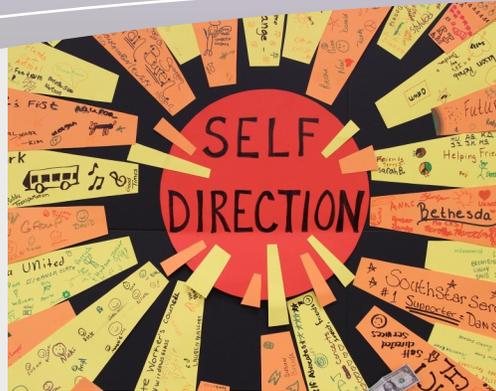


The Alliance News

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Vision

Our vision is for self-advocates to work together to get the support we need to live the life we want in the community.

Mission

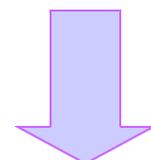
Our mission is to speak up for ourselves and each other while working together to make changes in our communities and in Illinois.

The Alliance is an Initiative of the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day

~ Megan Norlin

Hello Self-Advocates and welcome to spring 2012's Call to Action! Surely you all know by now that, this year, the Alliance is focusing on issues surrounding employment for people with disabilities, and we are all doing our best to figure out how we can work toward making them a little bit better. As your Local Group Coordinator, I've been working hard trying to come up with different things you all could do with your local groups, or even on your own, to contribute to the fight. As I was brainstorming, I couldn't help but think that sometimes, it's best to think a bit outside the box. I mean, sure, we should all take the time to write up a good résumé and practice interviewing. That's all great, and I absolutely think you should take the time to do that if you haven't already. But the truth is, one good résumé can easily be pushed aside in favor of some else's equally good résumé. There's a lot of competition out there, and sometimes, you have to give yourself a little competitive edge, and do something that's going to make you stand out. Then I thought, instead of *being* interviewed, why don't *we* do the interviewing? How are we going to do that? Well, here's my idea...check out Page 2 to read all about it!





The Alliance News

LOCAL ISSUES

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day continued

Have you ever been to a career day? For those of you who don't know, a career day is an event where representatives from local businesses come and set up tables, so that people who are looking for jobs can come and ask them questions, give them a résumé, or schedule an interview. Sometimes, people get interviewed right there on the spot. Sounds kind of cool, right? So I got to thinking some more, and wondered, what would happen if we turned the tables on traditional career day? What if each of our local groups organized an event where local business owners and representatives would be invited to come and *be interviewed* by all you advocates? You could ask them questions about the kind of jobs they offer, and the work environment. You could even take the opportunity to voice some of your on-the-job needs, and ask how they would accommodate you. Of course, I know planning an event of any kind is a big task, so I've prepared a little guide to help you out. I've included a few different ways to approach planning this event, some possible questions to consider, and even a few extra resources for résumé writing and interviewing for you to use whenever the need arises. I hope you like it, and as always, if you have any questions, feel free to let me know.

That's all for now, and I'll see you next time!

Keep up the good work!

Megan Norlin
Alliance Local Group Coordinator
Phone: (815) 228-9829



The advocates of People First of the Illinois Valley have no problem speaking their minds. We all know we've got a pretty big election coming up in November, and the folks at People First want to make sure everyone out there knows the importance of voting. Some of the advocates are hoping to offer a little presentation on the subject of voting to some other advocates. There has even been some discussion about taking the same presentation to local schools, so those who will be able to vote this year will be ready to hit the poles. When they aren't occupied with politics, the People First folks are busy dreaming up fundraisers meant to raise money for the advocates to attend advocacy rallies, like Speak Up Speak Out in November. So far, the group has only been able to send a few people to the event. They are hoping to give a few newer advocates the opportunity to attend. Good work guys! Keep up the good work!



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AROUND ILLINOIS

The 2012 ARC Conference

Hi everyone! It's time for State Actions!!! To start off, the Alliance staff went to the ARC Conference in Lisle, Illinois on April 25th and 26th. Jen, Terah, Megan & Tara did a presentation discussing employment for people with disabilities in Illinois and what we could do to change it. We also brainstormed some ideas that The Alliance members can do individually, in their local groups or as a coalition of ALL groups!

We learned a lot about autism and what other people's perceptions were on the subject. Speakers talked about the Ligas case, the history of disability rights, institution closures, advocacy, internet training and transportation. Keynote speaker Alex Plank, who has Aspergers Syndrome, explained how he deals with it on a daily basis. He was quite entertaining and gave a great speech! Besides just coping with Aspergers, Alex turned his experience into something that would help others with similar conditions. He created an online web community called **Wrong Planet** that was designed for individuals (and parents/professionals of those) with Autism, Aspergers Syndrome, ADHD, PDDs, and other neurological differences. They provide a discussion forum where members communicate with each other, an article section with exclusive articles and how-to guides, a blogging feature, and a chatroom for real-time communication with others. Way to go Alex!

Check out Wrong Planet at ww.wrongplanet.net.

The conference ended with awesome breakout speakers and a special guest...the GOVERNOR! He was enthusiastic about rebalancing the budget and making those with disabilities a priority. All in all, the conference was a huge success!

I would like to send out a reminder about the RALLY coming up. It will be June 19, 2012 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Bloomington Illinois and will focus on EMPLOYMENT! The rally is from 10:00 to 2:30. I hope to see all your lovely faces there. Please make sure to register ASAP. Thank you!

Terah Green, State Action Coordinator
terahgreen@ymail.com

Self-Advocates!!! We need your help to promote life in the community for those with disabilities! Check out the "Going Home" Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GoingHomeLifeintheCommunity



We need your help in three ways. They're all fun and easy:

1. "Like" the Facebook page.
2. Send in pictures and quotes of yourself or your loved one being successful in the community.
3. Regularly check out our page and comment on the posts you see there. That will provide your networks of friends and advocates an opportunity to see the FB page and comment too...

See, wasn't that easy?



The Alliance News

ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide

Hello Local Groups! Glad you decided to try out the newest Local Groups Call to Action activity from the Alliance. As promised, I've prepared for you:

- Some suggestions for planning the Turning the Tables on Career Day event
- A list of questions you may want to ask the employers who come to your event
- A few resources for résumé writing and interviewing, in case you need them

Now, as always, please remember that nothing in this guide is set in stone. You and your group are more than welcome to change anything you need to make it work for you. This guide is just here to get you started.

Let's get planning!

STEP ONE: Considering your options

As I see it, you and your group have three options when it comes to the LAYOUT of this event. (That is, what the event is going to look like).

Option One: **Make your career day look as much like a traditional career as you can.**

- Set up several booths for the event, and have a few members of your group work each of them
- Invite many local employers and business people to come to the event
- Ask them to rotate around to each of the booths

Keep In Mind:

To make this option work, you're probably going to need a lot of space. It's best to make sure that everyone who attends your career day (both guests and workers alike) can move around comfortably. You don't want the event space to be overcrowded.

You may want to make sure you have several booths set up, not just one or two. Having just one or two booths might make the event too short. If the entire career day only lasts an hour, your guests won't be walking away with much.



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

You have to make sure you give them enough to do and learn, so that they'll walk away feeling glad that they made the decision to come.

Many booths mean you'll need many people to work them. Do you think you have enough self-advocates in your group to pull this off? If not, could you team up with another group? Do you have enough support staff to help you if you need it?

You also may have to invite a lot of business people to come. You'll want to make sure the people who come know that your career day is a 'happening' place.

Having a bigger event might make it possible for the employers you invite to actually SEE YOU WORKING. This is a very important thing. It might help when you follow up with them later.

Option Two: **Host a small employer panel discussion**

Invite four employers to your panel

Make sure all of them know that the others will be there

During the discussion, ask each of the panelists questions

Keep In Mind:

This option won't require as much space. You may even be able to use your usual meeting room.

It would be best to have a LOT of advocates come ready to speak and ask questions, so the employers see that there are a LOT of people who want to work. Make sure to spread the word early.

If you wanted to, your group could organize a panel several times. Think about having four employers come one month, and then invite a new set of four employers to come the next month, and so on.

Go around the room and have everyone introduce him or herself. Try to make sure the employers learn your names.



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

Decorate the room with photos from other events you attended or participated in. Let them see all the work you have done. When your group is working on the action plan to organize this event, think about writing it down on a big piece of paper, and leaving it hanging in the room. Every little bit helps!

Think about having a small meal or snack with the panelists after the discussion is over. This will give them a chance to get to know you and your group members a bit more.

Option Three: Invite one employer at a time

Invite one employer to your group meeting

During the meeting, ask the employer questions

Keep In Mind:

Like option two, this option won't require as much space.

It would be best to have a LOT of advocates come ready to speak and ask questions, so the employers see that there are a LOT of people who want to work. Make sure to spread the word early.

You could also do this several times, but it will take much longer to talk to every employer you want to.

On the other hand, some employers may like speaking to you on their own a little better.

They may be more likely to ask you questions as well.

Again, go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves. Try to make sure the employer learns your names.

Decorate the room with your accomplishments. (See Option Two).

Think about having a small meal or snack with the employer after the discussion is over. This will give her a chance to get to know you and your group members a bit more.



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

A Few Other Things To Remember:

If you decide to go with the discussion or panel ideas, make sure you listen to each other. Try not to repeat questions. (You may even want to come up with all your questions together as a group).

Don't be afraid to get creative with your questions. What are all the skills you have, and how might you be able to apply them to each employer's work place?

Make sure you RESEARCH all the employers who come to your event. If you do your homework, you will definitely make a good impression. Also, the employers may get frustrated if you ask them questions that don't apply to them or their company.

Don't forget to create an ACTION PLAN. You can find a sample one in your Leadership Manual. And of course, if you need any help at all, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Some Questions You May Want To Ask on Your Career Day Event:

Here are some questions I came up with to get you started. Feel free to add to the list!

Questions About the Work Environment:

Think about what your ideal work day would look like. How long would you work? At what time of day would you work? What kind of work would you be doing? Then ask the employer(s) questions based on your ideal workday. Even if one work place doesn't fit into your ideal day, it'll get the employers thinking, and that's what we're trying to do!

EXAMPLES:

I like to work in the mornings/afternoons/evenings; can I do that where you work?

I like to work with other people, how can I do that where you work?

I like to work by myself, how can I do that where you work?



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

I'm really good at working with computer. Can I do that where you work?

I'm really good at office work. Can I do that where you work?

I love kids, and I love working with them. Can I do that where you work?

I love to work with animals; can I do that where you work?

Questions About Workplace Accommodations:

We all know that we need our work areas to be accessible to us. Not only do we need it, but also, we have a right to it. Unfortunately, this tends to be a very touchy subject for many people. Here are some questions to help you bring it to an employer's attention.

HINT: If the employers do not know the answers to these questions, try not to get upset.

Try to help them. You know what you need. You know what works for you. Make suggestions. Share what you know. Ask questions, and help them figure it out.

Sometimes people think making a workplace accessible to a person with a disability is difficult. Show them that that isn't always the case.

What kind of jobs do you offer at your workplace? If I was hired to _____, could my wheelchair/walker/crutches fit into the workspace? If not, how would you accommodate my wheelchair/walker/crutches?

I am deaf/hard of hearing, if I was hired to _____, how would you accommodate my hearing impairment?

I am blind/visually impaired, if I was hired to _____, how would you accommodate my visual impairment?

If someone wasn't able to move very quickly around your workplace, how would you accommodate them? Would you be willing to schedule them to work when things weren't so busy?



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

I would love to work for you! If I end up working for you some day, will you make sure the person who trains me works at the same time I do, so I can go to them if I have questions? (Sometimes, I need a little extra time to learn something new, and I want to be sure I can learn the job well).

IMPORTANT: At the end of the discussions, be sure to ask all the employers involved if they have any jobs available now. Have someone write the answers down, so that you know what to follow up on later. (If they say, "Yes," start getting ready to interview for them right away. If they say, "No," make a note to call them in a couple weeks to see if anything has changed.

These questions are just the tip of the iceberg. See how many others you can come up with!

Career Day Follow-Up: Résumé Writing and Interviewing Tips

So your Career Day Event is over. It was a great success, and now you're ready to go out and get that job. Awesome! But you're going to have to follow-up with the employer, and get yourself an interview. Don't wait too long to make that call! And of course, be sure to bring a clean copy of your résumé with you. How do you do a résumé? Well, everyone's résumé looks a little different, but there are a few little rules that everyone should follow.

Always list your name, address, phone number, and email, (if you have one) clearly at the top.

As you type it out, be sure you are using a font that is easy to read. And make sure your font size isn't too big. Using a large font could make the employer think you are just trying to fill up space.

When you are listing things on your résumé, always start with the most recent item, and go backwards.



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

Keep in mind that a résumé should only be ONE PAGE long. No more. No less. You don't have to put everything on there. Trying to fit a lot of information on one page will make it hard to read.

It may be a good idea to sit down with someone you trust and go through all the different things you could possibly put on your résumé. Write them down, then go back through the list and pick out the things you think will work best. Remember, the idea is to sell yourself. Make sure the skills and experiences you list on your résumé fit well with the job you're applying for.

Always have someone check it for you before your interview. Give yourself plenty of time to make changes.

I know this is a little confusing. I'll admit, it's hard for me to explain it in a page or two. To help you out, I'm going to let you in on a little secret. When I'm writing a résumé, I always use a *résumé template*. A résumé template is a fake résumé that is posted online, so that other people can use it as a guide. Here's a link to a résumé template for a job in a store:

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resumesandcoverletters/l/blhighschool.htm>

Do you see how everything is broken up into sections? Try to follow this example. List your contact information, then your education. If you don't have any work experience, no problem. Just list your advocacy work. List how long you have been a member of your group, and list some of the events you have helped plan. List some of the rallies you participated in. Maybe you and your group went to speak to some politicians? Put that on there too. Volunteer work is always welcome, and don't forget to date it all. Just do the best you can, and don't forget to have someone check it. I am always available to help with that, as well as answer any questions you might have. Remember, it takes practice to do anything well, including writing a résumé. So if you get lost the first time, shake it off, and try again. Eventually you'll be a résumé pro!



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

2012's Call to Action: Turning the Tables on Career Day Activity Guide continued

Interviewing Tips:

Some of you may know that job interviews can be a little scary. If you really want the job, you're probably going to be nervous. The best way to get through that though is to be prepared. Here are a few survival tips to remember the next time the next time you get the job interview jitters.

- Show up a few minutes early. This way, you will have time to use the restroom, or check your hair, or just sit for a few minutes. And let's face it, if the boss sees you showed up early, that makes you look good!
- Dress nicely. No need for a tuxedo or formal evening gown. Just make sure you wear a decent dress shirt and slacks or a skirt. Make sure the clothes fit well and are comfortable too. You don't want to be constantly trying to fix your clothes during the interview.
- Your future boss will probably want to shake or hand when you first meet. Make sure you give him/her a good handshake, and make eye contact while you're doing it you may want to practice this with your group).
- Smile. People like working with happy people.
- Make sure you bring lots of energy to the interview. Energy is contagious, and that's a good thing.
- When the supervisor starts asking you questions, don't be afraid to mention the things on your résumé. Talk about things you're proud of, and show him/her why you would be proud to work at her company.
- Remember to listen. Yes, you should talk about your accomplishments, be sure to be patient. Let your boss talk, too.
- Stay positive.
- Thank the supervisor for his/her time.
- Send a thank you not a couple days after the interview. It's a nice thing to do. After all, everyone loves mail, and it will help the supervisor to remember your name.
- If you haven't heard anything in a week, make a follow-up phone call or visit. Be courteous, but persistent. Do anything you can to let your future boss know you WANT THAT JOB.

That's all for now Alliance Advocates. See you next time for another Local Groups Call to Action!

Stay Awesome!

Megan Norlin, Alliance Local Group Coordinator

E-mail: hottwheelz702@yahoo.com Phone: (815) 228-9829



The Alliance News

RALLY INFORMATION

Employment Works 2012



Tuesday, June 19, 2011

10am – 2.30pm (registration begins at 9.15am)

Doubletree Hotel

10 Brickyard Drive

Bloomington, Illinois

Employment Works 2012 highlights three (3) learning sessions relating to employment of people with disabilities on three levels ~ individual, community, and state-wide. All participants will attend all three sessions. The day will feature a variety of activities including:

Music

Employment Jeopardy

Self-Discovery of Employment Gifts, Talents, and Interests

Panel Discussions

Sharing of Ideas and Successes

EVENT DETAILS:

This event is free, and lunch is included.

Please register by completing the Registration Form. Registrations are limited to ten (10) attendees from each agency/self-advocacy group, and must be in by **Tuesday, June 5, 2012** so that lunches can be ordered and accommodations prepared.

The Alliance will reimburse mileage for self-advocate transportation.

If you need to arrive in Bloomington the day before the rally due to transportation arrangements and are in need of hotel accommodations, please contact Krescene Beck by using the information below.

For more information, please contact Krescene Beck at 618.806.9431 or krescenebeck@gmail.com.

In order to get wheelchair accessible transportation to and from the train station to the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington, you will need to contact BNPTS (Bloomington Normal Public Transit Systems) by calling 1.309.828.7511.



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RALLY REGISTRATION

Employment Works 2012

Registration Form

Tuesday, June 19, 2012

Doubletree Hotel 10 Brickyard Drive Bloomington, IL
10am – 2.30pm (registration begins at 9.15am)

Space Is Limited. Each agency/self-advocacy group will be limited to a total of 10 (ten) participants (self-advocates and support staff combined) attending.

Number attending: Self-Advocates _____ Support People _____ TOTAL _____

Agency/Self-Advocacy Group Name _____

Names of Self-Advocates (please print clearly): _____

Names of Support People (please print clearly): _____

Contact Person

Name _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Accommodation Requests

___ Sign language interpreter

___ Dietary requirements – please specify (ie, Gluten Free, Dental Soft, No Styrofoam, etc.).

NOTE: Any physician-prescribed dietary requirements will be accommodated; food preferences will not be honored.

___ Other requests – please specify _____

Please register by Tuesday, June 5, 2012 by mail, email, or fax to:

Krescene Beck

Mail: 6754 Middlegate Lane, Glen Carbon, IL 62034

Email: krescenebeck@gmail.com

Fax: 217.875.8899