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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.

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



## Employment Works 2012

Hi again...its time for another state action update from the Alliance! On June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012, we had a rally in Bloomington, IL that was focused on employment for people with disabilities. The beginning of the day included a fun Jeopardy game testing our advocates' knowledge about employment laws and policy and we gave a brief overview of the day. Next, we broke into small groups and rotated into break out sessions. The first session was all about state action. We talked about what the state could do to help people with disabilities get jobs in Illinois. During the second session, we talked about what advocates can be doing individually that could get them jobs, like skills training, internships, volunteering, etc. The third session had a guest speaker, JJ Hanley of JJ's list ([www.jjslist.com](http://www.jjslist.com)), who discussed how writing local business reviews on her site can create accountability for local businesses, promote positive disability awareness, and eventually help create jobs in the community for people with disabilities. At the end of the rally, we all got back together in the big group and spoke out about what happened in the break out sessions. We then cheered and played the classic song, "Taking Care of Business", waving our blue, yellow, and red colored streamers in the air to celebrate! It was such a blast!

***Thank you to everyone who came out and made this event possible! A BIG thank you to The Alliance staff who worked tirelessly to make this happen as well as our breakout speakers for sharing their experience and expertise!***



# The Alliance News

## LOCAL ISSUES



### People First Aktion Club

In 2001, People First began as a social club sponsored by JACIL (Jacksonville Center for Independent Living). Two years later in 2003, it formally became People First Aktion Club co-sponsored by JACIL and the Jacksonville Kiwanis. With 22 members supported by an advisor from JACIL, the group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every month at JACIL and about 10 times each year to engage in special community events.

People First Aktion Club is currently focused on their Summer Fun Day Cook Out, one of the 4 "fun days" it holds each year. The group is also active in Speak Up and Speak Out Summit, last year helping with a voter awareness and registration display ~ they helped out 24 people with specific voter registration needs and handed out disability voter information to approximately 300 people at the summit! The group is active in the local community by participating in two local college parades to share the message disability awareness. One of the women in the Club had an idea to start a "girls night out" at another woman's home to invite the other female members to share in a night out and so others who may live in a group home or other large living environment

experience a bit of what it may be like to live independently and to host a party. The night out includes movies, refreshments, and peer mentoring.

Accomplishments as the People First Aktion Club include developing and voting on the Club mission statement; holding a garage sale and raising \$95 to put towards civic and not-for-profit organizations the Club votes on supporting and usually volunteers at including the Kiwanis, Cancer Society, JACIL, Salvation Army, New Directions Homeless Shelter, etc. The Club stayed busy earlier this summer by cleaning up the JDC Cemetery and put flags and flowers at gravesites.

JACIL staff advisor Cyndy Benton shared that she is most proud of the level of commitment the Club has to the community, and the pleasure and self-worth received from volunteer efforts. Club members are hard workers and see projects through by staying committed until it is done. Cyndy also shared that every member of the People First Aktion Club on their own is cool but when put together to achieve a goal, they become a driving force!

**Way to go, People First Aktion Club!**





# The Alliance News

## LOCAL ISSUES

### Alliance Local Group Feature

#### Self Advocates of Lake County

On June 13<sup>th</sup>, the Self Advocates of Lake County and I went on a field trip to Evanston, IL. Home to Northwestern University, Evanston is a diverse town 12 miles north of downtown Chicago off Lake Michigan that boasts many opportunities for shopping, dining out, and having fun! Group advisor Pam Lebellarte came to visit with self-advocates Brian, David, Monica and Lindsay to see what Evanston life is all about. We spent the day seeing the sights, driving through the Northwestern campus, visiting the beach, and touring a local disability service agency called Center for Independent Futures (CIF). We were able to visit two of their housing facilities, meet several participants and check out the offices of CIF and JJ's List. Our last stop was my favorite spot in the city, The Merrick Rose Garden. While in Evanston, I can frequently be spotted snapping pictures of the GORGEOUS roses in bloom.

The advocates had a great time and I really enjoyed getting to know them better. I learned that they are working on a transportation initiative with the Lake County Center for Independent Living in an effort to expand the PACE program, ADA paratransit and Dial-a-ride programs, allowing people with disabilities

to go more places, more often, for longer hours. The advocates told me how it can be difficult to get transportation during certain hours and on certain days. Brian Dixon expressed that "work, housing and healthcare are vitally important, but if you don't have transportation, you are stranded. It is essential for us to be able to get around to appointments and work on time, every time."

The Self Advocates of Lake County are passionate about making change in their local community and I left them feeling inspired by their hard work. What a great way to spend the day!

**Thanks for your inspiration,  
Self Advocates of Lake County!**



***Would YOUR group like to be featured in the newsletter? Contact your local group support person for more details!***



# The Alliance News

## CALL TO ACTION

Yo and hello self-advocates! I hope you are all surviving the summer heat. I would love to say that this section of our newsletter will be brimming with awesome ideas to help you and your groups beat the heat...but it's not (I got a little stuck for ideas, myself, you see). I hope you can forgive me just this once. Don't worry though; I'm not going to leave you completely empty-handed. I've got a little project I've been working on that I would like to bend your ear over.

Many of you have said you would like to get more connected with other groups, both within and outside of The Alliance. We all know that one of the things that keeps people from really doing that is the lack of transportation from place to place. It's a big issue, and unfortunately we can't fix it over night. But I think there is a way to communicate a little better with each other and with other groups in Illinois, maybe even throughout the country, and that is to increase our presence on the good old world wide web. I know it sounds too simple, but I really believe if we put ourselves out there a little bit more, we can get a lot more attention, and more importantly, learn a thing or two. So I've come up with a little plan. For starters I went ahead and made us a Facebook page. Search for The Alliance on Facebook to find us! My hope is if we really take the time to maintain it, eventually, many more people will see it, and want to get involved with The Alliance and all our activities. Maybe we'll be able to find some volunteers to help us at our next event. Maybe it will help us connect to an amazing advocacy group from another state, and they'll tell us how they overcame their transportation issues. Possibly you'll look at it one day, and discover a brilliant new activity to take to your groups. Or perhaps it will just help us talk to each other a little more easily. Either way it's all good, but I really think the possibilities are endless. Now, I know some of you know your way around a computer and some of you don't. That's okay. I'm going to make sure you guys have a way to get involved one way or another.

Since this project is in its beginning stages, however, I would like to start small. My only Call to Action for you today is this: I would really like your help in maintaining our page, so please call or e-mail me if you would be interested in adding something new to it, every so often. I would also like to know if you or any of your group members would be interested in some basic internet coaching, which I hope to have developed by the end of August, so be sure to tell me that as well (and if you forget, no worries...I'll be calling you soon). That's it for now. I know this probably doesn't seem like much, but I really think it could do a lot of good. Trust me, this is only the beginning. I'll have another little update for you about this project in September, but for now, try not to melt.

Keep speaking out!

Megan Norlin  
Alliance Local Group Coordinator  
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# The Alliance News

## SPEAKING UP



The Riot is excited to release the Voting Rocks! issue! Self-advocates are all about speaking up for themselves and others. One way to have your voice heard is to vote. Later this year, Americans will cast their vote for president. This issue is about helping you get ready to vote. Inside you will find information about new voting technology, personal stories about voting, and tools to help you decide who you want to vote for. You'll have what you need to get out there and rock your right to vote! We hope you

enjoy reading this issue!

To view Voting Rocks! in PDF, use this link:

[www.theriotrocks.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Riot\\_Issue\\_July\\_2012\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.theriotrocks.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Riot_Issue_July_2012_FINAL.pdf)

To view Voting Rocks! in Rich Text Format, use this link:

[www.theriotrocks.org/the-riot-newsletter](http://www.theriotrocks.org/the-riot-newsletter)

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### VOTE!

**National Technical Assistance Center for Voting and Cognitive Access** believes that it is very important for people with disabilities to vote and learn how to vote. We are very excited about the new public service announcement we just did. This project was created by the national self-advocacy organization Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered and some other self-advocates. This is a message for people with disabilities wanting other people with disabilities to go out and vote and make a difference. Also to show others without disabilities that people can vote.

Check out the public service announcement at [www.idhd.org/Advocacy.html](http://www.idhd.org/Advocacy.html).

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**Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect.  
There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions.  
So what.**

**Get started now.**

**With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled,  
more and more self-confident and more and more successful.**

~ Mark Victor Hansen



# The Alliance News

## THIS & THAT



### Check out Self-Advocacy on Wikipedia!

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-advocacy>



Check out Clearbrook's  
"Spread the Word to End the Word" video  
on YouTube!

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQj633jtH3I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQj633jtH3I)

A self-advocate in Lincoln, Illinois is seeking a self-advocate from another part of Illinois as a pen-pal. If you are interested in being a pen-pal, please write a letter and send it to



Pen Pal ~ Logan-Mason Rehab Self-Advocacy  
Group

ATTN: Julie Hester

760 South Postville Drive

Lincoln, IL 62656



### Census: More Americans Have Disabilities

~ Shaun Heasley

July 26, 2012

As the U.S. marks the 22nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, new Census data indicates that the number of people with disabilities is on the rise. In a report released Wednesday, the federal agency found that 56.7 million people had a disability in 2010, an increase of 2.2 million since 2005. Despite the growth in disability prevalence, however, the percentage of people with impairments remained relatively unchanged at 18.7 percent, accounting for roughly 1 in 5 Americans. About 1.2 million adults had an intellectual disability, according to the report. Meanwhile, some 944,000 adults had other developmental disabilities including autism and cerebral palsy. Among children, the Census found that 1.7 million kids had an intellectual or developmental condition. The new Census data marks the first time since 2005 that the agency has offered estimates and analysis on the population of Americans with disabilities, officials said. Several agencies including the Social Security Administration, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Administration on Aging rely on Census data in their planning.

View the report by logging on to [www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf).



# The Alliance News

## PHOTOS

### Relive the Memories ~ Employment Works 2012



**June  
19,  
2012**

