

The Alliance News

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Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance



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 proud to be an Initiative of the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

Congratulations to The Network on receiving the Barbara Pritchard Award in recognition for assisting people with disabilities to achieve their leadership and advocacy goals!

The Network is a group of individuals who come together for a business meeting on the first Tuesday of every month. This has been happening in Alton for about 10-12 years. Members come from 2 counties and several rural towns. They come by fixed route public transit, by Para-transit and by their own car.

Many of the Network members started out as members of a PEOPLE First group. Two community PEOPLE First groups merged to form one group known as The Network.

The Network chose their name strategically. They wanted to network, to meet new people and possibly develop new friends. Their goal was to be productive members of community through self advocacy, socialization and to be full participating members of community developing new skills and having new experiences.

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Your Voice Matters!



Equip for Equality

Advancing the Human & Civil Rights of People with Disabilities in Illinois

Equip for Equality is seeking your input on how we can best meet the legal advocacy needs of people with disabilities. **There are 3 ways for you to let us know what you think.**

In Person: We are hosting two Public Meetings - one in Springfield and one in Chicago. These meetings allow people with disabilities, family members, service providers and other interested parties to provide us with input on how to allocate our resources.

Wednesday, June 12, 2013
3 – 4.30pm
Lincoln Land Community College
Auditorium
5250 Shepherd Road
Springfield, IL

Friday, June 21, 2013
10am – 12noon
James R. Thompson Center
Room 9 – 031
100 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, IL

A sign language interpreter will be present at our Public Meetings. You can request other accommodations by contacting Cecille at 800-537-2632, ext. 7346.

Via the Internet: You can give your input by filling out our online survey by June 30, 2013. Visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/EFESurvey to submit your comments and suggestions using our online survey.

By Mail/Fax: You can give your input by mailing or faxing your survey responses to us by June 30, 2013. Contact Cecille at 800-537-2632, ext. 7346 to receive a copy of the survey. Once completed, send your completed survey to one of our offices or fax it to us at 312-541-7544.

We carefully consider all input when deciding how to allocate our resources. And we've started new initiatives as a result of past input. Our staff and Board of Directors look forward to your input so we can share our visions for the future with each other. We hope you will participate as we work together to advance the civil and human rights of people with disabilities in Illinois.

Thank you from Equip for Equality!



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Congrats to The Network

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The Network has an annually elected board and advisor. The board consists of president, vice-president, secretary, treasure, and sergeant of arms. This board meets before the monthly meeting to form an agenda. The meetings generally have 15 – 20 members present. Committees are formed based on activities/events. There is always FOOD!!!!

The Network is not grant funded. Some of the fund raisers the Network has held include Gala Ball, bake sale at a craft fair, renting a community swimming pool, Christmas time cookie bake off and Dance, Dinner and Rummage Sale night.

The Network is very active in their community by participating in summer Downtown Block parties, community dinner dances, Bell Ringers for Salvation Army, etc.

One aspect the Network is particularly proud of is their participation in disability related events and groups both locally and statewide. Some members have presented at statewide and national conference. Over the years, members have become Amtrak experts riding from Alton to Springfield.

Following is a list of a few of the organizations and events the Network has been involved in

Campaign for Real Choice

Speak Up Speak Out

CCDI

New Visions

Meeting with Division of DD Directors

Local Legislative Forums

Founding members of the Alliance

Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)

Illinois Imagines

Statewide Advisory Council

Meeting with local lawmakers

Hosting educational events for local community

Many of the Network members have provided testimony at the capital on important issues related to people with disabilities. Network members have been present and presented testimony at both Jacksonville and Murray Center State Operated Developmental Centers.

Most recently the Network has formed a committee and filed a compliant with the Illinois Attorney Generals Office.

Rallies...The Network knows how to rally. They have participated in countless rallies at the Capitol. The last rally they participated in was the Going Home Rally in April 2013.

Come learn more about self-advocacy and The Network by attending a meeting at 3pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month at Impact CIL in Alton, Illinois!



The Alliance News

Telling Your Story App

Need to make a change in your community? Need a legislator to help you? Here's fun project for you and your self-advocacy group:

1. Download a free app (details below).
2. Use it to collect and record everyone telling their story.
3. Send them to your legislator.

"Telling Your Story" is a free app from the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities. It's meant for persons with disabilities, family members, and other advocates to use to compose and practice the personal story they'll present to elected public officials or other policy makers at all levels of government when seeking policy changes or increasing awareness about disability issues. The app guides users through the steps, from introducing yourself to identifying the specific issue to the best methods for presenting a compelling personal story. After entering the text of their story, an audio recording feature allows the user to rehearse their story. Users can also select and preview a photo they may wish to include.

You can view the app in the iTunes Store at

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/telling-your-story/id541403749>.

To use all the features of this app, an iPad 2 or newer is required.

We are each a chapter in a book that everyone will want to read.





The Alliance News

People 1st Mini Conference Rewind

People First of Illinois' Anti-Bullying Mini Conference

~ Megan Norlin, Local Group Coordinator

Happy June everybody! I don't know about you, but I can't believe it's summer!

On May 19th, staff of The Alliance was invited to present at People First of Illinois' Anti-Bullying Mini-Conference. I was the lucky one who got to go and give our Stop Bullying NOW presentation, which we first gave at our own anti-bullying training in February. It was a wonderful experience, and I wanted to share it with you!

It was a small but mighty group. The advocates of People First were obviously in attendance along with a few members from DSC Self-Advocacy Group from Champaign. I was happy but not-at-all surprised to find that people were eager to share their own experiences with bullying, and join the cause to make it stop. If you by any chance missed our Stop Bullying NOW presentation, you can now find it on the Resources section of our website. Here's the direct link:

<http://selfadvocacyalliance.org/resources>. Please feel free to take it, and share it with your own groups, or anyone you think might be interested.

I am also happy to report that other groups within and outside of The Alliance are working on similar projects on anti-bullying. Our voice is growing louder, and more people are hearing and spreading our message, so those of you who may still be struggling with bullying, don't lose heart. There is always hope.

This review would not be complete if I did not talk about the presentation given at the end of the day by Jim Cooper. Jim is a People First Self-Advocate who for many years has been working as a motivational speaker with the hope that more people will learn to recognize their own self-worth and inner strength. Here are a few quotes from Jim's talk. Try to remember these the next time someone tries to bully you, or something doesn't go the way you wanted it to:

"I know people look at me and pass judgment on me. This is not necessary in my life. I ignore it. I am better than that." "I'm not perfect, but I'm sure trying." "I am a worthwhile person."
"I am as valuable a person as anyone else." "I am happy being me."
"I have all the qualities I need to live well."

I'll leave you with a quote Jim borrowed from Audrey Hepburn, "Nothing is impossible. The word itself says "I'm Possible."

This is of course only a taste of what Jim had to say, but it sure hits home. Thank you to Jim, Candace McFadden, Tia Nelis, and the rest of People First of Illinois for inviting me to be a part of your wonderful conference. I'm so glad I got to hear it, and thank you for your support. Great work you guys! Keep advocating!