

# The Alliance News



## Operation: Community Access

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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.

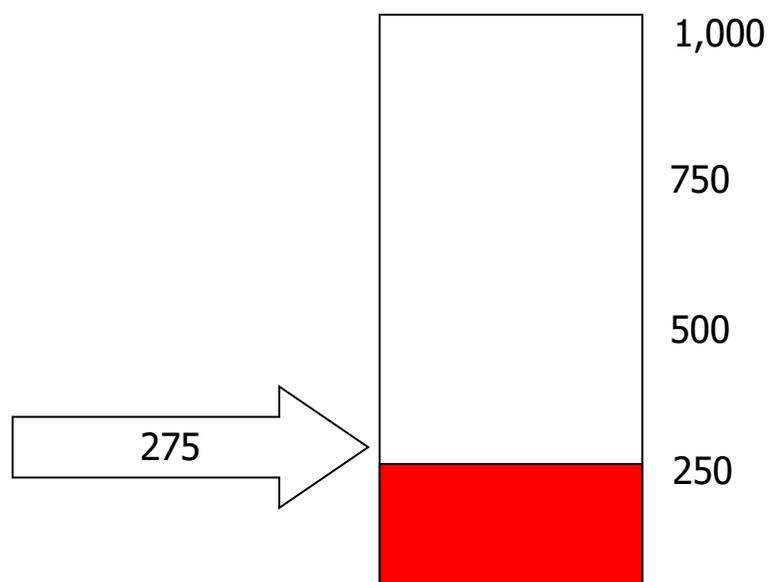
### Mission

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

### We're Working Toward Our Goal of 1,000 Signed Petitions!

The Operation: Community Access Steering Committee has set a goal of getting at least 1,000 signed petitions to present to DHS DDD Director Greg Fenton in June 2016. We need your help to make Operation: Community Access a reality. If you have already signed a petition, thank you! If you haven't, there is a petition on page 2 that you can print and sign; if you are able, make extra copies and ask your friends, family members, agency staff, and others to sign! Send your signed petitions to The Alliance, P.O. Box 666, Park Forest, IL 60466.



Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance

PO Box 666 Park Forest, IL 60466 618.806.9431

Email: [krescenebeck@gmail.com](mailto:krescenebeck@gmail.com) Website: [www.selfadvocacyalliance.org](http://www.selfadvocacyalliance.org)

Find us on Facebook at Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance



Operation: Community Access

## **The Alliance's Operation: Community Access Petition**

The Alliance is statewide collaboration between self-advocates, member groups, agencies, and organizations. We the self-advocates, have gathered together to work on a campaign called "Operation: Community Access"; we want flexible day services for people with disabilities so we can make more choices about what we want to do during the day.

We believe it is important for people with disabilities to

- be a part of our communities;
- use our voices to self-advocate; and
- to advocate for the rights of others.

I support self-advocates in having flexibility in making more choices in activities during the day.

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_, Illinois

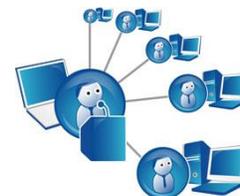


Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance  
 PO Box 666 Park Forest, IL 60466  
 Website: [www.selfadvocacyalliance.org](http://www.selfadvocacyalliance.org)  
 Find us on Facebook at Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance



Welcome to The Alliance's newest member group ~ LSA Academy Council! LSA Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday at Lifestyles Academy in Palos Park. Learn more about Lifestyles Academy at [www.lifestylesacademy.org](http://www.lifestylesacademy.org).

**Self-Advocacy Through Artwork with the 9 Muses  
Tuesday, February 23, 2016 10am CST**



Join the artists and allies from CTF's 9 Muses in Charleston, Illinois as they share about self-advocacy through artwork. 9 Muses is an art studio where individuals with developmental disabilities learn the principles and elements of art on a daily basis. Individuals build their knowledge of art, follow lesson plans and learn about new techniques. Each individual in the program has the opportunity create, sell and earn income from the artwork they produce. They showcase their art at the 9 Muses Art Gallery as well as various events in the community.

Please register for Self-Advocacy Through Artwork with the 9 Muses on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 at 10am CST by going to

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4994435183086300162>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

**ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
DRAFT STATE PLAN – PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Please help the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (The Council) plan its course over the next 5 years. The Council is in existence because of a federal law called the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. The Council is to engage in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change that leads to a comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports and other assistance that help individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive and be integrated and included in community life. Through an established Council (comprised of 60% individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and family members) a Five Year State Plan is developed and submitted to the federal Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This plan guides the work of the Council.

Give the Council your feedback on the draft goals and objectives at this link: [http://tiny.cc/ICDD\\_Survey](http://tiny.cc/ICDD_Survey) Responses accepted until March 10, 2016.

Call us at our Chicago office if you need an alternate version of the survey. 312-814-2080

**The Council is the entity that funds, among other projects, The Alliance!**

## Save the Date!

### The Facts About Adult Issues for People with Disabilities

A conference presented by The Network, self-advocacy group

Topics covered:

Your financial house", Community housing options,  
Local and state wide self-advocacy groups: The Alliance and The Network,  
The difference between Home Services and Home Based Support Services  
(PA vs PSW)

March 11, 2016

8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Lewis and Clark Community College, Godfrey, Illinois

For more information, contact Michelle at 618-972-9024

With support from: Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois, The Arc of Illinois - Ligas Family Advocate Program, The Alliance, IMPACT Center for Independent Living, and Lewis & Clark Community College

Hello Self Advocates, Allies and Friends:

Self Advocates Becoming Empowered Voter Project has a newly released 2014 Voters with Disabilities Election Report. We are excited to share it you and your organization.



The information in the report is from the findings of the Voter Experience Survey and the Polling Place Accessibility Surveys. It is an interesting to look at some of the problems people had. We also made recommendations of how to work together to improve voting experiences. It is a great way to get a discussion started about this year's election. If you don't vote how will life improve for you and your friends with disabilities.

You state Protection & Advocacy Organization received the Report too. Maybe your group can invite them to talk about interesting facts in the report or about the voting laws or court cases around the country. Also, how they can partner with self-advocates to do the Voter Project Training.

Check out the report by going to [www.sabeusa.org/2015/12/02/2014-voters-with-disabilities-election-report/](http://www.sabeusa.org/2015/12/02/2014-voters-with-disabilities-election-report/).

I would also appreciate any comments about the report or follow up on how you used the report with your groups or organization to improve voting in your state.

Thank you very much for your time and support of self-advocacy,

Teresa Moore  
Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, Voter Project Co-Director



### **Alsip Group Steps Up Effort to Help Disabled**

Ginger Brashinger, Daily Southtown

January 21, 2016

In existence for a decade, an Alsip group is stepping up its efforts of helping adults with intellectual disabilities to live independently. The Sertoma United program is attempting to help adults at Sertoma Centre's Martha Polacek facility, 4100 W. 127 St.

"They're learning to speak up for themselves," said Lynn King, Sertoma Centre's consumer support services coordinator. "They're learning to shape the services that they're receiving so instead of support professionals telling people what they need to do, they're really learning to speak up for themselves and advocate for what's important to them." Sertoma Centre consumer support services specialist Melissa Sands said that 20 years ago "people thought (individuals) with disabilities couldn't do things." "They would tell people what to do as opposed to teaching people what to do," Sands said. The Sertoma United effort program trend that reflects a change in our culture, Sands said. "Sometimes individuals with disabilities — from the minute they wake up to the minute they go to sleep — are told what to do, what to eat, what to wear — simple things that we take for granted. Being part of the self-advocacy group is teaching people that they have a say in things," she said.

An example of growing independence is the use of "consumer" by Sertoma Centre participants to describe themselves since each of them chooses the services they purchase from the nonprofit, Sands said. She said the increased independence must be supported by competent daily living skills, a focus of the program which teaches Sertoma United consumers how to become productive members of the community, teach others at the Centre what they have learned and enjoy a better quality of life.

The current Sertoma United group has 10 members who attend classes, participate in programs and decision-making at the Centre, and work in the community, Sands said. One consumer-taught class currently in place "to build leaders" teaches grocery shopping skills, Sands said. Occupational therapists recently attended classes to help the participants understand product sizes, pricing and other consumer information through the use of props, Sands said. She said Sertoma United members also are taught how to use their phones to assist in shopping and how to read and understand ads and coupons in the newspapers. Members create a shopping list based on a specific recipe, shop for the groceries needed and then make the recipe choice. Sands said the program is "hopefully giving them different skills. (We try)...to make our classes, our groups, outings...as educational as we can. That's our goal."

Continued on next page

King said another important role of the self-advocacy group is assisting executive director Gus Van den Brink with new employee training. "With Sertoma United...they have developed and grown to the point where they have so many more responsibilities and input here at the agency. Some of the self-advocates help teach new employees about our services and how our individuals want to be treated and respected," King said. "One of our self-advocates goes to (the new employee) training and speaks up about what the individuals here want. That's one of the coolest things we think that they do. What we've seen is more and more involvement for our individuals."

The Sertoma United participants are also involved in off-site events such as Advocacy Days to encourage the Illinois state legislature to fund services for people with disabilities. They also assist at fund-raisers for Sertoma Centre and other nonprofit organizations, conduct food drives for the needy and make holiday cards for people in retirement homes, among other activities, Sands said. When members of Sertoma United "graduate" from the program, they become "Sertoma United ambassadors," a resource for the program while remaining involved in other activities at the Centre. "We want to have as many people to develop those skills as possible," King said. "We like to rotate in new people, too, because it's new ideas, and they are kind of the core group that helps the agency evaluate to make sure we're doing things the right way."

Derrick Hudson, 33, of Olympia Fields, is one of the Sertoma United graduates who is a Sertoma United ambassador and also holds down a job at Food for Less in Alsip. Hudson said he enjoys meeting new people in the community and feels Sertoma United helped him with customer service, especially "how to treat people politely, the way you want to be treated." Deborah Smith, 34, of Park Forest, said the program has helped her "speak up, not speak out." Smith was recently able to use her self-advocacy skills to help her improve her living situation, she said. She works at Knutes in Midlothian and Smashburger in Oak Lawn. Baltazar "Billy" Alpuche, 38 of Homewood, said he has definitely benefited from the Sertoma United program. "I'm learning how to ...speak up for myself and I'm learning how to help others the way others helped me," Alpuche said. "When I had a question or I had a problem I never would speak up for myself by telling staff or anyone I needed this, I need that." Alpuche is in his third year in the program and will soon become a Sertoma United ambassador, Sands said. Nathaniel Ayala, 30, of Chicago, requested entrance into the program. He said participating over the last three years has made a difference for him. "It's been a challenge for me. I was very shy because I didn't know what to do, and I was afraid to say something. I was afraid to express my feelings," Ayala said. "After I joined the class, I got the hang of it. I feel more confident."

Individual's stories about the benefits of Sertoma United illustrate the worth of the program for its members, but Sertoma United members put their self-advocacy skills to work for all members of Sertoma Centre, King said. Whenever there is a possible policy change at the Centre which would affect its members, staff members explain the situation to Sertoma United members who can make their voices heard on the subject. "They're either going to approve it or sometimes they're going to challenge it," King said. King said focusing on developing the strength and ability of the individual, developing self-advocacy skills and allowing individuals to use their skills off-site allows them to be integrated into and valued by the community. King said Sertoma United has been "a great example of that," choosing to participate in several volunteer activities per year. "They have so much to give and to offer and a great skill set that can be used in the community," King said. "They want to be in their community, giving back to their community."

Adults 18 years old and older with disabilities are eligible for services at Sertoma Centre even if they are currently in a different program or leaving a high school program, King said. For more information, contact King at [king@sertomacentre.org](mailto:king@sertomacentre.org) or call (708) 730-6352.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Wednesday, February 24, 2016**

The Arc of Illinois Ligas Family Advocate Program

**"KNOW YOUR OPTIONS" PRESENTATION**

**Come out and meet other families and get your questions answered!**

9:30 a.m. – 3:00p.m.

Park Lawn School & Activity Center

10833 S. LaPorte

Oaklawn, IL. 60453

**\*\* Free –Light refreshments will be provided to participants\*\***

**\*\*REGISTRATION:** There is NO cost - but you will need to register so that we can have an accurate count for materials. Please register by calling The Arc of Illinois/Ligas Family Advocate Program at 708-331-7370 or email Shirley at [Shirley@thearcofil.org](mailto:Shirley@thearcofil.org).

**Guest Speakers include:**

- ❖ Sarah Myerscough-Mueller- DHS- Update On Employment First Options
- ❖ Paul Jordan- Park Lawn - Provider
- ❖ Lore Baker- Housing Options - Governor's Office

**Ligas Family Advocacy Outreach & Family Advocacy Training Session**

The Ligas Family Advocates (LFA's) team is here to help you connect with other families and inform you about additional options.

In addition to outreach to Ligas Class Members and Individuals eighteen and older seeking to become Ligas Class Members, we provide Family Advocacy Training to Families who have loved ones with intellectual or developmental disabilities. We share information regarding **Guardianship, PUNS, SSI** and other topics to help families stay informed and be informed advocates!!

**WE HOPE YOU CAN JOIN US FOR THESE EXCITING DISCUSSIONS!**

**The Alliance Staff Contact Information**

Megan Norlin, Advocacy Coordinator  
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Tara Wickey, Community Organizer  
tara.advocacy@gmail.com

Krescene Beck, Program Coordinator  
krescenebeck@gmail.com

Leanne Roth, Organizational Coordinator  
leanneadvocacy@gmail.com



# Save the Date

for the 4th Annual

# Going Home Advocacy Day

Wednesday, May 11, 2016  
Illinois State Capitol Rotunda  
Springfield, Illinois

8.30am (registration begins) – 2.30pm  
Rally begins at 11am

Join hundreds of self-advocates and allies in  
**speaking up** and **speaking out** in support of  
community living for people with disabilities.

Going Home is an advocacy campaign dedicated to full inclusion and  
equality for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Registration begins March 1, 2016**

We are a lot stronger when we work together!

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**ALLIANCE  
ANNUAL  
RALLY**

**WHEN** Tuesday, June 28, 2016  
10am – 2pm (registration begins 9.15am)

**WHERE** Doubletree Hotel  
10 Brickyard Drive, Bloomington, IL

**STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION!**

**Be a Part of Advocacy in Action by attending your local Advisory Council Meeting****North Suburban**

To Be Announced  
Community Alternatives Unlimited  
8765 W. Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL

**North Central**

Tuesday, February 2, 2016  
10am  
Freedom Hall (Morton Park District building)  
349 W. Birchwood  
Morton, IL

**Northwest**

Tuesday, March 8, 2016  
4.30pm  
Milestone Training Center  
4504 Shepherd Trail  
Rockford, IL

**City of Chicago**

To Be Announced  
UIC's Institute on Disabilities and Human Development (Auditorium)  
1640 W. Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, IL

**Central Region**

Thursday, February 12, 2016  
12.30pm  
DHS DDD - Centrum Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
319 East Madison  
Springfield, IL

**Southern Region**

Wednesday, February 17, 2016  
10.30am  
Southern Illinois Case Coordination  
1400 South Locust  
Centralia, IL

**South Suburban**

Thursday, February 18, 2016  
2pm  
Suburban Access  
900 Maplewood Avenue  
Homewood, IL