Voices & Choices Vermont’s 16th Annual Self-Advocacy Conference

May 29-30, 2014
Schedule for Thursday ~ May 29

Register for Voices & Choices
Hotel Entrance
3:00 - 6:00 pm

Pick up Hotel Room Keys at Hotel
Front Desk
4:00 - 6:00 pm

Art as a Teamwork Tool
in Room 10
4:00 - 6:00 pm

Totem Pole and Puzzle Piece
Art Projects in Gateway One
Room 4
4:00 - 6:00 pm

Star in GMSA’s Happy Music Video in Gateway Two Room 5
4:00 - 6:00 pm

Talent Show in Northstar One
Room 6
4:30 - 6:00 pm

in Northstar Two Room 7
5:00 - 6:00 pm

Dinner in Oscar Ballroom
6:30 - 7:30 pm

Guest: Chester Finn
Theater Adventure Performance
7:30 pm

Dance in Oscar Ballroom
8:00 - 11:00
Thursday Afternoon

Northstar 2 Room 7
Come Play...

5:00 to 6:00

Winners share a prize dinner date at Thursday’s conference banquet.

GMSA is Making a Happy Music Video
Gateway 2 Room 6
4:00 to 6:00

Clap Along if you feel Happiness is the truth!

Gateway 1 Room 4
Totem Pole & Puzzle Art Projects
4:00 to 6:00

“There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle of life.”

Room 10
Art as a Teamwork Tool
4:00 to 6:00

Paint a beautiful piece of art which will then be available as a postcard after the conference

Northstar 1 Room 6
Grab Your 3 Minutes of Fame!
4:30 to 6:00
Breakfast for Hotel Guests  
in Oscar Ballroom  
7:00 - 8:00 am

Registration & Continental Breakfast  
For Friday Only Guests in Hotel Entrance  
8:30 - 9:30 am

Keynote Speakers  
9:30 - 10:30 am

Morning Workshops  
10:45 - 12:00 pm

Lunch in Oscar Ballroom  
12:00 - 12:30 pm

★ GMSA 2013 Slide Show  
Theresa Wood Citizenship Award  
Local Group Annual Awards  
12:45 - 1:15 pm

Star in GMSA’s Happy Music Video  
1:15 - 1:30 pm

Afternoon Workshops  
1:45 - 3:00 pm

Get Home Safe...Thanks for Coming!  
3:00 pm
Kristofor Medina has been typing to communicate since 3rd grade. He is a leader of Communication Alliance, a local self-advocacy group.

To be able to communicate is a luxury, and it is a right not to be taken for granted. I’m trying to tell you that without typing – I would be left without a voice.

Please present open minded attitudes with everyone even if they can’t vocalize their thoughts. I want a life with love, laughter and hope, and if I don’t have communication, that is lost in the mist of longing for what we all deserve. Graduating from the University of Vermont with a degree in English felt amazing but I am ready for my next journey which is finding my dream job as a writer. My mighty typing finger is ready to go. See you all on the typing play grounds.

Kris Medina
Barre, Vermont

Chester Finn works for the NY State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. He was appointed to the National Council on Disability by President Obama in 2010. In 2008, Chester co-founded the Community Empowerment Programs Incorporated, which provides community services and educational programing for people with disabilities. Chester is a past-president of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered.

Chester Finn is blind, yet he sees himself and the world more clearly than most. He refuses to be defined by his disabilities. In fact, it’s the other way around. Through them, he has choreographed a life of participation, contribution, enjoyment and prestige. As he says, "You learn to deal with what you have. I know who I am and I can tell people what it’s like to be me. Among the most telling words that Chester uttered were, "I love being me."
### Friday Morning Workshops

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Oscar One</th>
<th>Oscar Two</th>
<th>Oscar Three</th>
<th>Gateway One</th>
<th>Gateway Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sister Act: Siblings in the Self Advocacy Movement</td>
<td>Speak Up! Speaks Out: How We Made Our Film</td>
<td>How To Date Like A Pro: Moving from Friend to Girl/Boyfriend</td>
<td>Opening Paths to Self-Expression Through Making Art</td>
<td>Working For An Agency: Being Treated As A Professional</td>
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<td>Come to an open discussion about what’s it’s like to have a sister or brother or both! We will talk about the tough stuff, the great stuff, all of it. Learn how to include your sisters and brothers in the Self Advocacy Movement.</td>
<td>First we will show you our 18-minute video we made about how to be a self-advocate called Speak Up! Speaks Out. We will talk about how we live independently in our community. Craig Davis, Chuck Denis, Mary LaFontain, Antoine Polgar, Delsie Polgar, Lindsey Hescok &amp; Ed Thorndike</td>
<td>Are you interested in finding a date? Is there someone you want to ask out? Dating and becoming someone’s girlfriend or boyfriend can be very exciting and challenging. In this workshop, we will discuss how to move from just being friends to becoming a couple. We will cover topic like letting someone know you are interested, asking someone out, what if they say &quot;yes&quot;, and what if they sat &quot;no&quot;. Join us for an honest discussion on how to date like a pro. Max Barrows &amp; Karen Topper</td>
<td>I will talk about personal experiences as an artist and how I learned to develop my skills as a painter. I will share examples of my artwork and give people ideas on how they can do art. I will also talk about what is involved in developing a career as an artist. Larry Bissonnette and Pascal Cheng</td>
<td>Join us to learn how having your dream job can be like a roller coaster of emotions. Presenters will describe how to handle the pressures and excitement of working the job of your dreams! People will share tips on the supports they use that work. Randy Lizotte, Nicole Villemaire, and Rachel MacMartin</td>
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Art as a Teamwork Tool
Art can be an ice breaker, team builder & learning tool. Art is a great way to express your emotions - both good and bad and is a great stress buster. Use Art to think about and record your dreams for the future. Art is very healing and can help you deal with change, loss and celebrate happy times. We will paint a beautiful piece of art which will be available as a postcard after the conference. **Suki Kapinao**

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Friday Morning Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northstar One</th>
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<td><strong>Inclusion and Overcoming Communication Barriers</strong></td>
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<td>Participants will gain an understanding of the importance of inclusion in our schools and communities. Presenters will share their personal stories of overcoming communication barriers and becoming included in schools and community life. Question and answer session will follow individual presentations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tracy Thresher, Kyle Moriarty and Maleia Darling</strong></td>
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<th>Northstar Two</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Advocates Act</strong></td>
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<td>Join students from Spaulding High School Self-Advocacy Theater Program for Fun theater activities. Practice some fun improvisation and theater games. Laugh and make new friends.</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Wilcox, Felicity Garr, Kayla Richard, Alysia Duhaime Frankie Kelly, Maisie Lejeunesse, Sabrina Miller, Justin Manning</td>
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<tr>
<th>Escapade One</th>
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<td><strong>LGBTQ People With Disabilities: Let’s All Have The Conversation!</strong></td>
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<td>People with disabilities who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ) will learn that they are not alone and they can find support in having a safe space to talk about who you are. Support staff &amp; family will find out the challenges people with disabilities have who identify as LGBTQ such as coming out, socializing and challenges on the job. Learn the importance of providing support for this community.</td>
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<td>David Frye, Josh Queneville, Joseph Shappy &amp; Amanda Parrott</td>
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<th>Escapade Two</th>
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<td><strong>Our Personal Stories and Struggles of How We Became Our Own Guardians</strong></td>
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<td>“I wanted to be my own guardian, but I did not want to hurt anyone’s feelings.” Learn about the first steps to take when becoming your own guardian. Find out how to get help support to navigate through the paperwork. We will discuss what you might expect from your family and team members.</td>
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<td>Barbie Hodgdon and Samantha Parizo</td>
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Voices and Choices Conference
The Think College Vermont Experience: What College Means To Us

Presenters will share their experiences in the Think College Vermont programs at the University of Vermont and Johnson State College. Presenters will talk about what it was like going through college and what they learned and experienced to help them in their lives and establish careers.

NICOLE VILLEMAIRE, TAYLOR TERRY, JON FITZGERALD, BRYAN DAGUE & CASSIE GEORGE

Making your Case: Good old fashion Speaking Up for Yourself

Can You Really? Yes, I can! Chester Finn and Max Barrows will work with folks to do lots of role playing on speaking up. Practice acting self-confident and believing in yourself. It is your life! Make sure you are in the driver’s seat and not just a passenger along for the ride.

CHESTER FINN AND MAX BARROWS

Writing Our Stories

Do you have good stories in your head waiting for an invitation out? Well, then come to this workshop! I will tell you a bit of my story. Then I will ask big, wide questions to invite your stories out. This workshop will provide a good opportunity for romance, mystery and more. No experience necessary. Typers and Non-typers welcome.

MARK UTTER AND EMILY ANDERSON

Knock Their Socks Off! How to Make a Great First Impression!

Have you ever wondered how to dress or what to say when you go to a job interview… the State House…want to volunteer somewhere…are giving a presentation? Come learn how to make a GREAT first impression! We will have a fun fashion show and practice with role plays. By the end of the workshop you will know how to dress and what to say to knock anyone’s socks off!

LISA RUDIAKOV AND SKYE PEEBLES

Love and Marriage

Come hear two couples tell their love stories. Delsie and Antoine have been married for 3 years. Randy and Jana are getting married in October. They will tell you what steps it takes to plan for and get married.

DELSIE AND ANTOINE POLGAR, RANDY LIZOTTE AND JANA WEBER

The Think College Vermont Experience: What College Means To Us

Presenters will share their experiences in the Think College Vermont programs at the University of Vermont and Johnson State College. Presenters will talk about what it was like going through college and what they learned and experienced to help them in their lives and establish careers.

NICOLE VILLEMAIRE, TAYLOR TERRY, JON FITZGERALD, BRYAN DAGUE & CASSIE GEORGE
Friday Afternoon Workshops

Northstar One

Inclusion and Overcoming Communication Barriers
Participants will gain an understanding of the importance of inclusion in our schools and communities. Presenters will share their personal stories of overcoming communication barriers and becoming included in schools and community life. Question and answer session will follow individual presentations.

TRACY THRESHER, KYLE MORIARTY AND SCOTT BRODIE

Is Our Conference Too Noisy For You?
CHECK OUT OUR RELAXATION ROOM

Northstar Two

Theater Adventure
We love surprises! Creativity abounds in our Theatre Adventure Troupe. We have learned that everyone has a different voice with unique abilities and ideas. We recognize that there are many ways to communicate. It is a priority for us to help troupe members build friendships as well as share their own interests. Join us as we discuss our Thursday night performance and share how we find ways for each participant to shine (both on stage and off stage).

THEATRE ADVENTURE PROGRAM - NEW ENGLAND YOUTH THEATRE

Escapade One

Being Proactive:
How To Speak Respectfully in Stressful Situations
Being proactive can get you good results in difficult situations. Learn strategies for how to stay respectful when meeting to discuss your ISA. However the hope is that participants will understand that these tips can be applied to other situations as well.

SHAWN GORTON AND RACHEL MACMARTIN

Escapade Two

How Do I run a Smooth Meeting?
That's the Million Dollar Question!
Come play Who Wants to Be a Millionaire and we will discuss this burning question. The topics covered: organizing, facilitating and dealing with difficult situations. You won’t win money, but there will be fun prizes.

NICOLE LEBLANC AND KAREN NOONE
HATS OFF to the
VT Developmental Disabilities Council

A heart-felt thank you
from GMSA
to the Council
for funding conference
scholarships

Thank you to
Big “C” Sugaring
Cochran & Son
802-454-8376
for supporting
our conference!!!
Thanks to Our Sponsors

Thank you to CABOT for supporting our conference!!!

Thank you to LIZ LOVELY for supporting our conference!!!

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G.W. Tatro Construction, Inc. is one of Vermont’s leading heavy civil construction companies. Founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1978, we build roads, ski areas, wastewater facilities, snowmaking systems, penstock for hydroelectric dams and many other infrastructure projects used by tens of thousands of people.

We offer a wide range of services:
- New Construction
- Remodeling and Additions
- Home Performance with Energy Star

We strive to meet your project and budget needs.
A HUGE thank you to the Vermont Workers Center
Join A Local Group!

Next Steps Self-Advocates
Champlain Voices
Burlington Self-Advocacy Club
Capital Advocates Together
Friends Helping Friends
Speak Up Addison County
Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered of Rutland
Bennington Peer Support
Connections of Peer Support
Randolph Area Peer Support
Our Drop In Center
GATSA: Getting Acquainted Through Self-Advocacy
SAVY: Strong Advocacy Voices & You
Vermont Choices
Rockin’ Advocates of Montpelier/Barre

Local Self-Advocacy Contacts

Call Max
1-800-564-9990
Max can tell you how to connect with a self-advocacy group near you

Three LGBTQ Groups Supported By RU12 around the state
New Group Starting in Windsor

Advocates for Action
Families First Peer Support

Voices and Choices Conference Page 15
A Tribute to 2014 Award Winners

**COPS**
Self-Advocate of the Year: April Brown
Ally: Elizabeth Peets

**Capitol Advocates Together**
Self-Advocate of the Year: Hilary Christian
Ally: Bret Sweeney

**Rockin' Advocates of Montpelier/Barre**
Self-Advocate of the Year: Sabrina Miller
Ally: Cliff Thompson

**NEXTSTEP Self Advocates**
Self-Advocate of the Year: Ken Jacobs
Ally: Amy Anderson

**Windsor County Self-Advocacy**
Self-Advocate of the Year: James Paradis
Ally: Gabe Streeter

**Communication Alliance**
Self-Advocate of the Year: Kris Medina
Ally: April McCandless

**Champlain Voices**
Self-Advocate of the Year: Greg Haskins
Ally: Caitlin Hill

**LGBTQ Support Groups**
Self-Advocate of the Year: Josh Queneville
Ally: Elizabeth Underwood

Self-Advocate of the Year: Carolyn Croteau
Ally: Paul Collins

Self-Advocate of the Year: Lisa Rudiakov
Ally: Paula Colbert & Karen Sousis

Self-Advocate of the Year: April Brown
Ally: Elizabeth Peets

Self-Advocate of the Year: Hilary Christian
Ally: Bret Sweeney

Self-Advocate of the Year: Sabrina Miller
Ally: Cliff Thompson

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Self-Advocate of the Year: Kris Medina
Ally: April McCandless

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Ally: Caitlin Hill

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Ally: Elizabeth Underwood

Self-Advocate of the Year: Carolyn Croteau
Ally: Paul Collins

Self-Advocate of the Year: Lisa Rudiakov
Ally: Paula Colbert & Karen Sousis
A Tribute to 2014 Award Winners

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Rachel Lizotte
Ally: Wayne Snow

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Levi Gardner
Ally: Jacqueline Beer

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Mary Jones
Ally: Brooke Lacey

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Alyssa Christopher
Ally: Stephanie DeCesare

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Daisey Emerson
Ally: Heather Blakey

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Deborah Demars
Ally: Jennifer Stratton

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Samantha Parizo
Ally: Cathy Blaise

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Adam Billings
Ally: David Bessette & Randy Lavalette

Self-Advocate of the Year:
Leif Pfaff-Powers
Ally: Stephanie Salasin
Nominees For the Theresa Wood Citizenship Award

**Randy Lizotte** – Randy is passionate about self-advocacy, and has no problem speaking up. He has volunteered countless hours to self-advocacy in both Middlebury and St. Albans. Randy has shown a great deal of determination in his personal life, as well as in GMSA. Randy is so good at what he does, that a local developmental services agency hired him as peer advocate! Randy is also described as having a “whacky” sense of humor which helps out in difficult situations.

**Samantha Parizo** – Samantha is very active in her community through Speak Up! Addison County. Sam is considered a real mentor and role model to other self-advocates who want to live independently and be their own. She is a hard worker and has been a strong advocate to provide training to ACTR (Public Transportation). Samantha is always willing to listen to what others have to say, not judge, and is able to point them in the right direction when they need help. She is known as the “hostess with the mostest” – every time there is a gathering, she plans and creates an original dish to share with friends! Samantha uses her strengths to improve the quality of her life and others.

**Kyle Moriarty** – Kyle’s passion is to change language that is demeaning and devaluing to the disability community. Kyle is a peer educator for GMSA. Even though the path has been bumpy and arduous, Kyle has mightily stayed true to his purpose in life. Kyle is the baking guru in his local self-advocacy group and is considered “the dessert king with a fundraising attitude.” Kyle continues to lead his Communication Alliance group. Tracy Thresher writes, “I met Kyle as a timid young boy; typing his thoughts has built his confidence. Kyle now presents and educates with passion. To be with Kyle puts my mind in a place of calm.”

**Mark Utter** – Mark makes a huge contribution to his community with his positive presence, with his living example, and with the impact he is making in the world with his creativity and the creation of his film, “I am in Here.” He walks into a room and lights everyone up with his “hellos!” and positivity. He is a living example of “treating people the way you would want to be treated.” Mark’s creation of his short film, “I am in Here” exemplifies his creativity, determination, sense of humor, and commitment to teaching society about people who utilize Facilitated Communication as a means of expressing themselves and engaging in life’s activities.
**Nominees For the Theresa Wood Citizenship Award**

**Max Barrows** – Max is well-known in Vermont and across the country for his passionate work in self-advocacy. Max works for GMSA and can frequently be seen testifying at the legislature. Everyone sees Max as a leader and he goes out of his way to be understanding of everyone. He seen as someone who is nice, friendly, always helpful. Max is a good listener; he always has a great sense of humor – that is unless his favorite baseball team (the Yankees) is losing!

**Craig Davis** – Craig actively contributes to his community by working part time and volunteering at the Illsley Public Library. He is member of Green Mountain Self-Advocates Board and the VT Developmental Disabilities Council. Craig is a problem solver and uses his deductive reasoning skills during group meetings when a conflict arises. Craig is dependable and determined. He likes to be involved with important issues and keep a good sense of humor and stay upbeat when times are tough.

**Mary LaFountain** – Mary is the Vice-President of Speak Up! Addison County and was one of the group’s founding members in 2003. Mary is a fun and creative leader who keeps her group on task and is always ready to help out her community whether it is by educating, taking care of friends, being part of a community supper, or through Special Olympics. Mary is an active advocate that continually uses her positive attitude to advocate and educate community members. Mary shows significant strength and always understands people’s feelings and acts with empathy and a great sense of humor.

**Stirling Peebles** – Stirling’s reach in her community includes participating in the Think College program and completing internships at ORCA Media and WCAX. They are key examples of her doing jobs that show the public what people with disabilities are capable of doing. Stirling is creative and knows what she wants! She uses her skills in technology to build communities – she has created more than 300 YouTube videos and has started a number of Facebook groups that bring together people from all walks of life. She has a virtual self-advocacy group with over 83 members. She has a great sense of humor and is always ready to pop in with a wisecrack!
Making Connections

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

Super Advocate

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

The Cool One

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

The One You Can Depend On

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

Nice Smile

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

Funny Guy

Name: ____________________________
Phone number: ___________________
Email: __________________________

Lots of Energy

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Voices and Choices Conference
GMSA celebrating 20 YEARS