



**GMSA Board Meeting**  
**6/29/2015 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm**  
**Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT**



**Officers:** Levi Gardner (Vice-President) Lori Jones (Secretary), Randy Lizotte and Nicole Villemaire were absent.

**Board Representatives:** Kaiya Andrews, James Paradise, Joel Marshall, Craig Davis, Heather Raymond, Jeremiah Gerbasi, Beverly Williams, Raymond Gordon, Rachel Colby, Danielle Viau, Linda Monette and Tesha Thibodeau,

**Self-Advocates:** Kate Tibbs, Herman Goldberg, Allie Monica, Diane Robinson, Josh Dumais, Jeremy Chaim, Tracy Thresher, Antoine Polgar, Lorna Merrill, Tiffany Martinez, Lauren Tewkhill, Marilyn Shank, Debbie Demars, Adam Mozdierz, Marc Preman, Robert Martin II, Kate Dailey, Joel Owens and Michelle Haberern

**Allies:** Emily Andersen, Erin Rose, April McCandless, Paul Tidyman, Tracy Robar, Jayne Weber, Mary Ruffing, Edward Thorndike, Amy Anderson, Lisa Thompson, Jim Rice, Alicia Porter and Paula Collins.

**GMSA Staff:** Skye Peebles, Karen Topper, Max Barrows and Kris Medina

**Guest:** Kirsten Murphy from VT DD Council



**AGENDA #1: Local Group Updates** - Started with introductions and updates from local groups:



**Capitol Advocates Together (CAT):** Most members will march in the parade for 4<sup>th</sup> of July with disability awareness signs. Also Max Barrows has been invited to go to the White House for 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ADA Event.



**Windsor Self-Advocates:** We made \$500 at our fundraiser for the conference. Now we are going to try to make t-shirts for our group with extra money that raised.



**Advocates for Action:** Self-advocates from our group are looking forward to Max Barrows coming down next month to do a training about internet safety



**BSAC:** Max and Topper did a training for our group about doing disability awareness workshops for elementary school students. It inspired us to be writing our life stories to share with students.



**Champlain Voices:** Beverly is now the president and GMSA board rep for our group. Bill Villemaire, a founding member of the group, was interviewed by the Minneapolis Star Tribune about the years he spent in a sheltered workshop and how now he has a real job. And finally, we are planning our summer schedule which we hope includes having some legislators visit our meeting and agency to learn about what we do.



**Vermont Choices:** Working on a fundraiser to sell calendars to raise money for next year's conference.



**GATSA:** Heather Allen from the state Guardianship program came to our group to talk about different types of guardianship. On August 17<sup>th</sup> we will be going to the Elmore Fire Department for a tour. Some of us are helping to design the pre-service training for new staff for our agency.

**RAPS:** Edwin Place was here but he moved recently and did not have an update from his group.



**Friends Helping Friends:** One of their members was recently appointed by the Governor to be on the DS State Standing Committee.



**Next Step:** The group just completed a training with Max and Topper. They learned several person-centered planning tools which they are supporting each other to use as a way to get ready for their ISA meetings.

**Families First:** Their members really enjoyed presenting at the Voices and Choices conference and are already working with GMSA to think of different workshops they can teach next year.



**Communication Alliance:** Kris Medina co-presented with Max Barrows at DS State Standing Board meeting about making information accessible for people with developmental disabilities. Also many of our members are excited and getting ready to go to California to present several workshops at a national Communication Symposium.

**Speak Up, Addison County:** working on picking new goals.

**SAVY:** One of their members participated in a focus group facilitated by GMSA for women with developmental disabilities to discuss healthcare issues.

**Dreamcatchers:** This new group is working on picking goals. They just completed doing the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teams training with staff from GMSA.



**AGENDA #2: Group Agreements:** Danielle explained Step Up, Step Back. Jeremiah also gave some ideas.



**AGENDA #3: Voices and Choices and One-Time \$:** DAIL is the part of the government that gives the money to the agencies for services. One Time Money is extra money that typically DAIL gives it to agencies to give to people who need it. This year DAIL has decided NOT to give one-time money to the agencies. The decision is being challenged but in the meantime GMSA needs to decide what hotel to use for Voices and Choices conference in 2016. If one-time money is not available, we may have a smaller crowd and this would give us the option of using a smaller hotel like the Killington Grand Hotel. Randy asked board members to go back to your local groups and ask them:

- If you didn't have one-time money, how much would that decrease the number of people who would come to the conference?

- If we do end up having smaller numbers, would people be okay going back to Killington this year?



## **AGENDA #4: Focus Groups on Employment**

### **#1 Why is having a job important?**

- To be able to save money
- To be able to go out and do things and meet people in the community
- To be productive, better to be busy than to be sitting around doing nothing
- Provides a sense of purpose and meaning
- Helps you learn skills to function in a real world
- Good feeling to get paid
- Get out and socialize
- Helps me make a living
- You need money to pay bills
- Learn new things
- Achieve your goals
- Not staying home and being bored
- Make money for vacation
- Get out of the house
- Make us feel like part of the community
- Same money for the conference
- Feel like getting something done
- Have the ability to choose what I want to do for work
- Building self-esteem
- Developing new skills
- Meeting new people
- Gives you money for fun things
- Supplements money from the government
- Gives me an opportunity to see how other people live and think
- Provides access into the world
- Experience diversity
- Develop confidence
- Create good work relationships
- A great opportunity to practice self-advocacy and network
- To make money and support yourself
- Independence
- Helps improve mental health

#2 Think about a staff person you know who was good at helping people find jobs. What kinds of things did she or he do? What made him or her so good at supporting people to find employment?

- My sister helped me. She researched to find it and got me connected to the people there. Those people helped me fill out an application and interview.
- Justine knew I would be good working at the VNA because of my relationship with my grandmother. She encouraged me to take it easy because I was used to one person and there was going to be many people to work with.
- They need to be good at assessing skills.
- I am good at cataloging and my employment associate got me jobs at the library and an auto parts store.
- They focus on positive attributes of each person.
- A good person helps find the right jobs and assists with how to deal with the stress of interviews.
- Teach skills in how to get and keep job
- Go to Voc Rehab and help with skills to get the right job
- Job searching – go to unemployment offices, newspapers, online
- Help us filling out applications
- Committed to helping us to find jobs
- Goes with us and supports us having a conversation about the job
- My coordinator, the best, she helps me get jobs, makes phone calls
- I've been at my job for 11 years. I need help getting rides to work and cash check
- Person was kind to me and accommodated my needs and was always there for me
- Staff helped with natural supports
- Staff made sure my job was set up and made sure I didn't have to worry about it
- Staff asked me what I wanted to do for a job to make a good match and listen to me
- Listen to me
- Agency employment team- helps people do resumes and go online and look for jobs
- Allie- wrote her own ISA for her career development
- The person would have to have a similar personality, ask what kind of job they want
- Effective supports listen to your interests and help you find a good match

- Herman worked at the Brandon Training school doing mail where he had a uniform and hat. Now he volunteers and is a self-advocate
- Self-employment (mom helped) having someone listen to your

interests and develop a job from that

- A support person that can encourage them and help them and help them become confident in their abilities

### #3 Think about a job coach you know who was great at helping you on the job. Make a list of what you would want and need them to do?

- Be low key, calm and respectful, someone who is aware of your progression with the job.
- Someone who knows how to step up and step back by letting me be independent but can assist when I can't do it all.
- Trust.
- Someone to ask for help from, know me and be patient, intellectual, intelligent, and reliable and practice confidentiality.
- Being there when we get our monthly review.
- Checking with your employers.
- Motivate us.
- Help with change over and department.
- Check in with us to see how we are doing on the jobs
- Encouragement
- Keep us to focus so we can do our jobs
- Communicating with our boss why we need time off.
- Helping find the right tool for the job
- Keep on track
- Transportation: XX
- Help with communication
- Brings me to work, get me to work on time. "I want to make a good impression at work".
- Natural supports – General Manager – help me if I need it.
- Help with task list/check list
- I need help to keep focused
- Job coach helped me do what I needed to do on job
- Help advocate for me if I can't accomplish the task
- Help me stay safe
- The job coach helps you talk to your employer with. "Not about you, without you".
- Look at person's strengths
- If the boss addresses the job, redirect the boss to the employee.

- Understand the way a person speaks.
- Correct in private
- Encourage me to keep on tasks even though I might feel anxious.
- A job coach should have high expectations
- Help you update your resume, encourage you to apply for a new job, advancement.
- Presume my intelligence, learn how to facilitate my typing – be organized and professional.

#### #4 What should they never do?

- Don't be on cell phone. "They should communicate with me".
- In my face – invade my space, come behind and poke me.
- Keep your hand off the person you're with unless they said its okay.
- Never touch you with without asking.
- Never bad mouth you or talk bad to you.
- Never disrespect.
- Never ignore me. Be kind.
- Never just walk away/disappear – let work know where you are.
- Be rude.
- Realize it's the other person's choice to choose what they want to be.
- Not be late
- Not break confidentiality
- They should never speak for you unless they ask
- Tell you what to do, correct you in public.
- Should not take over job.
- They should not do the job for you
- Should not act like the boss.
- Should not have negative or bad attitude toward consumer on job.
- Don't fight over job.
- Hurt our feelings.
- Tell us how to do our jobs.
- Talk to our employers without us being present.
- No talking on the phone or smoking while working with us.
- Ignoring our phone calls
- Be late picking us up.
- Don't leave us alone on the job.
- Don't do grocery shopping while working with us.
- Didn't give compliments, hollered at me a lot.



**AGENDA #5: Focus Groups on Health Care: Groups were asked to review the Healthcare Passport and give the GMSA**

**Healthcare project feedback about this tool.**

- Too long, too much information
- Doesn't ask all the right questions
- It is helpful for health care people to know you better as a person
- Hard but probably most people got through it
- "The passport is an important tool that will help me receive the best care possible." – Kris Medina
- Doesn't mention over the counter medicines
- People were really concerned about confidentiality – who gets this? Where does it end up?
- It doesn't seem to hit your overall health very well – are you tired a lot? What is your diet like?
- Is it detailed enough to give a new doctor your information?
- It would be helpful if the words are available as a Word Doc so you can type it up and print it at home
- I think this form is great