



GMSA Board Meeting

8/31/2015 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT



Officers (3): Randy Lizotte (president), Levi Gardner (Vice-President) Lori Jones (Secretary), Nicole Villemaire was absent.

Board Representatives (14): Kaiya Andrews, Joe Marshall, Craig Davis, Kasey Butler, Beverly Williams, Jeremiah Gerbasi, Beverly Williams, Raymond Gordon, Rachel Colby, Danielle Viau, Linda Monette, Erik Johnson, Tesha Thibodeau, Patti Grassette.

Self-Advocates: Lorna Merrill, Amy Guinard, Michelle Haberern, Samantha Parizo, Jeremy Chaim, Chantelle Frease, Diane Robinson, Brooke Merrill, Dan Davis, Robert Martin II, Josh Dumias, Adam Moztzierz, Tara Audet, Edwin Place, Samantha Shoram, Cy Trombley, Marilyn Shank, Debbie Dumars, Marjorie Burns, Jon Ingalls.

Allies: Nancy Randall, Tim Cota, April McCandless, Paul Tidyman, Tracy Robar, Mark Schroteter, Mary Ruffing, Brenden Lanon, Leigh Descoteaux, Edward Thorndike, Amy Anderson, James Godin, Danielle Cote, Deborah Turner, Linda Belial, Jason Chester, Sydnee Boyd, Colin Provencher, Lisa Thompson, Jim Rice, Paula Collins.

GMSA Staff: Skye Peebles, Karen Topper, Max Barrows, Nicole LeBlanc, Kris Medina.



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



Capitol Advocates Together (CAT): Will do a community service project in September. Our members will do the Prevent Child Abuse walkathon.



Our Drop in Center (Newport): Creating banners for Direct Support Professional Day.



Windsor Self-Advocates: Organizing a dance fundraiser to raise funds to go to 2016 Voices and Choices conference.

Advocates for Action: Self-advocates from our group were joined by



THINKING AND SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES

others to make flags sharing our stories of appreciation about support workers in preparation for the story garden GMSA is creating on the State House Lawn for Direct Support Professional Day. We are going to have a spaghetti and bingo event on the 25th of September to raise money for conferences.



BSAC: We have been visiting local churches trying to find a community group that will share space for our group's future events.



Champlain Voices: Planning October 5th event - legislator's lunch. The commissioner of DAIL is coming too because we invited her. We are making on flags for state house lawn.



GATSA: Several members will be co-presenting to shared living providers on the staff training day at the agency.

RAPS: No update.

Friends Helping Friends: Several members are completing applications to



do the VT Leadership Series. The group had a BBQ fundraiser with Mindy's Kitchen (a self-advocate who runs her own catering business). The group made about \$220 dollars after cost of food. We have a silent auction going on with donations from local businesses. We are figuring out about putting our silent auction online to get more bids.



Vermont Choices: Currently doing flags for the state house. Just sold calendars at a local fair.



Rockin' Advocates of Montpelier and Barre: These high school students have been on break all summer. They will be electing officers.



Next Step: We are working on a staff training for new employees who are hired through NCSS to teach them how to better serve the self-advocates.

Families First: Planning a trip to go to the state house up in Montpelier State house for direct support professional celebration. Jeremiah will be speaking at the state house. We have 4 people signed up to go to the state house.



Communication Alliance: Several members just got back from California where they presented workshops at a national conference highlighting great examples of including people who use supported typing.

Speak Up, Addison County and SAVY: Unfortunately, didn't hear...



AGENDA #2: Group Agreements:

Members went over group agreements.




AGENDA #3: GALA: Randy explained what the GALA is.

(A celebration and fundraiser that GMSA hosts). There have been silent auctions in the past. Handout was passed out that has the details about the GALA. This year it is also a fundraiser. It will be on Saturday



Nov 14th 6pm to 10pm at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier. The event includes a full dinner, cash bar, silent auction and a dance party. Also there will be a photo booth and some other fun activities. There are

speeches about self-advocacy and related topics. Nov 9th is the deadline to purchase the tickets. They cost 35\$ per person which includes the dinner. You can buy the tickets online or you can fill out the form passed out and mail it back to GMSA with a check. You will not receive ticket in the mail you will just get a confirmation and GMSA will check you in at the event.

We need our members to look for sponsors for the GALA or businesses that would donate a gift certificate to the silent auction. The sheet handed out explained what a business would get if they do sponsor the GALA (This sheet is also online if you need to print out extras or GMSA can mail you a stack) They are looking for new items or a wide appeal.



The dress code for the GALA is just what your best outfit or your favorite outfit. There will be a section on GMSA's website for the GALA where all relevant information will be posted.

The members then worked in small groups to brainstorm what local groups can do to help out with the GALA. The differences between a sponsor and a silent auction participant was explained.

The gala committee is going to start meeting at the beginning of the September. The first meeting is going to be a conference call.

Talked about Max being honored as a champion of change.



AGENDA #4: Voices and Choices

Reviewed a list of past conference themes. Worked in small groups to come up with a few new **theme ideas**:

- We're the Dream
- Step Up, Step Back
- Better Together
- Working Together to Create Change
- Self-Advocates...We're Different but We're All the Same
- Don't Stop Believing
- Super Power – Charge up for Change
- Choices for Change
- Sassy Advocates
- Self-Advocates with a dream
- We belong



AGENDA #5: Elections

Randy asked if anyone recalled what we talked about last meeting. They talked about elections coming up and nominations and how

to vote. Talked about the voting process (only board members or everybody). Everyone broke into their group to discuss the voting process (Everyone votes or only board members). There was overwhelming support to keep it as Everyone votes.



Randy then talked about how nominations work. You have to have been an active member of your group for at least a year. You do not need to be a board member to be nominated. You get one vote per officer.

People who are going to run for an officer position you need to come to the next meeting with your speech ready. You will be recorded and the speeches will be put up onto YouTube for others to see.

There was more discussion about the nomination process and how that works. It was decided that we would nominate people in September and they would give their speeches in October. Vote for two months and find out who wins in January.

Finally, there were questions about having alternates in case the board member cannot make it to the meetings. Members were asked to go back to their local groups and discuss how to handle this new idea.



AGENDA #6: Issues to discuss with new administrators at the state.

- 1. What GMSA is?** We are a self-advocacy group; An organization for individuals with disabilities; We speak up for ourselves and others; We are self-advocates that support other people; We promote positive views about disability; Self-advocates work together and support each other.

They become good friends who help each other out with different things. Working with peers is very helpful because they have been through similar life experiences; A strong group of people that share common goals and common challenges working together to increase quality of life.;

2. What are the top issues you are concerned

about? No more budget cuts; Employment; Place to live; Fear of losing services; Becoming independent; Funding for facilitated communication being cut; Is she planning anything new or changes; One-time funding;

She needs to hear about institutions in our past that mistreated individuals. These institutions can cause people to regress and not actually increase their quality of life.

