

## **Green Mountain Self-Advocates Board Meeting**

**9/28/2015 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm**

**Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT**

**Officers:** Levi Gardner, Randy Lizotte, Lori Jones.

**Board Members:** Kaiya Andrews, Raymond Gordon, Erik Johnson, Joel Marshall, Linda Monette, Danielle Viau, Heather Raymond, Beverly Williams, Patti Grassette, Craig Davis, Conor Cleveland.

**Self-Advocates:** Debby Demars, Marilyn Shank, Cristy Golec, George Tanner, Margerie Burns, Lorna Merrill, Marc Preman, Mike Tarr, Antoine Polgar, Mary LaFountain, Jeremy Chaim, Josh Dumais, Brook Merrill, Robert Martin II, Dan Davis, Kris Medina, Tracy Thresher, Nick Zechinelli.

**Allies:** Colin Provencher, Emily Anderson, Paula Collins, Skye Peebles, Tammy Maberry, April McCandless, Erin Rose, Amy Anderson, Paul Tidyman, Edward Thorndike, Tim Cota, Jim Rice, Pat Warner, Nancy Randal, Kyle Griggs, Brenda Lenon, Deborah Turner, Mark Schroeter, Tracy Robar, Melaine Banoura, Travis Bergeron, Brittney McAdams, Kim Earle, Donna Douglas, Linda Belvel, Emily Hall.

**GMSA Staff:** Skye Peebles, Karen Topper, Max Barrows.

### **Introductions and group update**

Max introduced himself and talked about human rights retreat he went to over the weekend with Migrant Justice, 350 VT, Interfaith Action and the VT Workers Center.

**CAT group:** Looking into fundraising ideas that aren't about selling stuff. They are also working on a video that is being made that talks about how self advocacy effected their lives.

**Newport Group:** Michael Tarr was their representing the group, filling in for Donna Corkins. The two allies from Newport were Pat Warner and Brenda. Recently the group participated in a scarecrow contest sponsored by the city of Newport. They did this as a way to get allies for the group and to get the word out about their group.

**Next Step:** They are doing training for new staff hired through the agency. They are presenting for a couple of hours as part of the orientation training.

**RAMB:** Our next meeting will take place October 29<sup>th</sup> at Hedding church in Barre. They will take place on the last Thursday of the month.

**Speak Up Middlebury:** They are going to have a Halloween party at the legion (still in the works). Got all the calendars out for scheduling.

**Vermont Choices:** New officers. Levi Gardner is President. Elisha is VP. Rosie is treasurer. Bernie is secretary. Erik Johnson continues as GMSA board member representing the group.

**GATSA:** They are continuing to meet twice a month. For fun they are planning a fall dance at the Morrisville VFW.

**BSAC:** group members are preparing to go to different schools for reading for inclusion program. They will read books about children with disabilities to grades kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Champlain Voices:** Beverly Williams reported they got a grant from the DD Council called “spreading the news”. Their members are writing articles for their agency’s website, GMSA newsletter and more. They are having a legislative lunch on October 5<sup>th</sup> and Commissioner Monica Hutt will attend. They asked and got their agency, CCS to sponsor the GMSA Gala.

**COPS:** They are having their elections soon based off of how the US does their presidential elections. Next Monday GMSA is doing a training on “more than just friends.”

**Communication Alliance:** Educating students through the learning collaborative – in fact they are talking to the group of students today and it is a pleasure. They are also working on putting together a self advocacy website.

**SAVY:** The group went to Maine together. Many of their members had never seen the ocean before. They are also doing some fundraising so they can go to Washington DC next year.

**Icebreaker: Get to know each other**

A get to know each other activity with everyone standing in lines and answering three questions to feel more comfortable with each other.

**Nominations for Board Officers:** Randy went over the roles of the 4 officer positions that are up for election. This meeting we called for nominations. Next meeting the candidates will give their speeches.

**Nominations for president:** Randy Lizotte and Kaiya Andrews

**Nominations for vice president:** Robert Martin II, Levi Gardner, Danielle Viau and Josh Dumais

**Secretary Nominations:** Lori Jones and Chrissy Golec

**Treasurer nominations:** Raymond Gordon

**GALA:** Skye went over what the GALA was and where it is. 35\$ for ticket. This helps pay for the GALA and you get dinner. Kaiya explained how you can get your tickets. You can do it by mail or do it online at the GMSA website. Randy talked about silent auction donations. He explained how to think about organization or person who you think might donate something (money or objects for silent auction) you then approach them and ask them to donate. Skye talked about when you're going to get donations you can take this opportunity to tell them about GMSA and who they are and what they do.

**Hot Seat activity:** Hot seat activity took place. Raymond Gordon was in the hot seat. Next month, someone else will be.

**GMSA Ally Discussion:** Randy introduced the idea of electing two allies to be the allies of the GMSA board. They would be on the committee and they would be able to vote.

Some guidelines for things these allies should bring to the board:

- Diversity is important.
- Different types of skills and talents that they can bring to the board.
- Legal knowledge, long term planning skills, Leadership skills, good communication skills. Good connections with the community.
- They would have to commit to 4 board meetings a year.

- Someone who would fight for disability rights.
- Needs to attend board related events.
- Strong skills in technology and media.

**They broke into groups to come up with a list of ideas for allies.**

**This is what they came up with:**

- Need to learn about GMSA or wants to learn about Self-Advocacy
- Good listener and hard worker.
- Willing to put time in.
- Open minded.
- Flexibility
- Social compatibility with current board members.
- Be a people person
- Must be present and participate.
- Genuine kind person
- They do not have to have a disability background if they are willing to learn.
- Someone who is willing to listen
- Able to give and follow directions
- Have them write why they want to be on the board and what they want to learn about self advocacy. (question that should be on the application)
- Legal knowledge
- Financial management
- Public Relations
- Fundraising
- Long term planning skills
- Leadership skills
- Good communication skills
- Good connections in the community
- Cares about self-advocacy
- Technology and media
- Trustworthy
- Respectful
- Someone who knows about internet/web knowledge
- "I think that the allies need to possess a high level of commitment to the self advocates on the board they must be present to actively participate and lastly be a genuinely kind person." – Kris Medina
- Can see other point of view
- They should apply
  - Write an essay
  - Tell us their Personal info
  - Talk about themselves and what they know about self-advocates
  - Pass a background check?
  - Reference

We should ask them to fill out an application to be on the board. They could meet with the president; they can come to a board meeting. The officers will get together to draft an application and bring it to the next board meeting for everyone to review.

**Alternate board members:** Randy started the conversation about having alternate board members. Like Subs. Some groups wanted to bring the question back to their groups and discuss.

Max brought up that at SABE they have alternate board members and it is helpful for their meetings. It was suggested that the alternate should not be a different person all the time. You need to assign one person to be alternate, not different people showing up every time. Board members and alternates need to have the training so that they can perform their duties.

Comments from group:

- We should go back and get some input from our local groups (lots of people said this)
- At SABE we have alternates. It is helpful.
- It is helpful to have an alternate just in case you can't make it.
- There needs to be one alternate for each group. It can't change all the time because we have trained people to be board members.

The board voted and decided to postpone the vote until October.