

GMSA Board Meeting
10/27/2014 ~ 9:30am to 12:30pm
Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT



38 Self-Advocates:

Officers (3): Randy Lizotte, Nicole Villemaire, Lori Jones.

Board Members (10): Erik Johnson, Danielle Viau, Dan Dunn, Linda Monette, James Paradis, Heather Raymond, Conor Cleveland, Dan Davis, Raymond Gordon, Patty Grassette,

Members (24): Jeremy Chaim, Levi Gardner, Margerie Burns, Lorna Marroll, Cy Trombley, Amy Guinard, Tiffany Martinez, Debbie Demars, Dareen Mason, Marilyn Shank, Amanda Bianchi, Barbara Abbott, Nick Zechinelli, Joel Marshall, Edwin Place, Patricia Gibbons, Adam Moztzierz, Barb Null, Steve Applebee, Abby Liward, Mike MacDonald, Lauren Tewhill, Alyssa Chrisdopher, Shawn Gorton,

GMSA Staff (5): Max Barrows, Hillary Clark, Nicole LeBlanc, Karen Topper and Skye Peebles

Allies (24): Emily Michaud, Jayne Weber, Stephanie Decesare, Sue Hawley, Patti Mack, Danielle Cote, Barbara Bruno, Stacy Steady, Rich Atkinson, Richard Young, Nancy Randall, Karen Schwartz, Linda Bellval, Tonja Mettfeldt, Leigh Descoteaux, Emily Germain, Tammy Maberry, Nicole Tallman, Jacqueline Beer, Heidi Lorenz, Josh Bertini, Stacey Steady, Maryellen Sudol and Danielle Cote.

Guests: Karen Schwartz, Steve Meutal, Mike Gruteke and Ann Stannard.



Group Updates

Friends Helping Friends



★ Group had a potluck last Thursday for their members.

★ 7 members and allies went to Oklahoma conference. 3 members helped to teach 2 different workshops.

Communication Alliance



★ Our group is working on a presentation project to educate students in local schools and direct support professionals. The focus is to spread the word about presuming competence.

Capitol Advocates Together



- ★ The group reflected on the positive heart-felt comments shared between members and their parents during a dinner they held for families
- ★ A new person joined the group a few months ago, and we welcomed back an old member of our group as well.

★ 3 people from CAT attended the SABE national conference and co-presented 4 different workshops.

Rockin' Advocates of Central Vermont - Members of this group attend high school at



U-32, Harwood, Williamstown, Spaulding

- ★ All members participated in the GMSA all-day Youth Summit.
- ★ They will be having a Halloween party and meeting this week.

Our Drop In Center (Newport)



- ★ The group created beautiful flags with stories about their relationships with their direct support staff. Many members participated in the celebration held at the state house where they shared their stories.

Next Step Self-Advocates



★ Presented a training of “Look Through Our Eyes” for Special Educators in Franklin and Grand Isle counties. They were special educators in high schools and it was really well received. We talked about transition from high school to adult services. Nicole Villemaire and Randy Lizotte talked about their jobs working for the agency NCSS. Heather talked about her experience with self-advocacy.

- ★ Working on getting a Thanksgiving Dinner together for our group on 11/21
- ★ We are having another movie night on 11/7
- ★ Randy, Nicole, Jana and Jennifer co-taught 3 different workshops at SABE national conference in Oklahoma.



GATSA ~ Getting Acquainted Through Self-Advocacy

- ★ Our group will be donating cookies to the local food shelf in Lamoille County.
- ★ Fundraising report: in November we are selling cutlery to raise money

for 2015 Voices and Choices. In August we sold over \$1000 of pizza and kept \$300. We also have coupon books for sale again soon.

★Regina from LCMH reviewed stress management techniques for our group to improve overall health and wellness.



Windsor County Self-Advocates

- ★James is on the new agency board for HCRS.
- ★Held elections for local officers

BSAC ~ Burlington Self-Advocacy Club



- ★Halloween Party this week
- ★Max did a workshop for the BSAC group about Knowing Yourself which teaches the group to dream about what they want in the future.



Vermont Choices

- ★Have a dance coming up this weekend at the VFW in Lyndonville.
- ★Members and allies traveled to Oklahoma City to participate in the SABA national self-advocacy conference.

Families First Peer Group



- ★Planning our annual Halloween dance
- ★Are committed to sending peer leaders to GMSA statewide meetings. They selected a member to represent them on the GMSA board of directors.



THINKING AND SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES

SAVY is doing a Halloween dance at the Morrisville VFW.

Advocacy in Action supported members to participate in the SABA national conference. This month they are having a Halloween dance this Wednesday.

Report Back on National Conference

Nicole LeBlanc was impressed with the 3 Pearce Brothers who spoke. They are siblings from Vermont. David has Down's Syndrome. Kevin has a TBI from

snowboarding. And their brother Adam is one of their caretakers. They made a documentary called the Crash Reel. The movie won an Emmy.” Max recommends the film very touching. The conference was a success. The dating game went well. People enjoyed 9 workshops. GMSA workshops: **Supporting LGBTQ People With Disabilities, Converting Sheltered Workshops, Dating Game, Dating Like A Pro** (Randy said this was very successful – taught with Nicole V and Jana), **Sex and Relationships – How Do I Figure That Out** (Lots of Audience Participation), **Our Lives Our Healthcare** (Nicole and Max taught this workshop with Clarissa Kripke, a doctor from California), **NEAT and OCSS workshop** (about using technology to connect groups so they can learn from each other).

At the conference there was a meeting of allies. They talked about good resources for self-advocacy groups. One woman from Wisconsin raised her hand and said that the GMSA website is the absolute best resource for self-advocacy information she has ever seen and suggested everyone else look at it for resources. The people who got DD Council Scholarships received a form that must fill out to get the money.

DD Council Satisfaction Survey

Karen Schwartz from **DD Council** passed out annual reports from VTDDC and read through the booklet. The **DD Council** gets money from the federal government. They use this money for grants. GMSA applied to do the work described in the grants. We have 2 contracts with the **DD Council**. They need to do a survey to see how well the money is being used. Topper talked about a couple of the main things that the funding helps GMSA do:



Pays for GMSA staffers to visit local groups and teach workshops.

The GMSA Youth Summit

Disability Awareness Presentations about what it is like to be a person with a disability to colleges, doctors, schools and other civic groups

Karen passed out a survey and we reviewed it. GMSA staff did not fill out the survey.

Voices and Choices Conference



The officers talked about it and didn't want the date to conflict with other organizations, such as Special Olympics. The 2015 conference dates are May 4 and 5. This is a Monday and Tuesday.

What is a theme? A theme is an idea that you come up with – it gives it the spirit of the event. For example, Halloween is a fall theme. The 2014 theme was our 20th year anniversary: “You’re Going to Hear Us Roar: Celebrating 20 Years of Self-Advocacy in Action.” Other themes from past conferences were: “Getting Rid of the R-Word”, “I’m Not Afraid to Take a Stand”, “No More Back in the Day”.

Ideas for the 2015 conference were:

- Getting Fired Up to Meet our Goals
- Shine Bright Like a Firework
- Living Boldly
- Everyone Getting Along and Meeting New Faces
- Jazz it up! 25 Years of the ADA and 40 years of Right to Education Act: milestones – accessibility, right to live the same life as everyone else;
- We’re Winners
- Getting Better Every day – Self-betterment
- Active in the Community – We’re Here
- Communication – ASL
- Advocacy and Take Back our Rights
- Stick with the Plan
- Nothing is Impossible
- Never Say Can’t
- Together We are Invincible
- United We Stand
- Line dancing, fast dancing, salsa dancing, square dancing, ballroom dancing, semi-formal dancing, sing-along with karaoke, fairness, fashion
- GMSA Got Talent
- Fun, Exploring, and Socializing
- We are Strong, We are all Human
- Different Needs but We are all the Same
- Breaking Barriers – Being Nice Together

Budget Forums



Presented by Nicole LeBlanc:

On October 28th, the Governor’s staff is holding a forum to get input about the budget. It will be from 6:00 to 8:00 on interactive television sites listed on the flyer. As you know last August there was a budget cut for Developmental Services when the state faced a shortfall. In the past few weeks, newspapers have reported that the budget for next year may include more cuts. These forums are important but there are rules. You can only talk for 3 minutes. And not everyone who shows up gets to speak. Having said that, we encourage people to tell the state why they need services. Thank you for letting your families know about this meeting.



Gala for GMSA

Skye gave update on Gala. The new date is 12/6 from 6:00 to 10:00 pm at the Montpelier Elks Club. A meeting to plan the event will happen by conference call. Skye explained the Silent Auction and Sponsorship Form. Handed out ticket sale forms, handout about gala, sponsorship letters. Tickets are \$35.



Voting



Next Tuesday is Election Day – November 4th

People talked about where you can go to vote.

You can pick up your ballot early to vote if you want.

Speaking of Voting... Small Group Activity:

We have quite a few new board members. We are making plans to have a retreat. But for today the officers want us to practice making a motion and voting.



We worked in small groups and used a handout to practice going through the steps of voting. They include:

- Making a motion
- Seconding the motion
- Discussion
- Voting or tabling the issue.

People came up with examples of things to vote on and practiced. Groups did role-plays of their examples and the whole group gave feedback. Everyone did a terrific job.

We had guest speakers from Orleans County Citizen Advocacy. They are a non-profit organization that brings people with developmental disabilities and unpaid citizen volunteers together for lifelong friendship. For each match, we find a local volunteer, called an “Advocate”, whom we introduce to a person with developmental disabilities, called the “Partner”. We provided ongoing support to their relationship. Over the years, we created and supported nearly 100 such matches. Many lasted for years. At present we have over 20 active matches.

The advocates are not paid. For example, Anne has been working with Michael for 29 years. She is a constant person in his life. They call this being partners. Michael and Anne are advocates and friends. They touch base with each other and know they are there for each other if needed.

The organizations has 5 board members and volunteers to help with the work. OCCA is currently looking for volunteers and board members. We are looking for younger board members. Especially people connected to social networking and social technology.

OCCA supports activities if people want to go do something like go to a baseball game or movie. This is like natural support. As the advocate, it is important to be available so if something comes up like an emergency, you are there to help out. For example, Michael needed a ramp to get into the local bank, so Anne went to talk about that. This motivated the Post Office to put up a ramp too. "This made it so I could get my own mail too instead of my parents."

Partners don't tell you what to do. They talk about things with you and let them percolate, like an old-fashioned coffee pot.



The Board meets once per month at the Newport High School. Mostly meet in person, but telephone is available sometimes. They would prefer people are on the board for 3 years. You can be reelected and serve a total of 6 years. But everything can change! We don't have to meet once per month!



NEXT GMSA BOARD MEETING: December 15, 2014 9:30-12:30 at Vermont Technical College in Langevin House.