



Green Mountain Self-Advocates Board Meeting
3/30/2015 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm
Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT



Officers: Randy Lizotte, Lori Jones, Levi Gardner, Nicole Villemaire.

GMSA Board Representatives: Dan Dunn, Erik Johnson, Heather Raymond, Kaiya Andrews, Raymond Gordon, Joel Marshall, Conor Cleveland, Danielle Viau, Jeremiah Gerbasi, Patti Grassette, Taylor Terry, Rachel Colby, James Paradis, Linda Monette.

Self-Advocates: Doreen Mason, Rosie Dumais, Josh Dumais, Debbie Demars, Lauren Tewhill, Tiffany Martinez, Michelle Greenberg, Cory Savage, Hillary Christian, Cy Trombley, Robert Martin III, Adam Mozdierz, Lona Merrill, April Brown, Daniel Davis, Nick Zechinelli.

Allies: Fletcher Dean, Karen Vigue, Emily MiChaud, Hannah Brown, Amy Anderson, Tammy Maberry, Paula Collins, Kamal Pradhan, Lisa Thompson, Greg Masterson, Linda Bellville, Emily Anderson, April McCandless, Richard Young, Jayne Weber, Paul Tidyman, Alicia Porter, Danielle Cote, Sarah Shirley-Eldred, Rich Atkinson.

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

Local Group Updates



Vermont Choices (Josh, Robert, Adam, Eric, Levi, Rosie, Paul)

- 20 + members spent the day meeting with their legislators at the VT State House
- Had a valentine's day dance
- Have lots of people going to the conference
- We had a fundraiser a few weeks ago to get money for conference
- Max visited our group and reviewed voting issues



Friends Helping Friends (Hilary, Rachel)

- We are selling homemade soup and dip as a fundraiser
- Our group had a strong showing at the state house for Disability Awareness Day. Members had appointments to meet with their legislators. One peer leader testified in the House Human Services Committee.



Capitol Advocates Together (Max, Hilary, Kaiya)

- Nominated people for awards for conference.
- Members have spent 2 days advocating at the State House and sharing information while greeting legislators at the GMSA display set up in the card room



Communication Alliance (Connor, Kris, April, Rich)

- We are working on putting together a panel presentation for two workshops at Voices and Choices Conference.
- Members met with legislators at the State House.



Next Step (Randy, Heather, Cory, Nicole, Jeremy, Amy)

- All this month we have been very busy. We had a raffle to go to the conference and raised more than \$600.
- We did a “Dating Like a Pro” workshop led by Nicole, Randy, Jana, and Syd. It was well received and everybody participated.
- Had our regular meeting and had a movie night – watched Mrs. Doubtfire
- We nominated an ally and self-advocate awards for conference.
- The group is excited for Max to do Person Centered Planning training this coming Friday.



RAMB (Molly, Joel, Daniel, Nick, Fletcher)

- February meeting had a Valentine’s theme; we wrote positive comments to 3 different peers on Valentines.
- Talked about conference and handed out registration packets



Advocates for Action (Lorna, Linda, Paula, Tammy)

- Getting more people to go to the conference
- Thinking about our next fundraiser
- Members traveled to Montpelier to meet with legislators.



Windsor County Self-Advocates (James)

- Members traveled to the VT State House to meet with their legislators



COPS (April)

- Members have been participating on the Statewide Peer Mentoring Committee

RAPS (Dan, Susan) Recorder missed update



GATSA (Debbie, Raymond, Cy, Lori, Lauren, Jen, Michelle, Patty, Danielle)

- Our we sold over \$2000 pizzas and profited over \$500
- We had elections - Debbie was elected new Vice President of the group
- We are planning to have a legislative breakfast
- Our last meeting was really good with strong participation from new members.
- One of our leaders, Raymond Gordon, was a featured youth speaker at the VT State House on Disability Awareness Day.



BSAC (Danielle, Jayne)

- Raised \$658 at valentine's day dance and gave half to food shelf and half to humane society
- At end of April we are doing a community service project by cleaning up a local park that we use for summer BBQs
- We voted on awards for conference
- We are working on two workshop proposals to present at Voices and Choices.
- We gave out 4 \$35 scholarships for conference



Champlain Voices (Taylor, Emily)

- We are working on our goal to understand how budget cuts affect us and how to advocate for budget cuts not to happen

- Taylor testified in Human Services Committee on Disability Awareness Day. Her testimony is on the homepage of Champlain Community Services.

Families First (Jeremiah, Greg)

- We just got done with Maple Fest this weekend. We sold magnets and signs.
- We do dances throughout the month.
- We have a big group coming to conference.
- Our group voted for advocate and ally of the year this year.
- We usually have big peer group activities throughout the week.



SAVY (Patty)

- We have some folks going to the conference
- We had appointments and met with our legislators on Disability Awareness Day.

Reviewed group agreements.



- Everyone read through the group agreements.
- We discussed the idea of “step up” (getting over being shy and learning to speak up more at meetings) and “step back” (giving other’s a chance to speak up if you’re already speaking up a lot).

Voices and Choices Updates



- Randy gave updates about conference.
 - Lori led group through discussion about Ally of the Year Award. The group talked about the difference between an ally and a self-advocate looking at examples from the Civil Rights movement, the LGBTQ rights movement, and the Women’s Liberation movement.
 - The Ally doesn’t have to be a person – it can also be a group.
 - GMSA staff mentioned that ARIS, DD Council, or DS Directors are good options.
1. Kris Medina nominated the DD Council – Eric Johnson seconded it (3 votes)
 2. Lori Jones nominated all the DS agency directors – Rachel Colby seconded it (10 votes)

3. Jeremiah nominated VT Legal Aid - ? seconded it (1 vote)
 4. Taylor Terry nominated VT Coalition for Disability Rights – Danielle seconded it. (1 vote)
 5. Nicole Villemaire nominated ARIS – Taylor Terry seconded it. (2 votes)
- The group took a break to discuss their choices with their board members.
 - The winner is DS Directors!
 - There are still DD Council scholarships available.
 - Still looking for Theresa Wood award nominees
 - Looked at all the store items. Group voted on ordering the BLUE style sweatshirt. Group voted on ordering the cheaper, “fandana” style bandana.

NEAT



- Hilary gave a NEAT project update.
- One requirement of the grant is to conduct a needs assessment annually. The NEAT project suggested 5 questions be answered for the needs assessment. We broke up into small groups and discussed answers to the questions. The answers will be used to guide our state plan as part of the NEAT project.

1. What is your local group good at?

- Fundraisers: XXX
- Working together: XX
- Helping others
- Speaking up
- Supporting each other
- Being respectful of others
- Empowering one another
- Celebrating one another’s differences and birthdays.
- Organizing events like dances: XXX
- Running meetings
- We get along well, we work as a team
- Teaching our members sign language
- Singing
- Art
- Fieldtrips

2. What are you Self-Advocates great at?

- Asking questions
- Saying different things in the group
- Voicing our opinions
- Voting on different things about GMSA



- Speaking up (for ourselves): XX
- Help out friends: XX
- Organizing meetings
- Plans and directions for Self-Advocacy
- Understanding others
- Open minded
- Advocate for others
- Running meetings
- Communication
- Planning events
- Dress well
- Not holding back
- Working toward common goals
- Teaching each other how to use technology

3. What does your local group need to be successful?

- More Allies: XX
- More people to attend: XXX
- More trainings from GMSA at local groups
- More friends
- Working together and making our own decisions for the group what we want to learn about and activities.
- How to fundraise successfully and new fun ideas
- Be successful in voting on certain things.
- Have more time in our meetings
- Better meetings
- Need to be listened to



4. What do you want to learn more about?

- Learn more about GMSA
- Legislators: How they make decisions.
- What people want to know about and address toward the budget
- How to speak up
- Budget cuts
- Funding and budget issues
- What the DD Council does and how to use their services
- More opportunity for people with disabilities, like services/jobs. Etc.
- How to get rid of the R word
- Playing guitar to songs like "We will rock you"
- Dating
- Everything + GMSA
- Cooking
- Disability rights worldwide

5. What do you need to support you to be a strong Self-Advocate?

- More services for people with less severe disabilities
- More services for people with disabilities
- Presuming competence
- Help others to speak out if they need help
- More encouragement to speak up for yourself
- Support for typing
- Leadership
- Speak out loud
- Working on finding solutions and making our own decisions with support and through good and hard times
- To learn the skills of self-advocacy and to practice them
- Transportation: XX
- Access to communication
- Be not so shy about speaking in front of a big crowd

Healthcare Project

- Skye gave an overview of the Healthcare project that GMSA is doing with the DD Council.
- GMSA is looking for 3 self-advocates for this planning grant.
- We handed out information about the project for people who are interested in applying.

Budget Updates

- Topper gave a budget update. Budget passed the House of Representatives.
- They put the cost of living increase into the Healthcare bill. Not sure what will end up happening.
 - Group talked about why it is important for the cost of living to increase for staff.
- 3 main points to think about:
 1. New money for new people is in budget that passed House
 2. Cost of living increase is up in the air
 3. There is still a budget cut for next year's budget. There is a \$1.9 million dollar cut proposed for next year. But there is still money left over from this year. The important thing is that when the year ends in June, we want to make sure that the money that is left over from DS this year gets carried over to next year's budget.
- Topper passed out the handouts about legislators and budget information.

Meeting ended at 12:30pm