



**Green Mountain Self-Advocates Board Meeting**  
**5/18/2015 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm**  
**Vermont Technical College, Randolph, VT**

**NEXT Meeting is June 29<sup>th</sup> 9:30 to 12:30 at Vermont Technical College**



**Officers:** Levi Gardner (vice-president) Nicole Villemaire (treasurer)

**Board Members:** Kaiya Andrews, Joel Marshall, Erik Johnson, James Paradis, Linda Monette, Patty Grassette, Taylor Terry, Heather Raymond.

**Self-Advocates:** Hillary Christian, Molly White, Daniel, Nick Zechinelli, Lorna Merrill, Jeremy Chaim, Cory Savage, Amanda Bianchi,

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

**Allies:** Fletcher Dean, Amy Anderson, Emily Anderson, Paula Collins, Rich Atkinson, Barbara Bruno, Pam Lucero, Linda Belval, Jason Chester.



**GROUP UPDATES**

**CAT:** Capitol Advocates Together (Max, Nicole, Kaiya, Hillary)

- Max has been speaking at lots of meetings all over the place.
- Talking about doing community service/involvement (maybe Zoe's race and Humane Society)
- Just finished our group project – we videotaped everyone in our group talking about what self-advocacy means to you.
- Stirling is going to edit it and put it up on social media.
- Making plans to march in the Montpelier 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. We will make and carry signs about including people with disabilities in our towns.
- Working on a fundraiser – selling certificates from Simply Subs



### **RAMB: Rockin' Advocates** (Daniel, Joel, Molly, Nick)

- we have a picnic coming up soon at Playground 2000
- Everyone was excited to attend the conference; 9 of our members co-presented 2 workshops, one on using theater games to strengthen self-advocacy and another workshop about dressing for success.
- Before the conference our members watched the dance instruction video made and posted by GMSA on YouTube. We were able to learn some dance steps to get ready to be in the flash mob at the conference.
- We participated in a workshop where we learned about people who are turning 22 and leaving school this year
- we wish you all a nice summer and we will be back this fall when school starts up again



### **Vermont Choices** (Eric, Levi)

- our members helped out on VT Green-Up Day
- We had a dance and we are working on a calendar for our group. One of our members helped to teach a workshop at the Voices and Choices conference.



### **Advocates for Action** (James, Linda, Lorna)

- Our members enjoyed the conference. We were glad to volunteer and assist with the art workshops.



### **Friends Helping Friends** (Rachel)

- we had a fundraiser where we sold soup
- 4 of our members taught 2 workshops at the conference



### **SAVY: Strong Advocacy Voices and You** (Patty)

- just finished a fundraiser and had a BBQ



- **Champlain Voices** (Taylor)

- our group wrote letters to Senators Snelling and Lyons with our concerns about the budget cuts – we are going to invite them to our agency

- we loved conference; Taylor got SA of the year award; Our director was the Ally of the year
- Our group members volunteered on Green Up day.
- June 22<sup>nd</sup> we are having a fun day
- Taylor is leaving Champlain Voices on June 1<sup>st</sup> to go back to St. Albans



- **Next Step Self-Advocates of St Albans** (Jeremy, Nicole, Heather, Amanda, Cory)

- We all enjoyed the conference and learned lots. Two of our members taught a workshop about Love and Marriage
- Nicole helped present the awards
- Working on scheduling movie nights
- Max and Topper came to our meeting did the second round of the ISA training and that went really well.
- May 29<sup>th</sup> we are having a Therapeutic Options training: Part 2

### **What is an ISA? How Can GMSA Do These Trainings for You?**

- it is like a contract between you and your agency
- ISA means Individual Support Agreement
- It is the plan you put together when you get developmental services to figure out how you are going to spend your time.

- We have some person-centered planning tools at GMSA to help you be more a part of your ISA. A one page profile is one of the tools. Another form is called Important to and Important for. This helps match who you are with the support staff you are working with.

## **GROUP AGREEMENTS**

 The board reviewed the group agreements. Someone explained Step Up and Step Back.



## **VOICES AND CHOICES CONFERENCE FEEDBACK**

Everyone worked in small groups to review the questions on the form and to answer the questions, GMSA staff will meet with Sheraton to give them feedback and to find out possible dates for next year's conference.



### **1. Let's start with talking about the hotel:**

**a. How was checking into your rooms?** Good; Better than last time; Rooms were ready on time; Hotel staff were available and helped people find their rooms.

**b. How was the food?** Some people who ordered special meals did NOT ask for them; those who did found the staff very helpful; Many said the food was excellent; some would prefer a hot lunch; there were no long lines.

**c. How was the staff?** Good; nice, sweet, easy to interact with; better than last time.

**d. Do you have any suggestions for the hotel on what they could do better?** No problems we can think of; they did a good job.



**2. Give us feedback on registration?** Need better information sent out ahead of time about where, when, etc. registration is, where to get dropped off. (We emailed everyone who gave us an email address – next time put on the registration



form how they will get details.) Good for high school students, please email registration home. Arrival at hotel was fine; plenty of great staff. Well as usual, Sent it home to parent

3. **What about the program, do you have any suggestions on how we could make it better?** Good, unfortunately the people who asked for large print did not ask for the large print programs when they registered; nice colorful program – great job!

4. **Give us feedback on Monday afternoon workshop**

a. Talent show was great!

b. Some said the Flash mob moves were easy and fun to participate in and others said it was too hard and not broken down in easy to learn steps.

c. Maybe native American drumming in the future

d. Art project was fun and excellent

5. **Any comments about the DJ?** Some people liked him and others thought his music was too dated and he did not play current hits, He was cheaper and therefore some said bring him back, Ask him to play more country music and rock n' roll.



6. **We would like to send a thank you letter to Chaqueta the keynote. Do you have any feed about her speech?** Excellent, Great – do more call outs, I like the quote “I’m alive and I feel good”, She was a little hard to understand. She spoke on quite a few themes and it was hard to process what she said especially because of her Southern Accent, Very impressed with her message to talk to people in power, she sure was great.

7. **We had quite a few new workshops. Any comments? What workshop did you enjoy and why?** We did a great workshop “Dress to impress.” It was a great experience, my first time to present, I was nervous. Liked the Dating game, Learning how to have a relationship; the questions were both easy and hard, I think everybody loved the ABLE Act presentation, it was great and I need it to be more interactive.

8. **What was your favorite part of the conference?** Seeing friends (XXXX, Learning and doing different workshops (XX), having fun, the dance (XX), new art projects, Watching Lindsey do the flash mob.



9. **Any other suggestions?** Going back to Thursday/Friday, Go back to the Sheraton, they got the memo regarding customer service, second to none, treating us with, How about the African drumming, Have someone greet everyone at the conference, Better signs to registration, Need better directions to workshops



### **HEALTHCARE FOCUS GROUP OPPORTUNITIES**

We gave the board information about the upcoming focus groups about healthcare

### **SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING PRESENTATION**

- Nicole gave a presentation about supported decision making and Jenny Hatch
- It would be helpful to show the board an example of how to support someone

### **ABLE ACT PRESENTATION**

- Nicole gave a presentation on the new ABLE Act
- The group broke into small groups to come up with some questions about the ABLE Act.
- Questions about ABLE Act from small groups:
  - o How can you start this account with your bank?
  - o How do you know if you qualify for something like this?
  - o How does this affect my SSI?
  - o What can you spend this money on?
  - o Can you have this account and your other bank account at the same time?
  - o Does this affect my waiver services? Or this in addition to my waiver services?
  - o Is it available at every bank?



## **BUDGET UPDATES**

- Nicole and Topper gave an update on the budget
- Budget cut is not happening until November: They are short \$1.9 million for next year. But they might have saved enough money this year to not need the cut. They are waiting to find out.
- Wait list is not happening at this point
- The Medicaid rate increase is happening but is not as big as we had hoped for.

## **NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

- SABE has always been able to recruit a state or a group of states to work together to host a national conference every 2 years since 1990
- At this point, no one has offered to host a national SABE conference in 2016
- Labor Day Weekend 2017 – Rhode Island and GMSA would co-host – would take place in Rhode Island. Rhode Island and VT would be the main organizers and the other states would help out. We need partners who are movers and shakers