Hello, my name is Kris Medina and I am a self-advocate! Thank-you for joining me at the first Annual GMSA Youth Summit
Typing is my voice and has been since I was very young. Living my life socializing in a much different way than the rest of my peers had its challenges. Typing opened peoples understanding of who I was, and opened many doors to new opportunities.
Today I want to talk to you all about what self-advocacy means in our own lives, and how it affects our community as a whole. When people speak up, they are creating a much richer lifestyle for themselves.
State your wants, dreams, and desires. State it with conviction, but wrap it with a layer of softness. What that means to me is, to advocate with a balance of respectful assertiveness.
It is imperative to reach out to connect with others. To know that your connection builds a bridge, a bond that can form huge change. It wasn't until I was introduced to Tracy Thresher, that I knew how vital it is to form relationships with people that share the same struggles, that share the same mission.
Don’t just sit there and let people unfold your destiny, you take the wheel and control the direction in which your life travels.
So how does one do that? Our minds may be overwhelmed with such massive action, but all it really is, is one step at a time.
1. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT AND NEED IN YOUR OWN LIFE! What dreams do you possess? Would you like to someday live alone or go to college? Talk about it! Speak your voice! It starts with you!
Each and every one of us needs help at some point in our lives. Never be afraid to seek accommodations. Accommodations are necessary to ALL people! For example, some people speak, or use a pen and paper, but I need a device to type out my in-depth thoughts.
3. WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU? Reach out! There are people and organizations in your community that can facilitate you to take action towards your goals!
4. LEARN YOUR RIGHTS!
When you have a disability, sometimes people say that we do not have the same rights. This is called discrimination, and it is against the law. You have a responsibility to educate yourself so that you get the same accommodations that are rightfully yours.
I quite often see people with disabilities standing more in the shadows, not knowing how to step into the light.
Confidence is key to moving past your barriers. If you believe in yourself, confidence will naturally follow. Walking these roads with a strong set of beliefs and attention to your dreams can lead you to many splendid places.
Of course there are hurdles along the way, but that is inevitable when creating change. To soar you must not be afraid to fly.
Rally for each other! Support each other to build volume in this historical disability rights movement!
Talk to your peers, taking steps into the world of independence. Stepping peacefully and methodically towards a life that is open. One that is open to opportunity and possibility!
YOU ARE POWERFUL!!! Each and everyone of you hold your uniquely designed key! Are you the keeper of that key? Do you know which way it turns to unlock opportunity? Do you know that YOU ARE ALL CHAMPIONS!!!!
If you can relate, let’s hear that strong voice of yours!!! Are you all with me?