

Allies in Self Advocacy

CONNECTICUT



Self Advocacy in Connecticut

- Self Advocate Coordinators
- CT KASA
- CT Youth Leadership Project
- People First of CT

DDS Self Advocate Coordinators

- There are 10 Self Advocate Coordinators.
- Each has one to three self advocate groups they support.
- All the groups provide different topics and activities.



Roles of the Self Advocate Coordinators

- Promote Self Advocacy
- Increase consumer involvement
- Develop leadership skills
- Participate in Regional and State Activities
- Spread the Word!



Self Advocate Coordinator Program: Financial Resources



The Self Advocate Coordinators are entirely funded and supported through the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services.

CT KASA (Kids As Self Advocates)

- Part of a youth led national organization with a chapter in Connecticut
- Develops leadership skills in youth and young adults with disabilities ages 14-24



- Holds meetings with speakers on topics that the youth identify



CT KASA

Organizational Structure

- Adult Allies support the youth led organization.
- Two paid youth leaders who organize monthly meetings.

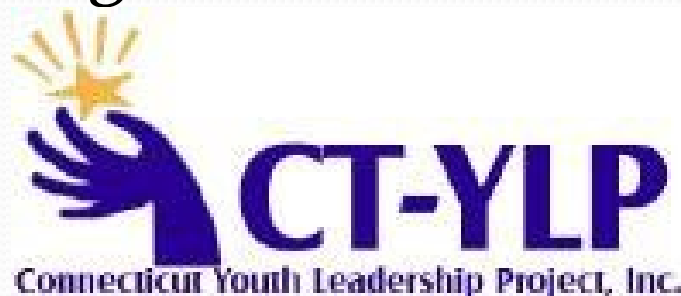
Resources and Supports for CT KASA

- The UCEDD provides staff support, office and meeting space.
- Funding from the CT Department of Public Health, the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Office of Protection and Advocacy, the Centers for Independent Living and CTYLP
- Technical support from National KASA
- Volunteers



Connecticut Youth Leadership Project

- A youth leadership training program
- The focus is on leadership development through a week long training each summer.
- Youth develop personal leadership plans.
- Delegates are chosen through a statewide competition among students with disabilities.



CTYLP Resources and Support

- Private donations from foundations, business and individuals
- **CT State Independent Living Council**
- Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)
- **CT Department of Social Services – Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS)**
- CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- **CT Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education**
- State Rehabilitation Council – BESB
- **State Rehabilitation Council – BRS**
- UConn Center for Students with Disabilities

People First of CT

- A statewide self advocacy organization
- Promotes individual self advocacy skills
- Advocates on behalf of all people who have disabilities



People First Goals

- ✓ Close Southbury Training School
- ✓ Provide all people with meaningful jobs in the community
- ✓ Expand self determination
- ✓ Increase community living opportunities
- ✓ Treat all people, regardless of ability or disability, with dignity and respect



People First of CT - Resources



- ☛ The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities supports the advisor's salary and operating expenses.
- ☛ ARC CT provides advisor support.
- ☛ DDS provides funding for an annual conference.
- ☛ The ARC of Meriden Wallingford provides meeting space.

Challenges and Strategies

Challenges

- TRANSPORTATION TO MEETINGS!!
- Don't remember when or where the meetings are held
- Changing leadership
- Support staff schedules limit the attendance of members

Strategies

- Offer transportation and other supports
- Hold meetings at the same time, same location
- Identify different leaders with different skills
- Work with support staff on scheduling for regular meetings

Challenges and Strategies (cont.)

Challenges

- Keeping meetings interesting for groups with different interests and skills
- Funding is inadequate and not consistent.
- Sometimes facilitators take over the self advocate meetings.

Strategies

- Use FAB (Fun, Advocacy, Brainpower) to offer new and challenging skills while still having fun.
- Develop partnerships among funding streams
- Support self advocate leaders to take real control and train facilitators to give back control to the self advocates

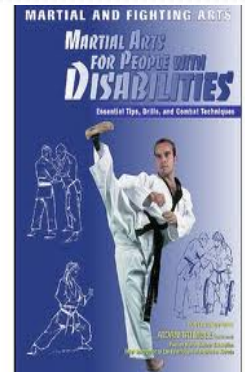
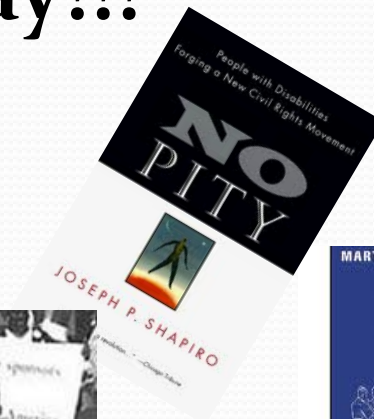
Accomplishments

- 👍 The self advocates create their own agendas and lead their own meetings.
- 👍 Self Advocates know that they are capable of making their voices heard and they are using their voices.
- 👍 Self Advocate Coordinators shape policies and programs in the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Goals and Dreams



Support all individuals to be effective advocates for themselves, know and understand their rights, and get real work for real pay!!!



CT State Team Members

Name	Organization
Cathy Adamczyk	Personal Assistant and Team Leader CT Council on Developmental Disabilities
Michael Adamczyk	CT KASA, Team Leader
Molly Cole	CT Council on Developmental Disabilities
David King	CT Council on Developmental Disabilities
Zuleika Martinez	CT Council on Developmental Disabilities
Beth Aura Miller	Self Advocate Coordinator Program, Department of Developmental Services
Jossie Torres	Self Advocate Coordinator, Department of Developmental Services
Gretchen Knauff	Assistant Director, Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Laura Maloney-Hastillo	People First of CT
Chad Sinanian	People First of CT
Mary Beth Bruder	University of CT AJ Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Tierney Giannotti	University of CT AJ Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities