

SELF ADVOCACY NATION

By Self Advocates Becoming Empowered

www.sabeusa.org

January 2008



What's Hot Across the Country?

SABE is your national self-advocacy organization. Self advocates are people with disabilities who speak up for themselves.

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Happy New Year to all from Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)! This bulletin covers what we accomplished throughout the nation in 2007 and provides an outlook of issues and activities coming up in 2008. There are many opportunities this coming year for experienced and new self-advocates to be a part of important change that will improve the lives of all people with disabilities throughout the country. Opportunities to get excited about include: 1) The Developmental Disabilities Act might be up for a vote in Congress and we can work to include Self-Advocacy activities as a stronger part in the law this time; 2) This year in November we will elect a new President of the United States, so another way we can make change is to **VOTE and make sure you are registered to vote!**; and 3) Get ready for the 2008 SABE National Conference by working with local and state chapters to raise money to send as many people from your state as you can. We can do anything if we all get active and work together to make the United States inclusive for all people with all abilities! Inside you will read about amazing things happening in almost every state in the nation. Let's make 2008 a BIG year for self-advocacy!



Save the Dates!

2008 Disability Policy Seminar

March 2 - March 4, 2008

Location: Washington, DC

2008 SABE National Conference

September 3-7, 2008

Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SABE CHAIR



Julie Petty, Chair

Happy New Year from Self Advocates Becoming Empowered! As the Chairperson of SABE, I have to tell you we have been busy! Self advocates all over the nation are taking charge and telling people what they want and need to live a full life. After I became chairperson, we had our first board meeting in Vermont in September 2006. Green Mountain Self Advocates were great hosts! At this meeting, we revisited the goals of SABE and voted on new goals for the organization. You can see these new goals on Page 4. I would hope statewide organizations will look at these goals and see if there was any issue you could work on along with SABE. We really need to come together as a nation of self advocates and work together.

In January, 2007, we had a board meeting at the People First of Alabama State Conference. It was nice to have our meeting, visit with all the self advocates in Alabama and talk to them about other groups around the nation. Bryon Murray of Utah, a SABE board member, gave the keynote presentation and did a great job! At this meeting one of the topics of discussion was a young girl from Seattle known as Ashley X. who was born with severe disabilities and in order to take care of her, her parents thought it would be easier if she had an operation to keep Ashley small so she would not grow, therefore easier to take care of. SABE came out with an action alert and we taped a testimony for YouTube. Another important issue discussed at the January meeting: the reauthorization of the Developmental Disabilities Act. SABE along with our allies are trying to get Self-Advocacy Information and Training Centers (SATICs) language included in the reauthorized version of the DD Act. We want the DD Act to be rewritten to authorize programs for self advocacy efforts.

On March 27th, 2007 I received an email from the president of the American Association of People with Disabilities. He wanted to submit questions to Democratic and Republican primary candidates on behalf of AAPD, ADAPT, NCIL and SABE. SABE was able to review the questions before we agreed to sign on. To view the responses to these questions please go to SABE's website, www.sabeusa.org.

In April, SABE went to St. Louis to have our board meeting and also to participate in the People First of Missouri State Conference. Some of the SABE board members conducted workshops. Tia Nelis was one of the keynotes for the conference.

In July, 2007, we decided to go to Indianapolis to check out where we were going to have the national conference. Self advocates of Indiana have a lot of support from their state department and other DD organizations. The hotel is very nice and accessible. My favorite part is the Starbucks at the hotel! Karen Flippo, the director of the National Association of DD Councils (NACDD) came to our meeting in Indianapolis to discuss the state of the DD Act and the support we have from the NACDD. We joined the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (www.c-c-d.org) in September.

In November, we met in Little Rock, Arkansas. We continued DD Act discussions and expect it will come up in Congress in early 2008 (but stay tuned because this date changes a lot!). We need states to always be talking to their legislators about the DD Act to get this passed and to get it passed with Self-Advocacy Information and Training Centers in it. We have a fight on our hands! Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) filed a bill for VOR (Voices of the Retarded) that would remove funding from the Protection and Advocacy organizations because they have the power to investigate institutions for people with DD, and to do what they can to fix it if they find a violation. SABE wrote a letter to Senator Frank to oppose this bill and has signed on to other letters with other DD organizations. I hope you all have a Happy New Year! See you in Indy in September for our National Conference!



CROSS-DISABILITY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FORUM



*Julie Petty, Ted Kennedy Jr., Chester Finn,
Max Barrows*

More than 600 self-advocates, their families, supporters and friends attended the first-ever cross-disability presidential candidate forum in New Hampshire on November 3rd, 2007. SABE was one of twenty national disability organizations that sponsored the forum. Many self-advocates from New Hampshire, Connecticut, Vermont and New York attended. Julie Petty and Chester Finn represented SABE.

Presidential candidates Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Joe Biden, Senator Chris Dodd, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, and Congressman Mike Gravel all came in person to share their positions on a variety of disability issues. Senator

Edwards sent his staff that deals with disability issues to speak for him and Senator McCain called in and gave his speech over the phone.

It is very important self-advocates meet and talk to their presidential candidates if possible to share your personal experience and let them know people with disabilities vote!

SABE would like to thank AAPD and Granite State Independent Living for all their hard work putting the forum together.

Go to the SABE website www.sabeusa.org to read about what the candidates think about disability issues.



Senator Hillary Clinton & Julie Petty

A banner for SABE 2008 Indianapolis. The background is dark blue with yellow stars. The text reads: "SEPTEMBER 4-7", "SABE 2008" (with flames on either side), "Indianapolis" (in script), and "REV UP YOUR ENGINES FOR INDIANAPOLIS— SELF ADVOCACY'S GOT THE FEVER" (in yellow block letters).

Rev up your engines for Indiana and join Self Advocates Becoming Empowered for the 2008 National Conference. The program committee has been busy at work planning great speakers, breakout sessions and lots of fun. If you've never been to a national self advocacy conference you need to come to Indianapolis. At the conference, SABE will be electing regional representatives and new national officers. At the national conference you will get to meet self advocates from all over the nation working on the same issues. This is a great time to share your ideas and to learn other ideas on how to make system change. A conference brochure with detailed information will be mailed out soon and check www.sabe2008.com for updates. See you in Indy!



2008 SABE GOALS



IDEA!!! State and Local Self-Advocacy Organizations can share these goals with your members and get ideas for activities and your own goals! Let us know what you are working on by e-mailing SABEnation@gmail.com . Read SABE's goals for 2008 below:

- 1. Eliminate institutions:** through Money Follows the Person, mentorships by self-advocacy organizations to individuals to assist in choosing the support they need: Close institutions; No more group homes; People with disabilities should be able to live in the community with the supports that they need.
- 2. SABE will support affordable and accessible housing for all people in the community:** Opportunities for home ownership; Reference guide and website for accessible housing; Accessible and affordable housing in the community so that people can live in the community with control over their lives.
- 3. National healthcare for all people:** Emergency preparedness for people with all kinds of disabilities; People with disabilities need to be able to afford the meds they need without creating a hardship on the person.
- 4. Equal employment opportunities for equal pay for all people:** Close Sheltered Workshops; Educate self-advocates on employment and benefits and Medicaid; SABE will work with the Department of Labor to develop a model for national internships; Training to get better jobs; Supports to start our own business; Improve communication attitudes with the Dept. of Labor and Vocational Rehabilitation and other agencies that affect people with disabilities; Work with the Dept. of Labor create an employment website like the Medicaid Reference desk; State jobs for people with disabilities.
- 5. People with disabilities will have self-advocacy at all stages of their lives with funding to support state, local and national self-advocacy organizations:** Educate students about self-advocacy, self-determination and transition; National Office for SABE; Give technical assistance to strengthen state self-advocacy groups; Self-advocacy run by the people with disabilities not others; Support self-advocacy groups around the world; SABE hiring a staff person; Lobbyist for SABE; Connecting self-advocacy groups at the local, state and national levels to work together; SABE communicate and go to all state self-advocacy organizations in the US; People allowed to speak without feeling scared that they will be punished; People can reach their dreams; Partner with states to pilot things that work; Put together self-advocate training teams to help states organize; Work closer with Protection and Advocacy representatives and lawyers; Get youth involved in leadership and educated about the National Disability Movement.

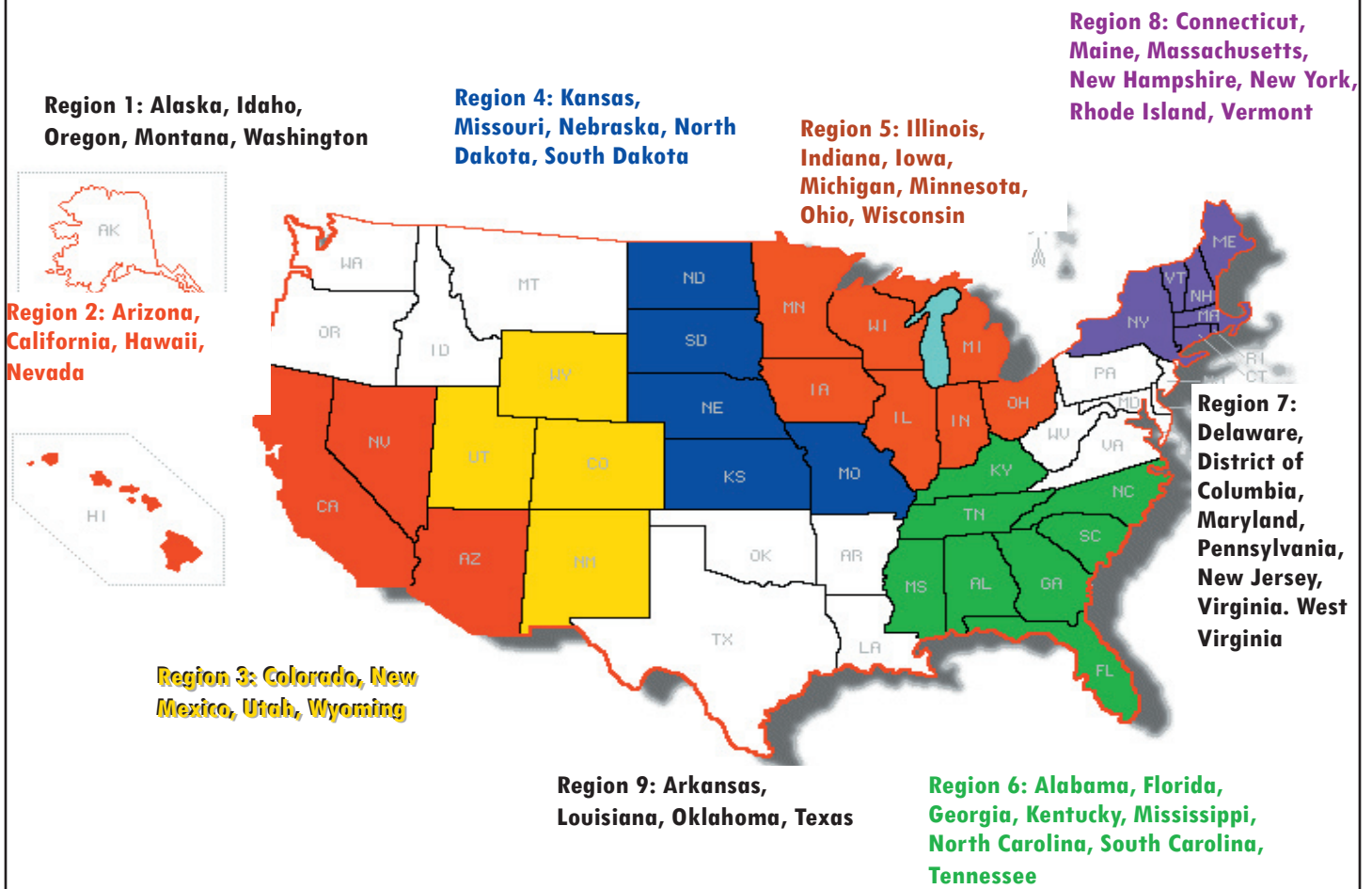


2008 SABE GOALS

- 6. SABE will educate people with and without disabilities on the options, choices and alternatives to guardianship so that full guardianship is not an option whenever possible:** Educate courts and judges on alternatives to guardianship; People with and without disabilities should learn more about alternatives to guardianship.
- 7. Relationships:** People with disabilities should have control over their own relationships (friends, family, dating, marriage, and being parents): People receive sexuality education.
- 8. SABE will be a political power house to work on legislation that effects people with disabilities lives:** Educate national press, Hollywood on People First language – no more “R” word – change the name; Equal representation of self-advocates on Medicaid state boards; SABE presents at national governors and mayors conference on financial freedom, People First language, housing and accessible communication; Self-advocates will lead policy change; Lawmakers will recognize SABE and we will support their campaigns and educate them on our issues; More people at the table when they are making decisions about our lives; Control over our money; Becoming the 4th leg of the triad in each state; SABE will continue to promote a public awareness campaign that promotes People First language in all forms of the media.
- 9. SABE will advocate for individualized services for all people with disabilities:** More choices in the community; We have self-determination and self-direction in each state; Direct our own lives through control of our services and supports; Money Follows the Person; Be in charge of their own waiver; SABE will support increased funding for community living; Attendant services; Better pay for staff.
- 10. SABE will support flexible and available accessible transportation (airlines, trains, buses) for all people in the community across the nation:** National transportation reference guide; SABE will work on transportation at the federal level with the Department of Transportation; Increased funding for transportation for persons with disabilities.
- 11. SABE will educate people – all people - about disability issues that are important in their lives:** Promote equal civil rights for people with disabilities by educating people with and without disabilities; Learn about rights and responsibilities and stick to them; SABE will work on all voting accessibility issues and getting the word out about how important it is to vote by having a voting campaign on a national level; All kinds of training on making own choices; Leadership training for advanced and beginners; We need the police to work with people with disabilities so they can have a voice and awareness; People are safe from abuse; Build strong and respectful partnerships on local, state, national and international levels; Work as a team with other disability groups; Partnership with providers to control our services; Education for landlords, employers and police and others so they understand what people with disabilities are really about.



What Region Are You In?



WHO ARE YOUR CURRENT REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES?

Reminder: Have you or other leaders in your state ever wanted to serve on the National Board? SABE Board Regional Representative Elections will be held at the 2008 SABE National Conference in Indianapolis in September!

Region 1: Gayle Gardner (Oregon)
Michael Rogers (Washington)

Region 5: Tia Nelis (Illinois)
Betty Williams (Indiana)

Region 2: Monica Cooper (Arizona)
Ryan Duncanwood (California)

Region 6: Kenny Stallings (North Carolina)
Bernard Baker (Georgia)

Region 3: Ben Borrell (Colorado)
Byron Murray (Utah)

Region 7: Victor Robinson (Washington, DC)
Bernie King (New Jersey)

Region 4: Tracy Southard (Missouri)
Brad Linnenkamp (Kansas)

Region 8: Chester Finn (New York)
Chad Sinanian (Connecticut)

Region 9: Ricky Broussard (Texas)
Julie Petty (Arkansas)



REGIONAL REPORTS



IDEA!!! Send your Regional Representative news from your state and local chapters so we can share it with the rest of the country! To connect with them send an e-mail to SABEnation@gmail.com

Region One (Not Included: Idaho, Montana)

WASHINGTON STATE: The big news from Washington State is Mike Rogers is the new SABE board representative. Washington State just hosted the National TASH Conference in Seattle, quite a few self-advocates attended.

OREGON: There is a lot going on in Oregon. At Self Advocates As Leaders (SAAL) the board of directors is working on developing SAAL's bylaws and applying to become a 501(c)(3). Our Outreach & Training Committee is doing training all over the state of Oregon. Our biggest trainings are Self Advocacy 101, Violence Awareness, and Telling Your Story. Last year we trained over 300 different people and we are trying to reach even more people this year. Our Public Policy Committee is training people to advocate at the Oregon legislature and tracking bills that are important to us. We sponsored a Respectful Language bill that was signed by the Governor two years ago. Our Editorial Board is working hard to get SAAL publications out to people in Oregon and all around the world. We publish the People 1st Connection Newsletter, and we have a website at www.asksaal.org.

ALASKA: People First of Fairbanks has a small group who experience a developmental disability. We have an executive board, which plans activities. We are trying to work on membership and fundraisers. The only funding we have is what we raise from fundraisers and donations. One of our artists created a t-shirt design and we had t-shirts made. Some of our members are involved with Key Campaign- an Alaskan non-profit advocacy group, which focuses on educating our state legislature about the needs of folks who experience developmental disabilities and was instrumental in getting more funding to get people pulled off of our waitlist for services. We get a lot of support from Fairbanks Resource Agency. We are working on getting space for an office and setting up our computers.

Region Two (Not Included: Hawaii, Nevada)

ARIZONA: The Self Advocacy Coalition of Arizona is doing the paperwork to receive their 501(c)(3), and become nonprofit organization within the next two years. We support member groups in helping to plan events. At the present time, self advocates are interviewing to be a new coordinator. We elected new officers in November and had a Holiday party in December. People First is working on a National Service Grant that deals with Inclusion. We assist individuals with filling out the applications. We also assist with matching talents and interests with work related job skills. Two independent living centers and The Division of Developmental Disabilities are offering Self Advocacy and Self Determination classes.

CALIFORNIA: People First of California has 13 regions which has many chapters that covers the entire state of California. In 2007 People First of California hired Joe Meadours as their first Executive Director with the support from a grant by the DD Council. PFCA has offices in both Northern and Southern California. Annually PFCA has a statewide conference in which over 1,000 self advocates attend each year to learn and gain knowledge on how to take control of their own lives and make their dreams and wishes come true. PFCA is a resource for all chapters in the state, we are a voice at the State Capitol and are helping to change attitudes and beliefs on how we want to be treated. We want to be full participants in the decision-making about our own lives.



REGIONAL REPORTS

Region Three (Not Included: New Mexico)

COLORADO: Colorado has been working hard on People First Language both statewide and on a national level. State Senator Bernie Buesher is promoting legislation for us in 2008 here in Colorado. US Senator Ken Salazar wanted to meet with SABE about carrying a similar bill nation-wide with meetings already planned but we don't know when that will happen. 4 people from Colorado attended a recent SABE Region 3 conference.

WYOMING: We had three people attend the SABE Regional Conference in Park City, Utah in August. We had our 16th Annual People First Conference in Casper, Wyoming in September. Bryon Murray from Utah was our Keynote Speaker, everyone enjoyed his visit. We had a Community Awareness Training in October. Marilyn Martinez was our keynote speaker. She did training on Marriage Penalty, Housing and Employment. We have a bill going to the legislature on getting rid of the "MR" word. Rep. Floyd Esquibel is sponsoring the bill and we are traveling around the state to talk to other representatives throughout the state. Our full time coordinator is Tamie Keney; she started in August. We attended the Mega Conference and NAMI conference here in Wyoming to promote People First. Alex Valdez and Richard Pimental were guest speakers at Mega. Richard Leslie a People First of Wyoming member won the Ralph Snyder Award for his leadership. We were on the Crossroads radio show to promote our legislative work and there was an article in their Magazine.

UTAH: Utah hosted a Region 3 meeting and participants from all over the region came. Ben Borrell and Bryon Murray led the meeting. Agenda topics covered were: working together better as a region; legislative updates on the DD Act and ways to communicate to legislators and other people how legislation can better improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Region Four (Not Included: North Dakota)

SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota does not currently have a statewide People First organization. Human Services Research Institute is assisting us in building leadership among people with developmental disabilities and determining how to support a statewide network of self-advocacy organizations. People First of Southeast South Dakota held a conference in May 2007 for self-advocates. There are a number of other People First Chapters across the state. Current activities through the grant, "Mobilizing for Self Advocacy in South Dakota" include: 1) 2-person teams have been developed in Watertown, West River (Rapid City and Spearfish) and Sioux Falls; 2) these teams have selected a local issue to work on and are developing action plans; 3) as a whole, these teams will be meeting to develop a strategic plan for statewide networking with other self-advocacy organizations currently existing across the state.

MISSOURI: People First of Missouri had a busy year in 2007. We had a great conference in April and SABE board members joined hundreds of others at the event. People First of Missouri is advocating for legislation that would drop "MR" from the Division of MRDD title and a respectful language bill that would require the state to make people first language an official standard. We continue to advocate for the release of people from institutions to settings in the community. We also continue to advocate for and support each other in leading dignified daily lives. We recently held elections and the old statewide officers are working together with the new officers to make sure they know what their roles and responsibilities are. We have held some preliminary discussions with the Department of Mental Health, who has expressed interest in employing self advocates to help ensure the quality of services they deliver. We have also held discussions and are envisioning a future in which People First of Missouri is strengthened in terms of social capital, autonomy, and influence.



REGIONAL REPORTS

Region Four Continued...

KANSAS: The SABE representative from Kansas is starting new advocacy groups and showing them how people with a developmental disability can have more say and control over how and who will provide their supports and services. One of the committees he works on is new program called WORK (Work Opportunities Reward Kansans) this is a program for people who are already working and need assistance in their home with activities of daily living such as housekeeping, cooking, shopping and other things with a certain amount of money every month based on an assessment of your needs to pay the people you hire to work for you to help maintain your independence. We just finished our Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK) conference this past weekend Oct 19-21st. We had 263 advocates and support staff there.

We have had over a 60% increase in the attendance in the past two years. One of the topics this year is self employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. We just finished our state conference for people with disabilities this past weekend plus we held officer elections our new state president is Steve Kounts from Leavenworth, KS.

NEBRASKA: People First of Nebraska is a state level board and organization with local chapters across the state, many very strong and doing a lot of work. There are some active members who do live in areas without chapters. We had the annual conference at the beginning of October which featured sessions on available services, getting involved in the political process (presented by our P&S program), leadership in systems change (adapted from our UCEDD Leadership and Advocacy project), interpersonal relationships, and strategic planning for PF (3-5 years). PF has also put out white papers on its priorities which they have really stuck to: 1) employment - they want real jobs and 2) transportation - they want to be able to get to work and fully access their communities and still be able to eat, etc. PF also remains very pro-community/anti-institution. There is a real push amongst the membership to become more involved in the political process. We had our annual convention in October, "Many Voices With a Common Cause." The emphasis of the convention was on systems change advocacy. PFN members reelected Tom Verkler Treasurer and Dana Shaw Secretary. The State Advisor is traveling to each chapter to get chapter members opinions on what we should be working on. Our Governor just signed the Community Support waiver. This is our version of Self-Determination. Currently we are working on eliminating the waiting list.

Region Five (Not Included: Illinois)

INDIANA: We had our statewide conference in November. We are working very hard to make sure the SABE national conference will be a success when you all come visit us here in Indianapolis this coming September, 2008. Go to www.SABE2008.com for conference updates.

WISCONSIN: We are actively advocating for changes in sub-minimum wage laws in our state. We are also working with the state to increase funding for supported employment and post-secondary education for persons with intellectual disabilities. We are involved in efforts to improve transportation in rural areas of our state. We are working to educate self-advocates across the state about the transition to a managed care delivery system of services. And we continue to work with groups like the Knights of Columbus to get rid of the use of the 'R' word.

If you want to make things happen you got to get out there to make it happen.

Bill Roe



REGIONAL REPORTS

Region Five Continued...

MICHIGAN: The Self-Advocacy Network of Michigan (SANM) is a group of self-advocacy organizations that promote self-determination, power, personal rights, freedom and choice. It is a statewide network of self-advocates that provides assistance, guidance, resources and advocacy to people with disabilities in creating and maintaining the self-determination movement. SANM works to bring self-advocacy groups and organizations together. Our purpose is to be a resource that provides technical assistance on self-advocacy and self determination and to advocate as a collective body across Michigan on issues in the disability community. Our goals are to facilitate collaboration among self-advocacy groups and organizations throughout Michigan; provide consultation and technical support to local self-advocacy groups and organizations that organize groups to facilitate advocacy efforts for system change; and make training available to people with disabilities on: Leadership, Self-advocacy, Person-centered planning, Self-determination; and to form a strong self-advocacy base for the dissemination of information on disability issues at the state and national levels.

MINNESOTA: In 2007 Minnesota got all the self-advocacy groups together to form a new network called Self-Advocates Minnesota or SAM. The SAM network helps groups stay connected and helps us be one big movement rather than a bunch of small groups. The best thing about the SAM network is that we were able to get some public money to support self-advocacy all over the state. This is a first for Minnesota!! Our state is divided into six regions. Each region gets money and support to build a power base of self-advocates and we have state meetings and are working on issues important to self-advocates throughout the state of Minnesota. The SAM network helps us be stronger together than we could ever be on our own. Also, we took great offense to the use of a new popular term "Celebretard". A bunch of Minnesota disability groups got together and decided to create a video to address the way the word is being used in popular culture. It's going to be a great tool for launching discussion in schools, community groups, and churches. We marked 1,200 graves in three state hospital cemeteries in 2007 and have plans to restore three more cemeteries in 2008. This is a bunch of self-advocacy groups working together on issues that are important to us.

OHIO: There are over 40 People First chapters in the state of Ohio. Ohio People First will hold a statewide conference March 14-16, 2008 called "Under the Big Top with Self-Advocacy". Usually about 400 people attend. The current President is Linda J. Kunick, Cincinnati, OH. One of the biggest issues in Ohio that PF and all other agencies are involved in is called "The Ohio Futures Plan for Ohioans with Developmental Disabilities". People First of Ohio has a vote on this Futures Committee to make recommendations to the Governor of Ohio for people with DD and their families to have the services and supports they need to live successfully in their communities and the opportunities to make the choices they want to make in their lives. This group will set the future direction for Ohio's DD Services. The report to the Governor must be done by March 31, 2008.

IOWA: Iowa self-advocates are in a transition phase right now working to get more chapters up and running and the statewide chapter is getting more organized. The presidential candidates are in Iowa campaigning and self-advocates are talking to them about their lives. The purpose of People First of Iowa is to unite and strengthen the disability community in Iowa and build equal partnerships with communities at large through: Educating self-advocates about their rights and responsibilities; Making presentations; Working with people who make decisions about disability issues for our communities, for the State of Iowa and for the Nation;

Telling Iowans about People First through the newspaper, newsletters, programs, radio, and television; Sponsoring social events; Attending local, state, and national meetings; Raising money to pay for People First events and expenses; Developing strong and helpful relationships between the Disability Community and local communities.



REGIONAL REPORTS

Region Six (Not Included: Mississippi & Florida)

NORTH CAROLINA: North Carolina is having its 23rd self-advocates convention on March 14-16 in Winston-Salem, NC. Julie Petty will be our keynote speaker for our convention this year. North Carolina got a proclamation read at the city of Raleigh council meeting for our city council to proclaim October as Disability Awareness Month.

GEORGIA: People First of GA had their state conference and they had over 200 people there. People First of GA is still fighting for the closing of institutions in their state. People First of GA is still trying to get Money Follows the Person and they are still trying to get people off of the waiting list. They also have advice directors that are in the hospital that will help people if they want to do a living will.

SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolina now has a statewide self-advocacy network. One of our local self-advocates has moved from the local to the state level. He is one of the original self-advocates that started advocating at the state level from Columbia, South Carolina. We also got some of the names changed that had the "R word" in it. South Carolina is on the move! We are also working on our state conference that we will have in 2008.

ALABAMA: People First of Alabama has their own office space now. The Department of MH/MR has contracted with People First of AL to handle their own funding beginning Jan 08. However, the Department still has the name with MR in it. We were going to hold a silent protest of the name. The position of People First of Alabama state coordinator is open. Interested applicants should e-mail Vicki at vicki33@prodigy.net

TENNESSEE: In March 2008, People First of Tennessee, Inc. will co-host the second annual Micro conference in conjunction with the Tennessee Microboard Association. People with disabilities and their families will come together for a weekend of fellowship and information sharing. Institutions update from Tennessee: Arlington institution will close in approximately 2 years. Still working on a closure date for Cloverbottom. We have received a three year grant from the Developmental Disabilities Network to do capacity building and advocacy in our organization. Just received money from a community enhancement grant from the state legislature. The commissioner of DMRS has just made major cuts to the budgets for the provider agencies across the state. This will be devastating to people with disabilities who are served by these agencies. People First is working on a plan to stop this harmful action.

KENTUCKY: The Kentucky Self-Advocates for Freedom is a statewide organization directed by Kentuckians with disabilities committed to working in partnership to promote equal rights, inclusion, self-advocacy, support and education in all realms of life. KYSAFF is continuing to make progress to encourage self-advocates to speak up for themselves and to teach, coach and support other self-advocates speaking up for themselves. Our members make presentations to groups to share their stories and knowledge about self-advocacy, the electoral process, voting rights, and recent changes in guardianship laws.



Self-Advocates Celebrating Together at the SABA 2006 Conference in Atlanta, GA. Over 1,500 self-advocates attended.



Linda Kunick, President of People First of Ohio, speaks at Statehouse rally in Columbus, OH



REGIONAL REPORTS

Region Seven

(Not Included: Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia)

WASHINGTON DC: Members of Project ACTION!, Washington, DC's self-advocacy coalition, have been busy. Members are part of a taskforce that is re-writing the outdated laws that govern services, service quality and rights for people with disabilities and testified on this topic at the DC City Council. Members also testified on legislation to require that all official documents in DC use respectful language when referring to people with disabilities and others – people first language only and no disrespectful labels! Project ACTION! hosted a Transition Planning meeting for the new Mayor to let him and his staff know what people with disabilities and their families want from DC government. In January 2008, Project ACTION! will host a follow-up meeting to look at what they had asked for a year ago, evaluate how the new administration did, and discuss their desires for progress in the new year. Project ACTION! members organized a public meeting at which DC's new transportation broker, the leadership of the Developmental Disabilities Administration, and the leadership of the Medical Assistance Administration (Medicaid) all came together to hear complaints and concerns about the new transportation system for people with disabilities in DC. Not only were major changes made after the meeting, but the transportation broker came back to Project ACTION!'s next meeting to make sure things had improved. Members of Project ACTION! serve on about 20 boards, committees, and task forces at which decisions are made that effect the lives of people with disabilities. At their monthly meetings, they talk about what they have done on these boards and get feedback from Project ACTION! members for upcoming meetings. Victor Robinson, who serves on SABE's Board, regularly reports on SABE's activities and gets support from Project ACTION! members as well.



Current and past SABE Board members Ben Borrell (CO), Todd Gatewood (OH) and Jeff Ridgeway (AL) at the 2005 Alliance for Full Participation Summit in Washington, DC



Self-Advocates at the Presidential Candidates Forum in New Hampshire, November, 2007

SABE Executive Committee members Chester Finn (NY) and Betty Williams (IN) presented to AUCD in Washington DC, November, 2007



REGIONAL REPORTS

Region Eight (Not Included: New York, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island)

CONNECTICUT: People First of Connecticut is a statewide self advocacy organization that meets every other month in a central Connecticut location. Members from 16 chapters come together to share self advocacy news and issues. People First is a Connecticut corporation and has a 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service. It was founded in 1989, and chapters exist in many major cities and towns and have support from advisors and The Arc Connecticut chapters, volunteers and people who work for the Department of Mental Retardation (now the Department of Developmental Services). See the article on page 15 about our success in changing the name of our state agency!

VERMONT: Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA) went to the Presidential Candidate Forum. We shook hands with Senators Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd, and Congressman Dennis Kucinich. GMSA leader Max Barrows serves on the Governor's Autism Committee to collect information from people with autism asking questions based on issues about their lives. The State conference for Vermont called the "Voices and Choices" went well. 550 people attended. We had 23 different workshops with a big focus on the arts. Karen Topper and I did a workshop on Sexuality called Sexual Self-Advocacy. Also, GMSA is running peer groups called "Hire Up" that investigate what is going on with young adults with disabilities who either don't have jobs or recently quit their job. We have discussions on the barriers to employment. We had a 2-day workshop on "How to Convert Sheltered Workshops to Supported Employment Programs". Over 80 people from 25 states were there. People said they got great information and are going home to close down sheltered workshops.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: People First of New Hampshire has been involved in Voter Education; Understanding Relationships and Sexuality; Emergency Preparedness; Training for Young Adult Self-Advocacy Groups; The Waitlist Bill and House Bill 153 on the term "Mental Retardation" Meetings; and as Co-hosts of the Presidential Candidates' Forum. Our work in more detail: The waitlist bill passed both the NH Senate and House of Representatives and will shorten the waitlist for citizens with disabilities to receive more community-based services sooner. As a result of our advocacy, Sen.Hassan will be sponsoring a new bill in 2008 to ensure that all the state laws remove the "MR" terminology and change it to "intellectual disability". We are also working on: 1) developing two young-adult groups in our state and a new youth grant with PF; 2) Participation on a legislative committee on how to keep, recruit and train direct care professionals who work with us. and 3) Preparation for people to attend the next national self-advocacy conference. A few of our long-time self-advocacy leaders have passed away this year including , Joan. During the service, former SABE Board member Tammy Mills, sang one of Karl Williams songs of the self-advocacy movement. With this loss of our friends comes an increasing need to tell our histories. We are developing a new project to do this. People First of NH continues to advocate for the inclusion of and funding for SELF ADVOCACY INFORMATION AND TRAINING CENTERS in the DD Act by requesting support from our friends and NH elected officials.

Region Nine

ARKANSAS, OKLAHOMA, LOUISIANA, TEXAS: SABE Region 9 had a meeting on September 14th and 15th. Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas were represented to "Light the Way to the Community". Region 9 gathered together on Friday afternoon to discuss the candlelight vigil we were having that night at the Denton State School for Haseeb Chistey. Haseeb was beaten so badly that he can no longer walk or talk, as he did when he enter the institution. For more information on Haseeb search for him on YouTube.com. On the second day of the meeting, each state reported on their current activities, then each state created an action plan on how to get people out of institutions.



Brad Linnenkamp awarded Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) 2007 Leadership in Advocacy Award



Brad Linnenkamp Receives Award from Lu Zeph, Past AUCD President

November 14, 2007, in Washington, DC Brad Linnenkamp, SABE board member and member of the Self-Advocate Coalition of Kansas received

the 2007 Leadership in Advocacy Award today at the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Annual Meeting and Conference. From the AUCD Website: "The award is presented to an outstanding individual or family member who has exhibited exceptional leadership and self-advocacy skills in the area of developmental disabilities. Mr. Linnenkamp exemplifies the characteristics of a true leader in the advocacy movement for people with developmental disabilities."

UN Treaty on People with Disabilities

The United Nations has a treaty on recognizing and protecting the rights of people with disabilities throughout the world. Many other countries have signed on to this treaty but the United States has not. SABE leaders have been involved with other national groups to tell the President and other decision-makers of the importance of signing onto this treaty.

Some of the rights covered by the Treaty are: The right to live in the community; The right to freedom from torture, violent exploitation and abuse; the right to healthcare and to free and informed consent in health services; the right to education; and the right to vote and to participate in public and cultural life.

For more information about the treaty and ideas about how you can encourage the United States to sign on go to:

www.RatifyNow.org



MEET THE NEW SABE ADVISORS

In July 2007, at our meeting in Indiana, SABE elected new Advisors. Before introductions, SABE would like to say a great big thanks to Karen Topper and Vicki Turnage who have devoted time to SABE and the movement for many years as advisors. Thanks Topper and Vicki! SABE's newly elected advisors:

Essie Pederson- Ohio (supports Regions 5, 8 & 7)

After 37 years of working professionally in the field of DD and, 58 years living beside the most determined, resilient, funny and loving person I have every met (my brother with Down syndrome); makes the opportunity to work with SABE "the cherry on my life-time of opportunities cake". I am a believer in not doing things for people but to surround people, with the opportunities, choices, and skills they need to meet their dreams. Being elected an advisor to a group of people I highly respect and admire for their clear vision, determination and lack of fear to change the world is a highlight in my life. I would like to thank the members of SABE for their belief in me to work beside them.

Laura Walker- Missouri (supports Regions 2, 3 & 4)

I am honored to be elected as an advisor to SABE. I have worked with self-advocates at the local and state level in Missouri and am excited to support SABE at the national level. Supporting self-advocates is one of the best opportunities I have had in my life. In 2006 I spent the year in Washington, DC learning about how disability advocacy groups work to make positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities. I am ready to use this experience to work hard with SABE, statewide and local groups to achieve their goals.

LeCell Lane- Alabama (supports Regions 1, 6 & 9)

I have been the Coordinator for People First of Alabama for over 3 years. I recently tied the knot in November and will be moving to Texas to be with my new hubby and will work for Advocacy, Inc. educating people on voting issues. Before working in Alabama, I advised a local group in Georgia and became involved with the Southern Collaborative and became involved with SABE. I then worked with James Meadours in Louisiana and have been a SABE advisor for 2 years and in July I was reelected to serve 2 more years. I have great enthusiasm and passion for our movement!

Self-Advocates Changing the “MR” Word in the Name of State Agencies

Is your state working on the “name change”? Many self-advocacy organizations are working hard to change the name of state agencies that provide services to people with disabilities. A lot of these states use the infamous “MR” word in their name. Here is an inspiring story to help encourage those of you that are still trying to get the name changed in your state agency! Here’s the news from Connecticut:

People First of CT leaders join Governor Jodi Rell in a celebration to change the name of DMR to the Department of Developmental Services. Members worked hard to educate legislators in 2007 and 2006 sessions by introducing and supporting legislation to change the name. The new name took effect on October 1, 2007. In her remarks, Governor Rell said, “Words can be hurtful and have changed over the years to refer to women and that it is about time that respectful language is used to show respect to all CT citizens.” President Carol Grabbe thanked the Governor with a heartfelt hug and words of appreciation.

If your state is working on changing the “MR” part of your state agency’s name let us know! E-Mail NoMoreMR@gmail.com



Chad Sinanian, the current SABA secretary, and CT advocates celebrate the name change from DMR to DDS with Connecticut Governor Jodi Rell.

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The Current State of Institutions in The United States

STATES WITHOUT INSTITUTIONS

- Alaska
- District of Columbia
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Maine
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico
- Rhode Island
- Vermont
- West Virginia

SMALLEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

1. Minnesota 9
2. Oregon 40
3. Montana 77
4. Nevada 79
5. Wyoming 88
6. Idaho 90
7. Delaware 99
8. Colorado 116
9. Michigan 127
10. Arizona 134

LARGEST NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN STATE INSTITUTIONS

1. Texas 4,943
2. New Jersey 3,064
3. California 3,025
4. Illinois 2,709
5. Ohio 1,606
6. New York 1,605
7. North Carolina 1,605
8. Virginia 1,452
9. Louisiana 1,419
10. Pennsylvania 1,416
11. Mississippi 1,377

Source: Braddock, D. *State of the States in Developmental Disabilities*. (2008, forthcoming (January))





Join SABE at: <http://www.sabeusa.org/sabemembership.htm>

Contact SABE at: SABEnation@gmail.com

from 9 Regions throughout the United States. SABE is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation.



Self Advocates Becoming Empowered is a national self-advocacy organization run by a board of directors

Mail to:

Place
postage
here.



SABE
c/o PF of MO
P.O Box 30142
Kansas City, MO
64112



The DD Act: Get into it!!



SO WHAT IS THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT?

It is a federal law that creates programs that improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities throughout the country and territories.

The DD Act was first signed into law in 1963. It stated that people with developmental disabilities have certain rights. In the beginning it gave money to open University Centers to study developmental disabilities.

In 1970, the DD Councils were started through the DD Act.

In 1975, the Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As) were started through the DD Act.

In 2000, Family Support and the Direct Support Workers Program we added to the DD Act.

In 2000, the words "People with developmental disabilities have the right to exert control and choice over their own lives and to fully participate in their communities." were added to the DD Act.

IN 2008 THE DD ACT COULD INCLUDE SELF-ADVOCACY INFORMATION AND TRAINING CENTERS!

Go to the Action Alert at the SABE Website to learn more about what you and your local/state self-advocacy organizations can do to advocate for the DD Act to authorize federal program money for self-advocacy activities!!

Show your friends, co-workers, family and fellow advocates at your next self-advocacy meeting the DD Act Action Alert at: WWW.SABEUSA.ORG

SABE would like to express appreciation to the national DD Act program organizations, the Association of University Centers on Disability, the National Association of Councils on DD and the National Disabilities Rights Network, for the partnerships we have developed with you and look forward to working together in 2008!