



Self-Advocacy Organizations in Arkansas



Organizations:

- Arkansas People First (state-wide network with 12 local chapters)
- Arkansas Youth United
- Self-advocates also participate in other advocacy organizations that are largely parent run

Functions of Self-Advocacy Organizations

State Level

Finding and developing leaders

Collaborating with the DD Network thru:

- Project Vote
- Leadership Training
- Board Membership
- Promoting Legislation
- Reaching My Own Greatness

Training for DSPs

- Participation in DD Conference



Functions of Self-Advocacy Organizations



Local Level

- Finding and developing leaders
- Education on self-determination
- Education on health promotion
- Creating positive awareness about disability
- Advocating for change
(example: sidewalk repair)
- Community service
- Recreation



Resources for Self-Advocacy Organizations

Name of self- advocacy organization	Who provides the resource(s)?	What resource(s) is provided?
Arkansas People First	DD Council, P & A, UCEDD, State DD Agency, University of Arkansas, Several DD Providers	Collaboration on Project Vote Funding for: -Travel to national meetings -Staff for mock legislative session -Office space & administrative support
Arkansas Youth United	HSRI Arkansas Support Network	Funding & administrative support

What Has Worked for Us

Multiple volunteers

People First Staff

- State Coordinator
- Assistant State Coordinator

[May 2010-February 2011]

- Committee Coordinator
- Chapter Coordinator

Collaboration with Developmental Disabilities Network (UCEDD, P & A, DD Council) , State DD Agency, and local DD providers



Our Challenges and Struggles

- Institutional bias - Five state-run ICFs, housing around 1,000 people
- State laws and budget that do not allow flexibility in supporting community inclusion
- Old mind set that people with DD/ID need protection and cannot make decisions
- People supported on home and community-based waiver are not allowed to be self-advocates and make their own choices
- Some provider agencies do not support self-advocacy
- The majority of legislators support congregate living
- Maintaining funding for self-advocacy

What we are proud of?



- The support we have from DD Network (UCEDD, P & A, and the DD Council) and the state DD agency
- Mock legislative session on full participation
- Passage of Respectful Language Act of 2007
- Passage of act eliminating the R-word in 2009
- Self advocacy has supported people to become their own guardians and live where they choose
- Given more people a voice
- 10 state conferences with over 100 people at each

Our Goals and Dreams for Self-Advocacy

- Secure stable funding
- People First Chapter in each county
- Change attitudes of Arkansans about people with DD
- Everyone with DD included in the community

Arkansas Team Members

- Jacqueline Bettis (People First)
- David Deere (UCEDD)
- Dewey Graves (UCEDD, DD Council)
- Shelly Lee (State DD Agency)
- Holly Ann Long (DD Council)
- Vincent McKinney (P & A - Disability Rights Center)
- Julie Petty (People First, UCEDD)
- Eric Treat (People First, UCEDD)
- Regina Wilson (DD Council)
- *Unable to attend:* Nan Ellen East (P & A - Disability Rights Center)