

Missouri



State of Self-Advocacy in 2011

People First of Missouri

People First of Missouri is a statewide organization that promotes equality for people with disabilities so they can live the life they want in the community. People First members:

- Teach and empower people to understand their rights and responsibilities and to speak up for themselves (self-advocacy);
- Stand up for one another to help people live the life they want with the supports they need (advocacy for one another);
- Advocate for community services that allow people to have choices and control over their supports and lives (advocacy at the systems level);
- Create change in communities to ensure opportunity and full, meaningful participation for all people (advocacy within the community).

People First: Past to Present

- Began with support of DD Network in early 1980's
- Currently there are 30 chapters, 18 of which are highly active
- Over 1000 members
- New chapters are being formed across the state

What helps People First grow?

- **UCEDD:** Staff and organizational development support
- **DD Council:** Primary funding source
- **State Org and Chapters:** Resources from county boards, Div. on DD Regional Offices, local providers, churches, other community organizations (primarily in-kind)
- **AmeriCorps*VISTA** grant for 3 years
- **Advisors** that volunteer their time and energy- some over the past 20 years
- MO unique in having **one statewide organization**
- **Conferences** every 2 years
- **Recognized** by key state organizations as unified voice for people with disabilities

Accomplishments

- Partnering on grants and projects
 - CMS grants, MO Planning Council, Coalition with DD Network and the ARC of MO
- The MO Disability Vote Project
- Disability Rights Legislative Day
- Getting rid of the “R” word
- Hosting statewide and national (SABE) conferences
- Newsletter to stakeholders
- Annual Self-Advocacy Retreats

Examples of Accomplishments of Local Chapter: Boone County

Each semester for the past year, People First of Boone County has addressed the University of Missouri's "Cross-Cultural Journalism" class, so far reaching over 1,000 students.

The chapter uses a PowerPoint presentation on respectful language, and engages students in frank discussion about the impact of language in shaping attitudes about people with disabilities.

It's become a regular gig!



Challenges

1) Funding to have full-time dedicated staff and office space

- Staff to support TA needs of local chapter development
- Self-advocates and staff to represent PF on all statewide committees and collaborations (i.e. transportation and job conflicts)
- Communication issues at all levels

Challenges

2) Local chapters:

- Dependent on advisors
- Advisors need training
- Good advisors are hard to find
- Funding, Transportation
- Meaningful activities
 - Leadership training
- Connection to the community: getting out to educate and also attract new members
- Connection to statewide People First

Challenges

3) Individual Members

- Recruiting new Self-Advocates and develop new leaders
- Rely on family to participate
- Rely on PCA and staff to participate
- Advisors have to assume support staff responsibilities
- Youth not involved enough with statewide organization

Our Goals and Dreams for Self-Advocacy in Missouri and the United States in the FUTURE!

- “Self-advocates and professionals in other DD organizations would join together in the same voice”
- “More awareness of the connection between the civil rights movement and the disability rights movement”
- “Self-advocates need to take a greater role in affecting change. We need to be more than ‘at the table’. We need to be taking a proactive approach while advocating. True leadership roles in impacting the system will result in real action rather than lip service”

Missouri's Self-Advocacy Summit Team Members

Team Member	Organization
Shawn DeLoyala	MO P&A
Bernie Simons	DDD
Kelly Ray	PFMO
Susan Pritchard-Green	MO DD Council
Cathy Brown	MO DD Council
Laura Jackson	UCEDD
Cathy Enfield	PFMO, SABE
Nancy Nicklaus	DDD
Vicki McCarrel	DDD
Jeff Johnson	PFMO
Mark Satterwhite	PFMO
Jason Mize	PFMO