Self Advocates Becoming Empowered started with a dream and a steering committee in 1992. Sixteen years later on September 4th, 2008 in Indianapolis, Indiana self advocates will come together from all over the nation and other countries to celebrate the hard work of our civil rights movement. We will remind ourselves why we started SABE to begin with- to create one voice and be equal partners at the table when decisions about our lives are made. National leaders recognize that the SABE conference is the biggest gathering of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the United States. It is important for us to come together to talk about the issues, to learn from one another and, of course, to have fun! Self advocates around the nation will also be able to have their voices heard this coming November when we elect the next President of the United States. It is so important for people with disabilities to have all the information about the candidates so they can make the best decisions about their lives and to shape a future where all people with disabilities live inclusive lives in the community. We showed how powerful we can be when we all came together on the issue of the “R” word. Now let’s show everyone the power of the disability vote!!! SABE is your national self-advocacy organization. Let us know what is happening in your local and statewide activities at: SABEnation@gmail.com and visit www.SABEUSA.org

Save the Dates!

2008 SABE National Conference
September 3-7, 2008
Location: Indianapolis, Indiana

2008 U.S. Presidential Election
Tuesday, November 4, 2008
Cast your vote!

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Hello Self Advocates Becoming Empowered! It has been an amazing two years as the President of SABE. I have learned a lot about self advocacy around the nation, building partnerships with others and I have learned about myself as a leader. It was a great honor to represent self advocates from all around and sometimes challenging. The challenges are what make us better self advocates and better people.

In the past two years, SABE has gone coast to coast! Our board meetings began in Vermont, September 2006, with the awesome Green Mountain Self Advocates, and we ended in Portland, Oregon with the great Self Advocates As Leaders. I would like to say thanks again to SAAL, The RIOT, the Oregon DD Council, Bill Lynch, Hannah Bowen, Gayle B. Gardner and all the other organizations who hosted the fabulous reception for SABE in Portland. We discussed the ADA Restoration act, voted on bylaws, and talked about the national conference.

After all our hard work, SABE decided to have some fun and enjoy the 2008 Rose Festival Parade. You know my motto, “Work hard, Play hard!”

The national conference is quickly around the corner. Betty Williams and the Self Advocates of Indiana have been working hard to make sure all of us can come and get our engines revved up for self advocacy. I hope at the conference everyone will learn tools to help further the movement in your state. There are many people I’d like to thank for your support to me and to SABE over the last two years. I’ll be doing that Friday morning with a picture slide show, but until then I’d like to thank Betty, Tia, Chester and Chad for being great leaders and the best executive committee. Thanks to all the SABE board members for your commitment and hard work for SABE. Last but not least, National Advisors, thanks to Topper, Vicki, Essie, Lecell and Laura for your support and respecting the self advocacy movement.

See you all in Indy for our National Conference!

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. 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 big changes in the world and your own life! Be sure to come to the SABE conference in 2010- check www.SABEUSA.org often to find out where future conferences will be held!
BY TIA NELIS

On July 26th 2008 in Columbus Ohio 1,000 people gathered to celebrate the 18th anniversary of the American with Disabilities Act; and to hear from the presidential candidates about their disability platforms. Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) talked for Senator Obama (D-IL) and John McCain (R-AZ) joined by satellite. Everyone had a chance to hear about how the candidates felt about issues that are important to people with disabilities and their families. People got to also cheer for the candidates they liked and the issues they agreed on when they heard them talk. We also had a chance to hear some great music written and sung by Jeff Moyer (OH). Robert David Hall, who stars on the TV show CSI and who has a disability himself, gave a great speech about advocacy and acting. The public service announcement made by Project Vote and Self Advocates Becoming Empowered was featured. Then PBS Broadcaster, Judy Woodruff interviewed a panel that covered topics like Employment, Community, Transportation, Health Care, Education and more. They answered questions about how they felt on each issue.

Wow, what a great forum! People learned a lot about how the candidates felt about disability issues and their plans for the future. Eighty four national, state and local disability-related organizations sponsored this event. Hopefully, this event will encourage more people to Go Vote!

SABE’S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

SABE’s current major legislative priorites are:
1) Include language in the reauthorization of the DD Act that directly funds self-advocacy information and training activities.
2) ADA Restoration so more people can be protected from discrimination.
3) Better wages and health care for direct support professionals.
4) Create a Ticket to Work program that really allows people to work without losing health care and other supports needed to live and work in the community.

Julie Petty and Connie Garner who works with Senator Ted Kennedy on disability issues present on the DD Act at the 2008 Disability Policy Seminar
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.
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 powerhouse to work on legislation that affects 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.
Hey, What Region Are You In?

At the national conference every two years, SABE elects regional representatives and new officers. SABE is divided into 9 regions and each region has two representatives. That makes a total of 18 board members! From the 18 board members, SABE elects 5 officers who will make up the executive committee. The 5 officers we will elect are: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Sergeant at Arms. Regional reps serve a four year term and officers a two year term. For more information on duties and responsibilities of board members, look at SABE bylaws on www.sabeusa.org

Region 1: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington
Region 2: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada
Region 3: Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
Region 4: Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
Region 5: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
Region 6: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
Region 7: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
Region 8: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
Region 9: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

Region 1: Gayle Gardner (Oregon)
Michael Rogers (Washington)
Region 2: Monica Cooper (Arizona)
Ryan Duncanwood (California)
Region 3: Ben Borrell (Colorado)
Byron Murray (Utah)
Region 4: Tracy Southard (Missouri)
Brad Linnenkamp (Kansas)
Region 5: Tia Nelis (Illinois)
Betty Williams (Indiana)
Region 6: Kenny Stallings (North Carolina)
Bernard Baker (Georgia)
Region 7: Victor Robinson (Washington, DC)
Bernie King (New Jersey)
Region 8: Chester Finn (New York)
Chad Sinanian (Connecticut)
Region 9: Ricky Broussard (Texas)
Julie Petty (Arkansas)
**REGIONAL REPORTS**

**REGIONAL REPORTS**

**OREGON:** Self Advocates As Leaders is Oregon’s statewide self-advocacy group. We have three committees that are responsible for SAALs advocacy work. In the last year our Training Committee has organized over 26 different trainings for advocates, parents, and staff across Oregon. Some of our most popular trainings are about voting, violence awareness, telling your story, and self-advocacy but we also do allot of other kinds of trainings. Our Public Policy Committee is talking with legislators about The Marriage Penalty that cuts benefits when people on SSI get married. At the last legislative session we also testified about the need for a support staff database that would keep track of abusive caregivers so that we do not hire them in the future. We need more self-advocates at the capitol so we are putting together a Capitol Connections training to give people skills for advocating with legislators. Our Editorial Board is publishing four editions of the SAAL Newsletter and four editions of the People First Connection every year. They also oversee our www.asksaal.org website. Finally, our Board of Directors is revising our bylaws so that we can apply for 502(c)(3) status next year.

*Self advocates giving a thumbs up!*

**ARIZONA:** People First of Arizona has two chapters within the state and has worked closely with other disability agencies to assist with legislation issues- testifying and being on committees, applying for and self-managing grants, sitting on councils, attending and presenting at trainings, and educating the public.

- Self advocates and disability agencies successfully advocated to keep the Dental Bill for people with Developmental Disabilities in our state.
- Legislature did not make any cuts to funding in Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) due to advocating efforts among self advocates and disability agencies working together.
- DDD renewed a grant with two Arizona Independent Living Centers to provide Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Skill trainings to people with cognitive disabilities enrolled in DDD. The grant’s purpose is to educate DDD consumers to become self advocates and create a self-directed service system.
- Governor’s Council on DD’s Self-Advocacy Coalition was created in 2004 to unite the self advocate groups in our state. In 2007, became a corporation and in 2008, filed for 501c3 status & will be hiring its first Executive Director in October, 2008.
- Governor Napolitano presented at the ADA Celebration in July about the importance to maintain the ADA.
- The 18th annual ADA Celebration was overflowing the capitol lobby with self advocates and other interested participants.
- Transportation – “The Maricopa Association of Governments’ (MAG) has begun a study to identify long term regional transit needs to year 2030 and beyond. Known as the Regional Transit Framework Study (RTFS), this exercise will identify and prioritize future transit needs for the entire region.”
- Self Advocates are more active in advocacy issues and voting coalitions & trainings across the state.
**REGIONAL REPORTS**

**Region Three (Not Included: New Mexico and Colorado)**

**WYOMING**: People First of Wyoming conducted two board meetings this last quarter where we continued to work on conference presentations. The statewide conference will be held September 19-21 in Thermopolis with the motto being “Take Charge, Be a Leader”. We updated our People First of Wyoming and People First Language brochures. We worked on our vendor board, fundraising, and wrote next year’s grant proposal. People First is also looking at submitting a proposal to DDD to do IPC training for participants. We visited the new board members in Evanston and assisted them with some “growing pains”. Two board members will be sitting on a collaboration team with WIND on victim services. We submitted a grant application to the ELA Foundation and were turned down. We had a booth at Juneteenth. We went back to the hotels we wrote letters to address accessibility issues, there were absolutely no changes! We forwarded our legislative success story along with newspaper articles to Senator Enzi. We also requested a visit with Senator Enzi concerning the DD Reauthorization Act. We were in the Wyoming Governor’s Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities “Crossroads” magazine. Our coordinator resigned and we have a new coordinator hired to start work August 1st.

**UTAH**: Utah People First participated in the development of a DVD to help self advocates in Utah learn how to register to vote and how to vote. They came together for two days. They practiced and did role-playing which was taped. The project called “Determined to Vote” will be a part of a tool kit used to help self advocates learn how to vote. The Utah Disability Law Center staff will take the “Determined to Vote” project around the state. The DLC will help self-advocates register to vote and have voting machines at each site to help self advocates learn how to use them. This activity is a result of a $20,000 grant from the Utah Lt. Governor who gives out HAVA funds.
NORTH DAKOTA: Self-Advocacy Solutions, North Dakota (S.A.S.) is a grassroots Self-Advocacy Organization run by and for people with developmental and other disabilities. S.A.S. enhances the self-advocacy movement in North Dakota by providing what we call an A.C.E. plan. Accessment, Choice and Education are the three areas we came up with that would help us achieve our goals. Through this process, Self advocates from across the state access what our needs are and also give opportunity to do assessments on an individual need. One of the areas that we feel on a statewide level is that we are not allowed choice, in many cases, it can appear that we have choice, but all to often it is our choice and someone else’s decision. Using great curriculum from Advocating Change Together, statewide efforts have been made to enhance the skills necessary for making choice, and not giving up our power by allowing others to make choice for us. It might be the need to look for a new provider, or holding forums with case management, a provider sharing our personal stories about how our choices do not enter the picture in our home, work or play. Education, is also key in our A.C.E. plan, we have a very active speakers bureau that gives trainings and presentations at the University Level, also to Direct care, Civic groups, Providers, and Policy makers. We also believe that knowledge is key and continue to become educated, learning from our peers other self-advocacy groups and others. S.A.S. hosted the third annual S.A.R.G., Conference a regional gathering where Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota come together as neighbors and learn, teach and strategize. Networking with other groups is key and we have been so fortunate to network with our neighbors. Through the A.C.E. process self-advocates from the across the state also access the issues they face and they choose how they want to proceed to take action.

As an organization, we see the UN Treaty as a means to start shifting the perception of disability from something wrong with the person to something wrong with society.’ S.A.S. Leaders also took part in a Human Rights Retreat in Farmington, Minnesota with members from Self Advocacy Minnesota, SAM and People First of Wisconsin. S.A.S. has started groups throughout North Dakota called Friends United in Human Rights.

Self-Advocacy Groups are going strong in Bismarck, Fargo, Grand Forks, Grafton, Williston, Devils Lake, Valley City, Bowmen, Wahpeton, and a new group is being started in Dickinson called Back to the Basics, headed up by Leaders in this movement, Lori and Allan Marx.

Transportation, Education, Accessiblity, Human Rights, VOTING, Housing, Health Care, Legislative Issues, what happens to people with disabilities during natural disasters and working with issues with service providers have been some of the issues groups through out the state our working on. Self-Advocacy Solutions, N.D. is supported by The North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities with inkind match from L.I.S.T.E.N. Inc. We look forward to seeing and meeting you in Indiana. Till then a Big SHOUT OUT FROM OUR BIG VAST STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA...WHERE LIFE IS TRULY IN THE VAST LANE....SHOUT OUT TO KEEP ON SPEAKING OUT!
**REGIONAL REPORTS**

**Region Four**

**SOUTH DAKOTA:** We are in the 3rd year of a 3-year project to “Mobilize Self-Advocacy in South Dakota”. The Human Services Research Institute has been working with small groups of self advocates to assist them in becoming effective leaders for their local communities and to develop a network of self advocates to continue activities after the project ends in December 2008. Two-person teams have been developed and trained in Rapid City, Spearfish, Watertown and Sioux Falls. During 2008, six additional teams will be developed across the state. We hope that these teams will provide energy and focus for the current People First chapters throughout the state. A newsletter is planned to share information regarding activities and issues that are important to people with developmental disabilities. The group hopes to have a state conference in 2009.

**MISSOURI:** People First of Missouri is hard at work still trying to get the “MR” words out of our state agency’s name. We conducted a planning meeting with the state agency on dd, the UCEDD, the P&A and the DD Council and others to come up with a plan on how we can grow to have our own organization with staff and our own funding. We have over 1500 self advocate members statewide.

**KANSAS:** The Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas (SACK) has just started doing Conference Calls for groups around the state to use at Sacks’ quarterly meetings.

The Community Developmental Disability organizations and SRS Social Rehabilitation Services has just added in the state contract that have to have at least 1 computer that consumers can use for advocacy related business. Another reason to have the computers is to have an advocacy network that advocates can communicate with one another and to also know which CDDO’s are providing the computers.

Kansas has just started work on an initiative looking at ways for people that receive day services at a workshop setting to have competitive employment opportunities that will take the place of day services.

**NEBRASKA:** Recently, we met to plan our annual convention. Nebraska will be celebrating thirty years of advocacy. The convention theme is, People First of Nebraska Thirty Years of Friends helping Friends. Our conference is October 10, 11 & 12, 2008.

We are still working on developing priority goals. We have been traveling to each chapter to get the chapter member’s opinions on what our priority goals should be.

Currently, we are working on getting people out of our state run institution.

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*Self Advocates at an Awards Ceremony*
INDIANA: Indiana is hosting the 2008 SABE national self-advocacy conference. While we celebrate we also mourn the loss of a dear friend to the self-advocacy movement, Elbert Johns. He was an exceptional supporter of SABE and Self Advocates of Indiana. We will miss him very much.

WISCONSIN: People First Wisconsin worked on:
1. Employment: we successfully worked to get our state to adopt a form of an Employment First policy - we successfully worked to get our state to adopt numerous reforms to improve people’s access to services that support integrated community employment.
2. Sub-Minimum Wage: we successfully worked to get our Department of Workforce Development to recommend the first ever reforms to sub-minimum wage in our state. We got a broad coalition to agree to a need for a floor in sub-minimum wage - we got the National Meeting of Governor’s Committees (to be held in April 2009 in Wisconsin) to agree to give us a major platform to discuss sub-minimum wage reform.
3. Self-Determination: we have been working with a broad coalition to bring self-directed supports to our long term care service system - we have increased the number of our members serving on committees and boards.
4. Local Self-Advocacy Groups: we have increased the number of local self-advocacy groups across our state by 20% - we assisted local groups in advocacy in their home communities that have resulted in numerous positive changes in communities issues like increased voter registration, sidewalk improvements, park accessibility, etc.
5. Transportation: we had listening sessions around our state where self-advocates ranked transportation as the number one area in need of reform in our state - we are continuing to develop an advocacy platform for action on this issue.

ILLINOIS: People first of IL is still trying to find funding. We are working on keeping our chapters going. Our state chapter meets when we can. And we are looking for other possibilities for grants that we could do. We are also involved in a community coalition where the focus is on what is happening at Howe developmental center, where people with disabilities are dying and not from natural causes like they said. There have been 21 deaths so far before we started trying to get it closed and more happening everyday. This is so wrong what’s happening here. Even when they have had money taken away with experts coming and leaving after not being able to do anything, they still keep this place open. The committee has been doing a petition to close Howe, and we will have it at the National conference for people to sign please help us!!!! Please send the Illinois Governor a message to Close Howe Developmental Center NOW!!!!!!!

Self advocates in Minnesota learn about their rights to privacy.
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 meeting and are working on issues important to self-advocate throughout the state of Minnesota. The SAM network helps us be stronger together than we could ever be on our own. The other cool thing Minnesota is working on is a video called “Offence Taken”. A local theater company titled a production “The Rise of the Celebretard…” It was a show that poked fun at celebrities like Paris Hilton and the title used the word retard to show just how stupid these celebrities are… just like retards!! Well, needless to say, we took great offence to the production. 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. This will be a great tool for groups organizing around the Tropic Thunder movie too! The Remembering With Dignity project is still going strong in Minnesota. We marked 1,200 graves in three state hospital cemeteries in 2007 and have plans to restore three more cemeteries in 2008. Again, this is a bunch of self-advocacy groups getting together to work on an issue important to us.

KENTUCKY: Kentucky Self-Advocates for Freedom completed their first year as an organization totally managed by Kentuckians with developmental disabilities. During our annual educational conference and annual meeting, almost one hundred self-advocates from across Kentucky came to network, share, learn, and dance! Kentucky Self-Advocates for Freedom’s chapters across the state are pleased to share how they are making a difference to many of the 874,000 Kentuckians with disabilities: Southeastern Kentucky People Who Care Chapter of KYSAFF continues to grow in both members and activities. In an area where transportation is especially challenging, the Corbin chapter has positioned itself as the authority in working with local government on accessible issues. The chapter was asked to review the plans for a new city park and playground. Members’ comments pointed out areas that were either dangerous or would exclude those with developmental disabilities. Since last fall meeting attendance has grown from six to eight regularly to 25 to 30 each month. When asked, members respond that they are now looking forward to meetings because they feel they are making a difference to others. This chapter has been so successful that there is enough support and potential members to begin a new chapter. Louisville hosts two chapters and has added a third. The members from one chapter began visiting elementary schools in Louisville Metro speaking to all students about physical and mental disabilities and answering questions. Their responses have been positive and students ask questions, including “How does your wheelchair work?” The chapter has added 13 new members because they are learning of the program and wish to speak and share their stories with children. The State Coordinator and many self-advocates have spoken and met with residents at Oakwood, our state residential facility. The residents are interested in starting a KYSAFF chapter, and our Lake Cumberland/Somerset Chapter members are assisting in this effort.
**MARYLAND:** Report for People On the Go of Maryland: The closure of Rosewood Institution over the next 18 months. (Governor O’Malley’s announcement) Jan 15 2008, after many, many of years of advocacy pressure from People on the Go (POG), a State-wide Self-Advocacy group, as well as several other local advocacy groups. Since that time almost 40 residents have already moved from the Institution. Rosewood had NOT been in compliance with Office of Safety and Health Adminstration (OSHA) regulations for over a year and that caused the Governor to order it closed. The individuals who have already moved from residing in the confines of Rosewood are quite pleased and successful in their community living settings. Many other people who are currently in the transitioning process to move out of Rosewood seem to be quite pleased with the progress of the process at this point in time. Everyone has a VERY positive outlook about how the community setting in which they will live will allow the new living situation that each person will experience. Several of our State Advocates have also been to Annapolis to testify on several Bills in both the Senate and House which affect persons with disABILITIES. Our legislators are listening to us. Many legislators also speak out on our behalf in each of their respectful committees: as we have made contact with each of them, be it by person, letters written, phone calls, and/or e-mail. Another and vital instrumental part of the self-advocacy movement that POG has been focusing on is Transitioning Youth. Our concentration has been on the age group of 18 - 25 years of age. We have been ‘attracting’ many younger individuals to join our many, varied advocacy efforts. The young members are interested in becoming part of the local groups as well as People on the Go. Several of them are already showing the potential of becoming leaders of our continuing and growing advocacy movement.

**NEW JERSEY:** Hello Everyone! The Seeking Ways Out Together Team or SWOT TEAM is what we call ourselves. We live and work in New Jersey. Our work is about getting people out of all kinds of institutions. In 2007 we worked with NJ ADAPT and other groups to get Money Follows the Person in our state. We made one of our longtime projects come true. We organized with other groups like the NJ DD Council a Candlelight Vigil to remember all the people who lived and died in NJ institutions. In 2008 the SWOT Team with a grant from NJ Protection & Advocacy we started working in two of our developmental centers to tell people on our state waiting list to get out about community living and Olmstead State Plan. Two of our members married and they have a beautiful baby girl. Our oldest member John Kover celebrated his 90th birthday in August and retired from the SWOT Team. We are planning a retreat in October to celebrate our 14th birthday. We have been raising money all summer to get to Indianapolis for the conference.
**NEW YORK:** Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS) is strong! SANYS Speakers Bureau and SA/AmeriCorps: Both of these projects involve self advocate teams speaking to various community groups, faith communities, and students and teachers in schools about community inclusion and self-advocacy. AmeriCorps teams are also working to increase awareness of the need for emergency preparedness. Last year our teams gave over 571 presentations to close to 12,000 people throughout New York. Over 90 self-advocates were paid to participate in these presentations. Changing our system: Through a grant with the NY Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, SANYS has sponsored a Think Tank partnership with families, providers, OMRDD, and others to increase the opportunities for individualized supports and self-determination. We created a definition of individualized supports that is now being used to develop individualized services in NY. We will soon publish our second book of stories of people who are creating and self-directing the supports they receive and living the life they choose. Using the Nothing About Us Without Theme, leaders of SANYS are involved with all the system change activities within our state as active committee and council members at the local, regional and statewide level. On the statewide level, we participated in almost 150 policy meetings last year. Self advocates are viewed as leaders and partners for change. SANYS Vision: Our Board of Directors has created a list of things we want to accomplish this year, called a Vision Board, which speaks of our goals for our organization. Our number one priority will be to strengthen our grass roots. We have revised our by-laws to make it clear what it means to be a self-advocacy group and to increase self advocates leadership skills. Our board thinks it is really important that we be an even stronger organization at the local, regional and statewide level because we believe our advocacy will be even more important in the coming years when state and the federal budget may be cut do to the US economy. We also plan to completely revise our website and all the ways we communicate with self advocates in our state. Check out our current site at sanys.org. And one more important goal: we will finally change the name of our State DD agency this year. You can find the rest of our goals and other info on our website: sanys.org. Jigiya: This is the second year of our involvement with a group of people with disabilities in Mali Africa, who we met through a Peace Corps member. Jigiya means support, hope and courage in their native language Bambara.
OKLAHOMA: Since acquiring our non-profit status, OPF, Inc. has grown by leaps and bounds! We are currently working on our 18th annual State Conference, to be held in Tulsa this year. The theme is “We Are Doin’ Great in 2008!” which was of course conceptualized by our self advocates. Our conference attendance is steadily on the increase every year, which means more individuals getting involved with advocacy! Yea! Our state organization is currently overseeing the development of four new local chapters as well as discussing the potential addition of at least three more. We have also received a few small grants to assist us with our program development while we finalize discussion about potential fundraisers.

TEXAS: Texas Advocates held their 2008 Conference Aug. 8-10 in Austin Texas with over 550 people in attendance. Our keynote speaker was State Senator Judith Zaffitini who supports our goal to end the waiting lists for community services. We had workshops on SSI and employment, Owning your own home, Self Determination, Legislative Advocacy, Healthy Relationships, Art Works – Dream Big, Community Living, Voting and Transportation. All of our workshops are interactive and use different learning styles including role plays, interviews and games and are presented by self advocates and experts working together. Our Friday night entertainment was by www.Drumcafe.com which was very exciting and motivating to see 400 people using African Drums making music and harmony together and helping everyone to see that they can do anything.

The Texas Advocate Peer to Peer Grant is going strong. We have created solid relationships with both the San Antonio and Corpus Christi State Schools. We will continue to work with their self advocates educating them on community living and self advocacy skills. Our grant was just approved for its 4th year at the beginning of August. We have started accepting Leadership Academy applications for our 2008-2009 session. The next Leadership Academy session is scheduled to begin at the end of September. We have also begun researching and will develop an interactive DVD and web based self advocacy/self determination training module that will be accessible to any self advocate or self advocacy chapter that wishes to learn more or brush up on their skills.
Eric’s Journey to Finding a Place to Call Home!

After years of living without the right supports and in segregated settings, Eric, now 26 years old, has finally found his place to truly call his own home. Getting to this point in this journey has not been easy. Eric and his family have had to endure trials and errors over the years to discover what doesn’t work for Eric to finally find what does! Eric first moved out of his family’s house into a more independent living apartment situation when he was almost 20 years old. The apartment had some oversight from staff, but this particular situation didn’t work for him. He required more attention from someone to keep him focused and from doing “creative activities” that the staff didn’t like when he was bored (which was often). After that, the state didn’t know what to do with him so they moved him into a state operated habilitation center. They knew it wasn’t the right placement for Eric but did not have any providers who were able to provide him services. The director of the habilitation center quickly recognized the mismatch of this placement and Eric moved into a 6-8 person group home also run by the state. This placement was a good fit for Eric in some ways and was not in many others. For example, Eric was not allowed to participate in the activities that made his day to day life enjoyable (Boy Scouts, camping, race-cars, volunteering, etc.) After a few years, a private agency took over the group home and created an environment that was not a good fit for Eric. It was decided that Eric should move out. Eric moved into an apartment owned by the agency that agreed to provide his services, with a roommate chosen by the agency and where staff worked “shifts”. Eric and his family and friends were excited and felt like the new apartment setting was really going to work. They felt he could finally have the appropriate attention so that he could focus on the daily activities that made him happy. They thought he would finally be in a place with the supports to create a life that Eric himself, not others, wanted.

This was not the case. Eric and his family and friends felt that the agency did not have the same philosophy about supporting someone to live the life they want to live. They didn’t see the positive qualities in Eric and how he was not getting the right supports. This situation eventually ended in agency staff abandoning him at the hospital with the excuse that they just couldn’t provide the type of services that met Eric’s needs. It was clear that another look had to be taken to what Eric needed in order to build the life he wanted.

On their own, the family looked into other models of supporting people that were happening around the country and found there were providers who would set up a “companion model” for services. There are different ways that this model works, such as moving in with a companion, you and your companion finding a place to live, or the person with a disability having a place to live and a companion moving in. So Eric and his family found a home in a nice, safe neighborhood. Eric, his family and the provider agency identified a companion who will be Eric’s roommate and full time staff. This companion is “off” during the day and on some weekends. For Eric, this makes the most sense. He now can go to sleep each night knowing that this is his home and that he can’t be kicked out of it, he can decide who his roommates are and he can paint the walls whatever color he wants. His parents, also have the comfort of having consistent support in Eric’s life. The future will have obstacles, just as life does, but for Eric and his family at least they know that he has a place to call “home” where he can overcome whatever life throws at him.

Eric and his family had to learn on their own about the many different types of living situations that are possible within and outside the disability service system. Sometimes these options aren’t always the “norm” or what is easiest for providers or service coordinators, but in the end the options seem to be the best for that “person.” It is important that every family research the housing options and understand how the service system budgets work. There are many options available for self-advocates and their families, such as “self-direction”, companion model, foster families, independent supported living and others. Maybe by hearing Eric’s story, you will not have to endure the obstacles he did just to discover that what makes sense is what is best for the individual and that it is not always the traditional services available.

Submit a local success story to SABENation@gmail.com for a chance to be featured!
Self Advocates ALL OVER THE COUNTRY protested the use of the hateful “R word” in the movie Tropic Thunder.
ADVOCATES PROTEST TROPIC THUNDER MOVIE

Acceptance and inclusion for ALL People!!

TROPIC THUNDER!
TRY TROPICAL THUNDERSTORM OF DEGRADATION.
Exhibit on Disabilities Shown at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center

The exhibit created by SABE, Advocating Change Together, and People First of Alabama in 2004 on The History of Disabilities is featured at the Ohio exhibit, The Unfinished Revolution, Freedom for People with Disabilities. The exhibit can be visited from August 21- October 2, 2008 in Cincinnati, OH. The Inclusion For All Committee, spearheaded by Robert Harris, John Romer, and Essie Pederson, brainstormed this historic collaboration with The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

The opening of the exhibit on August 21, 2008 had over 250 people in attendance. SABE Chair, Julie Petty and SABE Treasurer, Tia Nelis were in attendance as this historic collaboration between disability-related organizations and the Freedom Center unfolded. Ohio self-advocates, Marvin Moss and Diana Mairose as graduates of Ohio Partners in Policymaking, served on this committee and personally welcomed every guest and discussed the exhibit.

Brendan Keefe, Anchor/Reporter for WCPO TV Channel 9, served as Master of Ceremonies. Christopher Shires, Director of Exhibits and Programs at the Freedom Center and Cheryl Phipps, Superintendent for the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD welcomed guests. Julie Petty followed by giving a passionate speech on “freeing our people”.

The evening program featured the premier of a new documentary filmed in Ohio, Lest We Forget: Silent Voices. Judy Leasure, Executive Producer for the film, introduced this “must see award-winning” film that chronicles the lives of people with disabilities and the dilemma of parents who not having any options but to send their children to Ohio’s institutions. From behind these walls, we will hear about their long journey home heard now in their own voices, history as only it can be told by those involved in institutionalization.

For more information contact Essie Pederson, epederson@cinci.rr.com

Judy Leasure, Executive Producer of the film “Lest We Forget: Silent Voices” and Marvin Moss

Audience in Harriet Tubman Theater to view the film

SABE Exhibit at Freedom Center
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 were 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 2009 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 the future!