

SELF ADVOCACY NATION

By Self Advocates Becoming Empowered

MAY 2014

SPRING EDITION

Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons

By Bob Macaux Co-Director Best Judgment Advocates in Action Rhode Island

My name is Bobby Macaux and I'm writing to tell you about a documentary that I'm making with fellow Self-Advocates, a team of professional filmmakers, and Advocates in Action Rhode Island, our Statewide Self-Advocacy organization.

As a person who has Down Syndrome, I know what it is like to be called names and judged because of my disability. I also know that, if I had been born at a different time, I might well have ended up spending my life in an institution – segregated, deprived of basic rights, and without hope of exploring my potential as a human being. That's why I'm so excited to be co-directing the film ***Best Judgment: Ladd School Lessons***.

Today, while Ladd is closed, other institutions like it still exist around the country. And many people who have a

disability still don't have equal rights. That's why this film is so important!

Best Judgment will examine the stigma and negative attitudes that people



who have a developmental disability face every day. It's going to be a powerful film and I believe it will help remove some of the prejudice and discrimination that exists. It will help us

END THE R-WORD once and for all! More importantly, I believe that ***Best Judgment*** is going to empower people who have a disability to speak up for themselves and others. And that's what Self-Advocacy is really all about.

Our fundraising campaign is over, but we still have a lot of work to do, and we can still use your support. You can find out more at our website: www.laddfilm.com. Thanks for your time. Remember: Together, we can make a difference!



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Plan Now for 2014 SABE Conference



It may seem like a long way off (6 months from now), but it's never too soon to get the next **SABE Conference** on your calendar.

Let's all plan to be there.

Location: Renaissance Hotel

Oklahoma City, OK

Dates: October 9 - 12, 2014

Sponsor: Oklahoma People First

Theme: "The Sooner We Are Equal,
the Better"

As our movement grows,
we're building our power.

See you there.

For more information

<http://goo.gl/w5OzeT>



Siblings Can Support Each Other to Vote

by Katie Arnold

Siblings often have the longest relationship of lives with each other. We grow up together and can support each other in many ways throughout our lives. One way is by helping each other exercise our right to vote. The Sibling Leadership Network (www.siblingleadership.org)

encourages siblings to support their brothers and sisters with disabilities to vote. Our organization has created a voting position statement sharing our belief that all citizens have the right to vote, including people with disabilities. We also have a voting video on ways siblings can support their brothers and sisters with disabilities in the voting process.

My sister, Patrice, voted for the first time in the 2012 Presidential election. She had just turned 30 years old. As the middle of five children, she was the last of my siblings to register to vote. There are many reasons for this, but in some ways our family just never really thought to ask Patrice if she wanted to vote. We didn't really know how to support her to vote either. Project Vote helped us

realize the importance of giving Patrice the opportunity to vote. Patrice learned about the power of the disability vote and the importance of getting out and vote in the disability community. By learning from other self-advocates, my family was able to support Patrice to get



registered to vote, get educated about the candidates, and get to the polls to cast her vote.

As siblings we talk to each other about the issues and the

candidates. We don't always agree, which is okay. We remind each other to keep our voter registration up to date and to go to the polls for elections.

What ways can you support your brothers and sister to vote?

Check out more resources here:

<http://goo.gl/C9ZGvc>



Southern Collaborative Energized and Standing Strong!



SABE was one of three organizations awarded a Regional Self Advocacy Technical Assistance grant by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The name of the project is called Our Community Standing Strong Grant (OCSS). The grant is to enhance work in the southern collaborative states which includes Region 6 and 9. This project is off to a

great start. The states participating in this project are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Other

allies who are working with self advocacy leaders on this project include: DD Councils, P & A's, UCEDD's, ARC's, State IDD agencies in each of the states.

It has been so amazing to see the energy and motivation from the participants who bring new ideas and thoughts to the self advocacy movement. There is an increasing amount of support being developed on building and strengthening

relationships within the southern collaborative states. Mostly importantly, the Southern Collaborative states are learning from each other and renewing the momentum of the self advocacy movement. The main objective of the grant project is to enhance peer mentorship in advocacy, training and leadership development, and education and outreach to communities.



OCSS has formed an advisory committee to accomplish the aforementioned goals. The advisory committee has accomplished a

number of activities since the project kicked off in October 2013. These include four Advisory meeting using Webinars, Southern Collaborative listserv, Conference Calls and the completion of state demographics and issues. As of March 15, 2014, 539 surveys from individuals addressed what their needs are in their states and have helped us identify needs for technical assistance and priority issues for self-

advocacy in the southern collaborative states. Based on the survey, the top technical assistance needs are: funding, partnership, grant writing, and managing grants. The top issues are self-advocacy, employment, closing institutions, Olmstead, and voting, and transportation. We are anticipating to collect 1500 surveys by the end of March.



In addition, there have been conference call meetings with others regional technical assistance grantee's such as ASAN (Pacific Alliance) and N-E-A-T (New England states). It is empowering and refreshing to have collaboration from others who are from other parts of the country working on their needs and sharing in such tremendous ways.

OCSS advisory committee (Southern Collaborative) met face to face with the SABE Board in Nashville, Tennessee for a working meeting on January 11-12, 2014. Attendance was outstanding and people came to make a difference in the work of self-advocacy in the south. We were pleased to have a number of participants from the DD Networks and state IDD agencies from Tennessee, South Carolina and Alabama, and a representative from a chapter of the National Sibling Network.



There were great presentations from all states as well as some strolls down memory lane that gave the meeting many special moments. It not only revived the participants, but created an atmosphere for all who believe and value self advocacy for people's lives. Amazing work has begun to re-energize the south.

The next face to face meeting will be in Birmingham, Alabama on May 8-9, 2014. This meeting will focus on developing individual state plans. There will also be a visit to the Civil Rights Museum and Disability Rights Exhibit. OCSS extends a special thanks to Bryan Murray and the SABE board for the support. The project effort is lead by Co - Directors, Caquetá Stuckey, and Vicki Turnage; support advisors, Juliana Huereña and Glenda Hyman-Singleton.



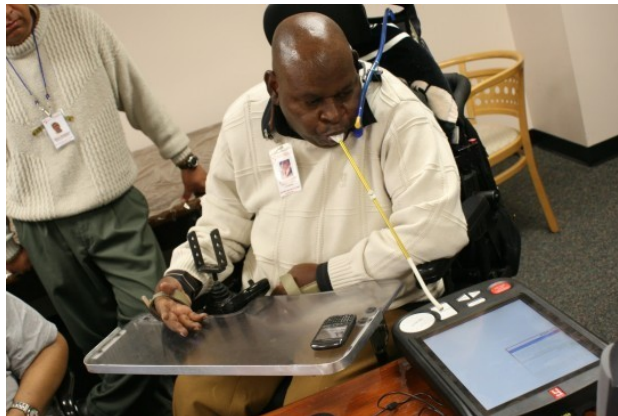


Making Our Vote Count: Project Vote Training and its Impact on South Carolina Advocates

By Ebony Deloach

The self-advocates of South Carolina may all be known for their smiling faces, positive attitudes, and our spirit of determination. However, in the world of advocacy, you may not see those smiles if our voices are not heard. It is important that advocates not only in South Carolina but in every state speak up for themselves and for what they believe. As advocates, speaking up for ourselves gives us a sense of empowerment, independence, and confidence to achieve any goal that we set for ourselves.

The South Carolina self-advocacy Council also known as IMPACT South Carolina believes that we as individuals motivate people to achieve change together. One issue in the state of South Carolina is a lack of education about voting. The members of IMPACT felt that it was important to us to gain more knowledge about voting, so along with "Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities, Inc (P&A), the members of IMPACT participated in the project vote training sponsored by SABE.



South Carolina was one of six states that participated in the training. The training was designed to educate the advocates about voting using a voting toolkit. The toolkit was designed to train advocates on how to register to vote, identifying where to vote, voting rights, and the

importance of knowing candidates just to name a few. The overall goal of the training was to bring awareness to the voting issue and ensure advocates that they can be comfortable when voting and

alleviate fears that many advocates have had or still have about voting.

Two members of IMPACT South Carolina participated in the training, Ebony Deloach and Saquan Brown. Ebony has been a member of IMPACT for two years and she is also a member of the voting coalition in South Carolina. Saquan Brown is the IMPACT South Carolina secretary and he is also a member of the voting coalition. Maggie Knowles is the PAVA & Development Coordinator in South Carolina.

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Central New York Self-Advocates

Advocacy, Awareness, and Independence Is How We Roll



On March 15th Self-Advocates from Central New York marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Syracuse. Members from the Self-Advocacy Network, Utica Self-Advocacy

our community great! Some of our messages included Advocacy, Awareness and Independence is How We Roll, Nothing About Us Without Us, and Respect the Differences. We also passed out "Spread the Word to End the Word" Pledge Cards and pencils to over 700 people. Fun was had by all!



Group, United Self-Advocacy of Syracuse and Self-Advocacy for Change joined together to ask the Syracuse Community to celebrate "community" by supporting the inclusion of all, by respecting each other and by valuing the contributions each of us give to making

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

She joined P&A earlier this year. She also participated in the training.

The project vote training was led by Tia Nelis and Teresa Moore. The members of the Project Vote Training Team felt these ladies did an excellent job with providing the training.

Ebony Deloach Project vote team leader for South Carolina stated that the training was very resourceful. "With the use of technology the training was very user-friendly."

The homework assignments allowed the team as a whole to gain more knowledge about the voting process. The training leaders were always available by phone or e-mail to answer any questions and that was a big help.

Maggie Knowles stated "The vote toolkit is an excellent resource to educate voters with."

Overall the team feels that providing this training will definitely keep our advocates smiling because they will be more knowledgeable about voting and they can educate others as well.



Real Jobs Sought for Alabamians with Disabilities

BY KIM CHANDLER

This article was published March 31, 2014 <http://www.kansascity.com>

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MONTGOMERY, Ala. — It was the early 1990's. Jeff Ridgeway, who was born with a mix of disabilities, had started going to a day program at a Mobile Goodwill. They timed how fast he could pack napkins into boxes. They told him he was unemployable in the outside world. It made his blood boil.

"I said, 'You watch me. You watch me. This ain't acceptable,'" Ridgeway, now 49, recalled.

Ridgeway eventually got a job at Bruno's Supermarkets and worked there for 15 years. Today he is one of the state's best known advocates for people with disabilities. He has lobbied the state to put more resources into helping people with disabilities live independently and helped sway lawmakers to rename the once-called Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Now it's called the Department of Mental Health.

Ridgeway is now pressing for the Alabama Legislature to adopt a measure that would help more people with

disabilities enter the workforce. The proposed Jeff Ridgeway Act would push the state to move away from sheltered workshops — where people with disabilities perform basic tasks often for less than minimum wage — and to put more money into job coaching and other services.



Courtney Tarver, Alabama's Associate Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities, said the Department of Mental Health supports the bill because the department is moving in that direction. Tarver estimated last year that 4,500 Alabamians with

intellectual disabilities were in some sort of day service, in either a workshop or school-like setting.

The bill has been stuck in a state House committee. Tarver said it faces opposition from some workshop operators and some families who fear the disappearance of day programs they've used.

Ridgeway said it is about choice. He said there has been confusion and



unwarranted fear about the legislation, and that no one will be forced to work if they feel they are unable. He added that supporters of the proposal will try again next year if the bill fails this session.

Ridgeway was born in the north Alabama city of Athens in 1964. His mother had Rubella when she was pregnant, causing multiple birth defects. He was born with a hole in his heart, suffered strokes and was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. Ridgeway said at first people didn't really know what to do with him.

"Mama kept me tied to her apron strings," Ridgeway said.

After his mother died, he moved with his sister to Mobile. His sister searched for a place for him to go during the day, and he eventually ended up at Goodwill.

Ridgeway said part of his life's work has been to make people see people with disabilities simply as people.

"We walk different. We talk different. We use canes and wheelchairs. We use assisted devices, and that's all they see. They forget each one of them is a proud U.S. citizen and so am I," Ridgeway said. "Why are we so willing to discriminate

against somebody who happens to be a little bit different instead of understanding and working with them?"

Ridgeway has become a familiar sight at the Alabama Statehouse when legislation affecting people with disabilities is up for debate.

"I don't think that there are many people in this state who would have demonstrated so consistently over so many years the willingness to say, get up, take a bus at 3 or 4 a.m. from Mobile to Montgomery to push for what they though was right. And then get back on a bus and get home at 9 or 10 or 11 at night. To me that is what is extraordinary about Jeff," James Tucker, executive director of the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program.

Ridgeway has also lived with congestive heart failure since he was a child. Doctors tell him his heart is now functioning at only 10 percent. He said the doctors have cautioned he might not have much time left — but he laughs and says they have been telling him that since he was a child.

"The good Lord can call me home whenever he wants, but until then I've got work to do," Ridgeway said.

Going to a SABE National Conference

by Max Barrows



Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) hosts a national Self-Advocacy conference every two years. Going to a national self-advocacy conference is a way to meet new people, travel to places you haven't been before and learn more about self-advocacy. Since 2006, I have been to 4 National Self-Advocacy conferences, and they have all been a blast!

Some of the fun is traveling with people that you know. It could be friends, family, staff or co-workers. Usually, traveling involves flying. There is less stress and anxiety while traveling with other people. For example, going through security, dealing with delays and layovers, it's always nice to have company. Second is going somewhere new. I remember my first experience traveling somewhere I haven't been, the feeling was WOW! It definitely influenced me to want to travel more. Plus, if you're from a rural area, you get to experience what's it's like in a city.



On your way to a conference for the first time, you may wonder about making friends. There are 1000 people that attend from across the country. You meet people with all kinds of intellectual and developmental disabilities, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and from inner-cities to rural areas. Also, you realize you are not alone. You connect with peers from across the country and you feel empowered by that.

**Plan Now for 2014
SABE Conference**



**For more information
<http://goo.gl/w5OzeT>**



At a conference, there are a lot of workshops which are taught by self-advocates themselves. Through what I've seen, most workshops focus on personal life experiences. This can bring awareness to issues that impact your life. I like learning from other people. As someone who works to make a difference, I can't do my job effectively without knowing the issues coming from someone else's story.

It's one thing to take to workshop, but another to present one. Teaching a workshop is a great way for people to learn about you. You can learn how to be more comfortable with presenting in front of people. Also, doing a presentation can be helpful when looking for financial support to go to the conference.



Of course a lot of the fun comes from having big dances. From my personal experience, there is a variety of music and the DJ's are excellent. Overall, the dances that happen are better than what some nightclubs have to offer. People stay up for the very end which is almost midnight.

During lunch and dinner sessions, there are keynote speakers, a self-advocate who speaks on behalf of persons with disabilities on a national level. Keynotes are a way to be more inspired to speak up.



Overall, the last 4 conference have made me feel more a part of the Self-Advocacy movement. How? You find out that it's not just your life, or the lives of members of your local group, or state organization that matter. You begin to see the whole picture of issues that impact the lives of people throughout the United States.

Recordings of Calls & Webinars On-line

Welcome! Here is a list of webinars presented by SABE's Autism Now team. You can listen to what was said and look at handouts. Just click on the link and it will play a recording of the webinar. You can download a copy of the PowerPoint.



Go To: <http://sabeusa.org/?catid=393>



SABE members have written 20 BLOGS about living life with autism. Go to

<http://sabeusa.org/?catid=393>

The SABE Autism NOW team has new Self-Advocacy Tools on:

- A Short History of Self-Advocacy
- Advice for Allies, Advisors and Support Staff
- Equal Employment for Persons With Disabilities
- How To Start & Run A Self-Advocacy Group
- Including Members Who Use Alternative Ways To Communicate
- Making Meetings Make Sense
- Presuming Competence

Allies and Advisors
Going To College
How to Date Like a Pro
Sex and Relationships
Disability Awareness
Joys and Pains of Working
Talking About 'Your' Transition"
Making Information Accessible
Medical Procedures that Violate Civil Rights
Parents with Disabilities
Presenting at a Conference
Self-Advocacy
Running A Self-Advocacy Groups
Taking Responsibility for Your Life
Converting Sheltered Workshops to Employment
Moving Beyond Subminimum Wage
Building a Safety Net for Yourself
Is Voting Important to You



Advocates in Action

Producing **Best Judgment:
Ladd School Lessons**
www.laddfilm.com



Region 1: Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

Region 4: Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota

Region 5: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

Region 8: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont

Region 2: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada

Region 3: Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Wyoming

Region 9: Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma

Region 7: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia


Region 6: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Having trouble remembering which region you are in

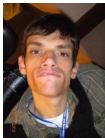

or do you need to get in contact with your regional representative?

Here is a quick and easy way to get connected!



Region 1

	<p>Jason Billehus Email: j.billehus@yahoo.com Cell: (406) 728-0953</p>	<p>Vacant Seat</p>
<p>Montana</p>		



Region 2

	<p>Ryan Duncanwood (Treasurer) Email: rmduncanwood@gmail.com Phone: (530) 221-8770</p>		<p>John Britton Email : bigturbo39@hotmail.com Phone: (480) 785-0171</p>
<p>California</p>		<p>Arizona</p>	

Region 3

	<p>Bryon Murray (President) Email: bryonmurray2000@hotmail.com Phone: (435) 722-7590</p>		<p>Amira Rasheed Email :hotwheels_princess@hotmail.com Phone: (505) 883-4630</p>
<p>Utah</p>		<p>New Mexico</p>	

Region 4

	<p>Cathy Enfield (vice President) Email: mswings9@comcast.net Cell: (816) 718-0419</p>		<p>Bill Story Email: billstor@aol.com Cell: (913) 237-5486</p>
<p>Missouri</p>		<p>Kansas</p>	

Region 5

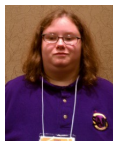


Betty Williams (Secretary)

Email: bwilliams@arcind.org

Cell: (765) 277-2538

Indiana



Carrie Varner

Email: carriemv2001@yahoo.com

Cell: (320) 444-3337

Minnesota

Region 6



Bernard Baker

Email: djbakeratl@gmail.com

Phone: (404) 431-3670

Georgia



Chaqueta Stuckey (sergeant at Arms)

Email: chaquetastuckey2011@gmail.com

Cell: (843) 625-0980

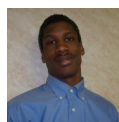
South Carolina

Region 7

Vacant Seat

Vacant Seat

Region 8



Max Barrows

Email: maxwbarrows@gmail.com

Work: (802) 229-2600

Vermont



Clint Perrin

Email: cperrin@sanys.org

Cell: (518) 630-7275

New York

Region 9



Consuelo Castillo

Email: consuelocast2006@yahoo.com

Cell: (210) 527-4092

Texas



Samuel Jenkins

Email: samueljenkins55@hotmail.com

Phone: (405) 882-6667

Oklahoma

National Advisors



Juliana Huerena

Email: prinzjana@aol.com



Leanne Roth

Email: leanneadvocacy@gmail.com



Glenda Singleton

Email: GlendaHyman-Singletary@fcdsn.org



PO Box 12239
Florence, SC. 29504

Justice NEWS



On April 8, 2014, the Justice Department announced it entered into a agreement that will resolve violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for approximately 3,250 Rhode Islanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The landmark ten year agreement is

the nation's first statewide settlement to address the rights of people with disabilities to receive state funded employment and daytime services in the broader community, rather than in segregated sheltered workshops and facility-based day programs. Approximately 450,000 people with I/DD across the country spend their days in segregated sheltered workshops or in segregated day programs. The agreement significantly advances the department's work to enforce the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, which requires persons with I/DD be served in the most integrated setting appropriate .

As a result of the settlement, 2,000 Rhode Islanders with I/DD who are currently being served by segregated programs will have opportunities to work in real jobs at competitive wages. Additionally, over the next ten years, 1,250 students with I/DD will receive services to help transition into the workforce.