

IOWA:

A Place to Grow Advocates



SELF ADVOCACY IN IOWA

- 25 + local advocacy organizations across Iowa but no list of them all
- Located in large and smaller communities
- Some meet socially
- Others focus on peer support, training, issues and advocacy.
- Includes 7 Independent Living Centers and at least 3 local People First organizations

RESOURCES FOR SELF ADVOCACY

- No single funding source for all of the self advocacy organizations.
- Independent Living Centers receive federal and state \$, & support from the State Independent Living Council (SILC)
- Others receive support from local Arcs, DD Council, ID Action, provider organizations and local businesses; it varies widely.

WHAT HAS WORKED?

- IOWANS WITH DISABILITIES IN ACTION (ID ACTION)
 - A DD Council project intended to increase knowledge, skills and confidence
 - Grants for local organizing and change projects
 - Advocating Change Day at the Capitol
 - State Capitol Advocacy days for local groups
 - “Just in Time training” for caucuses, voting, and advocacy like meeting with decision-makers

CHALLENGES

- Transportation
- Youth Involvement
- Funding
- Top down approach to organizing self advocates hasn't worked—need to start locally and grow first at the community level
- Reaching the “silent majority” of lowans with disabilities who are inactive as self-advocates to support them to be more actively involved

WE ARE PROUD THAT

- Legislators have passed a bill to get rid of the word “retarded”. Finally!
- 800 people advocate for change at ID Action’s Advocating Change Day at the State Capitol.
- There are 2700 new voters with disabilities because of increased access, training and education.
- People with disabilities are providing training about community living choices for their peers.
- People with disabilities were included in the system redesign planning meetings last Fall.

DREAMS & GOALS

- Everyone should have the choice to be excited about living in the community
- Integrated community employment
- Leadership development
- See People First of Iowa back in action
- Statewide Self Advocacy Conference
- Youth involvement after the Youth Leadership Forum
- Supports to live & travel for example, personal assistance services

THE IOWA TEAM

- Jeremy Beavers, People First of Cerro Gordo County
- Tricia Cain, Arc of Story County
- Jeff Gitchel, Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- Becky Harker, Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council
- Mike Hoenig, Center for Disabilities & Development (UCEDD)
- Charlene Joens, Disability Rights Iowa (P&A)
- Todd Lange, Mental Health & Disability Services, Iowa Department of Human Services
- Koki Nakagawa, People First of Story County
- Mia Peterson, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered
- Rick Samson, Citizens Disability Consortium
- Rik Shannon, Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council/ID Action
- Sujit Singh, Access 2 Independence Center for Independent Living