



What is Self-Advocacy?

Self-Advocacy refers to the civil rights movement for people with developmental disabilities, and other disabilities. It is an important term in the disability rights movement, referring to people with disabilities taking control of their own lives. The self-advocacy movement seeks to reduce the isolation of people with disabilities and give them the tools and experiences to take greater control over their own lives. **Self-Advocacy is about supporting individuals with varying abilities in making daily living choice, and real change in their own lives.**

What is The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS?

The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS is a 26 -year old statewide organization run by and for people with developmental disabilities who speak up for themselves and others. Self-Advocate leader Bernard Carabello founded SANYS after he worked with Geraldo Rivera to close Willowbrook state institution. The self-advocates at our organization were involved in and are the catalyst for many initiatives you may hear of today (**Self-Determination, SANYS U, Self-Advocacy Youth Leadership, We Have Choices, Wheel Power, A Person First Name for OPWDD and more importantly keeping services and spending in systems person first**), The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS is one of the most active self-advocacy organization's nationwide. SANYS recently presented SANYS University Leadership curriculum in Minnesota for the National Self-Advocacy group SABE (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered). This initiative is swiftly traveling locally and nationally. In order to further share this meaningful curriculum our goal is to offer SANYS U as an App on the iPad! The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS is considered the leader in best practices supporting people with disabilities to speak up for themselves and others. **SANYS is one of the strongest and most active self-advocacy organizations of its kind.**

What is the role of SANYS and local initiatives?

The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS hosts many events and activities in the Long Island Area: Supporting and developing self-advocacy groups is an importance part of what we do! Reaching people with diverse abilities and living situations (at home, independently in an apartment, a group residence, or developmental center) is critical part in helping people to understand their basic human rights, which can often be overlooked by society. **Self-advocacy groups are among some of the most important groups experiences individuals with disabilities can have. Our groups empower individuals and their families to apply knowledge of rights and opportunities to their everyday living. Teaching people the tools they will need to have richer deeper community experiences and build their leadership and advocate for what is important to them is what self-advocacy groups are all about. Social groups and activities are a natural by-product of the self-advocacy group experience. We support many independent and agencies affiliated groups. SANYS supports self-advocacy group involvement locally and statewide.**

Self-Advocacy Leadership Meetings (Nassau & Suffolk): Presidents and Advisors of self-advocacy groups from across long island have the opportunity to work together on learning how to navigate systems (Medicaid, Medicare, Transportation, Career-School involvement and networks). At self-advocacy meetings we support people to become leaders and take charge of their own choices by practical application of pragmatics, social and team building experiences, project planning, and legislative-policy related activities. Socialization and more community involvement, and connections are a natural by product of self-advocacy groups. These meetings are open to all community members (individuals with disabilities, teachers, brokers, parents, MSC's and others) **At meetings individuals learn strategies to make their needs known!**

Youth Leadership Team The Self-Advocacy Youth Leadership team focuses on teaching young people about their rights, responsibilities and how to make their needs and wants known (at school, home, work etc.) through a variety of fun, interactive projects. Youngsters work with their peers to build their own leadership and teach others. Individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to work together on learning how to navigate systems (Transportation, Career-School involvement and networks). At self-advocacy meetings we support people to become leaders by practical application of pragmatics, social and group officer related experiences. Young people are offered the opportunity to work on community presentations, internships, community service hours and a working leadership council. Socialization and increased community involvement are natural by products of self-advocacy. **SANYS self-advocacy youth teams are changing Long Island one community at a time!**

“Independent Us Self-Advocacy Group “ is a group for the people with disabilities who live and receive services independently. That’s why they call themselves “Independent Us”. This group is for individuals living independently that wish to learn about self-advocacy, real choice and being part of a team. *Parents/family members are welcome to network in the adjacent cafeteria and join us for the 10-minute wrap up at meetings end. **If you know anyone interested in or involved in self-determination or ICS tell them to come join us. We hope to see you there!**

Long Island Regional Self-Advocacy Conference

Each year the Long Island Regional Self-Advocacy Conference engages over 500 individuals with developmental disabilities, care givers, school personnel and providers through workshops, teaching choice, human rights and responsibilities for all. This event differs from most others because people with disabilities are presenting, teaching and establishing leadership by hosting the day right along side their invited colleagues. This conference is an engaging day where people learn about community, ability and the paradigm shift of going from caregiver to colleague. SANYS recognizes each person’s ability to be a valued member of the community. Using venues like our conference to support the positive education of our communities to eliminate negative connotations and stereotyping of people with disabilities. **Our conference is a unique opportunity for emerging self-advocate leaders to demonstrate talents and their leadership abilities.**

Why The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS (SANYS)? :

Without organizations like SANYS services for people with disabilities would be lost in a myriad of budget tasks and fiscal cuts.

People with disabilities learn to make their needs known by speaking up for themselves and learning how!

SANYS provides more networking opportunities, internships, volunteer and social interactions with policy makers and community members than any other self-advocacy organization in NYS. SANYS always keeps the voices and concerns of the individuals in the forefront.

SANYS has a long-standing proven track record of developing future leaders with a strong knowledge base of services provided for people with disabilities.

Various paid and unpaid opportunities are offered to individuals with disabilities (Grassroots Presenters, Quality Assurance etc.).

SANYS works with self-advocacy groups across the nation and locally on Long Island to teach people about choices and opportunities for their lives.

SANYS is and has been the driving force in advocating to keep funding flowing to support services for people with development disabilities in this ever-changing fiscal climate.

Organizations like SANYS are and have been instrumental in advocating to keep Self-Determination, ICS, Transportation, Medicaid, Medicare, Employment, Housing, and insuring that funding dollars are spent in a person first way, and in the forefront of future planning meetings, agendas and open dialogues.

Thoughts on SANYS from the Long Island Community:

SANYS gave me the tools to live my life more independently! -Self-Advocate Leader

Self-Advocacy gives people the Courage to ask for what you need want and what you want!
Self -Advocacy is the core of everything; it is the crux of living your life! –Parent

Self-Advocacy opens up a whole new world of camaraderie and understanding. -Youth Member

Self-Advocacy teaches people about the human condition, a paradigm shift from caregiver to colleague. The human experience! – SA Coordinator

For information on how to get involved and support SANYS please visit www.sanys.org or contact:
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