

# Ryan Success Story



I chose Ryan Paggiolito to do a success story on, because he is always so positive, motivating and a strong believer in self-advocacy (SA). Ryan has a smile that can make anyone's day, and it was my pleasure to interview him. Ryan believes that self-advocacy is about empowering and working with people and that's what made him start his own SA group Inclusion Action Group. His group is connected to the Inclusion Action Group. The Inclusion Action Group is connected to the Special Olympics and it's a movement with Catholic Charities including some of their staff, Day Service Option groups, individuals and DDS to make a difference. Ryan is proud that he is an athlete and global messenger spreading awareness and working behind the scenes to promote self-

advocacy. Ryan enjoys participating in the event, Dream Rides, which is a Hometown Foundation sponsored event with fancy cars, motorcycles, food, entertainment and Patriot cheerleaders. He received the Dream Ride Metal and walked the red carpet. When I asked Ryan if it was challenging starting and running his self-advocacy group, he responded It wasn't hard because his staff Jessica Czarnota provided him with lots of support. Ryan believes that self-advocacy is all about uplifting people and not hurting their feelings. He told us, "It's not about you, it's not about me, it's about us." Right now, his 40 members, in-person group that meets in Newington is open to everyone, but his goal with the help of his dedicated staff member, Randi Jackson, is to have it become hybrid. Ryan dreams to inspire a lot of people to get connected, involved and work together. When I asked Ryan what advice he would give to someone who wanted to start their own SA group he responded, "You can do something that makes a difference and motivates yourself. Try not to embarrass yourself and lead the way." Ryan loves life and is a party animal who lives by the slogan, "Life is a Party!" His role models are his mom, his staff Jessica, Diamond and Karen and his 2 girlfriends lol. When I asked Ryan what was the best piece of advice that he's received he responded, "Let the good times roll!"