

# DDS

# Self Advocate Coordinators

## 2020

## End of Year Report

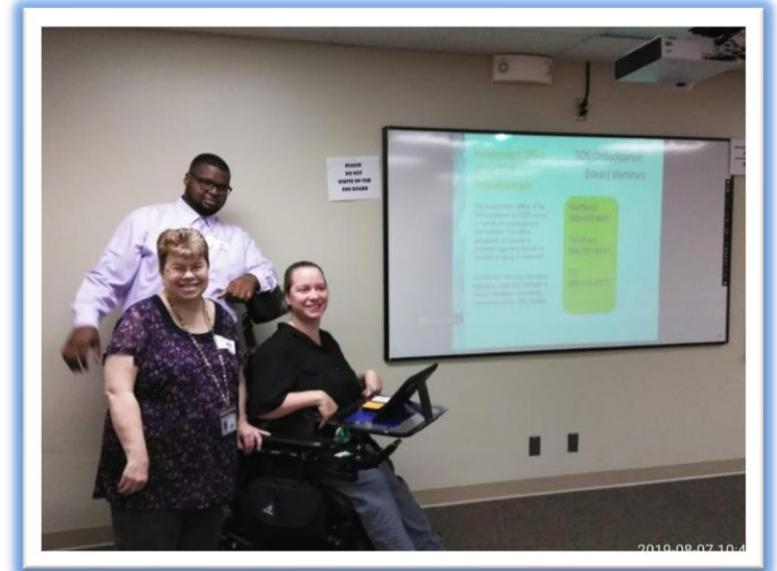


**Leading the Way through Change**

# Self Advocate Coordinators at Work!

## Who are the SACS?

- Legislature Supported
- A Voice of the People
- Making a Difference



## What do they do?

- Promote Self Advocacy - Spread the Word!
- Promote Individual Involvement
- Lead by Example
- Support Regional and State Activities





**James Louchen**



**Yana Razumnaya**



**Varian Salters**

**West**

**North**



**Jossie Torres**



**Natasha Cole**



**Kevin Arce**



**Kellie Hartigan**

**South**



**Carol Grabbe**



**Jeremy Powell**



**Paige Librandi**

**DDS**

# West Region Self Advocate Coordinators

## James Louchen

Self Advocate Coordinator

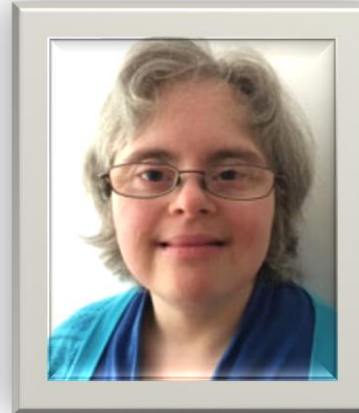
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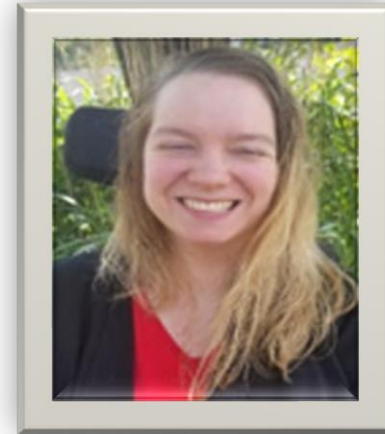
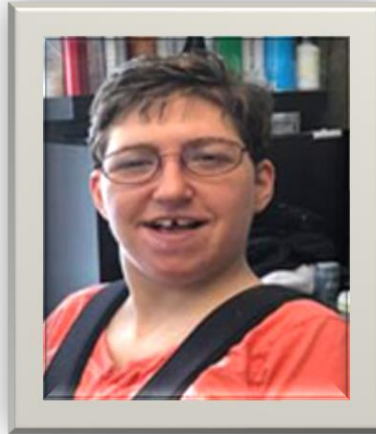
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# South Region

## Self Advocate Coordinators

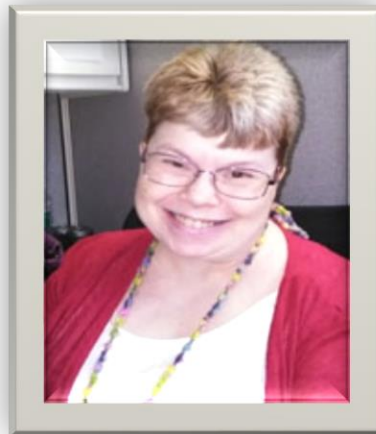
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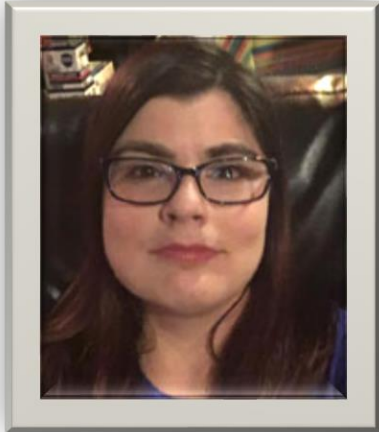
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### **Kellie Hartigan**

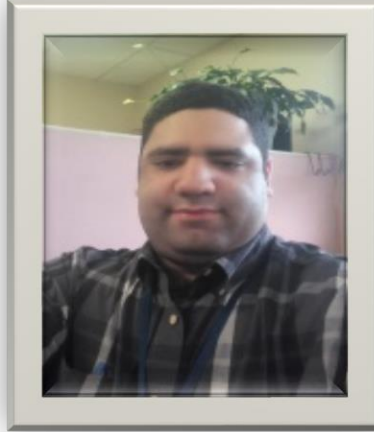
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# SACs Support the VOICES of all the Advocates of DDS!

- 2004 - CT Legislature supported DDS in creating 10 state positions to represent the people supported by the department – 10 Self Advocate Coordinators (SACs)
- The SACs are State employees
- SACs lead the department in Making A Difference!



# WE Are People. Call ME By MY Name!

- Since February 2015, “We are People – Call Me by My Name” campaign has asked that everyone be called by their given name
- The DDS Self Advocate Coordinators (SACs) have promoted “People First Language”
- SACs hope to eliminate the words and terms:

**"client"**

**"patient"**

**"ward"**

**"them"**

**"handicapped"**

**and the**



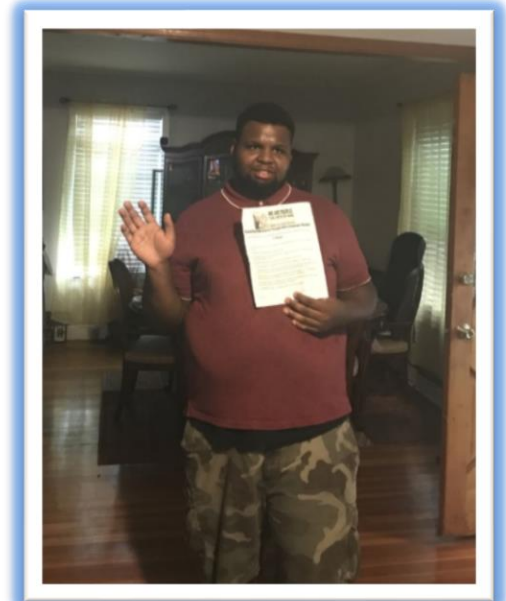


# Take the Pledge!



- The SACs have written “The Disability Awareness Pledge” and challenge everyone to take the pledge to reaffirm a commitment to seeing the person and not the disability
- Over 3,335 people have taken the Pledge!
- The SACs are challenging each one of us to be the change that makes a difference.
- SACs are promoting all stakeholders to [Take the Pledge](#) and keep it moving forward!
- Together, we all can be the CHANGE!

 TAKE THE  
**PLEDGE**



# SACs Promote the 10 Steps of Being a Good Self Advocate



These are great steps to follow to work through any problem.



1. Believe in Yourself



2. Realize YOU have Rights

3. Discuss YOUR Concerns



4. Get the FACTS in writing



5. Use the Chain of Command

6. Know your appeal rights



7. Be Assertive and Persistent

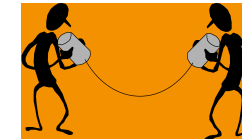
8. Use Communication Skills



9. Ask for help



10. FOLLOW-UP



# Self Advocacy Building Voices

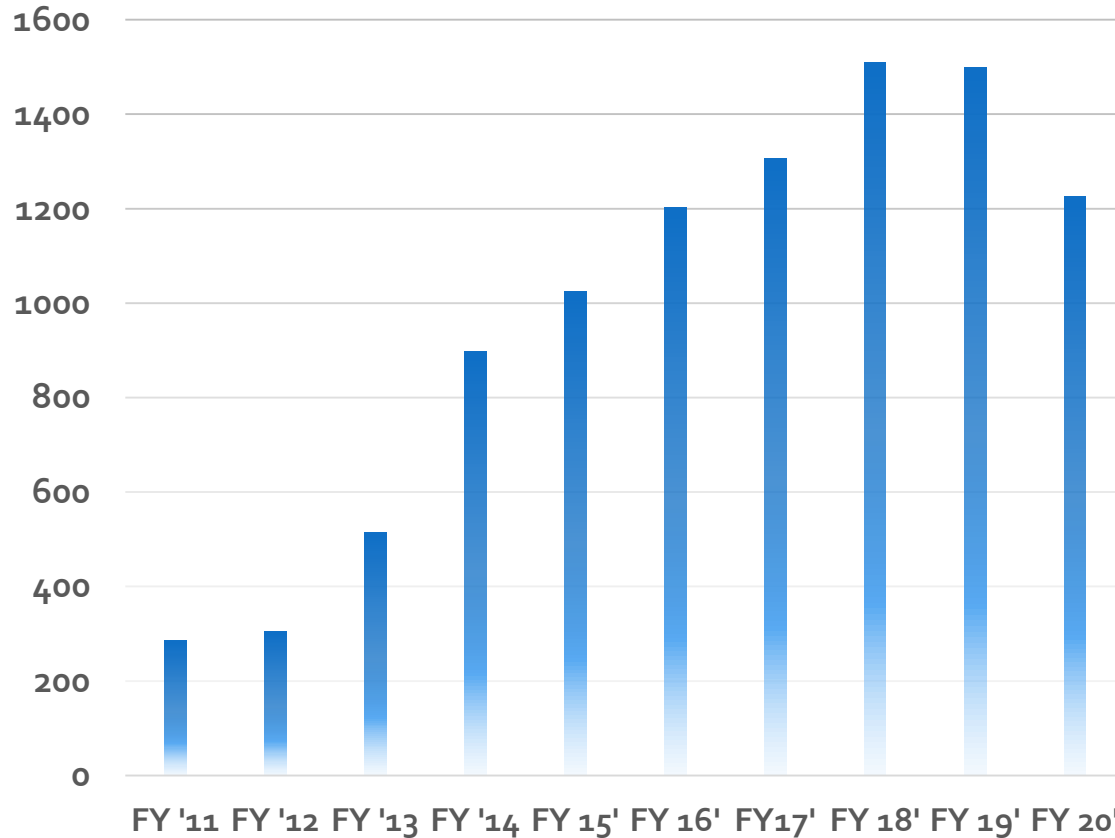
## Empowering Others to Speak Up!

- Developing, supporting, empowering, and expanding Self Advocacy Groups in CT
- Being an IP Buddy and developing IP Buddies to support individual advocacy
- Supporting and participating in “CT Cross Disability Alliance”
- NCI’s – Peer Interviewing and sharing Self Advocacy Information
- Working with all the CT Private Providers and stakeholders to support advocates having a voice
- Promote Peer 2 Peer waiver service and Employment Opportunities as a Peer 2 Peer qualified provider



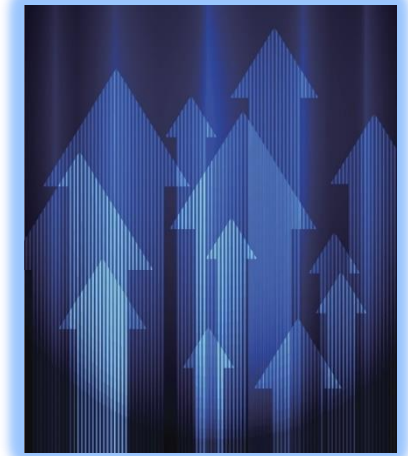
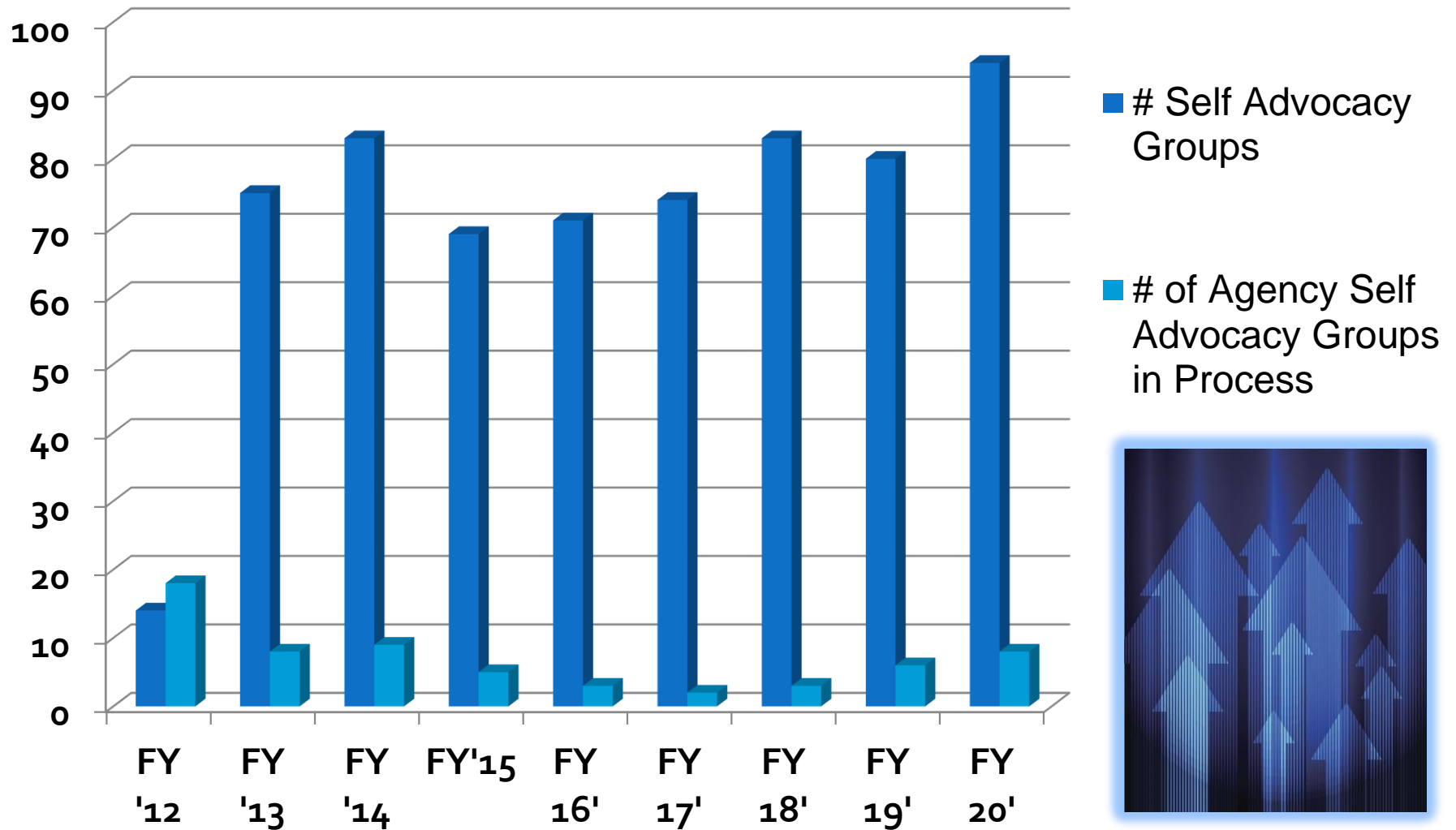
# Self Advocacy Continues to Grow

Total Number of Participants in Advocacy Groups: 1,227  
Due to COVID-19, our numbers decreased slightly



# Statewide Self Advocacy Groups

Total Number of 2020 Groups: 94



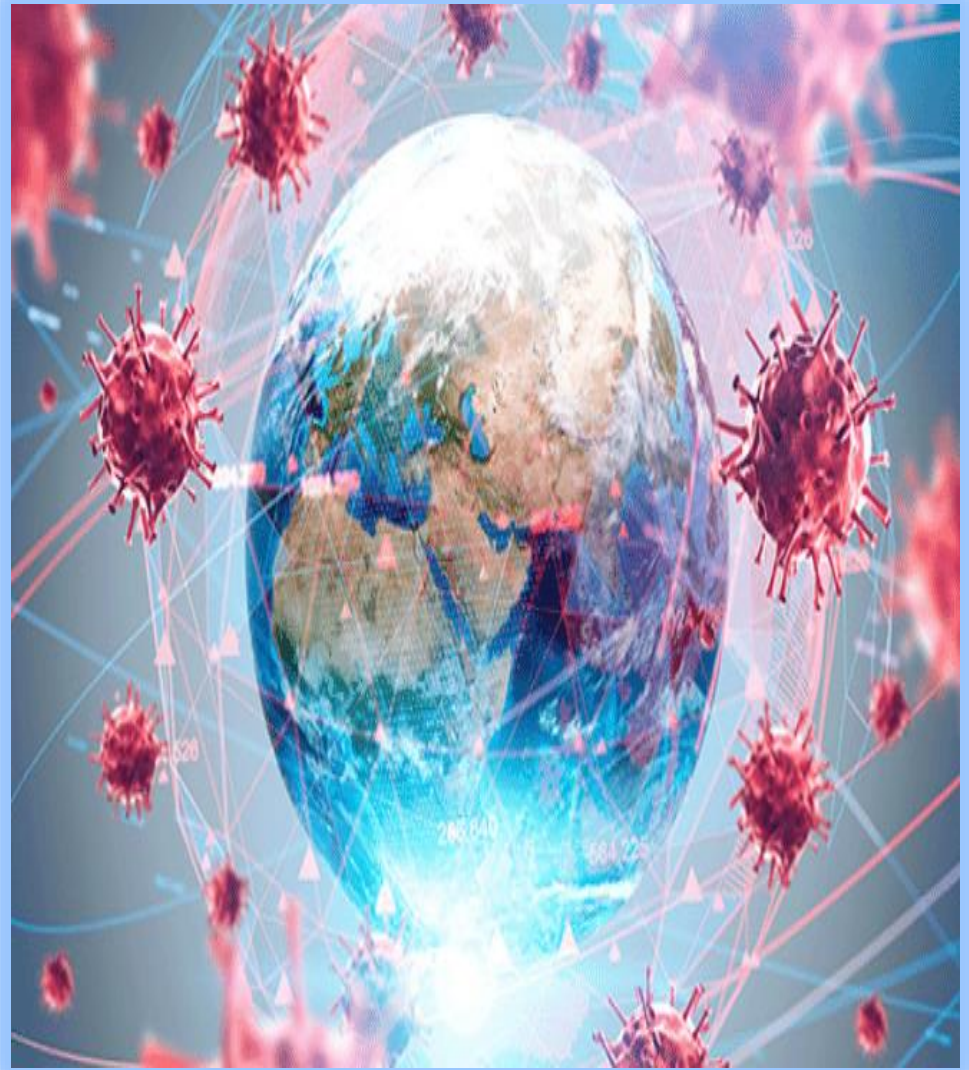
# Challenge – How to Connect During a Global Pandemic?

Explore Technology

Use social media

Create Virtual Gatherings

Learn what is important  
**To** and **For** people and  
finding the balance to  
support each other



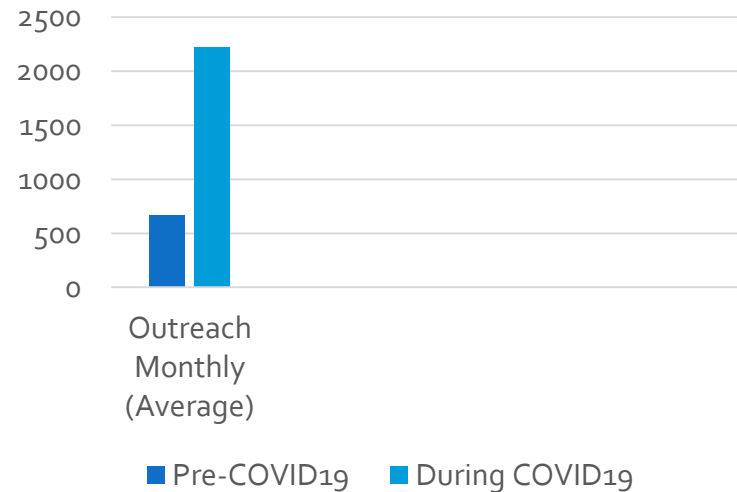
# The COVID 19 Challenge – Virtual Connections!

Technology has increased our  
outreach dramatically!!!

Monthly outreach  
670 people to 2218!



## Outreach to Stakeholders



- Virtual Bulletin Boards
- Virtual Self Advocacy Meetings
- Virtual 1:1 Advocacy
- Virtual Trainings
- Virtual Flyers

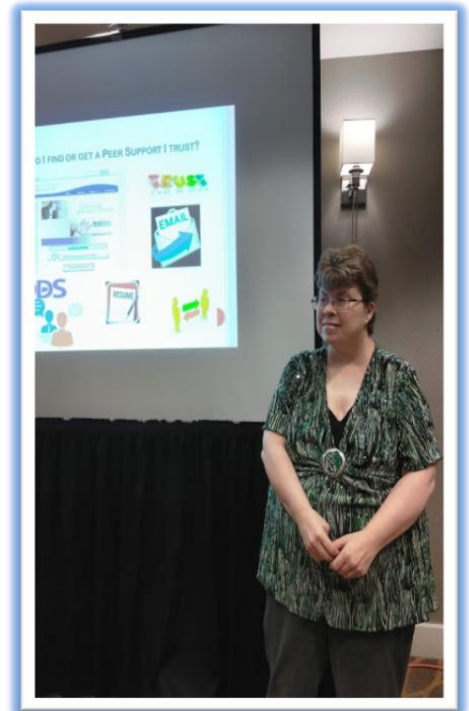
# Self Advocacy

## Spreading The Word!

**Self Advocacy within DDS: Promoting to individuals and all supporting staff the importance of self advocacy and how it empowers people to “Make their Life Happen”!**

## Public Speaking

- State Conferences – Aging, People First
- Employment First Trainings, One Voice, Transition Symposium. Regional and State Presentations
- Promote Employment
- Disability Awareness Month
- Promote DDS Mission and Vision
- Disability Summit
- NCI interviewers
- Virtual bulletin boards and Virtual flyers
- New Provider Orientation material to promote self direction, self determination, self advocacy, and employment!





# Self Advocate Coordinators Provide Education & Training

- Regional Leadership Forums
- Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance
- Peer 2 Peer Support
- DDS New Employee Training
- Developing, Updating, and Supporting the DDS Advocates' Corner website
- Secondary Transition Symposium
- Youth Leadership Forum
- Ongoing presentations to DDS staff and all Stakeholders
- Next Street Driving School
- DDS Council
- Job Development Leadership Network
- CT Family Support Network Collaboration and trainings
- Ongoing trainings for Healthy Relationships
- Write and Share Success Stories to post on the DDS Advocates' Corner website



# Self Advocate Coordinators Leading the Way!

- Youth Leadership Forum
- National Core Indicator Surveys – Interviewers
- Individual Plan Buddies
- Annual Mentoring Day
- Presenters at National and State Conferences
- Transition and Employment Fairs
- Promoting SA and Spreading the word at the Big E
- One-to-One Advocacy
- Disability Awareness Day
- Virtual Groups



**National Association of Medicaid Directors NAMD Conference  
SAC Varian Salters & Commissioner Scheff presented and attended**

# Leadership



## Statewide and Regional Conferences, Trainings, and Committee Work:

- Hiring Interview Committees, Qualified Provider interviews
- Provider Qualification Review Board
- Community Companion Homes
- Charting the LifeCourse
- CT Coalition for Aging and Developmental Disabilities
- Family & Mentoring Leadership with CTFSN
- APSE Board
- CT Secondary Transition Symposium
- Parents with Disabilities
- Housing Committee
- Video Monitoring and Human Rights
- Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance Committee
- Abuse and Neglect Oversight Committee & Financial Task Force
- Project Search



# Spreading the Word!

## Presentation Boards:

- Virtual Special Olympics Summer Games
- Virtual Bulletin Boards
- Virtual Advocacy Groups
- Virtual Flyers
- Regional Resource Fairs
- Transition Fairs
- School Fairs
- Family Forums
- Regional Offices
- Big E
- Disability Summit
- Annual APSE Conference
- CT Youth Leadership Project/Forum



# Promote Self Advocacy Spread the Word!



## Knowledge is Power!



- All SACs have a Focus Area
- Regular meetings are held with DDS Administration to discuss issues that are important to everyone who receives services from DDS
- FAB Topics – Shared with the SA Groups
- Explore [FAB Topics](#) on the website!

**Fun  
Advocacy  
Brain Power**

# SAC Focus Areas



Each of the SACs support all of the Focus Areas and are responsible for “Spreading the Word” with all the topics. They each coordinate the following Focus Areas:



- Self Determination/Self Direction
- Self Advocacy



- Special Olympics & Healthy Living

- Transportation



- ADA/Assistive Technology

- Aging



- Employment



- Housing, CCH, Living Options



- Healthy Relationships



- Public Safety



# Self Determination/ Self Direction

- On average, 100-125 people choose to self direct their services every year
- SACs hire and manage their Direct Support Professionals. This is called Self Direction.
- SACs are role models of living a self determined life and self direct their own staff to support them to live the life they want with the support they need.
- SACs submit success stories to the “Advocates Corner” promoting Self Determination and Self Direction
- All SACs developed personal work goals and identified their support needs to live their self determined life!



# Self Advocacy

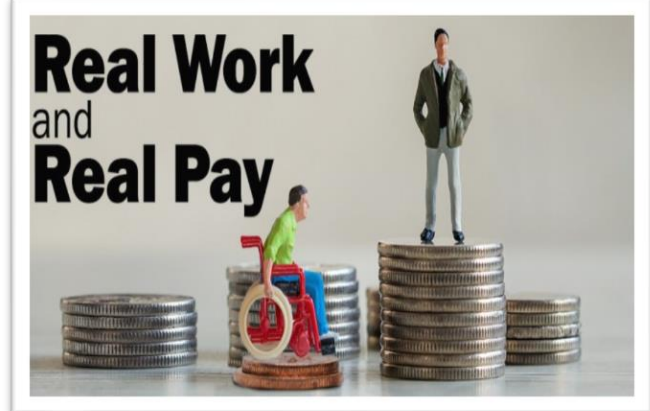


- **FAB Topic information is shared monthly with providers and individuals across the state.**
- **On Board Training – The SACs train new employees on the importance of human rights and advocacy.**
- **Advocates' Corner Website promotes self advocacy and provides information to find your voice as an advocate!**
- **Bulletin Boards - SACs support all of the DDS offices with monthly boards focusing on FAB topics, Advocacy and Employment information. In April we started to create virtual boards and increase our contacts to 4,815 individuals.**
- **Sharing Self-advocacy information with high school students in transition as well as Project SEARCH participants, helps them to speak up and advocate for themselves.**
- **All Self Advocate Coordinators offer 1:1 Advocacy**





# Employment for ALL!



- Promoting employment goals in Individual Plan
- Increase employment activities and interviews at SA groups
- Promote review of benefits with Level Up Counselors
- SAC on APSE Board – Association of People Supporting Employment First
- SACs assisted in planning APSE’s annual conference in CT
- SACs are members of JDLN -Job Development Leadership Networks
- SAC member of SELN Review Committee
- SACs attended Job Training Program, Job Fairs, Diversity Employment Fairs
- Promote Employment at Transition Fairs, Provider and Staff Meetings
- Promote Employment in Self Advocacy groups

**REAL WORK FOR REAL PAY!**



# Special Olympics/Healthy Living

- SACs promote Healthy Living in SA meeting by promoting Self Care (Drs, medicine, taking breaks, and loving yourself)
- Healthy Recipes in Self Advocacy Meetings and Bulletin Boards
- The SACs co-facilitate the Healthy Relationship Classes with a professional from PPSNE
- Promote exercise in Self Advocacy meetings and on Bulletin Boards
- The Self Advocate Coordinators teach individuals to know their Rights
- SACs have been promoting the Special Olympic FIT 5
- SAC supports and coordinates the Torrington SA Fit Club for 4 years
- SACs promoted Special Olympics in their SA Groups and Bulletin Boards
- CT Virtual Summer Special Olympic Games held first time

Link to [Virtual Summer Games Highlights](#)

**Special  
Olympics**  
Connecticut



# Transportation



- SACs attended the Multi-Modal Transit Summit.
- 5 presentations done on Transportation this year.
- SACs provided transportation presentation CTFSN
- Driving:
  - SACs promote learning to drive
  - SACs have been in communication with Andrew Arboe, a self advocate, who is helping Next Street Driving School in location to develop training
  - The Next Street Driving School has expanded its driver training program for individuals with disabilities and providing evaluations
- Air Travel:
  - REAL ID ACT – Homeland Security established minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards
  - Starts October 1, 2021 – need to have yellow star on your license to fly
  - You will still be able to fly with your passport. This is called REAL ID. The deadline was extended to October 2021.
- Due to COVID-19, transportation is less of a concern with virtual opportunities



# Assistive Technology and Promoting The ADA



- The SACs promote the 30th year anniversary of the ADA
- SACs promote how assistive technologies help voices be heard.
- This year shared with advocates across the state several adaptive devices that assist people to work and live their lives independently with the support that they need.
- **The Neat Market** has a Smart Home on wheels which has technology that is voice activated. It allows individuals to live as independently as possible.
- The Lending Library at UCP lends assistive technology to an individual to try the device before purchasing.
- CT Tech Act- participates in Steering Committee
- ARC of Meriden- participates in Steering Committee
- We are a member of the DDS Assistive Technology Steering Committee
- All of the Respite Centers have been equipped with Assistive Technology
- SACs promoted virtual supports, learning, and SA groups
- AT evaluations done for SACS- independence/opportunities



# AGING



- SAC on the board of the CT Coalition on Aging and Developmental Disabilities (CCADD).
- The Annual Aging Matters Conference supported by CCADD, DDS, DADs, and AAIDD was not held in May 2020 due to the pandemic.
- SAC supporting, planning, and presenting at the Aging Matters Virtual Conference - Fall 2020
- Promote aging on DDS bulletin boards
- SACs promote and share information to support people as they get older
  - The article, [What do Older Adults and People with Disabilities Need to Know?](#) gives you different tips to keep you from being lonely and keeping you involved with activities.



# Public Safety

The SACs promoted public safety in the following ways:

➤ Bulletin Boards



➤ S.A. groups



➤ Virtually



➤ Providers



➤ Daily



➤ Participate in Sartac SA & 1-to 1 Advocacy



**Text your friends where & when you are going out late**



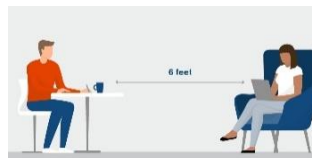
**Travel with a friend. Learn how to defend yourself**



**Keep your personal information safe. Don't share on social media especially when you're on vacation**



**Carry a cell phone - Identify ICE –person In Case of Emergency**



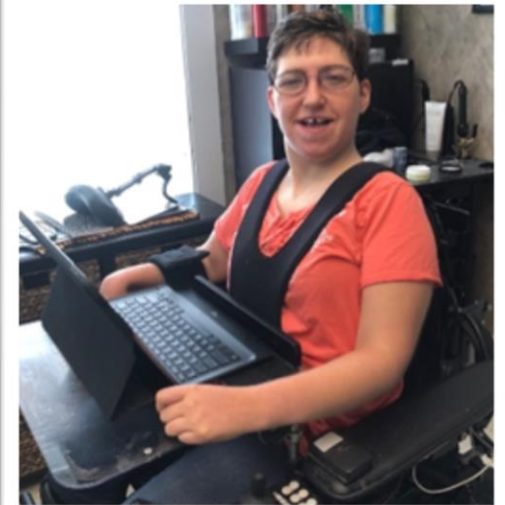
**Stay home, stay safe  
Social distancing and wear a mask**



*Amazing Advocates!*

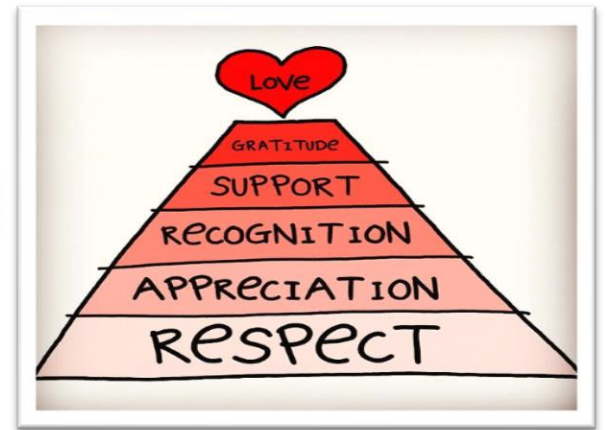
# Housing Options

- This year the SACs promoted a variety of agencies as housing options for adults with special needs. We shared this information with individuals in our community throughout the year.
- We promoted CCHs, shared living, independent living, clustered living, and family or living in own home.
- Assisted living facilities allow people a great deal of independence with an option to also have a support system in place.
- Section 8 provides vouchers for people with low income to obtain housing in the community. The individual pays approximately one-third of their monthly income and the voucher pays the rest.



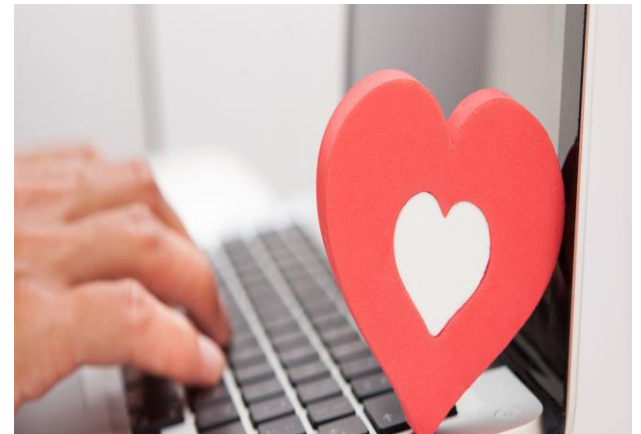
# Healthy Relationships

- Promoted the Healthy Relationship Pol that provides the right of all Individuals supported by DDS to have and enjoy a healthy relationship
- Presented HR overview for CTFSN
- Typically there are three - 6 session trainings held in each region but due to COVID 19 only **4 sessions** held in person
- First Virtual HR Session held in 2020
- Up to 25 participants in each session
- Peer teaching by Self Advocate Coordinators with PPSNE Educator
- Planned Parenthood of Southern New England expanded their educators to meet the demand of the series



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

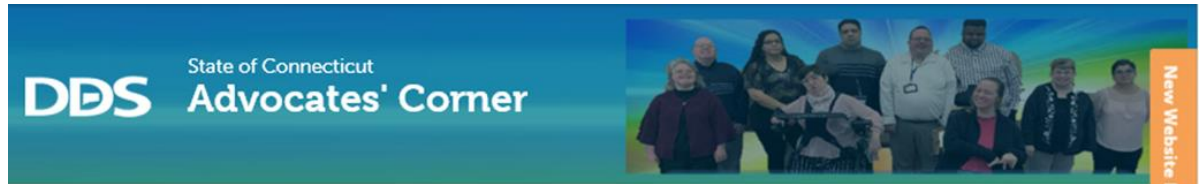
CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF CARE





# SACS Launch Updated Website - Advocates' Corner

Advocates' Corner



[CT.gov Home](#) / [Advocates' Corner](#)

- About Us >
- Life Tips >
- Transportation >
- My Plan - Life Course >
- Recreation and Respite >
- Employment >
- Emergency Preparedness >
- My Vote Matters >
- Topics A-Z >

Search Advocates' Corner

by Keyword

## Highlights & Happenings

- [Meet the DDS Self Advocates](#) >
- [Healthy Relationships](#) >
- [Peer to Peer](#) >
- [Living the Mission](#) >
- [SAC end of year report](#) >
- [Take the Pledge](#) >
- [COVID-19 Updates for DDS Individuals and Families](#) >



Looking  
Forward to  
an Exciting  
New Year as  
We Make  
New  
Virtual  
Connections  
Fiscal Year

- Promote advocates' voices by expanding and developing Self Advocacy Groups
- Expand Virtual Connections
- Promote Living a Self Determined Life
- Continue to promote Healthy Relationships
- Promote various Living Options
- Promote Peer 2 Peer and Employment Opportunities as a Peer 2 Peer qualified provider
- Promote and lead by example the Individual Plan (IP) and use of the CT LifeCourse Materials while expanding IP Buddy support/training
- Continue to promote and train Degrees of Mean for providers and advocates
- Continue to provide education and training to Individuals, Families, DDS Staff, Providers, and Sister Agencies in the Department Initiatives
- Promote Youth Leadership Forum with schools
- Provide support, training and modeling at the Youth Leadership Forum
- Continue to promote REAL WORK for REAL PAY



2021

# Leading the Way Through Change!



**SPEAK UP and SPEAK OUT!**