

Changing Lives..... Shaping Futures

"The AU course not only builds advocates, it builds human beings. It changed my life."
 — Donald P.

"I truly believe it saved my life. It improved my self-esteem. It enabled me to believe I could do things."
 — Heidi M.

"The education I received has been really useful. I see three or four people a week that I have been able to reach out and help."
 — Scot F.

Advocacy Unlimited, Inc. is a consumer run, DMHAS-funded, non-profit organization. AU facilitates the empowerment and recovery of people with psychiatric disabilities. AU offers participants who live in the community and in institutions a comprehensive, 14-week course that provides extensive training in self, systems, and legislative advocacy skills. Graduates perform internships within the community for six months and become part of a grassroots network of trained advocates that help others in their recovery by advocating for their rights and teaching them to advocate for themselves. Knowledge and skills ensure that people play a central role in shaping the services and policies that affect their lives. AU advocates are a constant presence in statewide policy meetings at the Capitol during legislative session, working to educate legislators to defend and expand the rights of people with psychiatric disabilities. Advocacy Unlimited also provides a wealth of information, support, and resources pertaining to mental health and the issues surrounding it, including awareness and stigma to members of the public, providers and consumers.

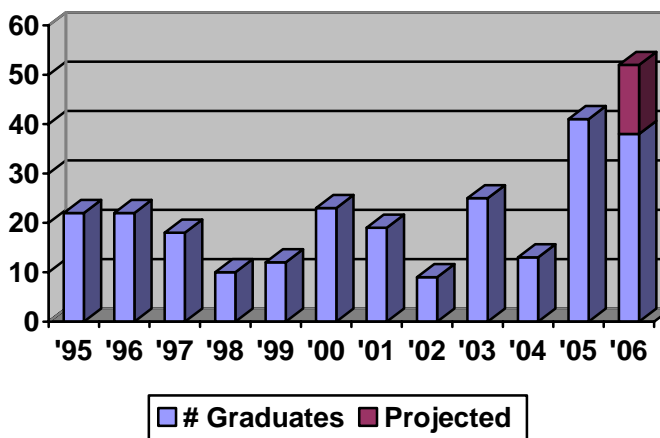
"Recovery is the overarching theme that guides everything we do at DMHAS. Recovery is based on empowering people and offering hope that they can lead self-determined and fulfilling lives, directed toward achieving their highest potential."
 — DMHAS
 Commissioner
 Thomas A. Kirk.



Sample of Courses:

- Advocacy and Documentation
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Housing Issues
- SSI / SSDI
- Legislative Advocacy
- Public Speaking
- Stress and Time Management
- Body Language
- Patient's Rights
- Advance Directives
- Grievance and Negotiation
- Voter's Rights

Number of AU Graduates by Year



- This year:**
- **35** advocates were recognized by AU for their work educating legislators at the capitol.
 - **123** advocate appearances at AU bi-monthly meetings (24.6 per meeting).
 - **Fifty** advocates are currently completing placements.

AU advocates work! Many of the advocates became employed after taking the course and here is a sampling of their job titles: *Retail Customer Services Representative, Teacher's Assistant, Peer Support Specialist, Nurse, Personal Care Assistant, Latino Club Coordinator, Customer Service Representative, and many more.*

For more information, contact AU Executive Director, Melissa Marshall at 860-667-0460 or mmarshall@mindlink.org, or visit the AU website at <http://www.mindlink.org>. To view previous issues visit <http://www.dmhas.state.ct.us/infobriefs/index.htm>.