

## **GMSA Board Meeting held on March 28, 2022**



**GMSA Officers (4):** Lisa Rudiakov (president/Friends of Friends), Levi Gardner (vice president/VT Choices), Nicole Villemaire (Secretary/Champlain Voices), Chad Cleverley (treasurer/VT Choices)

**GMSA Board Members (8):** Tesha Thibodeau (Winds of Change), Marjorie Burns (BSAC), Jenny Rainville (BRAG), Chris Dubeau (COPS), Heather Raymond (Next Step), Erik Johnson (VT Choices), Tesha Thibodeau (Winds of Change), Carol Patenaude (Newport Self-Advocates)

**Self-Advocates (7):** Susan Mandell (BRAG), Amanda Daniels (VT Choices), Susan Mandell (BRAG), Danielle Viau (BSAC), Marshall Denutt (VT Choices), Jeffrey Drake (GATSA), David Frye (Champlain Voices)

**Allies (5):** Lee Reilly, Jacob Weber (BSAC), Wendy Summarsell (Winds of Change), Lucy Stone (COPS)

**GMSA Staff (3):** Max Barrows, Hasan Ko, Karen Topper, Karen Noone

### **Agenda:**

- 10:00 Introductions and Group Updates
- 10:30 Presentation of New GMSA Officers
- 10:45 Announce and review plans for VT Leadership Series.
- 11:00 5-minute break
- 11:05 Update on GMSA Projects
- 11:20 Report from Voices and Choices Committee.
- 11:45 Discussion about GMSA supporting groups in 2022

### **Introductions and Group Updates**

- 1) Capitol Advocates Together:** Supported one of their members to run for city council in Montpelier. She was very proud to be involved in local politics. She

felt like people listened to her and she learned a lot and she got over 30% of the votes. Our group had a discussion about what's going on with the war in Ukraine.

- 2) **VT Choices** - Meeting on Zoom; organizing community services projects to support partner organizations. Looking for information about at-home Covid tests.
- 3) **BSAC** – We meet twice a month on Zoom with an option of attending in person. We had St. Patrick’s day event. We continue to provide staff training
- 4) **Champlain Voices** – Planning a garden project to do together. Our group presented on self-advocacy during the agency’s annual luncheon
- 5) **BRAG** - Zoom meetings and we have a walking group on Wednesdays
- 6) **Central VT Self-Advocates** – Max met with these high school students from 4 schools in Washington County. They want more information from us about alternatives to guardianship.
- 7) **COPS - Connections of Peer Support** - Making a game that explains person centered planning. Also doing some Staff training.
- 8) **Winds of Change** – supporting HCRS to develop a peer advocate position for the agency
- 9) **Next Step of St. Albans** – **presenting a disability awareness training to the agency board.**

### **Presentation of New GMSA Officers**

Many groups have not been meeting in person. The Board approved using a Ballot survey to vote. About half of the votes were submitted online and half were recorded when groups were meeting. It was a very close vote. Congratulations to all who ran.

The winners are:

**Lisa Rudiakov for President**  
**Levi Gardner for Vice-President**  
**Nicole Villemaire for Secretary**  
**Chad Cleverley for Treasurer**

## Reviewed list of Board Members

- Bennington Friends of Friends - Lisa Rudiakov
- BRAG – Brattleboro Reg Advocacy Group - Jennifer Rainville
- Bridging Advocates Together - vacant
- Burlington Self-Advocacy Club - Marjorie Burns
- Capitol Advocates Together - Taylor Terry
- Champlain Voices - Whitley Draper
- Communication Alliance - Kris Medina
- Connections of Peer Support - Chris Dubeau
- Friends Helping Friends - Lisa Smedy
- GATSA - Eugene Johnson
- Newport Self-Advocates - Carol Patenaude
- Next Step Self-Advocacy - Heather Raymond
- SAVY - Patty Grassette
- SABE of Rutland - Caroline Gillen
- Speak Up! Addison County - Antoine Polgar
- Vermont Choices - Erik Johnson
- Winds of Change - Tesha Thibodeau

## **Technology Stipends for Board members:**

In review, last month we discussed how when the GMSA board met in person GMSA we spent about \$650 each meeting. This included 1) 30 lunches for GMSA Board meeting 222.00 2) Renting Langevin House - \$250 and at least 3) Mileage reimbursement - \$150. For the past 2 years the board has met virtually. The board discussed and agreed to give board members (approximately 20 people) a \$30 per diem to reimburse for internet and technology expenses for a total cost of \$600 a meeting.

Chad Cleverley made a motion:

In order to support participation in GMSA events, meetings and online activities, *GMSA will provide a \$30 monthly stipend to each board member and officer to reimburse for internet and other technology expenses.*

Marjorie Burns seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **VT Leadership Series**

Presentation by Leadership graduates on what they learned during the 3-weekend session training. We need to decide on recruitment strategy and identify any barriers for participation.

What does it mean to do the Leadership Series?

- Develop skills to be an effective advocate
- Build relationships with policymakers.
- Talk about disability rights
- Get better at working as a team with parent advocates

We need to recruit people to take our Leadership Training.

- Weekend One, May 21-22, 2022, Lake Morey Resort, Fairlee, VT
- Weekend Two, June 25-26, 2022, Northern Vermont University, Johnson
- Weekend Three, July 23-24, 2022, Castleton University, Castleton, VT

It is Saturday starting at 10:00. You stay overnight in your own room. We are done on Sunday after lunch. You must go to all 3 weekends. You do not have to pay for food or your hotel room. Board members agreed to share recruitment information with members of their group. Individuals can call the GMSA office to get support to complete an application

## **Update on GMSA Projects presented by Max:**

- **SARTAC** we runs a website with hundreds of resources made by self-advocates. We do Zoom meetings and trainings.
- **Leadership Series** - a 3 weekend series where families and self-advocates attend. The history of the self-advocacy movement and leadership skill are taught.
- **SAP or Self-Advocacy Project** - we use this for our website, trainings and technical assistance to local groups, supports the board, support people with IDD to serve on boards, provide disability awareness training to organizations

- **Vera Institute of Justice** - training curriculum for police about communicating with people with IDD.
- **Peer Mentors for Person Centered Planning** - got a small grant to plan still waiting to apply for BIG funding from the state for \$\$ to pay peer mentors
- **Supported Decision Making** - we are part of a team that is trying make this more popular. We are doing a training for parents and high school students in July.
- **Open Doors** - we made a leadership training for BIPOC youth
- **AUCD (Association of University Centers on Disabilities)** - we helped them turn their vaccine information into plain language.
- **NASDDDS** - they hired us to do training and write a Blog once a month

### **Voices and Choices in 2022 – Report**

- Voices and Choices in PERSON will be April 24 & 25 2023
- For 2022 - We are having the conference virtual in September. It will not be in the summer so we can avoid vacations and camp. And so high school students can be included.
- Last time we did virtual conference for 5 days with 3 events a day. In September we will spread it out over 2 weeks - and have 1 or 2 events a day. For example:
  - On day 1 do something in the morning and afternoon
  - On Day 2 just do something in the evening.
- Workshops are 60 minutes long. Presenters get paid \$75.00
- You need to tell us exactly what you will do. We need an outline. Include directions for activities you will teach.
- Please no lectures - no talking for more than 5 minutes at 1 time
- Use humor, music, role plays, short videos, small group work, games, activities,
- Go at a reasonable pace (not fast) give enough time for all to understand
- You must have slides that go with what you are teaching. We are on zoom so people need something to look at.
- Who can present?

- We want workshops taught by people with disabilities. Support can be given by others, but self-advocates must be the lead presenters. Self-Advocates who present will be paid \$75. (only 2 paid presenters per workshop). First time presenters will be asked to share all of their presentation materials with GMSA staff ahead of time so we can assist you as needed.

**These theme ideas were suggested by the board:**

- Stay Connected
- Help Others Get Online
- We Stick Together, We Are Not Alone
- Rebuild Self-Advocacy
- Get Rid Of The 'R' Word
- Friends Helping Friends Out

**Discussion about GMSA supporting groups in 2022**

What can GMSA do to better support local groups?

- a) Newport wants help to get people more involved
- b) BSAC talked about cleaning up the language in the state's website
- c) CAT group wants advanced leadership skills training