



"Among my peers, I feel safe—like I am with family. We need peer-run spaces to openly talk about growing up and becoming independent. We need you to prioritize self-advocacy." Max Barrows



**Vermont Pathways
to Partnerships**
Rooted in support, soaring to success

Bring Peer-Led Self-Advocacy to Your School

An Invitation from Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA)

Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA) is Vermont's statewide organization led by adults with disabilities. We partner with schools to bring peer-led self-advocacy workshops and clubs directly to students. Our Peer Trainers teach from their own lived experience. Students listen differently when the learning comes from us.

What Students Learn - Through fun and interactive sessions, students build skills in:

- Understanding yourself and your rights
- Speaking up and communicating your needs
- Preparing for IEP and transition meetings
- Building a positive disability identity
- Learning the history of Disability Rights
- Exploring alternatives to guardianship
- Using these skills in real life, not just in school

Sessions are offered in person or virtually and can be adapted to your school's schedule.

What This Looks Like in Schools

- Prefer 2–3-hour sessions (or adapted to your schedule)
- Offered during the school year and summer
- Designed for groups of students with a wide range of disabilities
- Hands-on, interactive, and practical

Why Schools Partner with GMSA

- Students learn from people who have lived it
- Builds confidence, leadership, and real-world self-advocacy skills
- Strengthens transition planning
- Supports a culture of inclusion, high expectations, and student voice

More Opportunities from GMSA For Students and Teachers

Self-Advocacy Clubs in Middle School and High School

For more than 30 years, GMSA has helped schools start student-led self-advocacy clubs. These clubs are run by students (not staff) and focus on building confidence, leadership, and problem-solving skills. We will pay high school students to help us set up and run clubs in Middle Schools.

Learn How to be a Peer Trainer

Students age 16+ can apply to become Peer Trainers. Students learn how to teach self-advocacy and facilitate clubs in their schools. Receive ongoing support from GMSA and get paid!

Peer Support Hours

Weekly virtual drop-in support session led by self-advocates. Students discuss using self-advocacy in everyday life. Meet students from other schools. This is a great opportunity to learn from one another and have a consistent space where our voices matter.

Voices and Choices 2-day Conference held in May

P2P students can win a scholarship to attend Vermont's statewide self-advocacy conference.

GMSA also offers virtual trainings for students, families and educators on:

- Plain language communication
- Supporting students to lead IEP and transition meetings
- Allyship and advocacy
- Alternatives to guardianship

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