



MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Masonic Institute for the Developing Brain, 2025 East River Parkway,

Minneapolis, MN 55414

October 7, 2026

9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Minutes

Members Present

Heather Kainz, Chair
Jenny Arndt, Vice Chair
Holly Andersen
Luke Bourdeaux
Prince Cole
Daonna Depoister
Jen Hall-Lande
Heidi Hamilton
Joel Liestman
Elizabeth Marsh
Katie McDermott
Lisa McDonough
Carolyn Perron
Janna Peterson (virtual)
Dan Reed
Ashley Reiff (virtual)
Bonnie Jean Smith
Heather Stillwell
Sumukha Terakanambi
Lauren Thompson

Members Excused

Chris McVey
Mary Raasch
Jennifer Santema

Kaylie Schmidt
Garret Zayic

Staff Present

Stephanie Nelson
Colleen Wieck

Guests Present

Dustin Anderson
Jacqueline Colt
Indu Eati
Mark Eati
Priyanka Eati
Anastasia Harper
Mary Harreld
Betsy Hayes
Stephanie Kampa
Charlie Krejchik
Tim Lewis
Paul Macharia
Kristina Mengis
Jillian Nelson
Holly Olena Kampa
Brenton Rice
Katy Simmons
Megan Skweres
Shane Soberg
Pam Sunder
Jenny Svihel
Bala Tadavarti
Chad Trench
David Tucci
Marilyn Tucci

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER –

Heather Kainz, Council Chair called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS – Kainz

All present introduced themselves

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Kainz

Kainz asked for approval of the Agenda. **Motion:** McDermott moved, seconded by Cole that the Agenda be approved. Motion carried

IV. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 5, 2026 COUNCIL MINUTES – Kainz

Kainz asked for approval of the August 5, 2026 Council Minutes. **Motion:** McDermott moved, seconded by Smith that the Minutes be approved with one correction. Heather Stillwell should be listed as an excused absence. Motion carried.

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – Wieck

October 2026 is the 55th anniversary of the Council. Every member received a token of appreciation for their service on the Council as “difference makers.” The federal government notified the Council that the Five-Year Plan (2027-2031) was approved with no revisions (the letter was distributed).

The Annual Work Plan aligned to the 2026 Baldrige Criteria was reviewed with the members. **Motion:** Liestman moved approval of the Work Plan, seconded by Depoister. Motion carried.

The Administrative Spending Plan was presented. **Motion:** Stillwell moved approval of the Administrative Spending Plan, seconded by Bourdeaux. Motion carried.

VI. The remainder of the meeting was spent listening to presentations by the Council’s grantees. The PowerPoint presentations were distributed at the meeting and are available online.

- A. **Partners in Policymaking (Odyssey Group)** from 10:00 am until 10:30 am
Short break from 10:30 am until 10:45 am
- B. **Self-Advocacy (Advocating Change Together)** from 10:45 am until 11:15 am
- C. **Training Conference (Highland Friendship Club)** from 11:15 am until 11:30 am
Lunch from 11:30 am until 12:15 pm
- D. **Employment (MSS)** from 12:15 until 12:45 pm
- E. **Cultural Outreach (Autism Sibs Universe)** from 12:45 pm until 1:00 pm
- F. **Ambassadors for Respect (PeaceMaker Minnesota)** from 1:00 pm until 1:30 pm
Short break from 1:30 pm until 1:45 pm
- G. **Continuous Improvement (Mary Harreld Consulting) and Publications, Online Learning, and Websites (Mastcom)** from 1:45 pm until 2:15 pm

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Smith asked that the letter from France be read aloud praising the Council’s archival work. Kainz read the letter and it is attached to the Minutes.

Jenny Svihel thanked the Council for the opportunity to be at the meeting. “Thank you for the impact you have on my life. Let’s continue to work together to make Minnesota better.”

Liestman shared that White Bear Lake High School will host the adapted sports soccer state tournament on November 20-21, 2026 . This is a varsity sanctioned sport.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Kainz called for a motion to adjourn. **Motion:** Bourdeaux moved that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Andersen. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 2:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Wieck, Executive Director

OVERVIEW OF
PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING CLASS 43 (2025-2026)
SEPTEMBER '25 – MAY '26



**Partners in
Policymaking®**

Class 43 | Year 2025-2026

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING GRANT PROGRAM

- Created in 1987
- Over 1,200 Minnesota Graduates
- \$210,000 funding
- 35 participants accepted
 - Adults with disabilities
 - Parents or legal guardians of children with developmental disabilities
- 8 sessions (September – May)
- 128 class hours
- Local and national speakers, elected officials
- History, Inclusive Education & Effective Meetings, Personal Living, Supported & Customized Employment, Community Organizing, Minnesota's Legislative Process, and Federal Government



A LOOK INTO CLASS 43



- Start: 36 participants
- End: 31 participants
- 18 people with disabilities
- 13 parents, 23 children
- Capitol Visit

	Individuals with a developmental disability (IA 1.1)	Family member of an individual with a developmental disability (IA 1.2)
The number (%) who report increasing their advocacy	88%	100%
The number (%) of people who are better able to say what they want / say what is important to them	94%	100%
The number (%) of people who participating in advocacy activities.	69%	91%
The number (%) of people serving on a cross-disability coalition	38%	45%
The number (%) who are satisfied with the project activity	88%	100%

⑧ TECHNOLOGY, APPS, SOFTWARE, ELECTRONIC + MECHANICAL DEVICES

- AAC ^{reminders} ^{as about devices} ^{board} ^{maker} ^{translation app} ^{light + sound} ^{fire alarm}
- E-books
- Headphones
- Captions
- Handles for devices
- Wearing equipment that connects to your phone and doesn't show
- People are wearing hearing device
- Chrome extensions ^{!Packs} ^{globe!}
- eye gaze tracking
- pens that read what is scanned
- enlarging fonts
- PAPER AT lab + other lending libraries
- Sign language software
- Jaws software
- Staff training: all staff
- touch
- live se
- adapted
- mobile
- larger buttons
- PECS
- Bluetooth
- screen readers
- Captions
- Speech to text (auto transcription)
- assistive access for iPad
- talk to type/text
- Alfred/Siri
- Pencil grips
- hearing aids
- Cochlear implant connects to teacher audio
- YouTube
- Homer
- Visual Timers
- A.I.
- Apps can revision
- computer/graphic design
- mac buttons
- microphones
- noise cancelling headphone

⑩ YOUR FAVORITE SUPPORT THAT PROMOTES SCHOOL + COMMUNITY INCLUSION

- AAC Reading Day
- Best Buddies
- Art making
- Cultural parties & nights
- "A Day Without Words" Reading Day
- Murals → by community
- Gift us students activities
- Clubs/organizations
- Retreats
- Camp Discovery
- Paper
- changing Grandparents Day
- Donuts w/ Dad etc to make inclusive names/participation
- Phy's about different disabilities
- mn epilepsy association
- community fairs/expos
- NAMI
- tree + reduced lunch
- common interest trips/activities (winter boots)
- noise reduction ^(e.g. foam in walls)
- Harrison's Playmakers
- Gig's Playhouse
- Autism
- ARC
- cultural kindness museum
- Preschools w/in nursing homes
- Miracle League
- Ironwood Springs Ranch
- Life works Center for Disability + Inclusion
- community service projects led by students
- sensory inclusion days ANYWHERE
- HOPE KIDS
- adult changing tables
- wheel chair access
- Accessible play grounds
- Parent groups bringing all children + siblings together
- muffins in march





Group Activity



Brittanie Hernandez-Wilson (Class 37)











“The biggest asset of this program are the connections I’ve made and the relationships I’ll continue to build.”

“This training has been invaluable to myself and my family and has helped us work through multiple issues during the program.”

“The speakers teach valuable knowledge, inspire me, and help me become a stronger advocate for my child and other families.”

“This training has given me a family I didn’t know I needed, knowledge I didn’t have, and information I can use to help the people I love.”

“This program is incredibly effective at empowering people to go out and achieve change in our lives.”

“I appreciate the thought, consideration, and planning that went into this program, and I loved getting to know the cohort. Many of us are now good friends and collaborators.”



PRINCE COLE

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING CLASS 43 GRADUATE





MASTCOM

VIDEO WITH DIRECTION

Partners in Policymaking

Video content in
development based
on interviews with
Partners Graduates



ASHLEY



SAM



MAO



DOCUMENTARY

- **30-40 minute documentary**
- **History of Disability Justice & Enlightenment**
- **Disability Community, Cohorts & Belonging**
- **Disability Services Awareness & Engagement**
- **Personal Transformation & Hope**
- **Confidence & Finding Ones Voice**
- **Community Inclusion & Access**
- **Employment, Leadership & Career Growth**
- **Barriers or Challenges**
- **Parent Advocacy**
- **System Change**
- **The Future of Disability advocacy**

DUPREE



AMANDA



INDIVIDUAL STORIES



KATIE

4-6 minute story of each participant, their experience in Partners, how they've used what they learned, how it empowered them and how it changed the trajectory of their lives.

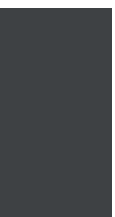
SOCIAL MEDIA

**Teasers, promos and
good stand alone bites**

JOEL



TEASER VIDEO



THANK YOU

www.mastcom.com



MHConsultingGroup



MN Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

October 7, 2026

Agenda:

Minnesota Disability History Learning Lesson Package

- *Development & User-Centered Panel Discussions*
 - *Discovery (Phase I)*
 - *Implementation (Phase II)*

- *Website & FB Launch*



MN Disability History Learning Lesson Package

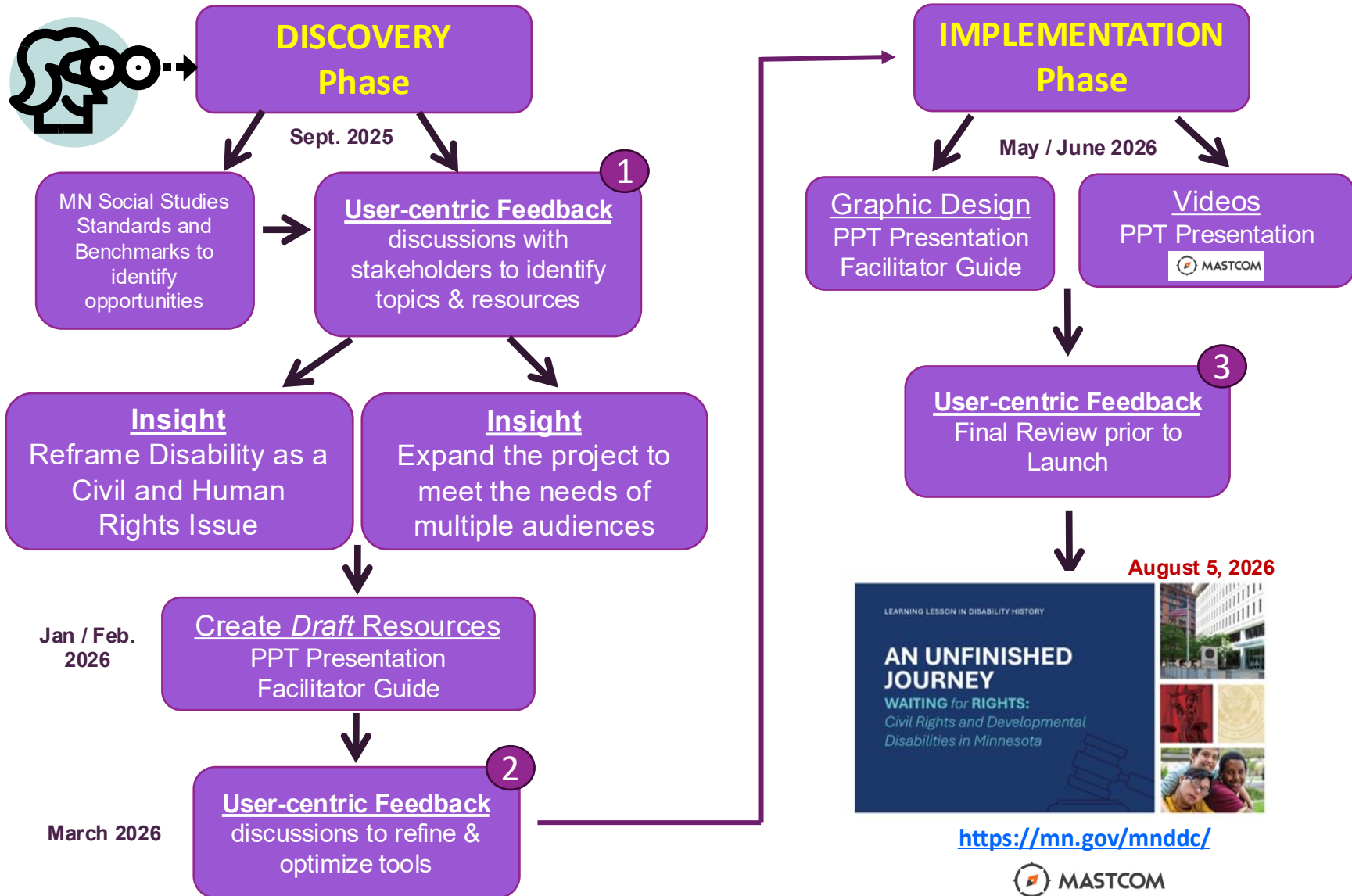
- Background:

- GCDD was interested in **creating a comprehensive training package comprised of resources and tools to increase awareness, accessibility, and education related to Minnesota Disability History.**

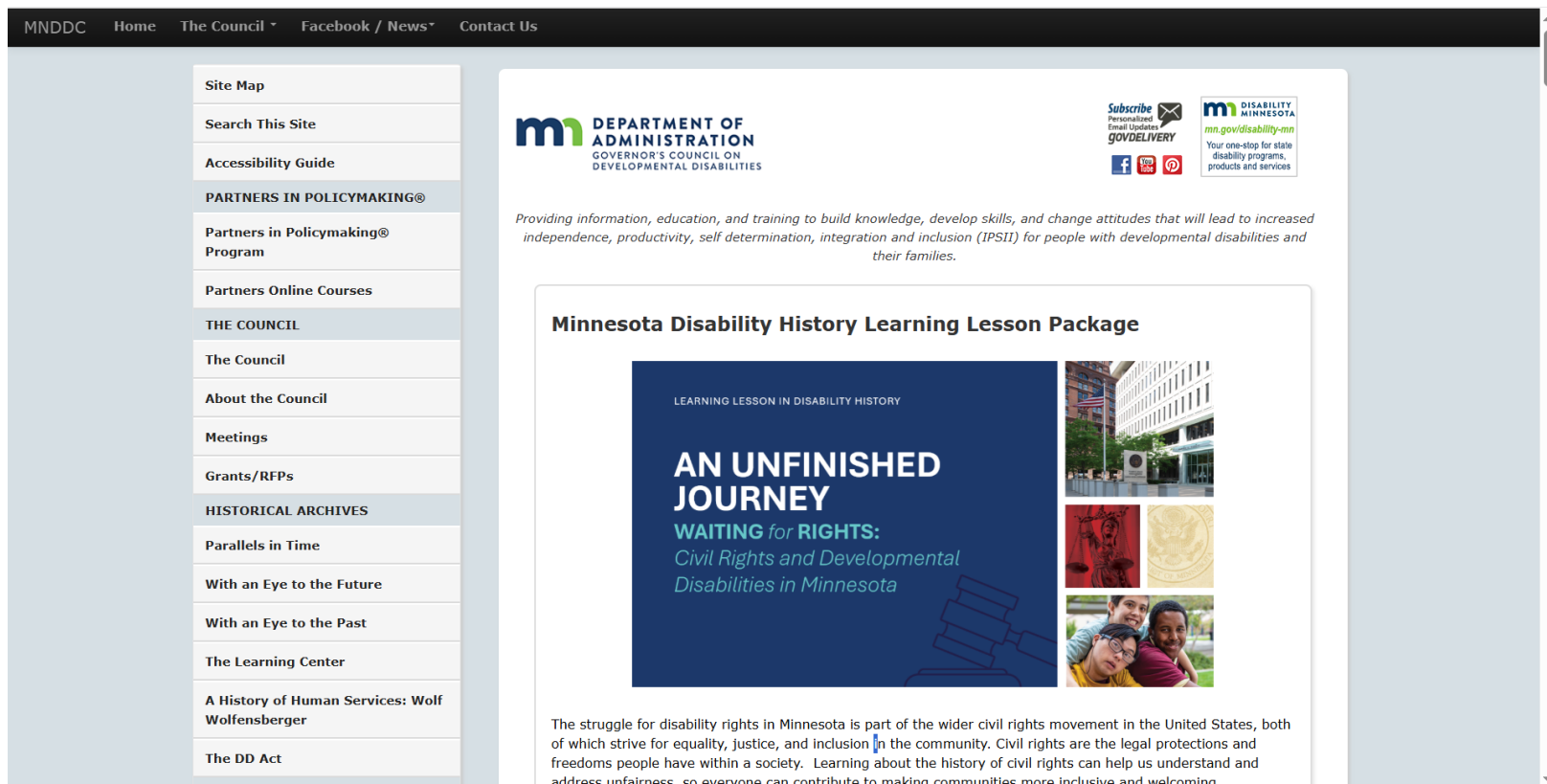
- Goal:

- Create **tools that can be used with a variety of audiences and settings**, including:
 - Individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and supporters to use when learning about disability history
 - Community groups to broaden the circle of people who understand and care about disability rights
 - School-aged children as a supplement to social studies civil rights lessons

Process we used...



Website Launch – August 5, 2025



<https://mn.gov/mnddc/>



FB Post – August 4, 2025



Search Facebook



Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities



✉ admin.dd.info@state.mn.us

🔗 mn.gov/mnddc

🕒 Open now ▾

Photos

[See all photos](#)



Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabi... ..

August 4 · 🌐

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities is pleased to announce a new Learning Lesson package that explains the struggle for disability rights in Minnesota as part of the wider civil rights movement in the United States, both of which strive for equality, justice, and inclusion in the community. This training package includes a PowerPoint slide deck "Waiting for Rights: Civil Rights and Developmental Disabilities in Minnesota" with video clips, and a Facilitator Guide that supports the presentation. The lesson can be delivered in 30–60 minutes and is designed for social studies classes, self-advocacy and family groups, as well as starting a community conversation.

<https://mn.gov/mnddc/learning-lesson/> See less

LEARNING LESSON IN DISABILITY HISTORY

AN UNFINISHED JOURNEY

WAITING for RIGHTS:
Civil Rights and Developmental
Disabilities in Minnesota



User-Centered Feedback:

What we heard...

*“Knowing where it [presentation] started, and now where it is, I'm like, wow! And I feel like, and I know that this was the idea, but it doesn't always come into fruition. **You guys really took our feedback, and that really means a lot. Like, it's wonderful. So far, I am wowed!**”*

“It's great! I'm like, tell me when I can present this to everybody. I want to present this every day. This is wonderful. I love it so much.”

*“The **timeline is great.** It shows how long this group has waited compared to **all of the other different groups that we have in our country that have gotten their civil rights**... it is kind of shocking to realize, like, geez, you know, groups have gotten it **30 years earlier, 40 years, 50 years earlier, that's wild, you know?**”*

*“Oh, I really **like the tips for building empathy and participation**, that is really good. Super helpful.”*

*“Say you're meeting with **a community or like an organization or whatever, the linking it to their values and their mission is, that's a great idea.**”*

Appendix

CQI Initiatives

Council's FY2025 Business Results

Council's Five-Year Plan and Program Goals

PPR Reporting Process – Federal Reporting Requirement

- Grantees' Performance Dashboard
- Verification of grantee ACL measurements
- Reviewed/ Feedback of the federally required report

User-Centered Projects

- Disability History Learning Lesson
 - Discovery and Implementation of MN Disability History Learning Lesson Package

Customer Satisfaction

- Continue to move to online platform - Survey Monkey
 - Publications/Website/Online Classes
 - User-Centered Projects
- 3rd Party results verification



Employment Services

Pam Sunder-Director of Employment Services
Jacqueline Colt-Business and Community Partnership Development
Kristina Mengis – Art Employment Specialist
Katy Simmons- Employment Specialist



OUR MISSION

OUR MISSION IS TO SUPPORT
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
AS VITAL AND
CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF
OUR COMMUNITY.

ABOUT OUR SERVICES

We provide [community and employment services](#) to individuals with a wide range of disabilities. High-quality acclaimed and accredited programs are the foundation of our past, present, and future. We provide innovative, individualized services geared toward the specific aspirations and needs of each person we support. We work with individuals to find and create pathways between them and the life they choose.

We offer these flexible programs and services, brought to life daily by our creative, professional staff:

- ☐ Employment Services
- ☐ Creative Arts opportunities at each location, in the larger community, and at Fresh Eye Gallery.
- ☐ Day Services life enrichment skills
- ☐ Community integrated education and volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Support for personal development and increasing self-sufficiency
- ☐ Self-Advocacy skill building

MSS Employment Services

MSS Employment Specialists utilize a discovery process with each person seeking employment.

The discovery process:

- Incorporates Person-Centered Planning Principles that identify what is Important To and For the person
 - Begins with an Individualized Employment Plan
- Job Search activities focus on the person's strengths, interests, skills and abilities
 - MSS staff are also attending training in Customized Employment Services

Grant Overview



Overall Goal

Increase opportunities and the supports needed by individuals with developmental disabilities to be employed in an integrated setting at or above minimum wage.

Goal: Assist (20) adults and transition age young adults with developmental disabilities in securing competitive employment.

Results: 17 Persons secured employment

Data is for 11 months

Progress on Initiatives

Employment Awareness Training

Goal: At least 10-15 individuals with DD and their families will participate in training sessions to increase awareness and understanding about services available for transition and employment.

MSS staff presented to 14 individuals (6 staff, 6 parents and 2 students) at Wayzata Transition.

Title of Presentation: First Jobs: Exploring Employment Options and Resources. * Also included information on transportation

Employment training for Students

Goal: MSS will partner with transition programs to offer training and discussion to students about employment options.

MSS employment staff provided mock interviews with 6 students at Branch Out Transition Program.

Branch Out Transition Program, located in W. St. Paul, is an individualized, student-driven programming focusing on the areas of transition for students with disabilities.

Co-Collegiate Mentorship Program

The Co-Collegiate Mentorship Program pairs student mentors and students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Mentors act as informal peer liaisons by supporting academic success, encouraging independence, and fostering social connection through structured study time paired with shared campus activities.

Summary of Co-Collegiate Activity 2025-2026

Bethel University BUILD Program

MSS continues to partner with the BUILD Program's Academic Mentors, and supported 22 Academic Student Mentors working with 32 mentees throughout the 2025-2026 year.

Bethel hosted Paul Nevin in May of 2026 for a site visit. Paul took a tour of the grounds and cafeteria, and shadowed several study groups as students wrapped up their end-of-term projects. Students and mentors shared feedback on the impact that the student mentor pairings had on them throughout the year.



Central Lakes College Occupational Skills Program (OSP)

With Co-Collegiate funding, the Occupational Skills Program was able to hire a student mentor in April of 2026. The mentor and mentee built a routine around on-campus fitness, academics, and social connection. By the end of the semester, the OSP student expressed more motivation in her schoolwork and finding genuine friendship in her peer mentor.

Photo 1 (Top): A group of Bethel BUILD students and student mentors looking into a telescope on an autumn day.

Photo 2 (Bottom): A student and student mentor standing indoors in front of the Central Lakes College initials.



Challenges & Considerations in 2025-2026

South Central College of Mankato

In Fall of 2025, MSS began supporting a mentor/mentee pairing with South Central College of Mankato. After further review, we found the student didn't fit the target population outlined in the Governor's Council goals, and the funding partnership was concluded at semester's end.

New Partnerships

Normandale Community College GainED Program

Starting Fall 2026, MSS will support the new GainED Program, a fully integrated 5-semester program for students with IDD. The program will have Core Competency classes, traditional classes related to each student's interest, and employment internship.

One Peer Mentor has already been hired and MSS is providing them with training on working with vulnerable populations. MSS will also provide funding to pay the mentor for time spent providing academic support to mentees.

Beyond Limits College

Beyond Limits is based at the Free Lutheran Bible College campus in Plymouth and offers a fully inclusive, two-year residential college experience with audited college classes, independent living skills courses, and employment internships within an integrated campus. MSS will support Beyond Limits through funding and training for Academic Student Mentors starting in Fall 2026.

Photo 1 (Top): Normandale Community College's 50-year old Japanese Garden located in Bloomington.

Photo 2 (Bottom): Beyond Limits College students posing indoors for a group photo with their peer mentors around a couch.



2026-2027 Goals

MSS will start measuring the impact of the Student Mentor pairings on academic success and personal goal attainment of students. To do this, we will develop and implement surveys to assess these outcomes and inform continuous improvement.



Photos from top to bottom starting on the left: a close-up of Bethel students singing in a choir, two Bethel students studying, a Bethel BUILD graduate, Beyond Limits students standing outside in a group, three Beyond Limits students standing in a women's dorm, Bethel students singing in a choir, a group of Bethel students playing board games, and Beyond Limits students standing in a men's dorm.

FRESH
EYE
ARTS
+ GALLERY

Fresh Eye Arts Studio Programs in
Eagan, St. Paul, and Brooklyn Park

Serving nearly 60 artists

Artists are given personal or community
studio space with on-going support
from art staff, including employment

Artists were included in over 30 public
exhibitions & art fairs during the
first half of 2026



Chloe Geraty painting on silk scarves that were recently for sale at a Fresh Eye Arts pop-up art event at the Textile Center in Minneapolis.

New Initiatives and Accomplishments

- Creativity Explored x Open Invitational – our first national art fair representing three Fresh Eye artists.
- Three artists commissioned by the national Special Olympics to create a mural displayed at the games at the University of Minnesota
- Artists paid for teaching and demonstrating their art-making processes at the Highpoint Center for Printmaking
- Art employment team added a new full-time staff member to support more artists



Yousha Tighe points to her artwork in the collaborative mural commissioned by the USA Special Olympics.

Self-Employment: A Non-Traditional Path to Work

Why is self-employment important as an avenue for people with disabilities?

Non-traditional employment options allow for flexibility, independence, and the opportunity to turn a hobby or interest into income.

Goal: Expand our self-employment program and further educate our staff on how to support people with self-employment.

Throughout the grant year, MSS artists choosing self-employment grew from **five** to **nine**.



Yousha Tighe, CJ Weydert, & Michael Farrie stand next to the collaborative mural commissioned by the USA Special Olympics.

Josh's Creations

Artist Josh Buell representing his business, *Josh's Creations*, at the Northeast Farmers Market in Minneapolis. He is surrounded by t-shirts, cards, coloring books, mugs and other items with his artwork on them.





App-Based Work-Readiness Resources for Smart
Phones, Computers, or Tablets



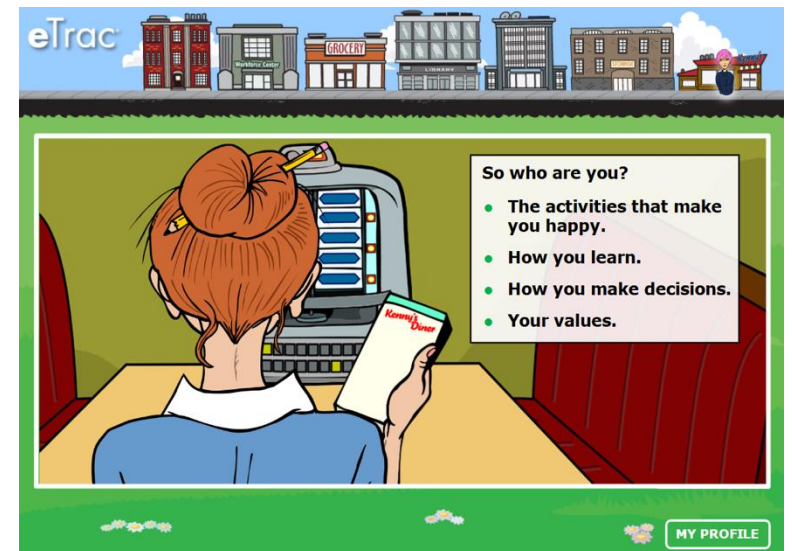
eTrac 3.0 is an online training curriculum designed to teach discovery and job seeking skills to people with barriers to employment, especially for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. eTrac is animated, narrated, and is fully accessible for adaptive technology. Content is inclusive and presented using engaging animation, real-world videos, simulations, and interactive exercises. Pre-test and post-test for each course measure learning retention.

Current Grant Goal

Grantee will provide *eTrac* training sessions for learners to enhance their understanding of employment. Follow up with participants regarding their experience with the training and positive employment outcomes.

Result

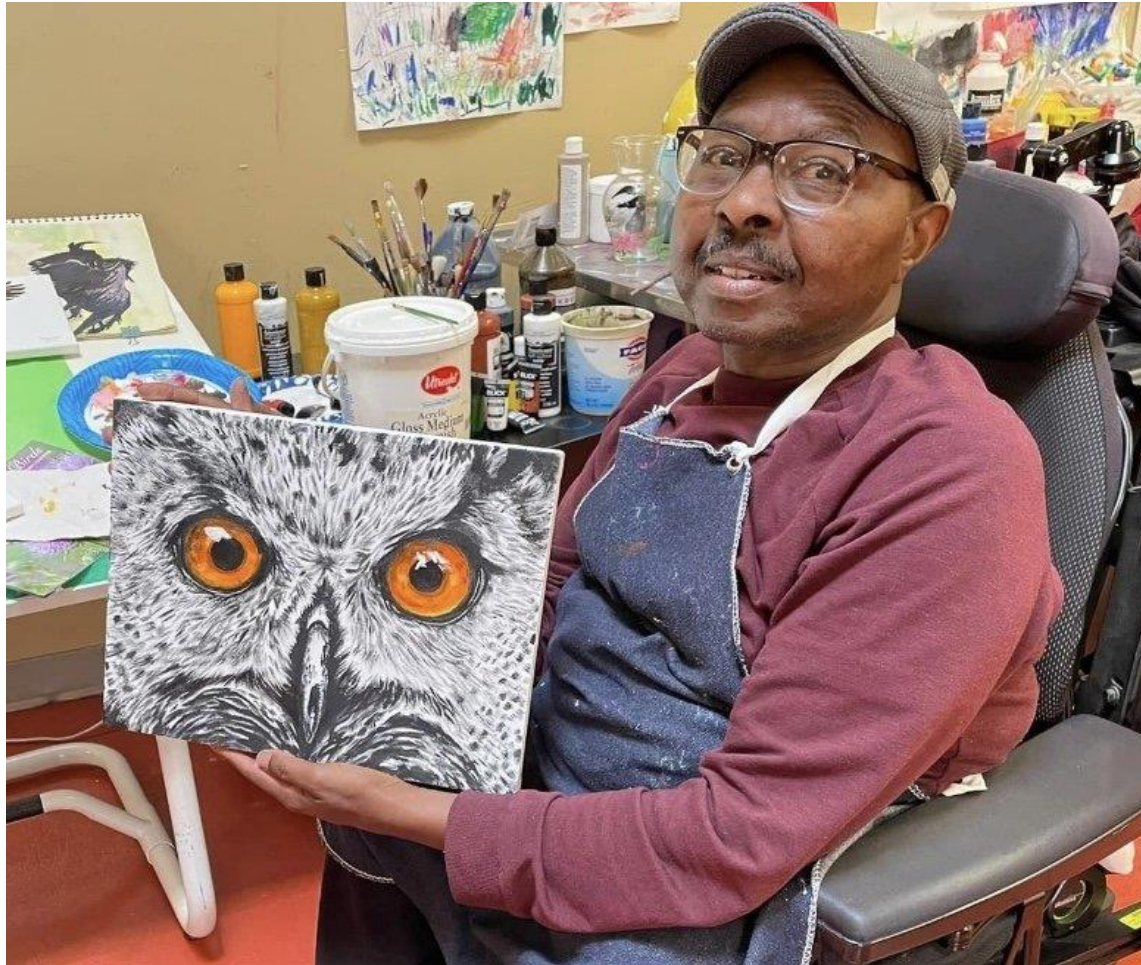
In 2026, we taught an eTrac session in Minneapolis to 7 individuals and also held facilitation trainings with DSPs and Service Coordinators. This sparked discussions around work crews and CIE within our centers. Since then, we've integrated eTrac into our Employment Services Team's toolkit. It is now used one-on-one as a Discovery and skills-building tool, and it helps open up employment conversations between staff and clients.





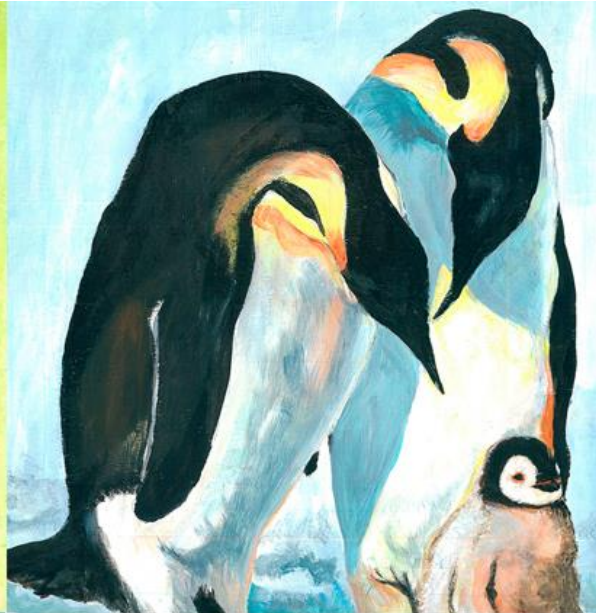
MSS Success Story

Meet Charlie Krejchik



MSS Success Story Paul Macharia









Conclusion

**Thank you to the Governor's Council for
your support in helping MSS
carry out our mission.**



Ambassadors *for* Respect



PeaceMaker
Minnesota



***All of the artwork backgrounds for this presentation are original pieces of art made by Ambassadors for Respect students at the Career and Life Transition Program in Roseville, MN.**



PeaceMaker
Minnesota

PeaceMaker Minnesota
is in its eighth year of
coordinating the
Ambassadors for
Respect Program.

To help create a more peaceful world, our mission is to help schools to be safer places, free from bullying and harassment, and to help youth learn positive relational skills like empathy, respect, cooperation and how to resolve conflicts peacefully.



What is Ambassadors for Respect?



A4R is a program that begins with teams of Ambassadors.

Teams can be from Transition Programs, Community Based Organizations, or Post-Secondary Education Programs.

Ambassadors are taught bullying prevention skills.

Ambassador teams then go into 4th grade classrooms and train the students. They teach them about including others, Person First Language, and advocacy.

These bullying prevention skills are taught through activities.

"I will stand up for anyone who is being bullied and I will include them."

- 4th Grader trained by an A4R team

"When I get mad and I'm at home I'm going to grab a piece of paper and write down why I'm mad and crumble it and throw it away"

- 4th Grader trained by an A4R team

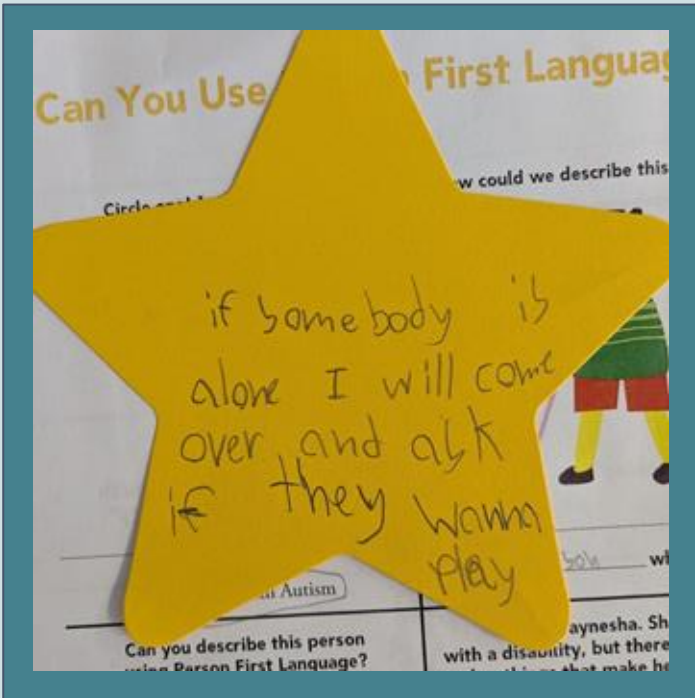


Our Program Partners Include:

- **BEST Transition Program (Burnsville)**
- **Branch Out Transition Program (West St. Paul)**
- **The BUILD Program (Bethel University)**
- **Cannon Valley Special Education Coop (Faribault)**
- **CHOICE, Inc (Eden Prairie and Maple Grove)**
- **Career and Life Transition Program (Roseville)**
- **COMPASS Transition Program (Elk River)**
- **Focus House (Willmar)**
- **Home and Community Options (Winona)**
- **Merrick, Inc (Vadnais Heights)**
- **MSS (Oakdale)**
- **PHASE Industries (Mora)**
- **ProAct (Eagan)**
- **STAARS Transition Program (Hastings)**
- **UDAC (Duluth)**
- **WACOSA (St Cloud)**
- **Waseca Transition Program (Waseca)**



At least 577 of the students participating in the training had a disability, according to teacher's reports of students who have an Individualized Education Plan.



Training Data Results

51 schools, 170 classrooms, and 3,949 students were trained last year.

Outcomes: Fourth Graders

98% of students could list three ways to include others.

92% of students said they learned how to use Person First Language.

95% of students could list three ways to advocate for oneself and others.



115 (68%) trainings took place in the Metro area, and 55 (32%) trainings took place in Greater Minnesota.

The Ambassador (IPSII) Survey has shown outstanding results. According to our 2025-26 surveys:

100% of participants responded that they are satisfied with the A4R Program.

97% of Ambassadors reported that, due to participation in the Ambassadors for Respect Program, they are increasing their advocacy.



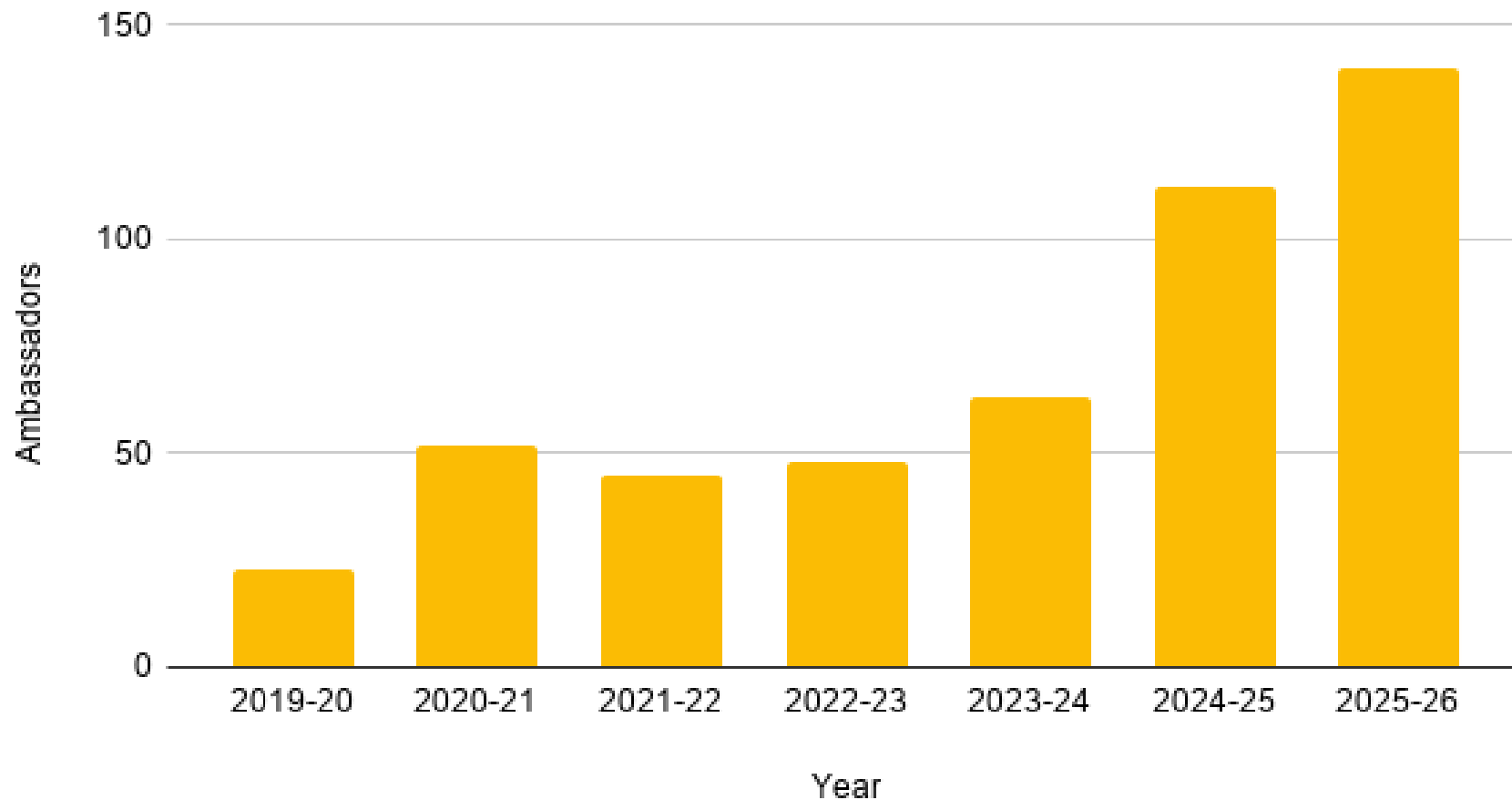
"We are changing the 4th graders' minds to stop them from bullying--I'm so happy to be an Ambassador. We work wonderfully together as a team."

- Ambassador from Mora

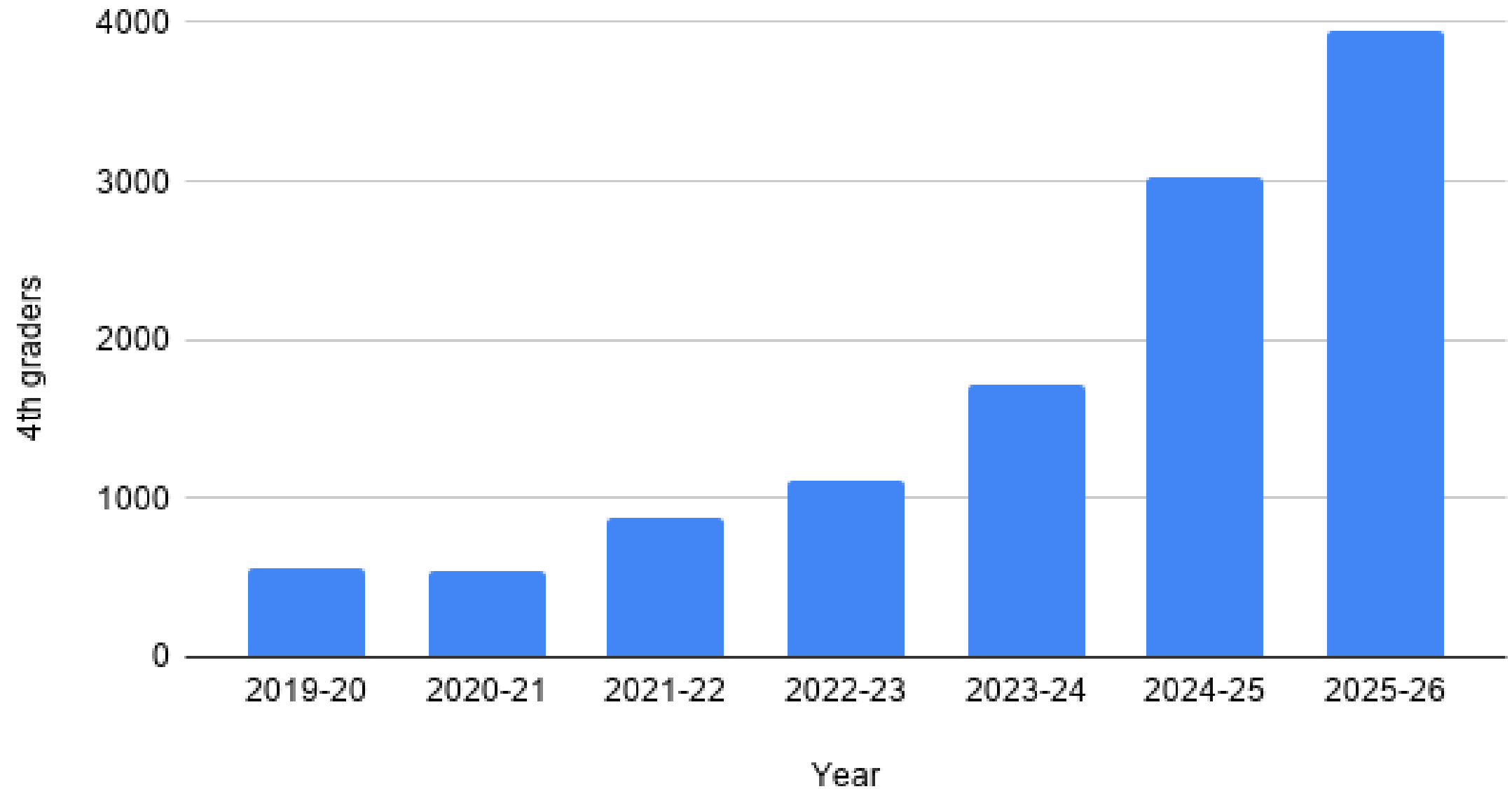
**140 people served as
Ambassadors in 2025-26.**

"A4R makes me feel confident, important, and included.
I am making a difference." -Ambassador from Winona

Ambassador Growth by Year



4th Graders Served Each Year



Ambassador Coaches

"Students who have a disability label do not get a lot of recognition in schools. I am grateful for the Ambassadors for Respect Program who created this opportunity for my students to become Ambassadors for Respect and teach 4th graders about what it's like to not be included because of a disability and that they are more than that label. My students talked about inclusion and anti-bullying and made a difference in the world, and I am so proud of them!"

—Ambassador Coach Carrie Garcia, speaking at the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area School Board Meeting



**Thank you for
supporting our program!**

**Please contact Mandy for more information about
the A4R Program. mgrunklee@peacemakermn.org**



SAM • Self-Advocates Minnesota
Advocating Change Together

ACT & SAM: Building Power Together

2025–2026 Year in Review



Introduction

Presenters:

- Dustin Anderson (SAM Central)
- Jenny Svihel (SAM Central)
- Shane Soberg (ACT, Program Officer)

Sharing accomplishments supported by the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

About ACT & SAM

- **ACT Mission:** Support the leadership of people with disabilities to fight ableism and build inclusive communities.
- **Our Vision:** ACT envisions a world where people with and without disabilities are valued for their contributions and have equitable access to leadership and power.
- **Self-Advocates Minnesota (SAM):** A statewide network of 6 regional self-advocacy groups (NW, NE, Central, Metro, SE, SW).
- **Leadership Circle:** Representatives from each region guide SAM's direction.

Strategic Planning Highlights

- ACT Forward 2025–2029 Strategic Plan
- New mission, vision, and values
- Refreshed website and logo

SAM Assessment Overview

- Purpose: Assess strengths and areas for growth in SAM.
- 83 participants engaged across 6 regions.
- Values: Accessibility, leadership, respect.

ACT's Strategic Priorities



Promote and Build Support for ACT

Grow support for ACT by telling the story of what ACT does and why it's important.



Strengthen the Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

Connect and collaborate across Self-Advocates Minnesota (SAM) regions so Minnesota has a strong and vibrant self-advocacy network.



Solidify ACT's Funding and Structure

Plan for ACT's funding and structure so the organization can do good work well into the future.



Grow the Movement

Think bigger about what ACT does to grow the self-advocacy movement and advance disability leadership.

What's Working Well

- Local leadership & regional flexibility
- Culture of respect, friendship, and peer leadership
- Disability Pride Festival, Self-Advocacy Conference, retreats
- Strong connections across the state

How SAM Can Grow

- Clearer roles & responsibilities
- More outreach (schools, group homes, diverse communities)
- Continue to strengthen the Leadership Circle
- More in-person and accessible events
- Expanded funding & resources



ACT Forward Priorities in Action

- Strengthen the statewide self-advocacy network
- Promote and build support for ACT
- Grow the self-advocacy movement
- Solidify ACT's funding and structure



2025 Disability Justice Jamboree

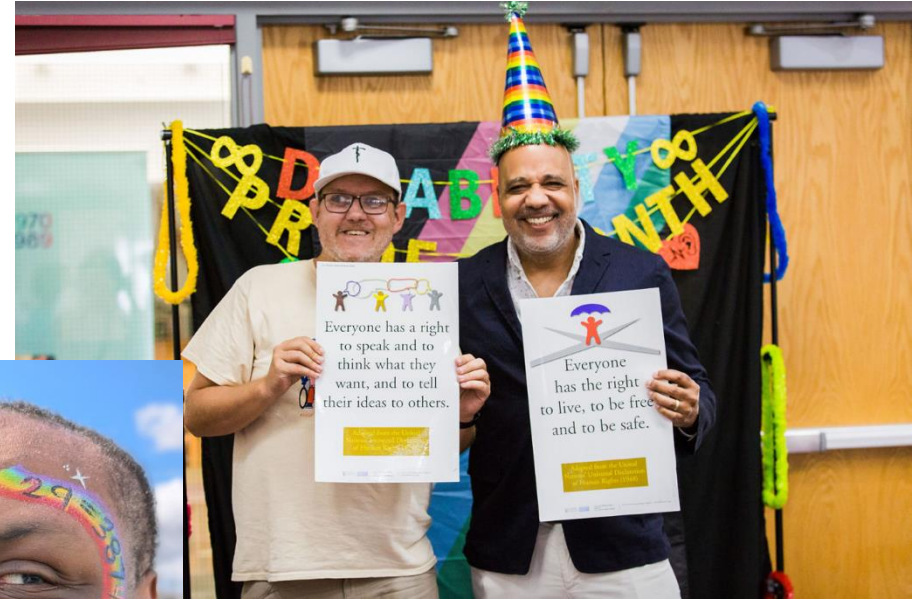
• <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6k3WAv5cc4>



2026 Leadership Circle



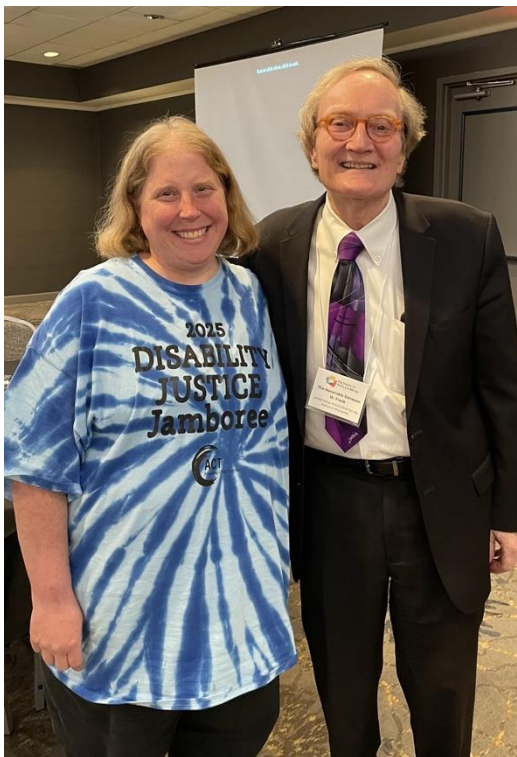
2026 Disability Pride Festival



Remembering With Dignity



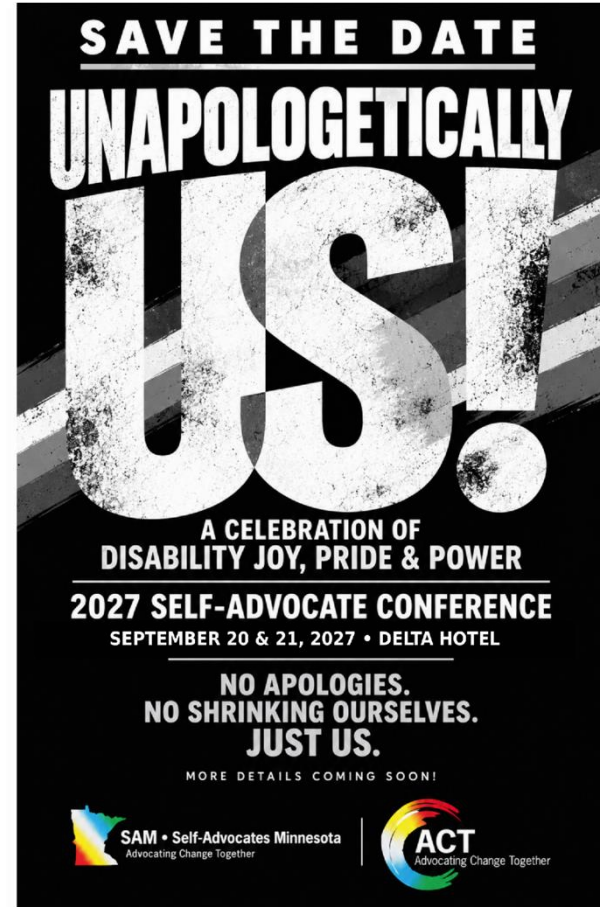
DETS (Disability Equality Training Series)



Looking Ahead

- ACT 50th Anniversary in 2029!
- Expanding SAM outreach & leadership development
- Continuing Disability Pride Festival and statewide gatherings including 2027 Self-Advocate Conference and the 5th annual Pride festival immediately after
- Commitment to Disability Justice principles!

THANK YOU!





Cultural Outreach in
Asian Indian Disability Community
GCDD Grant Project by Autism Sibs Universe (ASU)
SECOND YEAR ANNUAL REPORT – Oct 2026



October 7, 2026

Purpose

- Report Year 2 accomplishments, outcomes, challenges, lessons learned
- Year 3 goals

Major Accomplishments – Overview

- The training program continues to be created and managed by disabled Asian Indians. Gives us purpose!
- ASU extended marketing and community outreach to rural areas
- Partners in policy making awareness continued to increase in the Indian disability community
- 62 participants
- 2 training series / 6 days / 51 hours
- 52 hours of 1:1 support
- Many success stories

Awareness & Outreach – Key Insights

- About 40% never heard about about Partners in Policy making, compared to 90% the previous year
- The gaps in training needs continue to be so high for some Indians were so high, ASU provided personal guidance and attended county and school meetings to support them
- 62 Asian/Asian American - 54 Urban and 8 Rural

Trainings Completed

1. Kick off and onboarding
2. Views and perceptions of disability in the selected communities and cultural barriers
3. The role of county in providing services and how to access county services including home and community based waived services
4. Introduction to Partners in Policymaking program
5. The state legislative process, current state legislative issues, speaking with govt officials and legislators an, preparing and presenting testimony
6. Best practices and understating the areas of inclusive educations, customized employment, self-employment
7. Introduction to the benefits of assistive technology

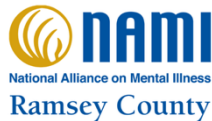


ASU also hosted multiple culturally specific events

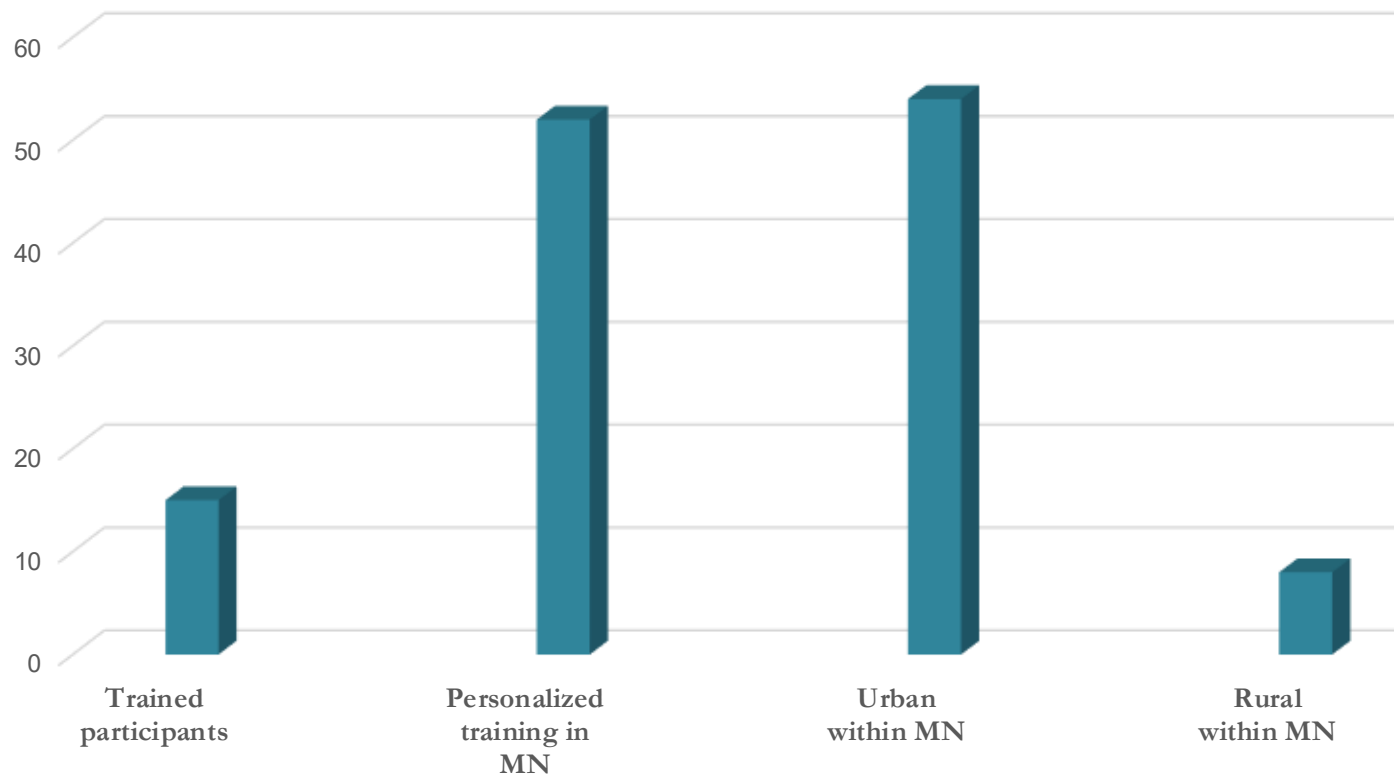
Strengthened disability partnerships in Indian community - ASU received honorary awards



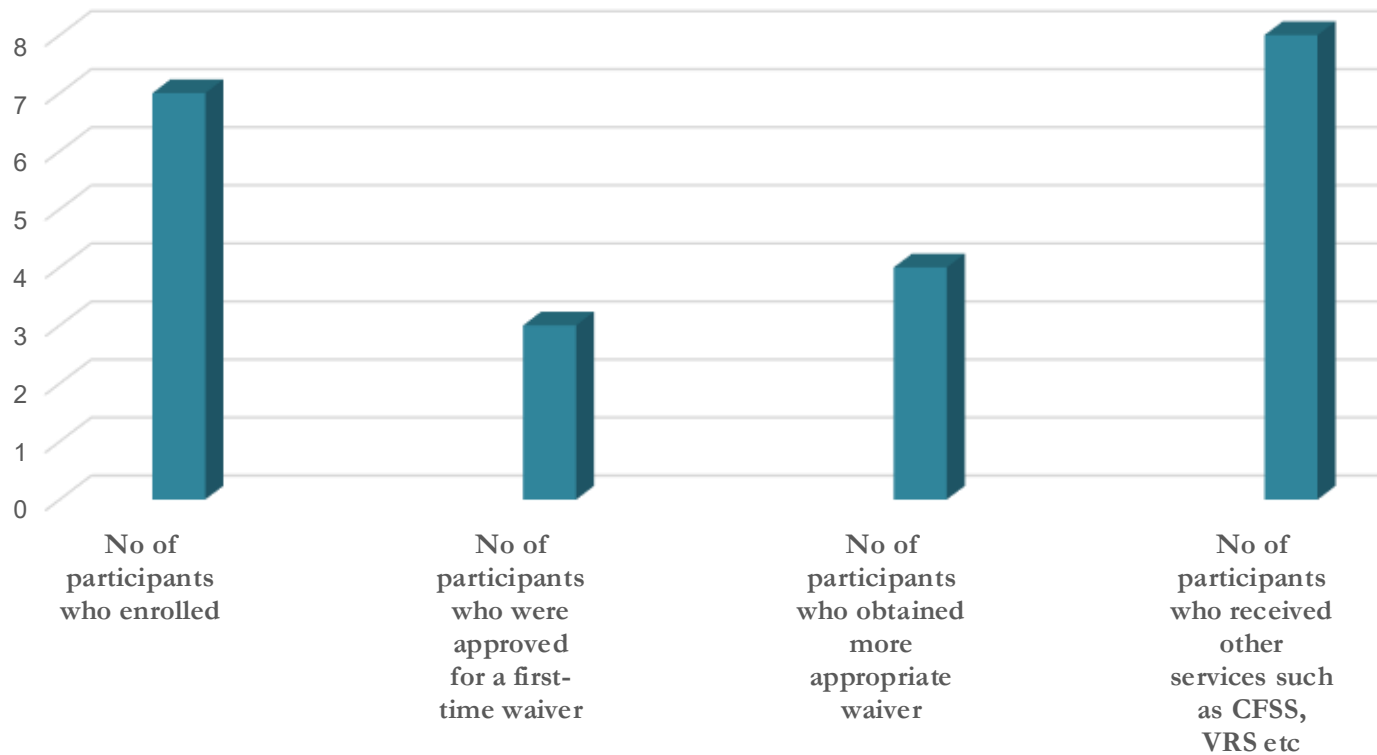
India Chamber of Commerce MN



Training and Outreach Counts



Waiver enrollment and approval counts



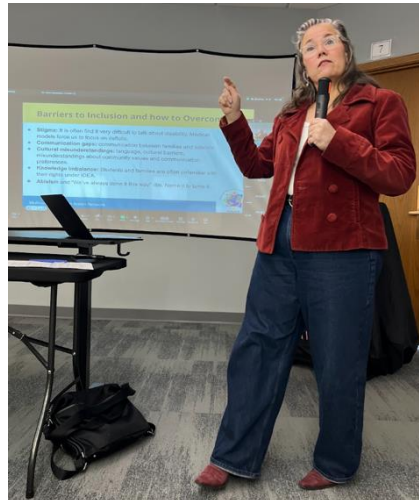
Intro to Partners in Policymaking



Colleen Wieck
Jillian Nelson
Sumukha Terakanambi
Olumide Akintunde



Community leaders and advocates



People with disabilities sharing real stories or kudos to Partners in policymaking



Improvements / Challenges

Improvements

- Surveys went much better this year
- Presentations were stronger
- Star and technology trainings were very successful
- Engagement levels were higher
- A few repeat audience
- All age groups attended
- A handful of rural attendees

Challenges

- Many families are immigrants
- People don't sign up till the last minute
- Protecting people with disabilities from YouTubers

GCCD Grant Year - Three Goals

- Further increase rural outreach
- Add 'Partners in Policymaking' graduate panel
- Expanded languages and cultures

Closing & Call to Action

- Share a couple participant testimonials
- Call for Action
 - *‘Partner with us to understand how Asian Indian population is different’*
 - *“Share our challenges and needs with legislators*

A very BIG Thank You
to the Governor’s Council, Partners, and Asian
Indian community members!

Jonathan Hamoudi
13 rue du Viaduc
92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux
France

September 8, 2026

Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
370 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
USA

Subject: Note of appreciation from France regarding your exceptional resources

Dear Members of the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities,

I am writing to you from France to express my sincere gratitude for the remarkable resources, archives, and educational materials you make freely accessible to the public.

Your work in documenting the history of developmental disabilities, deinstitutionalization, and the broader disability rights movement is truly invaluable. The depth and rigor of your digital archives—including seminal resources such as *Parallels in Time* and your extensive primary source collections—provide critical insights and context for researchers, professionals, and advocates well beyond the United States.

Access to such preserved history is rare and essential. It directly enriches our understanding, research, and ongoing efforts surrounding accessibility and inclusion across the Atlantic.

Thank you very much for your long-standing dedication to preserving this memory and for keeping these essential milestones open and accessible to an international audience.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Hamoudi
Front-end Developer & Accessibility Specialist



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PERSONAL SAFETY, BOUNDARIES, AND RELATIONSHIPS

GCDD TRAINING EVENT

TRAINING ATTENDEES



INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES: 15

FEMALE: 12

WHITE OR CAUSASION: 14

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS: 5

MALE: 6

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN: 1

UNKNOWN: 2

HISPANIC/LATINO: 3

UNKNOWN: 2

TRAINING OBJECTIVES & METHODS



Engage in hands-on activities and guided discussion to explore what boundaries are, how to recognize and express boundaries, and how to understand consent in everyday interactions

Use tools such as conversation cards, drawing and writing activities, and visual supports, to identify “touch circle” and practice recognizing personal boundaries.

TRAINING SET-UP: THREE GROUPS



Requires continuous 1:1 support to maintain personal safety and navigate boundaries and relationships. Member is unable to consistently recognize unsafe situations or maintain appropriate boundaries without direct supervision and support.

Requires moderate support to understand and apply concepts of personal safety, boundaries, consent, and healthy relationships. Member demonstrates basic understanding but benefits from regular reminders, coaching, and reinforcement.

Demonstrates a general understanding of personal safety, boundaries, consent, and healthy relationships, with minimal support needed. Member typically applies concepts appropriately but may occasionally need guidance in unfamiliar or complex situations.

TRAINING CONTENT: 2 FOCUS AREAS



DEFINING BOUNDARIES AND CONSENT:
WHAT ARE MY BOUNDARIES? WHO IS IN MY TOUCH CIRCLE?

COMMUNICATING BOUNDARIES AND CONSENT:
USING ASK, LISTEN, RESPECT FRAMEWORK

TRAINING CONTENT: DEFINING BOUNDARIES

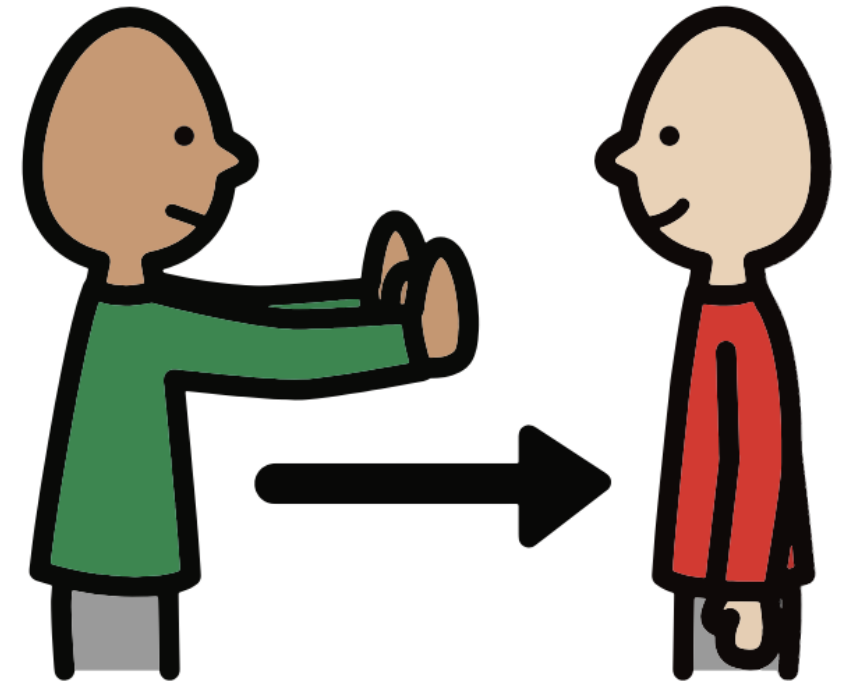


BOUNDARY

A line that others cannot cross without permission.

Things to think about:

- Everyone's boundaries are different.
- Boundaries can change over time and also with your mood.
- We have different boundaries with different people.
- We can have both physical boundaries and emotional boundaries.
- You are ALWAYS allowed to change your mind about boundaries.



TRAINING CONTENT: DEFINING CONSENT



CONSENT

When a person agrees to a certain activity or behavior.

Things to remember for consent:

- Consent means someone is giving permission.
- Consent is needed before the activity, every time.
- Consent is needed for touch.
- People need to get consent before touching me.
- I need to get consent before touching them.
- You can always change your mind about consent.
- Consent is ongoing. This means we have to keep checking in when engaging in touch, particularly in sexual relationships.



TRAINING CONTENT: TOUCH CIRCLE



RELATIONSHIP BANK:

- MOM & DAD
- GROUP HOME STAFF
- SIBLING
- AUNT
- POLICE OFFICER
- HFC STAFF
- NEW FRIEND



GROUPS 1 & 2
WORK TOGETHER

GROUPS 3 MAKE
INDIVIDUAL TOUCH
CIRCLES

TRAINING CONTENT: FLIP BOOK



MOM & DAD
GROUP HOME
STAFF
SIBLING
AUNT
POLICE OFFICER
HFC STAFF
NEW FRIEND
A STRANGER



AT HOME
AT WORK
IN THE BATHROOM
IN PUBLIC
ON THE BUS
AT HFC
IN MY BEDROOM

HUGS ME
HELPS ME

GIVES ME A HANDSHAKE
BRUSHES MY HAIR

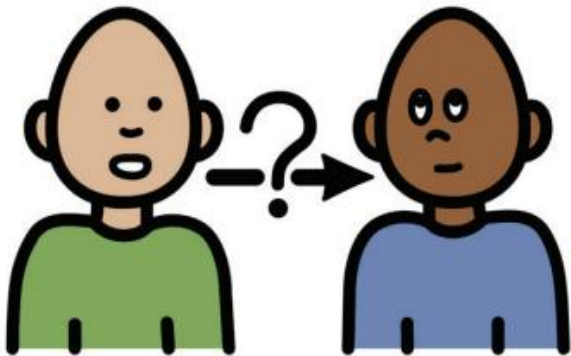
KISSES ME
TOUCHES ME

PATS ME ON THE BACK
TAKES OFF MY CLOTHES

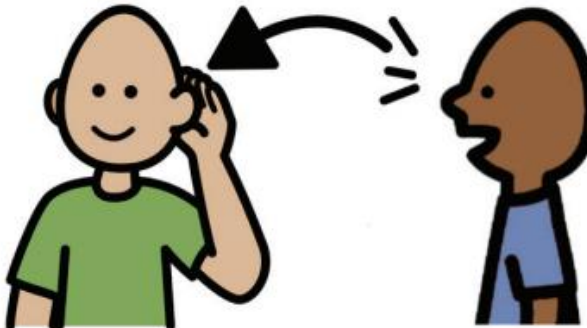
TRAINING CONTENT: CONSENT GUIDE



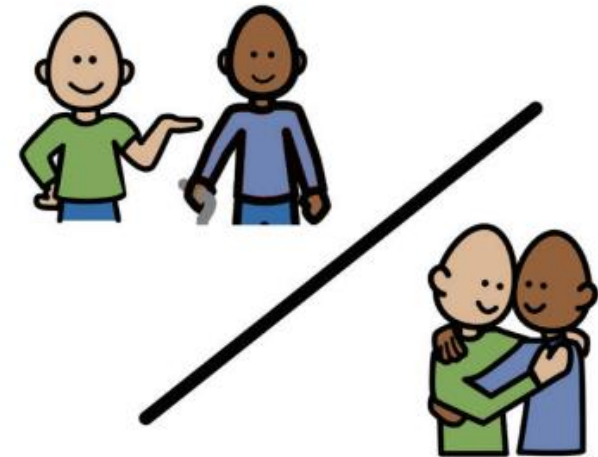
Consent is a three step process.



Ask



Listen



Respect

TRAINING CONTENT: COMMUNICATING BOUNDARIES



Steps to Communicate Boundaries

1. Think about the boundary you want to communicate.
2. Take a deep breath.
3. Be assertive.
4. Be clear and specific.
5. Repeat the boundary if necessary.

Examples of Assertive, Clear, and Specific Communication:

Please let me finish my sentences. I feel like my thoughts are not being heard when I am interrupted.

I want to hold hands with you during the movie tomorrow night. I like being in a relationship with you and holding hands makes me feel good.

I like kissing you but I don't want to kiss you in front of other people. It makes me feel uncomfortable.

I do not like it when you pat my back after doing a good job on a task at work. I would prefer a compliment with words instead.

I do not like the bathroom door open when you are helping me shower and get ready for the day. I don't want my housemates to see me getting ready.

TRAINING CONTENT: COMMUNICATING BOUNDARIES



What to say or do if my boundaries are not respected

I told you that I did not want _____.

OR

I told you that I _____.

That is my boundary and my boundary was not respected.

This made me feel _____.

I would like you to respect my boundaries next time.



Talk to a trusted person in your life.

Be gentle with yourself. It's not your fault that your boundaries were not respected.

TRAINING OUTCOMES: OUTCOMES



KUQ MEASURES:

KNOWLEDGE GAINED:
4.65

USEFULNESS OF
INFORMATION:
4.7

QUALITY OF
PRESENTATION:
4.8

ACL MEASURES:

NUMBER WHO REPORTED
INCREASING ADVOCACY:

MEMBERS: 13
CAREGIVERS: 4

NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN
ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES:

MEMBERS: 10
CAREGIVERS: 4

NUMBER WHO ARE BETTER
ABLE TO SAY WHAT THEY
WANT/WHAT IS IMPORTANT
TO THEM:

MEMBERS: 13
CAREGIVERS: 4

NUMBER SERVING ON A
COALITION, BOARD, OR
COUNCIL:

MEMBERS: 5
CAREGIVERS: 3



NUMBER SATISFIED WITH THE TRAINING:

MEMBERS: 15
CAREGIVERS: 5

IPSII MEASURES:

INDEPENDENCE:
4.1

PRODUCTIVITY:
4.15

SELF DETERMINATION:
4.2

INTEGRATION/INCLUSION:
4.2

TRAINING OUTCOMES: COMMENTS



"My daughter is low functioning and she was able to understand this presentation with me (mom) present. [The facilitator] did a great presentation involving all HFC participants. Thank you!"

"I learned emotional, personal support, job training, and home support information."

"This training helped me most learn more about boundaries, consent since I am now 18 years old and a young adult. Thank you."

"It was very good, helpful information to learn about yourself and others that are more like you and setting boundaries."

"It was cool. I loved it. I learned a lot of things."