

A New Look for Message From the People

Welcome to the newest issue of the People First of Missouri Newsletter. It may look a little different, but you'll find the same kind of information inside to help you stay connected to other self-advocates across the state. Please let us know what you think!

This issue looks at how self-advocates are participating in democracy in Missouri. Every year, there are some issues that are really important to our lives. You can stay informed about them by reading this *Message From the People*.

People First of Missouri is Strong and Active

People First members and chapters are busy learning, giving and growing. We make a positive difference in our communities.

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Members of People First of Missouri visit the State Capitol



People First members visiting state legislators

Message from the President

It is that time of year again! The legislative session is in full swing. We have passed the halfway point, and advocacy is crucial to ensure that the voices of self-advocates are heard loud and clear in the capitol.

There are several bills that address Medicaid. As you look at the bills that you would like to advocate around, it is important that you look at the facts surrounding the legislation. For example, a bill might address raising asset limits which may sound really good to you, but there may be provisions within the bill that would hurt you and others across the state. So, it is important to be cautiously optimistic when looking at bills that address the issues that are important to you.

Another aspect of advocacy to remember is to tell your story. Legislators have facts and figures available to them. What they do not have is your information and why the issues are important to you.

For more information about what our members have been doing on this, keep reading. Hope to see you soon!



Roger Crome, President



The PFMO Steering Committee discusses self-advocacy skills when meeting with legislators

Steering Committee learns new skills

The People First of Missouri Steering Committee met in late March to use their self-advocacy skills to help state legislators learn about our needs. But first, the committee spent the day deciding what issues matter most to people with disabilities in our state this year.

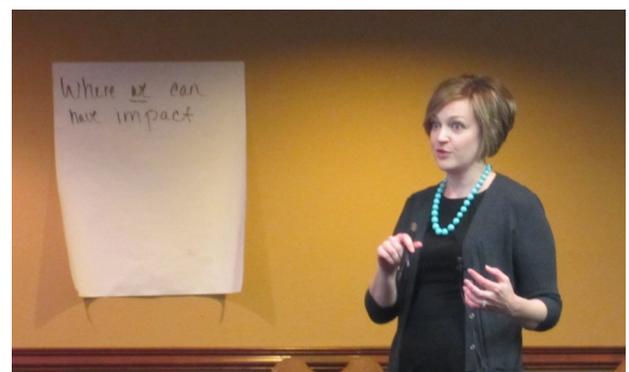
Two people helped make it a great day: Cathy Brown, Director of Independent Living Services with the Delta Center for Independent Living and Andrew Lackey, Public Policy Analyst with the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council.

Cathy led discussion about three topics: 1) What is important to us? 2) What are legislators working on this year for new laws? And, 3) Where can we make an

impact? Turn to page four to see the priorities the committee decided.

Andrew taught the group how to show, instead of tell, legislators what we think by sharing our stories and experiences.

Later, the group role-played the new skills.



Cathy Brown leads the group as they decide legislative priorities



Andrew Lackey explains how to talk with legislators

PFMO Legislative Priorities

The People First Steering Committee members chose the following as the most important needs to focus on this legislative session:

Increased Dollars for Services for people with DD

Governor Nixon and the Missouri House of Representatives support increasing the money set aside to pay for services for people with disabilities. We hope the Senate will join them.

Dental/Hearing/Vision services funded through Medicaid

These services need to be included as part of Medicaid.

The Circuit Breaker Tax Credit

It is important to keep this tax credit in place, because it leaves me with more of my own money to pay for essential things not covered by Medicaid. It helps me stay independent.

Higher Asset Limits for people who receive Medicaid

Raising the Medicaid asset limits to \$5,000 per person and \$10,000 per married couple would let me keep more money in savings for emergencies that may come up.



Sign up Now

Get ready to attend an exciting gathering of consumers, family members, friends, self-advocates and persons in recovery to learn about programs, service issues, opportunities and self-advocacy. Come to foster growth, be empowered, and find tools to be successful in the community.

- August 17-19, 2014
Osage Beach, MO

To register or find out more information, visit:

dmh.mo.gov

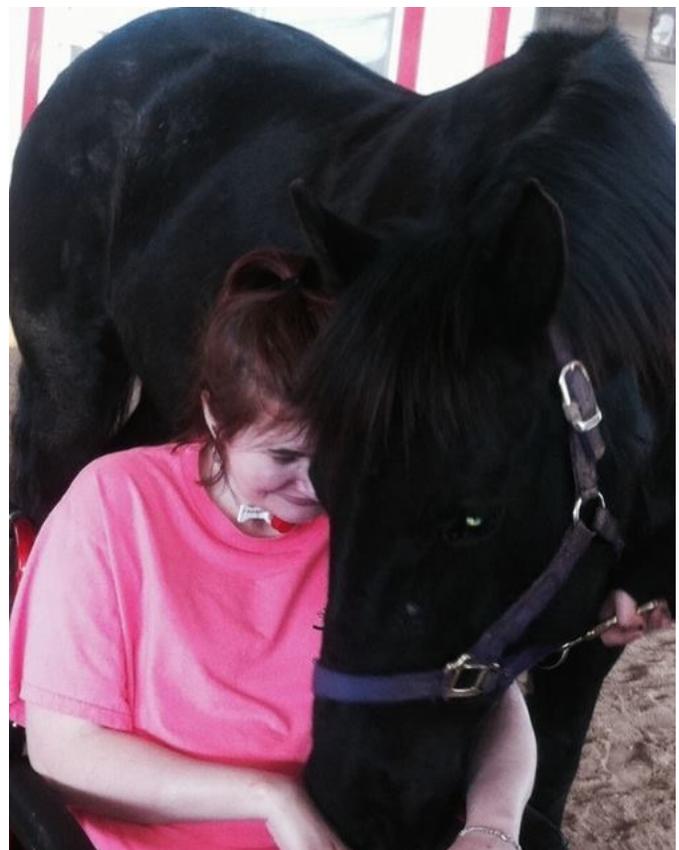
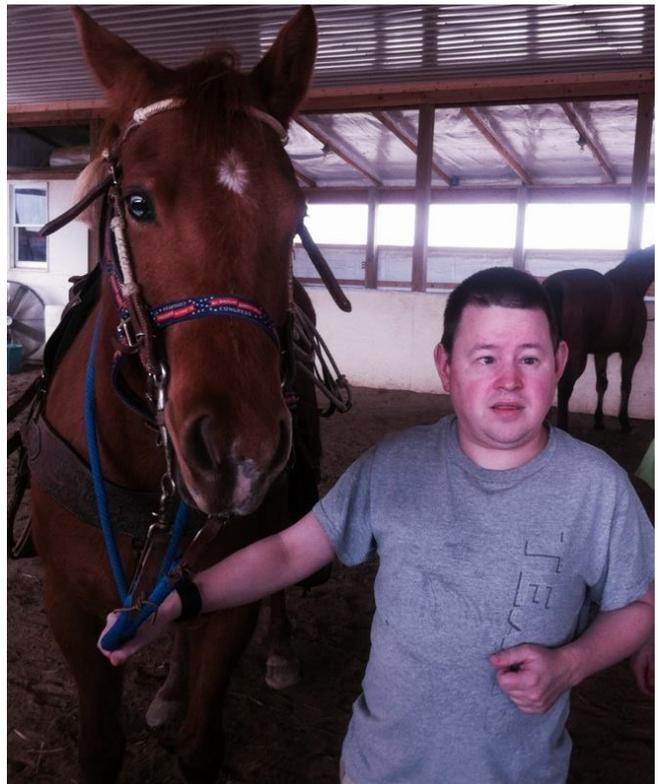
Or email:
ConsumerConference
@dmh.mo.gov

Chapter Updates—What's Happening?

Boonville

Boonville People First recently went to the Riley Equine Center, thanks to Bonnie Riley. Twenty-five people enjoyed the trip. Riley Equine Center is a place that helps people with developmental disabilities, and lets them be themselves. We got to ride horses and interact with them. Bonnie has around 25-28 horses on her farm. The photos show some of our members that went to the Center. Our members were able to paint on a horse for therapy. At Riley's there are volunteers to help everyone ride, from young kids to adults.

Also, on May 6th, we will be having our second Walk-A-Thon. We are working on getting donations from our local community. Last year we raised around \$700. We are hoping to raise the same amount.



Chapter Updates

Boone County

People First of Boone County had elections in November. Members from other chapters visited and joined us for Thanksgiving potluck. Our new president is Jeff Johnson. Jason Mize is now Vice President.

In December, our holiday fundraiser dance was canceled due to weather. We have a lot of leftover snacks, and we are looking into other ideas.

In January, Jeff Johnson and Jason Mize joined the Victimization Task Force, which has partners all over the state. They are representing People First of Boone County and People First of Missouri. They are helping to make schools and communities safer for people with disabilities.

In February, Jason joined Cathy & Richard Enfield, Becky Dickey, and Mark Satterwhite to share information about People First with Partners in Policy Making. Some of the Partners members recommended that People First reach out to youth. Our chapter will work on a PowerPoint presentation for elementary schools that teaches about people first language and the harm caused by bullying.

In March, People First partnered with several other organizations in co-hosting a disabilities issues forum for local school board and city council candidates.

Iron County

Iron County Chapter started the new year off with a bang! We elected officers and made plans for the rest of the year. We will continue to take care of one of the city's community gardens to help beautify our town, and plan to have lots of informative programs and fun activities throughout the year. Our group feels it is important to be caring and give to others when we can, and to be involved in our community.

Some of our plans for this year include having a bake sale in the spring and a lemonade stand in the summer. Hopefully, with some other fundraisers, we can raise enough money to attend the annual conference.

We had a great Valentine's Day Party that included refreshments, music, and dancing. Everyone had a great time!

Chapter Updates

Marshall Chapter

Marshall chapter member Larie Hutson joined the Partner in Policymaking class of 2014.

Springfield Chapter

In December of 2013, we elected new officers for our chapter: Marisa Clary, President; Patty Goss, Vice President; Scott Wheeler, Secretary; Frank Collins, Treasurer; and Judy Shrek, Sargent Of Arms.

One of our members noticed that the stoplight close to where we meet at Battlefield and Fort's timing was too short for safe pedestrian crossings. That particular member took it upon herself to call the city of Springfield to have the timing for pedestrian crossings lengthened on that intersection.

Within the next couple of months, People First of Springfield will be involved in several resource fairs. One will be in Ozark/Nixa, MO and the other will be in Marshfield, MO. Over 30 vendors from Springfield and local areas will be talking about independent living for people with disabilities.

Washington County

People First of Washington County chapter hosted a Project STIR training. Project STIR stands for Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility. Seventeen People First members graduated in a ceremony in December, complete with caps, gowns and diplomas. Friends and family attended a celebration banquet.

Project STIR/People First participants said their favorite parts of the training were the role plays and the session on money management. People First Advisor Jeff Richards said it was great fun for all involved, and encourages other People First chapters to seek out Project STIR trainers in the state if they wish to host a training. Local regional office advocacy specialists will have information about these opportunities.

Please tell us...What do you like or not like about the new look of the People First newsletter? What other things would you like to see in it? Please send this information and your chapter's update and photos for the next newsletter to: missouripeoplefirst@gmail.com

A thank you...

From a Partner in Policymaking, class of 2014

“People First of Missouri,

Thanks for your awesome presentation at the 2014 Partners in Policymaking Conference. I learned a lot of informative information that I never new about resources for (people with disabilities) in Missouri! Keep up the excellent work.

God bless you!”

Nekesha Phillips

Partners in Policymaking Class of 2014



PLACE
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HERE