Planning the Future for People First MO

Big plans are now being made—and you’re invited to the fun that is to come. The People First of Missouri Steering Committee met on June 28th, and began building the framework for two exciting upcoming events.

The first, “PFMO Leadership Academy: Building Social Capital” will take place at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach on September 6. It will be a day of learning with Dr. Carl F. Calkins and Cindy Beckmann of UMKC Institute for Human Development. Get ready to build your own Social Capital. See page four for details.

The second event, “A Season for Change: Springing into New Era of Self-Advocacy” will happen April 24-26, 2015. See page five for details, and mark your calendar now!
People First of Missouri (PFMO) exists to promote equality for people with disabilities so they can live the lives they want to live. We believe the value of a person’s life lies in the perspective of the one living it. The philosophy of “nothing about us without us” guides our mission. In the interest of these principles, we’re working to organize activities to help all of us grow.

September 6th, PFMO will host a Leadership Academy. Dr. Carl F. Calkins will lead discussion around social capital, and how we can enhance self-advocacy in Missouri. Come learn how we can make a difference! (p. 4)

A plan is forming to redesign the Missouri Developmental Disabilities system, in which many functions of the regional offices will move to county boards. But there is need for more effort to get information out for people to learn about this type of shift. PFMO and Arc of Missouri will partner to bring speakers from states with success in the proposed system to provide information for self-advocates and families to form opinions. Details coming soon.

Other exciting things: in late April, we will host our bi-annual conference. This promises to be a fun and informative event. (p. 5)

Lastly, please fill out a chapter survey if yours has not yet: www.surveymonkey.com/s/PFMOChapterSurvey. Thank you!

The International Disability Rights Treaty

Have you heard about the International Disability Rights Treaty? Its full name is the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,” or CRPD.

It is designed to protect the rights of people with disabilities around the world to have equal opportunities to education, health care and employment. It also protects basic human rights to be free from abuse and neglect.

The treaty sets goals for other countries to change laws to more closely resemble the rights given to people with disabilities in the Unites States.

You can learn more about CRPD by visiting disabilitytreaty.org and find out how to voice your opinion about it with our leaders in Washington, DC.
People First Officers and Members Share Learning

The National Disability Rights Network Convention, By Jason Mize

Katie Kinder and I are both officers in People First of Missouri, as well as board members of Missouri Protection and Advocacy.

In June, we flew to the National Disability Rights Network Convention in Baltimore, Maryland, a big city on the Atlantic Ocean.

At the conference, we learned about the Protection and Advocacy system. Missouri P&A’s mission is “To protect the rights of individuals with disabilities by providing advocacy and legal services.” A lot of the classes taught advocates and professionals to protect rights. We learned about making voting accessible for all people, and talking to people who might have been abused or neglected. Like, how to get to the story about what happened, and help them have courage to share the truth. There were other classes designed for self-advocates learning to tell their stories. Katie and I both learned new things that will help us as board members.

We also met new people from all over the country. It was a great experience, and we’re thankful that Missouri Protection & Advocacy sent us to the convention. You can learn more about Missouri Protection and Advocacy on their website: www.moadvocacy.org.

The Future is Now Conference, By Marilyn Whittle

I went to “The Future is Now: Making the Connection” conference in June, given by the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council, Division of Developmental Disabilities, and UMKC Institute for Human Development.

The topic was helping providers and people with disabilities think about ways of providing supports driven by the needs and decisions of the people receiving the support.

Governor Nixon came and talked about issues affecting people with disabilities. He wants to get rid of the waiting list for support services.

I really liked the presentation by Holly Fiscus Forlenza and her mother Eileen Forlenza. Holly is a woman who does not talk. She is a song writer and author. She wrote a song, and a book called “Just Because I Can’t Talk Doesn’t Mean I Don’t Have Anything to Say.”
When: Saturday, September 6, 2014—10 am to 3 pm

Where: Tan-Tar-A Resort, 494 Tan-Tar-A Drive, Osage Beach, MO 65065

Cost: $30 per person, includes lunch

Who can attend? All People First of Missouri members, advisers and supporters

The People First of Missouri Leadership Academy will be a one-day training with presentations on these topics:

- Disability History and the Growing Importance of Social Capital
- Basics of Social Capital, Self-Determination, and Inclusion
- Understanding your Own Social Capital - Build Your Own Social Capital!

Participants will also join in group discussion about how these concepts impact our lives, and how we can build more Social Capital ideas into the work of People First of Missouri.

Presenters for PFMO Leadership Academy: Building Social Capital will be Carl F. Calkins, Ph.D., Director of the UMKC Institute for Human Development and Cindy Beckmann, M.M., Director of Information Dissemination at UMKC IHD.

To register, visit [www.missouripeoplefirst.org](http://www.missouripeoplefirst.org).

For questions, call 800-558-8652 or email [missouripeoplefirst@gmail.com](mailto:missouripeoplefirst@gmail.com).

Sign up deadline: August 31, 2014 (After this date, we will not be able to guarantee lunch for you.)
Save the Date for the PFMO Spring Conference

When: April 24-26, 2015

Where: Tan-Tar-A Resort, Lake of the Ozarks

What: Do you want to learn and grow and maybe even change yourself for the better? Come join the fun at the annual People First of Missouri Conference in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. More details will be coming soon!
Boone County

People First of Boone County received funding from the Friends of Boone County Resources to develop a new website. A student at Encircle Technologies is developing it for us.

We’re planning a bake sale fundraiser to hold at the local Farmer’s Market.

Some of our members attended the “Future is Now” conference June 17 and 18. It focused on the importance of social capital and self-determination.

Our president and vice president will be meeting soon with Columbia Public Schools’ new school superintendent to discuss things like inclusion, the problem of bullying, and the importance of People First language.

Two of our officers are participating in the Victimization Task Force, a statewide coalition dedicated to reducing the incidence of abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disabilities.

St. Joseph

In March, we elected new officers. President: Ida Keuhn, Vice President: Gary Clouser, Treasurer: Tammy Courter, and Sargent at Arms: Chris Overman. Our new Secretary will be determined in July.

We had a Spaghetti dinner Fundraiser in April at MERIL. We had about 75 to 80 in attendance, plus People First members. We had door prizes from two local businesses. People First members served, and MERIL staff helped in various capacities.

We held a Garage Sale Fundraiser on July 19 at MERIL’s warehouse. We also offered drinks and hot dogs for sale at the event.

We are hoping to send nine to 10 people to the “Real Voices, Real Choices” conference with the help of State People First scholarships, MERIL’s contributions and community support through our fundraisers.

Tiger Country

We are happy to be a new chapter of PFMO, and that people like our name. We are hoping to do new things and go a long way, and we look forward to getting more new members.

People First of Boone County Officers, from left to right: Jeff, Jason, Barb, Betty, Donald, and Lora
Chapter Updates

Rolla

In March, we hosted a pizza party for the Rolla disability community. We held our annual barbeque in June.

Three chapter members and a support staff person attended the eight week Project STIR training. It is a program designed to help people be more self-determined in life.

In July, we’re participating in “Take a Stand Against Child Abuse,” as a community project. Chapter members will be attending the “Real Voices Real Choices” conference in August. We are hoping to go to the SABE conference in October.

St. Charles

We participated in this year’s MODDC campaign, “Everyone Wins When Everyone’s In.”

In March, we went to one of the local high schools and spoke to freshmen and seniors about inclusion and People First Language. We also told some success stories.

We are working with the Boy Scouts in our area, and will speak to troop leaders and scouts about People First language and inclusion. Our county library has asked us to present puppet shows to children as well.

Our summer events will include a barbeque and a tour of the local fire department. We are also preparing for “Real Voices, Real Choices” in August, and have a good amount of members attending. We recently got an increase in our grant which has been an amazing accomplishment and lots of hard work.

Reminders

RV, RC

Real Voices, Real Choices is an exciting gathering of self-advocates and family members to learn about programs, service issues, opportunities and self-advocacy.

When: August 17-19, 2014
Where: Osage Beach, Missouri
Information and registration at: http://dmh.mo.gov/constituentservices/ConsumerConference.htm

SABE

This year’s Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) Conference is close to home, and promises to be full of great information.

When: October 9-12, 2014
Where: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Information and registration at: http://muconf.missouri.edu/sabe2014/index.html or search for “SABE 2014.”
The declaration called “The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access” is vitally important to the future of all self-advocates.

Information and communication technologies are valuable tools for billions of people worldwide today. This includes computers, cell phones and iPads. The world continues to change, becoming ever more dependent on these technologies. Now it is difficult to even apply for a job without the ability to get online. As common as these tools are, access to them is limited for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Reducing barriers to information and communication technologies for individuals with cognitive disabilities is becoming more and more important as these technologies play a larger role in everyday life. Without access, people with cognitive disabilities will be disconnected from their community. Many of the gains we have made may be lost. We do not have a great deal of time in which to act.

You can read the declaration and its history at colemaninstitute.org/declaration. If you agree with it, endorse and distribute it to as many organizations and individuals as you can to make them aware of its importance to you and the self-advocacy movement.

If you do not have access to a computer, please call me at 816-808-4080 and I will mail you a hard copy that can be endorsed and returned to me. Thank you.