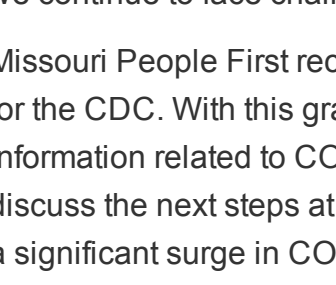




## People First of Missouri 2022 Winter Newsletter

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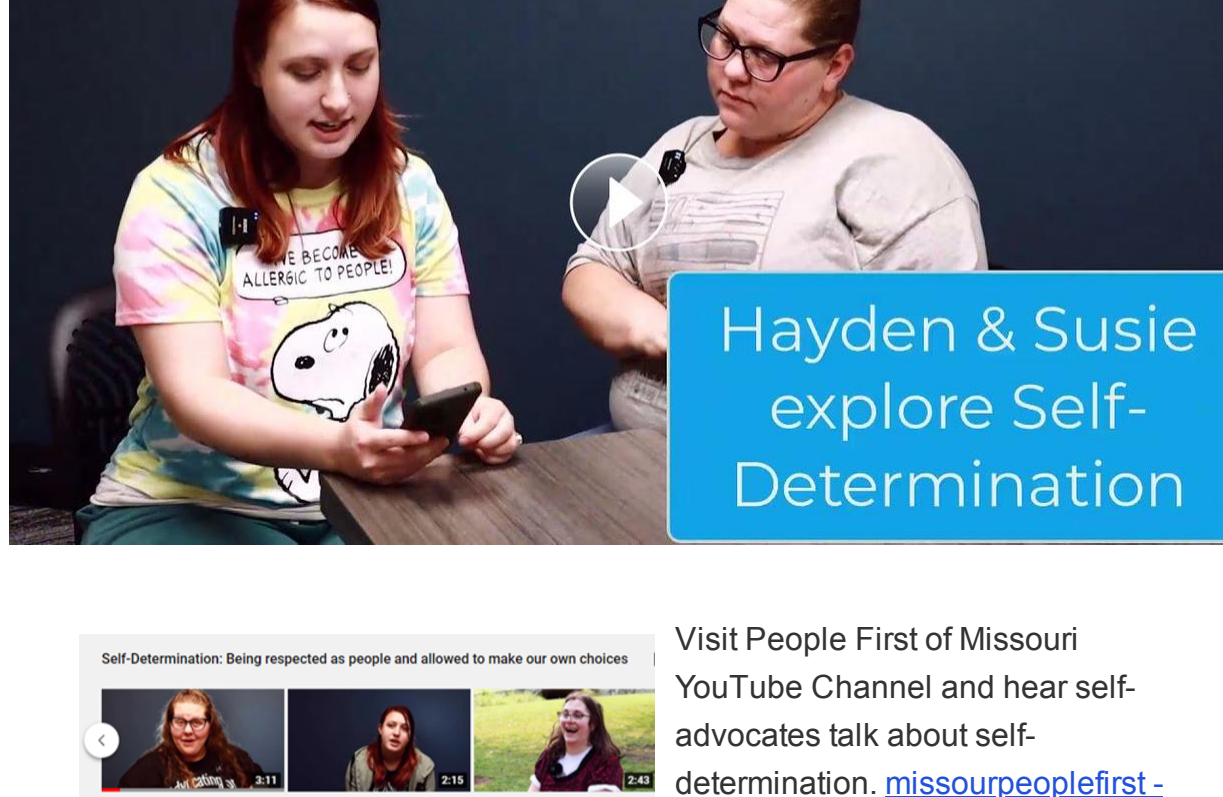
### Message from the President:

Greetings and Happy New Year, my friends. I hope you and yours had a happy and safe New Year celebration. I want to begin this message with a sincere thank you to all of you for trusting me to represent you as your President. With the New Year, we continue to face challenges and look forward to the future of our movement.

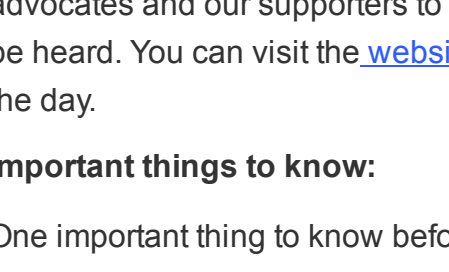
Missouri People First recently received a grant from SABE as a smaller grant for the CDC. With this grant, we have the opportunity to put out fact-based information related to COVID-19 and the vaccinations. More to come as we discuss the next steps at the steering committee. At this writing, there has been a significant surge in COVID cases, particularly the Omicron variant. Please be safe, my friends, and avoid situations that could negatively impact your health. I ask for your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate a challenging time for organizations everywhere. The officers and those that support us are working to move forward but remain cautious and vigilant for changes to protect the health and safety of all of us. At this time, we have every intention of having an in-person meeting in March and hope that we can participate in Disability Rights Legislative Day. At any point, things can change, and we have to be prepared to have a virtual or hybrid meeting.

In this issue, we discuss self-determination. As you read the articles, it would be important to think about what self-determination means to you and why it is important. In my life, self-determination is making choices for myself even if those choices aren't the best. Self-determination is not about always making the "right" decision. It has the responsibility to weigh out the pros and cons and decide that you can live with the consequences if that is what it is to be. One example of this for me was a few years ago. My sister-in-law made an awesome-tasting dessert with coconut. I like coconut, but my body is intolerant, and I knew the consequences. I chose to eat it and take the results. So, to me, self-determination has the right to make your own decision and the wisdom to know when to ask for help when you need it. Happy reading, my friends, and remember that there are no wrong answers, but approaches could be better.

## Self-Determination Hear from Advocates



Visit People First of Missouri YouTube Channel and hear self-advocates talk about self-determination. [missouripeoplefirst-YouTube](#)



## Disability Rights Legislative Day

Wednesday, March 9, 2022, is Disability Rights Legislative Day (DRLD) in Jefferson City, Missouri. You can also attend online if you would like. The theme for the DRLD is Power in Unity. The day is for self-advocates and our supporters to meet together in the capital to let their voices be heard. You can visit the [website](#) or [FaceBook page](#) to stay up to date about the day.

### Important things to know:

One important thing to know before you go is who your legislators are. You can learn about them by going to [Legislator Lookup | Missouri Senate \(mo.gov\)](#) and typing in your address. The website will tell you about your legislators and the bills they are sponsoring. It will also give you their office phone number and email.

A few days before the rally, try to schedule a meeting with your legislator on DRLD day. You can call or email their staff to ask to get on their calendar.

Make sure to get to their office ten minutes before your meeting time. Getting to their office ten minutes before your meeting will help you be prepared to talk with them and make sure they are not waiting for you.

When you meet with them, first share your story in a few short sentences. You want to explain your disability and your support to live in the community. If they can picture someone's face and know their story when voting on a bill, it makes a difference.

Two or three weeks after this meeting, thank them for listening to you and your concerns. This way, they will remember why they met with you. It can be a typed or written letter, an email, or a call to thank them for taking the time out of their day to meet with you. They are in the legislature to serve you and speak up for you.

## Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)

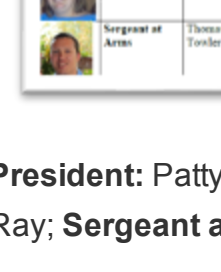
### Vaccine Outreach Mini-Grant

People First of Missouri was rewarded the Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) CDC Mini-Grant. The purpose of the grant is to make sure people with disabilities are getting the facts about the virus and vaccine in their state. The People First of Missouri slogan for the mini-grant is "Get Vaccinated! It is Good for You and Everyone".

Over the next six months, People First will create posters, information sheets, video contests, and other activities to get the word out about the vaccine.



Visit The People First of Missouri website for [Events Information](#) You will see information on events of interest for individuals with disabilities. Including Advocates Wednesday, a once-a-month webinar featuring self-advocates from across Missouri, several technology events; MOAIDD Annual meeting, and Success in Telling Your Story webinar.

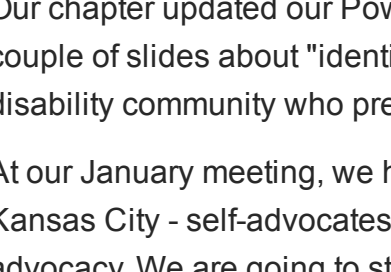


## Success in Telling Your Story\*

The purpose of this training is to teach self-advocates, family members, and service providers how to effectively tell their personal stories. Telling our stories is important because it helps us to connect with others, to advocate for our needs, it relieves stress, learns why our stories are important, learns about the eight ingredients of a good story, and tells their own story.

If you are interested in hosting a Success in Telling Your Story session for your group or organization contact [missouripeoplefirst@gmail.com](#)

\*The production of this training was sponsored and funded by the [Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council \(MoDDC\)](#) and the University of Missouri Institute for Human Development (UMKC IHD)



## Here are the People First of Missouri statewide officers for the 2022-2024 term:

At the last People First of Missouri steering committee meeting, the steering committee members elected who they would like to represent as officers at the state level. **President:** Roger Cromer; **Vice**

**President:** Patty Goss; **Secretary:** Katie Kinder; **Treasurer:** Kelly Ray; **Sergeant at Arms:** Thomas Towler

## Chapters Updates

For information about a chapter near you visit:

[Chapters - Missouri People First](#)

If you would like to start a chapter visit:

[How to Start a Chapter of People First](#)

or e-mail at [missouripeoplefirst@gmail.com](#)

### People First At Large:

People First at Large is still developing stages. This online chapter is open to anyone who wants to be a member of People First but is unable to attend a chapter in their local area. An additional goal of this chapter is to help individuals start a chapter locally.

#### Boone County:

Our chapter updated our PowerPoint on person-first language. We included a couple of slides about "identity-first" language since there are people in the disability community who prefer it.

At our January meeting, we had several guests from St. Louis, Springfield, and Kansas City - self-advocates who are young adults, who are the future of self-advocacy. We are going to stay in touch with them.

We partner with other organizations in Boone County and will host a Disability Issues Candidates Forum in March. There will be an election for the mayor, city council, and school board in April.

We are planning to sell People First polo shirts as a fundraiser. We will advertise them on social media since we are not yet doing events in person.

We are working on getting out the word about the importance of voting. Our right to vote has never been more critical.

#### Mark Twain:

The People First of Mark Twain Area in Hannibal has officially launched in January. They will be meeting at Douglass Community Services on the first Monday of each month from 12-1 pm. Some of the plans for the chapter include Valentine's Dance fundraiser in February and planning some webinars on Supported Decision Making and Guardianship.

#### St. Charles:

Susan Parker from the St. Charles People First Chapter found out she will receive the Mental Health Champion Award for Developmental Disabilities. The banquet will be in May of 2022. The Missouri Mental Health Champion Award highlights people living with a mental illness, developmental disability, or recovering from substance abuse who take positive actions in their community.

#### St. Joseph:

Congrats to members Chris and Gray, who received Challenge Coins from Legislator Representative, Travis Smith. They received coins after testifying at the Missouri State Capitol about broadband issues in Missouri.

A challenge coin is a small coin or medallion usually given to a person who has served in the military, but state officials can provide the challenge coin to a person who has shown courage and bravery.

In Governor Parson's 2022 State of the State address, he called for \$400 million toward broadband expansion projects statewide, the single largest broadband investment in state history. This proposal would connect 75,000 households, expand access to rural areas and underserved urban areas, and update and expand wireless networks across the state.

#### St. Louis:

The St. Louis chapter has decided to cancel their in-person bingo night fundraiser and has a virtual version of the same event on February 26, 2022.

#### Stone/Taney:

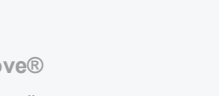
Our Stone/Taney County chapter was able to have its first zoom meeting in December! We are still searching for a location where we can have in-person meetings and still have room to distance ourselves socially. Since our chapter elected to have meetings every other month, we have a little time to secure an appropriate space.

Meanwhile, we are looking to make plans for future endeavors, such as community awareness opportunities which may include enjoying some local entertainment and perhaps planning a fundraising event.

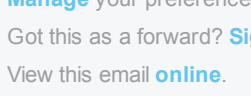
We are looking forward to gathering face-to-face when it is safe to do so and getting out together as a group.

#### UMKC Roo:

The UMKC Roo Chapter is a new chapter for the Kansas City, Missouri area. We have been meeting online on the second Tuesdays of each month from 5:30-6:30. At our last meeting, we nominated officers. Each member talked about what they like to do and what they want to learn.



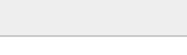
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