



The Connector

**SPEAKING UP FOR US
OF MAINE**

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April 2021 Newsletter

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Welcome to the April 2021 edition of The Connector! We at Speaking Up For Us have been busy learning about HCBS, participating in Legislative Advocacy, and completing our Advocacy Day series. In addition, we have spent some time on our [website](#) updating our [Stuff For Us](#) section. We have been able to add resources to this page including how an mRNA vaccine works in plain language, Advocacy Day series sessions, and other resources. Check it out today!

HCBS Informational Sessions

Speaking Up For Us has been having Lauren Wille from Disability Rights Maine attend our statewide meeting and some chapter meetings to discuss the HCBS Settings Rule Change. Self-Advocates have found these sessions to be extremely helpful in understanding the changes that will be coming. Lauren has giving a brief presentation at the beginning of each session with self-advocates and then answering questions. Each self-advocate has unique situations and circumstances that they want to ask about. Lauren will be attending a Springvale Chapter meeting in May and all self-advocates are welcome to attend that meeting. If you would like more information about the Home and Community Based Services Settings Rule Change you can find that on Disability Rights Maine [website](#), or on our [website](#).



Legislative Advocacy

Self-Advocates have started submitting testimony regarding bills that are in committee at the statehouse. Self-Advocates have shared how Dental Care, Waitlists, and raises for Support Staff affect them. Self-Advocates share personal stories about their experience and how they want a particular issue changed for future generations. In addition, SUFU has submitted testimony on raises for support staff, waitlists, and the forming of a mortality review board. Self-Advocates and the entire SUFU organization are committed to legislative advocacy during this legislative season. It is important for self-advocates to voices their concerns and lived experiences on certain issues.

Jon's Corner

In April I was able to attend the Disability Policy Seminar. On the 19th I attend a social hour

hosted by the Disability Policy Seminar for self-advocates. I liked the questions that were asked during this social hour. The presenters for the social hour shared stories about themselves to help us know who they were.

The other thing I liked about the Disability Policy Seminar was on the next day on the HCBS Access Act. A lot of information was shared about the draft of this potential federal

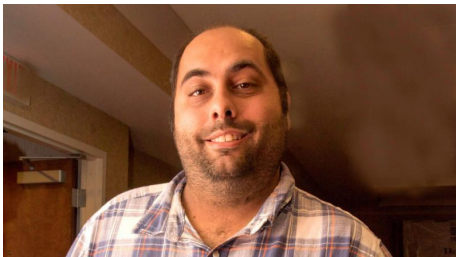
legislation. I was able to also listen to potential improvement regarding SSI and how that would affect people with disabilities. The Disability Policy Seminar was very good, and I am glad I was able to attend this online event.



Advocacy Day Series

Our Advocacy Day Series wrapped up on Tuesday April 27th. We finished the series by talking about why building a relationship with your legislator is important. Self-Advocates are the experts on their lives and how

legislation affects them. Some shared personal experiences on testifying at hearing or writing to their legislator on a particular bill. Self-Advocates were encouraged to reach out to their legislator if they had not done so already. This is an excellent step in a self-advocates journey in using their voice. If you would like to see all of the presentations that were used for this year's Advocacy Day Series, you can find them on our [website](#) under the Advocacy Day Resources. We hope that another year will bring us back to the state house where we can meet our legislators face to face.



Kile's Corner

I was able to attend the Disability Policy Seminar in April. One of the workshops I was able to attend was the Social Security Policy Session. I learned that there is a lot of details that will change regarding Social Security if this bill passes. This would update a law that have been in place for the

last 40 years.

I was also able to attend hill visits and met with two staffers from Maine's delegation. This is always an opportunity to share how laws affect me personally, and other self-advocates. I was also able to continue to attend the SARTAC meetings in April. One that really stuck out to me was when [People First Wisconsin](#) attended, and their work on Self Determination Channel on [YouTube](#).

Career Exploration!

Through a partnership with Vocational Rehab self-advocates from all over the state committed to a 5-week seminar on Career Exploration. April 28th was the first session where self-advocates came together to start working on things such as Resume Building, Networking, Interview Skills, Resources and more. Stephanie Pelletier said the first session went "very well." We will have more from the participating self-advocates next month.



Finally

We invite you to check out our [website](#) . Read our most recent [blog post](#) and subscribe to future blogs. You can also find the list of our chapter meetings, or follow us on [Facebook](#). If you are a SUFU member we want you to join our members only Facebook Group. To do that please email [Laurie Coldwell](#) or [Jon McGovern](#). We don't want you to miss anything.



Have an Idea for Something to be in The Connector?

Contact: Laurie Coldwell

Administrative Assistant (207) 956-1004 / Ext. 4

lcoldwell@sufumaine.org

SUFU CONNECTOR
Speaking Up For Us of Maine
207-956-1004

www.sufumaine.org