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December 2020 Newsletter

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Welcome to the December 2020 Newsletter! We hope this finds you well. What a year! As we reflect on the last year we can see what a bumpy ride it has been. We have all grown some, tried something we had never done before, and become a stronger team. We look forward to 2021 and what it has in store.

Chapter Happenings

Chapters are continuing to meet around the state on Zoom. While we miss seeing each other in person we are making the most of this time to learn.



A topic that we have all talked about is friendship. When we can't see our friends like we used to, we realize how much we miss them. This has brought about a great deal of discussion around friendships, how important they are, and how we can strengthen them even while we can't be together in person.

Another topic that many chapters have been talking about is self-advocacy. How did it start, why it is important and how we can advocate for ourselves each day. Some of our chapters have watched Crip Camp together and discussed the importance of that group of people, setting the stage for where we are today.



Goals

With the end of an year, and the beginning of another many are talking about what goals they would like to accomplish in the coming year. we have continued discussions around SMART goals, and how to use those tools in our goal setting.

Jon's Corner

Hi this is Jon McGovern, I have been really busy the last two months. Two weeks ago I went to the AUCD conference and it was really good. I went to a workshop on the needs of people with Disabilities during the Pandemic. They talked about how to protect yourself, like wearing a mask, and social distancing.

I also went to a workshop on Supported Decision Making. The thing that came out of that was other states are trying to pass this like Maine has.

This past month I was also able to write a [blog post](#) for the SUFU blog. Writing out how I was feeling helped me process this. I hope that others were able to feel not alone how they were feeling.

One of the highlights from this whole year, would be the subminimum wage bill passing. This has something I have been working on since 2015. It was the last bill I testified on this year, and I look forward to testifying on bills again in the future.

This is my dream job and it brings me joy to work for SUFU. I am looking forward to what the new year brings.



Kile's Corner

Hi guys I am back to share what I did the last two months

Two weeks ago I attended to the AUCD conference

I had a good time meeting new people on the computer and I learned what other people are doing in their state to help people with disabilities.

When the new year comes, we will go to the hill virtually to talk about the Marriage penalty tax to see if can be eliminated.

I learned what the Iowa Lend program does to work with people with disabilities. In their lend program participants work to become leaders. There were opportunities for graduates to be on committees once they complete the course. Graduates have the opportunity to become mentor to other people in the Lend Program.

Then Illinois Lend Program works with people that come to the United States from other Countries who live with disability. They come to America to get a better life that they want to have. Then I went to a gala meeting we set a record on how many self-advocates in room on the computer. That number is 142.

I just had good time to working for you.

The Positives of the Year

- The Subminimum Wage Bill Passing.
- Members helping members connecting to Zoom.
- Being able to work with a wonderful team.
- Met people who are absolutely amazing.
- Members from all over the state get to see each other over zoom
- SUFU emerged as a group of strong leaders when the pandemic hit.
- The SUFU staff was able to pull together and be a resource for members.
- SUFU members and staff have adapted well and have been creative to get information out.
- We have done some very strong advocacy work.
- SUFU has had a presence on the [SARTAC](#) calls each week.
- SUFU has made connections with other self-advocacy groups across the nation.

Staff Highlight

Each Month we are going to Highlight our Staff members at Speaking Up For Us. As we have been meeting over zoom we have found ourselves virtually traveling around the state and meeting new people. We hope this helps you all get to know us a bit better!
Our Staff Highlight this month is Jon McGovern!



Where in the state do you live? *I live in the Bangor area.*

What is a typical work day like for you and what do you like about working for SUFU?
There is no typical work day for me. Each day is different and each week is different. I attend the SARTAC meetings, Statewide Meetings, and the Bangor Chapter. I also do a lot of work in the database, and talk to members.
I like it because it has been my dream job to work with people with disabilities for a long time.

Who is someone you admire and why? *I admire Kile Pelletier. He has been a mentor of mine for a long time. I like it when we work as a team, and I appreciate that.*

When you are not working what could we find you doing? *I am busy with my two bowling leagues during the week and I stay connected to the roller derby that I've participated in.*



Quotes from the Month

Each Month so many of our self-advocates share something that makes some of us stop and think. I try to stop and scribble them down to share with others. I hope we can share some of those here.

While talking about how people should be treated, Presque Isle chapter member, and board member, Mary Ann Swank shared the following, "They act like we don't have privileges.....That's not how it should be. We are to be equally treated. We are going to live in decent places, and we are not going to stop until we get what we want."

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