



The Connector

**SPEAKING UP FOR US
OF MAINE**

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June 2021 Newsletter

Mark your calendar now for the Speaking Up For Us Virtual conference on September 21st and 22nd. SUFU staff and self-advocates are hard at work starting to plan this exciting event. While summer generally means slowing down and resting, SUFU is still going strong. We do enjoy the summer season in Maine, but as always there is still work to be done in self-advocacy.

2021 Speaking Up For Us Conference Announcement

Save the Date

Speaking Up for Us
Virtual Statewide Conference

September 21-22, 2021
Located over ZOOM!



For More Information:

Call Laurie Coldwell
(207) 956-1004 Ext 4

Check our website for updates and registration:
sufumaine.org

and 22. This year we are planning workshops, a virtual vendor fair, and as always our Annual Meeting. Registration and cost information will be coming soon! Workshop Proposal Forms are available on our [website](#) or by emailing [Laurie Coldwell](#).



Chapter Updates

Aroostook County Chapter updates from Lisa Betancourt:

Houlton- This month we finished up with the ADA presentation. Our second meeting for the month we had a guest speaker, Abby Kelly from Red Cross, she had a great presentation on, "How to be Red Cross Ready, Fire safety and prevention" The members and staff provided me with positive feedback on the presentation. Many said, "I

learned so much" from Abby. We look forward to inviting her back soon.

Presque Isle Chapter- The members finished the ADA presentation, discussed an article from, Disability Scoop on L. D. 1376 Restraints and Seclusion in Maine School System. Our second meeting for the month we discussed, Supported Decision making. The members had many questions. I will invite a member from DRM to speak to the Chapter.

Caribou Chapter- Sadly 2 of members lost their beloved bunny, Chuwey. Please accept our condolences on your loss. In our chapter meetings we went over the Disability Scoop article on, L.D. 1376 Restraints and seclusion in the Maine School System. We also finished our ADA Presentation.

Southern Maine and Bangor Chapter Updates from Laurie Coldwell.

Bangor, Greater Portland, Casco, and Springvale have all been talking about the same things in their chapters. Some of the highlights have been a training on using coping skills when we find ourselves in those triggering situations. In addition, we talked about how to figure out which ones work best for each of us, and how to communicate that to our staff and supporters.

Our most recent, and requested training was on getting back to life after the pandemic. As many of the restrictions are being lifted and we are able to go out and meet with each other we wanted to talk about how to navigate those social situations. For some of us there was the realization that maybe we aren't ready for that yet, or maybe we don't want things to return to the way things were. We get the opportunity to define our future and what and who takes up our time. We spent time in each chapter learning about how to set boundaries on what social situations we want to be part of, how to ask questions about social events, and communicate what we were comfortable with.

Jon's Corner

This month I sent Emails to Legislators on LD 1573 & LD 1360. I wanted to let them know what I thought about these bills. Both of these bills are very important to me because I would like to see DSP'S get a higher wage. I would like to see the waitlist disappear in Maine forever.

I worked on the HCBS Access Act 2021 with Stacy G & learned a lot about it. I am going to go back and look at the presentation that is on our website to continue to learn more about it. I would encourage others to view the presentation.

I also finished the Career Exploration Workshop Series. I have a blog post coming out soon on my review of that series. Look for it on our website.



Statewide Meetings



On Tuesday afternoons at 1pm self-advocates from around the state gather together on zoom to have our statewide meeting. This is an opportunity for us as a group to learn something new, get an update on what is happening in other parts of the state and more. Topics for June included Vision Boards with Lisa, Supported Decision Making with Mana Abdi from Disability Rights Maine, Guardianship from Lauren Wille from Disability Rights Maine, and the HCBC Access Act with Jon McGovern, Stacy Giberson and Monique Stairs from SUFU. We wrapped up

our June Statewide Meetings by finishing up our Vision Board with Lisa.

If you would like to join us for a statewide meeting you can find the list of what we will be talking about on our [event page](#) on our website.

What's on the blog?

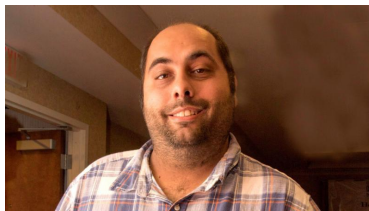
The month of June brought some excitement to the [blog](#). Marco started the month with a post on having a [clean slate](#) in how we define our future after the pandemic.



Chris Heywood shared a favorite [summer activity](#) that he enjoys as we welcomed the first day of summer.

Sarah Trites shared a [poem](#) that she had written with us. We hope to have more poetry from Sarah in the future. If you have not had the opportunity to read it you should!

We finished the month with some of the self-advocates sharing what they learned in the Career Exploration Workshop Series.



Kile's Corner

I have been working hard for all you guys to get what you want. I just want to give you an update on what I have been working on. I have continued attending the SARTEC each week. This week one of the topics was the Olmstead

Decision. We talked about what life was like for people who lived in institutions and compared to what life is like now. We still have a lot of work to do though, to continue to make life better for all of us. We talked about being treated with respect.

Last week I was able to attend a Public Speaking workshop. It showed us how to prepare for public speaking. They talked to us on how to dress for speaking to the public, and how to be positive. There are other classes available on public speaking for self-advocates. I also did a training with Disability Rights Maine last week called Cultural Competency. We were able to educate Pine Tree Legal Assistance on the history of Self-Advocacy in the State of Maine. We were able to talk about Maine's institutions closing. There were other topics that were presented, and it was a good opportunity to talk about self-advocacy and learn about others in the state of Maine.

I hope people have a good summer. I know we will.



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?

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