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Mission Statement

The Self-Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT) serves as consultants for the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities and other advocacy organizations. Our group’s members are talented citizens who want to effect positive change in New Hampshire. We are committed to supporting people who experience disabilities by tackling big issues that keep us from living quality lives in the community.

Facilitator’s Notes

In these extraordinary times the need for advocacy in the disability community is more important than ever. COVID-19 has not denied the Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT) the ability to advocate for equality, freedom, and inclusion for themselves and others with disabilities. That said, the team has found it necessary to shorten our meetings, which are held on Zoom. We have collaborated with the Institute on Disability (IOD), the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities (NHCDD), and the Disabilities Rights Center (DRC) this year. SALT has been asked to provide advocacy support to three grants at the IOD. This is extremely exciting because we are finally beginning to make a name for ourselves as an up and coming advocacy group. Collaboration with other disability organizations has been our strong point since SALT began. For many people, the issue of access to technology and staying connected has been difficult. For this reason, since March, the number of attendees at our meetings has dwindled. In the next few months, we will have to put a lot of energy into rebuilding our membership. The team will seek out energetic, motivated individuals with disabilities who truly believe they can change the world through advocacy.

Although it may seem like we didn’t accomplish as much as in years past, I know that we can accomplish great things if we believe in what we are doing. I really appreciate all the support from everyone who hung in there despite problems with technology and the pandemic. I look forward to seeing and hearing all of you on my computer and hopefully in person, in the not too distant future, on the third Thursday of every month. Thank you for this opportunity to continue working with all of you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Bates
Core Issues

SALT has identified four core issues to focus on. These issues are

- Transportation
- Employment / Real Careers
- Mentorship
- Abuse & Neglect Prevention

It is the policy of the Self Advocacy Leadership Team to choose issues that are important to the wider community and not just people who experience disabilities. SALT strives to strengthen the community for everyone.

Collaborators

New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities
Vanessa Blais, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Mary Lawson, Ronnie Rakoski, Patricia Vincent-Piet

EngAging New Hampshire
Roger Vachon

New Hampshire Health and Human Services
Rachel Lakin, Angele Rivers, Sarah Lecler, Jan Skoby

The Institute on Disability
Kimberly Phillips, Sarah Boege

Disability Rights Center
Stephanie Patrick

NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
Marie Linebaugh, Linda Douglas

People First of NH

The Legislation Administration Committee
The Honorable Chairwoman Janet Wall and members

Leadership Education and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND)
Deanna Whitmore-Trainee
Advocacy Training

SALT Member, Tammy Mills, teamed up with Marie Linebaugh and Linda Douglas from the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence to develop an awareness training program specifically for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. They piloted the training at a People First of NH meeting. Members of People First of NH were able to give feedback that will be valuable in improving the training to be most effective.

The training gave participants examples of different types of abuse, including exploitation, physical and emotional abuse. This training was very informative and interactive. A great deal of emphasis was placed on recognizing abuse and how to get help if you need it. SALT member Tammy Mills performed a skit with her brother, Mike Mills, that was centered around talking with someone you trust and finding resources for help. Trainings like this one are important and should be offered on a regular basis. The training aligned perfectly with our core issue of abuse and neglect prevention.

Confidential Statewide Hotlines

24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline

1-866-644-3574

24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline

1-800-277-5570

Crisis center advocates are available across the state of NH to provide free and confidential support services to those impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
Consultant Work

SALT members continued to work with Dr. Kim Phillips and Sarah Boege of the Institute On Disability to ensure that the research projects and data collected about people with disabilities are written in plain language and are easy to understand. The team provided feedback on the research activities and products for distribution for Disability Statistics and Demographics Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, a grant awarded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (https://researchondisability.org/statsrrtc).

Team members also shared their observations of an infographic which gives data about the disparities in employment, health benefits, and poverty in urban and rural communities for people with disabilities.

The group appreciated reviewing the infographic because it was much easier to understand and provide feedback on than other resources that used a lot of technical language. This work is in-line with our core issue of employment.

Institute on Disability/UCED

SALT members consulted with University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disabilities Studies LEND Trainee, Deanna Whitmore on the creation of a survey to be used for the DD Council’s Diabetes Awareness Initiative program. This program was created to address the issue of disparity in the counties of Belknap, Carroll, and Coos in regard to diabetes prevalence. SALT members assisted in designing a survey that was easy to understand and accessible to program attendees.
Policy

Kathy Bates and Kelly Ehrhart wrote testimony for HB 1303, an act establishing a commission to study expanding public testimony opportunities to remote locations statewide. It was presented to The Honorable Chairwoman Janet Wall and the Members of the Legislation Administration Committee.

SALT Members often testify about issues that are important to them and the wider community. It is our civic duty to educate elected officials on the issues that directly impact our lives. The team felt that HB 1303 was an important bill to advocate in favor of because it could ultimately make testifying on other legislative issues more accessible for everyone.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 Pandemic complicated the legislation process here in New Hampshire. Many bills were tabled before the session ended. SALT is hoping that HB 1303 will submitted again during the 2020-2021 session. Members will also work alongside the DD Council Policy Director, Ronnieann Rakoski to identify bills to watch and submit testimony supporting policy that improves the lives of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities.
Advocacy During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The importance of working together and being together cannot be overstated, as the team strives to achieve their advocacy goals. However, business as usual is just not possible during the pandemic. It has been important to celebrate our victories, both personal and as a team.

Doug McIntosh started his first job at Walmart this year.

Tammy Mills and Kelly Ehrhart were both nominated for the Virginia L. Bowden Advocacy Award presented by the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Michelle Schladenhauffen developed a web page to sell her artwork on Annie’s Angels. [https://www.anniesangels.org/michelles-tees-and-more](https://www.anniesangels.org/michelles-tees-and-more)

John Fenley, a founding member of Spark Community Center in Lebanon, NH, is reopening the center in a new location.

Katie Epstein, a direct support professional, is working with a new client.

Kathy Bates writes a blog for UNH Institute on Disability (IOD) called, From Where I sit, [https://iod.unh.edu/iod-blog](https://iod.unh.edu/iod-blog). She continues to expand her readership.

Roberta Gallant, a long-time advocate, won the Virginia Bowden Advocate of the Year Award. She has recently retired from the Bureau of Developmental Services after several years of service.

Frank Vinceguerra is a political activist who advocates for voter education for people with disabilities.

Denis Greenwood continues to volunteer at UpReach Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Goffstown, NH.
Hope for the Future

One of the strengths of this team is that we are all very goal-oriented people. The Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT) has done a great job staying connected since March, despite the Covid-19 Pandemic. The team is hoping to come together sometime next spring. Our connection is vital to the future of Advocacy in New Hampshire. We hope to support the Institute On Disability in their future grant work whether it involves transition planning for adolescents and young adults with disabilities, telehealth, focus group data, or any other projects that may come our way. SALT will develop a technology survey that will be distributed to advocates with disabilities. The hope is to gather data about the need for technology and education around it.

SALT members will continue their policy work with issues that will improve the lives of advocates with disabilities while also keeping in mind the needs of the wider community.

For the last seven months the team has discussed the pros and cons of becoming a non-profit organization. We are most likely headed in that direction. The immediate concerns, however, are to find a way to increase our membership so that if and when we become a 501C3 we can share the responsibilities of being independent amongst all of us. Part of SALT’s consideration is whether or not to join an existing non-profit organization or to become a whole new advocacy organization. The members have reservations about reinventing the wheel and starting something new in the midst of a health crisis. As a team, we are not really sure which direction to take, but we know it’s more important than ever to be creative and productive.

Thanks,

Yours in Advocacy, Kathy Bates
In Memory

Peter Fleming

NHCDD Vice Chair, NHCDD Policy Committee Co-Chair, Member of SALT, Advocate NH, Special Olympics athlete, coach and board member, member of Knights of Columbus and Best Buddies International and NH Chapter of Best Buddies fellow founder.

Peter passed away on April 20, 2020. He will be missed for his dedication to advocacy in the disability community. Peter spent much of his life representing his community and making friends throughout New Hampshire and the U.S. He leaves behind many family and friends who will miss him greatly.
In Memory

Cordelia White

Founding Member of SALT, former NACDD Council Member, NH Leadership Series Graduate, YEAH Council Member, NH Ambassadors Training Graduate.

Cordelia passed away on August 10, 2019. She was known well for her advocacy work, especially in special healthcare needs and special education. Cordelia loved connecting with people through humor. She had a deep caring for people in need. Her passing is a great loss to her friends and family, and to the advocacy community.
To: The Honorable Chairwoman Janet Wall and the Members of the Legislation Administration Committee

From: Kathy Bates, Facilitator/Member of the Self Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT)

Re: HB 1303, An Act **Establishing a Commission to Study expanding public testimony opportunities to remote locations statewide.**

February 13th, 2020

Good morning. On behalf of all our members of the Self- Advocacy Leadership Team (SALT), we would like to extend our gratitude to the members of the Legislative Administration Committee, For the ability to testify in favor of HB 1303.

SALT serves as consultants for the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities and other advocacy organizations. Our group members are talented citizens who want to effect positive change in New Hampshire. We are committed to supporting people who experience disabilities by tackling big issues that keep us from living quality lives in our communities.

I am the facilitator and a member of SALT. It is impossible for many people with disabilities to testify because they cannot attend a hearing in person. Accessible transportation and the support needed is expensive and drivers are not always readily available. The disabled community needs the opportunity to speak out but, it can take an act of God to attend a hearing and testify. Many people have to travel up to two hours just to get to Concord. Advocacy is important. It is our civic duty to educate elected officials on the issues that directly impact our lives. Testifying on issues such as the Health and Human Services Budget, the addition of dental care as a Medicaid covered service for adults or any number of direct support issues is often the best way to make the biggest impact. **While testifying in person puts a face to the story, testifying remotely would serve the same purpose.**

I often attend meetings remotely from my home, without the stress of dealing with my personal care or transportation needs. 1 in 4 of us are disabled. That number goes up even higher after the age of 65. It is important that everyone be able to contribute and that is why HB 1303, Establishing a Commission to Study expanding public testimony opportunities to remote locations statewide, is definitely a good idea. I urge you to vote in favor of HB 1303.

Sincerely, **Kathy Bates**

Kathy Bates Facilitator of SALT
Wings and Wheels Consulting Services