

GMSA Board Meeting held on January 25, 2021 on Zoom

GMSA Officers (3): Randy Lizotte (president), Chad Cleverly (treasurer), Danielle Viau (vice-president)

GMSA Board Members (8): Erik Johnson (Vermont Choices), Marjorie Burns (BSAC), Hasan Ko (Champlain Voices), Tesha Thibodeau (Winds of Change), Taylor Terry (Capitol Advocates Together), Cory Savage (alternate for Next Step Self-Advocates), Eugene Johnson (GATSA), Carol Patenaude (Newport Self-Advocates)

Self-Advocates (6): Rebekah Thompson, Levi Gardner, Joel Bertelson, Kelly, Michelle Haberin, Rebecca

Allies (5): Lee Reilly, Jacob Weber (BSAC), Francine Heywood (Newport Self-Advocates), Wendy Summarsell and Mary Ruffing (Winds of Change)

GMSA Staff (3): Karen Topper, Max Barrows, Karen Noone

Agenda



9:30 - Go around and say hello. Please mention when your group is meeting.



9:45 - GMSA Goals for 2021 and Beyond

10:15 - Break for 5 minutes



10:20 - Answer questions about diversity at GMSA

Local Group Updates

VT Choices and Newport Self-Advocates: every Thursday, 2 to 3:30

BSAC: every Friday morning, 10 to 11:30

GATSA: every two weeks on Monday

Champlain Voices: every Monday, 2 to 3:30

Next Step: every Friday, 10am

Winds of Change: once a month but group does other things together on zoom every day.

CAT: meets every 2nd Thursday, 5:30 to 7. We haven't been having a leadership team meeting.

GMSA Goals for 2021 and beyond!

This list was initially generated by GMSA officers. They opted not to look at last year's goals that were adjusted to address the impact of COVID-19.

#1 Make sure people with disabilities have enough money.

- Help people get their stimulus check.
- If a person lost their job or decided not to work during COVID, help them get unemployment.
- Give advice or support to get back to work.

#2 Help people to connect to their legislators (federal and state)

- GMSA provide an update so we know what is going on.

#3 Provide COVID-19 information in plain language

- Reminders that people need to be wearing masks.

- When are we getting a vaccine?
- About treatments and issues that come up in getting support

#4 Help people get out of isolation.

- Help people to get devices and access to the internet.
- Make sure we let people know about GMSA groups and meetings.
- Push the agencies to truly commit to sharing GMSA information.
- GMSA needs to pull together and share resources for using zoom and other online programs.

#5 Help groups to meet regularly. (We have lost some groups and others are meeting more often) (We have lost touch with some leaders during COVID and we have also gained many new leaders who we are in touch with every week because of all our zoom meetings.) (Our groups meeting are competing with agencies running online classes during COVID.)

- Make sure groups have leaders or officers. Support them to meet and to plan.
- Shift away from zoom “check-in meetings”. People respond better if there is a guest speaker or if we are teaching something during our meetings.
 - ✓ GMSA can pay peer leaders to be guest speakers. GMSA needs to come up with an online schedule of when other groups are meeting. GMSA needs to find out what groups want to learn. And identify who could be a guest speaker or trainer.

#6 Train people to be peer mentors who help people with their ISAs and person-centered planning.

#7 Get better at working with people who use devices to communicate. It is hard because some of us cannot communicate with them. Being isolated during COVID many self-advocates who speak are seeing what it is like to live with no communication.

#8 Provide technical assistance on training support staff.

- Explore groups working together to do basic intro trainings for support workers.

#9 Recognizing and responding to discrimination:

- Learn about racism
- Get better at welcoming and including people from diverse cultural groups
- Learn about ableism and ways that society discriminates against people with disabilities. And how to deal with it.

#10 Keep doing the VT Leadership training.

#11 Teaching teenagers and others about their rights. Make sure we focus on:

- Discipline in schools
- Accessible information about taking care of our health
- Mental health

#12 Form a committee to put together a plan for GMSA to shift to having a CEO and COO. A Chief Executive Officer (a self-advocate) and a Chief Operating Officer that has skills like Topper. Begin by writing job descriptions and describe how it could work. Set up some advance training for:

- managing money
- managing grants/contracts
- supporting a board

Short List GMSA Goals for 2021 and Beyond

- a) Make sure people with disabilities have enough money 👍
- b) Help people to connect to their legislators (federal and state) 👍
- c) COVID information 👍
- d) Help people get out of isolation 👍
- e) Help groups to meet more regularly 👍
- f) Train people to be peer mentors who help people with their ISAs and person-centered planning 👍
- g) Get better at working with people who use devices to communicate 👍
- h) Provide technical assistance on train support staff 👍
- i) Get better at welcoming and including people from diverse cultural groups 👍
- j) Keep doing leadership training 👍
- k) Learn about ableism and ways that society discriminates against people with disabilities. And how to deal with it. 👍
- l) Form a committee to put together a plan for GMSA to shift to having a CEO and COO. 👍