

# DDS



## 2022 End-of-Year Report

**Seeds of Change – Supporting  
people to blossom and thrive**

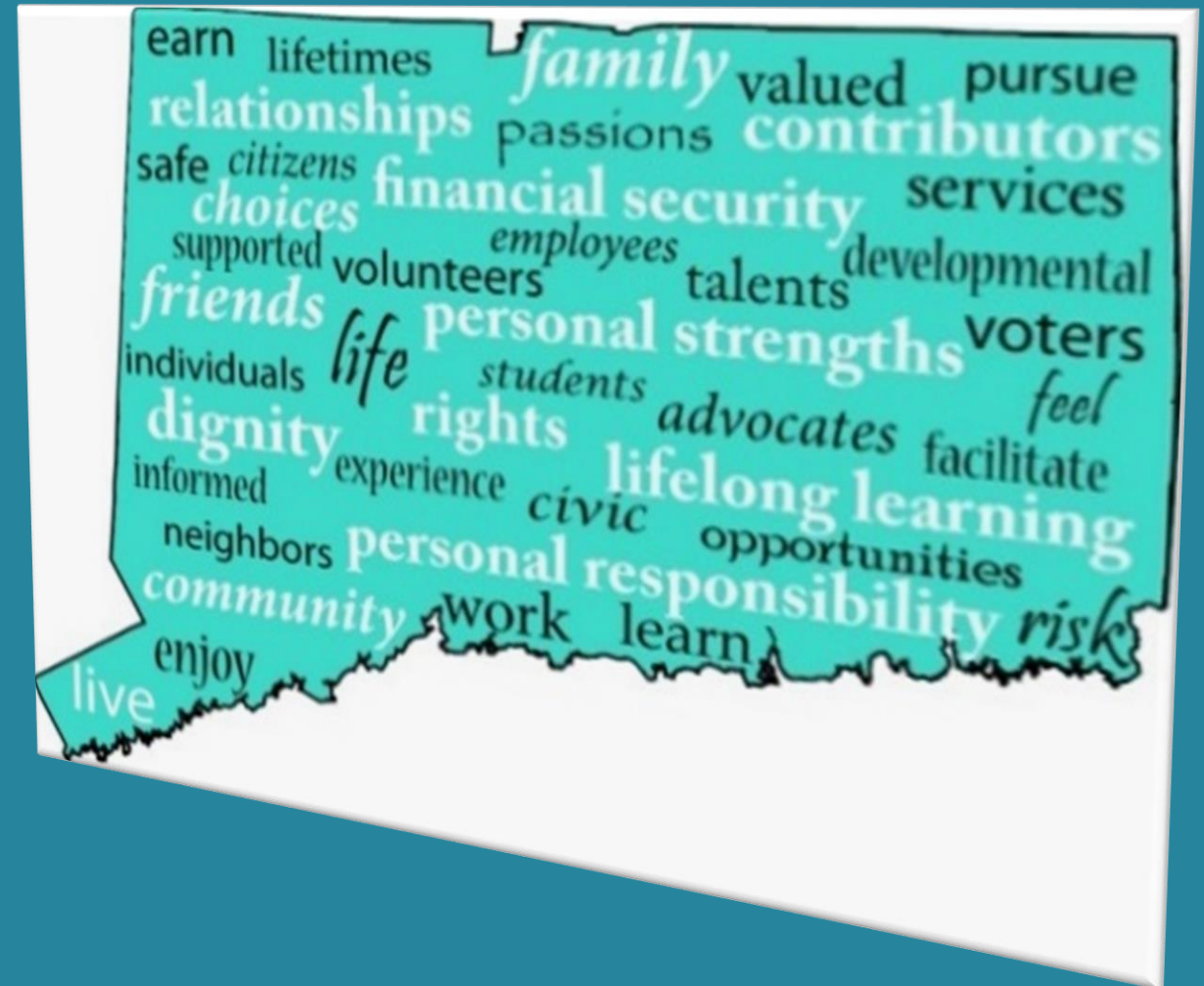
# Self-Advocate Coordinators at Work!

## Who are the SACs?

Legislature Supported  
A Voice of the People  
Making a Difference

## What do they do?

Promote Self-Advocacy  
Spread the Word!  
Promote Individual Involvement  
Lead by Example  
Support Regional and State  
Activities





**James Louchen**

**Yana Razumnaya**



**Varian  
Salters**



# North

**Kevin Arce**



# West



**Josse  
Torres**



**Natasha Cole**

# South



**Kellie Hartigan**

**Jeremy  
Powell**



**Paige  
Librandi**



**Carol Grabbe**



# South Region Self-Advocate Coordinators

## Carol Grabbe

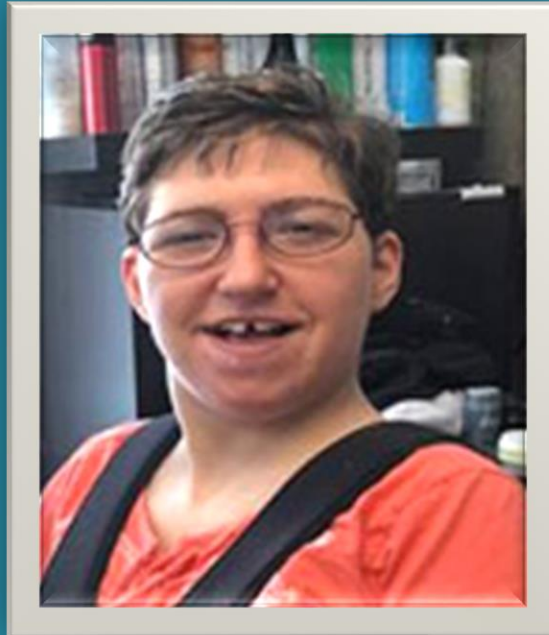
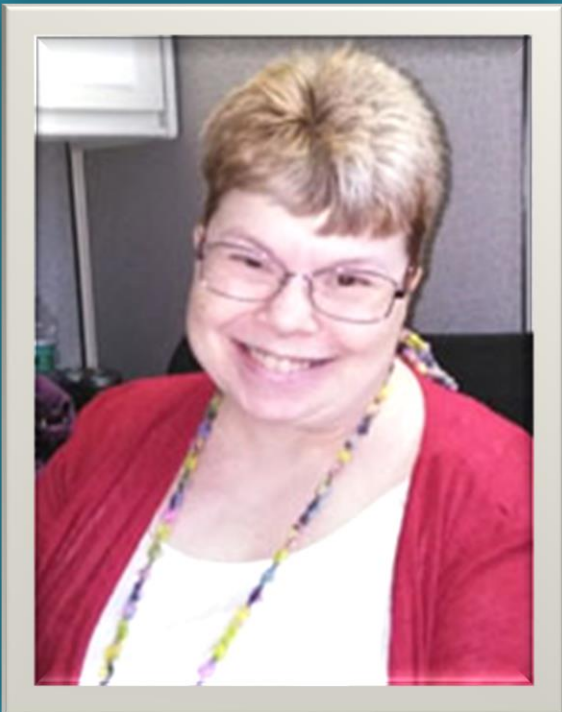
Self Advocate Coordinator

35 Thorpe Ave, 3RD. Floor

Wallingford, CT 06492

[carol.grabbe@ct.gov](mailto:carol.grabbe@ct.gov)

Tel: (203) 294-5119 Fax: (203) 294-0220



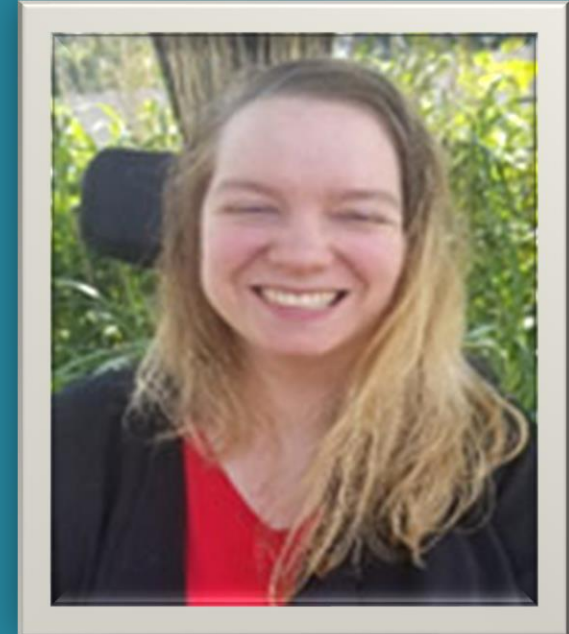
## Paige Librandi

Self Advocate Coordinator

370 James Street New Haven, CT 06511

[paige.librandi@ct.gov](mailto:paige.librandi@ct.gov)

Tel: (203) 974-4232 Fax: (203) 974-4201



## Kellie Hartigan

Self Advocate Coordinator

401 W. Thames St. Suite 202

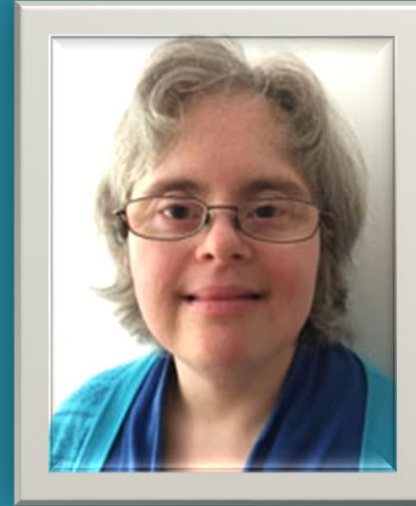
Norwich, CT 06360

[kellie.hartigan@ct.gov](mailto:kellie.hartigan@ct.gov)

Tel: (860) 859-5512 Fax: (860) 859-5579

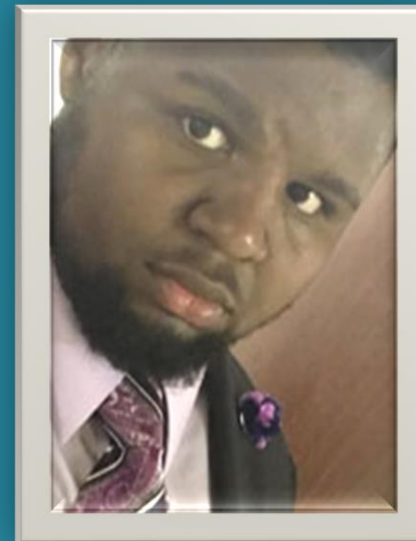
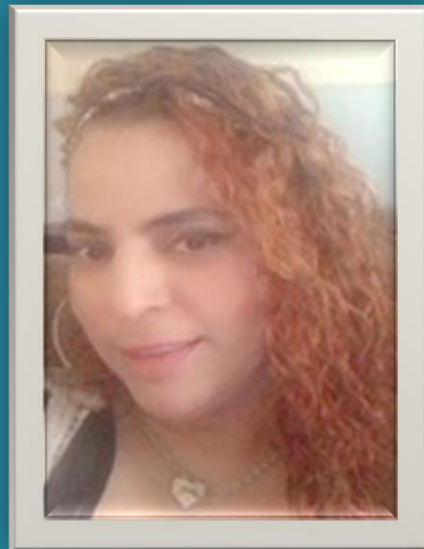
# West Region Self-Advocate Coordinators

**James Louchen**  
Self-Advocate Coordinator  
195 Alvord Park Road  
Torrington, CT 06790  
[james.louchen@ct.gov](mailto:james.louchen@ct.gov)  
Tel: (860) 496-3067  
Fax: (860) 496-3001



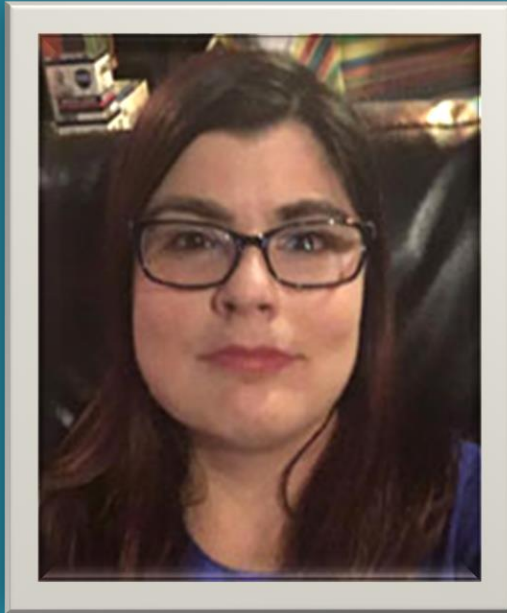
**Natasha Cole**  
Self-Advocate  
55 West Main Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
[natasha.cole@ct.gov](mailto:natasha.cole@ct.gov)  
Tel: (203) 805-7467  
Fax: (203) 805-7410

**Jossie Torres**  
Self Advocate Coordinator  
55 West Main Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
[jossie.torres@ct.gov](mailto:jossie.torres@ct.gov)  
Tel: (203) 805-7431  
Fax: (203) 805-7410



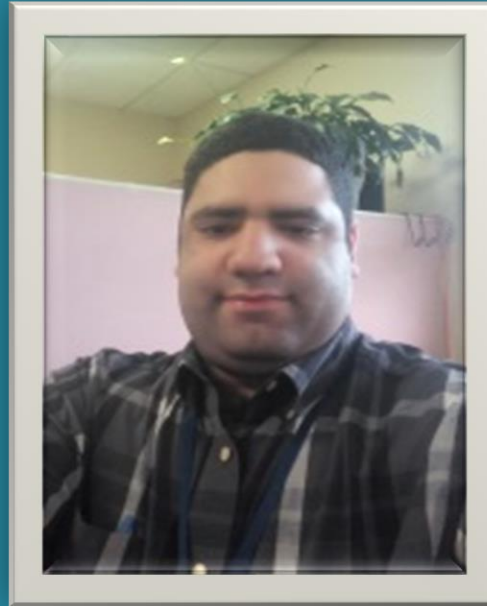
**Jeremy Powell**  
55 West Main Street  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
[Jeremy.powell@ct.gov](mailto:Jeremy.powell@ct.gov)  
Tel: (203) 805-7464  
Fax:(203) 805-7410

# North Region Self-Advocate Coordinators



**Yana Razumnaya**

Self Advocate Coordinator  
155 Founders Plaza  
East Hartford, CT 06108  
[yana.razumnaya@ct.gov](mailto:yana.razumnaya@ct.gov)  
Tel: (860) 263-2554  
Fax: (860) 263-2525



**Kevin Arce**

Self Advocate Coordinator  
155 Founders Plaza  
East Hartford, CT 06108  
[kevin.arce@ct.gov](mailto:kevin.arce@ct.gov)  
Tel: (860) 263-2457  
Fax: (860) 263-2525



**Varian Salters**

Self Advocate Coordinator  
90 South Park Street  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
[varian.salters@ct.gov](mailto:varian.salters@ct.gov)  
Tel: (860) 456-6345  
Fax: (860) 456-6378

# SACs Support the VOICES of All the Advocates of DDS!

Where it all began - 2004 - CT Legislature supported DDS in creating 10 state positions to represent the people supported by the department – 10 Self-Advocate Coordinators (SACs)

The SACs are State Employees

SACs lead the department in Making A Difference!



## SELF-ADVOCACY

IS THE ABILITY TO ARTICULATE

ONE'S **NEEDS** & **MAKE**  
INFORMED  
DECISIONS

ABOUT THE **SUPPORT**  
NECESSARY **TO MEET**  
**THOSE** **NEEDS.**



# WE Are People. Call ME By MY Name!



- Since February 2015, the
- “We are People – Call Me by My Name” campaign has asked that everyone be called by their given name.
- The DDS Self Advocate Coordinators (SACs) have promoted “People First Language”.
- SACs hope to eliminate the words and terms: “client”, “patient”, “ward”, “them”, “handicapped” & the “R” word.





# Take the Pledge!

The SACs have written “The Disability Awareness Pledge” and challenge everyone to take the pledge to reaffirm a commitment to seeing the person and not the disability

**1,309** pledges reported this year!

All new employees now take the pledge with Onboard Training

Over **5,481** people have taken the Pledge!

The SACs are challenging each one of us to be the change that makes a difference.

SACs are promoting all stakeholders to

[Take the Pledge](#) and keep it moving forward!

Together, we all can be the CHANGE!



# Self Determination/Self Direction 2022 Varian's Focus Area

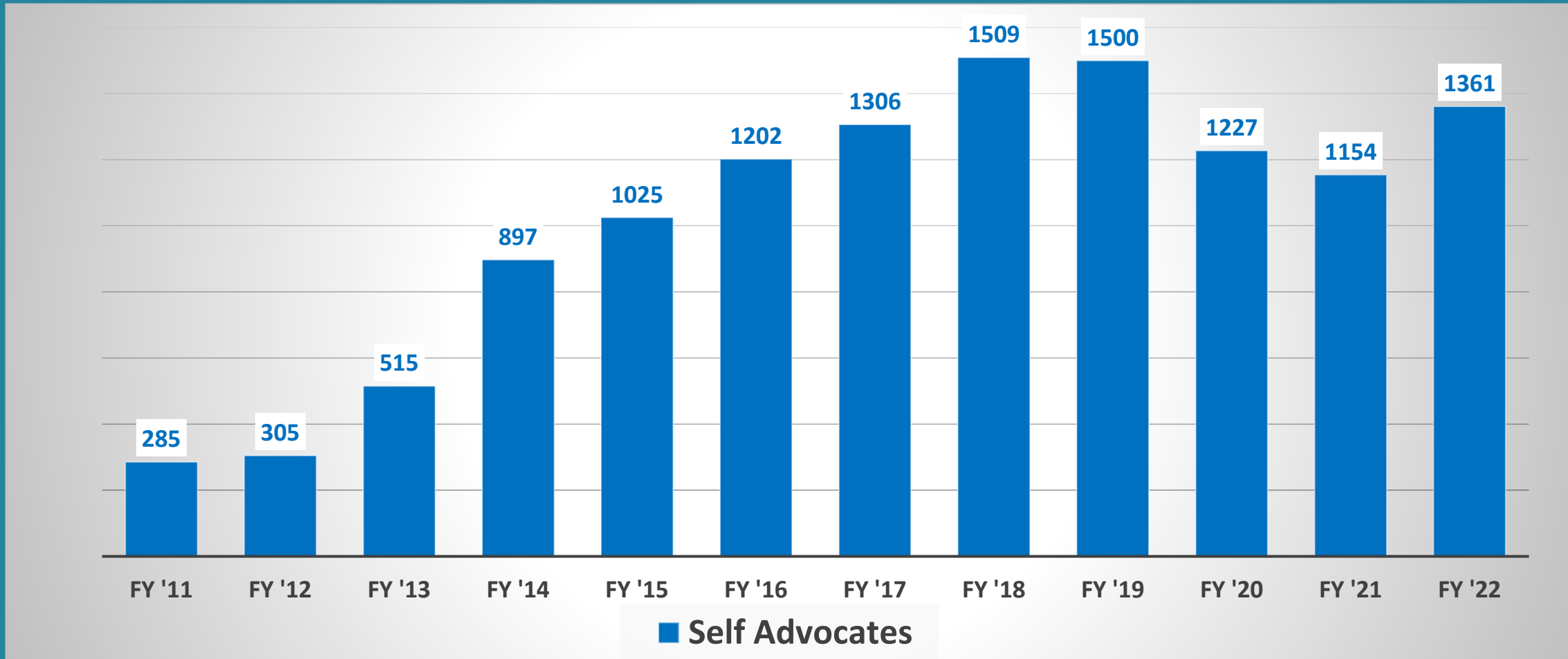


## MAY 2022 RECREATION CALENDAR

TUESDAY 5:30-6:30PM	WEDNESDAY 5:30-6:30PM	THURSDAY 3-4PM
3  PAIGE'S VIDEO <i>Dance &amp; Party</i>	You must have a zoom account (free) to participate <a href="https://tinyurl.com/62rn5ujn">https://tinyurl.com/62rn5ujn</a> Meeting ID: 222 399 8386 Passcode: 479813	5  MOVING WITH <i>Natasha</i>
10  SING ALONG JUKEBOX <i>with Ann Marie</i>	11 <b>THE GOOD LIFE</b> SOCIAL GROUP	12 NAME THAT TUNE
17  Yana's CRITTER CORNER	19 <b>Test Your Trivia Skills</b> ??? <i>with Kellie</i>	26 <i>With Carol</i>
24  SING ALONG JUKEBOX <i>with Ann Marie</i>	25 <b>VIRTUAL VACATION</b> With Yana	
31 <b>Share Your TALENT</b>	Virtual Recreation for CT adults (20 + up) receiving DDS services Contact Corinne Jackson with any questions corinne.jackson@ct.gov	

SACs assisted Corinne Jackson Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant II with 70 recreation events in 13 months in the Self Determination Division!

# Self-Advocates Continue to Reach Out during the Challenge of COVID



**Total Number of Participants in  
2022 Advocacy Groups = 1,361**

# Virtual Connections!

Technology continues to increase our outreach!!!



- Virtual Flyers
- Virtual Bulletin Boards
- Virtual Self Advocacy Meetings
- Virtual 1:1 Advocacy
- Virtual Trainings

# Self-Advocate Coordinators Continue to Lead the Way by Providing Education & Training



## Regional Leadership Forums

Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance

Peer 2 Peer Support

DDS New Employee Training

Developing, Updating, and Supporting

the DDS Advocates' Corner website

Secondary Transition Symposium

Youth Leadership Forum

Ongoing presentations to DDS staff and  
all Stakeholders

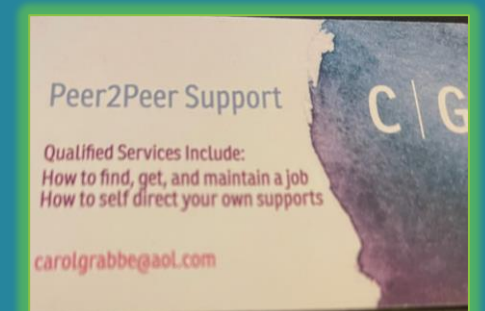
## DDS Council

Job Development Leadership Network

CT Family Support Network Collaboration  
and trainings

Ongoing trainings for Healthy  
Relationships

Write and Share Success Stories to post  
on the DDS Advocates' Corner website



# Leadership



## Statewide and Regional Conferences, Trainings, & Committee Work:

- Hiring Interview Committees, Qualified Provider Interviews
- Provider Qualification Review Board
- Promote community living options
- SACs are Ambassadors for Charting the LifeCourse
- CT Coalition for Aging and Developmental Disabilities conference development committee
- Family & Mentoring Leadership with CTFSN
- Training area hospital on "How to Best Support Me" during hospital stay
- Membership with Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance Committee
- Membership with Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness Task Force
- Membership with JDLN



# Continue to Promote Awareness of Abuse and Neglect

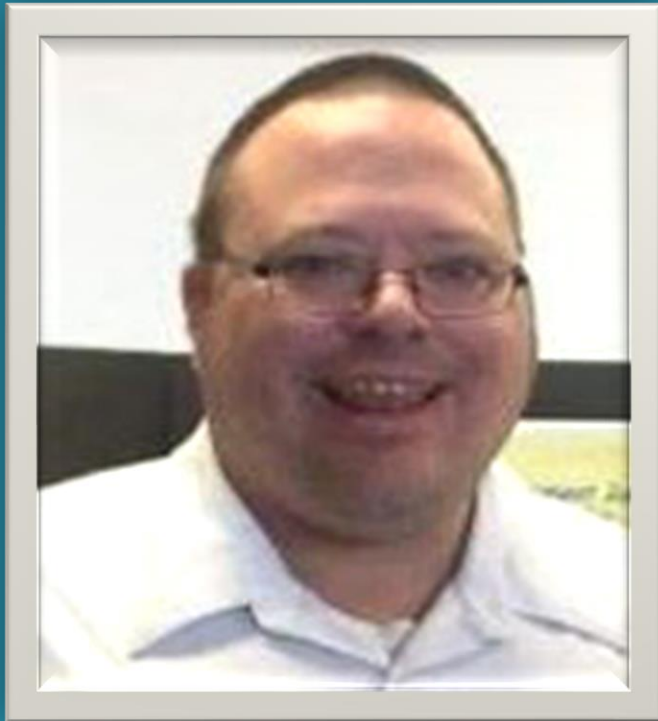
SACs Promote Knowledge of Human Rights, Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination to Help Prevent Abuse!

- Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness Task Force –
- Promotion of a month in April of spread the word #itsnotok and continuing throughout the year to remain active in promotion of awareness of abuse and neglect
- Training and promotion of the Degrees of Mean
  - SACs together with staff have been training providers and individuals in promoting positive relationships to recognize abuse and neglect- the Degrees of Mean
- It's Not Ok
  - The Healthy Relationships Series helps to prevent sexual abuse
- Peer 2 Peer Services
  - Can allow people to learn from someone else's experiences which may prevent abuse



# Self Determination/Self Direction 2022

## Varian's Focus Area



SACs submitted 12 success stories to the “Advocates Corner” promoting Self Determination and Self Direction with advocates and families across the state



All EORs are using EVV Platform for Self-Hires.



We have about 2,574 people Self-Directing their services.



9 SACs did presentations on Self Determination.

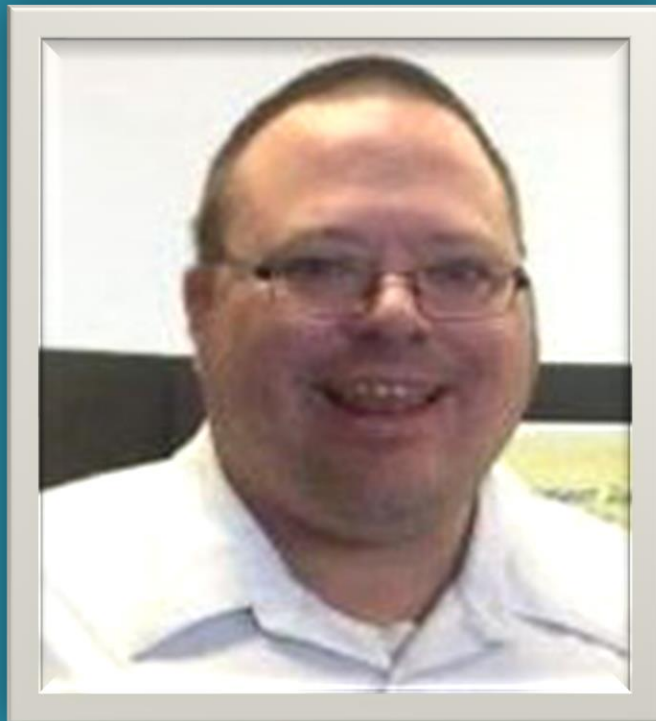


8 SACs out of 10 use Self-Directed Services.



# Self Determination/Self Direction 2022

## Varian's Focus Area



Our outreach contacts increased from 120,371 last year to 164,777.



We continue to learn new skills for navigating the virtual world.



Teaching each other & our advocates how to connect meaningfully even though we may not see each other in person.



We continued to create PowerPoints & presentations educating advocates across the State.



SACs created 12 Virtual Bulletin Boards, 17 CTFSN presentations and 31 advocacy presentations this year.



SACs hosted 133 Advocacy groups with 1,361 participants this year.

# Focus Areas:

## Self-Advocacy

2021-2022

This year Rights and Diversity Committees were started in each region, and the SACs are taking part of that, and creating presentations, and writing articles.

It's a new area to explore how individuals can speak up and speak out loud!



# Outreach Contacts

Outreach has increased to 13,731 contacts per month.

We are coming out of the Pandemic, so, as a result some SA group are starting back up, and the other groups that are virtual are either becoming a hybrid of virtual, and in person meetings, and some are returning just in person.

We continue our research groups and create and send out FAB Topic information on a monthly basis.



## Kevin's Focus Area: Self-Advocacy

709 people took the pledge this past Fiscal year, and this brings our total number to 4,958 people who have taken the pledge.



# Healthy Living

The SACs have been promoting the FIT 5 which helps remind individuals to drink 5 glasses of water, do 5 workouts, and eat 5 fruits/vegetables a day, and provides screenings, such as Healthy Mind, Unified Sports, Fit Feet, and Healthy Smiles. The SACs are promoting a collaboration between DDS & SO with our Fit 5 groups and DDS Recreation.

Fit club has done one event at Club 24 this year with 5 individuals. Individuals have been encouraged to go to the gym solo. We have locked in our memberships through 2023. IFS workers have brought their people individually since COVID.



As James moves on into retirement, Natasha moves forward with Healthy Living



How to get your

# FIT 5

A guide to achieving fitness and your personal best with **physical activity**, **nutrition**, and **hydration**.

The Special Olympics logo, featuring a stylized figure with arms raised.

# Special Olympics (SOCT)

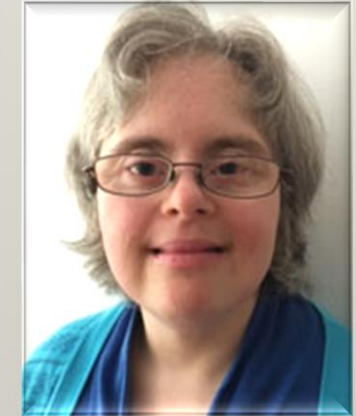
SACs promoted the virtual Fall, Winter, and Summer Special Olympic games. The SACs typically have a booth but due to the Pandemic, they did not this year.

Some SACs participated in Special Olympics Summer Games 2022 in New Haven, CT.

James Louchen retired but before he left his role as a SAC he worked on continuing to share the importance of being active and fit through participating in SOCT.

Thank you James and all the best in your next steps in "Making Your Life Happen"

**Special  
Olympics  
Connecticut**

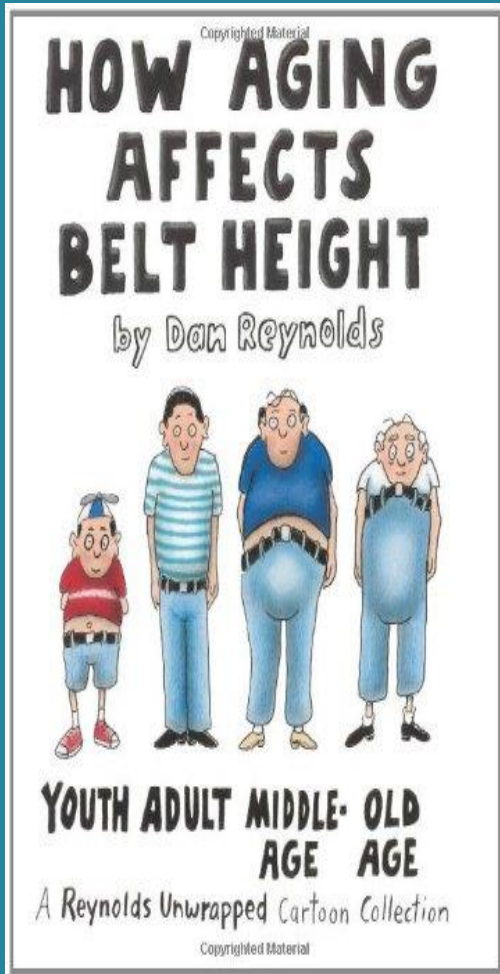


*CT.gov* State of Connecticut

**DDS**

# AGING

The Self-Advocate Coordinators share information that according to the ADA, 30 percent of Americans over the age of 65 and 50 percent over age 75 have a disability. This can range from having difficulty walking, to hearing loss, and problems with vision and thinking.



- \*Self-Advocate Coordinators attended the annual Aging Conference, “Aging My Way” on May 13, 2022, with 62 people in attendance. The conference was about independence, staying home and staying safe, retirement and how to approach your end of life.
- \*Life Course materials target families and individual perspectives. Self-Advocate Coordinators encourage individuals to use the Life Course materials, for example the integrated star. The star can assist people in frame working strategies such as advance care planning and health directives.

[www.Prepareforyourcare.org](http://www.Prepareforyourcare.org)

[info@hospicefoundation.org](mailto:info@hospicefoundation.org)

1-415-735-1106

Hospice Foundation America

[www.hospicefoundation.org/end-of-life-support-and-resources](http://www.hospicefoundation.org/end-of-life-support-and-resources)

1800-854-3402

[info@hospicefoundation.org](mailto:info@hospicefoundation.org)

\*The SACS continue to promote information on aging throughout the year.

SACS promote fire safety and assistive technology.  
Below are some informative links the SACS provided on Aging.



<https://www.newtownbee.com/07242021/connecticut-officials-launch-new-elder-justice-hotline/>

<https://www.wtnh.com/news/health/the-center-for-healthy-aging-begins-new-pilot-program/>

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/10/adults-control-aging>

<https://aginginplace.org/senior-home-care/>



# Assistive Technology



We promote visiting the lending library at UCP to utilize their assistive technology option to borrow equipment. This option enables people to live their lives independently.

SAC's create PowerPoints for Self-Advocacy groups that teach assistive technology tools. For example, teaching individuals at Sharp Training Inc. how to use kitchen adaptive technology.

SAC's continually offer virtual Self-Advocacy Groups, Fab Topic information, and virtual recreational opportunities all focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion.

April 2022 focused on Homelife. SACs reported on how independence is heightened with AT.

[Stay Independent With These Assistive Technologies \(verywellhealth.com\)](https://www.verywellhealth.com)



NEAT Marketplace, Connecticut's largest private provider for people with disabilities, offers vans, wheelchairs, product demonstration, equipment restoration, expos, classes and computer use. Removing barriers for all individuals.

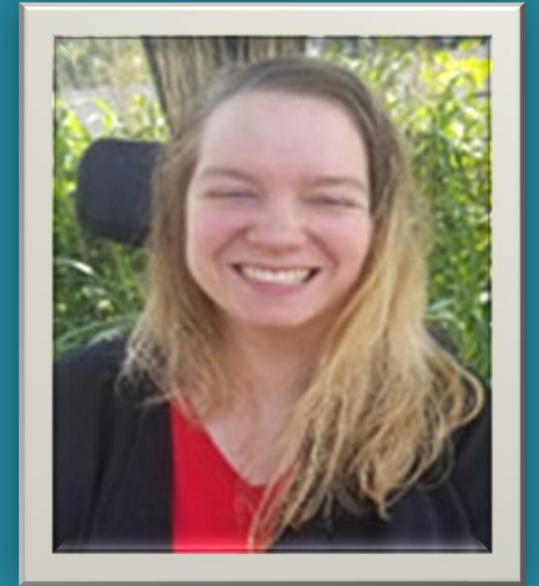
# Assistive Technology

This year the SACs created a video (below) on specific assistive technology they use to celebrate AT Awareness Day including Pro Lo Quo To Go, power wheelchairs, iPad/iPhone, and Alexa devices.

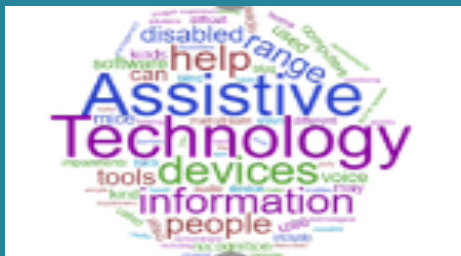
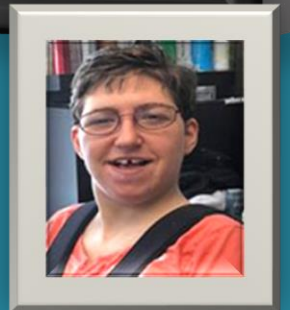
Midstate ARC uses a statewide program designed in collaboration with Connecticut's leading disability agencies for the purpose of training staff in the use and application of technology to reduce barriers and increase the independence of individuals.

## Technology Center – MidState Arc

SACs promoted the ATECH Conference 2022 held in Mystic, CT:  
Journey to Independence: Assistive Technology at its Best



[Click to listen](#)



**ATECH CONFERENCE 2022**

# Housing

Self-Advocate Coordinators support the Fair Housing Act. This act offers reasonable accommodations that promote change and service. These options enable people with disabilities an equal opportunity to obtain housing.

SACs promoted a variety of housing choices by presenting virtual Self-Advocacy Groups, creating and sharing Virtual Bulletin Boards and promoting the Advocates' Corner.

## Living Options:

- Self- Direct Your Own Supports
- CCHs
- Shared living
- Independent living
- Clustered living
- Living with your family

- Section 8

**REASONABLE  
ACCOMMODATIONS**



**They told me to  
"Try someplace else."  
So I did.  
I called HUD.**



SCAN HERE FOR  
MORE INFO

I found the perfect apartment near a park and public transportation. I asked for a reasonable accommodation for my service dog, but the landlord told me "no pets - try someplace else." So I called HUD and found out it's illegal for a housing provider to prohibit service animals. I filed a complaint, and now my dog and I have a great place to live.

**Fair Housing Is Your Right. Use It.**

Landlords must make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, such as allowing for service animals or providing an accessible parking space. Report housing discrimination to HUD or your local fair housing center.

Visit [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing) or call the HUD Hotline  
**1-800-669-9777** (English/Español) **1-800-927-9275** (TTY)



A public service message from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in partnership with the National Fair Housing Alliance. The Federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability. For more information, visit [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing).



# Internet Safety Tips

Having our individuals set a 6–8-word passcode for all their social media accounts.

Teaching our individuals not to give out their information to anyone on social media or in general, such as (credit card numbers, living addresses, credit and debit cards pins, phone number, etc.)

Helping them to understand to be careful of scam phone calls.

Encourage them to know what you put on social media can influence your life or job.

Employers can see your social media accounts.

## Beware Phone Scams

We continue to get reports that phone scammers are calling customers trying to get money. Here are a few things to keep in mind:



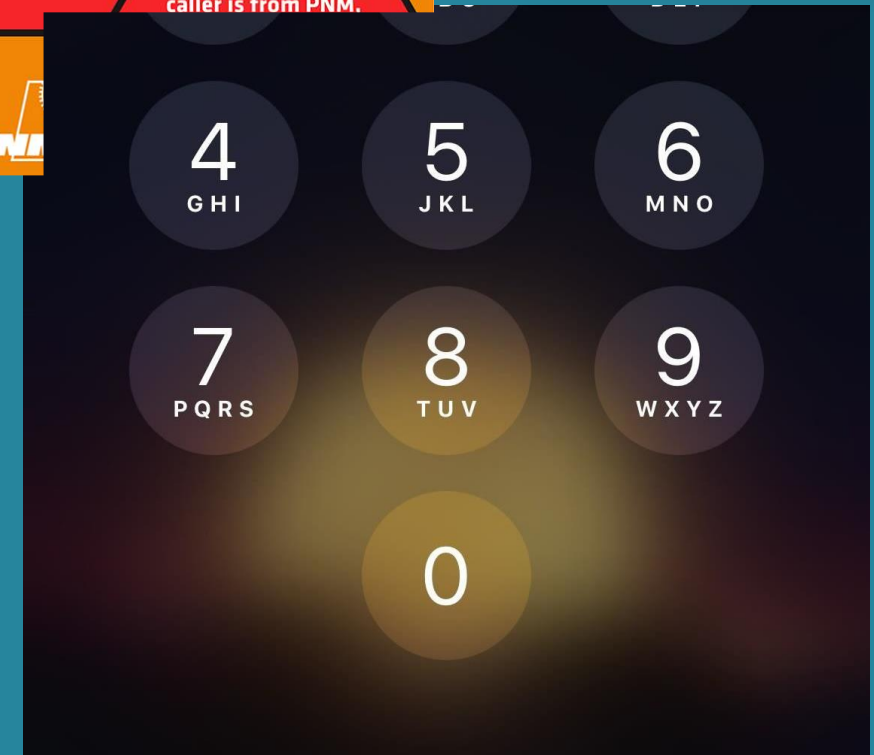
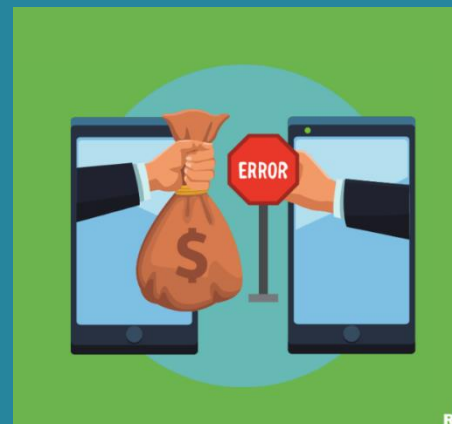
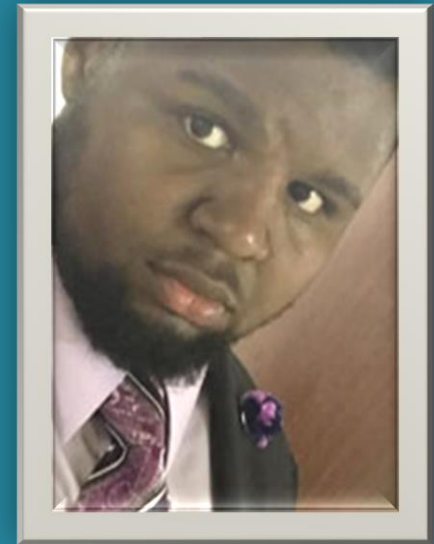
Scammer claiming you are behind on your PNM bill? Text PNM by sending #BAL to 78766 to get your account balance.

If you are asked to purchase pre-paid gift cards, it is a scam.

Check your bill. If you have **not** received a bold disconnect notice on page 1, it's a scam.

If you are ever uncertain whether a caller is from PNM.

PNM



# Public Safety

SACs promoted the importance of public safety by helping to understand not to travel alone at night.

Educating on how to be mindful when interacting with law enforcement.

Having open discussions about not being afraid to call 911.

Always stay alert to your surroundings. Look around even when listening to music. Always look behind you day in the daytime and at night.



# Covid-19 Safety

N-95 is the best mask to wear even if you are fully vaccinated.

Always wash your hands for 20 seconds. Don't touch any part of your faces.

Make sure to use and carry hand sanitizers.

Wear gloves, if possible, still wash your hands.

Stay 6-10 feet away from each other.

Try to avoid going to large events or the beaches.

Take extra precaution while traveling to others states or countries.

You can elbow bump as a greeting instead of hand shaking and giving hugs.

Covid-19 has a variant called Omicron.



# Transportation

As of April 18, 2022, CDC's January 29, 2021, Order requiring masks on public transportation conveyances and at transportation hubs is no longer in effect. Therefore, CDC will not enforce the Order.

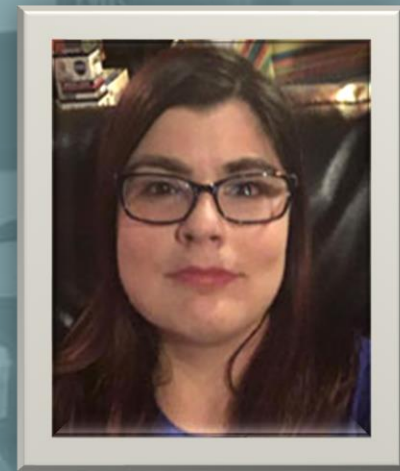
Governor Ned Lamont announced that effective Tuesday, May 24, 2022, electric trains will begin running on Shore Line East (SLE). Electric trains are already running on the New Haven Line. These trains are more environmentally friendly, comfortable and reliable.

In April, Governor Lamont announced that CT is receiving \$250 Million in federal funding for public transportation.

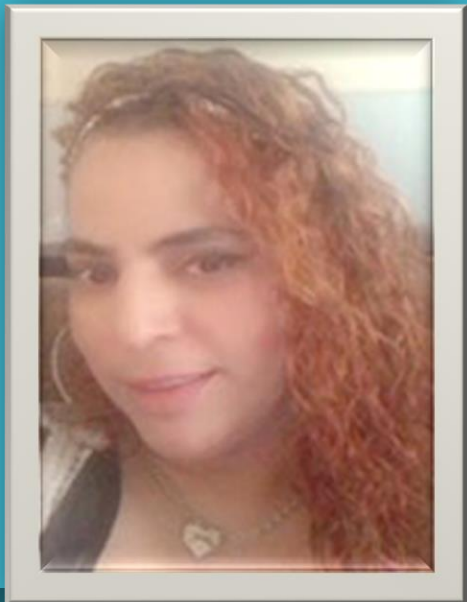
The first zero-emission electric CT Transit bus was revealed in Hamden in October and there are plans to bring as many as 700 electric buses onto Connecticut's roadways.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) announced that all public transit buses will be fare-free across Connecticut until December 1, 2022.

Free services include all CTtransit local buses statewide, CTtransit Express and CTfastrak services. ADA Paratransit is also fare free statewide until December 1, 2022.



# Employment Career vs. Just a Job



## Real Work for Real Pay

Self-Advocate Coordinators on APSE Board  
– Association of People Supporting  
Employment First.

Self-Advocate Coordinators are members of  
JDLN -Job Development Leadership  
Networks

Promote employment in virtual and in-  
person Self-Advocacy groups.

Promote employment on Virtual Bulletin  
Boards on the Advocates' Corner.

SELN- Leadership subcommittee and  
Strategic Planning.

Self-Advocate Coordinators support and  
attend Employment Resource Fairs

Virtual Employment Customize Conference

**Reach for the stars!**





# Collaboration with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and DDS Healthy Relationships Series

The SACs of DDS along with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England co teach individuals about safe and meaningful relationships

Click on this link for more information

[Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc.](#)

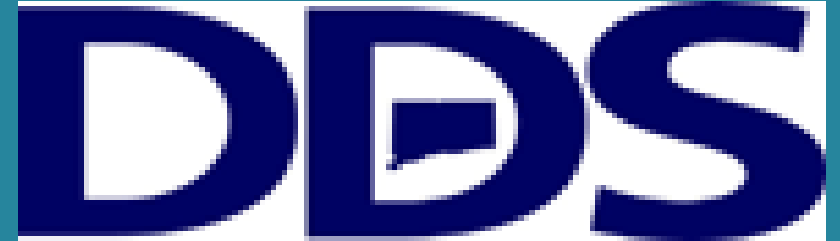
The classes are held virtually and all year long such as (Winter, Fall, Summer and Spring)

The information that is taught in the classes is very simplified and easy to understand

Over 84 individuals have taken the course

At the end of the classes, you will receive a celebration of appreciate for coming to the classes

All individuals who attend all classes get a certificate



# New Provider Orientation

- The SACS did virtual and in person new Provider Orientation
- Throughout the year of 2021-2022
- 194 Total people attend
- We teach about what we as DDS employ's believe in
- We talk about how important it is to take the people first language pledge
- And seeing us for our abilities and not out disabilities.





# On Board Training

- The Sacs did virtual On-Board Training for new employee for DDS throughout the year of 2021-2022
- 600 total people attended
- We taught on the topic of Self-Direction/Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy
- Also, we taught about human rights and being a mandate reporter
- Talk about what we as Self-Advocate Coordinators do on a day to day basis

# Youth Leadership Forum 2022 Virtual



There were a total of 30 students who were excited to attend the forum

We had 3 different teams

All the participants did a community service event

The young adults learned so much throughout the week. They learned how to advocate for themselves, use the life course materials and most important learned leadership skills

All individuals attending the forum left as stronger leaders as well as ambassadors of the Life Course materials.



# SACS

## Share the latest on the Updated Advocates' Corner Website

Advocates' Corner

State of Connecticut  
**DDS** Advocates' Corner

CT.gov Home / Advocates' Corner

- About Us >
- Life Tips >
- Transportation >
- My Plan - Life Course >
- Recreation and Respite >
- Employment >
- Emergency Preparedness >
- My Vote Matters >
- Topics A-Z >

Search Advocates' Corner

by Keyword

### Highlights & Happenings

- [Meet the DDS Self Advocates](#) >
- [Healthy Relationships](#) >
- [Peer to Peer](#) >
- [Living the Mission](#) >
- [SAC end of year report](#) >
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**DDS SELF-ADVOCATE COORDINATORS**

### SUCCESS STORIES

Control speak self voice  
determined learn leadership  
**Respect** empower Responsibilities  
self determination  
dignity life language  
advocacy independence groups  
relationships people choice  
rights mission living  
dignity MyVoice

# Moving Forward!

## Fiscal Year



- Continue to Promote Living a Self-Determined Life
- Promote advocates' voices by expanding and developing Self-Advocacy Groups
- Continue Virtual Connections
- Continue to promote Healthy Relationships
- Continue to promote various Living Options
- Interview and Share Success Stories of Special Olympic Athletes
- CT CoP -Promote and lead by example the Individual Plan (IP) and use of the CT Life Course Materials while expanding IP Buddy support
- Degrees of Mean - Continue to promote and train providers/staff and self advocates
- Continue to provide education and training to Individuals, Families, DDS Staff, Providers, and Sister Agencies on the Department's Initiatives
- Youth Leadership Forum – participate, train, roll model and support the youth of CT to become great Self-Advocates
- Continue to promote REAL WORK for REAL PAY
- Support DDS's Five-Year Plan such as Assistive Technology and Customize Employment