

Nothing About Us Without Us: Self-Advocacy with Danny and Liz

IDEAS 2019

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Tools for Life

Tools for Life, Georgia's Assistive Technology Act Program, is dedicated to increasing access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for Georgians of all ages and disabilities so they can live, learn, work and play independently and with greater freedom in communities of their choice.



Guiding Principle and Public Law



Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:

- A. live independently;
- B. enjoy self-determination and make choices;
- C. benefit from an education;
- D. pursue meaningful careers; and
- E. enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of society in the United States.

Public Law 108-364

Professional Development



Tools for Life offers online professional development to help you learn more about assistive technology strategies and solutions as well as the most recent information on AT devices and disability related issues and trends.

Webinar content and materials are developed and presented by one of the Tools for Life team members along with other regional and national leaders in the assistive technology community.

To join the TFL mailing list to receive our email announcements, visit www.gatfl.gatech.edu.

Self Advocacy is like Kudzu.
Know how to make it grow?
Just throw down the seeds and
run!

Gail Bottoms

Past President, People First of Georgia



What is Advocacy?

What Is an Advocate?

- An advocate is a person who argues for a cause, a supporter or defender. One that pleads on another's behalf.

The Advocate Performs Several Functions

- Supports, helps, assists and aids
- Speaks on behalf of others
- Defends and argues for people or causes
- Problem solves and finds solutions agreeable to both sides

What is Self-Advocacy?

Developing self-knowledge is the first step in self-advocacy skills. Learning about one's self involves the identification of learning styles, strengths and weakness, interests, and preferences.

Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to:

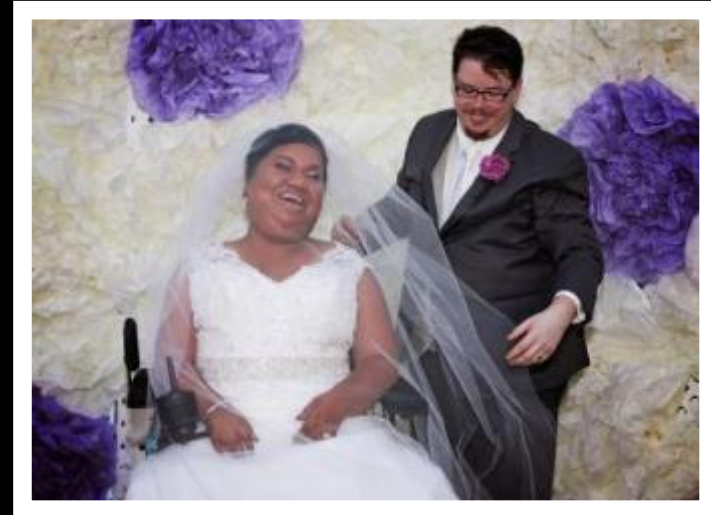
- effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights.
- It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.

We are Among Greatness!

Business executives who pay great sums for consultants to teach them to “think out of the box” would do well to observe the habitually creative thinkers in their midst – people with disabilities.

The necessity of addressing mundane problems with creative solutions has likely prepared many people with disabilities to be innovative in more complex areas, including the challenges faced by school and business.

Why Am I Here Today?



“She won’t and can’t be successful.”



My parents were advised to put me in a school for individuals with developmental disabilities.

They took me out the next day when they realized that *system* was not designed for me.

Success in the affairs of life often serves to hide one's abilities, whereas adversity frequently gives one an opportunity to discover them.

Horace

“I will and can be successful”

- Strong self-advocate, always wanting to help others, chosen as peer supporter to other students numerous times in elementary and middle schools.
- Always had good grades, made honor roll every year!
- In 8th grade won Humanitarian Award for community service.
- Active National speaker for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Atlanta and the SE.



“You may not control all the events that happen to you, but **you can decide not to be reduced by them.**”

Maya Angelou



Advocacy is Personal *and* Professional

- NFBGA Atlanta Executive Board
- disABILITY LINK Board Chair
- CDFI Coalition Board
- Inclusive Lending Workgroup Co-Chair
- CLD Community Advisory Council
- ADAPT



Danny's Advocacy Journey

- Kindergarten
- High school
- College
- IL
- Civil disobedience
- Walking the line
- It all started because of an educator



**Who is your biggest advocacy
influencer?**

When was it difficult to advocate for yourself?

Were you involved with your IEP?

**Talk about your experience with
self-advocacy in the workplace.**

“of” vs “for”

Peer Led Organizations

- National Federation of the Blind
- Georgia Coalition of the Blind
- Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard and Hearing
- People First
- ADAPT
- Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association
- Georgia Association of the Deaf
- Centers for Independent Living

Support Agencies in Georgia

- Center for the Visually Impaired
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Metro Fair Housing
- Georgia Lion's Lighthouse
- Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- DBHDD
- ADRCs
- FODAC

We're Here for You!

If you see us strolling around Epworth, come say Hi!





The Tools for Life Team



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