

April, 2005

The Riot!



April Fools Issue!

A National E-Newsletter from the Self-Advocate Leadership Network @ HSRI

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Can You Hear Us Now?

After dropping out, SABE has re-joined efforts to plan a national conference called Many Choices, One Vision. It will be held in Washington, DC September 22-23.

The conference is being jointly planned by "the Alliance," a group of national organizations involving mostly parents and professionals. SABE, a national self-advocacy group, was part of the Alliance until things went sour in February.

SABE left the group because Alliance members weren't listening or making changes in service systems that self-advocates have been asking for.

Chester Finn, of SABE, explained that SABE would no longer help plan the conference and would not

attend. Other self-advocates could go but not SABE.

This made people think. Self-advocates had to decide whether or not to go. Not everyone agreed. Also, the Alliance had to take a hard look at what they were doing. SABE and other self-advocates were speaking with a loud voice. Was anyone listening?

The answer is YES! SABE was heard! SABE and Alliance members came together and made an agreement. Now SABE is helping make plans and will attend.

A lot must be changed, but for the first time ever self-advocates asked, "**Can you hear us now?**"



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www.hsri.org/leaders/theriot

Self-Advocates Take a Stand!

People First of Alabama self-advocates want to be heard too. They took a stand and are speaking out in their state.

People First of Alabama believes all people with disabilities...

...have the right to live, learn, work, participate and have fun in their communities. We want to make our own choices, do what we want with appropriate supports when we need them, and be respected like anyone else.

...have a right to live in safe, affordable, and accessible housing that is not segregated from our families and friends.

We have the right to understand what resources and supports are available to help us live where and with whom we choose.

...should have services and supports in their community when we need them so we can live our lives like anyone else.

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About The Riot!...

The Riot! is produced by the Self-Advocate Leadership Network at the Human Services Research Institute.

We work together with self-advocates to come up with ideas and write the stories.

Here's who "we" are:

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Chet's Chat



Chester Finn

This February, the moment came to take a hard stand on issues important to us. SABE was working with the Alliance to plan a big conference. We walked out of a meeting because we were tired of not being heard. They wanted us there, but not to participate like we felt we should.

We want respect and an equal relationship with others. We believe they need to include us in making decisions about our lives.

Some issues important to us, such as closing institutions and sheltered workshops, still need to be worked out. Changes in service systems must be made.

Organizations like AAMR need to change their names. Others need to change their attitudes.

We wondered if the Alliance was taking these issues seriously. We had to make sure that our voices were being heard.

Finally, in March, we came to an agreement with Alliance members.

This time, self-advocates would be equal partners at the table. The Alliance decided to use some of our requests as background for their future work. A lot of people said they were happy we spoke up. People who support us are important allies.

This was a learning experience. We have to keep working at it. We must keep the pressure on. We have to work in our states, communities and neighborhoods for changes that are important to us. We are not going to sit back anymore. We are going to speak up. We have to stick together. Unless we put action behind our words they are only words.

We will stand up and be heard!

Teresa Says...

Ever feel like someone is going to say "April Fools!" about your services? I do...



Teresa Moore

- You receive a letter saying your new support coordinator is... you never met the last one.
- You ask for a therapy that would help you... they say it's not covered.
- A doctor says, "Why do you want the surgery? You already use a wheelchair."
- A provider says, "You can live in one of our homes and get support but you can't get support in your own home."
- You say you want more control over your life... they say, "Do you want services from Provider A or B?"

Are they kidding? ... ***Not!***

Are You Going?

**Many Voices One Vision
Alliance for Full Participation
Summit 2005, Washington DC**

September 22 - 23

Participate with hundreds of self-advocates, professionals, advocates, and others to help develop a new strategic policy to support integration, productivity, independence, and full participation of people with developmental disabilities in their communities.

Register on line:

www.allianceforfullparticipation.org



April Fools Day?

The Riot! Says It's Time To Stop Fooling Around!



For years now, self-advocates have listened to all the talk about "community inclusion" and "real jobs." There is also talk about self-advocates having chances to have REAL relationships with

others, including - can we say it? Sex! And there is talk about self-advocates helping to make policy at all levels.

Yes, progress has been made over the years. BUT it's April 2005... and still, for self-advocates all over the country, every day seems like April Fools Day! This is because every day the service system seems to be screaming out: "Just Fooling!" Look around! Look in your life... in your community... in your state! What do you see?

Here is a list of problems that self-advocates think should be fixed. Read the list. What do you think?

- Hey, all you state directors and service providers out there... Let's get this straight. Self-advocates do not want to live in lousy state institutions! Close the things! The year is 2005, not 1865!

While you're at it, stop supporting sheltered workshops and other places that do not help people to get real jobs for real pay. Get with it!

And, you know, self-advocates really don't like living in those places you call ICF-MRs, or these big facilities you call "group homes." You're kidding with these things, right?

- What's with all the RULES you throw around? Bed time at 9:00 pm? You schedule showers? Staff have to come along on a date? Staff restrict what we watch on TV? Or set our dinner menus

two weeks in advance? You call this "community life?" Hello! Pay attention! Self-advocates want to be "the boss of their own lives!"



Like anyone else, *self-advocates want to juggle their life with the supports they need.*

- Self-advocates helping to shape policy? Say, all you service provider agencies out there... How many of you have self-advocates on your Boards of Directors? Do they get the support they need to participate and contribute? How about it? Along those lines... state directors and executives of Developmental Disability Councils... Can you do more to invest in self-advocacy in your state? Can you actually help self-advocacy organizations build leadership and a statewide structure to work from? Some do... but do You?
- And talk about "people first" language. What's with the *American Association on Mental Retardation*? How about losing the "**mental retardation**" part to your name? The "**MR**" word really bothers people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Self-advocates have asked AAMR nicely to do it. Now... Stop all the talk, talk, talk... Just do it!

OK... This isn't much is it? Self-advocates want everyone to stop the "Every Day Is April Fools Day" theme in the service system. That joke is not funny! Self-advocates appreciate all that has been done, but it's time now to finish the job!

No foolin'!





Earth Visited By Space Aliens!



Scientists look at Gozer ship

The Riot! has learned that visitors from space landed in Boise, Idaho on March 22nd. They landed in a potato field next to offices where self-advocates

were meeting about self-determination.

Self-advocates were surprised by the visitors but welcomed them to the meeting.

“Hello!” one said. “We are Gozers from the planet Gozark. Take us to your leader!”

“Take us to your leader!”

A self-advocate, Ima Foolinu of Boise, fainted right then and there. She was soon brought around when her friend dumped ice water on

her head. Nobody was hurt. Another self-advocate, wanting to be a good host, ordered pizza for all.

After eating, self-advocates made some calls and put the Gozers in touch with President Bush!

“The Secret Service didn’t want to listen at first,” says Erick Yeary of Idaho Falls, “but eventually they paid attention.”

The Gozers are currently visiting the President and First Lady in Washington DC. They’re also planning to visit relatives living in Roswell, Nevada.



A Presidential Handshake

Busy Week For Gozers

First Lady Laura Bush spent this past week showing the Gozers all around Washington DC, where they visited with important people.



Visiting with Laura Bush

Despite a full schedule, they spoke about some differences between earth and planet Gozark.

The Gozers explained that Gozers with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect. On Gozark, “the universe is accessible to all.” Gozers with disabilities have choices about where they live and who they live with. They have real jobs, get the support they need to live the life they want, and are the boss of their own lives. They also said they are saddened by the

treatment of earthlings with disabilities. “It looks like they are treated like test scores rather than people.”

They wondered why we put earthlings in “institutions” and other places that keep them separate from others in the community. “Overall”, they said, “too many people are not getting the supports they need to live the life they want.”

Such straight talk was a hit with self-advocates demonstrating in Washington DC. “They can teach us a lot!” said Ricky Broussard of Texas.

The Gozark Leader told reporters that earthlings “must treat people with disabilities better.”

The White House could not be reached for comment, but the President said that he was “looking into it.”

April Fools!



Spring Horoscope

A horoscope predicts the future based on the position of the planets and your birth date. Find the sign that fits with your birthday. Then read on to discover what love's got to do with it!

Aries (March 21-April 19): You're on the right track Aries. If your love life has been slow this Winter things will warm up with Spring!

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Come out of hiding! A walk on the "wild side" will do you good. Try something new like kumquats or rollerblading...

Gemini (May 21-June 20): You're energetic and funny Gemini. If you use your charm you'll liven up the party and meet someone new!

Cancer (June 21-July 22): You need to get outdoors! Invite some cuties for a game of Twister in the sun. Tip: Remember sunscreen!



Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Lucky you! Your love life is about to get steamier than a hot tub in the summer time. Be careful not to get burned!

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Spring is a great time for change. Your crush will notice a new hairdo, scent, or dance move!



Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Batting your lashes will get you no where—so get movin'. Go for a walk or go somewhere new and find romance!

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your love life is about to get riper than a Georgia peach! Tip: Don't squeeze too hard or you'll be sorry...



Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your creative juices are flowing! So start thinking of new ways to find dates! Hint: Find hot dates in cool places.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The stars will point you in the right direction. You'll find your soul mate under the night sky!

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Plant a seed and watch it grow. Ask a cutie out on a date and see what sprouts! Tip: Learn new pick up lines.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): There's lots of fishies in the sea but you've got to go fishing! Juice up the bait to land a good catch!



Need Romance Advice? ...Ask Cubby!

Dear Cubby: My girlfriend has fallen hard for a space alien from Gozark. She won't admit it but she seems to spend all her time with him now, not me. What should I do?
—Crying in Omaha

Face the facts. Your girlfriend has unique taste in men. In the end, you have to let her date who she wants. Let her go and look elsewhere. Someone out there is waiting just for you!

Dear Cubby: My boyfriend used to take good care of himself. Now he doesn't brush his teeth or take a shower. He stinks! What should I do? —Tired-of-it in Great Falls
Sit him down. Tell him that you don't like the way he treats himself and that he needs to change. He needs to brush his teeth at least once a day and shower every day so he doesn't stink. Tell him that if he doesn't make these

changes you that you will dump him! Give him one day to shape up! Or you will ship him out!

Dear Cubby: I think my friend Tom is being abused by his girlfriend. She hits him and yells at him. Should I tell her to stop?
—Worried in Miami

You should tell your friend what you see. Ask him if he sees the same things. If he agrees, help him to get some help. You can go with him to tell someone about it, like a counselor, a case manager or parent. You can also visit an agency in your area that specializes in abuse. Many have phone "hotlines" that you can call.

Want Advice From Cubby?

Send your question to him at our address below or visit our website:
www.hsri.org/leaders/theriot



Spring into Gardening

Flowers look beautiful, smell wonderful, and can brighten your day! And Spring is the perfect time to start a small garden of your own.

Some people think you need a big backyard to plant a garden. Nope! It's not true. **Container Gardening** is all the rage! You only need a container, for example, a flower pot or a window box. That's all the space you need.

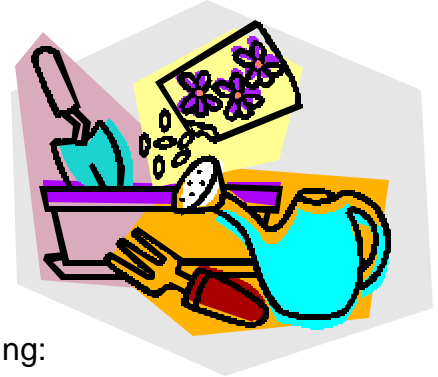
If you want to start a garden, here are some handy tips to get you going:

Supplies: The things you'll need to get you started.

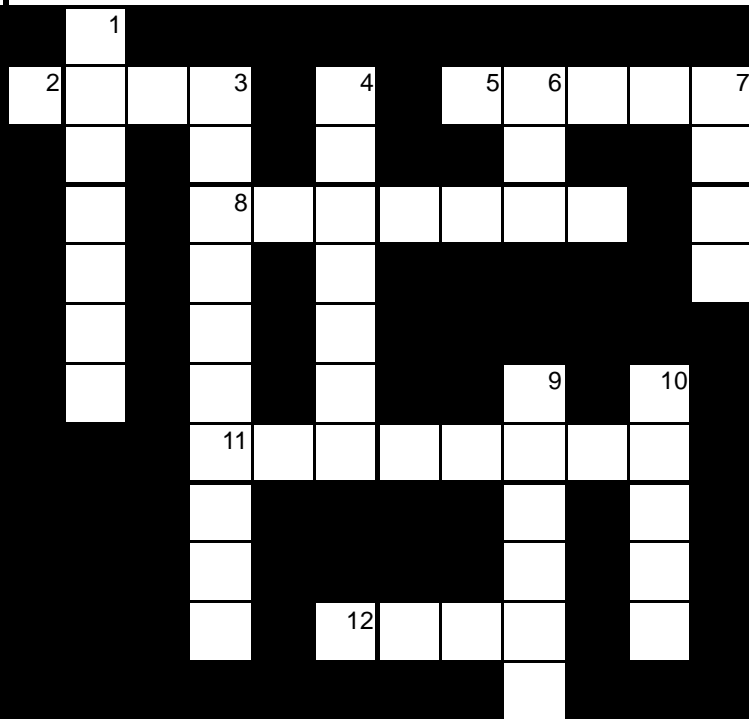
- A ceramic flower pot or wooden window box
- Potting soil ~ this is dirt with healthy nutrients to help your flowers grow
- Water ~ during hot summer months, you may need to water every day
- Seeds or small starter flowers ~ see the list below for some good ideas
- Sunlight ~ find a nice sunny spot where you can watch the flowers grow

Flower Ideas: Flowers that are easy to grow in a container.

Alyssum	Lobelia	Salvia
Black-eyed Susan Vines	Marigolds	Snapdragons
Desert Bluebells	Pansies	Zinnia



Spring Fever Crossword



- April bring May (8 Across) (4 Down)
- College is crazy during March . (3 Down) (1 Down)
- March comes in like a out like a . (12 Across) (2 Across)
- Move your ahead for daylight time. (10 Down) (9 Down)
- Love is in the ~ it if you can! (6 Down) (5 Across)
- In Spring training, players hit runs. (11 Across) (7 Down)

Instructions: Fill in the blanks to complete the Spring Fever Crossword. For each saying, write in the word that the picture represents. Beneath each picture, it tells you where the missing word belongs in the puzzle.



Craig Says... "Being Fooled Stinks!"



Hey you! Look, if you touch your nose and say "Craig is really smart" three times, I will send you a million dollars! Ha ha! April Fools!

No, really, it's Spring, and if you plant a piece of

pizza in your garden, a Pizza Tree will grow and you'll have all the pizza you want! For Free! Ha ha! April Fools!

Now, listen up! A joke is a joke. Jokes can be very funny and make us laugh. But a joke that never ends is not funny.

Self-advocates everywhere are tired of getting fooled every day. Self-advocates know that ...

- Institutions are still open. **Why?**
- States are not spending a lot of money on supported employment. **Why?** Is working in sheltered workshops better than a real job?
- A ton of money is spent on keeping people in expensive community ICF-MRs or big group homes. **Why?**
- There are plenty of SILLY RULES that keep people from living the life they want. These rules boss self-advocates around most of the day. Sometimes they keep people from having a boyfriend or girlfriend. **Why?**
- People talk a lot about self-advocates having a say about policy. Really? There are very few providers with self-advocates on their Boards of Directors. **Why?**

A lot of promises get made to people about the services and supports they will receive. There is a lot of talk about "community inclusion" and "self-determination." But self-advocates cannot be fooled anymore. That's because, **being fooled stinks!** It's time for everyone to be HONEST about the service system and what needs to change. And it's time to STOP fooling around and **start making the changes self-advocates want!**

"We offer our consumers choice and self-determination in the least restrictive environment. They can package plastic forks, knives, and spoons **OR** sort nuts and bolts."

"Don't buy it."

Helping Hands Workshop



"Professionals know what words to say but they keep doin' the same old thing. He's not foolin' me!"



Jazzy ★

Crossword Puzzle Answers

	M									
L	A	M	B		F		C	A	T	C
	D		A		L			I		O
	N		S	H	O	W	E	R	S	M
	E		K		W					E
	S		E		E					
	S		T		R			S		C
			B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L
			A					V		O
			L					I		C
			L		L	I	O	N		K
										G



The Riot! Action Page

Self-Advocates Speak Up! and Speak Out!



Ask these questions at your self-advocacy meeting...and **STIR THINGS UP!**

Think about your life. Think about the lives of other self-advocates in your town and in your state. Ask some tough questions about how things are. What do you and others think?

1. In your state, how many people live in institutions? How many live in group homes? How many work in sheltered workshops or “day habilitation centers?” Is that where they would **choose** to live or work?
2. Do people in “the system” (like case managers and staff) respect you? Do you feel like they listen to what you say?
3. Who’s the boss of your life? Are you? Or do you feel like other people, like case managers or staff, are the boss of you?
4. Are there any silly rules where you live or work that control you and don’t make sense?



Well... how did things turn out? Is everyone happy with how things are going? If not, what can you do to change things?

Talk it up.... Have yourselves a regular Riot!!!

Self-Advocates Take a Stand!

Continued from page 1...

This means getting rid of the waiting list. We have a right to make informed decisions about our lives and control funding for the services and supports we need.

People First of Alabama believes all people with disabilities...

...need affordable and accessible transportation. We feel that transportation is an important tool of independence that allows us to participate in our communities.

...have a right to choose jobs we want, to be treated with respect and equality, to be valued, and paid fair wages and benefits for the work we do. We want opportunities for advancement, careers, and self-employment with support if we need it.

Hey People First of Alabama: ***We can hear you now!***

Contribute to The Riot!

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