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## A Shot Across the Bow

Recently, the national self-advocacy organization, Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) decided not to participate as planned in the Alliance for Full Participation 2005 Summit.

President of the SABE Board of Directors Chester Finn stated in his letter to members of the Alliance explaining the withdrawal, "I feel that this is a challenge that we are putting out to you. SABE is willing to work with you on these issues. If you really believe in our issues and you want to win back our trust, you will join us at the table in achieving the goals of closing institutions and nursing homes, **self-determination**, individualized services, self-directed supports, and money following the person. All of these goals are related to making real lives for persons with disabilities."

The letter is a shot across the bow at every single major developmental disability organization in the United States. To read what SABE expects of these organizations visit <http://www.sabeusa.org/documents/Chester%20Finn2-14-05.pdf>

The Center for Self-Determination, who added **Confirmation** as the fifth principle of self-determination, believes what Chester Finn has so eloquently outlined are good examples of issues that these organizations probably know are worth addressing.

## Self-Determination State Sites

### Arkansas

#### - Advocates Needed Today

Advocates in Arkansas are making great effort at communication and working together around the topic of self-determination. "We plan on participants coming to know and mentor one another to increase the interconnectedness that we as advocates must have to achieve self-determination for all Arkansans," says Rebecca Riggs, Executive Director of the Arkansas Independent Living Council and Center State Contact. On Feb 28 and 29, Center Resource Guides Dennis Harkins and Peter Leidy will begin working with ANTS to discover what is possible in terms of self-determination under the Arkansas Home and Community Based Waiver-PASS Self-

Principles of Self-Determination

Freedom to live a meaningful life in the community

Authority over dollars needed for support

Support to organize resources in ways that are life enhancing and meaningful

Responsibility for the wise use of public dollars

Confirmation of the important leadership that self-advocates must hold in a newly designed system

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Editors

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Directed Pilot Project, and the amendments to the HCBS Waiver that have been submitted to CMS.

Most of the people attending this session have been through the **Secret of Effective Advocacy** training with Dennis Harkins. <http://www.self-determination.com/states/arkansas/index.html>

"We are trying to use the SD training as the next step up in experiential learning," continues Riggs. "Here in Arkansas, we continue to work to increase the options and choices for all with disabilities. We just get a little overwhelmed with this monster of a system and don't communicate as well as we should."

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## Florida

### - Florida Freedom Initiative

Informational sessions to learn about the Florida Freedom Initiative are being held in four different locations for two weeks this month for Floridians with disabilities, their families, brokers, Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities staff and Advisory committee members. Center Director Tom Nerney, Resource Coordinator and Lead Planning Consultant Vickie Vining and Renee Whaley Project Coordinator are conducting sessions. [Visit Florida Page](#)

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## Maine

### - Outcomes from Immersion Learning

*"All Maine high school graduates are prepared for and pursue postsecondary education and/or employment, including self employment, that leads to meaningful and comfortable lives with the self directed supports they require to be successful."*

This is the goal of Maine team plan carried home from the **Immersion Learning about Change for Prosperity** -- the collaborative effort with the University of Iowa's Center for Disabilities and Development and the Center for Self-Determination held late in 2004 in Chicago. In addition; the Maine Team further articulated their guiding principles as:

\*Public money spent on youth should only purchase integrated services and supports

\*Youth should be supported to lead their own planning processes (i.e. IEPs, 504 and VR planning)

\*The medical and mental health communities need to be better integrated with the education community

\*Assistive technology must be accessible and available to those who require it

\*Existing mentoring programs need to integrate mentees and mentors with disabilities

\*We must have high expectations for each and every Maine youth to have a valued and meaningful life and to earn or generate income

The team was sponsored by Maine's MIG project (CHOICES); Maine's Healthy and Ready to Work initiative, Maine Works for Youth!; and, the state's Tech Act project, Maine CITE.

Watch for a follow up report from a the teams February meeting with Tom Nerney in the March issue of the **Alliance for Freedom** e-newsletter

<http://www.tash.org/chapters/newengland.htm>

#### **- New State Contact**

Debbie Gilmer is the new State Coordinator for Maine

[Debbie\\_Gilmer@umit.maine.edu](mailto:Debbie_Gilmer@umit.maine.edu)

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## **Michigan**

#### **- Self-Determination in Livingston County**

The Arc of Livingston County, Michigan will host a one-day learning event focusing on the tools of self-determination. <http://www.self-determination.com/pdf/arc.pdf>

The Center is providing the curriculum, which is repeated throughout the day so all attendees have the opportunity to receive the same information, and coordinating a planning sessions with stakeholders on March 11. This informative opportunity may be easily replicated in your community. For information, contact Pat Carver at the Center for Self-Determination [pcarver@chartermi.net](mailto:pcarver@chartermi.net)

#### **-New Approach to Quality**

At the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards 2005 Annual Winter Conference "**Transformation: Building a Better Mental Health System**" in March, the Center's reasons on why a new approach to quality is needed will be presented. The quality protocol based on the paper "**Lost Lives**" will be discussed with those Michigan professionals in attendance. [http://www.self-determination.com/pdf/lost\\_lives.pdf](http://www.self-determination.com/pdf/lost_lives.pdf) For more information about conference: [http://www.macmhb.org/training\\_index.html](http://www.macmhb.org/training_index.html)

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## **New Jersey**

### **- The Impact of Expectations**

Raising Expectations is highlighted in the December 2004 issue of "People with Disabilities" the impressive publication of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities. Self-determination is featured in an opinion piece "Providers Speak Out." Additional stories, articles and essays all about the impact of expectations are included. Visit <http://www.njddc.org/pwd14-2.htm>

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## **Virginia**

### **- Clearly about Self-Determination**

At the Virginia Partners in Policymaking March session, self-determination will be described clearly for participants consisting of parents of young children and self-advocates as

1. a collective effort, by which individuals and those important to them work to create a life in community, regardless of the political, cultural, or bureaucratic constraints that limit where people live, how they spend their day, and the options considered to be within their capabilities and reach;
2. a political movement by which people with disabilities, their families and their allies are working on the political, bureaucratic and cultural changes needed for people with disabilities to be fully accepted as citizens and members of their communities;
3. a redesign of key structural elements of the public/private system of services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

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## **Updates and Announcements**

### ***And the Loser is...***

Three-time Peabody Award winner, four-time Emmy award winner and Dateline NBC correspondent John Huckleberry addresses the current movie "Million Dollar Baby" and "the thought of insulting millions of people who live full lives despite a myriad of restrictions on their freedom" in this essay.

<http://www.milliondollarbigot.org/loser.html>

- Introducing a new book by Gail Bottom, [from the inside out](#)
- For back issues of the Alliance for Freedom E-Newsletter visit [http://www.self-determination.com/publications/enews\\_index.html](http://www.self-determination.com/publications/enews_index.html)
- To subscribe to the Alliance for FREEDOM listserv contact Tiffany Devon

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### **Closing Quote**

*"Love is the only **freedom** in the world because it so elevates the spirit that the laws of humanity and the phenomena of nature do not alter its course."*

*-Kahlil Gibran*

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