

LOS ANGELES SELF-ADVOCACY NEWS

By And For People With Developmental Disabilities

November, 2008

Issue 6

Money and You By Wesley Witherspoon



You might hear on the news about the state budget crisis, the banks, and the economy. In these tough times of less money for everyone, self-advocates should learn how to budget their money. Most people with disabilities have little money to spend. Many self-advocates spend most of their money after receiving their checks.

My tips to saving money

1. Only buy what you need (food, rent, utilities, transportation, bus)
2. Learn how to compare prices in different stores. Buy things from stores that are cheaper than others.
3. If you go to a restaurant, if you have leftovers from the restaurant, take them home and eat them at a different time.
4. Do not spend more money than you have.
5. If you have credit cards, pay your bill as soon as possible. The longer you wait to pay, the more money you will have to pay.
6. Go to stores where things are cheap: Examples: Target, 99 cents store, K-Mart, Big Lots, Dollar Tree, Wal-Mart or any discount store. Many things you buy from these stores, you can save a lot of money.
7. Avoid going to stores where things cost a lot of money. One store, for example, sells a pair of socks for \$100.
8. Write down a list of the things that you spend. Ask for help if you need it.
9. Only buy things that you will use.
10. Save as much money as you can. Things can happen, such as emergencies.

I wish you all the best with budgeting your money in these tough times. Do the best you can to stop buying things or doing things that you do not need.

Self-Advocacy Conference Wrap-Up



The Self-Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County just held its 10th self-advocacy conference on September 27-28, 2008.

Attended by 170 people, “My Thoughts, My Voice, My Life...Celebrating 20 Years of Self-Advocacy in Los Angeles”, was both an educational event and a festive celebration.

Held at the Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Airport Hotel, highlights included an Exhibit Fair of local provider and advocacy agencies; Opening Keynote Speaker Mark Hutchinson from DDS representing Governor Schwarzenegger; a photo and music DVD of 20 years of self-advocacy history in Los Angeles; Dinner Keynote Speaker Joe Meadours from People First of California; 8 educational workshops all led by people with disabilities; the “Dating Game”; self-advocacy awards; an energetic Dance and Karaoke with a D.J.; and raffle prizes rounded out the weekend.

All conference details including the hotel selection, the workshops, photo montage, menu, decorations, raffle prizes, and DJ selection were handled by members of the Self-Advocacy Board.

The conference received very positive evaluations. Some of the comments were, “everything was perfect”, “I learned a lot from the classes”, “very informative”; “I enjoyed all of it”, and “now I can advise my friends so they can learn...and they can tell their friends also.” Thanks to all who attended. Our success is because of YOU!



Metro Menace -Editorial By Tom Fambro

After eating her meal at The Hat in Pasadena, Vickie Owens had to wait three hours for her return trip on Access Services.

After attending a Joni and Friends conference at Pasadena Nazarene Church, I waited an hour in the rain for my return trip on Access.

Clients at Foothill Vocational have either been late or early to work because of Access.

Don't ever become ill at work, because you will not be picked up by Access because you didn't make a reservation the day before.

These are some of the complaints I have about Access Services. They are not reliable. When you make a reservation with Access, you are taking your life in your hands. But persons with disabilities depend on their services!

They need to upgrade their services by 1) being able to make online reservations; and 2) when you give them your identification number, they should have your name, address, cross street and phone number in the computer after you have used the service once. Instead you have to give them that information every time you make a reservation. They are a menace.

Los Angeles Self-Advocacy News is published by the Self-Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County with help from Area Board 10.

Our officers are: President – Daniel Redmond; Vice-President – Colette Madore; Secretary – Carmen Redmond; Treasurer – Dennis O'Brien; Sergeant-at-Arms – Tom Fambro.

You are invited to send articles, stories, or letters by January 1 for our February issue. Send them to: Self-Advocacy Board, 411 N. Central Ave., Suite 620, Glendale, CA. 91203.

Phone: 818-543-4631. Email: sablac@earthlink.net
(We will do our best, but we cannot guarantee that we will have space to include all materials sent to us.)

Self-Advocacy Group

Spotlight



In this issue, we are featuring the North Los Angeles Angeles County Regional Center self-advocacy group. This group began in 1991 when Fred Lopaty, now deceased, took the lead in organizing it.

This group of about 38 members holds monthly meetings at St. Michaels Conference Center in Van Nuys. They have yearly elections for officers. When they vote, each member stands behind the person they are voting for. That solves the problem for some people who have difficulty writing, or for some people who were confused and raised their hands for more than one person.

At their meetings, they collect voluntary donations for their coffee supply. Members can also donate money for raffle prizes. This money is used for start-up money for their next conference. This group has put on two successful "Relationships" conferences and is planning another for 2009.

In addition, their meetings are used to plan for future events such as their annual Dodger game outing, their annual picnic, or their annual holiday party. There is always time for open discussion about personal issues and once a year, they have a guest speaker on a topic of interest.

Kathryn Lincoln has been the group's advisor since 1994. She is impressed with how much the group really wants to be informed and how much they appreciate and make use of flyers and handouts. She feels members have learned independence skills and a sense of responsibility through the leadership, voting, and

educational activities of the group.

This group won a self-advocacy award for their long-time commitment to self-advocacy at the recent L. A. conference. One member proudly noted that next year, the group will be 18 years old, saying, "We're going to be adults!" For further information, contact Kathryn at 818-756-6225.



Self-Advocacy Websites

More and more of us are learning how to use computers and surf the internet. Here are some great websites that have great information about self-advocacy:

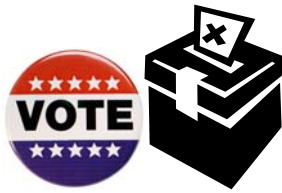
www.peoplefirstca.org People First of California's website. Among its resources is a People First Starter handbook full of information about the self-advocacy movement and how to get groups started.

www.sabeusa.org Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered. Includes their newsletter and details about many national self-advocacy activities

www.areaboard10.org Area Board 10's website has lots of useful information about rights, as well as a Self-Advocacy Corner that includes updates about the Self-Advocacy Board of L.A. County and a Directory of Parent and Consumer Groups.

www.pai-ca.org Disability Rights California's website (formerly Protection and Advocacy) has many publications that are helpful for training about rights.

We will list more websites in future newsletters.



Did You Vote?

As you know, November 4, 2008 was an historic election for U.S. President and other important offices and propositions.

If you missed out on voting, register to vote in the next election for state and local offices in 2009. If you are over 18 and a U.S. citizen, registering is easy. You must register at least 15 days before an election to be eligible to vote in that election. Forms are available in libraries, many banks, post offices, fire stations, and government buildings. You can also request one by mail by calling 562-462-1310. If you need assistance, ask someone help you fill it out.

With proper support, any adult with a disability can and should vote. **DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS CHANCE TO USE YOUR SELF-ADVOCACY POWER!**
(See more about voting on page 6).

Next Self-Advocacy Board Meeting

Everyone is welcome to join us!
January 24, 2009
1:00 to 4:00 PM
We will be meeting in Azusa this time.
Call for details at 818-543-4631.



Dear Aggie!



Dear Aggie,

I have a problem with my social worker from my Regional Center. I have left several phone messages for the worker who has not returned any of my calls.

What should I do with this matter?

Sincerely, Ignored

Dear Ignored,

Sorry to hear that you are having so many problems getting in touch with your worker. Usually the general rule is they have at least 24 to 48 hours to return any calls that they missed. If you have further problems, you can find out who the supervisor is of that particular worker. Speak to them directly by phone to express your concern. I am sure you will get an answer in no time if you follow the steps that I recommend.

Sincerely, Aggie

(Aggie is our new columnist who will answer your questions about rights and self-advocacy in each newsletter. Address your letters to: Aggie, Area Board 10, at the address on the left.)

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Merry Christmas



Happy Hanukkah

What to Know When Taking Prescription Medication

By Margaret Barcelo and
David Oster



Most prescriptions medications can cause side effects that we are not always aware of and they can have mild or serious side effects.

Warning Signs to look out for:

- Nausea / vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Blurry Vision
- Diarrhea
- Yeast infections
- Dry mouth
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling weak or fainting
- Can cause seizures

These are just a few side effects that you might experience when you are taking your medication,

What to do if you or someone you know has questions regarding the medication that you are taking:

- The first thing you can do is to contact your physician . If you cannot reach your doctor's office, call the pharmacist that is closest to where you live.
- Remember to call your doctor if your symptoms get any worse than normal.
- Or you can call 911.

It is wise to make sure to store your medication in a safe, secure place.

KEEP MEDICATION OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN!

Job Opportunities

Disability Rights California (formerly Protection and Advocacy) is recruiting for a Developmental Disabilities Peer/Self-Advocacy Coordinator in either Oakland or Los Angeles. Salary range is \$21.03 to \$28.22 per hour. Application is due 11/14/08. For information, go to http://www.pai-ca.org/Jobs/DDPSA_Coordinator-OAK-LA.htm or contact the Recruiter at 916-488-9955.

The California State Department of Developmental Services is looking for people who want to be Maintenance and Service Occupational Trainees. Pay starts at \$1,899/month and the jobs are at the developmental centers (DC). The closest ones to Los Angeles are Lanterman DC in Pomona (call Estela Contreras at 909-444-7508) or Fairview DC in Costa Mesa (call Lupe Martinez-Roberts at 714-957-5137) or go to <http://www.dds.ca.gov/MSOT/docs/MSOTflyer.pdf>

The state's Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) is an alternate examination and appointment process designed to facilitate the recruitment and hiring of persons with disabilities. Individuals who qualify for LEAP will be able to apply for any LEAP specified examination for which minimum qualifications are met. The Employment Development Department (EDD) recently announced a LEAP Open Exam for positions in two classifications: Employment Program Representative and Disability Insurance Program Representative. For more information go to <http://www.spb.ca.gov/jobs/faq/leap.htm> or call (916) 653-1262 or TTY (916) 653-1498. Applicants must get LEAP certification from the Department of Rehabilitation to submit with your application. Deadline is 11/14/08.

It's 2008 and Our Right to Vote is Being Questioned!

According to an article written by ABC News reporter, George Warren, the California Republican party is asking the Secretary of State to investigate an organized voting campaign involving developmentally disabled adults at Thumbs Up! day program in Sonora, California. As many as 10 clients of the program voted by absentee ballots and nearly all of them were for Barack Obama.

One parent of a 56 year old client describes his son as having the mental capacity of a 5-year old. "He wouldn't know one candidate from another." When asked, this client said he voted for "the black man" and was unable to remember Obama's name. His father feels he was manipulated by the program director. Another parent actually tore up her son's absentee ballot before it was mailed.

Program director, David Simerley, took the clients on field trips to both the local Republican and Democratic party headquarters. He stated, "When we register people to vote, we try to be totally non-partisan." He insists he did not influence his clients. He thinks many of them voted Democratic even though they are in a mostly Republican area simply because "I think maybe Obama would appeal to people with disabilities."

When interviewed by ABC News 10, the clients agreed that they were allowed to choose their candidate freely. Simerley only filled out the ballots for the clients' choice if they could not read or write.

For the full article on the internet, go to <http://www.news10.net/tools/printfullstory.aspx?storyid=49806>



Well, We Plan to Answer!

At its last meeting on November 1, the Self-Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County decided to respond. The Board plans to send a letter to the California Republican Party and the Secretary of State, telling them not to investigate. We hope to educate them and remind them that:

- Whether we are verbal or nonverbal, blind or sighted, hearing impaired or hearing, WE MAKE CHOICES EVERYDAY.
- Just because we cannot speak or hear or see or write or learn at a fast pace does not mean that we cannot understand.
- Our staff do not tell us what to do. We are learning to make our own decisions. They explain our options and then WE make the choice.
- It is common for two people in the same family to have different political opinions. It's also common to identify people by appearance if we can't remember names.
- Voting is one of our basic human rights.
- Voting gives us freedom.
- Voting allows us to be independent and express what we believe in.
- We don't want to be discriminated against.

The Board will send the letter once the members have approved the final draft in the coming week. We encourage you and/or your self-advocacy group to send letters as well. The Disability Rights Center (formerly Protection and Advocacy, Inc) has already sent a press release expressing outrage. **IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU VOTED FOR.** What matters is that no one should question our right to vote!

Upcoming Events



Disability Rights Legal Center
Free Self-Advocacy Trainings on
Employment and Housing and
Communication Access

Saturday, November 8, 2008

9 AM to 3 PM

Loyola Law School

919 Albany St.

Los Angeles, CA. 90015

OR

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

9 AM to 3 PM

University of La Verne College of Law

320 East D Street

Ontario, CA. 91764

For further information and to pre-register,
contact Eric Turner at

213-736-1030 or email: eric.turner@lls.edu

Cal Tash 27th Annual Conference

March 6-7, 2009

Manhattan Beach Marriott

Self-advocates encouraged to attend and to be
speakers.

For more information, call 415-503-4460

Free Trainings Available (Ongoing)

The Self-Advocacy Board of Los Angeles County and Area Board 10 continue to offer free self-advocacy trainings to any interested agency, program, school, or residence.

Trainings are tailored to your needs and can be specifically designed for your clients, students, and/or your staff. Trainings can be brief or more intensive, depending on your schedule.

Available topics include:

- Benefits and philosophy of consumer self-advocacy;
- How to start a self-advocacy group;
- How self-advocacy has helped me – a consumer's viewpoint;
- The role of the self-advocacy group helper/advisor;
- Rights under the Lanterman Act
- Self-advocacy with "challenging" populations;
- And more!

We believe children and adults with developmental disabilities deserve to learn about and get involved with self-advocacy. Self-advocacy means learning about your rights and responsibilities; speaking up for yourself; solving problems and making decisions; and getting involved in the community through voting, grassroots politics, and community service.

For further information or to schedule a training, please contact Melody Goodman at 818-543-4631. We look forward to hearing from you.

PHOTOS FROM OUR SELF-ADVOCACY CONFERENCE

“My Thoughts, My Voice, My Life”

September 26-27, 2008 – Sheraton LAX Hotel



Registration



Sales



Exhibit Fair



Keynote Joe Meadours with Exhibitors



Keynote Mark Hutchinson



One of the 8 workshops



Dinner Banquet



Self-Advocacy Board head table



Awards