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# Expanding Self-Advocacy



Sangha Unity Network, Inc.

End-of-Year Report, Year 3  
The Global Pandemic Year of January 2020 - December 2020

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Since 2018, in the first 3 years of the Expanding Self-Advocacy grant from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), Sangha Unity Network (SUN) supported the development of Uniting for Change (U4C), a grassroots network of self-advocates, allies and supporters throughout the state of Georgia. In 2020, we continued strengthening the network, connecting and supporting self-advocates to enhance their advocacy skills. In March, we shifted some of our plans and our work as the world adjusted to the COVID-19 pandemic.



We began holding virtual Leadership Collective Meetings, and then took over hosting and facilitating Community Strong in July. When we realized we would not be meeting in-person in 2020 for our self-advocacy retreat or hosting any in-person meetings or workshops, we worked with the DD Council to alter our budget, moving funds to support Leadership Collective members to have the necessary technology to participate with a computer equipped to utilize Zoom.

In the midst of the pandemic, the U4C Leadership Collective created and facilitated a virtual workshop led by self-advocates. More than 200 self-advocates registered from across the state. This workshop provided information explaining what self-advocacy is, the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities, and what it means to be a citizen. Workshop facilitators shared personal stories about their experiences moving out of group homes and institutions, terminating legal guardianship, and learning to rise up and speak out.

Advocates with Uniting for Change Leadership Collective participated in recording 8 different voting videos with key information about voting and Georgia's run-off election. These videos were produced in collaboration with the Georgia Advocacy Office and Sign1News, who shared the videos on their platform, reaching thousands.

We also supported the Leadership Collective in creating and presenting a virtual retreat for self-advocates, allies and supporters. During this retreat, the focus was on the Power of Connection, and 79 people participated during the 4 days. We hosted a panel with 2 self-advocates, DD Council Executive Director and DBHDD Director of Waiver Services. Advocates discussed next year's priorities in small groups and answered Zoom polls to set our 2021 priorities. We also created vision boards, and heard from 4 self-advocates as keynote speakers.

In this mostly virtual year, we learned more about the power of being connected through accessing technology, and our advocacy work did not stop or suffer. U4C members had multiple opportunities to lead, teach, collaborate and share with advocates and partners in Georgia, in other states and at a national conference. This report gives an overview of SUN's efforts in 2020 with U4C as this self-advocacy network became a force throughout the State, increasing presence and advocacy.

## Laptop Computers to Enhance Virtual Participation

Mid-year, when we changed our grant deliverables and adjusted our budget, we envisioned supporting more self-advocates with reliable access to technology to increase their virtual participation in our advocacy efforts. We wanted self-advocates to connect with each other and to participate in U4C Leadership Collective virtual meetings, advocacy virtual events, Community Strong! Sessions, and DD Network COVID-19 meetings.

We purchased and set up 23 laptop computers equipped with video cameras and short cuts to our most commonly used website and apps. We worked with each person to either set up their current email account on the designated laptop, or to create a personal email account.

Each new laptop owner signed a computer agreement with SUN agreeing to participate in the following activities:

- Attending Leadership Collective meetings
- Planning and participating in the Uniting for Change Virtual Retreat
- Participating in Community Strong meetings
- Learning and supporting U4C on Social Media
- Contributing stories/photos as needed

Technical support was provided on an ongoing basis. With our tracking, we make sure everyone who has laptop is actively participating.

By having access to their own computers, advocates have been developing and strengthening their competencies of using the technology, improving email correspondence, and are now more familiar with certain programs (Zoom, documents, slides, social media, etc.). We believe that once the pandemic is behind us, we will continue to rely on some virtual meetings as we support a state-wide self-advocacy network. The computer, technology, and communication skills learned during this time will sharpen advocacy efforts for many years to come.

# Rise Up, Speak Out Self-Advocacy Workshops

**205 participants with 106 self-advocates.**

SUN supported 11 U4C members to facilitate 4 Rise Up, Speak Out workshops including John McCarty, Ratiel Shepherd, Laura Owen, Mike Housel, Carmine Vara, Nandi Isaac, Gina DiPolito, Brandt White, Brad King, and Marian Jackson. The group designed the curriculum, practiced presenting, and then facilitated the workshops, educating other self-advocates about Uniting for Change, describing what self-advocacy is, our rights and responsibilities, what it means to be a citizen, and sharing personal stories. Folks were able to connect with one another and hopefully become more comfortable using their voices as advocates, letting people know their hopes and dreams and how folks need to be supported. We mailed advance packets to all self-advocates who registered.

The workshop was full of information and participants learned about...

- Advocating
- The Principles and Values of Self-Advocacy
- Our Rights and Responsibilities
- What it means to belong, be a citizen, and how we can contribute to our communities (including preparing to Vote and complete the Census), and
- How to Rise Up and Speak Out



A HANDBOOK DEVELOPED BY  
UNITING FOR CHANGE  
FOR SELF-ADVOCATES

Workshop facilitators shared personal advocacy stories and heard about:

- People who moved out of group homes into their own homes
- Someone who petitioned the probate court to overturn legal guardianship and restore his rights
- Another person who grew up in state institutions and is now living in their own place
- Many examples of leadership, making decisions and being involved





# Rise Up, Speak Out Self-Advocacy Workshops

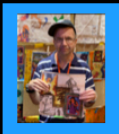
## Rise UP, Speak OUT Workshop Facilitators



Gina DiPolito



Nandi Isaac



Mike Housel



Marian Jackson



Sheila Jeffrey



Brad King



John McCarty



Laura Owen



Ratiel Shepherd



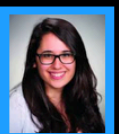
Carmine Vara



Brandt White



Katie Chandler



Gabby Melnick



Danny Hoover



Michelle Schwartz

## Workshop Attendance:

September 9: SW Georgia

**54** total participants, **23** self-advocates

September 10: NE Georgia + Metro Atlanta

**60** total participants, **34** self-advocates

September 15: SW Georgia

**51** total participants, **31** self-advocates

September 16: NW Georgia + Metro Atlanta

**40** total participants, **18** self-advocates

Graphics captured during Rise Up, Speak Out created by Gabby Melnick @GABBITUDE



## Community Strong

### 388 unique participants with 87 self-advocates

In June, Stacey Ramirez from the Arc Georgia reached out to ask if U4C advocates would be willing to take over hosting and facilitating Community Strong on Mondays. We met with the Leadership Collective who agreed to continue hosting Community Strong as a way to connect with advocates virtually during the pandemic and an opportunity to start our weeks “Community Strong.”

We hosted our first show June 29 and met nearly every Monday throughout the rest of 2020, hosting 21 shows. Each week, a self-advocate hosts and interviews a guest. Our guests have included local elected officials, disability advocates, Georgia House Representatives, local celebrities, members of Congress, the Governor of Georgia and a country music star. The host shares a word or phrase that the show is built around and leads discussion with participants. We spent many weeks learning various Zoom features, and throughout the year talked about the importance of participating in the US Census, voting, speaking up, and giving input and feedback to the proposed Medicaid waiver renewal and amendment.

Every week we sent an announcement that included photos of the upcoming host and guest, a screen shot of the previous week’s participants taken during the show, and a graphic summarizing the discussion created by @gabbitude.

In December, we took these photos and images and created a video to share, recapping all our Community Strong shows together. The video can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1HL31HWyNU&feature=youtu.be>


Music was provided by friend and advocate, Peter Leidy.





# Community Strong

In total, **1,041** people participated in the **21** shows that we hosted in 2020, including 416 self-advocates. Many of these were regular participants, joining us every week. We were able to reach **87** individual self-advocates and **301** other individuals across all Community Strong that shows we facilitated.



**COMMUNITY STRONG!  
VIRTUAL GATHERING**

This is a weekly Zoom gathering led by self-advocates for self-advocates. Each week, we have a different host and honored guest. We have discussion about the week's theme, learn about zoom together, talk about advocacy, have some fun, and make connections.

**Mondays at 4:00PM**

Led BY and FOR People with developmental disabilities

A time to connect & start the week "COMMUNITY STRONG!"

**21 Shows**  
**416 Self-Advocates**  
**1,041 Participants**

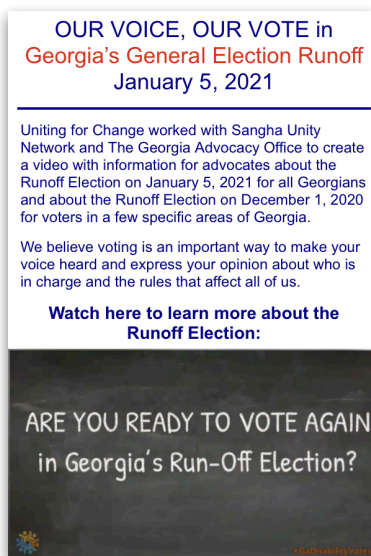
The chart shows details of each week, including the date, name of host, name of guest, word of the week, total attendees, number of self-advocates, number of new self-advocates (who haven't participated before), number of allies/supporters, family members, other professionals, and the total number of other participants (who haven't participated before).

Date	Host	Guest	Word of week:	Total Attendees	# Self-Advocates	# New Self-Advocates	# Ally or Supporter of Self-Advocates	# Family Member of Self-Advocate	# Other Professionals	# Combined All Others	# New Attendees - All Others
6/29/20	Gina DiPolito	Governor Kemp	Hope	146	29	29	44	26	3	73	117
7/6/20	Caroline Dempsey	Rep. Katie Dempsey	Adventure	67	26	9	20	10	1	31	21
7/13/20	Nandi Isaac	Rep. Dale Wasburn	Leaning on Each Other	58	19	3	15	16	2	33	19
7/20/20	Ratiel Shepherd	Peter Leidy	Strength	50	19	3	19	7	1	27	10
7/27/20	Susan Berch	Stacey Ramirez	Gratitude	40	20	2	10	7	3	20	3
8/3/20	Gina DiPolito	Congressman Rick Allen	Believe	56	20	1	17	7	2	26	7
8/10/20	Sheila Jeffrey	Beth Mount	Courage	55	23	8	17	4	4	25	11
8/17/20	Mike Housel	Rev Lonnie Lacy	Bravery	33	11	1	8	2	3	13	9
8/24/20	Amy Kahn	Katilyn Ross	Determined	68	23	4	14	4	4	22	23
8/31/20	Carmine Vara	Joe Sarra	I want to work!	47	20	5	17	5	4	26	9
9/14/20	Laura Owen	Liz Weintraub	Learning	55	27	8	7	5	13	25	13
9/21/20	Brandt White	Cyndi Taylor	Motivation & Determination	35	18	3	7	5	5	17	6
10/5/20	Brandt White	Stevie Bannon	Networking & Friendship	37	20	1	3	9	3	15	4
10/19/20	Brad King	House Candidate Lethia Kittrell Jones	Volunteer	40	18	3	6	3	6	15	7
10/26/20	Susan Berch	Rabbi Joshua Lesser	Peace	46	19	1	4	4	5	13	18
11/2/20	Darien Todd	Susanna Miller-Raines	Inclusion	29	15	0	7	2	3	12	2
11/9/20	Noel Keilhauer	Country Star Angie K	Confidence	25	15	1	4	1	4	9	3
11/16/20	Sheila Jeffrey	Dana Lloyd	Hope	32	19	0	8	2	2	12	0
11/30/20	Bad King	Gabby Melnick	Creativity	35	18	2	10	2	5	17	2
12/7/20	Stanley Hawes	Gaylon Tootle	Achiever	46	19	1	7	6	8	21	11
12/14/20	Carmine Vara	Jenn Hobby	Commitment	41	18	2	6	6	4	16	6
<b>Total:</b>				<b>1041</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>301</b>

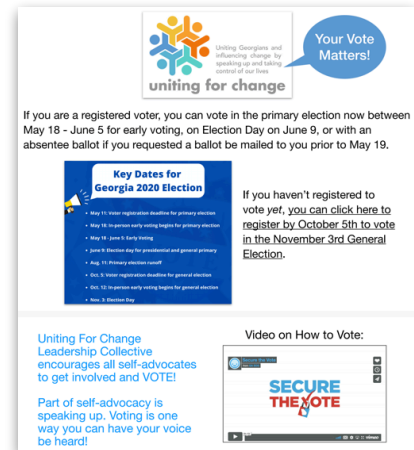
## Citizenship: Voting and Census

Advocates with Uniting for Change Leadership Collective participated in recording 8 different voting videos with key information about voting and the Georgia runoff election. These videos were produced in collaboration with the Georgia Advocacy Office and Sign1News, who shared the videos on their news platform, reaching thousands. All were produced with captions and side-by-side American Sign Language. The Run-off Election and Cure Your Ballot videos were also produced in Spanish with Spanish Sign Language. The links to all the voting videos produced are included in the Video section of this report.

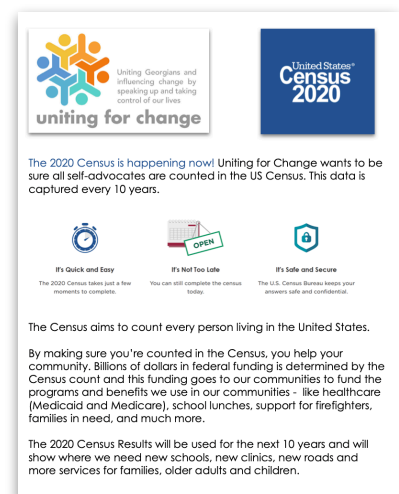
We created a Voting Resource document: <https://bit.ly/U4CVotingInfo2020>; sharing information about key dates for 2020 election, a video on how to vote, images showing how to mail in absentee ballot, where to find polling place information, and where to go to volunteer at a polling place.



Census Resource U4C created: <https://bit.ly/CensusU4C> sharing information on what the census is, why it matters, a video to watch about the census, how to respond to the census, and the 2020 census timeline.



Following the November election, we updated the voting guide to include pertinent information about Georgia's Run-off Election, with information about voter registration deadlines, absentee voting and tracking your ballot, finding your polling place, and the 4 Senate candidates and 2 Public Service Commissioner candidates.



## Impact Survey, Position Paper

We created and distributed a Google survey in June to gather input from self-advocates for U4C to write a position paper stating what self-advocates want. With so much uncertainty during the COVID pandemic, we had an opportunity to influence how support services are delivered during this time and post-COVID, in advance of Georgia's Waiver Renewal and amendment submitted to CMS.

People were asked to answer questions related to:

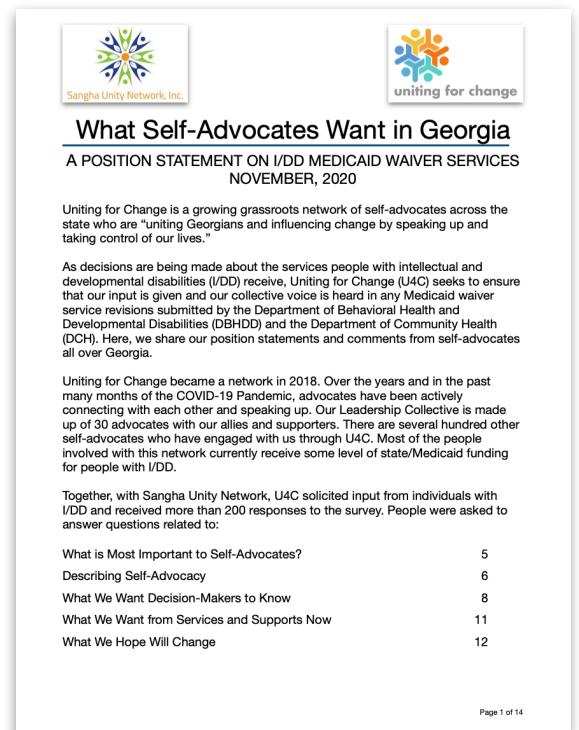
- What is most important to self-advocates
- What self-advocacy means
- What we want decision-makers to know
- What we want from services and supports, and
- What we hope will change

We received more than 200 responses and used the input from self-advocates to create the position paper to disseminate in November. We sent the paper with an introductory memorandum to:

- DBHDD Commissioner
- DBHDD DD Director
- DD Advisory Council Members
- DCH Commissioner
- DCH Medicaid Director
- Georgia Advocacy Office
- Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Center for Leadership in Disability, Georgia State University
- Institute on Human Development in Disability, University of Georgia

We also formally requested this document be submitted as public comment to CMS for the NOW/COMP Waiver Renewal/Amendment. This document can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/U4CPositionPaper>





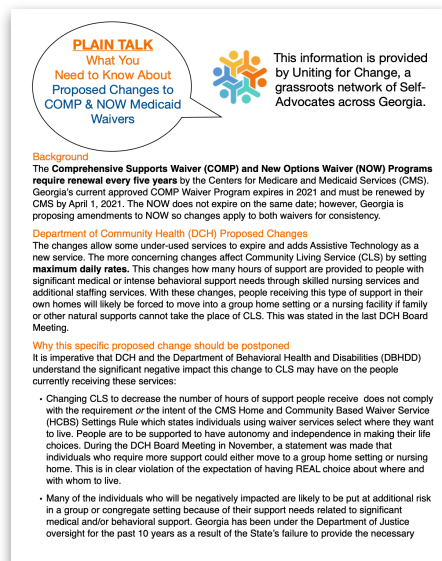
## Plain Talk Publication

We worked with GCDD and other partners to develop a plan for giving feedback and input to the Department of Community Health on their proposed COMP waiver renewal and NOW amendment. Working with self-advocates, we created a document that explains the details about the proposed waiver changes and what advocates can do so their voices are heard.

## Georgia DD Network COVID-19



Early during the pandemic, the DD Network worked together to host weekly Zoom meetings to discuss the unprecedented situation with COVID-19. Partners discussed current advocacy needs and provided updates across Georgia. SUN supported U4C to join the network as a partner, collaborating with 13 other agencies to spread the word about the meetings, increase participation, offer resources, and connect with others. Several U4C Leadership Collective members were asked to present on relevant topics during the meetings and one participated on the planning committee. The group together established an e-mail reach of 1,500 people, with several hundred commonly participating in the Zoom meetings. GDDN recorded notes, updated information and maintained a resource list found here: <https://gcdd.org/gadd-network.html>



## College Transition Project

SUN supported IHDD with their College Transition Partnership grant application, agreeing to support self-advocates to participate in the year-long project. The grant was awarded to IHDD, in partnership with CLD, and we received a sub-award to support U4C participation. The goal of the Georgia College Transition Partnership is to develop a model for an innovative, actionable pilot project focused on providing supports for young adults on the autism spectrum that result in their successfully transitioning from college to employment or graduate school. SUN worked with Brandt White, U4C member, to take on the role of participating in the project's advisory committee. We attended the first meeting in December. Brandt will be paid by SUN as part of our agreement and deliverables.

# Virtual Retreat: Self-Advocacy and the Power of Connection

## 79 participants with 46 self-advocates.

The Self-Advocacy Power of Connection Virtual Retreat was held December 9-12. A total of 168 people registered, including 87 self-advocates, 43 allies/supporters, and 28 family members. We mailed packets to 130 folks (family members and self-advocates received one packet together). We sent email information to all registrants over the 4-days and a total of 79 people attending. Participants included 46 self-advocates, 22 allies/supporters, 8 family members, and 2 professionals.

The 4 day virtual retreat included 4 break-out sessions, a panel discussion, 5 keynote presentations, a session on making vision boards, small group discussion, and the virtual dining rooms for folks to make connections. We coordinated with self-advocates and allies who helped facilitate the retreat. We created a Retreat Guide that can be found here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1sWuZYKSZa4eAjlnoOdBaGsgvikaoKma?usp=sharingfrom>

## Key Note Presentations:

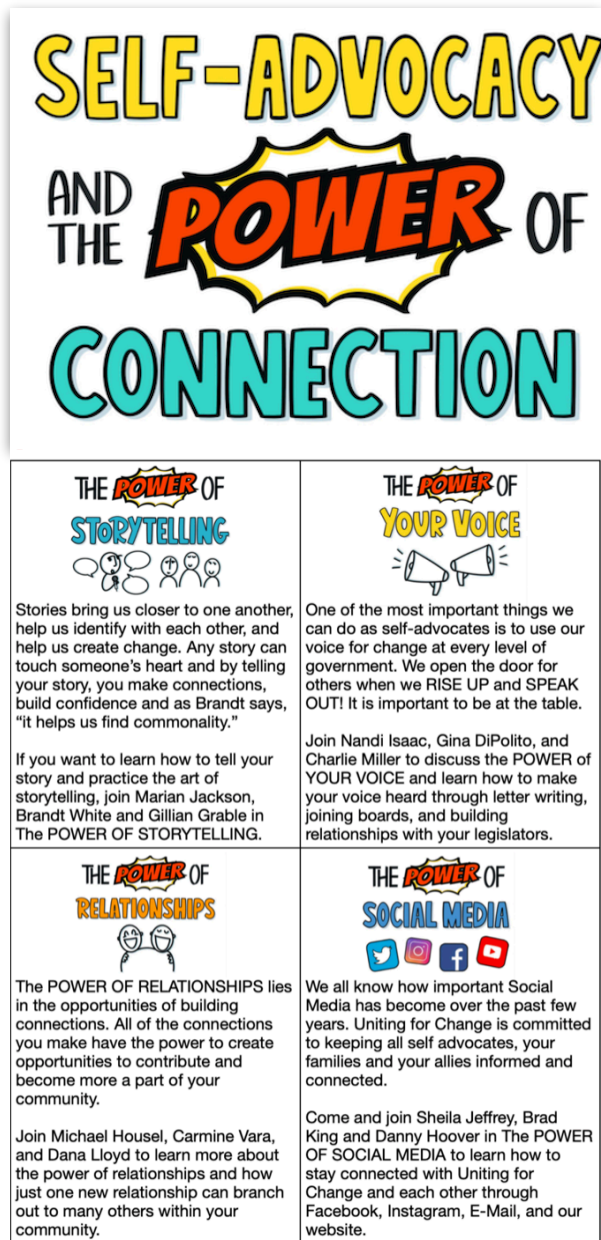
- The Power of Connection:  
Tia Nelis, TASH
- The Power of Your Journey:  
BJ Stasio, SANYS
- The Power of Your Journey:  
Shameka Andrews, SANYS
- The Power of Your Vote:  
John McCarty, U4C
- The Power of Vision:  
Beth Mount, Graphic Futures

## Break-Out Presentations:

- The Power of Story-telling:  
Marian Jackson, Brandt White & Gillian Grable
- The Power of Your Voice:  
Nandi Isaac, Gina DiPolito, & Charlie Miller
- The Power of Relationships:  
Michael Housel, Carmine Vara, & Dana Lloyd
- The Power of Social Media:  
Sheila Jeffrey, Brad King & Danny Hoover

## Panelists:

- Ashleigh Caseman, DBHDD
- Nandi Isaac, U4C
- Eric Jacobson, GCDD
- Ratiel Shepherd, U4C
- Brandt White, Facilitator, U4C



**SELF-ADVOCACY AND THE POWER OF CONNECTION**

<p><b>THE POWER OF STORYTELLING</b></p> <p>Stories bring us closer to one another, help us identify with each other, and help us create change. Any story can touch someone's heart and by telling your story, you make connections, build confidence and as Brandt says, "it helps us find commonality."</p> <p>If you want to learn how to tell your story and practice the art of storytelling, join Marian Jackson, Brandt White and Gillian Grable in The POWER OF STORYTELLING.</p>	<p><b>THE POWER OF YOUR VOICE</b></p> <p>One of the most important things we can do as self-advocates is to use our voice for change at every level of government. We open the door for others when we RISE UP and SPEAK OUT! It is important to be at the table.</p> <p>Join Nandi Isaac, Gina DiPolito, and Charlie Miller to discuss the POWER of YOUR VOICE and learn how to make your voice heard through letter writing, joining boards, and building relationships with your legislators.</p>
<p><b>THE POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <p>The POWER OF RELATIONSHIPS lies in the opportunities of building connections. All of the connections you make have the power to create opportunities to contribute and become more a part of your community.</p> <p>Join Michael Housel, Carmine Vara, and Dana Lloyd to learn more about the power of relationships and how just one new relationship can branch out to many others within your community.</p>	<p><b>THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA</b></p> <p>We all know how important Social Media has become over the past few years. Uniting for Change is committed to keeping all self advocates, your families and your allies informed and connected.</p> <p>Come and join Sheila Jeffrey, Brad King and Danny Hoover in The POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA to learn how to stay connected with Uniting for Change and each other through Facebook, Instagram, E-Mail, and our website.</p>

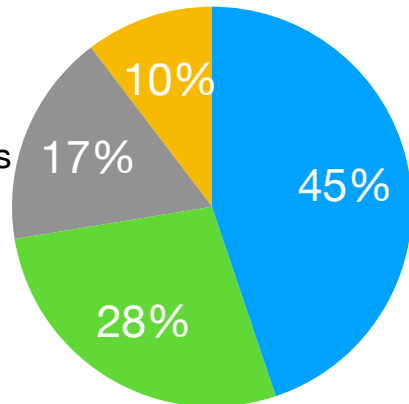
# Virtual Retreat: Self-Advocacy and the Power of Connection

During the virtual retreat, we held a priority-setting session. Self-advocates gathered in small groups through Zoom's breakout feature to discuss where U4C should focus next year.

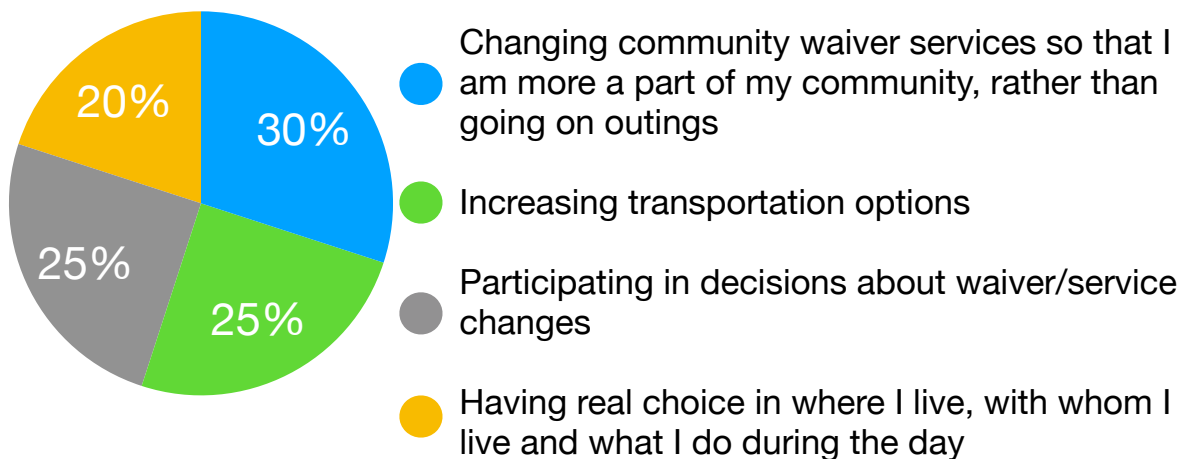
## Priorities Decided at 2020 Retreat

### Teaching & Education Priorities

- Increasing advocacy workshops for self-advocates
- Creating and teaching workshops for providers
- Having a seat at the table within all Stakeholder organizations
- Having a committee to work on legislative concerns

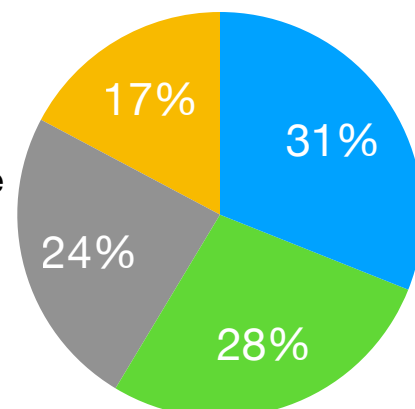


### My Life My Choice Priorities



### Connecting Priorities

- Increasing social media activity for Uniting for Change
- Having a space on the website for stories to be submitted
- Creating a monthly newsletter
- Submitting stories to share

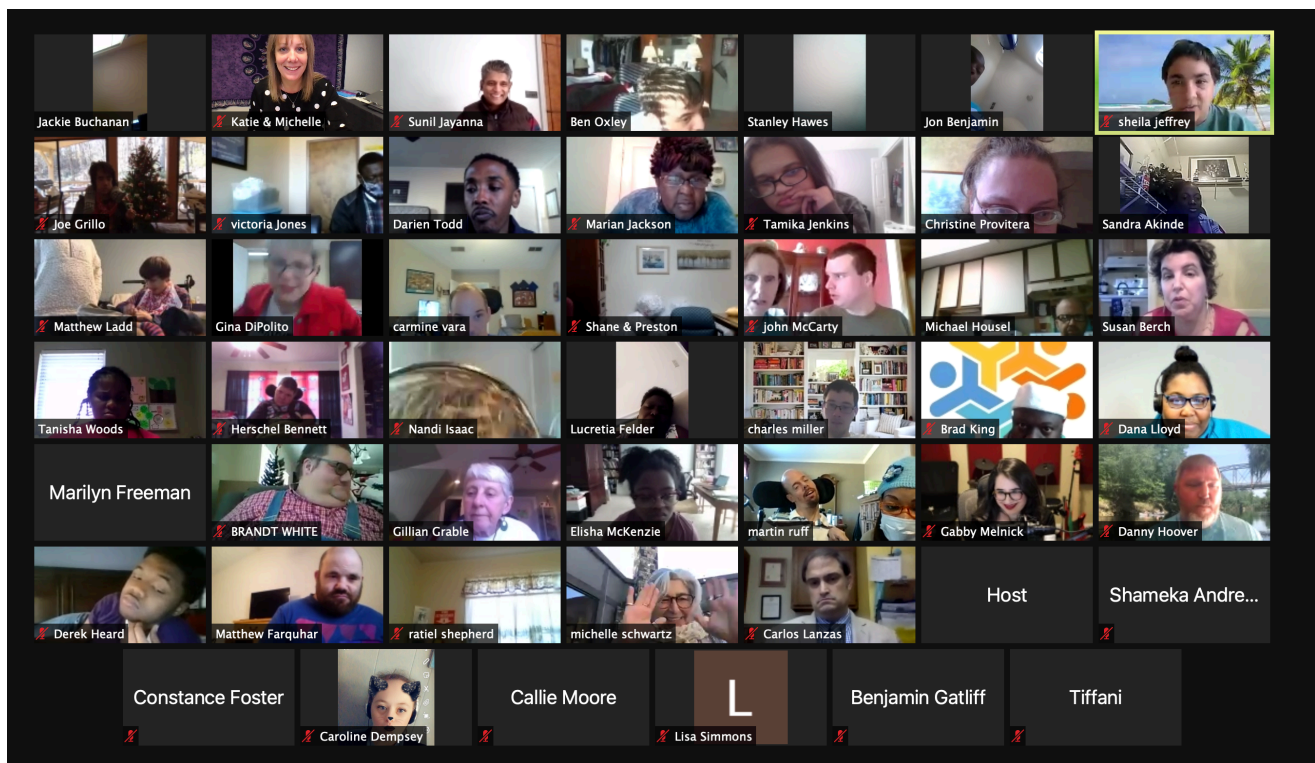




# Virtual Retreat: Self-Advocacy and the Power of Connection

Our Zoom survey polls to collect data received between 26 and 33 responses. We gathered evaluation feedback comments and captured photos of the vision boards participants created. From the 28 returned surveys from people with I/DD, 23 indicated the retreat was excellent and 3 indicated it was good.

Following the retreat, we created a retreat summary document we shared with participants with highlights, photos, graphics, quotes, poll data we analyzed and other key points: <https://conta.cc/3nVuTWj>



**BELIEFS & VALUES**  
  
**OF SELF-ADVOCACY**

**PRINCIPLES**  
  
**OF SELF-ADVOCACY**

**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**WHAT SHEILA AND NANDI TAUGHT US ABOUT SELF-ADVOCACY**

**BELIEFS & VALUES OF SELF-ADVOCACY**

- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunity
- Learning and Living Together
- Institutions are Bad for People
- Non-Labeling

**PRINCIPLES OF SELF-ADVOCACY**

- Being a Person First
- Making our own Decisions
- Believing in ME as a Person
- Having Other People Believe in YOU as a Person

**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The rights persons with disabilities include: equality before the law, freedom of speech, respect for privacy, the right to both marriage and family, the right to education, the right to health, and much more. As self-advocates, we acknowledge our responsibility to respect the rights of others and to communicate what we need in a respectful manner. We also acknowledge our civic responsibility, especially around advocating for systems-change and policy development.

"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do." -Edward Everett Hale

**Sharing Our Vision Boards**  
on giving birth to the new.....

Graphics captured by Gabby Melnick @GABBITUDE



## Outreach Efforts

Created a U4C website:

[www.uniting4change.org](http://www.uniting4change.org)

Increased Social Media presence with Facebook

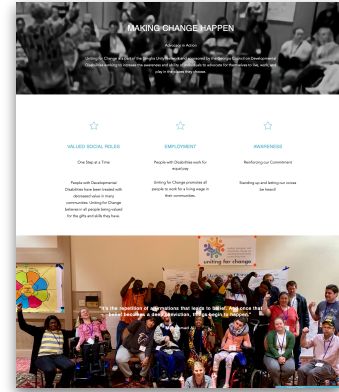
[www.facebook.com/unitingforchangeGeorgia](https://www.facebook.com/unitingforchangeGeorgia)

Created an Instagram Page:

[www.instagram.com/Unitingforchangegeorgia](https://www.instagram.com/Unitingforchangegeorgia)

Created direct link for folks to sign up for U4C Mailing List:

[bit.ly/Uniting4ChangeSignUp](https://bit.ly/Uniting4ChangeSignUp)



- Created and distributed newsletters with U4C's mission and vision, updates, photos, recent successes, requests for advocacy, and upcoming workshops.
- Provided updates and news to be distributed by SPADD and DBHDD through their BE DBHDD newsletter.
- Increased our email list in Constant Contact via 2 sign up forms and are including more providers, support coordinators, staff at agencies.
- Worked with one Support Coordination Agency (Creative Consulting Services) to include email access as part of their QA plan for coordinators to ask and support any people receiving services to have their own email address if they indicate they want an email address. Folks were asked if they wanted to be added to the U4C listserve and we added nearly 800 new email addresses. We requested DBHDD ask other Support Coordination Agencies to communicate with people using services about having their own email and to support us in gathering emails of self-advocates who want to be included in U4C.
- Distributed weekly updates via email and Facebook with registration links for Community Strong. These included photos of upcoming host and guest and a screen shot of previous week's participants, during the show and a graphic summarizing the discussion from @gabbitude.
- Created business cards for advocates in Leadership Collective to distribute. Many advocates were able to use these during the first few Advocacy Days at the Capitol in early 2020.
- Created Rise Up, Speak Out buttons, U4C buttons, and U4C keychains, which were mailed to Virtual Retreat participants.
- Created Rise Up, Speak Out t-shirts for facilitators to wear while teaching the workshops on Zoom.

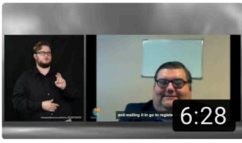


## Videos Created:



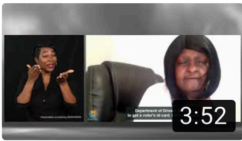
### Uniting for Change: Are you ready to vote?

We're encouraging all Georgian's with disabilities to influence change and speak out! ARE YOU READY TO VOTE? Sangha Unity Network and The Georgia Advocacy Office worked with Uniting for Change to create...



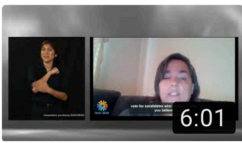
### Uniting for Change: Registering to Vote with Brandt White

Sangha Unity Network and The Georgia Advocacy Office worked with Uniting for Change to create a series of videos with disability-advocates FOR disability advocates to learn about and be prepared for our...



### Uniting for Change: Getting Your Voter ID with Marian Jackson

Sangha Unity Network and The Georgia Advocacy Office worked with Uniting for Change to create a series of videos with disability-advocates FOR disability advocates to learn about and be prepared for our...



### Uniting for Change: Absentee Ballot Info with Sheila Jeffrey

Sangha Unity Network and The Georgia Advocacy Office worked with Uniting for Change to create a series of videos with disability-advocates FOR disability advocates to learn about and be prepared for our...



### Uniting for Change - In Person Early Voting and on Election Day

Susan Berch , a member of Uniting for Change, shares information about voting early and voting on Election Day, November 3rd. Uniting for Change is a grass-roots self-advocacy network in Georgia who...



### John McCarty - Supported Decision Making & Voting

John McCarty prepared this script as a member of Uniting for Change, a grass-roots self-advocacy network in Georgia who believes that voting is one way we use our voice for change: We're encouraging a...



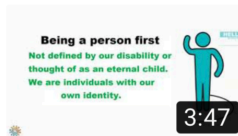
### Human Rights

These are your Human Rights!



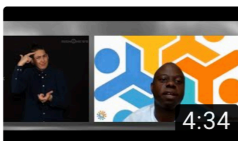
### Self-Advocacy is NOT

Brad King talks about what Self-Advocacy is NOT: A Program Being Quiet Letting People Speak FOR you A bad thing Someone telling ME what to DO A Club An activity People complaining Not telling ME what I...



### Beliefs, Values and Principles of Self-Advocacy

Uniting for Change Advocates describe the beliefs, values, and principles of self-advocacy, as defined by Inclusion International that represent a significant departure from the past and the views of parents and...



### Georgia's Run-Off Election by Uniting for Change

Brad King talks about Georgia's Run-Off election: We're encouraging all Georgian's with disabilities to influence change and speak out! ARE YOU READY TO VOTE AGAIN in Georgia's Run-Off Election? Sangha...



### ¿ESTÁ LISTO PARA VOTAR DE NUEVO en la segunda vuelta por el Senado de Georgia? (ASL)

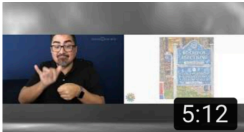
¡Invitamos a todos los ciudadanos hispanos votantes del estado de Georgia con discapacidades a que influyan en el cambio y se expresen votando! ¿ESTÁ LISTO PARA VOTAR DE NUEVO en la segunda vuelta...

## Videos Created:



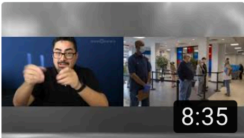
### Community Strong End of Year Video 2020

Community Strong is a weekly Zoom gathering FOR self-advocates LED BY self-advocates with Uniting for Change, the growing self-advocacy network in Georgia who is uniting Georgians and influencing change ...



### Cure Your Ballot (American Sign Language )

Bessie with Uniting for Change, a self-advocacy network in Georgia, will talk about how to cure your ballot. "We are encouraging all Georgians with disabilities to influence change and speak out! Uniting for Change...



### CURAR SU BOLETA (Cure Your Ballot - Spanish & ASL)

¡Nosotros en Uniting for Change, una red de autodefensa en Georgia, estamos animando a todos los georgianos con discapacidades a influir en el cambio y hablar! Uniéndose para el cambio con el apoyo de...



## Videos found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEQeway0w3NC8HVSqvnCycQ/videos>

## Presentations by U4C Advocates

### January 2020

#### Social Justice Symposium at University of Georgia

Program Description of Workshop: Callie Moore, Laura Owen, and Martin Ruff make up the Athens Leadership Cohort for Uniting for Change, a grassroots network of disability advocates who organized in 2017. The first organizational meeting was held in Athens, followed by others around the state. Uniting for Change members seek to share information, create opportunities, and influence change around issues important to people with disabilities. Some key issues are using supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship, promoting diversity and full inclusion, achieving equal representation in groups and committees, influencing laws and policies, and bringing awareness to what advocates and their allies can do when they work together. Callie, Laura, and Martin have a special interest in the creation of affordable, accessible housing options for people with disabilities living in the Athens area.

## Presentations by U4C Advocates

### **September - October, 2020**

SUN supported 2 Leadership Collective members, Nandi Isaac and Sheila Jeffery, to present and give advice to a group of self advocates with Neighbors, Inc. in New Jersey. There were 12 self advocates and 5 allies/supporters from Neighbors in this evening ZOOM meeting. Sheila and Nandi were asked to discuss what it means to them to be a self-advocate, their views on voting, and how they became involved with U4C. The next month, they were asked to meet again with the group to further discuss increasing self-advocacy and voting efforts.

### **December 2020**

#### TASH Presentation: Self-Advocates Influencing Change and Speaking Up

U4C Leadership members and an ally (Brandt White, Nandi Isaac, Sheila Jeffrey and Danny Hoover) presented a session for TASH called “Self-Advocates Influencing Change and Speaking Up.” There were 103 participants in the virtual sessions where presenters shared information about U4C, including the creation, mission, and vision for the future. They also talked about key focus areas and the 2019 U4C retreat. People were interested in hearing from presenters about how COVID impacted the group’s plans and organizing and shared a slide referencing barriers. Presenters talked about using more technology and highlighted the unexpected benefits that have resulted during this time. The presenters shared information about the range of virtual sessions that have been offered during this year to help improve their advocacy as well as the work of the leadership collective to increase their support to the entire group. Information about the weekly Community Strong calls was shared with the audience as a way to come together to connect as well as keep momentum going during this year when people have been kept apart and may be isolated. They mentioned the structure of the Community Strong calls as well as the range of guests and activities that have been included on these calls.

#### TASH Program Workshop Description:

A panel of self-advocates will share their efforts during the past 2 years to design and build a grass roots self-advocacy network in Georgia with grant support from the Georgia Council of Developmental Disabilities. The network, Uniting for Change, envisions a community where all people belong and are heard. A place where people are involved, speak out, make their own choices, are seen and treated as equal, and true to their destiny. Speakers will describe the development of the Leadership Collective and will tell participants about how Uniting for Change created their mission, vision, mutual agreements, and roles for self-advocates, supporters, allies and family members.

# Total Number of People Impacted

## (Grant Objectives and Performance Measures)

<b>OBJECTIVE 1:</b> Ongoing development and sustainability of Uniting for Change: SUN will work to expand self-advocacy and increase the visibility of Uniting for Change across Georgia while working with self-advocates to strengthen their leadership, advocacy, and communication skills.				<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b> SUN will demonstrate impact of expanding self-advocacy project in Georgia.			
DD Suite Category	Performance Measure	Target	Total Reached	DD Suite Category	Performance Measure	Target	Total Reached
IFA 1.1	The number of people with developmental disabilities who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems.	100	182	Dem - Gen - DD	Male Persons - DD	15	30
IFA 1.3	The number of 'other individuals' who participated in Council supported in activities designed to increase their knowledge.	75	342		Female Persons - DD	15	28
SC 1.3.4	The number of best practices supported through Council activities.	3	3		Other Gender - DD	0	0
SC 1.5	The number of Council supported systems change activities with organizations actively involved.	2	2	Dem - Gen - FM	Male - Family Members	1	1
					Female - Family Members	3	4
					Other Gender - Family Members	0	0
Dem - Geography - DD	Urban - DD	15	36	Dem - Geography - Family	Urban. - Family Members	2	4
	Rural - DD	10	20		Rural - Family Members	2	1
<b>OBJECTIVE 2:</b> Organize and facilitate a Self-Advocacy Retreat to provide opportunity for self-advocates, supporters & allies to gather, connect and learn from each other.				Dem - Race - DD	White, Alone - DD	15	28
DD Suite Category	Performance Measure	Target	Total Reached		Black/African American - DD	15	20
IFA 1.1	The number of people with developmental disabilities who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect their lives, the lives of others, and/or systems.	25	46		Asian American - DD	1	3
<b>OBJECTIVE 3:</b> SUN will demonstrate impact of expanding self-advocacy project in Georgia.					Native American/Alaska - DD	0	0
DD Suite Category	Performance Measure	Target	Total Reached		Hispanic/Latino - DD	1	1
					Native American/Pacific - DD	0	0
					Two or More Races - DD	1	2
					Race Unknown - DD	2	2
					Some other Race - DD	0	2
				Dem - Race - FM	White, Alone - Family	2	3
					Black/African American - Family	2	2
					Asian American - Family	0	0
					Native American/Alaska - Family	0	0
Hispanic/Latino - Family	0	0					
Native American/Pacific - Family	0	0					
Two or More Races - Family	0	0					
Race Unknown - Family	0	0					
Some other Race - Family	0	0					
IFA.2.1A	After participation in Council supported activities, the number of people with developmental disabilities who responded to follow up inquiries about increasing their advocacy.	40	69				
IFA 2.1B	Of the total in IFA 2.1B, the number of PWDD who responded that they are 'better able to say what they want, etc.'	30	65				
IFA.2.3IND	Of the total in IFA 2.1B, the number of PWDD who responded that they are 'better able to say what they want, etc.'	30	64				
IFA.2.5IND	Of the total in IFA 2.1B, the number of PWDD who responded that they are 'participating on cross disability coalitions, boards, and/or serving in leadership positions'.	20	45				
IFA.3.1A	The number of people with developmental disabilities who completed the satisfaction question on the participant surveys.	40	62				
IFA.3.1B	The number of people with developmental disabilities satisfied with a project activity.	30	62				



SUN's accomplishments in working to expand self-advocacy in Georgia throughout 2020 were many, as were the accomplishments of self-advocates uniting together. Together, we set the stage as advocates became known and U4C was recognized in Georgia as a self-advocacy network with power in speaking up and being heard. We look forward to supporting the self-advocacy movement to become more sustainable.

**This is not a program; it is a movement.**

**Self-Advocacy is NOT:**

A program      Being Quiet      Letting people speak FOR you

A bad thing      Someone telling ME what to DO      A club

Not telling ME what I NEED      An activity      People complaining

                                 An outing or shopping trip

Giving up      Overprotecting Me      Not what leaves me without support

*JUST* speaking up, but also knowing what I want and how to go after it



**Sangha Unity Network, Inc.**

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