ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE



End-of-Year Report, Year 5 February 2021 - January 2022



In our fifth year receiving the Advocates for Change Training by Self-Advocates grant from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, Sangha Unity Network continued working to expand self-advocacy across the state. We have been supporting self-advocates to take active roles in their lives and communities as we strengthen Georgia's self-advocacy network - established in 2019



as Uniting for Change (U4C). Self-advocacy leaders are being supported to teach other self-advocates the importance of "Rising Up and Speaking Out." We are committed to assisting people with disabilities to have a seat at the table - at all the tables - where decisions are made and establishing local self-advocacy area networks.

This report gives an overview of SUN's efforts in 2022 with U4C as this self-advocacy network grew stronger, created area networks, and enhanced our leadership skills and advocacy work.

This past year, we continued holding virtual Leadership Collective Meetings and hosting and facilitating Community Strong on Mondays. We presented multiple workshops virtually explaining what self-advocacy is, the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities, what it means to be a citizen, and how people want to be supported. We also taught a three-part Voting Series workshop and were asked to present at SPADD, the Pauling County Transition Fair, and the Georgia Occupational Therapy Association annual conference. U4C delivered the closing keynote at the Advocates In Action Conference by the Arc in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Individual members strengthened their advocacy skills and several had new employment and/ or committee opportunities. Also this year, we improved our website and social media presence and distributed regular newsletters through our email list serves.

In October, the Uniting for Change Leadership Collective came together for a retreat in Macon to prepare to teach, mentor, and facilitate U4C Local Area Networks in 5 locations across Georgia. SUN supported U4C to host 5 in-person meetings in 5 areas between November and December where 244 people participated.

SUN's accomplishments in working to expand self-advocacy in Georgia throughout 2022 were many, as were the accomplishments of self-advocates uniting together. Data from the project year is compiled in this final report to demonstrate our impact on the lives of people with I/DD and their families. We intentionally create our materials using Universal Design for Learning principles and include graphic images, photographs, text, and charts which you will find here.

We also believe in sharing our work so participants and interested stakeholders can examine the overall impact. Our previous end-of-year reports are currently posted on the Uniting for Change website: https://www.uniting4change.org/our-impact. These include an overview of the year, workshop participation statistics and outcomes, detailed Community Strong data, publications created, project updates, photographs, graphics, outreach efforts, videos created, presentations delivered, and number totals of the people impacted based on our grant objectives and performance measures.

We enthusiastically look forward to supporting the self-advocacy movement to become more sustainable as Uniting for Change continues to rise up and speak out.



Website & Social Media

In 2022, Uniting for Change continued to build our online presence with the ongoing development of our website. This year we specifically focused on developing a robust resource section so we can continue to be recognized as an advocacy resource for self-advocates, supporters, and allies in Georgia. Among our resources, we highlighted topics related to supported decision making and human rights. We also have a legislative information page that includes tips on how to connect with elected officials, how to develop an elevator pitch, and a copy of a letter that U4C wrote to members of the Georgia General Assembly. As 2022 was an election year, we developed a robust voting resources page that links to several non-partisan, voting education organizations, the Secretary of State website, important dates, and Uniting for Change's very own voting resource Google Drive. These pages will continue to be updated with more resources, helpful how-to's, and other tools about how to stay active and engaged in selfadvocacy throughout the year. We also created our Stories page, a space where self-advocates are invited to write their stories, poetry, and post their artwork so that we can join together as one in our efforts to have the life we want and deserve. We developed standard Community Guidelines for submissions to ensure that our media platforms model the inclusivity we strive for in our work. We continue to solicit input and feedback from U4C self-advocates about what they want to be featured. All U4C website pages are frequently updated so information stays fresh and current.

We also continued to develop and monitor our Facebook and Instagram channels, and in 2022 we reached even more self-advocates and their supporters and allies. We post about U4C events, workshops, opportunities, Community Strong, and more. This next year, we will be looking for more self-advocates who are interested in learning about social media development to take more leadership roles in managing our Facebook and Instagram. See examples here: https://conta.cc/3v4USRm and https://conta.cc/3v4USRm and https://conta.cc/3Ho72ZB

U4C's outreach and engagement committee also worked on multiple newsletters and submitted quarterly articles for *Making a Difference* Magazine.

Workshops, Presentations, Speaking Engagements

Advocacy Day

Carmine Vara presented as part of the GCDD Advocacy Day talking about employment and his long-time job at Stone Mountain Park. He talked about some barriers and how people supported him to get a job he wants.

Arc Kalamazoo

Three self-advocates presented the closing keynote at the Advocates In Action Conference by the Arc in Kalamazoo, Michigan on Zoom where they received rave reviews and requests for more presentations.

SPADD Conference

Ratiel Shepherd, Carmine Vara, and Sheila Jeffrey participated at SPADD Conference "Becoming Agents of Change." Over 90 providers attended and gave excellent reviews for the presenters.

Rise Up Speak Out (3)

U4C Leadership Collective hosted 3 Rise UP Speak Out Workshops for Self-Advocates in April. We worked with presenters to prepare and updated slides. 156 people participated:

Rise Up, Speak Out Participants	April 2022
Self-advocates	45
Other supporters/professionals	90
Family Members	21
Tota	al 156

Paulding County Transition Fair

In May, Derek Heard and Sheila Jeffrey presented to the Pauling County Transition Fair on Zoom to rooms full of students and educators reaching 196 total - 157 students, 20 Educators, and 19 parents/family members also joined. We sent them follow up information about getting involved with U4C, understanding Supported Decision Making, and a google survey to complete and give feedback. Following the event, the facilitator wrote us with these comments: "The presentation from your advocates certainly exceeded our expectations. It was exactly what I was looking for to educate our students about what self-advocacy is, what it means and how it impacts their lives. The presentation was engaging and full of resources and information that our students, staff and families will be able to benefit from. Sheila Jeffrey and Derek Heard were phenomenal! I appreciate all the time and energy that was given to our virtual transition conference. I look forward to working with you again as we prepare our students for post-secondary life."

Power of Self-Advocacy Workshops (2)

Facilitated two Power of Self-Advocacy workshops for providers, allies & supporters to learn from self-advocates how to better support people with disabilities. https://conta.cc/3MdncY5. This workshop was specifically designed for providers, support coordinators, family members, allies, and other supporters and reached 146 participants.

Power of Self-Advocacy Participants	March 15, 2022	March 24, 2022	Totals
Support Corodinators	23	38	61
Direct Support Professionals	8	9	17
Provider Supervisors/Management	8	17	25
DBHDD Employees	2	0	2
Other allies	7	12	19
Family Members	2	2	4
Self-advocates	9	9	18
Total	59	87	146

Our Voice, Our Vote

Uniting for Change hosted and taught a three-part workshop series, "Our Voice, Our Vote", to help prepare self-advocates and their allies and supporters for the 2022 election year. Each workshop was advertised on our website and social media channels, showcasing art by U4C Leadership Member, Derek Heard.

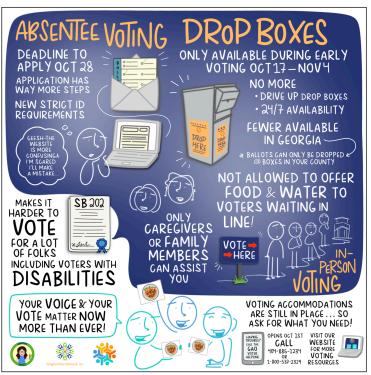




The first workshop on August 17 was an opportunity for folks to hear from self-advocates about the importance of voting, why it matters, and what folks need to know to register and vote in 2022. Part two on September 13 was all about the voting laws that changed in Georgia and how to prepare to vote. We also discussed how to advocate for staff to support your voting rights as a self-advocate. Part three on November 1 was a Voting Q&A where self-advocates, supporters, and allies had the opportunity to ask any questions they had about how to make their vote count.

Each workshop was recorded and had a graphic summary of the topics covered. We also created a google drive for voting resources that included recordings of all three workshops, graphics, helpful links, tips, tools, and resources (bit.ly/GeorgiaDisabilityVote22). The google drive is on our Voting Resources page and will continue to be a resource for future elections.

In total, we had 127 participants in the three voter workshops.







COMMUNITY STRONG

Community Strong

In 2022, we continued hosting Community Strong on Monday's - a weekly ZOOM gathering led by self-advocates for self-advocates. Each week, we have a different host and honored guest. We check in with each other, have discussion about the theme of the week, watch short videos, have fun, learn together, and make connections. For every show, we send out an announcement

34	Total # of Community Strong Shows
890	Total participants in grant year (2/1/22-1/31/23)
654	Total Self-Advocates throughout year
83	Unduplicated Count of Self-Advocates Participating
40	Total Family Members throughout year
23	Unduplicated Count of Self-Advocates Participating
196	Total Allies/Supporters throughout year
71	Unduplicated Count of Allies/Supporters Participating

through our email and social media channels introducing the next week's host, guest, and we include a graphic from the previous show.







This year, we had some incredible gatherings. Some of the guests included Senator Sally

Harrell, who spoke about SB208 - the bill she sponsored to fully fund the NOW/COMP waiver within five years.

We also had two opportunities to host attorneys from the ACLU Disability Rights Program, who came and spoke with us about SB202 and its impacts on voters with disabilities. Other guests included a civil rights attorney, several educators, principals, DBHDD representatives, and self-advocates from different states. At the end of 2022, we created a video highlighting Community Strong over the year:



The following chart shows details of each week, with the date, name of host, name of guest, word of the week, total attendees, number of self-advocates, family members, and allies/supporters as well as an unduplicated count of each.

Date	Host	Guest	Word/Theme of Week	Total Attendees	# Self- Advocates	# NEW Self- Advocates	# Family Members	# NEW Family Members	# Allies (Others)	# NEW Allies (Others)
2/7/22	Michelle Schwartz	Nick Papadopoulous	Determination	23	17	17	2	2	4	4
2/14/22	Sheila Jeffrey	Gabby Melnick	Love	30	26	9	1	1	3	1
3/3/22	Susan Berch	Senator Sally Harrell	Hero	48	12	4	5	5	31	24
3/7/22	Darien Todd	Danny Hoover	Birthday!	33	26	6	0	1	7	1
3/14/22	Darien Todd	Presentation	Supported Decision- Making	27	20	4	1	0	6	2
3/21/22	Derek Heard	Dr. Karen Hancock, Principal	Dependable	31	21	4	1	0	9	6
3/28/22	Ratiel Shepherd	Dr. Carol Britton Laws. IHDD	Professional	30	23	3	0	0	7	3
4/11/22	Brandt White	Meagen Bannon	Self-Care	27	22	1	1	1	4	2
4/18/22	Nandi Isaac	Eric Jacobson, GCDD Director	Leadership	26	22	1	1	1	3	0
4/25/22	Marilyn Freeman	Molly Tucker, CLD	Capacity	22	18	1	1	1	3	0
5/2/22	Quentin Jackson	Tim Hester	Communication	25	21	0	1	0	3	1
5/9/22	Matthew Ladd & Joe Grillo	Dr. Elise James, DOE	Engagement	27	20	2	2	1	5	2
5/16/22	Elisha McKenzie	Chris Wells, GVRA	My Choice	26	19	0	3	2	4	0
6/6/22	Derek Heard	Cathy Jenkins	Unique	18	13	2	1	0	4	0
6/13/22	Sheila Jeffrey	Cheri Mitchell, GAO	My Home	19	16	0	0	0	3	0
6/27/22	Sheila Jeffrey	Discussion	Mentorship	17	15	1	0	0	2	1
7/11/22	Quentin Jackson	Susan Mizner & Brian Dimmick	Freedom	24	17	1	2	0	5	2
7/18/22	Carmine Vara	Derek Heard	My Life	25	19	3	1	0	5	1
8/8/22	Susan Berch	David Ferleger, JD	No Limitations	23	16	2	1	0	6	1
8/15/22	Gina DiPolito	Shelley Woodward	Gifts & Talents	28	17	0	1	0	10	7
8/22/22	Sheila Jeffrey	Ashley Mathy	Growth	27	23	1	1	1	3	0
8/29/22	Aktion Club	Danny , Mike , Ratiel	Community Service	25	21	0	1	0	3	0
9/12/22	Sheila Jeffrey	Michael Thomton	Storytelling	21	19	2	0	0	2	0
9/19/22	Jacob Hollingsworth	Jennifer Lanno	Humble	17	14	0	0	0	3	2
10/3/22	Quentin Jackson	Jennifer Porter	Perseverance	25	22	0	0	0	3	1
10/17/22	Susan Berch	Madeline Ryan Smith	Opportunity	28	20	2	4	1	4	2
10/24/22	Sheila Jeffrey	ACLU Attorneys	Voter Rights	29	16	1	5	4	8	2
11/7/22	Sandra Wilcox	Mark Friedman & David Tavlor	Accessing Technology	21	18	3	0	0	3	1
11/28/22	Quentin Jackson	Bernard Moore, GAO	Thankful	21	17	2	0	0	4	2
12/5/22	Carmine Vara	Amy Roberts	Friendship	23	18	2	0	0	5	0
12/19/22	SUN	Celebration	End of Year Celebration	28	19	3	2	1	7	1
1/9/23	Susan Berch	Charlie Miller, GCDD	Legislative Advocacy	33	22	2	1	1	10	1
1/23/23	Jacob Hollingsworth	Jean Parker	Maturity	29	20	2	0	0	9	1
1/30/23	Ratiel Shepherd	Jessica Dean	Strength	34	25	2	1	0	8	0
		•	Totals	890	654	83	40	23	196	71

Growing U4C Local Self-Advocacy Area Networks

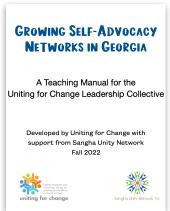
As part of our commitment to growing self-advocacy across Georgia, Uniting for Change established Local Self-Advocacy Area Networks in 5 areas:

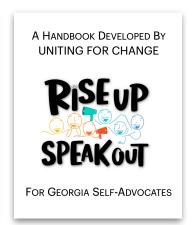
Northwest Georgia Metro Atlanta Area Northeast Georgia Middle Georgia South Georgia



To prepare the Leadership Collective to teach and mentor the area we hosted an overnight Leadership Retreat in Macon in October 2022. There, we discussed our commitment and responsibility to grow Uniting for Change individually and together to expanding self-advocacy in Georgia. We reviewed the guidebook and Teaching Manual we co-created and supported self-advocates to practice different presentation parts in their local area groups.







In November and December, the U4C Leadership Collective, with support from SUN and other allies, hosted Area Network Meetings in 5 areas of the state to reach more selfadvocates, allies, and supporters.

The workshops were offered in the following areas: Metro Atlanta (Decatur), Northwest GA (Cartersville), Northeast GA (Athens), Middle GA (Dublin), and South GA (Tifton) and were led by selfadvocates from the Uniting for Change Leadership Collective who are local to their area, along with their supporters and allies. This image shows where people came from in each of the area network meetings.

DECATUR ROSWELL JONESBORO UNION LOGANVILLE SUWANNEE DOUGLASVILLE EAST LAWRENCEVILLE POINT

NORTLIWEST

CARTERSVILLE DALTON DALLAS BLAIRSVILLE BLUE ACKWORTH RIDGE

SUMMERVILLE MABELTON

ATHENS CLARKSVILLE ARNOLDSVILLE MONROE HIAWASSEE TOCCOA JEFFERSON DEMOREST GREENSBORO COMMERCE AUGUSTA FAIRBURN FLOWERY BRANCH

NORTHEAST

GA AREA

MIDDLE GA AREA

MACON VIDALIA WARNER ROBINS STATESBORO PERRY SOPERTON SANDERSVILLE

SOUTH GA AREA

TIFTON VALDOSTA JESSUP ALBANY OSCILLA DAWSON FITZGERALD ASHBURN ADEL



The workshops were a chance for more folks to become involved in self-advocacy activities and events while spreading the word about what it means to speak their truth as a self-advocate and move closer to the life folks would like to have. Participants left knowing more about their their rights and what personcentered services really should be in their lives. Each group had powerful discussions about people wanting to speak up more as they continue to advocate for themselves.

We reached a total of 244 people - see the breakdown by role and location here:

	uniting	for char	nge 2022 Loc	al Self-Advoc	acy Area Netv	work Data	
	Northwest	Northeast	Metro	Middle	South GA		
	GA Area	GA Area	Atlanta Area	GA Area	Area		
Meeting Date	16-Nov	13-Dec	17-Nov	10-Nov	9-Nov	Total:	<u> </u>
Meeting Location	Cartersville	Athens	Decatur	Dublin	Tifton	Total.	* * *
Self-advocates	27	33	14	27	28	129	*
Direct Support Professionals	9	4	0	4	8	25	
Supervisor/Managers	2	11	3	3	12	31	*
State Employees	0	3	2	0	0	5	
Family Members	0	6	4	1	2	13	
Friend/Allies	3	5	4	4	3	19	*
Others	2	1	6	3	5	17	
Support Coordinators	1	3	0	1	0	5	
Total Participants	44	66	33	43	58	244	



Check out photos from the 5 Area Network gatherings here: https://photos.app.goo.gl/WJWYggzScey2jNnh6.



Project Impact

SUN is committed to the ongoing assessment of its progress towards achieving project outcomes to ensure the efficacy of its work. SUN uses funds in the grant to contract with a data analyst project consultant, who continues to support our evaluation processes and activities, including finding and implementing innovative ways of collecting, analyzing, and reporting quantitative and qualitative data.

We disseminate surveys at all of our in-person and virtual events, and we have streamlined our data collection practices to enable us to keep up-to-date records of both new and recurring project participants, separated by role. Additionally, we strongly believe in the power of qualitative data as a way to measure significant change and will routinely harvest stories and seek feedback from self-advocates and other project participants to ensure we are moving towards our vision of successful completion of project goals.

Grant Objectives and Performance Measures

OBJECTIVE 1: SUN will support the Uniting for Change Leadership Collective to increase their leadership, advocacy, communication skills, and the visibility of the network as they impact more self-advocates, family members, and other individuals throughout Georgia.

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	372	
IFA 1.2	The number of family members who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect the family, the lives of others, and/or systems.	10	79	
IFA 1.3	The number of 'other individuals' who participated in Council supported in activities designed to increase their knowledge.	100	308	
Total people reached:				

OBJECTIVE 2: SUN, along with support from allies/supporters, will assist Uniting for Change self-advocates to create self-advocacy local area networks throughout the state of Georgia.

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.	20	148	
IFA 1.2	The number of family members who participated in Council supported activities designed to increase their knowledge of how to take part in decisions that affect the family, the lives of others, and/or systems.	15	15	
IFA 1.3	The number of 'other individuals' who participated in Council supported in activities designed to increase their knowledge.	30	119	
Total people reached:				

OBJECTIVE 3: SUN will demonstrate the impact of Advocates for Change project in Georgia through collecting, analyzing, and reporting quantitative and qualitative data throughout the project year.

DD Suite Category	Performance Measure	Target	Total Responses
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	167
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.'	35	167
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	167
IFA 2.4 IND	Of the total in IFA 2.1B, the number of PWDD who responded that they are 'participating now in advocacy activities'.	30	163
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	86
IFA.3.1A	The number of people with developmental disabilities who completed the satisfaction question on the participant surveys.	40	167
IFA.3.1B	The number of people with developmental disabilities satisfied with a project activity.	35	167

DD Suite Category-	Performance Measure	People with DD		Family Members		
Demographic Data	Target		Total Responses	Target	Total Responses	
	Male Persons	15	74	1	4	
Gender	Female Persons	15	92	3	26	
	Other Gender	0	0	0	0	
Geography/Location	Urban	15	135	2	20	
Geography/Location	Rural	10	32	2	9	
	White, Alone	15	95	2	18	
	Black/African American	15	61	2	12	
	Asian American	1	4	0	0	
	Native American/Alaska	0	1	0	0	
Race	HIspanic/Latino	1	1	0	0	
	Native American/Pacific	0	0	0	0	
	Two or More Races	1	2	0	0	
	Race Unknown	2	2	0	0	
	Some other Race	0	1	0	0	

We greatly appreciate the ongoing support from the following organizations who continue to support the expansion of self-advocacy in Georgia:











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