

ACT OLMSTEAD ACADEMY, CLASS OF 2016

2016 DISABILITY INTEGRATION PROJECTS

A REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

DECEMBER 16, 2016

*The Olmstead Academy is a program of the
ACT Center for Disability Leadership*

ACT
Advocating Change Together

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DECEMBER 2016

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Advocating Change Together
Advocating Change Together (ACT) is a grass-roots disability rights organization run by and for people with developmental disabilities. ACT’s mission is help people across disabilities see themselves as part of larger disability rights moment and make connections to other civil and human rights struggles.

Olmstead Academy
The Olmstead Academy is a program of ACT. The 2016 class was funded with the generous support of the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Thanks also to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development for program supports as well as providing a meeting space for the Academy, and to the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

ACT Center for Disability Leadership (on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) incorporates a number of ACT’s longstanding programs, as well as new ones, into a structured framework for equipping groups to understand disability equality, make it happen, and inform others. In addition to the Olmstead Academy, ACT Center for Disability Leadership includes Self-Advocates Minnesota network, and ACT’s new, multi-level Disability Equality Training Series.

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ACT
Olmstead
ACADEMY

Advocating Change Together
1821 University Avenue, Suite 306-S
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-641-0297
800-641-0059
www.selfadvocacy.org

EVENT PROGRAM

Report to the Community

Olmstead Academy Pilot Year
Public event hosted by Judge Donovan Frank

December 16, 2016

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Devitt Ceremonial Courtroom
Warren E. Burger Federal Building & United States Courthouse
316 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN

1:30 p.m. Program

Opening procession: Academy participants
Welcome: Judge Frank
Academy overview: Mary Kay Kennedy
Presentations of project results: Seven regional teams
Comments by Judge Frank
Closing song

2:30 p.m. Reception

Guests are invited to join Academy participants for project exhibits and light refreshments in the Jury Assembly Room (also on the 1st floor)

A Dazzling Bouquet

Refrain:
This is a place where everybody's welcome.
I know it's true 'cause I got through the door.
We are a dazzling bouquet of every kind of flower.
Jump in the vase, 'cause we've got space for more.

1. Come here, all you six foot gladiolas.
Come all you purple lilacs shining bright.
Come let us all bloom together in one garden:
A carnival of fragrance and delight. (Refrain)

2. We don't simply cross our fingers hoping
We're digging up the soil around the state
And we must all plant the seeds of integration
Till every face will grace the grand bouquet.

(by Bret Hesla)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building self advocate leaders by working on projects to advance community integration.



Olmstead Academy Class of 2016: Building self-advocate leaders by working on issues to advance community integration.

TIMELINE

January 2016 through December 2016

ACADEMY GOAL

Create a culture within Minnesota where self-advocacy is a foundational piece in the state's Olmstead plan and self-advocates are playing meaningful roles in its implementation.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE

The Olmstead Academy is a 12-month program featuring eight days of classroom sessions, and 9 months of required field work on Disability Integration Projects. Participants enroll as teams of three

(two self-advocates, one ally) from around the state. Teams learn leadership skills and organizing tools for creating change to advance community integration. Each team develops and implements a project in their home community.

2016 PROGRAM FEATURES

- Team-based participation – two self-advocates and one ally.
- Participatory, innovative, proven methods of Popular Education and Kolb theory.
- Mentors assist each team to create and complete project.
- Each team receives up to \$5000 to implement a project

in their community.

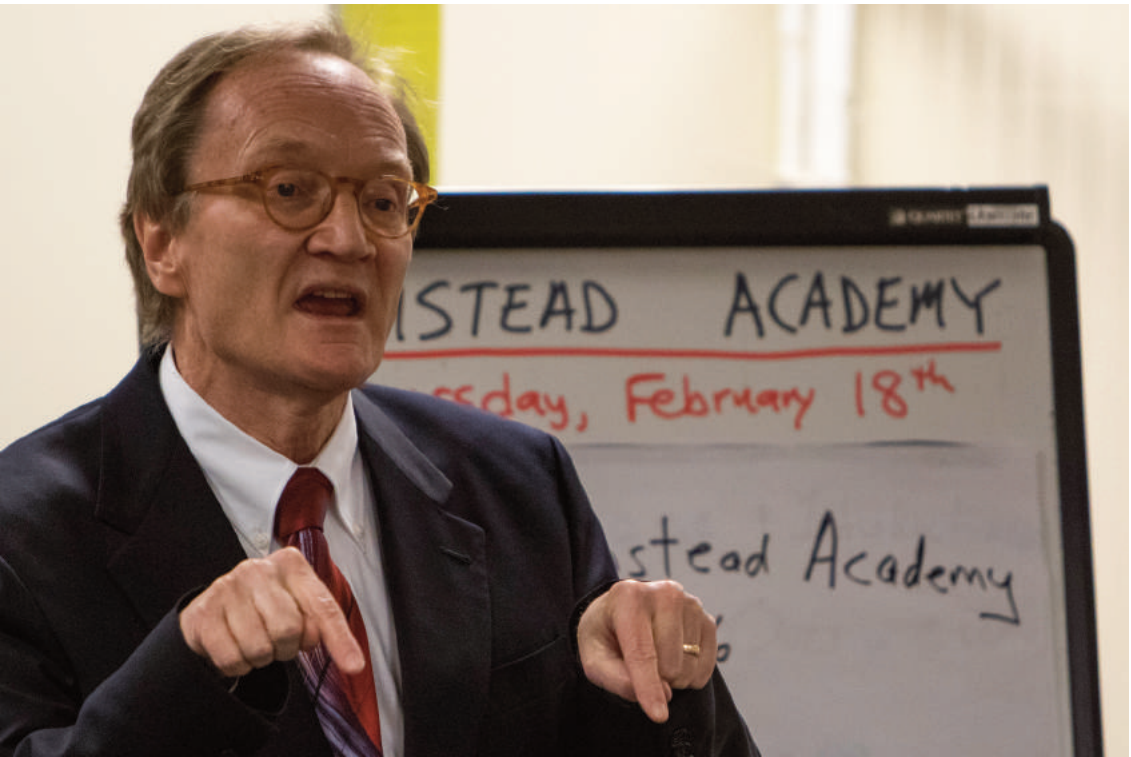
- Participants build relationships with key state allies during “dinner with leaders.”

DISABILITY INTEGRATION PROJECTS

Each team chooses and leads a local project to advance integration for real people in their community.

[See pp. 6-17 for results of each of these six projects.]

NOTES



OLMSTEAD ACADEMY LEADERS

Program Design

Mary Kay Kennedy
Bret Hesla

Program Facilitation

Mary Kay Kennedy
Bret Hesla

Session Leaders

Mary Kay Kennedy
Bret Hesla
Mary Fenske, Self-Advocates Minnesota
Deb Holtz, Consultant
Linda Breitag, Professional artist/musician
Carolyn Levy, Hamline University
Laura Mann Hill, Hamline University
Patrick Mitchell, Advocating Change Together
Katie Thune, Yoga Calm
Carla Tice, Self-Advocates Minnesota
Maggie Treichel, Self-Advocates Minnesota
Lynne Lindholm, Catering
Deni Berigan-Pirro, Catering
Paul Rogers, photography
John Anderson, photography
John Lindholm, photography
Cheryl Jensen, program evaluation

Team Project Mentors

Mary Fenske, Self Advocates Minnesota
Corbett Laubignat, Independent consultant
Les Bauer, MN Quality Council
Kristi Radeliuss Palmer, U of M Human Rights Center
Kenneth Brown, Independent consultant
Nick Wilke, Center for Independent Living
Maggie Treichel, Self-Advocates Minnesota
Beth Fondell, Institute on Community Integration

Dinner Hosts

Sheryl Grassie, MN-CCD
Alex Bartolic, MN Dept. of Human Services
Joan Willshire, MN State Council on Disability
Darlene Zangara, Olmstead Implementation Office
Colleen Wieck, Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities
Sean Burke, MN Disability Law Center
Carla Tice, Patty McGlynn & James Lee, Olmstead Academy 2015
Katherine Finlayson, MN Dept. of Human Services
Josh Dean, Community Involvement Programs
John Marty, Minnesota Senate
Rick Cardenas, Independent consultant

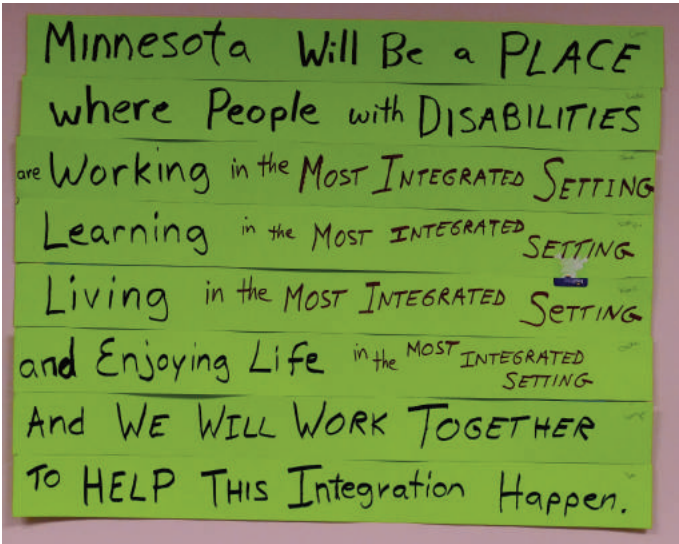


Don Lavin, Arc Minnesota
Barb Kliet, ICI, University of Minnesota
John Anderson MN Dept. of Human Services
Pat Siebert, Disability Law Center
Chris Serres, Star Tribune
Roberta Opheim, State Ombudsman

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“The ACT Olmstead Academy is cutting edge by involving people with developmental disabilities.”

Outside assessment by Strategic Consulting and Coaching



PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

A Program Effectiveness Assessment was conducted in June 2016, following the eight days of classroom training for the ACT Olmstead Academy Class of 2016. The assessment, conducted by Cheryl Jensen of Strategic Consulting and Coaching, was qualitative, using in-depth individual interviews of the 21 participants.



Strengths cited include relationship-building with the wider community, diverse participatory methods, and building opportunities to lead by example. As one participant said, “It was great to see people with disabilities taking a leadership role and coming up with solutions rather than being told what should be.”

Challenges centered around program rigor: finding time and resources to participate, and needing support to understand, plan and implement team projects. The report notes, “They enjoyed it, even though at times could be very stressful and challenging.”

Recommendations focused on expanding the program.

“ACT has done a tremendous job with the Olmstead Academy. SCC recommends the following:

- “Implement the ACT Olmstead Academy in 5-8 regions in Minnesota.
- “Publish the ACT Olmstead Academy curriculum; written and recorded curriculum could be offered or purchased by different regions. This product could also go national.
- “Raise additional foundation or government funds to expand the ACT Olmstead Academy.”

[Note: An additional assessment is scheduled to evaluate the process and outcome of the seven Disability Integration Projects. Results will be posted on ACT’s website.]

MERIDIAN TEAM

Created a volunteer force of self-advocates giving back to their community by helping others in need.



WHERE WE LIVE:

West Metro

WHO WE ARE:

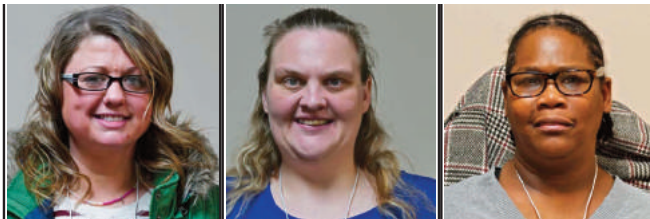
Heather Davis
Connie Sauer
Delarie Harris
Mentor: Maggie Treichel

WHAT WE DID

We wanted a way for people to be more out and about doing something good for our community. So, we created a volunteer club called Loving Hearts Helping Hands (LHHH). It consists of more than twenty members who give time and talent by volunteering for causes we care about. We worked side -by-side with our neighbors.

WHAT HAPPENED

Since launching in June 2016, our club provided many ways for people with disabilities to volunteer in the community and make a difference in the lives of others. In just six months, we volunteered in six projects. Each time, five to twenty people with disabilities took part. Participants brought support staff with as needed. Projects included: making garden mosaics with teens in homeless shelters, tying blankets for sick or distressed children, sign-making for a disability inclusion parade, baking goods for troops overseas, helping at Feed My Starving Children, and assembling supply kits for refugees. We also marched in the Golden Valley Parade to raise awareness of our



CENTRAL MINNESOTA TEAM

“Friendship Connections has helped me be more social and not feel so lonely.

Becca Arens, Program Participant.”



Night, Bowling, visiting St. Cloud State University., Community activities were a great way for us to be part of St. Cloud, side-by-side with other community members.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We learned that a club like this works to help people make friends and do things in the community.

BARRIERS

Lack of affordable and flexible transportation and a lack of money has a great impact on a person’s ability to get out and do things. Free activities were better attended. Friendship Connections staff sometimes provided transportation for participants who otherwise wouldn’t have been able to attend. Participants said that they liked the activities we offered, increased their community participation and appreciated what Friendship Connections offered. Of the 12 people who came to the club, eight reported that they made a new friend that they will continue to be

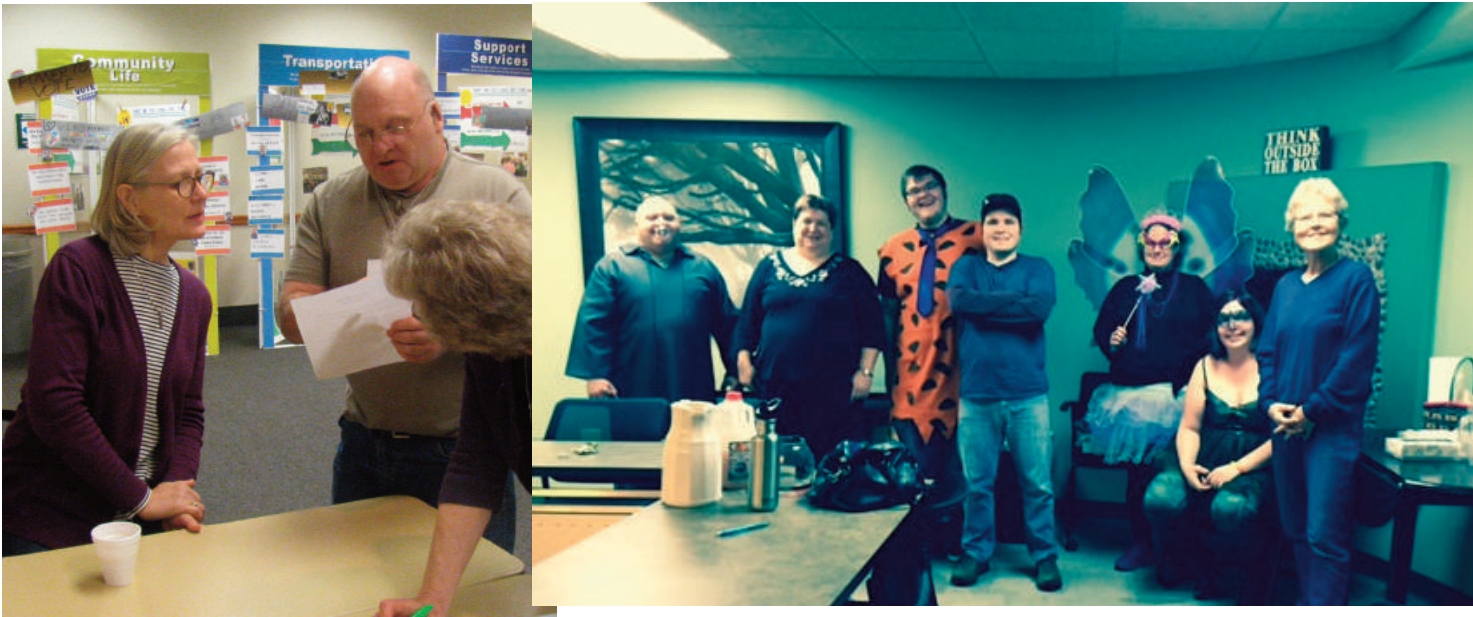
friends with as part of the club and outside of club activities.

NEXT STEPS

Our efforts to staff a drop-in center will hopefully have a lasting effect. Independent Lifestyles will continue to support the Friendship Connections concept and eventually fold it into their Peer Mentoring program. Our team will continue to lead the club activities and will provide Independent Lifestyles with participant feedback and suggestions for improving the program through increased outreach and support.

CENTRAL MINNESOTA TEAM

Started a drop-in center for self-advocates to create deeper social lives, in partnership with established local nonprofit.



WHERE WE LIVE:

St. Cloud, Minnesota

WHO WE ARE:

Sharon Weisman
Lance Koenig
Bev Kaler
Tony Hommerding
Mentor: Beth Fondell



WHAT WE DID

In St. Cloud, it is sometimes lonely and hard to make new friends. Our community needed a public place where people with disabilities could go, play games and get to know one another better through shared activities. We helped to develop a drop-in center --Friendship Connections--for people with disabilities to meet new people and make new friends.

WHAT HAPPENED

Starting in June 2016, we contracted with Independent Lifestyles, a Center for Independent Living, who provided staff, administrative support and a site for a drop-in center. We named the new center Friendship Connections. Through meetings and survey feedback, we set hours and scheduled activities. The center provided an opportunity for people with disabilities to meet more than 20 times. Attendance was between four and twelve people per time. Activities included on-site (e.g. Pizza and Movie Night, Games Night) and off site (e.g. Restaurant

MERIDIAN TEAM

We are a dazzling bouquet of every kind of flower. -
Connie



Many participants thanked us for the opportunity to join with new and old friends and make a difference in this world one project at a time.
Heather

group and how we are part of the solution in addressing community needs.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Our volunteer club increased our connections in our community! We took part in volunteer work having roles in the same way as our neighbors who do not have a disability.

Of the 20 participants, all reported that they have made new friends, did new things and felt a sense of pride in their contribution. Our club increased community integration of the participants! We tracked 91 hours of participant volunteer time on the six projects.

BARRIERS

We found that most participants were not able to attend every event. Their absence was not due a decision on their part, but rather due to a shortage in staffing to transport the individual, or other support staff issue.

NEXT STEPS

We're fired up! Loving Hearts Helping Hands is planning to continue in 2017. We have already arranged for a host of volunteer projects beginning in January 2017, including decorating Meals on Wheels bags, sorting clothes at Arc Value Village, assembling holiday

baskets, working at the humane society, running carnival games at the ACT picnic, helping Feed My Starving Children and singing holiday carols at a nursing home. We will be part of the 2017 Golden Valley parade to increase awareness about our club and what we do to make the world a better place.

Many thanks to Meridian for the ally support to keep this great club going.

METRO TEAM

Peers trained self-advocates to use Uber and Metro Mobility Same Day Ride for spontaneous transportation.



WHERE WE LIVE:

Twin Cities Metro

WHO WE ARE:

Lynn Krupp
Patrick Mitchell
Melvin Hagenson
Mentor: Corbet Laubignat

WHAT WE DID

Our project was about helping people with disabilities get transportation to go places without needing a lot of pre-planning and scheduling. We wanted to see how much more folks would get out if they could arrange a ride about an hour in advance. We trained people to use two short-order transportation services and we supported them as they learned to use these new modes of transportation.

WHAT HAPPENED



Over the summer of 2016, our team researched and found two metro options that offered spontaneous

transportation, Uber and Metro Mobility Same Day Ride. We recruited seven (7) people to be in the trial: four used Uber, three used Same Day Ride. They were instructed to keep their current transport, and just use these new services as another option.

People loved it! They loved being able to call a friend or cousin and ask if they wanted to meet-up to play pool, have a cup of coffee, go out to eat, or lift weights at the Y. The idea of not needing to plan these things days in advance was a new experience.

Total: 80 Uber rides, average: \$8.85 per ride, 21 Same Day Rides: average \$17.50 per ride. (The Uber trips tended to be short distances and the Same Day Rides were to places much further away.)

OPPORTUNITY PARTNERS TEAM

The one thing I've learned in my job is that every single soul wants to feel valued. ... A way to show value and respect is by having relationship with individuals ...before a crisis begins. These individuals then know that law enforcement values them and they remember those positive interactions....

Officer Heidi Miller



the participants from seeing each other in the community and now their connection is growing stronger.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Three major police departments were contacted for this project. After countless phone calls and delays, we realized that learning about and establishing relationships with people with disabilities was not a priority for the departments.

We are not able to draw any conclusions due to the limited nature of this project and our lack of success at getting police involved. While we have no hard evidence that people increased activities in

the community because of this project, people reported that they feel more connected to the role of the police and have some new skills regarding what to do in an emergency.

NEXT STEPS

Six self-advocates have had the opportunity to have coffee with a police officer. Over the next months, we will invite six additional self-advocates to do the same.

OPPORTUNITY PARTNERS TEAM

Started a coffee club to build relationships with local officers and thereby help self-advocates feel confident going out in the community.



I was nervous about trusting the police to help me if I need it. Now that I know Heidi, I feel more at ease when I'm out and about.

Program participant

WHERE WE LIVE:

South Metro

WHO WE ARE:

John Wolfe
Daniel Guerin
Darlene Cieminski
Mentors: Kenneth Brown, and
Kristi Radelius Palmer

WHAT WE DID

A friend of ours had a terrible experience in the community a short time back, when law enforcement did not respond appropriately to his aid. We wanted to try out a program to see if people would feel safer in the community if they had personal relationships with police officers. We also wanted to see if officers would respond differently to people with disabilities if they had personal relationships with us. We created a simple program, coffee with cops, for people to meet with police in a casual, friendly way to

establish relationships and increase community connections between officers and people with disabilities.

WHAT HAPPENED

Over the summer of 2016, we worked hard to get participation from police on this project. We eventually found a metro police officer to take part. We have held two meetings with this officer and they have been positive and helpful. We call our meeting Connecting with Cops Through Coffee and six people with disabilities got together with a cop to share experiences, laugh and have a snack. The police officer who attended knew one of



METRO TEAM

"I am loving Uber! The nice thing is, I don't have to rush to get ready. And I get where I want to go faster. And I don't have a 30 minute window."

participant Kayte



All told: participants increased the number of times they were out doing things with others by about once more per week! Not bad.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Uber is easier: Uber has an easy-to-learn, visually based smart phone app, great for folks who are not strong readers; Same Day Ride has a more cumbersome system and people tended to need more support to use it. This project showed that when given options and some training, people will use these options.

BARRIERS

Safety concerns by family and providers are a barrier. Trying something new that is outside of a medical model of providing services

is scary for many providers and family members. We made the argument that taking a cab or an Uber ride did not constitute a high risk to the safety of the rider. We provided information about background checks and instructions about how to use a third party ap to track rides on maps. One member was not allowed to use Uber per family objections.

One barrier we hadn't expected: when rides become easier, "Thinking of a place to go" becomes the next barrier to community integration. People need practice just thinking of what they'd like to do.

NEXT STEPS

Participants vary in their intentions on using either service after the project ends. Everyone prefers the new services they used during the project versus Metro Mobility, relying on staff or parents, or simply staying home. The variable is people's budget. Despite Uber being more popular during the project, Same Day Ride seems to have more people open to using it after the project. It's cheaper.. Part of the Same Day Ride fee is subsidized, so the cost users pay is lower.

ACT board is now considering establishing an Uber fund for short notice ride needs to ACT activities.

One participant is exploring paying for Uber through his Waivered service budget.

SOUTHWEST TEAM

Self-advocates teaching their peers how to ride the bus to go where you want to go.



"When staff says they can't take me somewhere, I now know I have other ways of getting where I want to go."
participant who didn't know before this project that the bus could take him to church, li-

WHERE WE LIVE:

Marshall area, western Minnesota

WHO WE ARE:

Kristina Tolefson
Ron Murphy
Pat Brooks
Mentor: Les Bauer

WHAT WE DID

Transportation is a barrier to community integration in southwest Minnesota. Not everyone has transportation available, or support to use it.

We mentored six people with disabilities to learn how to use the Marshall city bus system so that they could attend activities of their choice. The project encouraged independence, making choices, and it also increased self-confidence as participants learned a new skill.

WHAT HAPPENED

We began recruiting in June of 2016. To recruit, we connected with service provider agencies and got referrals on who would benefit from the project.

We chose six individuals and mentored them on how to use the bus. The bus training sessions were put on by our team in partnership with Western Community Action. Training included bus policies, safety, routes and bus etiquette. The peer mentors took the bus with the new riders until they were comfortable doing it by themselves. Mentors also helped plan activities on the bus route. They used public transportation for



LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES TEAM



"This project gave people opportunities to attend things they would not have done otherwise."

April, Team member

case managers at the county, and people associated with LSS kept spreading the word. We quickly signed on thirty-four people. They could use the taxi vouchers to get places they wanted to go, whenever they chose.

This project was a success. Thirty-four people used taxis to go everywhere: shopping, visiting with friends, going to a dance, attending church, and attending Special Olympics.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Negotiating with the taxi company was more difficult than anticipated. But through diligence, we worked it out. They gave us a small discount

on the rate, and we paid up front to assure them of getting paid.

Transportation is the engine that drives community integration. It's that simple. Because of our project, 34 people are now more involved out in the community. The members of our community council keep hearing of people who need transportation to do things they want to do, and the project has snowballed.

NEXT STEPS

The taxi company we partnered with will not continue beyond this project. However, just recently, another taxi company has started up in Little Falls. Inspired by our project and the goals of integration, the new

company will offer within-city taxi rides for a dollar to people with disabilities in Little Falls. While this is good news in the short term, this generous offer of \$1 trips is probably not sustainable. We are therefore looking for sustainable ways to continue the \$5 rides.

This report is a call-out to anyone reading this who might have ideas for how to use public funds (like Waivers) to keep this project going.

Out of city transportation remains a need.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES TEAM

Created a program to offer subsidized taxi vouchers to help self-advocates get around down, wherever and whenever they want.



WHERE WE LIVE:

Little Falls area

WHO WE ARE:

Jesse Schlichting
Melanie Gall
April Olson
Mentor: Mary Fenske

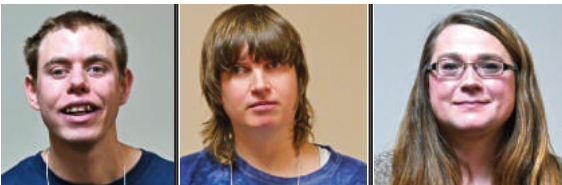
WHAT WE DID

People in Little Falls are isolated by extremely limited bus service: weekdays only, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm. We are often not integrated in the community simply because we can't get there. We set up a pilot program of subsidizing taxi rides for people with disabilities to attend activities of their choice: in the evenings, on weekends, whenever they chose, and on short notice.

WHAT HAPPENED

In May and June 2016, we worked out the program details. We negotiated with the taxi company for a flat rate: \$5 within the city limits, \$25 within the county. Rather than hand out cash, we created a voucher system. We purchased vouchers from the taxi company up front, and gave them to participants to use. Participants paid 20% of the voucher cost, and our team covered the rest. For example, participants paid \$1 for a voucher to get a ride in the city.

Recruiting was simple: demand was huge. Our community council, which included the taxi company,



SOUTHWEST TEAM

"I did it all by myself, nobody helped me!"
65 year old participant, after going through training and practice ride on her first solo bus ride.



on his own and he can do it again!"

WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

shopping trips, going to the library, YMCA, friend's house, home visits, movie night, out to restaurants and coffee shops, or any activity of their choice.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Having a bus available was not enough. Participants needed more than to just be told they could ride the bus. The barrier was skill (how to ride) and imagination (Where can I go?).

Integration increased: People involved with the project were given choices, engaged more often in the community, and were given a real choice of who they wanted to hang out with.

Mom who was reluctant of whole idea,

Public awareness of integration increased: By being out and visible on the bus, we showed that people with a disability have the same right as people without disabilities do.

We noticed that better transportation increased participant's self-esteem and self-confidence. Better transportation also increased a person's independence and responsibility in their life.

By taking public transit, our six riders increased participation in evening and weekend activities. Over the six-month project period, our participants took the bus an average of twice a month.

NEXT STEPS

We showed that with supports people can learn to use the public busses. We would love to see the program continue, and will explore options in Marshall to see if there is a way to use the results of this project to launch a bus training program that is on-going.

NEW CHALLENGES TEAM

Reached out to peers who were nonvoters and supported them to vote.



"I want to vote, but my Mom doesn't want me to."

new voter participant

WHERE WE LIVE:

Eagan

WHO WE ARE:

Travis Pederson
Jeff Lazano
Moses Timah
Mentor: Nick Wilkie

WHAT WE DID

Voting is a central way to participate in our society. People with intellectual and other disabilities vote at a lower rate than people without disabilities. We set out to mentor people who had not voted before to participate in the voting process. We gave them information on their voting rights, we got them registered, we hosted discussions on how they decide who to vote for, and we took them to the polls.

WHAT HAPPENED

Over the summer of 2016, we gathered information about registration

requirements, voting rights, and where and how to vote. We met with the Disability Law Center, Arc, Pacer, the Minnesota Secretary of State and Dakota County. We shared this information with 36 people who receive services from New Challenges: 18 of whom had never voted, and 10 more who had not voted since 2006, and 8 of whom had recently voted. We used a sample ballot and the slate of candidates giving a little background on each of the candidates and their prior experience and voting histories. We connected new voters with resources (on-line and print) to help match their values and issues with



NEW CHALLENGES TEAM

"This is the first time I voted and I am so happy."

new voter participant



WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

the candidates that most closely matches their priorities. Ten of the participants from the "never voted before" category voted for the first time! We helped them with voter registration, ID renewal, and transportation. For many people (with and without disabilities) the November election was about the presidential election. These new voters were most interested in Clinton verses Trump. That said, we did provide information and support for votes to consider constitutional amendment and down-ballot candidates like the judges that are unopposed.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We learned that, given information and support, people want to be part of the voting process. We also learned that there is a lot of misinformation out there about who can and cannot vote. With support, Minnesota gained ten new voters.

NEXT STEPS

Voting is just one step in being included in the community's political life. New voters can take the next step to deepen integration by helping hold public officials accountable. New voters can now start looking for candidates who support issues they care about. We will follow up with all 36 participants to offer support in continued citizenship via letter writing, visiting elected officials and voting in the next election.