2019 DISABILITY INTEGRATION PROJECTS

A REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

13 DECEMBER 2019

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



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ACT Center for Disability
Leadership (ACT Center) is a
grass-roots disability rights
organization run by and for people
with developmental disabilities.
ACT Center'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.

ACT Olmstead Academy is a program of the ACT Center. The 2019 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.

Other Programs. ACT Center incorporates a number of 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 includes the Self-Advocates Minnesota Network (SAM) and the Disability Equality Training Series (DETS).

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EVENT PROGRAM

ACT Olmstead Academy Class of 2019

Report to the Community

13 December 2019

Minnesota Department of Housing 400 Wabasha Street North, Suite 400 Saint Paul, MN 55102

1:00 p.m. Program

2:00 p.m. Reception

Guests are invited to join Academy participants for project exhibits and light refreshments afterward

Not Just Me, But You Too

Decent job with decent pay I Not just me, but you too. Living in community I Not just me, but you too.

Give me ways to get around I Not just me, but you too. We belong out on the town I Not just me, but you too.

Let your voice rise to the sky I Not just me, but you too. Life is good with human rights I Not just me, but you too. by ACT Olmstead Academy © 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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





TIMELINE

January 2019 through December 2019

ACADEMY GOAL

Create a culture within Minnesota where self-advocacy is a foundational piece in the state's Olmstead Plan to increase community integration, and position self-advocates to play meaningful roles in its implementation.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE

The ACT 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 first learn leadership skills and organizing tools for creating change to advance community integration. Each team then develops and implements a project in their home community.

2019 PROGRAM FEATURES

- Team-based participation two self-advocates and one ally.
- Participatory, innovative, proven methods based on Popular Education theory.
- Mentors assist each team to create and complete project.
- Each team receives funds 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 seven projects.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

Of projects launched by the first four classes, over half of the Olmstead Academy teams have found ways to continue their successful efforts, including using Uber, community gardening, event planning and volunteering in the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is wonderful to witness people gaining an awareness about what they deserve—and building confidence to make their dreams come true.

Joan Decker, Support Ally Community Involvement Programs







ACT CENTER TEAM

Help 12 people in the metro area learn and use light rail and Uber to do fun things in the community.

WHEEL KEEP MOVING





We tried out the light rail, all together. It was actually pretty easy.

WHERE WE LIVE:

St. Paul

WHO WE ARE:

Lori Rohovit Kenisha Conditt Nikki Villavicencio

Mentor: Patrick Mitchell





THE PLAN

Getting to places we want to go is an issue for many people with disabilities. Most of us currently get rides from Metro Mobility, a provider van, or family -- and these rides are often on someone else's schedule and don't allow for a lot of flexibility. True community integration means you have transportation for the fun stuff -- even spur of the moment stuff, like going out for a beer with a

cousin, meeting up with friends to go to a ball game or getting to a self-advocacy party.

We decided to help people expand their options by trying new ways to get around. We wanted to help ourselves and others practice skills and build confidence using existing transportation -- in this case light rail and Uber.

WHAT HAPPENED

First we did some planning. We recruited eight peers to join us. Together, we researched transportation options. We found people who currently use Uber or light rail and asked them to come and talk to us. From there, we supported each other to try at least one new way of getting around.

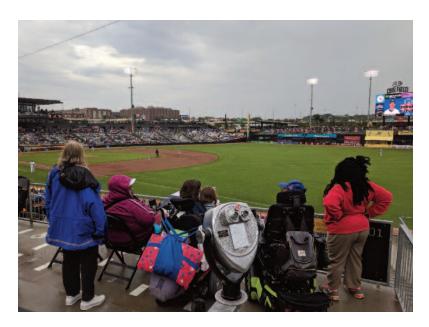
For some, that new way was the light rail. So, those folks planned a group outing: taking the light rail to a Saints game in St. Paul. We learned the ropes together, rode the light rail together, went out to eat afterward, had great time.

ACT CENTER TEAM

"Don't worry, Mom. I'll just call Uber."

Kenisha Conditt, Participant





We stopped for lunch on the way to the game. Pretty cool. I can't wait to do it again, on my own."

WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

For others, the new way was Uber. We recruited seven (7) people who had smart phones and wanted to try it. We helped them install the ap on their phone. Then we talked them through the process, including safety tips. We asked them to use Uber for something they would not have done otherwise, not as simply as a replacement for a ride they already had.

Of the seven people in the Uber group, four (4) went on to use it regularly. Over a two month period, they used it for 34 rides! That's about once per week. They were able to do all sorts of fun things without planning days or weeks in advance: visit friends, shop at the Mall of America, attend a dance, visit family members and even go to the airport.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- 1. Once people build skill and confidence to use Uber, they like it ... a lot! The freedom to call a ride when you want one is life-changing.
- 2. Learning together is a lot more fun, and successful, than learning on your own.
- 3. There were several barriers to using Uber. People without credit cards cannot participate. People without smart phones can't participate. Guardians and providers sometimes prefer to go with tried and true transportation versus working toward something new.
- 4. Finally, for some people it's not enough to simply set them up with a new way to get around. People

need support to explore new ways to participate in their communities. With support, people build an appetite for community.

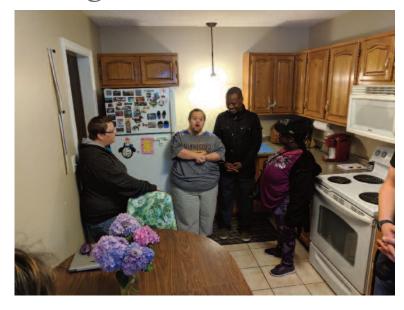
NEXT STEPS

If anyone is wondering about a perfect holiday gift, think about an Uber gift card!

We will keep showing by example how to get out there and enjoy life -- side-by-side with everybody else. The more we do it, the more we want to do it. As people see their peers getting around on the rail or using Uber, some seeds of "Wow, maybe I can do that, too" are planted.

CIP TEAM #1

Host a bus tour for 6-8 people with disabilities and their guardians to see four different living situations that are working well.



"I live in this duplex by myself, with support. My parents live in the other unit!"



TOUR

On to the next tour stop

WHERE WE LIVE:

St. Paul

WHO WE ARE:

Tom Hodgson Angie Diebel Brad Teslow

Mentor: Katrina Simons





THE PLAN

We, the self-advocates on our team, currently live with family members. We wanted to explore options for living with supports in the community. We wanted to see first-hand how other people with disabilities are doing it. We have friends who'd also be interested in getting this information.

So we set up a home tour for selfadvocates and guardians to see different community housing

situations. To see it with our own eyes. To get inspired. To expand our idea of what might be possible in the future.

WHAT HAPPENED

We planned the tour. We pre-arranged four stops, that would show living situations with different levels of support. When the tour day arrived, nine people boarded the van (four people with disabilities, five family members/guardians). We spent the day getting to know each other and meeting the hosts who had agreed to share their homes and living situations with us. We visited people with disabilities living self-directed integrated lives. They, and their support allies, answered our questions about day-to-day life: finances, walkable shopping options available transportation, meal delivery and cooking support.

After a long day—we had dinner together to reflect on what we learned.

CIP TEAM #1

"Seeing these different living situations is making me think that maybe there is a way for my sister to live more on her own."

Guardian, Home Tour Participant



I'll show you my place, it's on the 9th floor. All aboard!



What a view. I could get used to this.

WHAT WE LEARNED

First-hand knowledge makes a huge difference in taking step one, which is this: believing living with supports in the community could be possible for my life. The idea of living independently in an apartment, away from family, is exciting. But it's also kind of scary. It helps to see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears how other people with disabilities are doing it.

This tour helped guardians learn, too. Our guardians are often nervous about us living independent lives. We heard them saying, on this tour, "Wow, that could work."

It became clear over the course of the tour that living independently is complicated. People on this tour noted that "moving out" is a process that takes time and a lot of thought. We all need the support our families to figure out the right place, the right time, and the right support. With the right supports—we can do it!

Side note: It was fabulous to see how proud our hosts were as they shared their homes with us. Thank you for being our role models.

NEXT STEPS

It would be great if more people could explore options by seeing how others live. We do not know how to continue this project. If you have ideas, we want to hear them!

LUTHERAN SOC. SVC. TEAM

GROWING COMMUNITY

Build accessible planters, give them to a local nursing home and church, then work with neighbors to plant, weed, water & harvest.





We installed these nice red flower boxes, and helped plant and water them.

WHERE WE LIVE:

E. Grand Forks / Fosston, MN

WHO WE ARE:

Daniel Coffield

Carl Benson

Katie Baumer

Sean Hoaglund

Mentor: Les Bauer

THE PLAN

Our group wanted to connect with neighbors and community members through gardening, a hobby we all enjoy. We decided to build accessible planters-- two for a nursing home in East Grand Forks and two for a church in Fosston.









WHAT HAPPENED

First we recruited additional self-advocates to be part of our Growing Community project. We met in May to work out the garden details. We visited with church and nursing home leaders to sell the idea. Success, they both wanted accessible planter boxes. We then met with residents of nursing home/ congregation members to build support. Next we built planters. We purchased dirt, plants and a few tools. We created a schedule for tending to gardens.

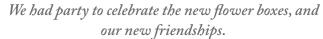
Finally, we installed the planters. In Fosston we built and installed two planters. On planting day, nine people from the church helped. At Good Samaritan Nursing Home of East Grand Forks, we also we built and installed two planters. On that planting day, seven residents came out to join in. Lucky for us one of

LUTHERAN SOC. SVC. TEAM

"This project gave us warm feelings and a greater understanding of people with disabilities and just how much we can do in our community together."

Pastor Jane, Hope Lutheran Church, Fosston MN







Check out this high-tech cake. Everybody loved it.

WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

these, a resident named Pearl, was an expert. She taught us a lot about gardening.

In the fall—we hosted two wrap up celebrations with cake, stories, skits and chatting. In Fosston, 140 people attended, in East Grand Forks, 45 people attended. Again, more new connections and friendships to build on.

Every step of our project was led by our team, and every step of our project included connecting to others in our community. Because of this project, people both with and without disabilities worked side-by-side, getting our hands dirty, taking root beer breaks, telling jokes and complaining about the hot weather. Strangers became friends. A member from our team, Carl, ended up joining the church and is now a member.

WHAT WE LEARNED

If you want to meet new people, you have to put yourself out there. Do something in the community, and it helps if that something is giving to others. Every one of the 16 people in our project said they made a new friend because of this project.

We also learned that it feels good to be the ones giving. We made a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Oh, and one more thing: plants need water. We learned that the hard way! Thank goodness for Pearl.

NEXT STEPS

We are going to continue helping maintain these planter boxes next year--meaning we'll continue to nurture these new community friendships as well! The planters are now in storage—we can't wait to take them out again in the spring and do it all over again--this time with familiar faces.

HAVE A GREAT THANKSGIVING

KIWANIS TEAM

Launch a community fundraiser to buy Thanksgiving meal groceries for families in Albert Lea.



We worked side by side with the local Kiwanis to do our project—it was actually fun, and we got along great.



Come have a burger. You'll be helping local families have a turkey dinner too!

WHERE WE LIVE:

Albert Lea / Fairmont

WHO WE ARE:

Carman Olson Scott Smith Richard Olson

Mentor: Darryl Meyer





THE PLAN

Planning: This project took lots of work and lots of meetings to make it happen. Our team has a strong value in helping others; our initial plan was to buy toys for kids. Since our team members all belong to the Kiwanis Club, we asked to meet with the Kiwanis executive committee to see if they were interested in working together, to make our project one of their 2019 goals. They

approved our plan at their July meeting, after which we started working together. Soon after, we started recruiting peers to join us in the work. We quickly got nine people with disabilities involved in the project. Then we all met (our group and the local Kiwanis group) to fine tune our plan. After lots of research and looking into different options, we decided to revise our project and work instead to give thanksgiving meals to families in need. Kiwanis also connected us with Rock Youth For Christ, who wanted to help us raise money and deliver food.

WHAT HAPPENED

Fundraising: To raise money, we announced a Burger Basket fundraising dinner for August 22nd. We had to reserve and rent the Legion Hall, and arrange for the food. The dinner was a success: 120 people came to the fundraiser dinner and we netted

KIWANIS TEAM

"I was surprised that the Kiwanis Club listened to us and approved our project. This food delivery happened because we spoke up. That feels pretty cool."

Carman Olson, team member



Food and fundraisers are a natural combo. We met lots of new people in the process, too.



We were able to purchase and deliver Thanksgiving food boxes to 36 families.

WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

\$500 after paying the legion and covering the costs for the dinner. This dinner not only launched our fundraising campaign, but also strengthened our partnership with the Rock Youth for Christ group. Those relationships were key to our success.

In all we collected \$700, enough to give thanksgiving meal baskets to 36 families.

Delivery: In November, we joined with Rock Youth to deliver 36 meal baskets. This was a great way for us all to connect more deeply with people in our community.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We learned to be flexible: after doing research, it was clear that food for families was more needed that toys for tots, so we changed directions. It was a good decision. We also learned that we have the ability to be Kiwanis leaders. We brought them our project idea and they liked it. When we speak up, we can make a difference. Finally, we learned that it feels good to be giving back to the community, to be involved in making life better for someone else.

We also learned that our involvement matters. Rock the Youth for Christ used to do a Thanksgiving Dinner fundraiser, but stopped a while back because they didn't have the capacity. Our team revitalized their effort.

NEXT STEPS

We're fired up! Our team is planning on doing this fundraiser and food drive again in 2020. Our community partners, Rock Youth for Christ and the Kiwanis Club, are also on board for next year!

RURAL LIVING ENV. TEAM

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Help support people with disabilities to join various civic clubs and committees.



No need to organize our own event; we just plugged into the library's event and connected with all sorts of local civic organizations.



Oh, you like snowmobiling? Let me introduce you to the local snowmobile club president.

WHERE WE LIVE:

Babbitt

WHO WE ARE:

Shawn Whithaus Lucas Litchy Hans Olsen

Mentor: Meredith Kujala

THE PLAN

In the small town of Babbitt, we are so proud that people with disabilities have many opportunities to connect and be part of community life through a service group, sports club or civic organization. We decided to help people with disabilities take advantage of these opportunities and actually join one of these groups.







WHAT HAPPENED

Initially we set out to host our own event, where these local civic groups would each have a booth. and we would recruit a number of people with disabilities to attend. Unfortunately, scheduling among so many groups became too big a task. Luckily, we found someone to do that for us: turns out a lot of the groups we wanted to feature would already be at the Friends of the Babbitt Library event. So keep it simple; we decided to help people with disabilities attend that event. In addition we met with people on a personal basis to discuss what civic groups are around and the benefits of joining one.

RURAL LIVING ENV. TEAM

"Great group of people making fun things, selling them to help our people."

Bernice Norgard, Babbitt Senior Center



We staffed a table at the library event, helping people with disabilities meet with all sorts of new organizations.



One participant ended up joining the local snowmobile club.

WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

In all, we engaged with 25 people with disabilities, and introduced them to community groups like the Babbitt AV Club, the Babbitt Lions Club, the Walleye Whamma planning committee, City Council meetings, and the Fun Run planning committee.

As a result, eight people with disabilities actually joined a new group: ATV Club, Lions Club, Friends of the Babbitt Library, Upnorth Craft and Vendor planning committee, Hockey Tournament planning committee, and regularly attending city council meetings.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Getting out in the community and making an effort to connect with others pays off. People with disabilities wanted to join a group-but they definitely needed a nudge and some support to connect to the community in this way. And, every group we contacted was excited about our project and eager to recruit new members with disabilities. The appetite for inclusion is there, we just need to help make it happen!

NEXT STEPS

We are going to continue to help people with disabilities connect to civic groups, planning committees, and social clubs. In December, we have plans to get together to share our experiences and come up with more ideas for getting and staying involved in community clubs. It feels good to be a community leader.

CIP TEAM #2

FUN CLUB

Help five self-advocates expand their social life by each inviting friends to join them on riverboat cruises.





Just one season ticket and three free guests each time--wow!

Here's your ticket -- no charge!

WHERE WE LIVE:

St. Paul

WHO WE ARE:

Cynthia Gayles Michelle Williams Kris Jacobs

Mentor: Jean Mendenhall





THE PLAN

The whole idea of Minnesota's Olmsted plan is to get out there and enjoy life—side-by-side with everyone else. We took that message to heart! We all agreed that inviting people to join us on a Mississippi Riverboat Cruise would be a good chance to get to know some new people. So, we made plans to purchase season passes and give them to self-advocates who want to expand their social life.



WHAT HAPPENED

We did some research about the Jonathan Paddleford Riverboat. Guess what? With a season pass, you not only get to go as often as you want, but each time you can bring up to three guests for free. What a deal!

In all we recruited five participants: two of us on the team, and three of our peers. Each participant got a season pass.

Next we did a bunch of preparation. We did a trial run; our team, the participants and our team mentor went on a cruise, which sure helped work out the bugs. After that, participants could better answer questions when they invited folks along. We also spent time learning about and understanding how the season tickets work and practiced inviting people. We created little invitations cards so that our guests would know where to meet us and what time and where to park.

From that point, the five of us were off and running. Over the course of the project, we went on a combined 33 trips bringing 78

CIP TEAM #2

"I met some new people on this riverboat cruise. That was awesome."

Michelle Williams, team member



Just watching the river go by, hanging out with friends.



Life is good!

WHAT HAPPENED, CONT.

people. We brought cousins, daughters, parents, grandparents, former coworkers, romantic partners, and neighbors. Often times we would invite our guest to bring another person, which ended up being someone we didn't even know. Talk about meeting new people.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We learned that a club like this really does help people make friends and do things in the community. Having a prescribed activity (in our case riverboat cruises) to do is a great way to strengthen existing or develop new relationships. It's easy to ask people to join you when you're offering to host the outing.

Not everyone used their pass equally. While everyone used it at least once, only three of the five people used it regularly (each more than 5 times). The regulars used it as an opportunity to meet neighbors. One even had a sign-up sheet in her building's entry way. We learned once again that people need different levels of support to make community happen.

NEXT STEPS

Two of us have already purchased 2020 Paddleford passes and plan to keep rollin' down the river next spring, summer and fall!

Consider a Paddleford gift card or season pass as a holiday gift. It's a great way to support folks to be in the community meeting people and having fun.

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Within our ACT Olmstead Academy program and other ACT Center offerings, we see folks at both ends of the community inclusion continuum. From those who clearly know that they have a valued place in community life to those who have few experiences outside of their segregated service-system lives.

On the one hand we have Academy alum James, who is late for his East Grand Forks self-advocacy meeting because he decided to stop to talk to the mayor on his way. On the other hand, we have participant Melissa, who does not know about voting and is unaware of any right she might have to speak with an elected official.

The work of the ACT Olmstead Academy is designed to help people to participate more deeply in the life of their community. For some, like James, it's about stepping-up his game — getting out there and exploring new and interesting ways to be connected. For others, like Melissa, it's about taking some steps to diversify her interactions and friendships so as to include both people with and people without disabilities in her life. It's about helping her get out of a service-system bubble and explore new ways to be in the community.

The work of the ACT Olmstead Academy provides a framework and support structure for increased community integration. Here's what it looks like: people with and without disabilities get together to share a meal, garden, sing or volunteer. When this integration happens, stereotypes fade, and genuine relationships grow in their place.

A big part of what the ACT Center does is introduce participants to a disability equality movement in Minnesota. The ACT Olmstead Academy supports people to build knowledge, build skills and build confidence. Like the confidence James had to stop by and talk to his mayor. Most of all, the work of the Olmstead Academy is about expanding participants ideas of what is possible.

This year's Olmstead Academy class was brilliant in developing Disability Integration Projects that worked to open people's minds to what is possible. The six new projects in 2019 helped spark an appetite for being more included in the community. These projects helped people explore housing options, have fun times with people outside of their service bubbles, give back to the community, learn new ways to get around, and join established sports or service organizations.



Congratulations to the ACT Olmstead Academy Class of 2019. Minnesota asked for disability leadership to show by example how to create more and better disability inclusion. And you delivered! We counted it up: your projects set the stage for hundreds of people with and without disabilities to work and play side-by-side, building more inclusive and stronger communities.

Mary Kay Kennedy, Executive Director ACT Center for Disability Leadership St. Paul, Minnesota

OLMSTEAD ACADEMY LEADERS

Program Design and Facilitation

Mary Kay Kennedy, ACT Center Bret Hesla, Consultant

Program Coordination

Patrick Mitchell Mary Fenske

Session Leaders

Linda Breitag: Professional Artist

Eileen Buringrud: Leadership Skills Assessment

Larry Dittberner: Professional Musician

Carolyn Levy, Theater Artist Karen McNamara: Catering Patrick Mitchell: ACT Center

Team Project Mentors

Les Bauer, Long-time ally Meredith Kujala, Self-Advocates Minnesota Northeast Jean Mendenhall, Volunteer ally Darryl Meyer, Kiwanis Club leader Patrick Mitchell, ACT Center Katrina Simons, Institute on Community Integration

Dinner Hosts

John Anderson: MN Dept. of Human Services Elyse Bailey, Disability Services Division Alex Bartolic: MN Dept. of Human Services

Beth Fondell, Institute on Community Integration, U of M Betsy Gadbois, Dir. Person Centered Practices, DHS Barb Kleist, Inst. Community Integration, U of M

Lori Lippert: Olmstead Project Manager, Disability Services Division

Patrick Mitchell, ACT Center

Steven Schmidt,

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Office

Photography Scott Dekart



DIVERSE METHODS











DIVERSE METHODS

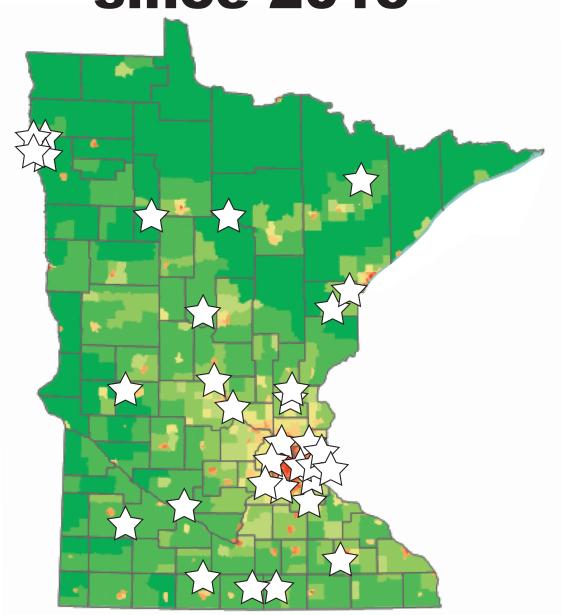






STATEWIDE IMPACT

32 Integration Projects since 2015



ACT Olmstead Academy:
Disability Leadership to
Advance Integration In Minnesota

STATEWIDE IMPACT

The first five classes of the ACT Olmstead Academy have now completed 32 integration projects in communities across the state, putting more people with intellectual disabilities side-by-side with everybody else.

Inserted ourselves into 3 longstanding community events.

Led job prep trainings for 26 peers --what do I need to know to pursue a community job?

Taught the public and peers about the importance of integration using theater, audience of 80 Gave 27 peers taxi vouchers

One-on-one peer mentoring to helped 5 people get the Taught 8 peers plans actually how to ride the bus to get where implemented they want to go.

Planned and led workshop to help 9 peers have a stronger say in their personcentered-plan

Created a volunte transportation around town force of 17 selfadvocates giving back to their corHelp 6-8 mor people join

to use Uber and Metro Mobility ide for Helped 6-9 Created a community people build ion. and install event subsidizec planning

planters at a local nursing home ---nsnrps with

to allow spontaneous

Trained 6 peers

artnered with on-profit to start a drop-in center for 12 self-advocates, to create deeper social lives

Reached out to 12 peers who were nonvoters and supported them to vote.

15 peers get around town,

vouchers tcommittee

to offer

Offered a tour of wherever and homes to inspire whenever they people in group want.

homes -- and guardians --by seeing how others with disabilities live independently

Tried a plan to

allow ourselves

more alone time.

technology to

and our peers

use new

Worked with eight people who already had a community job and helped them Bus tour for 6-8 : at

people with disabilities to see different independent living situations.

local cops and help self-advocates feel confident going out in the community. Hosted two

ffee

dinners, at our group homes, to build connections between 7 peers and 15 next door neighbors.

Help 10 metro peers learn and use available transportation

Set up a bus tour of build living options showing how others relationships with disabilities are

Assisted eight people who are lacking a basic right to take one concrete step to get it--bust a barrier

between 8 selfliving independently, to expand the sense community leaders of what's possible

Planned and hosted an End-ofthe-Summer Party for the town, to build relationships.

Hosted county fair booths to create new social connections advocates and 6 advocates and 6 advocates and 6 between people with and without disabilities.

Trained five people to Helped 6 people use existing get active in transportation

organizing Partner with an ons, giving them local service efforts launch a

in need.

collection drive for kids from families

organization to r own spontaneous sportation needs.

Helped six peers learn about rights, choose a goal and overcome barriers to get a quick-win in their life.

Helped six peers choose a goal and overcome barriers and be included in some new way in the community.

Help four peers invite friends to do fun new things in the community.

ACT Olmstead Academy, Class of 2019



ACT Olmstead

ACADEMY

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