

# PEOPLE FIRST MANUAL

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Self Determination or Self Advocacy training!*

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## **THE PURPOSE OF PEOPLE FIRST (T.W.)**

The purpose of People First is to create a self- directed, supportive community of adults who have developmental disabilities. People First is a “self advocacy” and “self help” organization. Members of People First have written what these words mean to them:

Self Advocacy is:

- Learning how to speak up for ourselves
- Making our own decisions about what we want to do with our lives
- Learning to carry out our own plans
- “Feeling Strong”
- “Feeling Good about myself”
- “Teaching the people who would be mean to me”
- “Respecting others rights, but speaking out for my own”
- “Taking chances when you know you are right, and then learning from your mistakes”.

Self Help means:

- We reach out to people who are not members, yet.
- Getting all the information, than taking action.
- “Deciding what I want to do”
- “Finding out *what* and *who* will support me.”
- “Knowing my rights and responsibilities”
- “Problem solving when things go wrong”
- “Taking charge and speaking out for myself.”

People First helps the people who are members get better at these skills, by giving them a place to practice making decisions, helping others, and solving problems.

The members of People First are trying to show other people in the community that people with developmental disabilities are regular people who have the same interests, talents, strengths, and desires that other people have.

Our group is called “People First” because we are people, we are not a disability label. Sometimes people who don’t know any better call us names like “retarded person” or “disabled person”. We are not our labels. We are people, first.

The members of People First want to show people who don’t know about disabilities that people with developmental disabilities are able to live and work among them, and that people with disabilities can contribute to and enrich the communities in which they live.

The disability label that was given to us, was meant to help us get services that would help us learn in school and in our job training. It was not meant to keep us separate from the other people living in our communities. The label is only good when it is used to show that we need extra help in training and medical care. It is not good when it is used to put us down or keep us away from others. Or then it makes people think we can’t do things!!

One of the worst things about the label (like MR) is that most people don’t really know what it means. People think it means more than it does. All it really means is that people with that MR label think a little more slowly than some others do, and that it might take some of us a little longer to learn new things. We can learn how to do everything!

We believe in ourselves and in others. We are not going to let our label keep us down. We are not our “disability” – we are People, First!

The members of People First of Missouri Steering Committee talked about the problems facing people with disabilities.

We came up with what most of us think are the two biggest problems facing us, today.

1. The number one problem is that many other people don't understand what our situation is. They don't give us a chance to try new things, and then learn from our mistakes. Sometimes they get in a hurry to have something done so they take over and do it for us, instead of letting us do it for ourselves. Some people look at us and only see a "disability", and they think that the "disability" means they have to do everything for us.
2. The second problem is that some people who have disabilities need to learn how to believe in themselves. They have to learn that they are worth being respected. That they are capable and valuable human beings.

People First of Missouri, and all the local chapters in Missouri are trying to do something about both of these problems. Even the name "People First" is a statement the members are making that they are *human beings first*, and that their disabilities *are not* the most important thing about them.

People First members believe in themselves are valuable human beings, and they believe in each other. They encourage each other, and reach out to other people with disabilities who may not know about People First or self-advocacy, yet.

## **HOW PEOPLE FIRST WORKS (TW)**

**INDIVIDUALS:** A person decides to visit a People First meeting to see what it is like. They like the way that they see others with disabilities following parliamentary procedure and running their own meeting. They may decide to join that chapter of People First or they may start a new chapter closer to home.

**ADVISORS:** Advisors are people who are not eligible to be members of People First, but who enjoy going to meetings, and working with people as they carry out the plans the members have made. Advisors like to see other people learn how to do new things and don't worry if it takes people a long time to get something right. Advisors give advise, but they let people learn from trying things out for themselves. Advisors help members learn how to teach other members how to do new things.

**LOCAL CHAPTER:** Local chapters meet every month. The members follow parliamentary procedure. They learn, practice, and put self-advocacy into action by working together toward goals they set at their monthly meetings.

**AREA MEETINGS:** Many times people from several nearby chapters will work together at a project. Projects that areas have worked on in the past include: Camping; an ADA rally to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act; New Chapter start-up. These projects are decided upon by the members of the chapters that want to work together. They are different every year.

**STATE MEETINGS:** Missouri has a statewide steering committee which is made up of 2 members elected by each local chapter. The steering committee meets 4 times a year. The steering committee helps arrange for training materials, conferences, and has the best interest of each local chapter at heart. The state

steering committee hosts a statewide conference on alternating years. Sometimes the steering committee will host a conference with another agency or group, such as Missouri TASH or a Parent Organization.

**NATIONAL MEETINGS:** The United States has a national organization of People First representatives who are elected by regional vote. The national People First organization is called “Self Advocates Becoming Empowered” or “SABE”. SABE sponsors a conference on alternating years, as well. The Missouri State Steering committee sends some members to the meeting, each time it is held.

SABE divided America into 9 regions. Missouri is in Region 4 along with Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota. This region sends two representatives to each of the meetings held quarterly by SABE. For the past several years, Missouri has had an elected representative on SABE, Joe Wrinkle. (You will find his phone number and address in the resource section).

Joe Wrinkle was elected to represent **you!** Your chapter should be sure to write to Joe and let him know what you think the national group should do for people with disabilities, and how they should do it.

**INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS:** People First has chapters worldwide. There are active chapters in Europe, Africa, Great Britain, Japan, China, Korea, Canada, and other places. We meet at a worldwide conference every fourth year. There was an International Conference held in Alaska, April 22 – 25, 1998. The next International Conference is due in the year 2002.

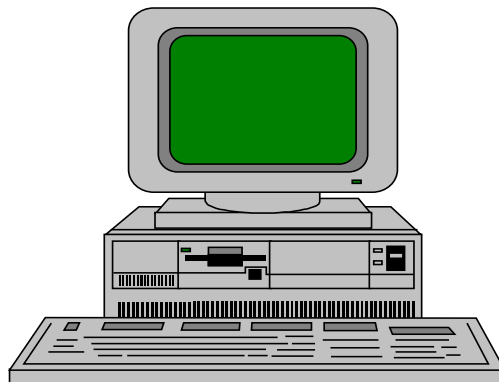
**YOUR CHAPTER:** People can be as active as they like in People First. All chapters are encouraged to send one or two representative to the state steering committee. These meetings are held in hotels, and last about 2 days.

Since going to the meetings four times a year might be too expensive for the members, the statewide steering committee has a grant from the Missouri Planning Council on Developmental Disability (The Director is Kay Conklin) to provide money for the hotel and some of the meals for each meeting.

At the steering committee meetings, there is a meeting of all the statewide committees, which you will read about in chapter 5. Each member of People First, across the state, is encouraged to work on one of the committees.

The steering committee also meets on the Internet once a week. The address is the *chat room* of the People First website. The address is <http://www.missouripeoplefirst.org>. The meetings are held on Saturday morning at 10AM and Thursday evening at 7 PM. Everyone is welcome to join in.

Some chapters have an email address and receive email from People First members worldwide. Other chapters prefer to focus on their own community and the people around them. Either is fine!!





## **HOW DO WE GET STARTED???????** (TW)

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### Nine Steps to Starting a People First Chapter:

#### **STEP 1 : WRITE A MISSION STATEMENT.**

Your Mission Statement can be a big help in performing your roles as chapter members. Without a Mission Statement you and the other members would not be able to make sure that all of your activities were working toward a particular goal.

A Mission Statement is a very short summary of why your People First group wants to exist, and what you stand for.

You get a Mission Statement by writing it with your group, or by using one that some other group wrote, that you think fits your group perfectly.

To write a Mission Statement, make sure that everyone in the group understands what People First and Self Advocacy are. Talk about why people want to meet as a group. Write it down. There you go- that is your mission statement.

**The Mission Statement written by the members of the Missouri People First steering committee in 1999 is:**

**“To provide Self Advocacy Training, Increase the Quality of Life, and Protect Equal Rights for People With Developmental Disabilities in Missouri.”**

## STEP 2: TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Decide on the responsibility each of the people working with the new group will have. Someone needs to do each of the following things:

- Find a meeting place
- Find someone to serve as an Advisor
- Find out what transportation is available
- Write the first agenda, to use when starting the first meeting
- Make fliers and mail them to people who might want to be members, or who might come and help the group get started
- Decide if there will be snacks at the first meeting, then choose who will bring them

## STEP 3: LEARN FROM OTHER PEOPLE FIRST CHAPTERS

Of course your group will want to make their own decisions about these things. But as you can see, it would help you get started if you had an experienced person working with you to help you make these things happen.

Any member of a People First chapter near you would be glad to help. We also have had, since 1998, an Americorps\*VISTA project in Missouri, which provides help in starting new chapters. The names and phone numbers of these *VISTA volunteers* are in the resource section in the back of this manual.

## STEP 4: DECIDE ON THE RULES (BYLAWS)

Decide on the rules for how you are going to work together. These are the bylaws. You will need to plan ahead so that everyone will know what to expect when it comes time to choose officers, or spend money, or solve problems that come up.

You could get some good ideas for your chapter bylaws by looking over the bylaws that other chapters wrote. Some chapters have a section in their bylaws for what to do if someone injures another member, or if someone takes money that isn't theirs. Other chapters have bylaws that tell how people will be elected as

officers, and how often the elections are going to be held. You may want to use the bylaws of another group as a model to help you get started. You can use the Resource Guide in the back of this book, and call the Missouri People First office to ask for a copy of the Missouri People First bylaws to be sent to you!

## STEP 5: DEVELOP TEAM SPIRIT

A great chapter doesn't happen without a lot of hard work. People will all have their own ideas on how to do things. Some people may even be unreasonable and want to have their way all the time. Sometimes people quit if they can't get their way. It is a challenge to work with a group of other people in a way that both gets things done, and makes everyone feel like a valuable person in the group.

Most chapters have found out that they have to work hard at helping people get over hurt feelings and learn to contribute to the group.

One thing that has helped many groups work well together is that all of the members try to show each person that the group likes them and appreciates hearing their ideas.

People are encouraged to come up with their own ideas and share them. Even if the idea is not the one the group chooses to do, everyone appreciates that the member shared their idea.

## STEP 6: DEFINE YOUR CHAPTER GOALS

Decide upon what your chapter wants to accomplish this year. That is your goal. Some chapters have both goals for the short term (like 3 months) and long term (forever). We will put the goals and activities of the Missouri People First Statewide Group in the pages that follow. You might like to see if they give you some ideas for your chapter.

## STEP 7: DETERMINE YOUR CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

This can be a tricky step. Many people in the group may come up with fun ideas that don't have anything to do with your Mission Statement or Goal section. They may want to go to a ball-game, or have a party, or go swimming. These are all fun ideas, but do they match what you wrote down as your Mission Statement and Goal?

If your goal was “to provide a recreation activity”, then that would match. If your goal was “self advocacy training”, it would not match, unless the activities at the party or pool were about self advocacy training.

The activities of People First should always be in support of the goal and the mission statement. People First is not a support group, or a recreation group. It is a civil rights movement- a group which tries to improve the public policy that concerns people with disability, and that offers training and experience in self determination activities for people with disability.

This does not mean that People First doesn't have fun! We think we have a lot of fun making the community a better place to live, and making sure we know how to do all the things we need to do to take our place in the community.

People First activities are always planned so that the members learn something new, or learn how to do something, or get some practice in a skill they are building. We work on computers, practice reading and doing math in our activities, and learn to be effective board members of other organizations, so we can share with others the perspective of a person with a disability, and impact the way that that organization makes decisions.

## STEP 8: DEVELOP CONNECTIONS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

Be active and interact with others in your community. Find ways to reach out to other people with disabilities so that they can learn about their rights and responsibilities, too.

Work with other civic organizations in your community to make the community a better place for everyone to live. Help by picking up trash on the highway (like Marshall does), or by planting flowers in the park, or by serving food at the Ronald McDonald house.

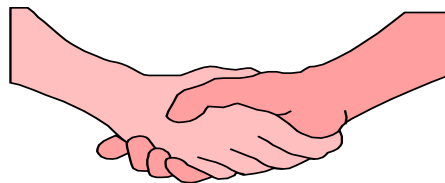
Find ways to share ideas with service coordinators and direct care staff, and others who have a powerful effect on the lives of people with disabilities.

Reach out to kids with disabilities in school. Help them get the most out of their education, and help them prepare for their future career.

Keep your chapter up-to-date on legislation that affects people with disability. Get together and write letters to make changes in the laws and public policy that affects YOUR life!!

## STEP 9: STOP NOW AND THEN

Every so often, stop and think over how things are going in your chapter. Talk things over as a group. If some of the members think that something should be changed, have both sides make a presentation to the chapter, then VOTE ON IT!



**Mission Statement for People First of Missouri:**

*“To Provide Self-Advocacy Training, Increase Quality of Life, and Protect Equal Rights for People with Developmental Disabilities, in Missouri”.*

<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>GOALS</b>	<b>ACTIVITES</b>
1. To provide Self Advocacy Training	1. That leadership training is provided to elected steering committee members who return and share the training with chapter members.	1. Quarterly Steering committee meetings. 2. President and Advisor training workshops 3. Speakers Bureau training and conference workshops given 4. Production and sale of a training manual. 5. Sending elected representatives for training at selected conferences
2. To Increase quality of life for people with developmental disabilities	1. Involve the steering committee on subcommittees 2. Provide training to people who impact the lives of people with disabilities in Missouri. 3. Increase post secondary	1. Write strategic plan 2. Encourage use of email and website to share information. 3. Work on statewide issues, such as transportation 4. Increase the

<p>3. To protect the civil rights of people with developmental disabilities</p>	<p>educational opportunity for people with developmental disabilities.</p> <p>1. Impact public policy and laws that affect people with developmental disability</p>	<p>number of chapters, statewide.</p> <p>1. Train PeopleFirst members to use the computer to access current events that affect them.</p> <p>2. Train members to write letters and participate in setting the agenda for public debate on issue that affect them.</p> <p>3. Teach People First members their rights and responsibilities and help them teach others.</p>
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Your chapter's objectives and activities may be like these, or they may be different! It is up to you!!!

Enjoy the process of learning what your goals are and planning how to reach them!!

## **OUTREACH-** *By Joe Wrinkle, Kansas City*

**Outreach:** To reach out to people; To tell people very important information about something or someone: such as People First.

Learn how to tell People what People First is, learn to call and set up appointments with strangers , to tell them what People First is .

### **What is People First ?-** by Joe Wrinkle

People First is an international (6 continents) self-advocacy organization composed of people with developmental disabilities. In People First, we learn about our rights & responsibilities, how to be assertive, how to speak up to various professionals and other people. We show people that we are just like anyone else in the community by living, working & playing (recreation) in the community. We have the same interests, talents, strengths and desires just like anyone else.

People First members and other self-advocates already live on their own throughout the United States and they have jobs in the community. We do presentations at various conferences about: living in the community, Person Centered Planning, getting out of institutions (habilitation centers), people with disabilities & the criminal justice system, to name quite a few presentations. We serve on various councils, committees, boards, core groups & other groups. We have planned state, national and international conferences and have presented at them. We hold classes and do training for self-advocates along with developing training materials. Also, we train self-advocates to serve on boards and to represent other consumers. We get involved with community, legal, public & legislative issues along with knowing & finding out what our rights & responsibilities are and we go after(get) them and uphold them. We also raise money through sales and grants in



order to be self sustaining. We take part in person centered planning and in our life planning .

## **Why We Need People First**

-By Joe Wrinkle

People First helps people with disabilities to learn their true potential as to what they can do. People First teaches us that we can live in the community (as in community inclusion) instead of institutions where we don't belong. People First trains us to be better self - advocates to advocate for ourselves and others that are not able to speak for themselves. People First also trains us to be leaders on all levels (national, state & local) of People First.

## **History and Birth of People First and Self - Advocacy**

- by Joe Wrinkle

This page tells about the history & birth of People First and self - advocacy chapters on all levels: International(worldwide), North America(Canada & U.S.A.\*), National(U.S.A.), State(Missouri) and Local(Kansas City). The birth of the name "People First" and the birth of the national People First Organization called Self - Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) will also be told.

Most People First groups started in institutions and some ,if not all, members came from institutions.

The name "People First" was born in Salem, Oregon in May, 1974 and ever since then, a lot of self - advocate chapters/groups have decided on the name "People First" for their name.

International : The very first People First chapter (on a worldwide basis) was started in Stockholm, Sweden between 1965 and 1970 as a club. They would meet and go to places. Then they would go back to the meeting place and discuss where they just went and what they did there.

North America : In 1973, the very first conference for people with disabilities was started by a professional association in British Columbia, Canada and got people to thinking about having a group for people with disabilities. However, the very first People First group started a year later in British Columbia, Canada.

National : 1. In 1973, a few weeks after the Canadian conference, People First was conceived in Salem, Oregon and was born January 8, 1974 in Salem, Oregon at the first meeting of the chapter.

2. In May 1990, the idea for a national organization came from self - advocates in Atlanta, Georgia at an AAMR conference and was conceived at The First National People First Conference in Estes Park, Colorado when they voted to start one, along with forming a steering committee. Later on, in September, 1991, the national organization was born at The Second National People First Conference in Nashville, Tennessee and was named at the first meeting of the steering committee in Nashville. The name of the national organization is: Self - Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE).

State (MO) : On March 8, 1991, People First of Missouri was conceived and born at a MOTASH conference in Columbia, Missouri when some members of various chapters, advisors and advocates held a state - wide meeting.

Local : People First of Kansas City, Missouri was started in 1983 and has been meeting ever since then. It is the very first chapter in the state of Missouri.

### **Why we have a Mission Statement and Goals**

- by Joe Wrinkle

**A Mission Statement tells about why the organization exists and the purpose of the organization.**

**A Goal is a plan that a person or an organization makes for the future. Some examples are : Getting a driver's license followed by a car, getting a place to call your own, travelling on your own, going to school or college and getting a diploma or a degree, etc.**

### **Self – Advocacy**

-By Joe Wrinkle

Self -Advocacy begins at birth , because when a baby cries, they are speaking out for food, love or clean diapers .

Parents can give their children two things : Roots to grow and wings to fly .

- Roots means your family history , where you came from , parents teaching their child to live on their own .
- Wings means for a child to leave their parents and go live on their own .

As adults with disabilities , we need everyday opportunities and the expectation to be a Self-Advocate ; Opportunities to grow as a person ; such as being part of a Self-Advocacy group such as People First and being a part of the community ; living ,working , participating and contributing in the community .

**There are lots of meanings as to what self - advocacy is and I will try to put them here. - Joe Wrinkle**

**Here are some principles**

- **Taking care of you in 2 ways , physically and emotionally**
- **Try to get the right information knowing about being a Self - Advocate and the issues are important to you .**
- **The 2 main tools of Self-Advocacy is communication and negotiation**
- **Take notes so you will have everything in writing ; that is called Documentation**
- **Knowledge will give you the way to empower yourself**
- **Equality for everyone ; no discrimination**
- **Community Inclusion ; you have the right to get involved in your community**
- **Showing people that we no longer need labeling ( Label Jars Not People )**

**People First of Nebraska say this about self-advocacy**

“Self-Advocacy is gaining confidence in yourself to make friends and participate in activities ; grow in ability in yourself and others by speaking up and speaking out , by making decisions and solving problems , by knowing my rights and responsibilities , by helping and supporting each other , by working together to make services

better for people with disabilities ; we want real jobs with real wages ; we want better laws and budgets ; we want to close institutions ; we want barrier free and affordable housing and transportation ; we want human rights and dignity and justice and contribute to the community.”

Here is the definition of Self -Advocacy that was adopted by SABE:

“ Self-Advocacy is teaching people with a disability how to advocate for themselves and to learn how to speak out for what they believe in . It teaches us how to make decisions and choices that affect our lives so that we can become more independent . It also teaches us about our rights, but along with learning our rights, we learn our responsibilities.”

From We Can Speak For Ourselves, we have the following :

“ Self-Advocacy by people with developmental disabilities mean that individually or in groups ( preferably in Groups ) , they speak or act on behalf of themselves , or on behalf of issues that affect people with developmental disabilities .”

Self-Advocacy also is knowing your rights and standing up for your rights , taking responsibility for your life and asking for help because you want it and need it .

## **HOW INFORMATION IS GATHERED AND DECISIONS ARE MADE**

**-By Helen DeHamer, Secretary, People First of Missouri**

Information exchange is the lifeblood of the community in that it effects every aspect of our lives. Without information exchange life as we know it would come to a standstill. Sound decisions cannot be made, businesses would experience collapse, doctors and health professionals won't be able to make a proper diagnosis, People First chapters would be isolated.

It is important to keep informed about what is going on within your chapter and with other chapters around the state. The question is how do we keep informed?

One way to keep informed is a newsletter. A newsletter usually contains a lot of information about what is going on such as meeting times, activities, legislative issues, community events and conferences.

Attendance at meetings is a way to exchange information first hand. If you have access to an Internet computer e-mail and chat are excellent ways to exchange information. The telephone is away to exchange information over long distances. A written letter accomplishes the same purpose except that information exchange is slower.

Based on information gathered, decisions are made that effect the lives of people and organizations. No decision can be properly made unless all important information about the matter is obtained, evaluated and then acted on. The exchange of information also helps to build and strengthen bonds between People First members and chapters and promotes growth. Without information exchange

organizations die, but when information is exchanged freely organizations thrive and grow.

## **HOW PEOPLE FIRST GROUPS MAKE DECISIONS:**

Step 1: Someone gets an idea 🕒 —————>

Step 2: The person tells their idea to their chapter. Now they all have the idea. 🕒 🕒 🕒

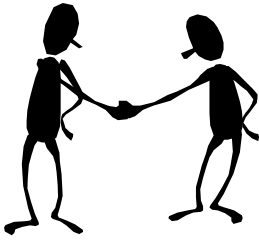
Step 3: They discuss the idea. Their advisor thinks about the idea too. They find out as much as they can about whether it is a good idea that might work out well, or if it needs some changes in order to work out.

Step 4: They check the Mission Statement and Goals in order to see if the Idea is a good idea for a People First chapter. They remember that everything the group does has to somehow help work toward People First goals.

Step 5: After all the facts are known, there is discussion. Then the President asks for a motion to be made for a vote. Then someone seconds the motion. Then the members of the chapter can vote on whether to do the idea or not.

That is how People First Chapters made decisions!!

***No single person ever makes a decision that affects the whole group. All decisions are made after the group talks about the idea and votes.***



## *Friendly* REMINDERS

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### *for People who support other People*

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- Be discrete. Offer assistance in an unobtrusive manner.
- Support the communication of the person you are there to support. Don't contribute your ideas to the meeting.
- Plan ahead.
  - Before the meeting date, *review the materials* with the person you are supporting.
  - Be on time.*
  - Be prepared.* Bring all necessary materials and equipment with you.
  - Call ahead,* and know how to access the building in which the meeting will occur. Know the location of the room, and how you will get there.
- Know the safety issues of concern for the person you are supporting. Have a plan to deal with things that come up.
- Know what kind of help the person you are supporting wants you to offer. Discuss your role before the meeting.
- Know when you are needed and know when you are not needed.
- Never leave before the person you support, unless other arrangements have been made.





# SELF CHECKLIST

## FOR PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT OTHERS:

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- I SUPPORT THE COMMUNICATION OF THE IDEAS OF THE PERSON I AM SUPPORTING.
- I ASSIST BY PREPARING AHEAD FOR THE MEETING.
- I AM ON TIME FOR THE MEETING.
- I FOLLOW THE AGENDA OF THE PERSON I SUPPORT.
- I AM DISCRETE ABOUT OFFERING SUPPORT.
- I DO NOT LEAVE THE PERSON I AM SUPPORTING ALONE, UNLESS REQUESTED TO DO SO.
- I SIT IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM.
- I DO NOT CONTRIBUTE MY IDEAS UNLESS ASKED.
- I DO NOT WALK IN/OUT DURING THE MEETING.
- I DO NOT FINISH OTHER PEOPLE'S SENTENCES.

## **THE ROLE OF OFFICERS**

The members of each People First chapter vote for their own leaders.

Each chapter decides how they want to hold elections and how they will decide on who the candidates are. In some chapters the advisor helps the current officers discuss possible candidates who are then nominated to run for office. In other chapters all the members can nominate themselves to run for office. Most chapters have the candidates give speeches to tell why they would make good officers. Then the members make up their own minds and vote.

The advisor and the officers usually meet once between People First meetings to plan the agenda and work on special topics. Where transportation is a problem, these meetings are often carried out by using the phone.

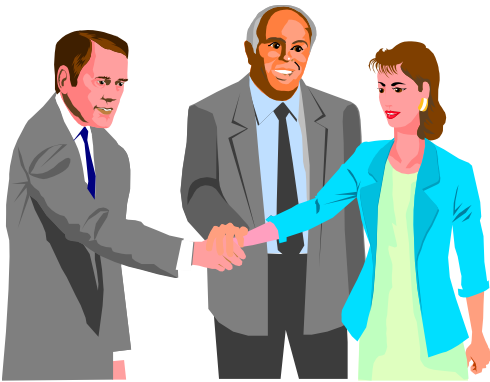
The following pages contain a description of each of the offices that most People First chapters have. There is a description of what the job entails. This statement is usually read aloud to the group before the nomination process is started. And many groups also have the current officers speak about what the role has called for them to do in the preceding year.



## **QUALITIES OF A GOOD OFFICER:**

A good officer is a good listener and a good speaker

- A good officer is a leader that helps the members become leaders and self advocates
- A good officer is kind and polite to all of the other officers and members at all times
- A good officer respects everyone as a person who has something good to offer
- A good officer explains things to the members using simple words and examples so that everyone can understand
- A good officer practices how to be a good officer by reading the manual
- A good officer teaches members how to be an officer and run meetings so that everyone can have a chance to learn to be a leader.
- A good officer believes in People First and believes that all people in a community can speak for themselves and make the community a better place for everyone to live.



## **THE PRESIDENT OF PEOPLE FIRST**

**-By Helen DeHamer, Secretary, People First of Missouri**

Without the officers following through with their commitment then we would not exist. All officers should communicate statewide and with members of your chapter. Make use of your e-mail. Use the library if needed. When speaking in the public, know your audience and subject. You were elected because everyone has confidence that you are the one to do the job. Now you need to be trained and show those who were confident in you that you can and you are doing your best.

A president should be someone who can do the following:

1. Communication.
2. Someone who can control a meeting.
3. Organizational skills.
4. Can follow Parliamentary Procedure.
5. Able to speak in public.
6. Read and write.
7. Devoted to People First and the office they hold.
8. Needs to complete his/her responsibilities.

9. Make a weekly work plan for working on People First agenda and items that may arise and devote equal time to the chapter.
10. Outgoing good personality.
11. One who is fair and gives everyone a chance.
12. Willing to help others.
13. Call people who were not at the last meeting.
14. Well groomed, takes a bath, washes hair, brushes hair and teeth, wears clean cloths, and clean shoes. (no holes or dirt).

Work on training your members how to be an officer by using the officer's handbook. This is to prepare the members for the election to come, so they will be prepared to take a position and will want to become an officer.

The officers meeting should be conducted just like the monthly meeting, with the president opening the meeting. Make sure everyone at your chapter meeting has a copy of the minutes and treasurers report. This way if there are any corrections they may be made at this time.

Now it is time for the secretary's report. If it deems necessary for the report to be read then let the report be read and ask if there are any additions or correction to the minutes. If not ask for a vote for approval. If there are additions or corrections to the minute then ask for a discussion and have the secretary make changes and then vote on approval.

Now it is time for the treasurer's report. The treasurer's report should give a detailed description of all money spent. He/she should have a receipt for every penny spent. When they are keeping track of fundraisers that members are involved in this is very important because this money they are working for is to be put in their account to help them be able to afford to go to all conferences or what ever event may come up. So work with your treasurer to help keep an accurate account for your members.

Now it is time for the old business. The old business should be everything you had at the last meeting that was new business.

Make sure everyone understands the dates, times and the event so everything is correct.

Now it is time for the new business. This is where you bring up any and all correspondence you might have received in the month. Also any new fundraisers in the working and how, when and where. This is also where you can bring your committees in to tell them about the events.

Now it's time for the announcements. Ask if anyone has any announcements they would like to share with the members? Example: moved, got a new job, getting married, getting a divorce, went on vacation, got a drivers license, etc.

Now it is time for the program. You need to have a program that everyone would be interested in. If you have a speaker then make sure you ask them how long they will need and if they will need a VCR or an overhead, etc. Make sure the equipment is set up and ready to work properly. If they need more time, maybe you can have them as a special speaker and have something else as your program. This way if members need to leave they can.

You can now adjourn the meeting but before you do let everyone know where, when and time of your next meeting. Also thank everyone for coming. Serve refreshments if you have time.

It is important that you follow the agenda so as to keep the meeting running smooth. Remember to keep control of your meeting. Do not let people talk to one another during the meeting.

## **THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT:**

1. The president runs the meeting using parliamentary procedure, as shown in Helen's report above.
2. The agenda looks like this:
  - The president calls the meeting to order.
  - The president asks the secretary to read the minutes of the last meeting. These are either voted to be changed and accepted, or accepted "as read".
  - The president asks the treasurer to read the treasurer's report. This is either voted to be changed or accepted "as read".
  - The president leads the discussion of old business
  - The president leads the discussion of new business, and asks if anyone has anything else to add to the agenda
  - The president introduces the program for the meeting
  - The president adjourns the meeting.
4. When there is something to be decided by voting, the president calls for an open discussion of the topic, and leads the voting.
5. The president goes to the officers meetings to help plan the agenda for the next meeting.

The president faithfully attends the Chapter meetings. If not able to attend, the president lets the Vice President know in plenty of time so the Vice President can prepare to lead the meeting.
7. The president has the other officers help in the meeting
8. The president sees that someone from the chapter attends the steering committee meetings, and gets a report after each meeting.

## **VICE PRESIDENT OF PEOPLE FIRST- By Helen DeHamer**

You were elected because members had confidence you could do your job. So let's train you for your job. You are the vice president and your job is to take over for the president if he/she is not going to be able to be there. This includes officer's meetings or any presentations the president might have arranged. You need to read over the president's training and be able to do all that they must do. You and the president are to work close together so you will be able to take over when he/she is not available.

A vice-president, like a president should be someone who can do the following:

1. Communication.
2. Someone who can control a meeting.
3. Organizational skills.
4. Can follow Parliamentary Procedure.
5. Able to speak in public.
6. Read and write.
7. Devoted to People First and the office they hold.
8. Needs to complete his/her responsibilities.
9. Make a weekly work plan for working on People First agenda and items that may arise and devote equal time to the chapter.
10. Outgoing good personality.
11. One who is fair and gives everyone a chance.
12. Willing to help others.
13. Call people who were not at the last meeting.
14. Well groomed, takes a bath, washes hair, brushes hair and teeth, wears clean cloths, and clean shoes. (no holes or dirt).



It is very important that you have all information needed at your fingertips. Always know what is happening in your chapter and others. Be at all meetings, no matter what kind. Help out with meetings and projects in the works.

Do not make any decisions without going to the officers. Even if you need to call a special meeting.

Remember also that it is important that you keep yourself looking clean and groomed well. A good appearance is important to you as well as others.

### **THE ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT**

1. The Vice President is the one that leads the meetings when the President is absent. The vice president does everything listed under the role of President, above, when acting as president.
2. The Vice President helps the president in the meetings when asked.
3. The Vice President goes to the officers meetings and helps to plan the agenda
4. The Vice President always goes to the chapter meeting. If not able to attend, the Vice President lets the President know before the meeting date.

### **SECRETARY OF PEOPLE FIRST- by Helen DeHamer**

First off the secretary needs to know how to read, write and type. This is very important because the secretary will be taking notes at all meetings and then typing them. The secretary must give a list of those who were not at the last meeting to the telephone committee so that those people might be contacted to see why they

were not there and told when the next meeting will be. The qualifications of the secretary are as follows:

1. Know how to read, write and type and communicate.
2. Be organized.
3. Know how to take notes and be able to type up the minutes from those notes.
4. Be self-motivated.
5. Knowledge of fundraising (this is not necessary but it can help).
6. Know how to contact people for fundraising, whether it is someone for a donation or someone to help.
7. Be able to complete all minutes at least two weeks after your next meeting.
8. You need to know how to talk to people on the phone.
9. You need to know how to type a letters of correspondence including letters for donations.
10. You do not need to be bashful to ask for help when needed. Don't try to do it all by yourself. Ask for help from the other officers or members.

You as the secretary are to be able to take notes at all meetings whether it is monthly, officers or special meetings. You must type these up by the next chapter meeting or officers meeting so they might be read and approved. All minutes should be typed and copied before the meeting.

Do not make any decisions on your own always involve the officers, even if you need to call a special meeting.

## **TREASURER OF PEOPLE FIRST- by Helen DeHamer**

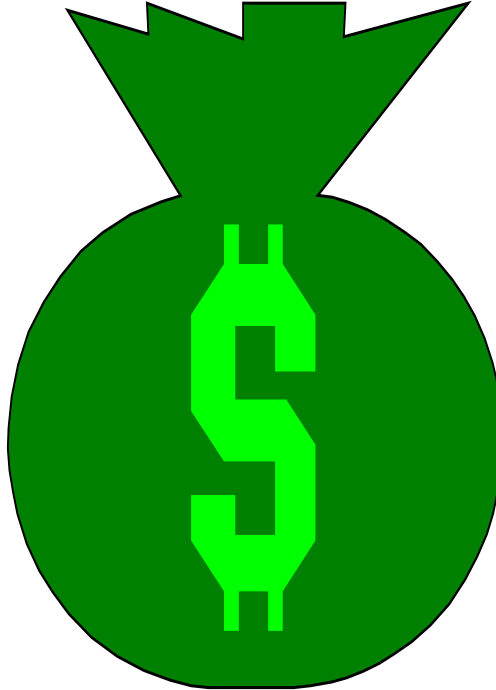
The treasurer's report is important too. The treasurer should know how to count and subtract, also to read and write. A little knowledge of how to keep books would help but not necessary, you can be trained. You need to be part of the meeting to make up the agenda for every meeting. Without the agenda you could not conduct a meeting.

Do not make any decisions without talking to the officers. If need be call a special meeting.

You must make sure you get a receipt for all money spent, for this is also how you keep track of the money. Get a folder of some kind and start a file on different receipts. Like a file for Wal-Mart, office supplies, rent, etc.

Remember that it is important for you also to take a bath and clean yourself up so you look nice, after all you are a representative of our organization.

The way you keep books is very important. When you give a treasurer's report you need to tell where the money has gone or where it has come from. You need to tell who got the money and for what purpose. The end of the report must tell a total or a loss. An example is on the next page, and in the section of this chapter called "Budget and Finance".



Example:

Treasurers Report  
Date: May 23, 2000

Balance in account	\$576.90
Deposit from candy sales	350.00
Total in bank	936.90

Paid out

Office supply's	\$ 25.38
Rent for building	250.00
Total pd. out	\$ 275.38

Total in bank	936.90
Total pd. out	-275.38
Total in bank	\$ 661.5 2

## **STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE-**

**By Helen DeHamer**

The steering committee representative is someone who can go to the meetings every three months and take notes and bring them back to the chapters to report on what the committee is doing and what they would like for the chapters in Missouri to do. They should be someone who can speak out and voice his/her own opinion. They need to have confidence in themselves.

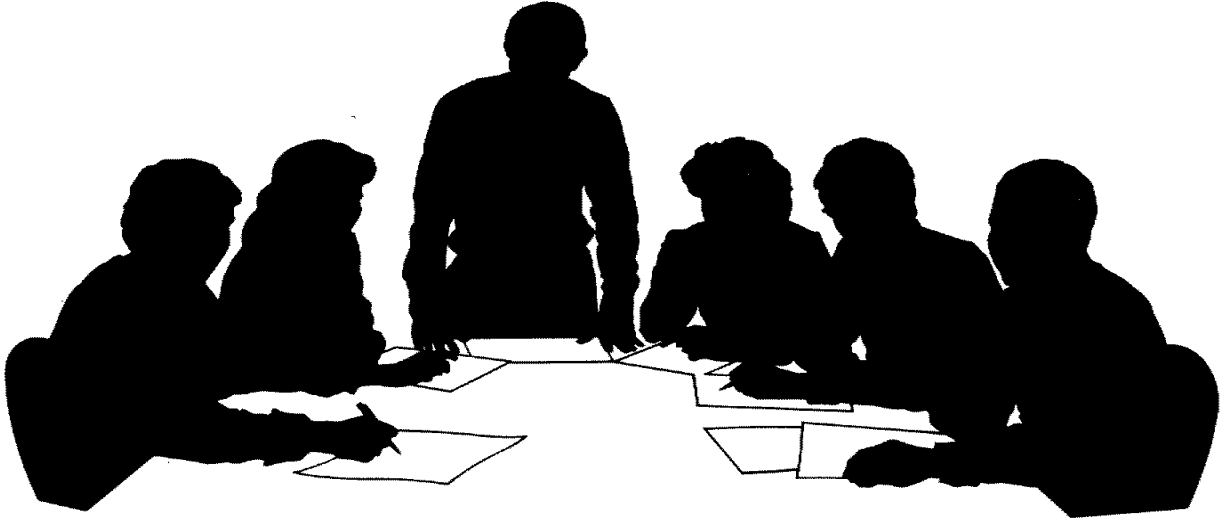
Remember you to need to be well groomed because you are representing your chapter and its members. So make sure you are clean and well groomed.

Do not make any decisions with out the officers and if need be you can call a special meeting.

## **SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, PEOPLE FIRST- By Helen DeHamer**

1. The sergeant-at-arms is the person who controls the meeting when it gets out of hand. Then the president should recall the meeting to order.
2. The sergeant-at-arms goes to the officer's meetings and helps plan the agenda.
3. The sergeant-at-arms helps in the meetings. Like set up the television or an overhead if needed by the speaker.
4. The sergeant-at-arms is to sit at the entrance door to make sure everyone signs in and hands out information.

You also need to make sure you are well groomed and you look nice for the meetings. And, just like the other officers, never make any decisions with out the board.



*The members of the People First chapter are a team.  
They work together to make their community a better one for  
everyone! People First members make the most of their abilities!*

## COMMUNICATION

By David Haynes, People First of Springfield

The purpose of communicating is to facilitate the exchange of information so that decisions can be made without speculation. The way information is exchanged will differ from chapter to chapter. What each chapter needs to do is to decide is how often and in what way do they communicate. There are chapters that don't have e-mail. Some don't have but limited access to phones and limited phone usage. There is the option of letter writing, but of course there is the consideration of postage expense and how much each chapter has allocated for postage. Word of mouth works inside the chapter but time and distance are present barriers with chapters that are spaced apart by long distances. The question is "How do we break down these barriers?"

- E-mail may be used by anyone having personal computer such as the public library.
- Written letter-may be used when all other means of communication are not practical. (Provided there are funds for postage)
- Telephone may be used when there is a telephone accessible and long distance is authorized and the information is needed immediately.
- Word of Mouth may be used when local meetings are taking place or when meeting in person.

When communicating it is important to assess the urgency and importance and purpose of that communication. Then determine

the best avenue of communicating for example if the matter you are communicating about requires conversation then the telephone might be the most efficient way of communicating.

To determine the best way to communicate check to see what forms of communication you have available and what forms of communication the other person or chapter has available to them. For example if both your chapter and the other chapter have e-mail then e-mail could be the form of communication. Otherwise some other form of communication is going to have to be used. Such as letter writing.

Then you need to designate who will do the communicating. Such as the president or secretary or some other representative. This person should be skilled in written and spoken communication and have computer skills if E-mail is used.

Next the message needs to be put in a form that can be understood by the receiver. This way the flow of information can be clear and concise. Then the message needs to be sent in the way that seems most plausible whether that be a phone call, letter, e-mail or word of mouth.

*Communication makes the world go round!  
Happy Communicating!*

## **INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION** - By David Haynes, Springfield Chapter

Interpersonal communication takes on two forms verbal (spoken) non-verbal (unspoken). We not only communicate by what we say. But also by our actions. It is said that actions speak



louder than words. That is because we communicate through our actions more than we communicate by what we say. For this reason it is important to make our verbals match up with our non-verbals. A problem occurs when our words say one thing when our actions are saying something else.

The quality of our lives depends on how well we communicate. We communicate through what is known as body language. For example when we are angry our face will show it in our eyes and mouth. The tone of our voice is also a way that we communicate. For example if we are in a cheery mood our voice will be light and cheery. What we do affects what others do back to us. If we act angry, others will act angry, too.

We also communicate by listening. Listening is not the same as hearing. When listening we try to interpret what we are hearing. Hearing is the involuntary reception of sound. In order for communication to occur there must be a sender and a receiver. The communication must be clear and understandable to the receiver.

The best way to make sure the message was understood is to have the receiver repeat the message in his own words. If the receiver's version and your version agree you have communicated.

Good communication is vital to any organization. Quality communication affects how well an organization runs. Many problems can be avoided when the communication is clear and understandable.

## COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

- by David Haynes, Springfield Chapter

Barriers to communication are the greatest stumbling blocks to any organization. These blocks inhibit the flow of information and eventually cause the shut down of an organization.

One of the greatest barriers is the lack of a response. The purpose of a message is to prompt some sort of action. When there is a lack of action on the part of the receiver the sender gets frustrated because work can't get without a return message or action. Always assume that any message received requires a timely response. Timely meaning within the shortest amount of time possible, this is because of deadlines.

Another communication problem is assumption or assuming. This is making a judgement without getting the facts. When we assume we are opening ourselves up to problems because we are acting without being informed and the results can be devastating.

Another communication barrier is not listening. Listening is not just hearing but evaluating the meaning of the message and treating the sender like a valued person. When we don't listen we are not only shutting out the information but also treating the sender as a non-person.



Barriers to communication create problems but if we can avoid these barrier problems can be minimized. Problems are always going to exist within an organization. However when we address the problem and apply the right solution the problem disappears.

## **TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION**

**- By David Haynes, Springfield Chapter**

The telephone allows two or more people separated by time and distance to communicate verbally. When using the telephone it is important to log the person you called, the number called, the time the call was made and the time the call ended. This will help keep track of long distance usage and control telephone expense. The call should be brief and contain only the important facts. Local calls are generally standard service for a local phone company but long distance calls should be held to a minimum. However if long distance calls are necessary toll free numbers should be used when ever possible.

The person making the call should have good verbal communication skills and be able to take notes of the telephone conversation. This way information can be exchanged in a smooth and orderly fashion. To help facilitate telephone calls a record of telephone numbers should kept close at hand. This record should be kept up to date as much as possible so that numbers can be referred to when a call is being made.

Courtesy should always be the key when speaking on the telephone with someone. A good professional voice tone should be used and remember to say hello and goodbye. Your message should be brief and to the point so that you don't lose the interest of the person called. If you call someone and that person is not there leave a message and phone number so that person can call you back.

If you were left with phone messages while you were out those messages should be answered promptly with a return phone call. To help facilitate this an answering machine might be the

best tool. The telephone is a useful communicating device when used prudently and efficiently.

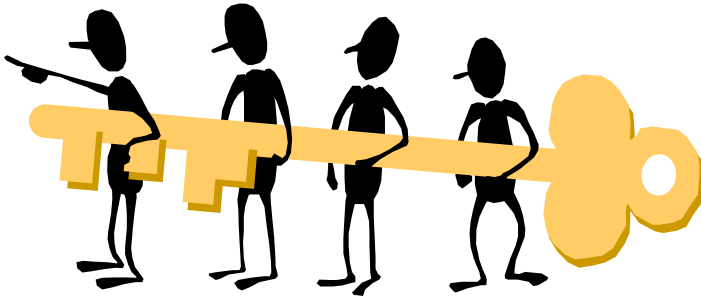
## **COMPUTERS- By David Haynes, Springfield Chapter**

Email is the fastest way to send information especially over long distances. But a lot of research has to go into seeking an e-mail server. Some servers charge a fee some servers don't charge a fee. Then you need access to a computer. You also need access to a phone line. This is possible if someone in your chapter is computer literate and owns a computer and is willing to let the computer be used for this purpose. The library or local Regional Center could be a good place to go for the use of a computer.

Once your server is selected you need to set up an account with them and get an e-mail name and address. Once that is done you need to designate who will be sending and receiving email messages. You will also need to decide how often email is checked and sent out.

Another feature of the Internet is chat. Chat makes it possible for two or more people that live great distance apart to hold a meeting and exchange information. Many times this can be done at no cost. Call us for help in arranging to get on-line!! Those who use chat must have an e-mail account and most importantly be computer literate. We have weekly meetings on-line. JOIN US!!! Our website address is: <http://www.missouripeoplefirst.org>

The computer can be a valuable tool in the communication process. Call the People First State Office. We will help you get on-line!



## **THE KEY TO GOOD MEETINGS** *for Presidents of People First Groups*

### **BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING:**

- Call your advisor. Schedule a meeting at which you can discuss the agenda of the next meeting.
- Make sure the meeting place is ADA accessible.
- Check your list of members to send fliers to, and be sure it is correct. Also make sure that if you scheduled speakers, that they are called and reminded to come.
- Send the notice about the meeting and the meeting agenda to all of the members of the group at least two weeks in advance. The notice should say where the meeting is, the date & time of the meeting, and what will be on the agenda at the meeting.

### **AT EVERY MEETING:**

- First, everyone at the meeting should introduce themselves.
- Make sure an area is set aside in the back for advisors and people who came to the meeting to support other people.
- Have the minutes of the last meeting read by the secretary.
- Have the treasurer give a report on the money the group controls.
- When people are speaking, give them plenty of time to finish.
- Keep to the agenda. Don't get off the subject.
- Make sure everyone in the group gets to share their ideas.
- Only one person can talk at a time. Remind people to save their ideas to share with the whole group.
- Don't leave anyone alone after the meeting. Stay until everyone is gone.

### **AFTER THE MEETING:**

- Send a thank you note to the people who provided the meeting place.

## **THE UNIQUE ROLE OF PEOPLE FIRST ADVISORS**

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TW

As a People First Advisor, you are not a member of the chapter. Yet you are closely tied to the chapter, and have the best interests of the chapter, and its members at heart.

You may not vote or make decisions, yet the goals and activities of the chapter may only be fulfilled through your efforts.

Every People First chapter deserves an advisor who is able to act as a resource person for the People First members, and who is capable of helping the members settle disputes, plan activities, and set goals which do not reflect the opinion or goals of the advisor.

Some thoughts members of the Missouri People First Steering Committee have, on advisors:

- Know there will be disagreements
- Communicate with the members directly, not through other members
- Be honest and smart
- Follow through
- Come to all the meetings
- Back us up on the rules, when we have to point out someone 's mistake
- Advise us
- Ask us questions
- Listen
- Ask us what we want you to do
- Take advise from us
- Learn what support each person needs

- Be a friend
- Find ways to help everyone get involved
- Make sure everyone knows when and where the meeting is.
  
- Don't take over for the leader
- Don't dictate what we should do
- Don't be afraid to speak
- Don't make decisions without members
- Don't assume that everyone agrees
- Don't talk too much
- Don't do too much for us
- Please don't quit

## **ADVISOR OF PEOPLE FIRST**

**By Helen DeHamer, Secretary. People First of Missouri**

As an advisor you are not eligible to be a member of People First but one who enjoys working with people with disabilities as they carry out their plans and dreams.

As an Advisor you should be someone who can listen and understand what your chapter wants to do. The members are to learn, not to watch you do the work. You are there to guide them when they need your help. You need to be able to tell the difference between helping and letting them do it for themselves.

Train members to be able to think for themselves. Example: if someone asks a question then ask a question back that will begin him or her to think. The more you let people think for themselves the more they will grow and learn.

## **What Makes a Good Advisor?**

**By Helen DeHamer, Secretary, People First of Missouri**

1. Someone who can devote equal time to the People First Chapter.
2. Someone, who is clean and dresses appropriate, be a role model.
3. Someone who is knowledgeable of the things that are happening to or for people with developmental disabilities.
4. Give advice when needed.
5. Help get training for the officers so they can train the members of the chapter.
6. Attend every meeting including officer meetings.
7. Train officers, especially the president, the importance of keeping control of the meeting.
8. Make sure members know the proper way to vote.



## **MISSOURI PEOPLE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE**

TW

In Missouri, there are approximately 97,000 people with developmental disabilities. People with developmental disability labels have a history of being excluded from the community and forced to live in isolation, with limited opportunity for social contact with the larger community.

Generally, the needs of people with developmental disabilities have been defined by others, such as parents, or professionals, and they have seldom been offered the training and support they need to represent themselves. People First chapters are self-advocacy training groups which are an effective way to assist people with developmental disabilities to learn to speak out for themselves, support and encourage each other, enhance their independence, and develop leadership skills.

With the support of local chapters across the state of Missouri, members of people first have learned to advocate for themselves in areas such as obtaining education, buying a home, getting married, moving to an apartment, starting a hobby, and being able to make advances in employment.

Local chapters of People First are being developed all over the United States as well as in other countries. At present there are 40 local People First chapters in Missouri. Each local chapter elects 2 representatives to attend quarterly state-wide planning meetings with their advisor. This planning group is known as the People First of Missouri Statewide Steering Committee. Detailed information about the Mission, Goals and Activities of the Steering committee are given in Chapter 2 "How People First Works" page 14 - 16.

The Steering Committee is further divided into 8 statewide subcommittees, each with responsibility for developing strategies of action in that specific area, which are then brought to the Steering Committee for vote, at the quarterly meetings. You do not have to be on the steering committee to be on a subcommittee. Subcommittees are open to any people first member across the state. These subcommittees are:

- Grant writing and program development
- Conference and Workshop Planning
- Budget and Finance
- Outreach
- Speakers Bureau
- Communication
- Transportation
- Training

Activities of the Steering Committee in 1999 were:

- Quarterly training and business meetings
- Assistance to local chapters in development and training
- Development of multi-media training materials
- A joint state-wide conference for People First members and others
- Training for self-advocates in leadership skills and for board membership
- Presentations by the Speakers Bureau at 16 conferences in the state, the 5 state region, nationally and internationally.
- A statewide grant writing team produced two major grants in 1999 that will make training available statewide.

There are four steering committee meetings that are attended each year, by the elected representatives from each chapter. (See Chapter 3 for information on elections and officer roles). At these meetings, there is first a business meeting conducted by the elected state officers, followed by an interactive training workshop for the representatives by the VISTA volunteers who are also People First members.

It is then the responsibility of each representative to take home a full report from the Steering committee and share it with their local chapter.



## **PEOPLE FIRST SPEAKER'S BUREAU-**

**By Anita Carroll, President,  
People First of Missouri**

It is important for People First of Missouri Members to do Public Speaking at Conferences and other Public places to let everyone know what is needed in their lives, to make it their life instead of a program.

**Speakers:** are People First Members who do the Speaking in front of an audience.

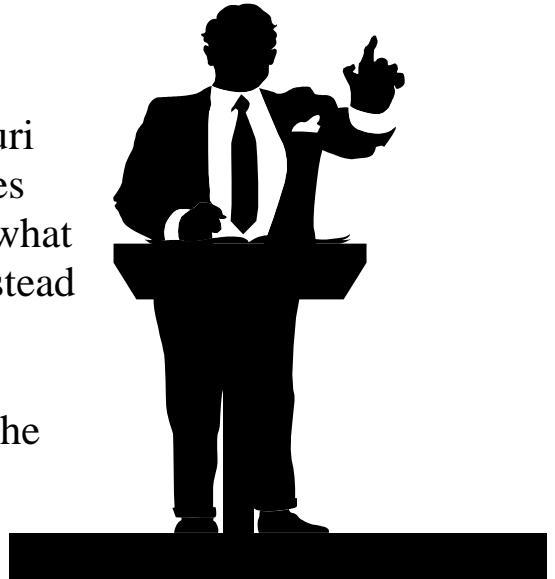
**Bureau:** is a body of members that form a group.

**Speaker's Bureau Chairperson:** Who ever is appointed by People First Members at the state level.

### **People First:**

Is a Self-Advocate Organization formed to teach people with Developmental Disabilities to Speak up about what they want and need in their life. Speaking Up is a very important part of having a life.

Knowing that you have the right to Speak and plan what you want in your life is important. Some people with Developmental Disabilities can't speak for themselves so you have the right and responsibility to help others by Speaking for them. Who better than a People First Member should do the Speaking? We know best what is needed in our life.



**Missouri Statewide Steering Committee of People First:**  
It is the Statewide People First Members that Plan which People First Members speak at specific Conferences, and on which Panels. They also Act as a point of call for outsiders who want to arrange to have a People First Member or Members of Missouri to Speak.

**To be active in the Statewide Speakers Bureau:**  
It is best that you start by speaking at a local level at a People First Meeting, then go to Schools, College Classes, Community Organizations, then apply to People First Statewide Speakers Bureau.

**Public Speaking:** Let outsiders know that People First has voices that need to be heard pertaining to issues.

- Planning our own Person Centered Plan
- How we can work out our own lives "With a little help from our Friends"
- Self-determination
- Working with Staff
- Owning our own Homes
- Legislation Issues "You and the Law"
- The right to an Education
- Guardianship
- Transportation
- Other Important Issue's

**Conferences:**

A Conference for People First Members is a big meeting place where People talk and give you ideas on how to make decisions. As People First Members we can Teach Directors, Providers, Staff, Families and Consumers about People First issues and needs.

Families attend so we can inform them about our feelings. Their family member may be trying to tell them, but coming from another person may help the Family to understand what their People First Family member has been trying to tell them. Attending Conferences shows the whole picture for everyone.

Some Conferences we do Speaking at include:

- People First Conferences
- National People First Conferences
- International People First Conferences
- Self Determination Conferences
- ISSUE FORUM Conferences
- AAMR Conferences
- MACDDS Conferences
- MO-TASH Conferences

### **Who Can Serve on the People First of Missouri Speakers Bureau:**

Any People First of Missouri Members that want to voice their opinions.

### **Requirements:**

1. Be a People First Member.
2. Be a People First Member that has done Public Speaking.
3. Apply for the Speakers Bureau by writing a short paragraph about how People First has helped you with your life, or about a Person Centered Plan, or another self determination topic.

Send your paragraph to:  
Speakers Bureau, People First  
2220 Holmes 3rd.Floor  
Kansas City Mo. 64108

4. If you need a Support Person or Advisor they must be of the same Gender as you. (Due to sharing a room the Support Person or Advisor must be of the same Gender as the Speaker.)

### **Duties as a Speaker To Take Seriously When Speaking:**

1. Be on time.
2. Know your Topic "What you are speaking about" and stay on that topic only.
3. Practice your talk with other Speakers before Speaking to an audience.
4. Be Clean.
5. Be formally dressed. (Dress Presentable.)
6. Be Assertive when Speaking, try to keep eye contact if you can.
7. Feel good about what you are Speaking about. Even if it's not a Positive issue, you Speaking may be what makes it a Positive Issue.
8. Speak Loud and Clear (If you need help the Chairperson will help you when needed.)
9. Be proud you are representing People First of Missouri.

10. Question & Answer: Inform to the Best of Your Ability. Do not be afraid to answer Questions that are asked, and if you don't know the answer, maybe one of the People First Members on the panel may know the answer. Ask them. If they do know ask them to stand and reply to the question. If no one knows the answer ask the person to meet you after the session and take their name and address and connect them with the right Resource Center that can answer their question. Someone will always be there to help you to get the correct information.

**If an Emergency comes up:**

- Let an Advisor or Support Person know right away, so that you can be safe.
- Let the Speakers Bureau Chairperson know right away so that the Chairperson can get someone else to take your place at the time the emergency comes up. If this happens you are not taken off the Speakers Bureau.

**Cost:**

There is no cost to You to be on the People First of Missouri Speakers Bureau:

- Most Conferences we present at will furnish a room if the presentation requires an overnight stay.
- Sometimes meals are added to the Conference that you speak at. Sometimes you may be responsible to pay for meals. If this is a hardship to you, please let us know ahead of time.
- If for any reason you have to have a Support Person or Advisor it is a requirement that they be of the same Gender so you can share a room if needed. If they are of different Gender the cost



of an extra room will be to you and your Support Person or Advisor.

## **People First:**

There are many outside resources to help answer questions about Developmental Disabilities. Like anything else there are Good and Bad. People First wants to help people to understand we can have a positive life.

People First Members haven't studied these issues we have lived these issues. We can Speak to others about our needs at Conferences and Public Meetings. Our Education is in our bodies and minds. We have learned about ourselves and we want to teach others how we can have productive lives.

It has taken us many years to understand we do have Rights and Responsibilities to inform others that we can have a life and we can Speak Up and let others know we can plan a life for ourselves. Years ago we were not taught to Speak Up for ourselves due to Developmental Disabilities. Because we were different we had no life. People First of Missouri Speaking Up at Conferences has showed we are able to let everyone know even though we are different in one way we have strengths in other ways.

We can grow as human beings and we can Speak at Conferences and do other Public Speaking to get these idea to others. Our Directors, Providers, Staff, Consumers, and Families of Developmental Disabilities people need to understand that we are People with disabilities but we have always been People First.

## CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

-By Genell Terry, Advisor, Lilbourn

### Conferences and workshops help to fulfill basic needs such as:

1. Establish good communication between people.
2. Discuss our goals.
3. Emphasize involvement in a project.
4. Alleviate stress areas.
5. Present accomplishments.
6. Sharpen our skills.
7. Develop awareness and willingness in people.
8. Unite the chapters.
9. Present and combat trouble spots in the project.
10. Develop positive attitude in people
11. Broaden perspectives and awareness of issues
12. Simplify and increase the input of information so that all involved will grow in knowledge Our objective is to hold effective conferences and workshops which train individuals to think positive, to follow instructions and maintain balance.  
Thereafter the future of the chapter or project will be stabilized.

## **Things to Consider in Planning a Conference:**

1. We need two coordinators to oversee arranging for hotels and making sure all arrangements are carried through.
2. Where will the conference be held? City and location.
3. How many are attending? Should we use a sign up list.
4. What subjects will be discussed?
5. What is the theme of this conference?
6. How long will the conference be held? Days and hours.
7. Will there be a guest speaker? Is a podium needed?
8. Will we wear nametags, should we get folder packets for handouts.
9. How will this conference benefit the members.
10. Do we have a video to show?
11. Also arrange for meals.
12. Consider mobility impairment and use of wheelchair.
13. Is transportation needed?
14. Notifying all chapters and advisors.
15. Create an atmosphere conducive to learning.

We need to be optimistic, expect a favorable outcome. Think positive and devote your abilities to become a strong united chapter. When conducting the training have fun be relaxed. Allow for interaction. Begin and end on time. Repeat questions from the audience. Speak in a normal voice to the audience.

### **How to Arrange Things!**

1. Should we sit around a table?
2. Bring a note pad and pen. (Note taking)
3. Always start meeting off with points of encouragement.
4. Exchange greetings. Everyone briefly tell some nice statement about themselves. This breaks the ice. Especially if this is a new group.
5. Address old business- up date results.
6. Address new business- Ask questions, give input, open communication.
7. If there is a video or computer program use it. Good teaching tool.
8. Use repetition in the conference, it gets peoples attention and help them remember.
9. Be mindful to take short breaks and have refreshments available.
10. Ask if any need help in their chapters?
11. If other chapters have materials to share allow for this arrangement.
12. Remember to thank all for attending. Urge all to continue to work hard with their chapters. Share your knowledge as you learn.

## **Cautions:**

1. Never discredit someone's idea.
2. Be considerate, show respect as we speak to others.
3. Display manners and kindness.
4. Always develop in the members an attitude of willingness and one of self-value, this depends on how you treat others.
5. Tell the members how important each one is to the chapter.
6. Encourage continued teamwork.
7. Be honest if you say you will do something keep your word.

*Appreciation is very important for the future of the chapter. If someone have or develop a certain skill well, tell that member you appreciate his or her hard work. Communication is a two way street, when done well we express ourselves honestly and without offense to others, therefore diminishing problems.*

## **Problem Solving!**

*Address any trouble spots with the facts. It is never a one on one ordeal. We emphasize we are a team. As a team we are here to alleviate stress and solve problems.*

1. Address issues up front.
2. Suggest the individual explain a inappropriate action. Always listen closely, allow individual to express him or her self.
3. Avoid becoming impatient or frustrated. Ask questions.
4. Your actions show inappropriateness.
5. Are you going through a crisis now?
6. Is there anything that you need to tell us?
7. We are concerned about you and the future of our chapter. Is the work load too much for you now?

### **If Serious Problems Continue:**

*Be polite. You can say: “We are concerned not only for you but also for the whole chapter. The reputation of the chapter is important. Your actions may have hurt our reputation in the community (or another member).. It was inappropriate and others were offended. Therefore we decided to -----.”*

Combat problems before they mushroom. One bad apple will spoil the whole barrel. Time doesn't solve every problem. The integral part of our chapter is to maintain positive members.

If an individual continues to be negative, it should be discussed by other members and they could vote on dismissal of this person, according to the bylaws that the chapter established at set-up. This is only for extreme problems. Some of these are discussed later. We also talk about them at our training sessions.

Come to the training sessions in your area and statewide. Don't try to go it alone.



## **HOW TO PLAN WORTHWHILE MEETINGS FOR YOUR CHAPTER**

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1. Make sure that everyone in the chapter knows when and where the meeting will be.
2. Make sure that the advisor knows what the Advisor role is, and that the Officers are prepared to run the meeting.
3. Have an Officers meeting ahead of time to plan the agenda.
4. Find ways to get everyone involved.
5. Make sure that everyone understands what is going on in the meetings, and what is being talked about.
6. Make sure that the discussions are real and important to the members during the meeting.
7. Make a 3 to 6 month plan with the group, so that people will be working toward something.
8. Make sure that the meetings are interesting and rewarding to people.
9. Face any problems that the group is having. Problems won't just go away on their own. We have to work through them. Some of our best learning occurs when we work through our problems together.
10. Call or write to the Steering Committee if you need ideas or suggestions. The purpose of the state office is to help chapters do their work better, and to increase the ability of members to live self-determined lives.



## **ALL CHAPTERS FOLLOW THE SAME PROCEDURES.**

**- Call us if you need training in them!**

The business portion of the chapter meetings should be the same, worldwide.

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The president of the chapter calls the meeting to order. Many chapters use a wooden gavel to tap on the table and get everyone's attention.

### **2. ROLL CALL OR INTRODUCTIONS**

In this portion of the meeting, each member says his or her name, or it is read aloud.

### **3. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The secretary reads aloud the minutes of the last meeting. The president asks if there are any questions or concerns about the minutes. If there are not, the President asks for a motion to be made to accept the minutes as read. The motion is seconded by a member. Then there is a vote taken either by voice or hand raising.

### **4. THE TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer reads the report, then the same steps are taken as after the Minutes were read.

### **5. OLD BUSINESS**

The President discusses the old business. These are things that have been talked about before, but they are not completed. Sometimes the President will ask for committee reports at this time. The Steering Committee representative will make a report at this time, if there has been a Steering Committee meeting since the last chapter meeting.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

The President leads a discussion about new business at this point. These are topics which have not yet been discussed. Some will be raised at the meeting, and others will have been called into the President earlier.

When any decisions need to be made, the members of People First (never the Advisors) vote on the issue after a thorough discussion has been made.

These are the steps used in voting:

- The President asks for a full discussion of the matter at hand. Everyone is encouraged to voice their opinion and ask questions. Many chapters go around the room, so that even less assertive people will have a chance to say what is on their mind.
- The President asks if anyone would like to make a motion to vote on the issue.
- After someone says, “I move that we do thus and so”, the President asks if he hears a “second”. That way it is clear that several people in the chapter want to vote on the matter.
- After the motion is made and seconded, the President asks if anyone has any further comment to make on the matter before the vote is taken. If no one says anything, the President asks “Everyone in favor of thus and so , raise your hand”. After a count of hands, the President says, “Everyone against thus and so, raise your hand”. These votes are counted also.
- The President announces the result to the group, and the Secretary writes it down in the minutes.

## 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

This portion of the chapter meeting is when people can make announcements concerning their own news, news of general interest, or legislative news. The President will also use this time to remind people of upcoming events.

## 8. THE PROGRAM

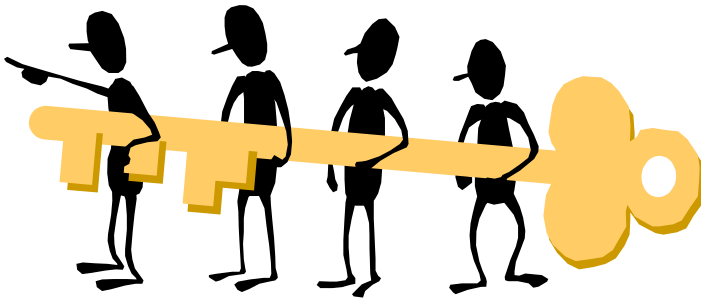
This portion of the chapter meeting may vary a lot from place to place. Sometimes this is the time when a chapter learns new things or does an activity together. There may be a guest speaker or a training video, or a role-play to do. There may be a discussion on a topic of interest to the members.

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The President taps the gavel to announce that the meeting is adjourned

## 10. REFRESHMENTS

Every 3 to 6 months the members of every People First chapter should decide upon another topic of interest. All of the meetings in that time period should support the project or topic on which they decided.



## **THE KEY TO GOOD MEETINGS** *for Presidents of People First Groups*

### **BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING:**

- Call your advisor. Schedule a meeting at which you can discuss the agenda of the next meeting.
- Make sure the meeting place is ADA accessible.
- Check your list of members to send fliers to, and be sure it is correct. Also make sure that if you scheduled speakers, that they are called and reminded to come.
- Send the notice about the meeting and the meeting agenda to all of the members of the group at least two weeks in advance. The notice should say where the meeting is, the date & time of the meeting, and what will be on the agenda at the meeting.

### **AT EVERY MEETING:**

- First, everyone at the meeting should introduce themselves.
- Make sure an area is set aside in the back for advisors and people who came to the meeting to support other people.
- Have the minutes of the last meeting read by the secretary.
- Have the treasurer give a report on the money the group controls.
- When people are speaking, give them plenty of time to finish.
- Keep to the agenda. Don't get off the subject.
- Make sure everyone in the group gets to share their ideas.
- Only one person can talk at a time. Remind people to save their ideas to share with the whole group.
- Don't leave anyone alone after the meeting. Stay until everyone is gone.

### **AFTER THE MEETING:**

- Send a thank you note to the people who provided the meeting place.

## **HOW TO RAISE FUNDS FOR YOUR CHAPTER**

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### **FUNDRAISING-** By John Terry, Lilbourn

Most people are afraid to ask someone else for money. They are afraid they will fail and afraid they will lose face. A few admit they are afraid, but most would rather give other excuses. The job of a good fundraiser is to teach volunteers how to conquer their fear of the unknown.

The first step is understanding that each person comes complete with his or her own set of fears and hang-ups, and the package of inhibitions usually includes a fear of asking for money. The second step is realizing this is normal and nothing to be ashamed of. The third step is working with the volunteers so they can get control of their fears.

We must understand and appreciate our volunteers' real feelings because when chapter members succeed at fundraising they do more than bring in money for the chapter. They have also overcome their own fear. When they raise money they have won a personal victory. They can then go forward to other ventures.

The whole chapter should understand and appreciate the achievements of fundraising. Successful fundraising takes intelligence, concern, hard work and courage. Our fundraising chapter members deserve a lot of applause and appreciation. Each fundraising member should be rewarded. In the business world, the person would probably get a raise in salary or even a trip to Europe.

But since we can't afford any such, what we can give is recognition. Commend each one for doing a good job and really mean it even private recognition is in order in addition to public recognition. It is no small achievement to raise money. It requires overcoming deep fears and inhibitions about money, belief in the cause and mission of your chapter and appreciation of human values.

Money is the moving force of the chapter's actions, it keeps the group moving. Fundraisers are vital to the life of the chapter and must be appreciated and applauded to keep the group alive and growing.

As a fundraiser we have a first responsibility to see that the money is being raised for an honest ethical purpose. This means that our chapters are open for anyone who wants to join, enjoy democratic decision making, clear complete up-to-date reporting for all the members information, and sensible financial controls.

The chapter makes sure that the members who help raise the money, also have a say in how it is spent. To make fundraising a success there are three areas we want to keep in mind:

1. First, choose events and techniques the chapter members like to do. Let them plan a special event or campaign and do it their way. Remember, if they plan it, it will succeed.
2. Second, make it fun. We can take on any job and make it fun if we want to. Give the event a name that suggests excitement even though they know it will mean work, but most of all be enthusiastic yourself, its catching.
3. Third, point out that one of our big advantages of the fundraising event is the quick reward. When your chapter meets their goals they have an accomplishment to be proud of especially if the chapter is involved in a prolonged action event

4. or campaign. Yes, it's a great lift for the whole chapter when they see that the fundraising event really worked and ended.

## **GRANTS –By John Terry**

### **What is a Grant (grant in aid) ?**

A grant of funds to an institution or an individual to subsidize or provide financial assistance to a project or program. This financial assistance is usually provided by the federal or state government.

### **How should we approach getting a Grant?**

First, we should keep in mind that the foundation or federal program has goals of its own. Thought should be given to how your program will further these goals. It is often wise to be specific in our wording. Too often, organizations appear to be concerned only with what the grant will do for them and not on what it could accomplish for those individuals and organizations contributing the money.

### **Four Steps of the Grant Seeking Process:**

- (1) develop an idea for a project
- (2) write a proposal
- (3) locate funding sources by word-of-mouth, previous grant experience or in one or more directories.
- (4) submit a proposal to those funding sources and wait for their decisions The grants success depends on systematically focusing not on what you want, but on how your project fulfills the needs of the granting agency.



## Writing the Grant

Many grant seekers feel that the proposal is the most important aspect of their grant search, however, the proper emphasis for the grant seeker should be on what comes before and after the preparation of the proposal. Effective research of funding sources, or a successful in-person contact with a funding official can do more to get you a grant than even the best proposal.

Its a good idea to use interesting illustrations and analogies when appropriate. Use as little jargon as possible. Remember, your goal is to make your reviewer read to the end of your proposal and respond favorably. You can only do this if your proposal is readable. In addition to style, format can also help make your proposal more readable. Try to avoid page after page of prose paragraph. Instead, think of yourself as a graphics designer. Consider using the following when you create page layouts for your proposal.

- short paragraphs
- indentations
- underlings
- charts, diagrams, and graphics
- chapter headings

These format excitors will make your text pleasant to look at and a lot easier to read. If you want to write a proposal that is strong from the beginning to end, you have to start looking at things from a funding official's point of view.

Shift the emphasis away from what you want, spend more time thinking, finding out, and writing about what your funding source wants. In short this means preparation, research, personal contact,

planning and lots of coordination and sorting information all the while tailoring it to fit your proposal.

## **Record Keeping**

A way to insure good continuing support is to remain in touch with the funding officials after the grant period. This means keeping good records. Always keep your records tuned-up and ready for quick reference and ready for action. Make sure all data in your files is applicable and up-to-date. Be ready with your new project ideas. You want to locate prospective funding sources, determine what they want, and present your organization as the very thing they've been looking for. So keep in mind that grant research, effective writing and accurate up-to-date record keeping are a winning team to grant success year after year.

## **FOR LOCAL CHAPTER FUNDRAISING (T.W.):**

Each chapter needs to have a small committee of people who develop ideas for fundraising for the chapter. The place to begin is with what the needs of the chapter are!

Most chapters need to have some money for these things:

- Mailing Informational Fliers to the Chapter Members (\$150)
- Buying two or more new Manuals a year (\$30)
- Travel and Expenses for the Officers and Advisor to attend the Statewide Conference each year (\$500)
- Telephone (may be provided by the Advisor's job)
- Refreshments for meetings (\$0 to \$200)
- Travel for the Steering Committee Representative to attend Quarterly meetings (\$0 - \$200, depending upon whether the representative needs money for gasoline, or whether the representative needs a bus ticket)

As you can see the actual needs of the chapter are fairly modest. A great deal can be done on just that amount of money.

Many chapters find that they are able to get donations to cover these expenses from local agencies who are friends of People First ideals and beliefs. These include:

- Your local County SB40 Board
- Your local Regional Center
- Your local Regional Advisory Council
- Your local ARC

If you need help locating these resources, look in the resource guide in the back of this manual, or call the State People First Office for assistance in locating the numbers you need.

Work on developing a good relationship with others in your community who believe in self advocacy and self determination. They may be able to assist by funding one of the projects: such as being the agency that supports the Representative by paying their expenses to the Quarterly meetings.

Attend all State Advisor and Officer training sessions as they are offered. We work on this type of thing every year, together.

## **SOLVING PROBLEMS AS THEY ARISE (T.W.)**

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Never let the sun set on a problem you have, without starting to work on solving it. It will not 'go away' by itself, and often will grow, if left alone.

People First chapters are full of energy and excitement, as people explore important issues and find themselves. But People First chapters are subject to the same stresses as those present in any group of people.

Some members are going to be selfish, some quarrelsome, some will gossip and start trouble and some will seize control and limit the rights of others in the chapter.

The advisor, working closely with the president and other officers can do a lot to reduce the effect of these actions. We can discuss a few things, in this space. Please attend all State Training Workshops for a chance to explore other issues.

1. Scenario: One member turns every discussion into a personal topic, and they talk long periods of time during the meetings.

Response: In private the Advisor and President (or other officer) must use tact and care in explaining to the member that while their personal issues are very important to the Advisor and President, it is not fair to take up meeting time by discussing one person. Make it clear that unless there is time to equally discuss every person, no one person may turn a topic into a discussion of their personal interests. Typically the offender will cry out that "everyone was interested- because it affects them too". The advisor and president must find a positive way to let the person know that they will no longer be able to talk about themselves in the chapter meeting. Tell them that you will have to remind them, in public, if they forget. If at

the next meeting, they do need to be reminded, do it in a way that no one else knows it has been discussed earlier, to help the offender save face. You could have the Sargent at Arms or President say, “While that is very interesting, Mary, it is a personal topic to you, and we need to keep this discussion general so that everyone can be involved in it. You and I can discuss your situation later.” This may need to occur more than once. If the Officers’ warnings are not heeded by the talkative member, the advisor could say something like, “Let’s hear from someone else, now. Maybe we should go around the room so everyone has a chance to speak”.

2. **Scenario:** The Chapter President is very ill. He has been in Intensive Care, but he attends the meeting anyway, because he fears losing his role if the Vice President fills in for him. He appears to be really ill, and the Advisor worries that he may collapse while at a meeting. (One advisor was even asked to pick up the President at the Hospital before the meeting and take the President back to the Hospital after the meeting!)

**Response:** The advisor can let the President know ahead of time that you feel his position as leader is safe. The bylaws have been designed to allow for the President to be temporarily replaced by the Vice President, during an illness, and that he will certainly regain his position upon his return.

Point out that it is a great opportunity for the Vice President to get some experience, although the President will be sorely missed by everyone. It is also a great time for the group to give positive feedback to the President by sending a heartfelt card with everyone’s names on it.

The Vice President could also be given a short training session on the work he or she will be undertaking, and given an estimate of the number of sessions that the President will be absent. That way, it is clear to everyone that the Vice President is filling in for a specified period only.

3. **Scenario:** The Chapter has a member who loves the excitement of a fundraising project. She or he continually tries to raise enthusiasm in the group for one or another project that has nothing to do with People First's real work of training or self determination, but that brings the member into the limelight. The advisor finds that much of the advisor's time is being spent on long, involved "fundraising" projects that raise very little money in the end, but that take up a huge chunk of time.

**Response:** This is a critical issue, because it brings into question the very reasons for which the Advisor chose to support People First and the reasons why members chose to belong. The members have the right to determine the activities of the chapter. However, the advisor is not bound to stay with the chapter past the time that the advisor feels comfortable doing so.

The members as a whole, not individually, should determine what the chapter is to do, and what the goals of the chapter should be. The advisor may be able to help find ways of doing things that will work better for the members, but does not have the right to set the goals for the group.

In this case, there are several good solutions. One critical first step is for the advisor to talk with the group about what his or her opinion is. The opinions of everyone in the group must be sought. Then, if the values of the chapter members merit it, it may be necessary to change the bylaws and the original goals of the group, in order to have a chapter in which the activities match the goals and objectives and mission statement.

If this changes the chapter into an organization that is no longer of interest to the advisor, she or he needs to let the group know that. They can either find another advisor, or the advisor can help the group find a co-advisor who will handle the fundraising projects, leaving the original advisor free to work on training issues.

Solving problems like these takes time and energy and kindness. It is not easy for people to work in groups, many times, but many times the gains are worth the struggle.

These are among the topics covered at Advisor training sessions. We are all working together to make our chapters responsive to the needs of all the members, and to create ways of handling our responsibilities as advisors that meet the Mission, Goals and Objectives of our chapters.

### **Frequently asked Questions- By Helen DeHamer, Springfield**

#### ***1. What if I can't get the members to be quiet so we can have our meetings?***

First I would start off the meeting with a little speech about how the meeting is not a social but a very important meeting. Ask them to please be polite and consider others so everyone can hear what is being said. That the social hour is after the meeting and if they have any comments to please raise their hands to speak. If this does not work then I would ask the advisor to please talk to them.

#### ***2. Do you mean that I have to always look nice no matter what?***

Yes, You are a representative for People First and once everyone knows that they are going to connect you to People First no matter what. If you are going to the store for a loaf of bread you should look presentable not in dirty clothes or holes but nice clothes. I do not mean to dress up just look nice. Once we are known as who we are people start to look at us in a different way and that way needs to be represented in the right way, so we need to be careful of how we act and dress in public.

### ***3. Who is supposed to answer any letters we may get?***

The letter should be brought to the officers meeting and addressed. Then the president usually writes a reply. We need to show that we can advocate for ourselves and not give everything to the advisors. If you as a president are involved in all aspects to People First like the Missouri Planning Council, MO TASH, Parent to Parent etc.

### ***4. Why do I need a work plan?***

We did work plans in our lives because sometimes our lives get so busy we forget what we are suppose to do. This will help you to devote at least an hour or two to People First. It is important to be devoted to something you believe in so you have a meaning in your life. See attached example of work plan.

### ***5. As an advisor what do I do to get the chapter started?***

The first thing I would do is to find out if people with developmental disability would be interested in the program. If there is an interest then I would call the nearest VISTA worker for People First and set up a meeting for those who are interested.

### ***6. I do not understand how to keep track of the money?***

You need a ledger book to start your account. When you have a fundraiser or get money you need to enter this by putting the source's name and date. Then enter in the column the amount of money given and add this to the last balance. This will be the total. Then if you have to pay for something you need to get a receipt and enter this into the column marked payouts. Make sure you keep all receipts, this is proof that the money was used wisely. Staple them to a piece of paper, date it along the side and why it was bought and total of purchase. There should always be a petty



cash of whatever you all decide to have. This money is to be kept by the secretary or treasurer so if supplies need to be bought she has cash on hand, but, she also has to keep receipts for the money spent. You might start your petty cash at a different amount and that is ok. You can use your dues money or collect money if necessary.

We have a form to help you. Our Chapter takes this form and fills out the persons name and fundraise they are involved in. When the fundraiser is over and you count the money then you take 10% of that and put into the Chapters account, then the rest of the money will be divided by the number of people helped. See attached form.

***7. So my job as an advisor is to sit back and watch and give advice when needed?***

Yes and No. You are there to guide them not to tell them to do. Let them make the decisions and then you ask question on who, what, why and how. Make them think about what is right and what is wrong. You need to make them use their brains and let them make the decision. If they are wrong then they may learn by their mistakes but make sure they do not make a mistake that will cause a scene or trouble involving People First or the advisor.

***8. Who should send out Thank You cards to people who support us and to those who come to talk at the meetings?***

This should be done by the secretary and if she cannot then the president.