

The Journey from Advocacy to Activism

Matthew Weiler AHRC NYC

Evan Yankey SANYS

Ethan Jones KCC Student

Kristin Thatcher CSI Graduate/SANYS U Teacher

- Established in 2008 and serves 40 people in 2 locations...(3rd in the fall)
 - Kingsborough community College
 - the College of Staten Island
 - Hostos Community College
- It was developed to give people with intellectual and developmental disabilities an opportunity for a post-secondary experience and career development
- It is a Medicaid funded, non-matriculated, certificated based program
- 4 year program: 3 years of Academics, 1 year of Alumni services

Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program @ CUNY

- There are 3 components to the program
 - Academic
 - College Life
 - Career Exploration and Development
- Our mission:
 - To provide a stimulating and fully integrated experience that supports students to exercise choice while pursuing relationships, academic knowledge and job skills
 - Encourage students to engage in the larger community while assisting them to develop the skills and competencies that participation requires
 - Provide opportunities for liberal learning and community membership
 - Provide support for career exploration and development

**Melissa Riggio Higher Education
Program @ CUNY**

- Founded by Bernard Carabello in 1985
- Largest organization directed entirely by people with developmental disabilities
- Statewide advocacy, education, and community organizing
- Commitment to advancing the voices and issues of people with developmental disabilities

Self Advocacy Association of NYS

- AHRC met with SANYS and a commitment was made on the part of the agency to make Self Advocacy central to our mission
- SANYS was looking to partner with an agency where change could evolve from all levels of the same structure
- Together we made a conscious effort to move from advocacy to activism

Partnership

- SANYS U was developed in 2011 and approached advocacy from an educational framework
- SANYS U structure was built to be completed in an educational setting
- AHRC and SANYS approached the Continuing Education department on both campuses (CSI and KCC)

Partnership

- The College decided to run the course under Continuing Education with the following ideas in mind:
 - Integrated Environment (access to campus)
 - Low cost (\$50.00)
 - Inclusive Scheduling
 - Day Hab Programs
 - High Schools
 - Accessibility
 - Open access for enrollment
 - Collaboration between service providers and non service providers

Partnership

- Introduction to Self Advocacy and History:
From Learning to Activism
 - What is important for us to know about the past to navigate the present?
 - How do we become links in a tradition of change as opposed to just receiving knowledge?

- Leadership and Organizing
 - What does it mean to have “power”?
 - And what does this mean inside the classroom, and outside the classroom?
 - How can we form groups, structures, and connections (also inside and outside the classroom)
 - What are issues that affect “all of us”

- Person Centered Planning and Getting What You Want
 - What are some of the options we have available to us that we may not know about?
 - How can we think about change in a holistic way?
 - What are the concrete tactics we use to make change in the system, for ourselves and others

- The Community, Resources, and Now
 - Where are more spaces and places we can go outside of learning or service environments?
 - What forms of and connections to power do we have available to us?
 - What are the current political and systemic issues affecting people with disabilities

SANYS U

- Onward!
 - Leadership Projects
 - Planning for Activism
 - Political Action
 - Changing our lives

SANYS U

- What has your experience been being a student with disabilities at KCC?
- What is it like inside the SANYS U course?
 - What kinds of people are in the class space?
- What learning has taken place?
- What are your future plans?

Ethan

- What has your experience been being a student with disabilities at CSI?
- What is it like inside the SANYS U course?
- Can you speak about some of your accomplishments since completing the course?
 - Letter in Staten Island Advance
 - Speaking at Staten Island Legislative Breakfast
 - Speaking at Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference
 - Co-teach two semesters of SANYS U
- What are some lessons for SANYS U students to learn?
- What are your future plans?

Kristen