



Michigan Partners for Freedom

Building statewide demand for self-determination

FALL 2009

Notes from the MPF Project Coordinator...

Fall has arrived in Michigan...the leaves have fallen, cool, crisp days are upon us, and Self-Determination is gaining momentum. Local Leaders have been busy building demand for Self-Determination. Michigan Partners for Freedom (MPF) has prepared nine new Local Leaders to spread the word about Self-Determination in the northern lower peninsula of Michigan. These Local Leaders live in various areas served by the community mental agencies of Central Michigan, Northeast Michigan, and Northern Lakes. Welcome Local Leaders, we are excited about your future involvement with MPF!



The Michigan Department of Community Health has convened a small external workgroup of individuals with disabilities, advocates, and representatives from local community mental health agencies to review the Department's draft documents informing recipients of mental health supports, their families, and providers about Self-Determination. These documents are designed to explain Self-Determination, to describe the tools of Self-Determination, and to assist systems to enhance their supports to reflect Self-Determination. Three Michigan Partners for Freedom Local Leaders (Kim Rosario of Oakland County, Ray Schuhholz of Wayne County, and Eric Thomas of Genesee County) are participating in this workgroup. Their advice and expertise have greatly improved these documents. *(continued on back page)*

REGIONAL UPDATES

Southeast

September 29
Regional meeting
Flint



Local Leaders
Eric Thomas, Gizela Schwartz
& Ray Schuhholz

Northern Lower

Michigan

October 22
Local Leader Training
Grayling City Hall



Southwest

October 29:
Regional meeting
Grand Rapids

A YEAR'S FIGURES

Overall Achievements:	
847	Individuals reached because of Michigan Partners for Freedom
52	MPF Local Leaders trained
21	Local Leaders presented at conference & seminars
1,763	Average monthly hits to the MPF website
At Learning Events:	
96%	Participants gained new knowledge about Self-Determination
92%	Said the information presented will be useful to them in the future
98%	Rated speakers as knowledgeable and effective

“There’s no such thing as a perfect life, and I don’t expect a perfect life. But I do expect to have a life.”

- Advocate struggling to gain control in Berrien County

Sharing Partners with Other States

Oakland County Local Leader, David Taylor, presented about Michigan Partners for Freedom at the *In Control Wisconsin* conference on Tuesday, October 12th in Milwaukee.



David emphasized the building of statewide demand for Self-Determination as the sole purpose of Michigan Partners for Freedom. Wisconsin is looking to Michigan for guidance in developing the Wisconsin Self-Directed Supports Network.

Self-Determination Coordinator Kevin Griffith Says: I Believe that ...

“I believe that the real difference in serving as a case manager/support coordinator and coordinating self-determination arrangements is my own individual sense of fulfillment. I get more joy and satisfaction at my job as Self Determination Coordinator.”

According to Kevin, he’s not the only one who is happy with the increased individual control. ***“I believe consumers’ lives are more fulfilled. In a nutshell,***

they’re happy — they tell me, they tell their support companions.”

Kevin says the biggest obstacle in his work is *“working with guardians and parents who want self-determination arrangements for those they represent and/or love, but do not embrace the entire philosophy of individual choice.”*

Kevin claims what is most rewarding in his role as SD coordinator is seeing *“those who recruit and hire their own*

supports feel more connected and satisfied and feel more control in their lives.” He continues, *“I see more investment in relationships between support companions and the individual being served. I believe real friendships develop.”*

Kevin Griffith joined Bay Arenac Behavioral Health Agency 16 years ago as a Case Manager. Eight years later Kevin jumped at the chance to coordinate self-determination in the agency.

Local Leader Reaches a Variety of Audiences

**Freedom
Authority
Support
Confirmation
Responsibility**

Donlin’s story of self-determination is one that directly ties freedom, authority, support, responsibility and confirmation in his life. As a young man of 24, John has much to share about self-determination and reaches every audience he can. In addition to presenting about MPF at the first ever Michigan Department of Community Health *Summit on Developmental Disabilities*, Donlin the all-staff retreat of Kalamazoo Community

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services.

Additionally, John has shared his story of Local Leadership with the Kalamazoo chapter of AMBUCS, a non-profit service organization consisting of a diverse group of men and women who are dedicated to creating mobility and independence for people with disabilities. Watch for John’s promotion sheet on the MPF Local Leaders page of www.mifreedom.org

“The five principles of self-determination are important to everyone,” says John Donlin, MPF Local Leader in Kalamazoo. ***“I see them as universal principles to accomplish things in life.”***



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In the coming months, Michigan Partners for Freedom will continue to build demand for Self-Determination. MPF will facilitate local community trainings, local leader trainings, and provide technical assistance to the Michigan Department of Community Health. MPF's Local Leaders will continue to work hard educating individuals with disabilities, their families, and service providers about the tools and principles of the Self-Determination as we build this civil rights movement.

I realize it might be a bit early, but on behalf of everyone involved in Michigan Partners for Freedom, have a safe and joyous holiday season.

Angela Martin

Michigan Partners for Freedom is funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council Grant #2010065

Michigan Partners for Freedom is a grassroots movement of

people with disabilities, family members, advocates, and organizations working in the field of disabilities to make Self-Determination a

reality for all Michigan citizens.

To join call 1-800-292-7851 ext. 105 or visit www.mifreedom.org

