

The Evolution of the Statewide A Life Like Yours Self-Advocacy Alliance





Background

The achievements of this project belong to a wide range of leaders committed to a world in which people with developmental disabilities are respected and valued as the voices to lead policy and systems that support people to have the life that they choose.

Over two years, many people engaged with The Arc of Virginia and contributed to what would later become Virginia's statewide A Life Like Yours Self-Advocacy Alliance.





Background Continued

In addition to the team at The Arc of Virginia working on this project, we collaborated with Lalenja Harrington, PhD and Jamie Liban of Liban Consulting, to facilitate and support Liaisons in their work. Dr. Harrington consulted for multiple creative and collaborative planning events, and Liban Consulting provided facilitation and leadership development to the Liaisons for the 6 months that would turn out to be the most significant time for the Alliance due to the impact of COVID-19.

The efforts of project facilitators and Liaisons, resulted in a strong and successful Alliance of self-advocacy groups possessing the knowledge, information and skills to advocate for inclusive support for Virginians with developmental disabilities.





Why Form an Alliance of Self-Advocates?

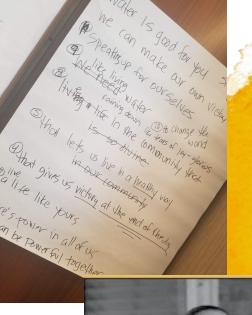
The purpose of forming an Alliance is to ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are the primary force for effecting change in Virginia.





How Did the Alliance Start?

The A Life Like Yours Self-Advocacy Alliance evolved out of the grassroots self-advocacy movement, beginning in August of 2018 at the Annual Convention of The Arc of Virginia.



August 2018

Annual Convention Collective Poetry Session





Poem by Self-Advocates 2018

This is us... beautifully divine

We live

in the community

having a vision

for everyone

paving the way for our future

that gives us victory

at the end of the day

that lets us live

in a healthy way

helping people

live a life like yours

in the community

a life like

living water

raining down

tears of joy

glorious

there's power in all of us

speaking for ourselves

to change

the world

beautifully divine

~ A Collective Poem by Self-Advocates, 2018

Reading of Poem, "This is Us...Beautifully Divine"

Building on the Momentum of 2018 Convention

Seizing the opportunity to expand on what self-advocates had begun to build at the convention, The Arc of Virginia secured funding to form a Statewide Alliance of Self-Advocacy Groups so that the voices of people with developmental disabilities are the primary force for effecting change in Virginia.





State Convention

Image Theatre

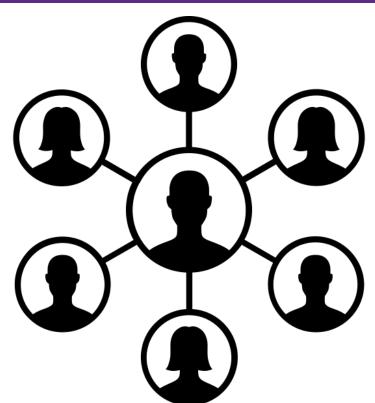
Kick Off Event for the Alliance "Envisioning a Life of Inclusion for Everyone"







Member Outreach & Recruitment August – December 2019





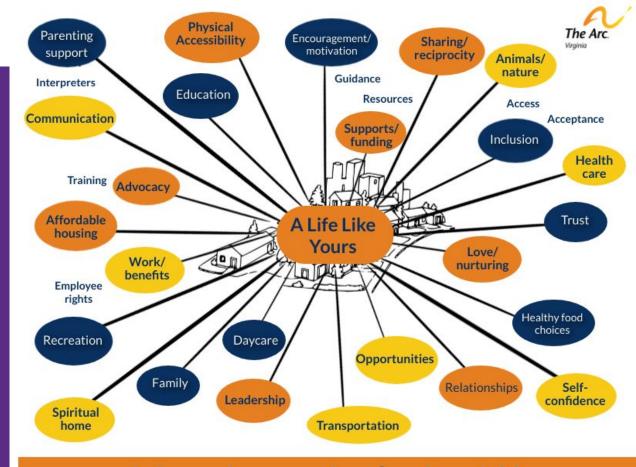
December 2019 Together 1st Alliance Move Move Mountains Leadership Retreat





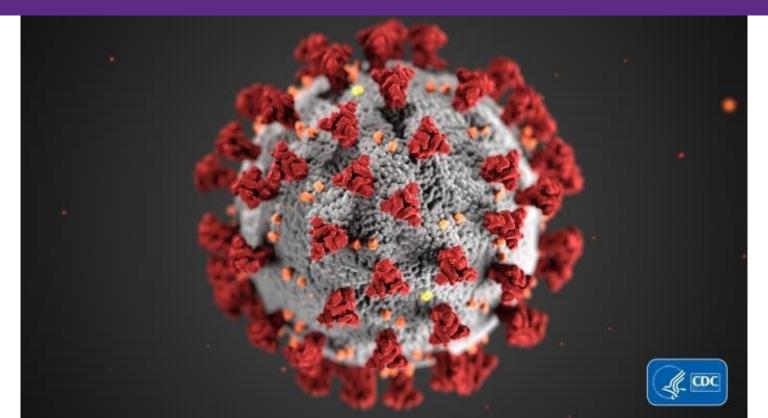


Community Map Designed by the Alliance during their first Leadership Retreat



Mapping an Inclusive Life
ALLY Alliance 2019

Coronavirus Hits, Forcing the Alliance to Move Online







Led by 3 Co-Chairs & Facilitator







March - July 2020

- Liaisons Met Twice Weekly
- Formed their leadership structure
- Provided Advocacy Skills Training
 - Provided Training on Inclusive Services to 141 People with IDD
 - Provided Training on Inclusive Services to 166 people with Providers
 - Hosted Alliance Summit

Formation & Public Launch

August - October 2020

- Designed Webpage & Facebook
- Completed Video Production of a "Declaration of A Life Like Yours"

October 27, 2020
Public Launch &
Advocacy Mobilization Event

To Join or Learn More

