

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."
 – Eleanor Roosevelt

"Let us fail, so we can learn from our mistakes. We're only human – everyone makes mistakes."
 -- James Meadours



Self-Advocates have been the vanguard in the fight to close institutions and move people with disabilities into the community. Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), a national self-advocacy organization, has launched a "Close the Doors" campaign, fighting for the release of our brothers and sisters from institutions throughout the US.



Individual and group leadership is being developed as self-advocates speak up, make their own choices, and work together for social change.

All people have the right to be valued as equals in their community. We must not be discriminated against because of our disability. Other people must learn that we are people and treat us in the same way as everyone else.

Irving Martin, the "Godfather of Self-Advocacy in Minnesota," pushed parents, professionals, and other self-advocates to take responsibility for increasing the quality of life for all people with disabilities. "Life is a 50/50 thing. People need to be out there in the community, to the best of their abilities."

"Who is in charge of your life?" Roland Johnson raised this issue of self-determination by focusing on control and decision-making.

THOUSANDS OF SELF-ADVOCATES ACROSS THE WORLD SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES AND FIGHT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE.

Like other civil rights movements, the self-advocacy movement — through many independent groups — has identified issues and developed strategies for creating change.

Self-advocates have shown us that an education, an opportunity for real employment, and privacy in our home are rights, not privileges; they do not come from the kindness of strangers during telethons, but from the fact that we are human beings.

On June 22, 1999, the Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), unjustifiable institutionalization of a person with a disability who, with proper support can live in the community, is discrimination. The case was brought by two Georgia women whose disabilities include mental retardation and mental illness. At the time the suit was filed, both plaintiffs lived in State-run institutions. The Court stated directly that "Unjustified isolation . . . is properly regarded as discrimination based on disability."



WE ARE PEOPLE FIRST!

1979
 The Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) is founded in Berkeley, California.

1984
 George Murray becomes the first wheelchair athlete to be featured on the *Wheaties* cereal box.

1985
 The National Association of Psychiatric Survivors is founded.

1986
Toward Independence is published by the National Council of the Handicapped (now National Council on Disability), recommending creation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

1987
 The last residents move out of the Pennhurst Institution in Pennsylvania. Across the country people are leaving institutions and moving into their communities.

1987
 Marlee Matlin wins an Oscar for her performance in *Children of a Lesser God*.

1987
 The *AXIS* Dance Troupe is founded in Oakland, California.