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

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

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.

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.”

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

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

We Are People First!