



*Seeking Employment, Equality and Community for
People with Developmental Disabilities*

SEEC E-News

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What's Up with Services?!

A monthly update on re-envisioning SEEC services post pandemic

By Sherry Beamer, Director of Services



The Re-envision Group is in its second month of meeting. The group is working from the affirmative topic of “How will we boldly re-envision supports so everyone thrives?” An affirmative topic is a statement or question that defines an area to improve in a way that is most likely to engage the group, get them thinking in productive and creative ways, and leads to a successful result. In the first two months the group was in the Defining and Discovering phases. The group has identified SEEC Strengths and Anchors to consider during the Dreaming, Designing and Delivering phases. Anchors are situations that may slow down the progress of better supports. In upcoming meetings, we will hear from leaders from the disability and general business sectors about their best practices so we can “go boldly” into creatively visioning future supports.

Inside This Issue

- What’s Up with Services?
- SEEC's "Growing Connections" Spring Gala 2022
- Masks Optional
- DDD and Advocacy at SEEC
- Poolesville High School Partners with SEEC
- Wellness Corner

SEEC's Growing Connections Spring Gala 2022

SEEC
Gala
2022

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2022

**IN-PERSON SPONSOR
EVENT BEGINNING AT
6:30 P.M.***

**JOIN US LIVE ONLINE
BEGINNING AT
8:00 P.M.***

***EVERYONE WILL NEED TO REGISTER ON OUR VIRTUAL EVENT PLATFORM IN THE COMING WEEKS WHETHER YOU ARE ATTENDING IN PERSON OR ONLINE.**

We are excited to gather in person again on April 2nd for our “Growing Connections” Gala, celebrating how the people we support have persevered and flourished during the past 12 months and the amazing connections they have made. We have a limited number of sponsorships available for those who would like to join us in person (or online with a special event kit to celebrate from home). Everyone is welcome to join us online for free although you will need to register so you can join us. The event will start at 6:30 p.m. in person and 8:00 p.m. online. We hope you will be able to join us! Watch your email for a link to register this week!

Become a Sponsor

Masks Optional

Due to a lower COVID infection rate in Montgomery County these past few weeks, mask guidance has changed and now most businesses, schools and gyms are mask optional. Beginning Monday, March 21st, masks will be optional at the SEEC office in both public and private spaces. Masks are also optional while in service. Some businesses, like healthcare, are still requiring masks and as such you’ll need to follow those potentially stricter guidelines. If you would like the people you are meeting with or working with to mask, please ask. We request that everyone respect each other’s choices and preferences.

DD Day and Advocacy at SEEC

By Christopher d’Arpa, MSW Intern at SEEC and Kyra Harvey, Instructional Resource Coordinator – SEEC’s Self-Advocacy Group

What is DD Day?

DD Day stands for the Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature. This year, DD Day happened virtually on February 22, 2022. It is an important day for people with disabilities living in Maryland as the budget



allocated to the Developmental Disabilities Administrations (DDA) is presented to the group of over 1,000 participants, most with developmental disabilities. Other topics were also discussed during the online rally such as supported decision-making, support for school-aged children with disabilities, waitlist reduction, and voting rights.

How people supported by SEEC advocated on DD Day #CommunityForAll!

SEEC self-advocates gathered on DD Day at the Legislature to learn about legislation impacting the disability community and ensure their voices were heard. In the months leading up to the event, the SEEC Self-Advocacy group met to learn about advocacy, policy, and how to ensure their voices are heard. SEEC self-advocates and staff watched the DD Day Zoom on a big screen in the SEEC office. Over 1,000 people attended the event virtually spreading the message of #CommunityForAll. After the viewing was over, SEEC self-advocates wrote advocacy emails to our legislative representatives urging them to expand the Developmental Disability Administrations (DDA) budget. Additionally, SEEC sent out an advocacy action alert to our community to prompt people to send more emails to support increased DDA funding. This is essential as DD community providers are facing the worst staffing crisis in history, with 1 in 3 providers reporting a vacancy rate of direct support professionals between 30% and 60% and almost 10% of providers reporting a vacancy rate between 50% and 60%. While SEEC experiences a less than 15% vacancy rate, we continue to support the work our colleagues. Without adequate staffing, providers cannot continue to support people with disabilities. You can learn more about this initiative here: (<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/The-Annapolis-Insider.html?soid=1102574169725&aid=ikVFbQKCg9Y>).

You can join SEEC's Self-Advocacy group by accessing the SEEC Virtual Activities Calendar on SEEC's website here: (<https://www.seeonline.org/virtual-activities/>).

Poolesville High School Partners with SEEC



Juniors in the Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet program at Poolesville High School contacted SEEC in September 2021 through the Contact Us section of the website and connected with Ethan Litvin, SEEC's volunteer coordinator. The students were participating in IDEATE, a Source America competition aimed at creating assistive technology solutions to help people with disabilities overcome workplace obstacles <https://www.sourceamerica.org/IDEATE>. A key part of this competition was working with a subject-matter expert in the field of disabilities so competitors could properly evaluate a barrier in the workplace and invent an effective solution. They asked if SEEC would be willing to partner with them to identify someone experiencing a barrier so they could create a solution to the barrier.

The students worked closely with Meghan Dworschak, PSNIH Instructor & Site Lead to identifying someone with a barrier to employment. Meghan and her team identified Sam, who works at NIH, volunteered that he sometimes had trouble grasping things at work due to issues with fine motor skills, so the team set about to help create a prototype that would enable Sam to better grasp a cloth to wipe surface areas. The team visited Sam at the SEEC office to try out the prototype.

While they are still working through the final phases of the project, SEEC is thrilled to help partners and encourage innovation and education!

Wellness Corner



Tips for Practicing Self-Care:

The demands of life seem greater than ever. Responsibilities of work, school, family life or caregiving, with the non-stop communication that comes with each, can leave us feeling overscheduled and stressed! With so much to do, it might seem like taking time for quality self-care feels indulgent or selfish. How can we focus on ourselves when there are so many other responsibilities competing for our time?

Remember the following: Self-Care is NOT selfish. In order for us to take care of the people we love and our daily responsibilities, we have to also take care of ourselves. We can not possibly be our best at work when we are feeling overwhelmed. We cannot support the needs of our loved ones, when we haven't recognized our own needs. We can not care for our families if we aren't able to care for ourselves. We do not provide quality supports when we are not supporting our own needs. Self-care is simply vital to our health and well-being- but even if we understand the importance of self-care, we might struggle with finding the time to focus on it. The best way to handle this challenge begins and ends with us, individually. You must make YOU a top priority. What does it mean to put ourselves at the top of your daily to-do list? It doesn't mean we ignore everything else around us. It just means that our own needs are reflected on our daily schedule too. Here are four things we can all do to fit self-care into our week, no matter how busy we are:

- Schedule it. Make an appointment with yourself and put it on your schedule. That little ding in your pocket from your smart phone can become a great reminder that it's time to focus on you — whether it's for a workout, yoga, meditation or just sitting quietly.
- A little goes a long way. If you're busy and over-scheduled, finding two hours on your calendar in the middle of the day to focus on your needs probably isn't realistic. To make "me time" work, choose what's realistic for you and commit to it. If you only have a ten-minute gap on Tuesday, that's OK. You will make bigger gains practicing self-care a few minutes each day instead of focusing on it a couple of hours each month — or none.
- Stick to it. Honor the time you schedule for yourself as some of the most important minutes in your day. Once you start making yourself a priority in your day, you will recognize how important it really is and how much better you feel because of it.
- Reflect and Repeat. The key to embracing self-care is consistency. Caring for yourself every day is so important, and the little things you do will add up to big changes over time.

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