The Journey from Advocacy to Activism

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Established in 2008 and serves 40 people in 2 locations... (3rd in the fall)

- Kingsborough community College
- the College of Staten Island
- Hostos Community College

It was developed to give people with intellectual and developmental disabilities an opportunity for a post-secondary experience and career development.

It is a Medicaid funded, non-matriculated, certificated based program.

4 year program: 3 years of Academics, 1 year of Alumni services.
There are 3 components to the program

- Academic
- College Life
- Career Exploration and Development

Our mission:

- To provide a stimulating and fully integrated experience that supports students to exercise choice while pursuing relationships, academic knowledge and job skills
- Encourage students to engage in the larger community while assisting them to develop the skills and competencies that participation requires
- Provide opportunities for liberal learning and community membership
- Provide support for career exploration and development

Melissa Riggio Higher Education Program @ CUNY
• Founded by Bernard Carabello in 1985
• Largest organization directed entirely by people with developmental disabilities
• Statewide advocacy, education, and community organizing
• Commitment to advancing the voices and issues of people with developmental disabilities
• AHRC met with SANYS and a commitment was made on the part of the agency to make Self Advocacy central to our mission.
• SANYS was looking to partner with an agency where change could evolve from all levels of the same structure.
• Together we made a conscious effort to move from advocacy to activism.
• SANYS U was developed in 2011 and approached advocacy from an educational framework
• SANYS U structure was built to be completed in an educational setting
• AHRC and SANYS approached the Continuing Education department on both campuses (CSI and KCC)
The College decided to run the course under Continuing Education with the following ideas in mind:

- Integrated Environment (access to campus)
- Low cost ($50.00)
- Inclusive Scheduling
  - Day Hab Programs
  - High Schools
- Accessibility
- Open access for enrollment
  - Collaboration between service providers and non-service providers
Introduction to Self Advocacy and History: *From Learning to Activism*

- What is important for us to know about the past to navigate the present?
- How do we become links in a tradition of change as opposed to just receiving knowledge?
Leadership and Organizing

- What does it mean to have “power”?
  - And what does this mean inside the classroom, and outside the classroom?
- How can we form groups, structures, and connections (also inside and outside the classroom)
- What are issues that affect “all of us”
• Person Centered Planning and Getting What You Want
  ◦ What are some of the options we have available to us that we may not know about?
  ◦ How can we think about change in a holistic way?
  ◦ What are the concrete tactics we use to make change in the system, for ourselves and others
The Community, Resources, and Now

- Where are more spaces and places we can go outside of learning or service environments?
- What forms of and connections to power do we have available to us?
- What are the current political and systemic issues affecting people with disabilities
Onward!
- Leadership Projects
- Planning for Activism
- Political Action
- Changing our lives
• What has your experience been being a student with disabilities at KCC?
• What is it like inside the SANYS U course?
  ◦ What kinds of people are in the class space?
• What learning has taken place?
• What are your future plans?
What has your experience been being a student with disabilities at CSI?
What is it like inside the SANYS U course?
Can you speak about some of your accomplishments since completing the course?
  ◦ Letter in Staten Island Advance
  ◦ Speaking at Staten Island Legislative Breakfast
  ◦ Speaking at Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference
  ◦ Co-teach two semesters of SANYS U
What are some lessons for SANYS U students to learn?
What are your future plans?