



Arkansas Alliance for
Disability Advocacy
DISABILITY RIGHTS ARKANSAS

PARTNERS IN
POLICYMAKING

2022 - 2023

COHORT

Partners in Policymaking

Partners in Policymaking is a national leadership and disability advocacy training program for individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members. Only self-advocates and family members of individuals with developmental disabilities should apply. Participants accepted into the Arkansas Partners in Policymaking leadership and advocacy training program will attend monthly two-day training sessions in Little Rock, AR. National and state experts on various disability-related topics will present on various issues concerning the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

Cohort One of Partners in Policymaking took on the task of identifying a need and creating an advocacy project to improve their community, state, or country. Cohort One approached their advocacy project with great dedication, putting in effort to create trainings, educational tools, support groups, and channels to amplify the voice of the disability community. We are thankful for the work of the Partners in Policymaking participants, and we foresee great things coming from their advocacy projects and journeys to create a more inclusive and equitable place for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Will you be in our next cohort?

Sign up today

to be a part of the
Partners in Policymaking
program!

SCAN ME



THE CLASS OF 2022-2023



Top: Partners group with the Alliance Director, Ally Thomlinson

Bottom Left: Partners working to complete an assignment

Bottom Middle: Wensday Kraemer, Teresa Dannaway, Dianna Mathis, and Kimberly Dodd at the Arkansas State Capitol

Bottom Right: Partners class working together during a review game





Teresa Dannaway

Project Title: AIDE

(Autism Intellectual Disability Education)

Teresa collaborated with Special Olympics Arkansas to train the Bryant Boys and Girls Club on supporting participants with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities (ID).

This training provided a pathway for the Boys and Girls Club to be more inclusive in their afterschool and summer programs. AIDE provided training to approximately 40 staff and volunteer members. Teresa offered educational information about Autism and Intellectual Disabilities while Special Olympics Arkansas provided hands-on training, allowing staff and volunteers to get real-world experiences from the Special Olympics' Athletes. AIDE hopes to see children with Autism and Intellectual Disabilities fully included in all areas of their community; supporting the Boys and Girls Club of Bryant, Arkansas, was an excellent first step.

[Click or Scan
Below](#)



Wensday Kraemer

Project Title:
Confined by
Society



[Click or Scan
Below](#)



Wensday started her advocacy project, which involves sharing her and other self-advocates stories of inaccessibility. Initially, she thought she would only focus on physical accessibility issues due to a recent experience of having to wash her hands in a hotel bathroom shower instead of a sink throughout a two-day, one-night stay. It would be helpful to note that Wensday has utilized a wheelchair full-time her entire life.

As she planned her project during the fall of 2022, she thought her project would take shape in the form of video entries on a platform like TikTok or YouTube. When looking for inspiration, she saw a TikTok creator in another country, accessbytay, who reviews various restaurants. She discusses how much room the place has, what the bathrooms are like, and other accessibility factors. In the end, she gives them an overall rating. However, once Wensday started to look at the technical side of the project, she realized how much time making, editing, and posting videos could take. Wensday knew she wanted to be successful in her project and decided she didn't have the time to commit to learning how to create high-quality videos. That's when she decided to make a blog to share stories that bring awareness to accessibility issues.

Click or Scan
Below



Dianna Mathis

Project Title: United Disability Advocacy Network (U-DAN)

U-DAN is a non-profit started by Dianna Mathis during her time with Partners in Policymaking. This organization has a goal to educate families that have children and adults with disabilities to better navigate the complicated process of getting the help, services, and support needed for their loved ones to be successful.





[Click Here to
Join the
Support Group](#)

Carmen Gonzalez

Project Title: ETA-NWA

For Carmen's project, she started by determining what would be a helpful resource within the community of Northwest Arkansas. When her daughter was diagnosed with Autism, it felt like a whirlwind. Carmen received a list of things to do with little understanding of how to complete these items and what this diagnosis meant for her daughter and her future. While navigating this journey, Carmen realized there was a need for added support and a place to share resources. Within that, she started a support group, ETA-NWA, for individuals with disabilities, parents, family members, friends, or other community members who want to share and support those with disabilities.

[Click or Scan
Below](#)



Click or Scan
Below



Kimberly Dodd

Project Title:

State College Disability Accommodations

Looking for your next steps after high school? This booklet lists Arkansas' 10 state colleges and provides information on the accommodations they offer students with disabilities. It includes the documentation required to receive those services. It also provides information on four state college programs designed for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These programs offer students a post-secondary opportunity to gain independent living skills and career development.

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING



Top Left: Dianna Mathis with Representative Ennett of District 80

Top Right: Carmen Gonzalez & Representative Ennett after the Partners legislative Session

Bottom: Partners in Policymaking Cohort with Representative Ennett and Representative Brown at the legislative Partners session



PARTNERS

HIGHLIGHTS

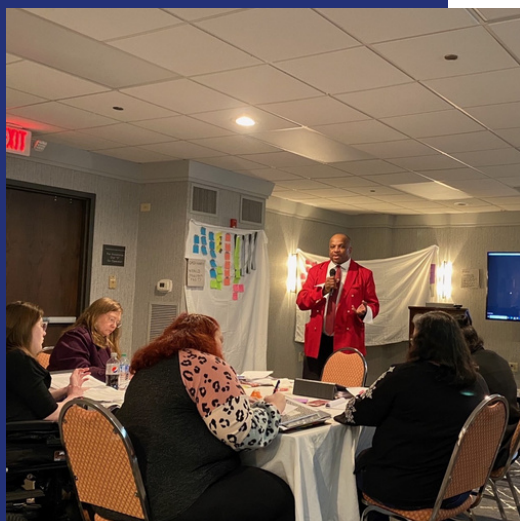
Top Left: Partners group with the Alliance Director, Ally Thomlinson

Top Right: Partners participants learning about the History of the Parent Movement presented by Speaker, Jayne Chase



Bottom left: Partners participants presenting to Representative Ennett and Representative Brown about issues impacting the Disability Rights Movement

Bottom Right: Wensday Kraemer & Teresa Dannaway at The AR Autism Festival & Walk vendor event



Top left: Dr. Michael McDonald training the Partners group on State and Federal Legislation

Top Right: Wensday Kraemer during Legislative Session Middle

Middle: The Alliance Director Ally Thomlinson with Wensday Kraemer and Carmen Gonzalez

Bottom: Partners in Policymaking Cohort One with Dr. McDonald of Murfreesboro, TN.



PRESENTATIONS AND AWARDS

Top Left: The Alliance Director, Ally Thomlinson, presenting Diane Mathis with her completion certificate



Top Right: Diane Mathis presenting her Advocacy Project speech



Bottom Left: The Alliance Director, Ally Thomlinson, presenting Kimberly Dodd with her Partners completion certificate



Bottom Right: Carmen Gonzalez presenting Advocacy Project speech





Top Left: Carmen Gonzalez was presented with her completion certificate by her children
Top Right: Carmen Gonzalez presenting Advocacy Project



Middle Left: The Alliance Director, Ally Thomlinson, presenting Wensday Kraemer with completion certificate
Middle Right: Wensday Kraemer presenting Advocacy Project Speech



Bottom Left: The Alliance Director, Ally Thomlinson, presenting Teresa Dannaway with completion certificate
Bottom Right: Teresa Dannaway presenting Advocacy Project Speech





**Arkansas Alliance for
Disability Advocacy**

DISABILITY RIGHTS ARKANSAS

Contact **The Alliance**

Telephone

Main: 501-296-1775 V/TTY

Toll Free: 800-482-1174 V/TTY

E-mail Address

aadateam@DisabilityRightsAR.org

Website

<https://disabilityrightsar.org/arkansas-alliance-for-disability-advocacy/>



Governor's Council on
**Developmental
Disabilities**

ARKANSAS

Funding for the described programs and this publication provided under Public Law 106-402 as administered by the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities for the State of Arkansas. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the GCDD.