

highlights from CHAMBER FOUNDATION



WHY DIVERSIFY MY WORKFORCE: PERSON-CENTEREDNESS AND EMPLOYMENT: A VIEW FROM THE SELF-ADVOCACY MOVEMENT

Contributed by Wilbur Neushwander-Frink, The ARC of Minnesota SW; Self-Advocates Minnesota SW Community Organizer and Playwright and Director for Aktion Club Theatre and the United We Stand Players



The Self-Advocacy Movement, civil and human rights movement for people with disabilities, arrived in the United States in the early 1970's. One of the primary values held by the movement is "I am a person first." The Self-Advocacy Movement is strong in Minnesota.

Many people have discovered and developed their leadership skills working on issues important to them through the Minnesota Self-Advocacy Movement. One of these issues is employment. Many people who identify as self-advocates or advocates want to have access to community employment and gain the necessary skills to find jobs of their choice.

One of the leadership strategies people learn about and practice is understanding "person-centeredness." This idea has been around since the early Self-Advocacy Movement and is now taking hold in Minnesota through the Minnesota Olmstead Plan. Person-Centeredness, according to Kendrick from his 2000 presentation called, "When People Matter More Than Systems," is something that begins "within people and radiates outward towards others... it is a set of qualities in each of us that is very dependent on our deeper values and aspirations as to what constitutes a good person." Person-Centeredness is more than just ideas or programs on paper. It is about getting to know who a person really is beyond labels and what they want in their life.

In this networking meeting, we will look at person-centeredness from the viewpoint of the Self-Advocacy Movement. We will look at how labels detract from getting to know who a person really is. We will also discuss the idea of "power relationships" and what that means in understanding person-centeredness. This meeting will feature interactive exercises and discussions and key ways of learning in the Self-Advocacy Movement. Once we understand the critical importance of person-centeredness, it can help us to understand what a person really wants in his/her life and can help set them up for success.

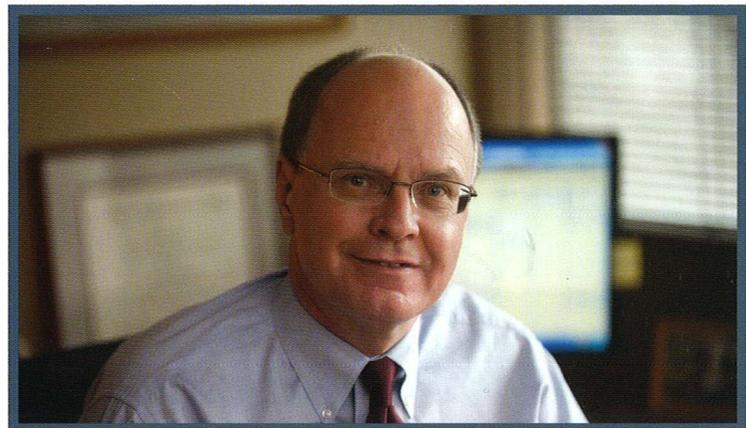
To learn more about this topic, attend **MAXABILITY'S TRAINING ON PERSON-CENTEREDNESS AND EMPLOYMENT** featuring keynote speaker, Wilbur Neushwander-Frink on **FEBRUARY 22ND** at Wood Lake Conference Center from **8:30 - 10:30AM**. To save your seat for this **FREE** event, register at: RochesterMNChamber.com/Events

LGR ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT Q & A WITH KREG KAUFFMAN OF KAUFFMAN LAW FIRM

Where do you volunteer your time? Shortly after I started my law firm, I met a young family whose breadwinner sustained a traumatic brain injury. Knowing I needed some education on this subject, we contacted the Rochester Brain Injury Community Committee (BICC) which met at St. Mary's Hospital at that time. This changed my professional life. As a result of BICC, I have actively been involved in several organizations that provide services (whether medical, psychological, vocational, recreational, or legal) for persons with disabilities or special needs, including the Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL), Wing House, Bear Creek Services, Ability Building Center, Inc. (ABC), the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance, and the Iowa Brain Injury Alliance.

How did LGR factor into your volunteerism? Leadership 2000 opened my eyes to the volunteer opportunities in this community. First, the program itself introduced us to areas of the community that we likely would not have known about otherwise. Second, at the end of the year, we were given a booklet that listed numerous volunteer opportunities available to Leadership 2000 graduates, as well as the opportunity to contact the agencies that interested us.

What is your vision for our region? I have seen many communities in Iowa and Minnesota where downtown is dead and buildings are literally boarded up. Fortunately, we don't have this problem in Rochester. However, we may have different problems moving forward. DMC and UMR will literally change our community. With these changes comes the recognition that some groups may be left behind. I have attended meetings of the group In the City for Good. My vision for Rochester includes a community moving forward, with projects like DMC and UMR recognizing the needs of and being inclusive of everyone so that no one is left behind.



INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LGR?

Contact Julie Brock, Executive Director, to get connected with LGR opportunities. Also, be sure to check out future issues of the Chamber Advantage as we showcase LGR Alumni and volunteers who are making a positive impact on our future and regional workforce.