

Ethan Saylor Alliance for Self-Advocates as Educators

Presentation to Advisory Stakeholder Group on
Autism-Related Needs

February 11, 2025

Erica Wheeler & Stephanie Dolamore



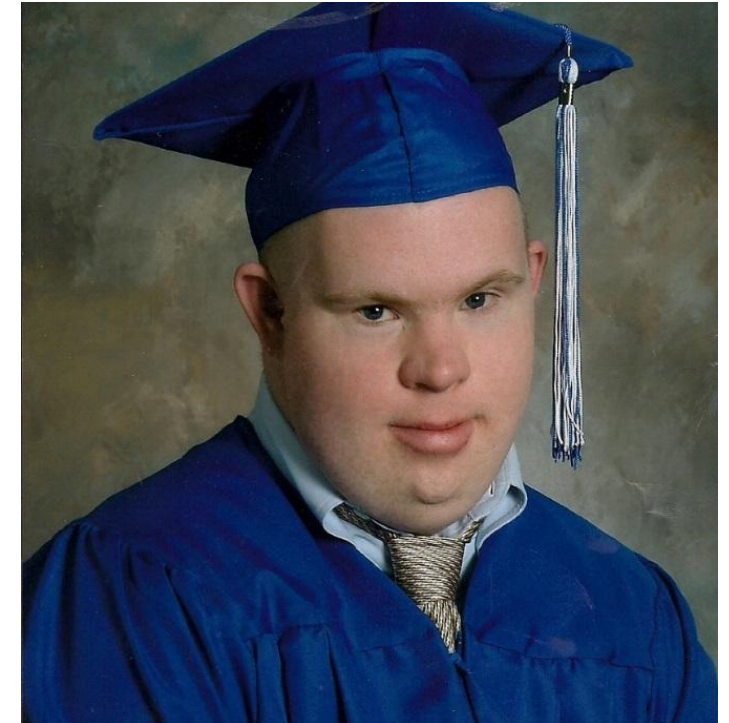
Presentation Overview

- Tragedy to advocacy
- Commission's activities & recommendations
- Legislative action
- Progress and activities to date
- Future plans
- A self-advocate's experience



Tragedy in a movie theater leads to change

- In 2013, Ethan Saylor, a 26-year-old man with Down syndrome died at the hands of off-duty police officers at a movie theater in Frederick
- Tragic consequences resulting from lack of understanding, poor judgment, and lack of accommodations
- Evidence of lack of adequate training
- Advocacy efforts were strong and caught the attention of legislators and then-Governor Martin O'Malley



From Advocacy to Executive Order

Governor's Commission for Effective Community Inclusion of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

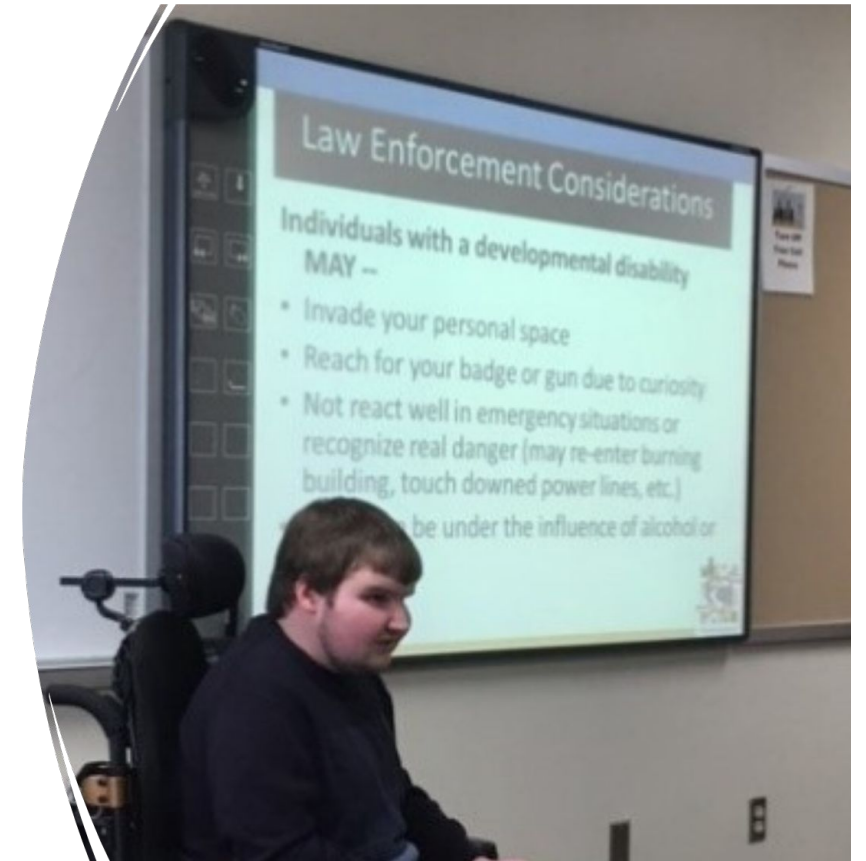
- Charged with submitting recommendations on the successful inclusion in all facets of life with particular focus on public safety
- Reports issued December 2014 and December 2015
 - People with I/DD want to feel safe, understood and included
 - No training standards exist for law enforcement on this topic
 - Whatever training is implemented, people with ID/DD should be involved in a meaningful way

Commission's Activities & Recommendations

- Listening sessions around the state
- List of training objectives created
 - Adopted by the Police Training Commission in January 2015
 - Mandatory entry-level training requirement
 - Every 3 years training requirement for veterans
- Model curriculum developed
 - Training law enforcement and including people with I/DD
 - Videos developed
- Proposed legislation establishing a center for self-advocates

Legislative Action: Ethan Saylor Alliance for Self-Advocates as Educators

- In 2015, landmark [Maryland bill](#) established framework for preparing and supporting self-advocates to co-lead trainings
- Created within MD Department of Disabilities
- Central premise is “nothing about us, without us”
- Establishes Steering Committee to oversee the work
 - Identifies entities to operate as the Alliance through grant and contract awards



Progress: 2016-2022

- Worked with Loyola University MD to create LEAD program for people with I/DD to participate in role-playing scenarios
 - At least 20 self-advocates were trained
 - 4 scenarios were developed
 - 26 entry-level and in-service trainings were conducted (BPD, DNR, Montgomery Co. Fire & Rescue Services, Prince George's Public Safety and Security Institute)
- Arc MD's Mini-Grants
 - 8 organizations were selected to facilitate events, trainings and other activities in 11 counties and Baltimore City
 - Grants totaling \$41,400 were awarded
- Revised Model Curriculum and released it to police departments, posted to MDOD's website



Progress: 2023

- Community Impact Grants
 - Fund projects up to \$5,000 to improve the relationships between people with I/DD and first responders
 - 7 community-based organizations received funding (\$20,000)
 - Estimated impact to at least 500 people with I/DD
 - Included pizza and pool parties, K-9 demonstrations, ride-alongs, roundtable discussions
- Awarded 3 other organizations for other projects > \$5,000
 - Mock traffic stops
 - Compensate self-advocates involved in trainings
 - Entry-level training for DNR
 - Training content developed on how to interact with people who are deaf/hard of hearing
- Created a logo, branded the project



2024 Activities and Plans for 2025

- Awarded 6 CIG totaling \$22,000
- Launched our website!
 - www.ethansayloralliance.org
- Revising the model curriculum to include new objectives (includes elopement and wandering)
 - Consulted with Centers for Independent Living to include content on physical disability
- Plans for in-person outreach across the state
- Involving self-advocacy groups more
- Planning a community safety event in the fall in conjunction with the MD Police Training Commission



A Self Advocate's Role: “We Can Do It”

Presented by :
Erica Wheeler

The Journey

- Personal Experience
- Concept of Self Advocates – Trainers
- Benefits



Personal Experience

- Governor's Commission
- Ethan Saylor Alliance Steering Committee
- Law Enforcement Training



Governor's Commission

- My Role
- Listening Tour
- Transition



Ethan Saylor Alliance Steering Committee

- Role on Alliance
- MD State Senate Finance Committee
- Law Enforcement Commission
- Training Experiences

Training Experiences

- Preparation
- Memorable Moments



Self Advocates as Trainers

- Identify
- Preparation
- Monitoring
- Partnering



Benefits

- Building Relationships
- Raising Awareness
- Developing Leaders



“Where there is no hope in the future, there is no power in the present.”

-John C. Maxwell

Questions?

