

SAFA

Self-Advocates with FASD in Action

“As individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), we don’t get that many opportunities to network with each other or talk about issues that are important to us personally. We want to talk about our own personal goals and dreams for our lives with other people that have FASD like us. That’s why we started The SAFA Network!”

- Rob Wybrecht & Jasmine Suarez-O’Connor, SAFA Network Coordinators

The idea behind the SAFA Network (SAFA stands for Self-Advocates with FASD in Action) began with two self-advocates with FASD who serve on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration’s (SAMHSA) The FASD Center for Excellence Expert Panel. They, along with The Arc, firmly support the core principles of self-advocacy. Through this project, they are beginning a national self-advocacy group created by and for people with FASD. The SAFA Network creates a place for people with FASD to learn more about:

- 1) what it means to have an FASD,
- 2) specific issues that affect people with an FASD, and
- 3) what it means to be a self-advocate and how to speak up for oneself.

Each year, the FASD Center for Excellence hosts a national conference to help support state systems that specifically address FASD. With support from The Arc, The SAFA Network is introducing a new self-advocacy track at the May 2011 Building FASD State Systems (BFSS) Conference developed by and for people with FASD. Topics for the self-advocacy track include learning about and building self-advocacy skills, understanding how FASD affects the brain, and learning how to use one’s gifts and talents in the real world to achieve real progress.

Up to 10 people with FASD (including a support person for each individual) were selected to be on the The SAFA Network’s Planning Committee. They were invited to attend this year’s BFSS conference and will be asked to help plan the self-advocacy track for the 2012 conference. Others interested in The SAFA Network who are unable to attend this year’s BFSS meeting are invited to participate up-coming SAFA conference calls.

General questions about The SAFA Network? Contact Rob Wybrecht, SAFA Network Coordinator at **rob1195@yahoo.com** or Jasmine Suarez O’Connor at **doconno2@nycap.rr.com**

Would you, or someone you know, like to become a part of The SAFA Network? Contact Leigh Ann Davis, SAFA Network Liaison at **ldavis@thearc.org**.



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

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