

Having Our Say

The newsletter of SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out

It's Time for SaySo Saturday - March 6, 2004

Register now! (See flyer attached to this newsletter)

Volume5, Number 3

About SaySo, Inc.

SaySo is a statewide association of youth aged 14 to 24 who are or have been in North Carolina's out-of-home care system. This includes all types of substitute care, including foster care, group homes, and mental health placements.

Our mission is to work to improve the substitute care system by educating the community, speaking out about needed changes, and providing support to youth who are or have been in substitute care.

Become a Member!

If you are interested in joining **SaySo**, let us know! E-mail or write us with the following information: your name, age, and address (including e-mail), region and the kind of out-of-home placement you are or have been in.

Contact Information

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Officers

Co-chairs: Chaney P. and Peaches S.
Secretary: Melinda M.
Treasurer: Brian M.
Sergeant-at-arms: Frank L.

What is SaySo Saturday? SaySo Saturday has been held for five years on the first Saturday of March. It is a one day conference that encourages young people who are or were in foster care to speak out and be a part of making changes that will benefit other foster youths as well as themselves. This is NOT a day of complaining. SaySo members DO NOT whine and complain. We take action and advocate for change. This conference helps us learn what to do and we have a great time getting to know other youths from around the state.

Why should I go? Why not? It's free and where else can you meet other youths just like you who have something to say and want to make changes? The adults listen to our suggestions. They have helped us meet people who can influence policy. It's not like other youth conferences. It's at **GTCC in Jamestown** so come visit the college too.



What will happen at SaySo Saturday? Lots of stuff will happen. Of course there will be workshops on becoming a leader, how to speak out, who to talk to, forming a local chapter, making a difference with GAL's, Make a Difference Day SaySo youth project, and all kinds of workshops to choose from. We also celebrate SaySo's birthday, give out birthday presents, and eat cake. We are six years old this year!! There will also be some workshops for adults to learn how to listen to youths ☺

Should I consider running for the SaySo Board of Directors? No one can make that decision for you because the commitment to the board is yours! There will be a workshop at SaySo Saturday about what BOD members do. Here's something a SaySo BOD member wrote last year about her experience: Speaking as a one-year member of the SaySo Board of Directors, I personally have learned how to represent what I stand for. SaySo provides a voice for young people. A voice is definitely necessary to express needed changes and prove to people what and who we are. The ability to encourage others is another characteristic needed to convince youth that there is nothing wrong with voicing concerns about the foster care system. Our input can be considered without us complaining or begging for sympathy. Strength should never be neglected when serving on the SaySo BOD. We have to prepare ourselves for the pressure we may be under if we are declined approval for needed changes or desires. We can't be ashamed or afraid of our experiences when reaching out, because our determination encourages others, which attracts more support. SaySo requires personal qualities; each member is unique and offers their own ideas of being able, young, and speaking out. (Chaka, 2002)



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Is SaySo Saturday for everyone? No. It's only for young people ages 14-24 who are or have been in foster care. Adopted youths who were in foster care and later adopted should also attend. College students and older youths who have aged out have lots to say about how foster care helped and hurt their transition to adult life. We all have something to say. This is the time to say it and take some action.

Will I get anything out of SaySo Saturday? That depends on you. Like anything else, what you get depends on what you are willing to put into it. It could be awesome and make a huge difference in your life - or none at all. You decide that. You will get a conference bag, lunch, snacks, and cake -maybe even one of the birthday gifts and probably even a new friend or two.



SaySo, Inc., helps aged out youth!

In December, the SaySo, Inc., Board of Directors established the Steaphon James Foundation in honor of our board member who is aging out of SaySo with a possibly fatal medical condition know as Marfan Syndrome. This foundation was established to help pay the monthly medical expenses required to keep Steaphon alive until he can have open-heart surgery. His Medicaid application was denied and is being appealed. It is anticipated that Steaphon will have surgery within the next few months. If you want to know more about the foundation, Marfan Syndrome or how to help, please contact the SaySo office.

Snowfall reschedules LINK-UP Conference

The SaySo Board Members had to reschedule this life skills conference for youths ages 13-15 years old from January 10 to March 27 due to snow fall in central NC. Board members facilitate the workshops and are the coaches for the O-LINK-pic games. This fun and active conference will be in Wilmington. If you want to attend, contact the SaySo office



SaySo Board Members Hit the National Scene!

Two SaySo Board members are going National!!! **Makeisha** has been elected to Senior Youth Representative to the National Independent Living Association (NILA). There are three other youths on the board with her from Ohio, Florida, and New York. **Melinda** is part of a national group of alumni forming the National Alumni Network (NAN). This will be the only nationally organized group of alumni ever! You go girls!!

You too could be a part of the action...join SaySo today!

