

Having Our Say

The newsletter of SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out

SaySo Saturday Quick Review

Volume5, Number 4

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. This is the one day SaySo members from different regions get together to speak out and be a part of making changes that will benefit other foster youths as well as themselves. This is a day where SaySo members DO NOT whine and complain. We take action, advocate for change and most importantly SPEAK OUT. This conference not only teaches us about making a difference throughout the nation for foster youth, we have a great time getting to know other youths from around the state. We even elected a new board of directors who will be commissioned in June.

SaySo Board Members 2004-05

Joining Peaches S. (co-chair) and Brian M. (treasurer)

Region 1

James P.
Julia S.
Jessica W.

Region 2

Suzanne J.
Melinda M.
Darnell W.

Region 3

Frank L.
Dayshawn M.
Lisa W.

Region 4

Megan B.
Vivian J.
Curtina K.

Region 5

Amanda B.
Antwan B.
Makeisha W.

Region 6

Jesica B.
Daniel S.
Lakisha T.

Outstanding Sessions and Activities

The workshop sessions throughout SaySo Saturday gave members information to take back with them and share with their friends, family, other foster youth, etc. By participating in the activities in the eight different workshops youth had a chance to discuss issues with youth from other regions. Some of the workshops included: **We Have the Power! Influencing Others; SaySo's Statewide "Make a Difference Day" Project; and Express Yourself! Foster Youth Rights & Responsibilities.** Existing local chapters celebrated one-three year birthdays and a new chapter in Onslow County was announced. Steaphon J., one of the SaySo Board Members was the first to retire from SaySo at age 24! We wish Steaphon the best of luck in his outrageous work. By the end of the day all the youth were proud about the many things they had learned as well as the interesting "birthday gifts" (**door prizes**) given out.

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Two openings

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Marcus

Passed away – will keep open

Region 6

Jesica – no email

Chaney- Co-Chair

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Make a Difference Day Project

The 14th Make a Difference Day is Saturday, Oct. 23, 2004.

Make a Difference Day, is the largest national day of helping others, it is sponsored by USA WEEKEND Magazine and in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation.

Suitcases for youth- Did you know that many children coming into foster care often have to place their treasured possessions into TRASH BAGS because social services can not provide a suitcase for every child? Imagine what it feels like to put all your things closest to you into a trash bag while leaving the only home you have ever known. Well, it has happened to plenty of us, and we can tell you, IT DOES NOT FEEL GOOD! SaySo, Inc., plans to change this by sponsoring a "Suitcase Collection Project" for Make a Difference Day. We are asking all members, local chapters, and partnering organizations to support this project by helping us collect donated new suitcases or duffel bags. We want every foster youth in NC to be treated with dignity during their moves (which are so hard to begin with). You could also help by donating a suitcase or donate money for us to purchase new bags for them.

SaySo Plans to Visit the Captial!

Nine SaySo members will work with state policy makers from June 28-July 2, 2004!! The page programs include: Senate, House and Governor programs. One SaySo board member and two SaySo youths from area local chapters (Wake, Moore, Guilford, and Cumberland) are participating in the page programs. Three youths will participate in each program. For the Senate and House Page programs, all youths must be sponsored by a House representative. We are so excited about the opportunity to start putting a real lives on the face of foster care. We hope this will be the beginning of other SaySo members to work with legislators and speak with them about how foster youths have the same needs as their own children.

These Page Programs affords NC youth the opportunity to see first-hand how laws are made by participating in the legislative process. The SaySo pages will be involved in a variety of work experiences that they will share in a future newsletter dedicated especially to this "adventure." We hope our pages have fun and pave a path for SaySo straight to the Capital.

Don't forget! The Steaphon James Foundation helps to support the medical costs involved with Marfan Syndrome. For more information about the foundation, Marfan Syndrome, or to make a donation, contact SaySo, Inc .