

Having Our Say

The newsletter of SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out

Volume 6, Number 5

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: Curtina K. and
Cherish C.
Secretary: Julia S.
Treasurer: Britney M.
Sergeant-at-arms: Antwan B.



EXPRESS YOURSELF! If you would like to make a submission for this section please email Melinda.medina@ilrinc.com

"Loving Myself"

I have a strong desire to love myself in such a way that no one can ever hurt me again.

I'm not foolish in my thinking!

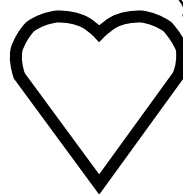
I know that I will be hurt again!

My desire is to be so in love with myself that I see the evil intent of others, and not leave room for anyone to ever break my spirits again.

Because I was broken at such a young age, it's been a very difficult battle to love the same person others have used in such disgusting manners.

Despite their lust, I have found love within myself, and everyday, I fall deeper....

Thanks Tracy T. for your original poem.



You too can fall in love with yourself. Try it!



What does moving day look like for you? Trash bags or suitcases?



Make a Difference Day Project

The 15th Make a Difference Day is Saturday, Oct. 22, 2005.

Suitcases for youth - Tell everyone you know to donate a suitcase or duffle bag to foster youth for our Second "Give a Child a Smile" project. Last year we collected over 2100 bags statewide! Let's show that foster youths deserve some dignity and have the right to carry their possessions in a "legitimate suitcase" NOT a trashbag! Our things may not be much, but they are not trash... they are treasures that belong to us. We all can do our part. If you are coordinating a collection site in your community, please do the following:

- Call or email the SaySo office about what you are doing.
- Let us know how we can help your project succeed.
- Afterwards let us know how many you collected so we can tell others the good work SaySo does!

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SaySo Youth Wins National Youth of the Year

FACT:

Makeisha Williams, age 21 won the 2005 National Youth of the Year.

FACT:

For the third year out of the last four, a SaySo youth member has won this award! (De'Von in 2002 and Melinda in 2003) Too cool!

FACT:

The award was made in Atlanta at the Growing Pains Independent Living Conference at the Westin Peachtree Plaza. (Fancy place)

FACT:

"Keisha" has enjoyed representing youth around the country and especially from North Carolina. She wants to be a social worker and is committed to helping all foster youths register to vote as soon as they are able. "We have the most at stake and our votes count too," says Keisha. (She is so right!)



**Way to Go Makeisha!
And now a word from
OUR WINNER!!!**



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Hello!! I am **Makeisha Williams**. I served as a board member for **SAYSO** for five years and for four of those years I have represented **SAYSO** on the **National Independent Living Association (NILA)** Board as a youth representative. Being a youth representative is a big but important job because I had to participate in conference calls every three months and one face to face board meeting per year. NILA is a board comprised of mostly adults with only three youth seats available so it was my duty to make sure that the youth voice was heard. This year as a member of NILA I am serving as the team leader for the Youth/Adult Partnership, which planned a Speak Out Forum for the Growing Pains Conference that was held in September. As a youth representative I have had the chance to go to Orlando, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; and Kansas City, Missouri. Most importantly I had the chance to take issues that my peers and I wanted to see changed to the NILA board so that we could change things on a national level. NILA has taught me how to work on a board comprised mostly of adults and has broaden my horizons in many ways. I am more committed than ever to take what I've learned into adulthood and continue to help foster youths. I hope that more SaySo members become interested in holding a seat on NILA Board. **My term is ending in January and I'd like to see someone from NC take my place.** If you are interested in being on the NILA board please contact the SaySo office (800-820-0001 or sayso@ilrinc.com) or email me at ronirocklives@yahoo.com