

# Illinois Imagines

July 2015



## Empowerment Guide Training Set

There is one more chance to learn about the Empowerment Guide as a final training will be held 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. September 1 at the Impact Center for Independent Living in Alton. We hope that many people can come and learn how to start empowerment groups. For registration information contact [surquhart@maconresources.org](mailto:surquhart@maconresources.org).

## Hands on with a Guide

In June, the Illinois Imagines of DeKalb County team all learned about the Picture Guide to the Exam After Sexual Assault. Marj Askins, victim advocate at Safe Passage, went through the slides and explained ways in which she works with survivors and medical professionals during the exam process. If your team has not done this yet, it is a great thing to do during a team meeting.

## Local Team Meeting Idea

Thanks to Erin Walters from the Coles County Illinois Imagines Team for sharing this awesome idea: Listen to a webinar with the team and then discuss the webinar. There are several webinars posted on the Illinois Imagines website at [www.illinoisimagines.org](http://www.illinoisimagines.org).

## Spotlight

### Decatur Initiates Empowerment Group

Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center and Macon Resources, Inc. came together with self-advocates to start empowerment groups. Empowerment leaders, Storm Scott and Diana Anders, discuss the groups they are leading in Decatur.

"It's rejuvenating to lead an empowerment group and it's also exhausting sometimes," Scott said. "I see a lot of people changing through this experience."

"It's fun. I learned a lot of different stuff," Anders said.

Both women want to encourage others to give these groups a try.

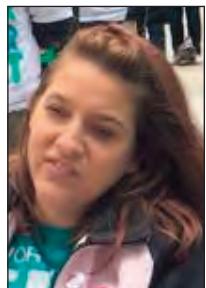
"It helps people with trauma to express ourselves," Scott said.

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## August 19 Webinar: Two Voices, One Movement

Many people think that people with physical disabilities don't have a voice in what happens and are not intelligent. You will learn from two powerful self-advocates that the statement is not true! Lisa Cesal and Cathy Saunders will share their individual journeys of self-advocacy. Participants will learn how to teach self-advocates to speak up for themselves and the value of teaching self-advocates how

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Saunders

Cesal

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Others attending the group added these comments:

- “I like discussing about feelings. It helps me to be more careful with people who are my friends.”
- “It kind of helped me out about dealing with my life. It calms me down and all that, and I really like that group.”
- “I like to talk to my friends about what happened to me in the past. It releases the pressure on me. Once I say it I can stop thinking about it.”
- “I’m finding it to be really interesting. I feel it is helping all the ladies in the group and myself. I feel that we learn a lot in the group. One of the things we have learned is to be supportive of one another and not put each other down.”

Staff attending the empowerment groups have also drawn strength from the meetings. “It has been very eye opening to hear some of the stories I was completely unaware of from group members I have known for years. Their ability to deal with this type of trauma with such wisdom and grace is impressive and they inspire me,” said Lisa England of Macon Resources, Inc.

“It is so wonderful to see ladies with disabilities engage in healthy and empowering discussions to help them heal,” said Kim Spicer of Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center.



*Storm Scott and Diana Anders of Decatur.*

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to use their voices to educate others about people with disabilities. Cathy and Lisa will also share about their participation on the Illinois Imagines Chicago Team. A short glimpse of the webinar’s focus can be found in the statements below from Lisa and Cathy.

Lisa Cesal: “Don’t ever allow your disability to discourage you from doing what you want to do.”

Cathy Saunders: “You do not have to be famous, or well known, or a poet who is good with words to be able to speak up. Each and every voice is important and each will be supported in speaking for his/her truth because voices cannot afford to be silenced with the shame that accompanies abuse and trauma.”

## Nothing About Us Without Us

Need more self-advocates on your community team?

The statewide team can help you plan caucus meetings with self-advocates in your community to gather input and recruit new members for your team.

Contact Shirley Paceley at [spaceley@maconresources.org](mailto:spaceley@maconresources.org) for more information and for support. The voices of people with disabilities is crucial for our work together.