

Having Our Say

The newsletter of SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out

Volume 4, Number 1

About SaySo

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: Melinda M. and
Steaphon J.
Secretary: Chaka C.
Treasurer: Clarence G.
Sergeant-at-arms: De'Von M.

Annual SaySo Saturday

Don't miss one of the biggest events of the year! Youth will get a chance to meet the SaySo representatives from their area, as well as other youth from around the state who are taking a stand. Last year, we accommodated 155 people, including one youth group from Georgia. Georgia took with them the knowledge to begin their own youth board. SaySo Saturday is a time to come and see what youth can do to make changes in the system. Youth will also learn how to start a local chapter in their area, as well as attend several workshops presented by the youth, ranging in topics from public speaking to understanding the LINKS program. Youth will also have the chance to elect representatives from their region, who will serve their SaySo term advocating for them. So come participate in SaySo Saturday, and help make a difference in your life, as well as the lives of other youth. The event will be held March 2, 2002 at Guilford Technical Community College in Jamestown, from 10 am until 3:30 pm.

What It Takes to Be A SaySo Board Member

Speaking as a one-year member of the SaySo Board of Directors, I personally have learned how to represent what I stand for. SaySo, Strong Able Youth Speaking Out, 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. Adults also need to be encouraged to give their support. Strength should never be neglected when serving on the SaySo BOD. Strong Able Youth Speaking Out. 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.

-Submitted by Chaka, Secretary and Region 3 rep

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Where We Have Been

There are many occasions during the year where the SaySo Board is called on. Two of the biggest events of the summer for the Board were the Youth Recognition Luncheons and the Youth Days Conferences held throughout the state of North Carolina. SaySo took part in Daniel Memorial's National Conference in August when Steaphon, Erica, De'Von, Chaney, and Stephaine presented a SaySo workshop to many people from all over the country. Also in August, Peaches participated in the Court Improvement Conference. Even in September, the Board stayed busy by participating in the NC Child Abuse Vigil in Raleigh on the Capital steps, which coincided with SaySo's Leadership Conference, in which renowned speaker Patrick Patrong taught the participating youth leadership skills. During the month of October, Steaphon and Jennifer conducted a SaySo workshop at the NC Foster Parent's Association annual conference. Jennifer also spoke at the Juvenile Judge's Training and received high remarks and compliments. Steaphon and Bernard also participated in the Workforce Development Partnership Conference.

There will be many more speaking opportunities for SaySo next year. If you want to be a leader, and desire to make changes in the system, SaySo hopes to see you running for the Board at our next SaySo Saturday Conference.

Local Chapter Info

Since our last newsletter, SaySo has grown. We would like to extend our appreciation to our newest local chapters: Wake County, Guilford County, and Cumberland County. We also wish to send congratulations to Moore and Mecklenburg Counties, whose local chapters are celebrating their first birthdays. Congratulations to all, and thank you for your hard work and continued support.

For more information about these, starting a local chapter in your area, or having a SaySo Representative speak to you, contact Nancy Carter at Independent Living Resources, Inc., 800-820-0001.

SaySo welcomes you to make copies of this newsletter and share it with others you feel it may benefit.