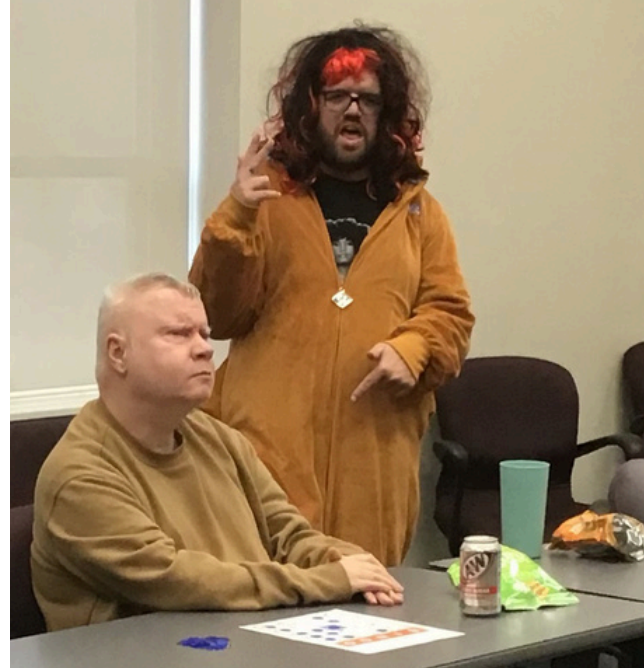




SELF-ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER

Merrick, Inc.



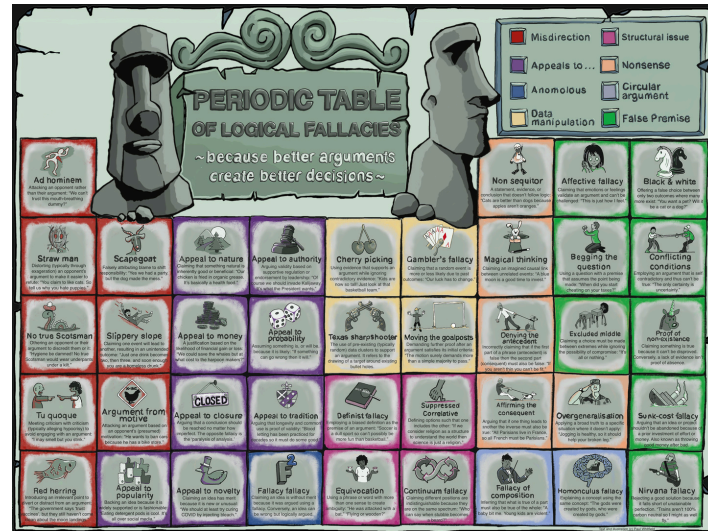
HALLOWEEN PARTIES!

With the profits made during the Ice Cream Socials in August, Self-Advocates contemplated what they wanted to do with the proceeds. Many ideas emerged: plan a carnival, go out for lunch, host a bingo day with big prizes, etc. The majority decided on a Halloween party with music, snacks, games, and prizes. Self-Advocates assertively communicated their snack and game preferences to their Facilitator who dutifully took notes.

Throughout the week of Halloween, parties were hosted during regular meeting times. Snacking options covered all dietary needs with Sun Chips, Pop Corners, popcorn, zero sugar pop, and sparkling flavored waters. Bingo and Trivia were played for prizes or candy while Halloween music played softly in the background. Some Self-Advocates decided to dress for the occasion!

Voting

Voting is one of many important civic duties. For some it is the only opportunity to make their wants and needs known...anonymously. This year came with a lengthy ballot of local, state, and national electoral races and propositions. Merrick's Self-Advocates were determined to be informed voters, instead of random or bandwagon voters. They built critical thinking skills by better understanding facts versus opinions, logical fallacies, debate structure, sources of information, voting rights, ways to register and vote, seeking assistance, and making choices. Many of these skills were demonstrated and practiced using gameplay on icivics.org. The iCivics game, Cast Your Vote, was downloaded to the client iPads. Fliers containing voting rights were available and taken home by Self-Advocates in September (for those who planned to vote early) and the week before Election Day. Merrick's Self-Advocacy Facilitator surveyed polling sites for accessibility throughout the White Bear Lake area on Election Day. These official efforts will help the state address any accessibility concerns before the next election. Post-election, Self-Advocates worked on accepting outcomes, remaining respectful during discussion, and contacting their representatives about issues that concern them.



Collaborative Poetry

Inspired by other artwork and randomly generated nonsense, Self-Advocates worked together to write the following poems.

I.

A man sitting cheerfully.
Teddy bear notices color -
Sapphires;
the greatest of all time,
on butterflies dancing
to fairy bells
like a heart rate.
Love.
Just gotta figure out
the separation -
where
it
is.
Light bulb ceiling.
Dim.
Oh, and
the clock's drooping.
Smile.
Inspiration!
Keep smiling.
Now slide down
slow,
calm.
Tree
roots
am I.

II.

Flooded street -
illusion of a water fall
to calm river.
A tree root staircase
leads to winter clouds.
Spilt milk swirls
and forms a wedding
dress,
illuminating reflections of
Princess and the Frog
dreams
viewed
from floating castle walls.
He writes on glittering paper
creating flower street lights
melting
dripping
onto mushroom umbrellas.
There a mountain
face wants
to scream - eyes wide,
as cats decide
that boxes are the ultimate
symbol of love, sleep,
and impending revolution.

Collaborative Poetry (cont.)

III.

Cotton Candy
pastel waters
trickle through a
sleepy town.

Butterflies
dripping into tea
clocks - tick tock.
Key fading into
fungi ship sailing
on newspaper
faces, identical in
print, blown away
by bubble gum
balloon. Lighter,
higher, and then
mountain ice
melting into river
orchestra. On the
bank, jazz-loving
cats collect water
in saxophone
shaped bowls.

IV.

She's painting backwards:
a polaroid fade,
pastels, and bold
blue feathers.

Thinking...

Maybe too much thinking
about heart-shaped flowers.

Oof!

Scary cliff on a windy night.

Must press on
to the river-side village.
Who peers from the cave below?

A genie?

Three wishes!

- 1) A free country
- 2) A vacation to Disney
- 3) Another genie

Nice!

Design a life of nonsense.
Whisper secrets to the coffee
and convince it to visit our long-
lost friend,
the sugar cube.
Together we can travel
to the North Pole's
disco wonderland,
where sneaky elves
turn cookies into presents,
causing a festive frenzy.

Collaborative Poetry (cont.)

V.

Art exploring together.

A missing eye.

Smoke in the hat worn by an alien
who is melting time.

An invasion predicted by cat eyes
swaying like fallen leaves.

In the after,

as a bizarre twist of tradition,

festive turkeys escape

leaving a trail of sauerkraut

to a bowling tournament

inside a Volkswagen

with a T-Rex

balancing

ice cream cones

on its

tiny

arms.



The Persistence of Memory - Salvador Dali



Untitled 7 - Katharina Jung

VI.

Snow covered
blossoms

Yellow streamers
prancing on the wind.

An artist paints them,
paints her.

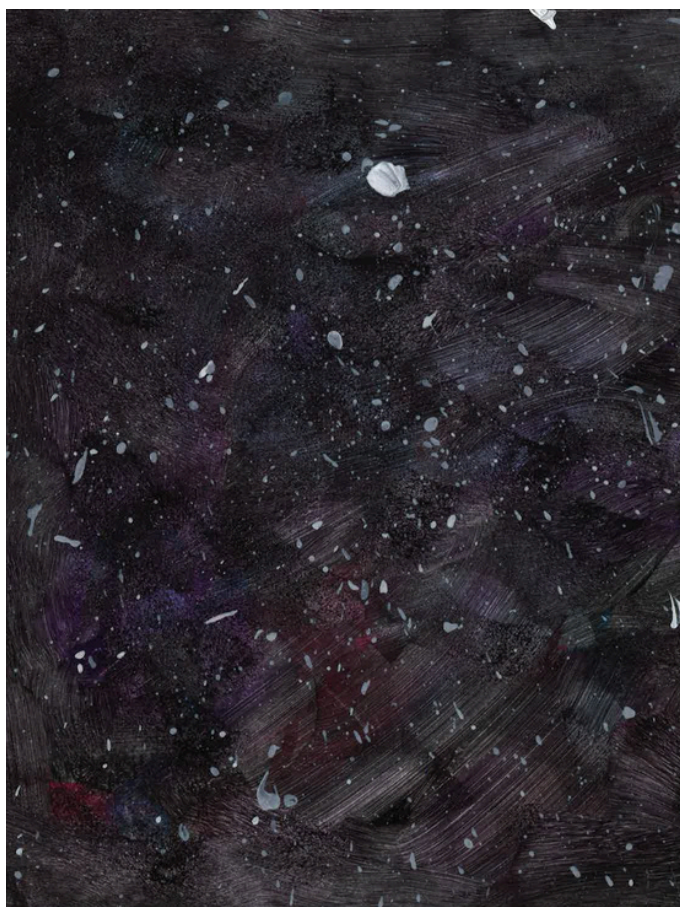
A giant woman, alone
in a red gown,
lounging beside
waterfall, sea
stretching wide

All would be friends
warned away by the
light house

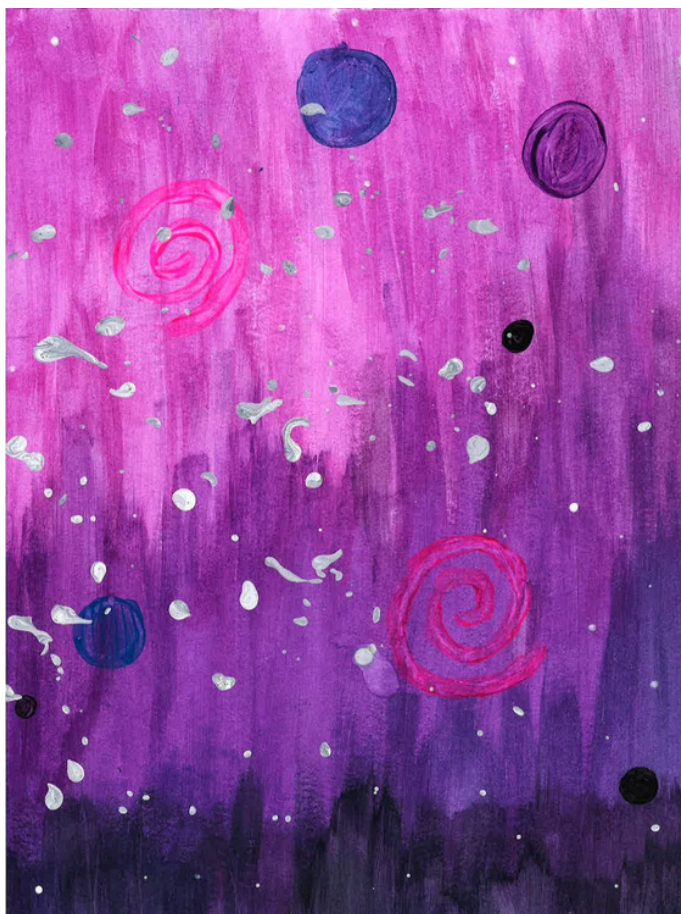
VISUAL ARTWORKS



Jenett. W.



Sofie



Emily



Elise

KEEP MOVING FORWARD >>>

Keep Moving Forward is an interview series featuring people with disabilities sharing their perspectives, insights, and experiences. KeepMovingForwardMN.org

Kate Eifrig

Kate Eifrig is a storyteller and an actor.

Kate hopes that one day people won't have to prove they are ill. She wants everyone to be accepted and supported as they battle any illness, whether you can see it or not.



Kate says, “Almost anybody with mental illness will tell you it’s frustrating that you can’t see mental illness.”

Service animals

Many people with disabilities, not just blind folks, use service animals to live independently. Service animals are specially trained to perform tasks that assist an individual with their disability. The animals are very well behaved and must always remain under their owners' control. Service animals are most often dogs and sometimes miniature horses, which are rare. No other animal can be a service animal. Pets are not service animals, but a person's service animal may also be their pet. If you see a service animal in public, be aware that animal is working and should not be approached by anyone. If you pet a service animal without permission, it may not be able to perform the tasks it is trained to perform. They are cute—but please ask before you touch them!

True or False

1. Service animals are only used by people who are blind. **TRUE or FALSE**
2. Service animals are the same as pets. **TRUE or FALSE**
3. A service animal may only be a dog. **TRUE or FALSE**
4. Service animals assist folks with disabilities to live independently. **TRUE or FALSE**
5. It is ok to touch a service animal without getting permission from its owner. **TRUE or FALSE**
6. Service animals are highly trained and well behaved. **TRUE or FALSE**

Willow is the service animal for Merrick's Life Enrichment Program. She is allowed to freely roam the admin area during the day. Willow knows that she is not to go into the programming area without staff. If she is not completing a session with clients, Willow is usually invited to the programming area at some point as they really enjoy seeing her.