

# THE ADVOCATOR

A quarterly newsletter for Self-Advocates

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## *Self Advocacy*

For many of us, it has become routine to speak up for ourselves. Let's be sure to look out for those who don't have a voice and help be their voice so they can find their place in the community. It boosts morale for both parties when we help each other. You can also help by teaching people to speak up for themselves, helping them learn how to use public transportation, and helping them learn how to use apps on their smart phones for things such as Uber rides and grocery delivery services. These two services are huge for achieving independence!

Another part of independence is making your own financial decisions. You feel a sense of accomplishment when you do things for yourself, but its ok to ask for help when you need it. Finances can get tricky!

If you have a job, be sure to get there on time and do your job to the best of your ability. We all make occasional mistakes, but there is always a lesson to be learned from those mistakes. Work is one of the places I sharpened my self advocacy skills. I had been working at my first job for a year or so and I felt I had earned a raise. I talked to some of my co-workers and they encouraged me to talk to the boss. I did get a raise and after that it built my self confidence. Now, I'm able to speak up for myself at work and many other places. Speaking up for yourself is a good skill to have. It gives you confidence and other people see that and learn from your example.

Learning to drive and getting my first car also helped me with becoming more independent. That is a possibility for many people with disabilities. There are many good things to look forward to so keep trying, keep using your voice, and never give up!

Warm Regards,

George

# Advocator Cafe

Advocator Cafe

Let's talk about SHOTS!!! I know, it's not a fun subject but I think we can all agree that we are sick and tired of the pandemic! What are you dreaming of doing when COVID-19 is over? Will you go on a trip, attend a sporting event or concert, have dinner at a restaurant, go to the movies? The possibilities are endless!

The good news is that we now have a vaccination that should help things in our world start to look more "normal." Talk to your doctor about getting your vaccination so you can safely get back out into the world while also keeping other people safe and healthy. Click the link below for more information.

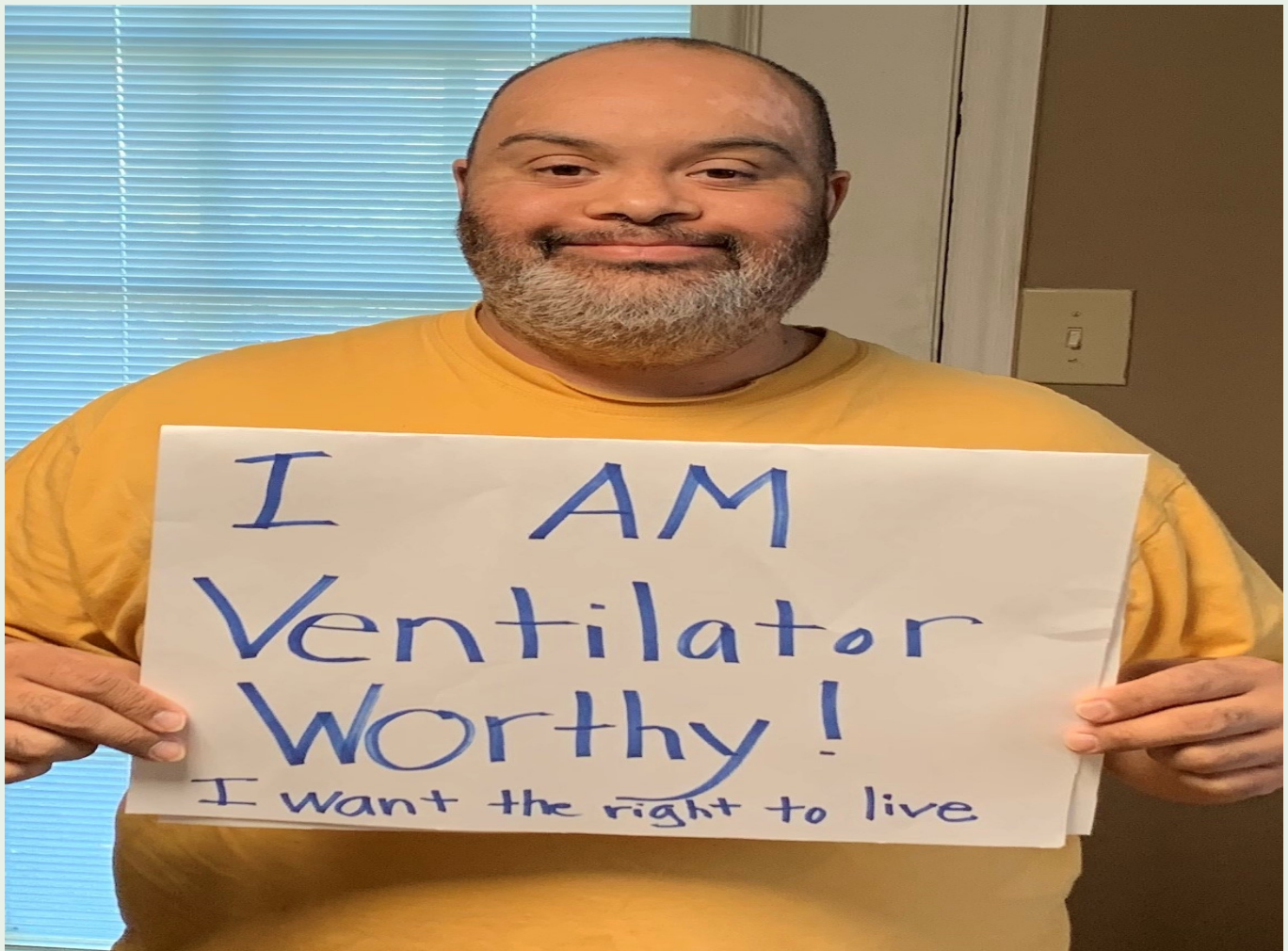
Warm Regards,

George

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19vaccine/index.html>

# VACCINATION PROTECTS US FROM DISEASES





## Matthew Foster

Matthew Foster has been an activist for disability rights since he was a teenager. He participated in his first state People First of Alabama conference as a 15-year-old high school student at Vestavia Hills High School. Matthew was a practitioner of inclusive practices beginning in preschool. He attended all regular classes during public school from Kindergarten through his senior year of high school.

Matthew became employed at Chuck E Cheese as a cast member (performer) before his senior year of high school at the age of seventeen.

Twenty years later he is still enjoying his role at CEC. He can't wait until the restaurant is able to entertain customers with parties and Chuck E shows again. Just like millions of other Americans, Matthew has also been affected by the economic and health emergency.

During this pandemic, when healthcare rights have been threatened, he used his advocacy skills on social media, national and local print and electronic media and radio interviews. He and People First joined with national advocacy groups and Alabama Disability Advocacy Program (ADAP) to protest and the Alabama Department of Public Health reversed its ventilator triage policy.

Matthew also enjoys Yoga and Zumba classes, art classes at a local art studio, and spends time enjoying his devoted relationship with his girlfriend, Meredith Rucker.

Matthew serves as a state officer for People First and is a member of Down Syndrome Alabama's self-advocate group. He was the 2017 recipient of the Jeff Ridgeway Self-Advocate of the Year Award. He has performed numerous public presentations including #ILoveMyDisabledLife. He was the guest speaker at the 2018 Birmingham Governor's Disability Employment Awards and speaks regularly at local elementary schools.



## Upcoming Events:

Stay tuned for info on rescheduling of events that were not able to take place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please visit the link below for the latest informational webinar from the Office of Self-Advocacy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgetWaAlNyg>

**I would like to encourage all of you to send me your success stories. It can be anything from moving into your new home, starting a new job, making a trip to buy groceries, etc. Any accomplishment that goes towards being self-reliant and having inclusion in the community is acceptable. If you send me your stories, I can put them in the newsletter to share with others and help inspire them to achieve their goals.**

**Warm Regards,  
George**

For information on self-advocacy presentations, please contact:

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