

April 2020



Advocacy Now, More than Ever

By Sydney Badeau

My name is Sydney Badeau and I'm a well-known disability advocate in the disability community of Southern Wisconsin. In 2018 I graduated from Partners in Policymaking, which is a six-part advocacy/leadership training put on by the WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities. I am currently the lead partner of my senate district, some tasks for that role involve working with fellow Partner grads as well as legislators about bills that are getting worked on. I've also been on the Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum staff 6 times and will be my 7th time this summer and I'm the current board president for WI YLF. The Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum is a week-long leadership forum for high school students with disabilities to learn various things from advocacy and leadership to how to meet with legislators in the capital.

I'm also a crisis counselor for Crisis Textline, I went through 30 hours of training this last winter and passed the final quiz of training in December. I am now a level 5 crisis counselor. I enjoy logging on to the Crisis Textline Platform a few nights a week on my laptop and helping people in crisis.

If you or anyone you know is an aspiring advocate or wants to get more involved in public policy, being a delegate for the Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum is a great experience. You meet other students across the state and make lifelong friends, you also learn so much in just a week as well as going to the capital, having a talent show and dance. Delegate applications are due April 20th. Being a staff member for the Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum is a wonderful experience, you work with so many talented staff from across the state as well as students who show great leadership potential. You get the chance to help them learn and grow as individuals with disabilities. You can still submit your staff application!

With so much uncertainty right now and many people feeling isolated I wanted to share some tips for people with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Stay in touch with friends and family via phone calls and or video calls using Facebook messenger or the app Zoom.
- Spend time with your pets' whether it's walking the dog or playing with your chickens.
- Do something creative for a bit each day whether it's photography or drawing/coloring or doing a puzzle.
- Reach out to WI BPDD or The Arc Wisconsin with questions you may have during this complicated time.