

YOUR ART IS  
YOUR WORDS,

YOUR WORDS  
ARE YOUR ART,

YOUR ART IS  
YOUR PROTEST!

Poems From: The Protest  
Poetry Workshops



# Acknowledgements

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Ocean C. Poet

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“The Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) seeks to strengthen the self-advocacy movement by supporting self advocacy organizations to grow in diversity and leadership. The resource center is a project of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), the oldest national self-advocacy organization in the country. SARTAC is a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance, funded by the Administration For Community Living – Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD). The information in this manual was written to provide guidance for self Advocates and their allies to assist in understanding policy issues affecting their lives. It is not to be used to determine a person's legal rights or an

organization's legal responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, as amended or any other federal, state or local laws written to protect the rights of people with disabilities."



# What Self Advocacy Means To Me

Self advocacy to me means having a voice and sticking up for what is right

Self-advocacy to me means having a voice in my community and not being hidden away

I advocate to keep my staff

I advocate to be paid a livable wage and keep my benefits

I advocate for my right to love and to be married

I will continue to advocate for myself to matter how long it takes

My voice matters

Your voice Matters

I believe anyone can be a self-advocate.

Written by: Jeff White

# Disability is Matter of Perception

Disability Rights is having your needs met.

Disability Justice is when people come to agree on the person who is served.

Neurodiversity is being beautiful and unique but also the same because we are all human beings.

Disability is a matter of perception.

Written by: Noa Makinen Brown

# Untitled

Protest the grotesque indifference  
Protest the deafening silence

No more generations destined  
to remain in silent prisons

No more human potential  
that is robbed to rot

No lived experiences  
dismissed as irrelevant

No more missing poets  
that don't get to write

No more nonspeakers  
without access to communication

- **Swarit Gopalan, 11 years old**

# Love Wins

We want justice.

We want freedom.

We want higher wages in our jobs.

We want more and better transportation.

We want to be equal like brothers and sisters.

We are there for each other.

We can stand back up together again.

At the end, love wins.

Written by: Noa Makinen Brown

# Chapter One of My Life

All my life I have been disabled.  
My disabilities make me who I am.  
My life has not been easy.  
I have been bullied, teased and disrespected.  
Never getting the help I needed or wanted.  
They always used to call me retarded.  
When all I wanted was respect.

I am worthy.

I am strong.

I belong.

This is chapter one of my life.

Written by: Jenny Svihel

# Everyone Needs Support

**S** - safety, security, and sense of humor

**U** - universal care

**P** - patient

**P** - present

**O** - open to new ideas

**R** - respect

**T** - takes the time to get to know me

Written by: Jeff White

# Whispers of Love

I just want to be able to love you without the  
ableist vultures flying above us waiting to  
attack.

I just want to be able to love you without being  
stared at.

I just want to be able to love you and not be  
worried that I can't come back.

I just want to be able to love you without  
thousands of miles separating us.

I just want to be able to love you without this  
screen in between us.

I just want to be able to love you without fear of  
losing everything.

I just want to be able to love you without the  
State watching over us.

I just want to be able to love you why can't it be  
that easy?

I just want to be able to love you, you are my  
everything.

Written by: Brittanie H-Wilson

# Empowers Us

I will continue to protest poetically.  
For we were all born free.  
Disability rights are human rights.  
I will stand up and fight.

For we deserve safe and healthy places to live.  
Jobs that pays wages so we can survive in this  
life.

Transportation that takes us to our destination  
on time.

We need people who will hear us, listen to us.  
When a crime is committed against us.

This is why self-advocacy empowers us.  
Especially people of color with disabilities.  
Learning about our rights enables us.  
To stand strong, speak up if we are treated  
wrong.

Demand social security not take our funds.  
When being awarded is our own.

Disability rights are needed.  
If ever in jail and in healthcare.

Acquiring Self advocacy inspires the ability  
To communicate and negotiate. Interests,  
desires and needs.  
It helps making safer and better decisions.

For you and me.

I encourage you to educate and advocate.  
Gain self-advocacy skills.  
Join a program or a group.  
Don't be afraid just be you.

Self-advocacy is.  
Knowing yourself  
Knowing your needs.  
Knowing how to get what you need.

Written by: Ocean C. Poet

# Katie and Her Cats

Nosey Rosie is little but mighty.  
She gets in to trouble in to getting into  
everything  
She thinks she cute and tries to cuddle with  
mom because she knows gotten in trouble  
She tries to butter up mom.

She plays with her bothers Charlie and gizmo  
cases them around the house when  
Then mom with big Boom!  
She flips them over playing  
They take turns casing each other  
She likes to hop in video calls during meetings.

Written by: Katie McDermott

# Self-Advocacy

I'm a very strong self-advocate.

I like to go places and dance and birdwatch.  
Being a self-advocate is so much fun.

We get our voices heard and we get  
accomplished and people sometimes bully you.  
And that ain't good.

They call you names like gay or fat.  
That ain't good.

You never call people names like that because  
if you ain't gay or fat it really hurts your  
feelings.

People have to be nice to you with respect and  
with my confidence.  
What make me happy and proud to be a self-  
advocate.

That's why you speak up for your rights and  
get things heard at the Capitol.  
And make sure your social security or things  
like social security or MA don't get taken away.  
You need MA and social security to go about  
your day.

Sometimes it's scary to speak up for yourself and you can do it if you got confidence. I always have confidence in myself. Sometimes I don't have confidence, but I know I will. Cause I speak up for myself even at meetings and tell them what I want and how am I doing at my job.

And making sure you need to add new goals to feel happy for yourself and proud to be a self-advocate.

And not embarrassed.

Sometimes when they do name-calling, it really hurts. Like, when they call you the R-word and you don't like it. So you tell them not to do that. And then that will make you happy.

And my dad who's in heaven, he gave me confidence. And my mom gave me confidence too.

I had confidence when I get confirmed Catholic. I knew I could do it.

And I also had confidence when I'm a self-advocate and doing things great.

And make sure nobody calls you names and hurts your feelings. Because you know you believe in yourself.

Everybody believes in you too.

So, that's why you speak up for yourself to get your voice heard.

And, then you will be happy too. And, you will feel safe also with your friends and family.

And if you have a girlfriend.

So, I always have confidence in myself the whole time I speak up for myself.

Also, I'm always happy, never mad.

So, that's why I speak up for myself too.

So I can get my voice heard also.

So then that way, I'll be always happy and never mad.

Sometimes it's frustrating.

Sometimes people make you mad when they call you names and they make you do something you don't want to do like break your computer.

Or scream.

Or curse.

Then, you'll never be happy.

So you always want to be happy and also, be proud of yourself.

Cause you are a great self-advocate too.

So that's why I always like to speak up for myself and it gets my voice heard.

I like it when I get my voice heard.

And then people will be proud of me.

But sometimes it's not always the right way to do it when you call names.

Never put people down.

And be proud with yourself because you're a great self-advocate.

And be happy with yourself.

Because you know you can dance, sing, or do anything you want to do when you believe in yourself.

Because, you are a great self-advocate too.

That's why I always will speak up for myself no matter what.

No matter if people put you down or not.

To get things you want to get going and make your life better.

Always be happy. Never be mad.

Because you know God is watching me all the time.

That's why I became Catholic and I'm proud of myself for doing it and I'm proud of myself for working at my job and making money.

So I can go on trips and go to concerts and do things I want to do.

Because I love myself and I believe in my confidence.

So that's way I always will speak up for myself.

Written by: Richard Grimm

# Don't Shut us Down and Out

My feelings of the United States of America is  
crumbling around me

As I try to put it together to keep my disability  
services and help others who use disability  
services to remain in the community the way  
they would prefer to live.

We know there is a crisis but we are  
advocating to make that change to a livable  
situation with some help as we go forward in  
our life that we can work with.

So we can be a part of the community with  
others who have the same dream.

So we can show the world that people with  
disabilities are capable of making a difference  
in their daily lives with their allies who are truly  
wanting to help us as we help them.

We are under a big umbrella. We are different groups wanting to help each other to gather our tools so we can live in the community as a whole, not as bits and pieces.

Representatives and senators we voted you in to help us live in the community.

**Don't shut us down and out** to the point where we don't have a voice.

We are not a dead society.

We are here to stay.

I hope the future stays alive and awake as long as it can survive.

Written by: Heidi Myhre

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