



FACT SHEET

Foundation:

In October 2011, Opportunities, Inc. responded to a call from its stakeholders to ignite the passion and energy of persons with disabilities and their families *to advocate in a grassroots effort, create **awareness** in the community and **advise** those who care for our citizens with special needs; ensuring service choices are protected and sustained.* This movement would become the **A TEAM**.

There are **over 50** members of the **A TEAM**, including consumers of Opportunities, Inc.'s many programs, family members, guardians, and community leaders, who are eager to share of their time and testimonies to provide the community and legislators the real information needed when making decisions on the future of services for citizens with special needs.

Mission:

Unite persons with disabilities and family members to **Advocate** in a grassroots effort, create **Awareness** in the community and **Advise** those who care for our citizens with special needs; ensuring service choices are protected and sustained.

Purpose:

The team has 3 main purposes to achieve their goal:

1. The first is **ADVOCACY**, which will be conducted in various ways, such as petition drives, connecting with state and local government officials, writing letters to local newspapers and collaborating with others, such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis, and various community organizations.
2. Second, the team will work to promote **AWARENESS** of persons with disabilities through video testimonials, and other media venues, to ensure their story is shared throughout the community.
3. Finally, members will offer their **ADVISEMENT** to Opportunities, Inc., and others, in an effort to guide the advancement of services that meet the current and future needs of persons with disabilities. This will be accomplished through quarterly meetings, surveys and networking.

Results:

- Petition Drive - led the charge in collecting 550 petitions for a statewide drive in support of protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in choosing where they want to work and advance their independence. This effort was formally recognized at a press conference held at the Wisconsin State Capitol on January 11, 2012, where 5800 petitions from across the state were presented to legislators. Representatives from the A TEAM submitted theirs to Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald. It was an exciting day for all.
- Video Testimonials – Six families took part in capturing their stories in video format to promote awareness of persons with disabilities and their important stories. The final testimonials will be used in various social media outlets in the coming months, and have been shared with legislators.
- Strategic Plan Survey – A Team members participated in an on-line survey to offer feedback and suggestions as Opportunities, Inc. begins its next Strategic Plan.
- Meet and Greet events with key legislators, including: Senator Scott Fitzgerald, Tommy Thompson, State Representatives Nass and Wynn. (Summer/Fall 2012)
- Partnership with RFW in Action to franchise the A Team model throughout the state of Wisconsin.
- Formalizing the effort to offer information/referral support for consumers/families pursuing the appeal process with Family Care/MCOs.

For more information on the A TEAM, contact Robin Kennedy, Director of Agency Relations: 1.920.563.2437.
RK: 7.12, updated 9.12