

Beyond VOR Advocacy Day: How to Keep Your Legislators Engaged Year-Round

A Presentation for VOR



Topics

- Review of the basics of advocacy
- Five Strategies for Building Advocacy Relationships
- Your five minute action plan

Basic Keys to Effective Advocacy

- Knowing what you want
- Knowing who you're talking to
- Knowing how to talk to them
- Knowing how to follow-up



Five Strategies for Building Advocacy Relationships



Develop Your Story and Share with VOR

The screenshot displays the VOR website interface. At the top left is the VOR logo. To the right are navigation links: Home, Events, Site Map, News, Resources, RSS. Below these is a search bar with the text "search..." and a "Go" button. A secondary navigation bar contains: GET HELP, GET INVOLVED, LEGISLATIVE VOICE, ABOUT VOR, CONTACT US. The main content area is titled "Get Involved > Great Story Submissions". On the left is a sidebar with links: VOR Initiatives, VOR Advocacy Letters, Great Story Submissions (highlighted), and Siblings Voice. The main text area contains an introductory paragraph about VOR's mission, a call to action for story submissions, and a featured blog post titled "Three men and their home at Templeton" dated February 11, 2011. The blog post is split into two parts. The first part describes the Templeton Center and the challenges faced by its residents. The second part, dated March 21, 2011, describes the struggles of three specific residents: Jimmy Holdsworth, Tony Welcome, and Bobby Shepherd. On the right side of the page is a "RESOURCES" section with links to Help and Information, Toolkit for Families, Toolkit for Legislators, Cost Comparison Study, Abuse and Neglect, and Olmstead Resources. Below the resources are "DONATE" and "JOIN" buttons, each with a checkmark icon, and a text box for email sign-up.

VOR

Home Events Site Map News Resources RSS

search... Go

GET HELP GET INVOLVED LEGISLATIVE VOICE ABOUT VOR CONTACT US

Get Involved > Great Story Submissions

VOR Initiatives
VOR Advocacy Letters
Great Story Submissions
Siblings Voice

The vast majority of VOR's members are involved in this organization because "mental retardation" has touched their personal world in some way. In this section, we will regularly share their stories. Their own stories in their own words explain WHO VOR represents and WHY we do, better than we ever could.

Do you have story to share? We welcome your submission. Send it to thopp@vor.net, or call toll free 877-399-4VOR.

Three men and their home at Templeton
COFAR Blog
February 11, 2011
Part 1 of 2

On a freezing cold morning last month, the fields of snow shone in the sunlight as Tony Shepherd drove through the Templeton Developmental Center campus in Baldwinville in central Massachusetts, pointing out the sights.

"It's God's country," he said, of the 1,400-acre campus that stretched around us in all directions. Directly ahead of us loomed the peak of Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire.

At the top of the much smaller hill on which we were driving, a group of cottages, farm houses, and small brick buildings was scattered. Those buildings are home to the 106 residents of the Templeton Center, which has been targeted by the Patrick administration for closure by Fiscal Year 2013.

If you talk to Tony Shepherd and other guardians of the Templeton residents, you'll often hear the word "miracle" used to describe this facility for persons with intellectual disabilities, with its working farm and dairy operation. I talked to three of those guardians, and each described how Templeton turned out to be the solution to problems that, in some cases, had brought them or other members of their family to the brink of despair.

[Here is a brief account of the stories of three of Templeton's residents.](#)

Part 2 of 2
More on the 'miracle' of Templeton
March 21, 2011

Jimmy Holdsworth kept getting thrown out of community-based group homes and sheltered workshops because his behavior was too volatile and his size and strength were too much for the staff to handle.

For Tony Welcome, community-based programs were ineffective in getting him to stop stealing cars.

Bobby Shepherd's habit of wandering and trying to make friends with strangers frequently got him into trouble, and community-based programs didn't provide the structure and supervision he needed.

In each of those cases, the Templeton Developmental Center turned out to be the solution to years of pain and struggle, not only for the men, but for their families. But it's a solution that will no longer be available to those families or the families of

RESOURCES

Help and Information
Toolkit for Families
Toolkit for Legislators
Cost Comparison Study
Abuse and Neglect
Olmstead Resources

DONATE

JOIN

For more information, please share your email address here.

Do Your Homework: Know the Political Environment

On the Policymaker Side...

- Who Makes the Decisions?
- Who or What Influences Them?
- How Can You Get to Those Who Influence Your Primary Audience?

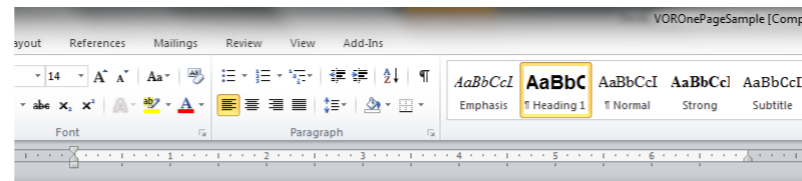
On the Advocate Side...

- What Skills do They Have?
- What is Their Connection to the Issue?
- What Relationships do They Already Have?

Resources

- www.opensecrets.org (campaign connections)
- www.congress.org and www.congress.gov (about U.S. Legislators)
- www.votesmart.org (about state and local legislators)
- [Advocate intake form](#)
- www.wufoo.com (capturing information)

Develop Your Story and Share with Policymakers Through a One-Pager



INSERT YOUR LOGO / LETTERHEAD HERE!

SAMPLE ONE PAGER

Use this template to develop a one-page leave behind about "mental retardation and disability" issues in your community. If you don't know the answers to all the questions, don't worry! Just fill in what you can.

Background on Issues in the Community

- The mission of your organization as it relates to these issues is [fill in] (If you're not affiliated with an organization, think about your own personal mission)
- I/We seek to achieve these goals through a variety of means, including:
 - List one or two HIGHLIGHTS of your work here. Try to limit it to two or three sentences.

Currently, businesses and groups in our community impact this issue in the following ways..

- Brief overview of residential housing issues in the community
- Brief overview of programs and projects in the community
- What you're doing to solve existing problems
- Other relevant information (include a map if appropriate)

Current Challenges

As our community grows / changes we face a number of challenges.

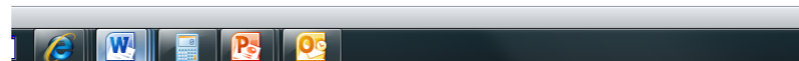
- List one or two specific challenges, such as legal challenges, Medicare funding, etc.

How Elected Officials Can Help

Government will play an important role in setting policy priorities and identifying the funding necessary to meet our current and future goals. [FILL IN ANY SPECIFIC ASKS HERE]. A Federal example is to support the Development Disabilities Act (H.R. 2032)

See the VOR Action Center at <http://www.vor.net/legislative-voice> for more details on specific federal legislation.

Insert YOUR contact information here, including websites, phone numbers, and details on how the planning department can help local officials better understand the issues.



Deliver Your Story: Local Visits

- When → A look at legislative Calendars
- Who → Your two audiences
- What → Your agenda for the visit
- How → The invitation process / logistics
- Follow-Up → Recording the event and responding to questions

Deliver Your Story: Web 2.0 Outreach



The Five Minute Action Plan



How are you going to use this information at home? Write down three things you're going to do to advocate for improved policies in your community – and beyond!.

Contact Information

Stephanie Vance, the Advocacy Guru

- Blog: www.advocacyassociates.blogspot.com
- Facebook: Advocacyassociates
- Twitter: Advocacyassociates and/or Advocacyguru
- LinkedIn: Advocacyassociates
- YouTube: Advocacyassociates
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Do you see a theme here?