



## **“Coalition Building: Strategies and Perspectives in Disability Advocacy”**

**Summary of a webinar from July 18, 2024**

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### **Introduction**

This webinar features community organizers and disability advocates. They share how they build and work in coalitions. A coalition is a group of people or organizations working toward a common goal. Advocates talk about how they work with local, state, and regional partners to create coalitions.

In this webinar, advocates talk about:

1. Strategies and tools for creating coalitions
2. How to keep coalitions strong
3. The challenges coalitions face

### **Going Home Coalition**

Carole talked about the Going Home Coalition. The Going Home Coalition supports full inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in the community. The Coalition is working to close the 7 state-run developmental centers in Illinois. While this is happening, the Coalition helps to build community resources. They also create person-centered supports. The Going Home Coalition takes action by teaching advocacy. They also connect advocates to opportunities.

### **New Disabled South and the Southern Disability Justice Coalition (SDJC)**

Lila said that New Disabled South aims to improve the lives of disabled people. They also aim to build movements in the South. They do so by:

1. Creating a coalition of activists, advocates, and organizations
2. Fighting for better policies at the state and local level
3. Researching key issues disabled people in the South face and finding solutions

Lila described the SDJC as a coalition made up of people and organizations across the 14 Southern states. They share their experiences and learn from one another.

### **Question and Answer**

When asked about the challenges of coalition work, both Carole and Lila said coalition work is difficult. They mentioned issues like funding, time, and refocusing efforts. Carole said it is important to face the challenges. Conversations can help guide what to do. Lila said it is important to engage people in ways that keep them energized. She said we need to find ways to support each other and think about how we thrive.



The speakers on this webinar were:



**Carole Rosen** is an Advocacy Program Specialist at The Arc of Illinois, overseeing The Going Home Coalition funded through The Grassroots Project and The Coleman Foundation. She also facilitated the launch of REV UP Illinois through an American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) grant. Before taking on her role at The Arc of Illinois, Carole served as a Governor appointed member of The Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities from 2014 until 2020. While serving on the Council, she served on its Executive Committee and chaired the Community Housing and Inclusion Committee. She is passionate about the need to create affordable community supported inclusive accessible housing options for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and has completed the Permanent Supported Housing Institute coordinated by The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), and The Supported Housing Providers Association (SHPA). Her driving belief is that Community is strengthened by diversity, accessibility, and inclusion. Additionally, Carole is certified as a Financial Wellness Trainer for people with disabilities through the National Disability Institute. In addition to her Master of Interior Design degree, she is a Certified Aging in Place Specialist with additional coursework in Universal Design. Carole and her husband, William, have a daughter who has developmental disabilities and a non-disabled son.



**Lila Zucker** (she/her) serves as New Disabled South's Organizing Director, bringing more than 15 years of experience as an organizer, trainer, and movement builder to the role. As a queer, disabled organizer, Lila has spent her career building solidarity across intersectional movements in labor, voting and social justice spaces. Union organizing runs deep in Lila's family, and Lila began organizing within the labor movement in high school. Lila's deep belief in working

towards our collective liberation through cross-movement and cross-disability solidarity guides all her work. Most recently, she worked as Fair Fight Action's Deputy Organizing Director, where she oversaw the organization's voter education and turnout efforts.

### **Grassroots Project & Contact Information:**

*The Grassroots Project is an initiative from the Administration for Community Living to develop structures, processes, and relationships necessary to build the next generation of cross-disability, cross-generational, and culturally diverse leaders within the advocacy movement. It's aim is to connect, grow, and strengthen networks of grassroots advocacy and action coalitions supporting each other with the skills and knowledge to advocate for improvements in the quality of community-living supports. Grassroots Project webinars are open to the public, and are geared toward grassroots disability advocates, people with lived experienced of disability, human services administrators, and providers. All Grassroots Project webinars are recorded and currently archived at <https://www.hsri.org/project/the-grassroots-project>. Contact us at [grassroots@hsri.org](mailto:grassroots@hsri.org).*