

Northeast Region

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HAPPY NEW YEAR, EVERYONE!

I hope your holiday celebrations were full of happiness and excitement with just enough time to relax. I myself went to Maine and had a wonderful time.

The last regional meeting we made some adjustments to our regional officer rosters! We welcome Daysiree Perez-Batista to her new position as regional treasurer, and Tim Holmes as our new Sergeant at Arms! We also did some games about the new year, and discussed meeting physically in the future. We plan on doing so at some point during the Spring at the Ipswich Public Library.

I also want to encourage ANYONE who wants to help us out in some way to please reach out to me via email:

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This January MASS will be hosting a statewide drop in on Thursday January 8th, from 5:30pm to 7pm, and Wednesday January 28th from 4:30pm to 6pm!

Our regional meeting will be from 4pm to 5:30pm on Wednesday, January 21st.

I hope to see you all sooner rather than later!

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Last month, when I was part of Kamisha's Corner, we talked a lot about goals, and what we were happy about achieving. But I realize now that I didn't get the chance to talk about something I was proud of. Aside from the obvious (I'm proud of all of you and this job, of course!) I've found that something I have been chasing for a long time is a sense of legitimacy.

By legitimacy, I mean I want to prove to other people that I truly believe in this work and truly can make a difference with it. I know that my co-workers here at MASS understand that I believe in it, and I am confident that they know I do my best. But I haven't been so certain about my family and my friends outside of work really noticing what I've been doing. I wanted, and I do want, my family's approval.

When I did a speech at the Western Region Self Advocacy Conference for James Miller and folks out there in Western Massachusetts, I brought my parents and sister along. I was so
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glad I did. It helped them realize that what I do is a powerful thing, and that what we do here at MASS is important. I think we all crave that. We all want to belong, but we also want people to recognize us for who we are as well. We all want ***acceptance***, and in the end that's a large piece of what we fight for here at MASS, I feel like.

What I've discovered is that by fighting for acceptance, we're fighting for belonging, and by fighting for belonging, we can make an immediate difference in what other people think we can do. It's easier said than done to just say "Don't give up.". So remember that proving people wrong about yourself in a positive way is one of the most satisfying things you can do and its own reward. When I was young, I was in a swimming pool and I didn't really know how to swim *well*, but I could swim! I loved jumping off the diving boards, but one of the lifeguards said I couldn't unless I could prove I could swim 3 laps around the pool. I proved him wrong that day and that in of itself was more than enough reward for me. Go forth and be awesome, everyone!

"Be the change you want to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi

- Sam Muench