

West Seneca Developmental Center Closing

On July 26, a closing ceremony was held for the West Seneca Developmental Center on East and West Road in West Seneca, NY. Lots of memories were shared as former residents and staff shared stories and a fond farewell. People Inc. Chief Operating Officer and Developmental Disabilities Alliance of Western New York President Rhonda Frederick spoke to the crowd. Participants from People Inc.'s Young Adult Life Transitions (YALT) of Daemen College attended the closing ceremony program.

In her speech, Rhonda talked about the history and journey of the West Seneca Development Center. She said, "In the 1970s, the Buffalo Evening News reported that the West Seneca Developmental Center had the best record in the state for moving individuals from the Developmental Center to living situations in the community. Remember that was over 30 years ago, and with time the community residential placements just kept getting better and better – with more and more opportunities for all types of living situations – in group homes, in apartments, with families, with roommates or totally on your own. The evolution of the system has been incredible." She continued

her speech with saying, "Most importantly, we are here today to celebrate the incredible triumphs of the men and women we are honored to provide services to. There are many people here today whose journey in life has taken them through the West Seneca Developmental Center and now into the many communities of Western New York and beyond. We are here to take inspiration from the past, while preparing for the future. We are on the verge of a new service system in NYS. DDAWNY is hopeful that our unique partnership among the people we serve, their families, OPWDD, the Western New York DDSO and the Western New York community will allow us to continue this incredible journey to the next level of excellence."

In the upcoming months, the Western New York Developmental Disabilities Services Office will consolidate into smaller administrative buildings on its campus. Find out more by reading the article in The Buffalo News, ["A place once called home."](#)



Pictured L-R: Renee Zimmerman, team leader University at Buffalo YALT; Debbie Lawniczak, member of the Disability History Self Advocacy group and Self-Advocacy Association of New York State, Inc.; Sophia Roberts, director of Self-Advocacy Association of New York State; Mallory Schultz, participant at Daemen College YALT and member of the Disability History Self Advocacy group; Jennifer Franklin, participant at University at Buffalo YALT; Alon Berger, student at University at Buffalo YALT and member of the Disability History Self Advocacy group; Chris DeVealt, participant University at Buffalo YALT and member of the Disability History Self Advocacy group; Jake Johnson, student at University at Buffalo YALT and member of the Disability History Self Advocacy group; New York State Assemblymember Mark J.F. Schroeder; Kevin Johnson, participant at Daemen YALT and member of the Disability History Self Advocacy group; and Larry Jordan, speaker at the ceremony and formerly lived at the West Seneca Developmental Center.

