



**Organized by the Youth Advocacy Council**

Youth and young adults with disabilities, ages 14 to 25, who connect with other students in Vermont, advocate for youth resources, and lead while providing community service.

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Summit**  
**Driven for Youth by Youth**

***“Education, Empowerment, Equity”***

**KEYNOTE:**

***Empowering Yourself for Independence: Lessons Learned and Honest Advice from Teagen and Tyler for Youth with Disabilities and Those Who Support Them***

***Hear members’ stories around self-advocacy.***

**Join in the conversation to help effect change on pressing issues identified by Youth Advocacy Council members.**

**May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - 9am to 12:30pm**  
**Virtual Zoom Event**



**REGISTRATION LINK**

For more information, contact Hannah Peach at  
**[hannah.peach@vermont.gov](mailto:hannah.peach@vermont.gov)**.



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER INFORMATION:

**Teagan Comeau:** My name is Teagen Comeau and I am an autistic person pursuing the arts and sciences as a future graduate student. I graduated from Franklin Pierce University with a degree in Biology and minors in Chemistry and Spanish. I also graduated from the 2019 NH Leadership series. I have a really wide range of interests, from film and animation to languages and linguistics, chemistry, and mathematics. For several years I have presented to schools, disability agencies, and universities on the challenges and strengths of educating and supporting individuals with disabilities. It is important to self-advocate and ensure that your rights and needs are being met, whether it is in the classroom or an employment setting. My twin brother Tyler and I have been making films together since middle school, and at one point I came up with an idea for a short film from the first-person perspective of an autistic student in a distracting classroom environment. We shot Dungeons and Distractions in 2011 and the film has been shown at countless of our presentations and lectures about autism in the years since. It was important to me to make this film because it could help people better understand the experience of being autistic.

**Tyler Comeau:** Hi, my name is Tyler Comeau. I'm an autistic filmmaker and currently a 24-year-old student at UCLA in the Film & Television Program focusing on Animation. During COVID, I graduated from Franklin Pierce University. I have been speaking for quite a few years on disability rights and other issues concerning access, equity, and opportunity. I am also a graduate of the 2019 NH Leadership Series on Disability. I like to share my story as well as the lessons I have learned along the way. Regarding the film link my mom shared, Teagen and I came up with the idea for Dungeons and Distractions back when we were in 5th grade. We wanted to find a way to accurately portray what class was like for us so that we could show the film to our teachers. We finished the film in 2011 when we were 14-years-old. I'm glad that the film we made is getting used and I hope that it helps future educators gain a better understanding of how to work with disabled students. The biggest thing I'd like people to get out of viewing DnD is that it's important to assume the best in students. Throughout my developing years I was constantly feeling guilty or made to feel that I was the cause of all my own problems. This often made my anxiety worse and led to a perpetual cycle of me wanting to learn and being put down by my teachers and instructional assistants. Maintaining positive communication with disabled students is important to ensuring their success.

**Dr. Jacqueline Kelleher:** My name is Jacqui Kelleher. My students typically called me Dr. K. when I was a teacher. I have been a teacher, administrator, state department compliance officer, researcher, professor and parent of four children with disabilities...quite a few helmets! Today, I serve as your State Director of Special Education in Vermont. My Ph.D. is in Educational Psychology - I have spent over 20 years in the area of special education, specializing in both learning strategies and autism spectrum disorder. I sincerely love the field of educational psychology as it is so foundational to supporting the teaching and learning dyad. I am very proud of the work of my adult kids, Teagen and Tyler Comeau, and the awareness and advocacy they bring to understanding and accepting autistic people and other people with disabilities around the world. I think their film, Dungeons and Distractions, is thought provoking and can inspire some critical and creative conversations about educating those with disabilities: <https://vimeo.com/181552316>