



# The Arctarian

*Newsletter of The Arc of Quinebaug Valley*



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## A Message from our Board President:

I am reminded each and every day of how fortunate we are at The Arc of Quinebaug Valley. We are fortunate for the trust and confidence that is given to us by the people we support; we are fortunate for the motivated members of our staff who continue to strive for greater certification and the delivery of "only the best" service.

In the past six months I have had the pleasure of meeting Mohan Mehra, the President of The Arc National Board of Directors, Peter Berns, the CEO of The Arc National, and Dr. Terrence Macy, the Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Developmental Services. Each had high praise and genuine admiration for the outstanding work being done at our Arc right here in little old Northeastern Connecticut. It is not important to me to be famous or popular, however it is quite significant to be recognized by your peers and colleagues as a leader in the work that we do. Make no mistake about it, we are in fact recognized as such. This reputation is well earned, so please allow me to encourage each and every member of our Arc team to "KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK."

Recently I have had two great manifestations of our work.

First, we had the courage to begin our Capital Campaign in

February with the hopes and some prayers of hitting our goal of \$250,000. Asking people and companies for money is very difficult, assembling a team of folks who are willing to do that on your behalf is very difficult, and competing for charitable dollars in a small community like ours is very difficult. This makes it so much more exciting to see hundreds of people want to be part of the effort, to see companies and individuals want to donate as much as they possibly can and to successfully exceed our goal and raise more than \$300,000 as of this printing.

## COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

This is one of the blessings that reminds me that people and companies see our work as important and they are willing to stand behind that feeling with conviction and money.

The work of Jason and Amy St. Onge, general chairpersons of the capital campaign, must be applauded. This is me, standing at the top of a mountain yelling, "THANK YOU JASON, AMY and EVERY OTHER MEMBER OF THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES." No donation is too small and no



Gene Michael Deary  
Board President

amount of time contributed should go unnoticed.

Second, attending our annual awards night celebration again reminded me why our work is important. To that end, I was incredibly pleased when an old neighborhood friend of mine, who attended his first Arc event as the spouse of a new employee, saw fit to send me a note about his impressions:

"Gene: One of my first mentors had a saying that I have always remembered: The details don't lie.

Whether a person, team, or organization, I always start my evaluation process there – with the details. It was no different for me when I attended my first Arc event on Friday. From everything I saw and I heard, your success should really not come as a surprise to anyone. It was clear to me it has been well earned...starting with the details.

*Please see page 5.*

## GET INVOLVED



**Join our Teams!**



"Like" us on Facebook!



## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND AWARDS NIGHT CELEBRATION

The Arc of Quinebaug Valley held its Annual Membership meeting and Awards night celebration at Wrights Mill in Canterbury celebrating 60 years of service to individuals with intellectual, developmental and other life-affecting disabilities in Northeastern Connecticut. The Arc has been a lifeline for families searching for supports for their family members with disabilities.

Special guests Commissioner Terrence Macy from the Department of Developmental Services and President of The Arc Connecticut Diane Aubin were on hand to share their support and encouragement. Commissioner Macy praised the work of The Arc of Quinebaug Valley for the past 60 years of advocacy for people and families in our state. He did say, however, that, "There is still much work to be done. We must continue to assure that individuals with disabilities have equal rights in our state."

Gene Michael Deary, President of The Arc's Board of Directors assured the gathering of 272 people that we will continue forward working diligently to meet the needs of those we support.



### Receiving awards were:

**Spirit Award:** Melissa Driebholz

**Dove Award:** Mallory Murray

**Everett O'Keefe Award:** Kurt Gagne

**Norma Cassettari Award:** Jeffrey Rawson

**Community Partnership Award:** Citizens National Bank

**Education Achievement Award:** Kahlil Ayau

**Volunteer Award:** Elizabeth Geary and the Pomfret School Outreach Program

**Appreciation Awards:** Joshua Peach, Terence Chambers and The Tamarack Team

**Ron Johnson Memorial Award:** Christian Fazzina

**Self-Advocacy Award:** Jamie Lazaroff

**Special Recognition Award:** Judy Daviau and Susan Levesque

**Vocational Services Employer Award:** Rite Aid Distribution Center

**Community Support Award:** Jason and Amy St. Onge

**Residential Achievement Award:** Albert Pallitta

**Employment Services Employer Award:** Mansfield Big Y

**Vocational Services Achievement Award:** David Isa

**Employment Services Achievement Award:** Robert Paddock

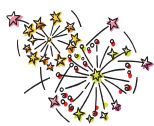
**One Person Can Make A Difference Awards:**

Sandi Riemann, Jesse Smith and Paul Leboeuf

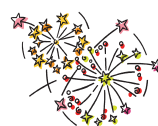
**Five Years of Service Awards:** Susan Desrosiers, Dawn Lazaroff, Sharon Bein and Neysha Larkin

**Ten Years of Service Awards:** Kimberly Malone, Kimberly Peck, Garry Brown and Rebecca Carpenter

## 25TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



***Celebrating 25 years!***



***Win a car!***



The Arc will be hosting its 25th Annual Golf Tournament on

**Friday, July 13, 2012** at Foster Country Club.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. and there will be a shotgun start at 9 a.m.

Continental breakfast served during registration. Steak supper after the game!

In addition to the golf prizes offered, chances to win a Buick Regal and \$25,000 on hole-in-one contests at designated holes, we also will have many great raffle items.

The Golf Tournament is a major fundraiser for The Arc and is well known in the community. Proceeds directly benefit The Arc programs.

The registration deadline is July 3. Cost is \$500 per foursome or \$125 per person.

Please call Linda Lamoureux or Sandi Riemann at (860) 774-2827 for more information!

OR

***Make a hole in one and win***

***\$25,000!***

## 15TH ANNUAL ARC RUBBER DUCKIE RACE

***The Duck Race is Almost Here!!!***



Tickets to "adopt" a duck are \$5 and will be sold at many locations in Northeastern Connecticut in June and July.

You can also call The Arc for tickets!

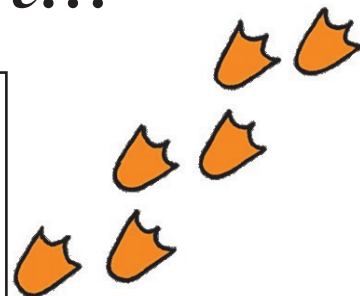
Tickets will also be sold on Race Day at several locations in downtown Putnam.

The Arc of Quinebaug Valley's Rubber Duckie Race is celebrating its **15th year!** This year, our event will be held in conjunction with the Putnam Car Show, on **Sunday August 12, 2012**. Race time is 1:30 p.m. in Rotary Park, Kennedy Drive, Putnam. Volunteer and sponsorship opportunities available! Call Linda Lamoureux or Emily Groves at (860) 774-2827.

***50 Great Prizes!***

**Including:**

**A New Hampshire Vacation package, a \$500 Visa Gift Card, a \$250 Gas Card, a 40" HD LCD TV, a Hot Air Balloon ride, and duck-loads of tickets and gift certificates!**



Come join The Town of Putnam and The Arc of Quinebaug Valley for a day of fun and entertainment!

- \* The Car Show
- \* Children's Games
- \* Face Painting
- \* Duck Walk Races
- \* Live Music
- \* Snow Kones
- \* Duck Pond Fishing
- \* Moon Bounce
- \* T-shirts and souvenirs
- \* Obstacle course



## “ELEVATING EDUCATION” CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Arc of Quinebaug Valley launched the “Elevating Education: The Power To Transform Lives Capital Campaign” in February.

The purpose of the campaign is to provide for the installation of an elevator at the Cook Hill Rd. Office, Education and Training Center that will allow The Arc to provide full accessibility to all people with life-affecting disabilities. These funds will also ensure the continuation of critical services and supports that enable individuals with disabilities to live full and productive lives.

The goal is to collect \$250,000 in gifts and pledges over a five year period.

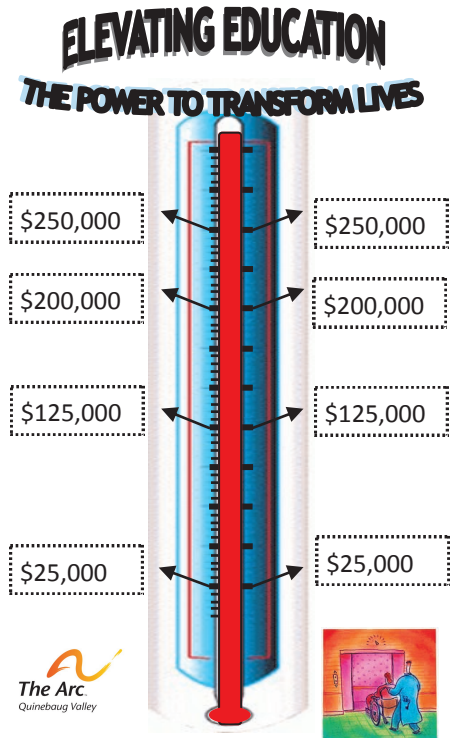
Jason and Amy St. Onge, owners of The G Seven Catering Company in Thompson, are leading the campaign as General Chairpersons. State Rep. Daniel Rovero and his wife Judy are serving as Honorary Chairpersons.

Vice Chairpersons of the campaign are Jeffrey and Jessica Rawson of Putnam. The leadership team are: Gene Michael



**Capital Campaign Committee:**  
From left to right: (seated) Lynn Bourque, Judy Rovero, State Rep. Danny Rovero, and Pamela Brown. (standing) Joshua Peach, Jeffrey Rawson, Jessica DiZazzo, Susan Desrosiers, Amy St. Onge, Jason St. Onge, Terence Chambers, and Gene Michael Deary.

Deary, Chairperson of the Major Gifts Division; Joshua Peach, Chairperson of the Corporate and Finance Division; Lynn Bourque, Chairperson of Community Giving; Terence Chambers, Chairperson of Family/Staff Division; and Pamela Brown, Chairperson of Social/Public Relations Division.



## Capital Campaign Kick Off Event

The Arc of Quinebaug Valley kicked off the community portion of its Capital Campaign April 26th at The Gold Eagle Restaurant at The Laurel House.

Members of the Northeastern Connecticut community joined The Arc Staff, Board of Directors and Capital Campaign Cabinet to celebrate the campaign's early success.



Pamela Brown and Gene Michael Deary prepare for the kick off.

“If you hear The Arc’s story, you can’t help but want to be a part of it,” Deary said.

“It’s going to be a successful campaign, we can assure you of that.”

Deary applauded The Arc’s Administrators and Board of Directors, who have demonstrated 100 percent participation in the campaign, and praised the staff for an overwhelming commitment as well.

Campaign General Chairpersons Jason and Amy St. Onge said they have been honored to lead the campaign and have been touched and inspired by the generosity Northeastern Connecticut has already shown The Arc.

“It’s only through the assistance of so many kind and caring individuals that The Arc is able to assist so many people,” Jason St. Onge said. “The Arc is changing lives in Northeastern Connecticut.”

Executive Director Susan Desrosiers said the generosity and commitment of the Northeastern Connecticut community “never ceases to amaze me.” “It’s a wonderful, wonderful feeling to go



The Arc Founding Parent Norma Cassettari (right) with Betty Hale at The Capital Campaign Kick Off Event.

home each night and know that we made a difference in someone’s life,” Desrosiers said.

Founding Parent Norma Cassettari thanked all of the parents, both past and present, for their commitment, dedication and advocacy. Cassettari said when she and a few other parents came together in the 1950s to form The Arc of Quinebaug Valley, they were in dire need of services.

“I don’t believe we envisioned the enormous growth of The Arc,” Cassettari said. “The one thing we wanted was help for the children, for our kids. It’s a great cause, and it’s been mine for 60 years.”

## IN THE COMMUNITY



The Arc of Quinebaug Valley hosted a “Legal Voice” workshop on April 17.

Featuring Attorney Frank Cathcart, of Steinberg and Cathcart, LLC, and Leslie Simoes, Director of Advocacy with The Arc Connecticut, the workshop for families focused on options for continued advocacy in the lives of their adult children with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

A big Thank You to sponsors Arabella Insurance and The Arc Connecticut, and to the parents who attended!

## Calling all Volunteers!

Our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Rubber Duckie Race will be held on Sunday August 12! Volunteers are needed to:

- Set up the Rotary Park tents and selling locations at 7:00 a.m.
- Set up the course at 8:00 a.m.
- Sell shirts, tickets and novelties at several locations throughout town from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Help with the Self-Advocate Group, who will be selling Sno-Kones at the Emporium to raise money for their group from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Help at Rotary Park selling tickets, shirts, novelties, water,

popcorn and Sno-Kones from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- Man the Moon Bounce and Obstacle Course from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Be roaming relievers and runners throughout the day.
- Be a Children’s tent volunteer.

Volunteers are also needed to sell tickets in the community some dates prior to the race! Please call Linda Lamoureux or Emily Groves to sign up today, (860) 774-2827.

*Together we can achieve success!*



Employees of the Savings Institute Bank & Trust presented The Arc Executive Director Sue Desrosiers with a check for \$275 in March.

### *Continuation of Message from Our Board President, from page 1*

As a coach and former athlete, I know that superior “heart” can overcome a shortcoming of talent and give me or my team a chance to compete, and therefore, to win. However, the combination of equivalent talent and superior “heart” creates a team that is for the most part, unbeatable.

And I know from first hand observation that there is no shortage of talent or “heart” at The Arc.

As one of your oldest friends from “the day” I just wanted to drop you a note and congratulate you on a job well done. You have certainly helped build and lead an organization of which everyone can be proud.

Keep up the good work!

- Mike Levesque”

We have more work to do and goals to accomplish. I am confident that we are positioned to do it well and will continue to provide great services and supports to the important people who place their trust in us.

I am looking forward to our first ice cream cone, wherever it may be served.

### Upcoming Event:

**July 30:**



The Arc of Quinebaug Valley will host an **Elevator Ribbon Cutting and Open House** from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. to celebrate the success of the Capital Campaign.

To attend, please R.S.V.P. by July 18 by calling Emily Groves or Sandi Reimann at The Arc at (860) 774-2827, or by emailing [egroves@qvarc.org](mailto:egroves@qvarc.org).



## CLEAN UP PROJECT WITH THE LAST GREEN VALLEY



Thanks to a grant from The Last Green Valley, The Arc of Quinebaug Valley participated in a Clean Up of Owen Bell Park in Killingly on May 2. Thanks to everyone who helped out!



## ARC ARTISANS

The Arc Artisans are working on some new designs! Staff person Neal Bissonnette and the artisans are recycling wooden pallets and turning them into beautiful tables and other unique pieces of furniture. Each piece is a one-of-a-kind creation. The tables are selling for \$80 each and the group cannot make them fast enough!

If you would like to view their designs, they are available at The Arc Emporium, 160 Main Street, Putnam, or call The Arc for a special appointment!



## DONATE YOUR CAR

### What is The Arc's Vehicle Donation Program?

The Arc's Vehicle Donation Program supports efforts to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy full participation in the community and are granted the same respect, equality, and security as every member of society.



### How to donate?

We accept cars, vans, trucks, boats with a trailer, and recreational vehicles seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

All vehicles must have a valid title.

Fill out the Online Form at [www.qvarc.org](http://www.qvarc.org)

## SELF ADVOCACY CORNER



*The Arc of Quinebaug Valley Self Advocate Coordinator Jamie Lazaroff writes this month on his recent trip to our Nation's Capitol.*

From April 23 to 25, I attended the Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. along with fellow self-advocates Michele Bell and Kelly Dorsey from The Arc of Meriden/Wallingford, and The Arc Connecticut Director of Advocacy Leslie Simoes. Shortly after arriving on Monday afternoon, we did a little sightseeing at the Smithsonian National History Museum on the national mall. As far as advocacy goes, the Museum had the ballot from the 1995 South Africa elections that Nelson Mandela won after the fall of apartheid in that country.

For me, after having read Mr. Mandela's book, this was a very delightful experience.

On Tuesday we attended the conference at the Grand Hyatt in Downtown D.C. We attended six sessions that dealt with a variety of federal issues such as Education and Employment policies and funding. In the morning we had a meet and greet with our fellow self-advocates from around the country. The presenters talked about Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) and The Arc National Council of Self-Advocates that The Arc Connecticut is a part of. It was good to hear that our concerns are felt around the country. One highlight of the day was an inspiring luncheon speech by Kareem Dale, Special Assistant to the President for Disability Policy. It is good to know we have an ally in the White House. In the evening we had a reception for conference participants on Capitol Hill that capped off a long day.

Wednesday was our day on Capitol Hill, where we met with our Connecticut Congressional delegation. As we had time between meetings we decided to see the

Martin Luther King Monument. As an advocate, this was a must see and a moving experience.

This was a very successful and rewarding trip. I highly recommend anyone thinking about attending this year's Arc National Convention in D.C. to go.



**Come to The Arc of Quinebaug Valley's Self-Advocacy Meetings at 6 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month.  
193 Mechanic Street, Danielson**



### **My Own Place**

**By Abby Snyder**

My Mom adopted me from El Salvador when I was a little baby

and we had a good life together. When I was growing up I thought that I would always live with her and that was fine with me. However, as I grew to be an adult I realized that other people my age were beginning to go off to live in their own apartments. At first I didn't know if I would be able to do that, but in recent years I began talking to my Mom about options for me since I knew that I wouldn't always have her to take care of me and besides I wanted some independence. I knew I would need some help but I thought it was possible to go live in a place of my own. I began to get excited about the thought of living away from home.

We looked into some options but either because of the type of challenges I have or because of the cost, these plans did not work out. Then my Mom came up with the idea of looking into my getting an apartment in a senior housing complex because they also take persons with disabilities. When she

talked to me about it, I thought that was a good idea, but I was a little anxious about it at the same time. Would I be lonely? Would I miss my Mom too much? These were some of the questions I had. We contacted the people in charge of one of the senior housing places right down the street from my Mom's house and they told us there would be 12-18 month waiting period. So we put my name on the list and, much to our surprise, we got a call about 4 months later saying that they had an open apartment!

Things moved fast from there. Now I was really nervous, wondering how I would do and how my cat, Rosie, who I was allowed to take, would do with the change. At the same time I was also excited about the move and about a shower that was being planned for me. We worked with my case worker, Maryrose, to get support staff in place. Then my friends and family had a wonderful housewarming shower for me. People even gave me furniture and when I was gone on vacation, Mom and her friends moved my things into my new place.

When the time came for me to move out of my Mom's house, she offered to stay with me in my new apartment for the first few nights. I was a little afraid of this new step but after the first night in my apartment, I

told my Mom she didn't need to stay the next night. After I got used to where things were and I saw that Rosie really liked her new home I got over being nervous and grew to like my new place a lot. It really didn't take long to get used to this new part of my life.

I have been in my apartment now for over three months and it feels like home. I feel like a grown-up and I like my independence.

I have support staff that help me with grocery shopping and meals and make sure I am keeping the apartment clean and neat. I talk

to my Mom every day and see her often but don't miss my old home as much as I thought I would. I go out to work every day, take part in Special Olympics, and belong to a Self-Advocacy group so when I am home I enjoy having time to myself and am not lonely at all. I have Rosie to keep me company and that is good. I am living one of my dreams: I have my own place.







Celebrating 60 years of providing a lifetime of support to individuals with intellectual, developmental and other life-affecting disabilities and their families in Northeastern Connecticut.

*The Arc of Quinebaug Valley, Inc. is a nonprofit human services agency committed to supporting individuals (and their families) with intellectual, developmental and other life-affecting disabilities. The Arc provides opportunities through advocacy and supports for work, play and education so each person experiences personal growth, dignity, respect, choice and greater independence to live life to its fullest.*

### **Our Mission:**

### ***Upcoming Events At a Glance:***

**July 13:** The 25th Annual Golf Tournament, 9 a.m. shotgun start, Foster Country Club, Foster, R.I.

**July 30:** Elevator Ribbon Cutting and Open House, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., The Arc of Quinebaug Valley, 687 Cook Hill Road, Danielson

**August 12:** The 15th Annual Arc Rubber Duckie Race, 1:30 p.m. race time, Rotary Park, Putnam



***Achieve with us.***

*For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities*  
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Danielson, CT 06239

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Real Progress

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