



The Arctarian

Achieve with us.®

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

COMMUNITY LINKING TOGETHER FOR AUTISM CELEBRATION	2
MEET THE ARTIST: CHRISTIAN FAZZINA	2
WONDERLAND PARK	3
AUTISM NOW	3
HOLIDAY DAZZLE & THANKSGIVING	4
ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY	4
HOLIDAY PARTIES	5
A JOYFUL SURPRISE	5

GET INVOLVED



Join our Teams!



"Like" us on Facebook!

Happy New Year to everyone!

We had a busy fall here at The Arc Quinebaug Valley celebrating holidays, beginning renovations, and continuing to look for new ways to help the people whom we support reach their dreams.

There have been many developments on the state level for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities this fall. The **Families for Families campaign** through The Arc CT has brought the development of an Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities caucus in the legislature in Hartford. For the first time, there is a group of legislators who is meeting on a regular basis with families and listening to their stories. They added \$4 million to the budget of DDS to provide much needed supports to individuals on the waiting list who have a parent and/or parents over the age of 70. There was a **Family Action Day Hearing on Thursday, January 15th from 11am to 1:30pm** in the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. If you are concerned about the DDS waiting list and the services that might be available for your loved one in the next several years, visit The Arc CT website for more

information. The Arc Quinebaug Valley will be planning to have our own legislative meetings with local officials from northeastern CT in the near future. It is imperative that our families get to tell their stories. If you would be interested in hosting a small group of families and legislators at your home or are interested in participating in the meeting, please let me know.

At our Cook Hill Education and Training Center, construction is underway for our new accessible bathroom/shower and training kitchen. This project was made possible through the generous donations of community members and businesses to our Capital Campaign that was launched three years ago to install an elevator. The agency received generous donations to not only pay for the elevator but also provide the added renovation of this area. The kitchen will be a great asset to the Cook Hill facility. It will enhance the healthy cooking classes that the agency offers and provide an environment for teaching the students and adults important skills for employment and independent living.

Construction has also begun on a new group home



Executive Director, Susan Desrosiers

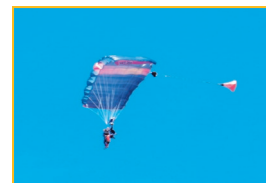
here in Danielson that the agency will be opening in late spring/early summer. This will be a beautiful new home for five ladies currently receiving services in the DDS system. We are very excited for this new home and are looking forward to the day that we open the doors.

Our greatest accomplishment this fall was to move a young woman from a 24/7 living situation into an apartment of her own. Through the use of assistive technology, Gloria is living her dream of being on her own, in her own apartment with limited staffing to assist her in continuing to grow her independence. Gloria attends The Arc's supported employment program where she works five days per week. She is very excited and proud to be on her own and is making new friends and expanding her social circle. We are very proud of Gloria and the wonderful strides that she has made in achieving independence in her life.

I wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!

COMMUNITY LINKING TOGETHER FOR AUTISM

On September 14, 2014, 4G's Pizzeria and Restaurant presented *Community Linking Together for Autism*, a fundraiser to benefit The Arc Quinebaug Valley. The day's events included "skydiving for a cause" by 4G's staff, Skydive Bingo, music by The Great Garage Band Reunion, raffles, pony rides, face painting and other fun family activities. The event was held at Danielson Airport in conjunction with Skydive Danielson. Shirts were sold at the event with a design created by Arc Education Department student, Christian Fazzina (see below). A heartfelt thank you to Roni Perry and Marcia Page from 4G's Pizzeria and Restaurant for hosting this fun event, and to Skydive Danielson for the one-of-a-kind "Skydive Bingo" game at the event. For more information about the 2015 event, check back with The Arc Quinebaug Valley through our newsletter, website, and Facebook page.



ABOUT THE ARTIST: CHRISTIAN FAZZINA

Christian Fazzina is a very creative and talented young man. Therefore, he was a natural choice to design a shirt to commemorate the *Community Linking Together for Autism* event. Below are some excerpts from our interview with him last fall. Christian talks about the process of designing the shirt and his positive experience as a student in The Arc Quinebaug Valley's School Program.



Q: Could you tell me a little about being asked to design a shirt for the 4G's fundraiser for The Arc Quinebaug Valley?

A: Well, I was very glad when staff asked me to design the shirt. They showed me a few pictures of the kind of thing they were looking for, and I tried a few drawings. I crumpled a few up and threw them away before I got the final one. I like it to be perfect! I ended up using the eyes of Bob the Tomato from Veggie Tales for the skydiver.

Q: I think they asked you to design the shirt because you are a very creative person. How would you describe yourself, or what would someone be surprised to know about you?

A: Well, I like theatre. I've been in some plays at The Bradley. I am going to try out for another play soon. I like acting and the theatre. I always take part in Fright Night. I like to write too. I wrote a book about a high school girl named Faith. She is bullied, and she looks up at the stars at night to feel better and believe in herself. It is called "The Life of Faith", which should be published soon. I am in a voice acting class at Killingly High School. I've met some celebrities.

Q: Who have you met?

A: Well, I've met Whoopi Goldberg. I have also met Jim Cummings, who is the voice of Winnie the Pooh. It was really cool.

Q: What do you wish people knew about The Arc Quinebaug Valley? What is it like to be a student in these programs?

A: We have a lot of opportunities at The Arc. We have a staff that is great and helps us out a lot. We have a lot of fun in all the activities we do. We usually make food or do something else fun if there is a half day. We have a new student, and he is getting used to it, but everyone is helping him out. Do you want to know more?

(Interviewer: Yes! Please share whatever you would like.)

A: The staff here are trained in CPR, so they know what to do if someone can't swallow, or if they are choking. We have a Duck Race every year that is a fundraiser which helps us get our stuff that we use in our activities, and the things we need. And the Education Department created a scarecrow for the scarecrow contest this year called "Jack Skellington."

WONDERLAND AT LIONS PARK - PLAINFIELD

Wonderland at Lions Park—Plainfield, CT was established in October 2013. A group of parents came together and discovered a common need in our community. The need is a playground where all children can play together. An Advisory Board was formed and research began. Current equipment is not age appropriate for children under age five or those who have significant disabilities. Equipment that is accessible, appropriate, and stimulating to all the senses was amongst the most requested by the community. We are seeking to create a space that would provide the opportunity to socialize and connect with others. This safe and fun environment will give children the opportunity to focus on building self esteem, family, and community relationships.

In July 2014, the Town of Plainfield Board of Selectmen authorized a Resolution to receive the funds raised for the playground from the committee through The Arc Quinebaug Valley, and take ownership of the project and administer the funds for construction. The town will also insure and maintain the playground according to the resolution. In October 2014, The Wonderland Committee signed a Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement with The Arc Quinebaug Valley to help raise, administer, receive, and disperse all funds for the playground project. Once necessary funds are raised, The Arc will turn them over to the Town of Plainfield to begin construction. The shared mission of The Arc and the Wonderland Committee to support individuals (and their families) with intellectual, developmental, and other life-affecting disabilities in achieving greater independence and to live life to its fullest is the foundation of this partnership.



Arc Quinebaug Valley Executive Director Sue Desrosiers (L) meets with Renee Toper (R), Project Founder of Wonderland at Lions Park, at The Arc Quinebaug Valley Offices.

AUTISM NOW

Autism NOW Empowers Individuals on the Autism Spectrum *From The Arc of The United States*

Autism NOW is a national information and resource center created by The Arc and funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, specifically for individuals on the autism spectrum, their families, and professionals in the field. Through a comprehensive website and various projects such as free webinars and summits across the country, the center aims to empower individuals on the autism spectrum by offering them high-quality information in a central location, which they can use to make better choices about how they live their lives.

The website, www.autismnow.org, is a unique joint venture of The Arc and several organizations dedicated to serving people on the autism spectrum and with other developmental disabilities. They combined their expertise to deliver basic information and education about issues related to autism in areas such as employment, home support, education support, inclusion, and government assistance, from several perspectives including family members and professionals in the field.

Autism NOW also provides information and links to local, state, and national groups that can help people on the

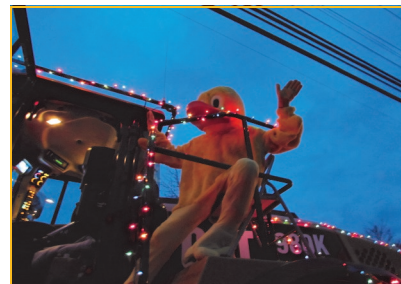
autism spectrum and their families, as well as support professionals in many fields. By providing information about contacts in people's own community, Autism NOW encourages people to develop connections in their community and discover information tailored to their specific community or individual concern. If you know of a group in your own community that you would like to share with others, *please visit Autism NOW's website to spread the word!*

Autism NOW invites anyone to go online to sign up for their newsletter or free weekly webinars on a variety of topics related to autism spectrum disorders. You can find out more about the resources Autism Now provides by visiting www.autismnow.org.



HOLIDAY DAZZLE LIGHT PARADE

On Sunday, November 30th, 2014, The Arc Quinebaug Valley took part in Putnam's annual Holiday Dazzle Light Parade. Students from our Education department led our "float" in the parade to thank the community for their support throughout the year. Of course, one of the parade favorites is The Arc Quinebaug Valley's own mascot, Donny the Duck. Each year, Donny rides on the pay loader truck donated by Rawson Materials.



THANKSGIVING CELEBRATIONS



Pictured above, Patty Cusson and Betty Scheinman from The Arc's Retirement Services program prepare a homemade bread stuffing to serve at the Quinebaug Valley Senior Center.

Pictured below, Warren Robbins leads a prayer of Thanksgiving for his fellow Arc Quinebaug Valley participants. On November 19th, 2014, staff at our Mechanic Street location created a delicious Thanksgiving dinner for the participants and served it up in the activity room, decorated in the spirit of the holiday.



ENHANCED ACCESSIBILITY



Construction of a new accessible bathroom/shower and training kitchen has begun at our Cook Hill Education and Training Center. This area will be a great addition to our healthy cooking classes and to teach important vocational and independent living skills.



THE ARC'S HOLIDAY PARTY & SELF ADVOCATE PARTY



On December 12th, The Arc held its annual holiday party at St. Mary's Church hall in Putnam. We enjoyed delicious food served up by the leadership team, and had fun dancing to great music played by D.J. Al Berger.

Pictured below, left to right: Gary Cote, Susan Cote, Ryan St. Jean, and Dennis Walsh

The Arc Quinebaug Valley's Self Advocate Group held its annual Christmas party at our Mechanic Street location on December 17th. Everyone had a fun time and enjoyed the spirit of the season! **Pictured above:** Bobby Brunelle and Heather Motyl



A JOYFUL SURPRISE



The Arc Quinebaug Valley holiday party held many special moments for The Arc family. Arc participant Mary was surprised and overjoyed when Santa came to the party. Mary had never had a chance to visit with Santa previously. Her excitement over this visit was a fun moment for everyone and really captured the joy of the season!





Achieve with us.



Our Mission:

The Arc 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.

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. 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. For more information or to fill out the online form, visit

www.qvarc.org.

Save the Dates!

May 1, 2015: The Arc Quinebaug Valley Annual Awards Night and Membership Meeting

July 10, 2015: The 28th Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament

August 9, 2015: The Arc Quinebaug Valley Rubber Duck Race

Real Progress

Real People,

empower

www.qvarc.org

For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities
687 Cook Hill Road
Danielson, CT 06239

The Arc[®] *Achieve with us.*



Non-Profit Org. U.S.
Postage
PAID
Danielson, CT
Permit No. 100