

The Arc Quinebaug Valley

The Arctarian

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A Message from The President of the Board of Directors



In 2007, as the President of Rawson Materials, a local sand and gravel company, I was contacted by Linda Lamoureux and asked if I would be interested in donating our front-end loader to dump ducks in the river for The Arc's Annual Rubber Duckie Race. I agreed to honor Linda's request, at the time not knowing that I had just made a decision that would forever impact perhaps hundreds of others, but equally as importantly, myself.

Since 2007, I have attended annual awards dinners, served as chairperson for the golf committee, sat as a member of countless other committees, and for the past few years, served as President of the Board of Directors.

During the course of these experiences, I have had the opportunity to positively impact the thoughtful, vibrant, and eager folks we serve but I have been impacted by many of them even more . . . What started with a simple "yes, I'd be glad to help", has turned into an eight year love affair with The Arc and the people who make it what it is.

We have volunteer opportunities available, but certainly not limited to, The Emporium, Project Redemption, or on the golf committee.

I share this story with you because it means so much to me and because I am hoping that it will inspire you to become involved with The Arc Quinebaug Valley. Please contact The Arc today at 860-774-2827 and say: "YES, I'd be glad to help." I promise you that you will be making one of the best, most rewarding decisions of your life.

A Message from The Executive Director



It has already been two years since our last Strategic Planning Session. The agency has seen growth and changes in all departments as we continue to strive to be the agency of choice in our service area. Funding challenges continue to push us to be creative in our service delivery.

Our staff work diligently to provide excellent services and care for the individuals we support whether it is through the Day and Supported Employment Programs, the Schools' Program or Residentially where supports might be from a few hours per week in someone's home up to twenty four hours per day, seven days per week. The month of May will bring a new planning session as we embark on our goals for the next two years.

As always, real work for real pay and assuring that the individuals whom we support live as independently as possible continue to be issues at the forefront of all that we do. How can you help?

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Support our new business, Project Redemption, and

donate your recyclable bottles and cans to The Arc. Check out the article inside about this new venture. Thank you for your support.

P.S. – Don't miss our 28th Annual Gardner Johnson Golf Tournament on July 10th at Foster Country Club. It always proves to be a superb time with raffles, prizes and steak dinner. Visit our website at www.qvarc.org, under "How You Can Help/Fundraisers" to print out a registration form!

Thank you for being a part of our family. The community's support continues to overwhelm us. The Annual Appeal will be mailed in May. We truly appreciate your generosity!

Family Action Hearing Day

On January 15th 2015, students and staff from The Arc Quinebaug Valley attended the second annual Family Action Hearing day at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. They joined more than 300 families, self-advocates, and advocates to send the message that unless funding was increased to the Department of Developmental Services, thousands of families would be marooned on a waiting list for apartments or group homes. There are at least 2,000 families waiting now, and the number is growing. On that day, the intellectual and developmental disabilities' caucus of about 45 members listened to an overflow crowd that asked the panel to find more money, or fix a system that spends considerably more to care for a resident in a public facility than it does for a person with the same level of need in a community setting. Our agency felt it was crucial to attend this meeting, as we need to help make our voices heard and take a stand. There is still a lot of work to be done in Hartford, but it was a great day for everyone with The Arc to experience government in action!



Valentine's Day

The DSO department took Valentine's Day festivities to a whole new level of fun, which proved to be a highlight of events to all of our participants in this program! They had an enjoyable time with a few arts & crafts projects, danced the day away to some of their favorite songs, witnessed a live harmonica performance, and even splurged for some sweet treats at the end of the day – delicious cupcakes! Check out the heart décor in the pictures below ~ all hand-made by our individuals! This was a great opportunity for everyone to unwind from the busy week and spend some quality time together!



Signs of SPRING

We may have had a mountain of snow outside in the earlier months, but "Spring Training" was in full swing at The Arc Quinebaug Valley regardless! The Retirement Services Program decided "enough was enough" with the snowy weather and took it into their own hands to have an inside baseball game! Our participants and staff had a wonderful and competitive time! In fact, nothing broke, and no one was hurt—safety first of course! Turns out our agency has a pretty great baseball team—we may have to consider an Arc baseball game for future events!



SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD

Spread the Word to End the Word is a very powerful campaign, with on-going efforts by Special Olympics, Best Buddies, and our supporters, to inspire respect and acceptance through raising the consciousness of society about the R-word and how hurtful words and disrespect can be toward people with intellectual disabilities. The campaign, created by youth, is intended to engage schools, organizations and communities to rally and pledge their support at www.r-word.org and to promote the inclusion and acceptance of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



The annual campaign day of awareness is always on the first Wednesday of every March. The Education Department and friends wore t-shirts representing this message, on Wednesday, March 4th, in order to show support. The Arc strongly promotes this message and encourages those who are not familiar with the campaign, to take the time to look into it. We need all the pledges and support possible to make a change!



The Arc's Project Redemption

What does a nickel buy? Most people might answer, “Not very much these days.” Here at The Arc Quinebaug Valley however a nickel, when multiplied by many nickels, can provide individuals with disabilities an opportunity to work, increase their independence and learn new skills. The Arc is pleased to report that the business venture that helps our local community conserve limited resources and provide “real work for real pay” for individuals with life-affecting disabilities is growing! Project Redemption is a bottle and can redemption business here in Northeast CT. The employees of The Arc's vocational program have been working in the program for over a year now and are proud of their accomplishments. Over one million bottles and cans have been redeemed!



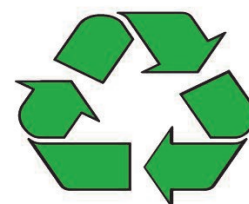
What's next? As a goal of our agency's Strategic Plan we continue to grow the scope of Project Redemption and include businesses and other community locations. Proceeds from this endeavor will also benefit all of the services provided by The Arc including Education, Residential, Retirement, Advocacy, Family Support and Day Programs. We hope to be opening a community redemption center in Putnam in the coming weeks. At this time we are securing all the necessary permits, a lease and a partnership with the state's leading redemption company TOMRA.



How can you help? Sign up your business! We will provide companies with a receptacle for employees to deposit the bottles and cans. Based on your needs we will develop a schedule for picking up these donations each week at your location and convenience. To promote your dedication to the community and to thank you for your partnership we will feature your business on our website, facebook page and in our newsletters. We will also offer you a free one year membership to The Arc for you to appreciate how your donations positively impact the lives of individuals with disabilities in our community.

We are also in need of the boxes that beer comes in. Distributors will only take the beer bottle returns back if they are in a box. Boxes may be dropped off at three locations 160 Main St. in Putnam, our Emporium store, 193 Mechanic St., the Danielson Day Program or 687 Cook Hill Rd. office in Danielson. If you have a quantity, we can arrange to pick them up. Of course we will gladly accept the bottles and cans as well!

Watch for more information on our grand opening in the coming weeks in the local media and thank you for your support of our program. More information about our redemption business can be obtained by calling Linda Lamoureux or Nikki Williams at 860-774-2827.



Self-Advocacy Talk

A WORD FROM OUR SELF-ADVOCACY COORDINATOR, JAMIE LAZAROFF

The last six months has been quite a bumpy ride. It all started on August 16th, when I fell down at home and could not get up. Luckily, my parents were home and called 911. I was transported to Windham Hospital via ambulance and then transported by helicopter to Hartford Hospital. I was diagnosed with having a stroke and sent home about a week later. Three weeks after that, I ended up back at Hartford Hospital with more severe stroke-like symptoms and after a few days, I was discharged to a rehab facility for two weeks. On October 8th, I had another stroke while at home. At the hospital, my neurovascular doctor diagnosed me with plaque buildup in the basilar artery in my brain. This stroke was quite debilitating and I spent the next two months rehabilitating in a facility until I was allowed to go home. After a month of in-home rehab, I was able to come back to work on February 10th.



On February 25th, I presented a patient bill of rights to our Self-Advocacy Group. Here are some things I learned: Make informed decisions, know the names of your healthcare providers and their role in your care, and be informed about the care you are receiving and will need after discharge. This is all important because your health and well-being is at stake and you need to advocate for yourself when it matters most.

Are You Interested in Getting Involved with The Arc??



Being involved and staying involved with happenings at our agency is crucial to the longevity and success of The Arc Quinebaug Valley. We have had so many members of the community, as well as families of our individuals, reach out to us and question what opportunities are available to become more involved at The Arc.

Whether it is working at The Arc Emporium, helping on the Golf Committee, taking part in the Duck Race event, volunteering time in our main office to complete bulk mailings, or even picking up bottles and cans for our Project Redemption facility, we are always looking for help! The Arc encourages and welcomes all volunteers, so should you be interested in becoming more involved, please contact our office at 860-774-2827. We thank you in advance for aiding us in becoming a better agency each and every day—your support and time is very valuable to The Arc and we truly appreciate your assistance in any way possible!

Did You know?

New Resources Available about ABLE Accounts for People with Disabilities

Thanks to advocates like you and the bill's champions in Congress, The Stephen Beck Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act was signed into law on December 19, 2014 after many years of advocacy and bipartisan work in both the House and Senate. Today, The Arc US is releasing two fact sheets about the new law—a summary and a more in depth look at the law to educate the disability community about how this law will work. These are the first of several materials that will be produced by The Arc US, so look for updates as federal regulations are released and accounts are set up in states.

The law allows eligible individuals with disabilities the ability to establish “ABLE accounts” for qualified beneficiaries that resemble the qualified tuition programs, often called “529 accounts”, that have been established under that section of the tax codes since 1996. The new ABLE accounts will allow more individual choice and control over spending on qualified disability expenses and limited investment decisions, while protecting eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, and other important federal benefits for people with disabilities.

New Commissioner Appointed to DDS

Governor Malloy appointed a new Commissioner to DDS, Morna Murray, J.D. Commissioner Murray was previously the CEO of the Connecticut Community Providers' Association. We look forward to working together with the new Commissioner to

assure that the individuals in our area with intellectual and developmental disabilities get the services that they need.

Along with the new Commissioner came a budget proposal from Governor Malloy that will severely hamper the services provided through DDS. The Arc CT Families for Families group is working hard with the Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Caucus of the State Legislature to restore funding to the DDS budget. For more information, check out Families for Families through The Arc CT website – www.thearcct.org.

DDS Grad Funding in Jeopardy

Every year across Connecticut, high school students with intellectual disabilities complete special education and graduate. These young adults go on to supported work programs and day service programs funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). This year, Governor Malloy has proposed a budget that has NO GRAD FUNDING.

Without DDS Grad Funding, there will be serious ramifications because there will be no money for students graduating out of public school systems. This means young adults with intellectual disabilities will have no where to go after high school and parents will be responsible to provide care. Not only will families struggle, but the residential waiting list at DDS will only continue to grow.

TAKE ACTION: Ask your legislators to advocate for restoration of Grad Funding into the DDS budget! Go to www.cga.ct.gov and to the “Find Your Legislator” section to find your legislator and their contact information.

Our Wish List



- * DVD Players
- * Appropriate DVDs
- * Books (Related to Disabilities or Teaching)
- * Adult Halloween Costumes
- * iPod Touch
- * iPads/Tablets

- * Construction Paper
- * Markers
- * Bulletin Board Supplies
- * Extra Large Portable White Board
- * Wall Mounted White Board
- * Tickets to Events, Movies or Amusements



To donate, please call 860-774-2827 – Thank you for your generosity!

A Woman on a Mission!

Gloria Beaudet had been wanting "her own home, without roommates" for several years. She voiced her opinion at every meeting, and to anyone who would listen! Gloria had several different housemates since beginning services with The Arc several years ago, but she never seemed to be completely happy with living with other adults. She has terrific skills and capabilities, and really just dreamed of living on her own. She is a strong self-advocate and definitely knows what she wants! Gloria wanted to be able to make more of her own decisions in her life and feel more independent.

As Gloria became increasingly unhappy living in her group home in Danielson, the team decided that everyone would really look at Gloria's desires versus her skills and support needs. The team met, and the mindset was, "Why not try? She has been wanting this for a long time and we think she can do it!" Gloria's parents (her guardians) agreed to give it a shot! The wonderful decision was shared with Gloria. Her face was priceless, pure happiness written all over her smile.

In June 2014, the Case Manager had determined how many support hours Gloria would receive through IFS supports, and The Arc mapped out how to use those hours. Safety and supports were top priority. The Assistive Technology Store in Meriden, along with a few technology conferences, helped The Arc understand what was needed for assistive technologies. The Residential Director, along with the IFS Coordinator, began the hunt for an affordable, safe apartment, since DDS assured The Arc they would pay for the equipment, and that her budget switch to IFS was approved. A four week plan of services, titrating from around the clock to 36 hours per week, was developed.

Finding an apartment was difficult but also a fun challenge. We wanted to make this dream a reality for Gloria, and The Arc would stop at nothing to make it happen. Motivation and dedication is what kept everyone going!

After countless hours of searching, an apartment was found! In Danielson! Affordable! Safe area! She could move in 2 weeks!

This is when the real work began! The Arc had to assure staffing, utilities, technology, rent subsidy, supplies, furniture and that a moving crew could be put together in these two weeks. We did it. On November 17th, the box truck was loaded up, and eight staff, including Gloria, moved her in! It was exciting and scary; a brand new venture for all of us.

This journey for Gloria and The Arc has been amazing. Together, this has been a life-experience that will never be forgotten, and we continue on the path of success each and every day! Gloria and the staff work on healthy choices, cooking, cleaning, shopping for quality foods and presenting her needs in a calm, organized, reality-oriented manner. Gloria comments, "I really love living on my own. I have so much freedom and I am meeting new people. My neighbors are so nice and I even met their grandchildren!"

Gloria receives 36 hours per week of supports, but has the option to send staff home should she want to be alone or visit friends. Gloria states "I still like The Arc staff to come to my house, even though I love my privacy, because I like to hang out with them and we get to go shopping together. Everyone has been so nice to me in trying to teach me to make good choices living alone." She usually makes safe choices. She is hoping to lose some weight and kick her soda habit. Gloria recently spent 90 minutes on the phone and got herself food stamps! The Arc is very proud of all her accomplishments and we truly believe she could certainly help others learn to advocate for themselves!



A Vision Turning Into A Reality

At our Cook Hill Education and Training Center, construction has been underway for our new training kitchen and accessible bathroom/shower! This project was made possible through the generous donations of community members and businesses to our Capital Campaign. Words alone cannot simply express how grateful and appreciative we are to everyone who has helped make this dream renovation come true for us at The Arc. Thank you!

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Many individuals who have multiple physical disabilities which

are referred to our agency, as well as, intellectual, affect their ability to be

self-sufficient with personal care, hygiene, and every day life tasks in the bathroom and kitchen. Some even require the assistance of one or two staff depending on the need. Protecting their dignity, respecting their privacy, and assisting them to be their personal best are our goals here at The Arc. The generous donations that have specifically helped improve our bathroom and kitchen facilities will directly benefit our individuals learning experience and have long-term life skills rewards.

Construction in Progress:

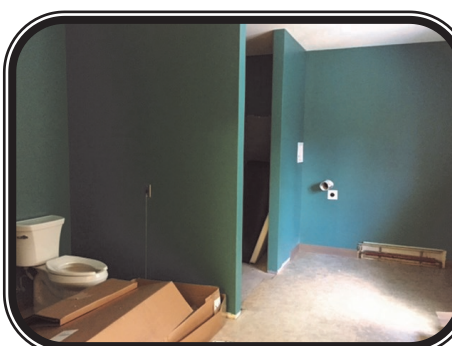
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Almost Done - Very Exciting!



Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Community support is one of the biggest foundations in making The Arc Quinebaug Valley so successful at providing the best services possible to our individuals.

We would like to truly thank Brooklyn Northeast Wines and Spirits from Brooklyn, CT for hosting two Bourbon Tasting Events to benefit our agency. On February 14th and March 14th, people from the community, and from afar, came together to taste bourbon while providing donations that would directly benefit The Arc.



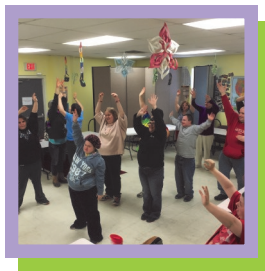
We are extremely thankful for the generosity of the Savings Institute Caring & Giving Campaign for their donation of \$700 to enhance our programs. It is community support, such as this, that allows The Arc Quinebaug Valley to continue the best services!



The Wellness Corner

HealthMatters™ Program

The Health Matters curriculum was developed by members of the University of Illinois' Department of Disability and Human Development and supported by The Arc U.S.'s Health Meet Initiative. Each year, The Arc Quinebaug Valley provides this exercise and health education program for people with developmental disabilities free of charge. These classes give individuals the knowledge to make healthier choices, as well as the support to achieve healthy goals together.



The Arc Quinebaug Valley 2015 Health Matters group voted and decided their favorite fruit is strawberries. Strawberries don't have to be dessert—you can work them into a main dish, too. Try Our Chicken and Strawberry Salad recipe! It's a wonderful no-cook dish that's a snap to make, combining sweet strawberries, moist chicken, and rich blue cheese.



From Our Kitchen To Yours

Chicken & Strawberry Salad (Makes 4 Servings)

- 4 cups torn romaine lettuce
- 4 cups arugula
- 2 cups quartered strawberries
- 1/3 cup vertically sliced red onion
- 12 ounces skinless, boneless rotisserie chicken breast, (cooked + sliced)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted cashews, halved
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) crumbled blue cheese

Combine romaine and next 4 ingredients (through chicken) in a bowl; toss gently. Place about 2 cups chicken mixture on each of 4 plates. Top each serving with 1 1/2 teaspoons cashews and 2 tablespoons cheese. Drizzle about 4 teaspoons of your favorite vinaigrette dressing over each serving.



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Follow 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 18th Annual Arc Quinebaug Valley Rubber Duckie Race



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