DFRC and The Arc of Delaware — an enduring partnership that benefits all with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Delaware

DFRC was founded in 1956 “to support services and programs that enrich the lives of Delawareans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.” DFRC’s generous support for almost 60 years has benefitted all of The Arc of Delaware’s programs and made an immense impact on the individuals we serve. Currently, DFRC supports The Arc’s Case Management and Outreach programs, as well as Group Home Monitoring and the Necessity of Life Fund. In fact, DFRC has supported Necessity of Life since its inception in 1992, recognizing the importance of ensuring that individuals have those essentials necessary to maintain their dignity and improve the quality of their lives. And that is what DFRC asks of The Arc — make life better for those served and change their lives in ways that are positive, meaningful and demonstrable. This supportive and intertwined partnership is described best by Becky Hill who serves both on The Arc’s Board, and DFRC’s Beneficiaries Committee:

“I think DFRC and The Arc of Delaware are an excellent match. Both are respected organizations which have existed in our state for over 50 years. Both groups care deeply about the intellectual and developmental disability community and work tirelessly to provide opportunities on behalf of these individuals. The Arc’s programs meet the goals established by DFRC. And the best part — it is a Win-Win situation for the children and adults served.”

Tony Glenn, DFRC’s Executive Director, is well known in Delaware not only for his tireless work to support the intellectual and developmental disabilities community by raising hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, but also as a former football coach and for his presence at the annual Blue/Gold Game. Tony views the partnership between The Arc and DFRC in the following warm and generous terms:

“The Arc of Delaware is one of the oldest and most treasured partners of the DFRC family. Personally, I cannot imagine our state without the dedicated and compassionate staff and volunteers comprising The Arc family. If someone were to focus on all that takes place within the course of even one single day, it would boggle the mind to try to comprehend the high level of love and goodness that is shared by the people who live the mission of The Arc. The positive impact made by The Arc on the entire state of Delaware is immeasurable, and we all need to take time to be grateful for all the years of service provided for so many. I have always been deeply inspired by the great work of The Arc of Delaware.”

We thank DFRC for their ongoing support of the mission of The Arc of Delaware.

Delaware’s first ever Statewide Self-Advocacy Conference

On Saturday, March 23, 2013, more than one hundred self-advocates and their friends gathered at the Dover Sheraton for a day of education, sharing and celebration centered on the theme “Speak from the Heart….It’s Your Life” which was coined by Wilmington self-advocate Robert Edelsohn. The conference was organized by a committee of dedicated self-advocates who chose the theme, the venue and the speakers, as well as taking care of all the many and complex details involved in staging an event of this magnitude. They received support from their family members, as well as staff from The Arc, the Center for Disabilities Studies, the Developmental Disabilities Council and the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. Break-out sessions included presentations on careers, transportation, emergency preparedness, fitness and nutrition, and finished with a group discussion on topics of interest to those in attendance.

The excitement generated by the Self-Advocacy Conference guarantees that the growing understanding of the benefits of self-advocacy will continue to be explored and implemented by the Self-Advocacy Coalition and Delaware People First. Delaware People First is a self-advocacy organization run by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that is supported by The Arc.

It is hoped that this event will become an annual conference for self-advocates and their supporters in Delaware. For more information about Self-Advocacy and Delaware People First, please contact Susannah Eaton-Ryan at seaton-ryan@arcde.org or at 302-996-9400 x 113.
As we all recognize, each person is unique unto themselves. This is certainly true for all persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD). These individuals can have a very broad range of gifts, skills and talents. On the other hand, these persons have a diverse variety of life challenges. More specifically, some persons with I/DD have great skills with respect to their ability to express themselves, their choices and their interests. Other persons with I/DD may be mostly or totally nonverbal. This creates great challenges both for these individuals… and for each of us who has an interest, commitment or obligation to support and empower them.

Of course the less verbal a person is, the more challenges the individual will face in making choices and making their needs and desires known. While it may be tempting to believe that persons who are totally nonverbal may be totally unable to make choices or advocate for themselves, this simply is not true.

Every parent and every professional who is successful in supporting a verbally challenged person with I/DD, has learned to recognize the choices, preferences, likes and dislikes of these individuals. More importantly, every time one of these family members or support professionals is able to recognize and honor the choice of a person with I/DD they have in fact empowered that individual to take more control of their own life. I believe they have also effectively advocated for that person.

Each person learns from their life experiences, parents, teachers and others to make choices. As they do so, it is critical that they are also being taught by social/cultural experience, shared values, religious/spiritual indoctrination, mentoring and example to recognize the responsibilities (to themselves and others) which go hand-in-hand with every right, and every choice. Informed choice is a very explicit concept and essential to the empowerment and personal growth of all persons.

“Choice” in the absence of information and responsibility can be, and often is, a recipe for irresponsible behavior. Additionally, uninformed or irresponsible choices can in some cases be extremely detrimental both to the person choosing and to others who share their life space. Positive influence from others is a fundamental ingredient in the process for all persons learning to make informed choices.

The life journey for each of us is a continuous growth process of learning from experiences, gaining knowledge and new skills; and the parallel process of making more informed, responsible and self-directed decisions about our lives as these abilities increase. A true advocate is someone who recognizes and supports (an)other person(s) on this very personal path. I believe a self-advocate is any person who is involved in choosing and pursuing their own path. Ultimately, for those self-advocates who are interested, they may also support and promote the rights and choices of other persons who share their challenges.

I invite you to contact me at tolson@arcdel.org or 302-996-9400 x 110 if you would like to discuss choices, rights and advocacy and how these issues impact the quality of life for all of us – including persons with I/DD. We will continue to explore these themes in the next issue of the newsletter.
The Arc of Delaware is generously supported by the following corporations and agencies who have recently given gifts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporation</th>
<th>Support Provided</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank of America</td>
<td>$30,000 in support of the Employment Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimes Foundation</td>
<td>$5,000 for group home renovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Shop Foundation</td>
<td>$500 equipment grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware Development Disabilities Council</td>
<td>$25,000 in support of Self-Advocacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFRC</td>
<td>$22,400 – in support of Case Management, Group Home Monitoring and the Necessity of Life Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discover Bank</td>
<td>$6,800 for group home renovations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant-In-Aid</td>
<td>$12,730 to support Case Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homes For Life Foundation</td>
<td>$51,000 for group home renovations</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPMorgan Chase</td>
<td>$25,000 in support of the Housing Options and Employment Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Palmer Foundation</td>
<td>$6,000 in support of seniors living in Kent County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sussex County Council</td>
<td>$1,000 in support of Delaware People First</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way of Delaware</td>
<td>$66,385 in support of all Arc programs in Delaware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000 for group home renovations</td>
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We thank the above funders who partner with The Arc of Delaware to ensure that Delawareans with intellectual and developmental disabilities are provided with opportunities for enriched lives in the community. We could not do our work without their help.

April is Autism Awareness Month

This month, we invite you to join us in raising awareness about what autism really means. If you are not already familiar with Autism NOW, The National Autism Resource & Information Center, visit www.autismnow.org for a wealth of high-quality, reliable information designed specifically for individuals on the autism spectrum or with other developmental disabilities, their families and others who care about them. Autism NOW is a project of The Arc of the United States funded in part by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

You can find links to Autism NOW’s social media channels on www.autismnow.org and you can follow The Arc nationally at www.thearc.org.

New data released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 50 children are now on the Autism Spectrum, a revision of the previous number of 1 in 88 as reported in March 2012.
Ursuline Gift Drive and Party

For many years, the girls of Ursuline Academy in Wilmington have collected Christmas gifts for residents of group homes who would not otherwise receive presents during the holiday season. The gift drive culminates in a party at the school to which Santa Claus pays a visit, Christmas songs and carols are sung and the gifts are distributed to the guests. It is always a delightful event that truly signifies the real meaning of the season: warmth; kindness; generosity; outreach to those less fortunate. On December 11, 2012, more than 100 individuals gathered at the school for an afternoon of fun, friendship and celebration. It was a joy to watch the girls greet their visitors, and make sure they all felt welcomed and comfortable. The smiles on the faces of those who were invited conveyed their delight at being included and celebrated. Many of the guests sang along with the girls and several of them did solo renditions of their favorite songs. Heather Blakiston of CSI said of the afternoon:

“As always, the party was a beautiful event and well organized. We had one individual there who was dancing and singing with the chorus almost the entire time. This is an individual who is VERY quiet and not overly social. It was a PLEASURE to see him enjoying himself as much as he did! All of the students and staff were very attentive and interactive which makes it very enjoyable for everyone.”

We extend our sincere thanks to the students of Ursuline Academy, and to the staff, particularly math teacher Holly Tattersall, who worked very hard to coordinate the gift drive and the party.

Buena Vista Event

On September 15, 2012, The Arc of Delaware hosted an evening event at Buena Vista to welcome Terry Olson as the recently appointed Executive Director, and several new members to the Board of Directors. The event also served to introduce them to our funders, service providers and partners. It was a beautiful evening and our many guests, including Governor Jack Markell and newly elected New Castle County Executive Tom Gordon, enjoyed strolling through the lovely old house and the lovingly maintained grounds. Many of the guests lingered on the patio as the sun set over autumnal fields to enjoy spending time with old and new friends.

We would like to thank Moore Brothers Wine Company for their generous donation of wines to this event.

The Arc of Delaware is marking its 60th year as an advocacy organization in 2013 and plans are being made for an event to celebrate. All our many members and friends will be invited and we look forward to sharing this festive occasion with you.

2013 is the 60th Anniversary of The Arc of Delaware – watch this space for more information!

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 19 Spring Fling Dance at Cheswold Fire Hall, 7 – 9 p.m.

April 20 Mid-Del Run/Walk/Roll at Wild Quail, registration begins at 8 a.m., run at 9 a.m.

May 17 Cinco de Mayo Dance at Cheswold Fire Hall, 7 – 9 p.m.

August 5 Golf Tournament and Silent Auction at Hartefeld National Golf Course
In Memory of Brenda and Matt Petke

On Monday, November 19, 2012, the intellectual and developmental disabilities community in Delaware was devastated to hear of the loss of Brenda and Matt Petke in a car accident the previous evening. Brenda and Matt, who had married in 2001, were a devoted couple and dedicated advocates. Their loss will be felt for many years to come.

Brenda and Matt had many ties to The Arc of Delaware and both served on the Board of Directors. They met and fell in love while serving as the President and Vice-President of Delaware People First, a self-advocacy organization run by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that is supported by The Arc.

Micki Edelsohn gave a deeply felt eulogy at their funeral service on December 1, 2012. The following is an excerpt:

“In a world where the truth can often seem a complicated matter, and there’s a lot of talk about what we SHOULD do, Brenda and Matt lived the elegant simplicity of just doing good, for goodness sake. Straight from their heart, just out of love. As those who knew them, worked with them and loved them realized, on that level of grace, they were not in any way disabled. Rather, we were the beneficiaries of their far greater patience as we learned from them lessons that we will never forget, of courage and kindness, perseverance and persistence. And that action is indeed eloquence.”

Arc staff member Mary Beth Limmina, who worked with both Brenda and Matt at Bank of America, remembers them both in the following manner:
“Brenda and Matt set an example for all individuals with disabilities to follow. They fought for the rights that everyone is entitled to, whether they have disabilities or not. Together they built lives for themselves that resembled the lives of their non-disabled family members and friends and they worked to secure the same rights and benefits for all of the individuals with disabilities whose paths they crossed. Brenda’s work team sincerely misses her gentle spirit and kind, nurturing manner. Matt is missed for his ability to foster camaraderie among his teammates while ALWAYS having a smile on his face. They leave a void in Support Services at Bank of America that may never be filled.”

We extend our sincere sympathies to their families.

New Sunroom at Chapel Hill

The Arc of Delaware partners with Chimes to serve 52 individuals in 13 of our community based group homes. In 2012, this partnership expanded when the Chimes Foundation contributed $5,000 to help renovate the sunroom of the Chapel Hill home in Newark. The ladies who live at Chapel Hill have done so for many years and are very comfortable in their home. They particularly enjoy sitting in the sunroom to look out over their garden in the evening. However, their enjoyment of the sunroom was being curtailed because extensive and expensive renovations were needed. The Chimes Foundation generously contributed $5,000 towards the overall costs of $19,000. The work was finished in December and the sunroom looks better than ever. We thank Pete Dakunchak and all our friends at Chimes for investing in the well-being of the residents and for helping The Arc ensure that the ladies have an attractive, safe and accessible area in which to relax.
Mary Horn

The Arc of Delaware Loses Valued Mid-Del Committee Member and Advocate

For more than four decades, Mary Horn gave of herself as the Office Manager for the Mid-Del Committee of The Arc of Delaware. She coordinated and organized activities, resources and recreation for individuals with special needs and their families.

Mary found her way to The Arc after a casual comment was made at her bridge club that Mid-Del needed a part-time office manager. Little did Mary know then that by accepting this position that she would graciously serve persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than 40 years.

The Arc was fortunate to have Mary as a calm and thoughtful team member who practiced genuine charity to improve the lives of others. She created and coordinated recreational activities and kept Mid-Del members informed about upcoming events. Included were scholarships to local summer camps, as well as bowling, swimming, scouting, and Sunday School. Mary was an avid supporter of The Arc’s group home monitoring program and wanted to ensure that all homes are comfortable, safe and well maintained for the residents. She frequently attended Mid-Del’s monthly dances that continue to be extremely popular.

Mary was a dedicated wife, mother, and grandmother who easily connected with people. She understood their need for human kindness and worked diligently for her family and her community. Her focus toward those individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities continued with her membership and support of the Auxiliary of the Stockley Center. She served as secretary to this organization and raised funds to improve living conditions at the facility.

Mary Horn died on February 4, 2013, but her service lives on. We thank her loving family for sharing this remarkable woman with us. She was a dedicated advocate for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and her power of caring and her charitable words enhanced the lives of many. Mary actively lived The Arc’s mission and will be truly missed by her Arc family.

— Marge Locke

Mid-Del’s Christmas Dance

On December 14, 2012, the Cheswold Fire Hall was festively decorated for the holiday season as more than 300 participants from across the state eagerly arrived for Mid-Del’s annual Christmas Dance. The sounds of DJ Jay Pappas soon filled the room as many took to the dance floor. Meanwhile, Santa’s elves, (aka parents and caregivers) bustled about the kitchen, cutting pizza, pouring beverages and plating other goodies they’d donated for everyone’s delight. Of course, the highlight of the evening was the appearance of the jolly old man himself, otherwise known as Paul Parton. A line quickly formed for the chance to sit on Santa’s knee and confide Christmas wishes; some came with their handwritten letters. Thanks to a sizeable donation from the Ladies of the Eastern Star, Morning Star Chapter #7 Smyrna, Santa presented those in attendance with a special treat. Needless to say, a wonderful evening was enjoyed by all.

Annual Mid-Del Picnic at Killens Pond

September 15, 2012 was a cool and crisp Saturday, the perfect day to hold The Arc of Delaware’s Mid-Del Committee’s annual picnic at Killens Pond.

Not a seat was left in the pavilion, there was a record crowd! Hamburgers, hotdogs, and fried chicken were on the menu, as well as a multitude of wonderful side dishes and desserts. Many guests came from group homes to join in the fun, others from their family homes. After enjoying the delicious food, Brian Jordan provided music, and the annual dance contest commenced. Games were also played and the winners were happy to receive Arc sports bottles and tee-shirts.

The heart of The Arc’s Mid-Del Committee is its volunteers and they were out in full force for this event. They cooked burgers and dogs, served on the food line, and visited with the individuals who came out to enjoy a beautiful day with their friends.
With blue skies and warm temperatures, The Arc of Delaware held its 20th Annual Golf Tournament and Silent Auction on August 6, 2012, at the Hartefeld National Golf Course in Avondale, Pennsylvania. Thanks to the Golf Committee, led by Doug Johnston, we had another successful event netting over $42,000. After a magnificent day on the course, golfers and friends of The Arc enjoyed an exceptional dinner followed by the presentation of awards and a live and silent auction with over 150 items donated by local businesses and friends of The Arc of Delaware.

We were honored, once again, to have Tubby Raymond, University of Delaware and College Football Hall of Fame great, as our Celebrity Host. As our dinner guest, we were delighted to welcome Elena Delle Donne, University of Delaware’s first team All-American women’s basketball player, who gave a very inspiring talk during dinner.

We want to thank all of the golfers and our friends who generously participated in the event, as well as our many sponsors, contributors and volunteers for another great tournament! Without their support, this successful event would not be possible!

**Profile of a Volunteer**

**Douglas E. Johnston** has been an active volunteer with The Arc of Delaware for approximately 16 years. He has held various leadership positions including Executive Vice President and Secretary of the Board.

Most importantly, Doug has served on The Arc of Delaware’s Golf Committee since 2001. He has graciously chaired the committee for the past ten years. Doug not only provides the expertise on the game of golf, but also attracts many of our sponsors and golfers. During his tenure on the Golf Committee, the tournament and silent auction has netted more than $443,000 to help Delawareans with intellectual disabilities access needed programs and services to increase their ability to live, work and socialize as independently as possible in the community.

Doug has donated literally hundreds of hours to The Arc of Delaware, our Golf Tournament and the people we serve over these many years. Volunteering is also a family affair for Doug, his lovely wife Joanne, daughter Lindsay and sons Brad and Gregory. All of them are “hands on” regular volunteers at our Golf Tournament. Doug and his family prove every year that making huge difference in the lives of others can be incredibly fun for all involved.
Micki Edelsohn in the News

Micki Edelsohn, who has served for many years as a member of The Arc’s Board of Directors and on our Housing Advisory and Finance Committees, received the Humanitarian award from the Delaware NAACP at their 48th Freedom Fund Awards Banquet on November 2, 2012. This award recognized Micki’s astonishing abilities as a fundraiser who has raised millions of dollars to build 25 community group homes in Delaware, 21 of which she deeded to The Arc.

In October, Micki was reappointed to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) for a second two year term.

We send our belated congratulations to Micki, and thank her for being the living embodiment of The Arc’s mission to improve the lives of those we support and their families.

Think Spring —
A Time of Renewal

It’s official — spring has sprung! Days are decidedly longer; grass is a little greener; trees are budding; and gardeners are planting seeds. Spring is, indeed, a time of the earth’s renewal. It’s also a time to renew with The Arc.

As the membership chair, I want to again personally thank our Life Members, as well as those of you who either joined or renewed in response to our membership drive letter. To those of you who have not yet made the commitment, let spring be YOUR time to become a member. You may also ask a friend or a person with an intellectual or developmental disability, or their family to become members. Please join our family.

Joining is easy. You can do so on-line by going to The Arc of Delaware website at www.thearcofdelaware.org, or by calling State Headquarters at 302 996-9400, or the Dover office at 302 736-6140 to request a membership application.

The Arc needs you. Together, as membership seeds are planted, we can look forward to a bountiful harvest for those individuals and their families that we serve.

— Merry Jones

Special Olympics Delaware Night of Heroes

On October 11, 2012, Delaware Special Olympics held their Night of Heroes, a recognition program and celebration of the sport, spirit and splendor of Special Olympics. Our own Merry Jones, Vice President of The Arc of Delaware’s Board and a Mid-Del Committee member, received the Volunteer of the Year award. Merry is evidently as popular with Special Olympics as she is with The Arc of Delaware, and she has given tirelessly of her time and talent to both organizations. It was obvious by the deafening applause how appreciated Merry is by Special Olympics. Tommy Fields, a member of Delaware People First, received the Athlete of the Year award. Merry had the audience crying, while Tommy had them laughing with their acceptance speeches. Bill Monaghan, President of Delaware People First in New Castle County, did an excellent job of presenting awards, along with Alex Brathwaite, son of Cheryl Roach, who is also a member of The Arc’s Board.

This wonderful event was an opportunity to meet up with old friends and to show our appreciation for the commitment of Merry Jones, Special Olympics “Volunteer of the Year.”