The Arc of Delaware

The ADA Turned 25!

On July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities. This legislation established a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities. On July 26, 2015, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the signing of the ADA. The ADA has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities by reducing barriers, changing perceptions, and increasing opportunities for full participation in community life for persons of all abilities. However, the full promise of the ADA will only be reached if we remain committed to continue and expand these efforts!

Andrea’s Gifts

Andrea Rees lived a life many of us dream of, with a supporting family, caring friends, a job she loved, travels, and books. She was independent, happy, and successful. She was also born with a disability.

Her life was not defined by her intellectual disability, but it brought her to The Arc of Delaware where she found a job at MBNA, now Bank of America, through our agency’s Employment Program. She worked there for nearly twenty years.


Mary Beth Limmina, a case worker at The Arc of Delaware, knew Andrea for years when they worked together at Elwyn and then later at Bank of America, where Mary Beth provided support services. Mary Beth continued to be by Andrea’s side when she stopped working due to her illness. “Andrea was a sweet, bright, always upbeat, lovely woman with a sense of humor that never quit,” said Mary Beth. “Several of my visits to Andrea in the hospital were spent by her making me laugh.”

Shortly after her passing, The Arc of Delaware received notice from her brother Eric of an extraordinary gift left by Andrea — a $100,000 donation to The Arc of Delaware. She also left $50,000 to Best Buddies, a program she had been involved with for many years. No one expected that Andrea had built up such a large estate, including her brother, with whom she first discussed creating a will when Andrea became ill.

On August 1, 2014, we gathered with Andrea’s brother, niece, mother, father and friends, along with representatives from The Arc of Delaware and Best Buddies, to celebrate her life and the legacy she left behind. We shared stories about the many ways Andrea has touched our lives and how the gifts she gave will continue to impact our future.

“Andrea’s gift will make it possible for The Arc of Delaware, Mary Beth, and the rest of our exceptional staff to touch many more lives,” shared Terry Olson, Executive Director of The Arc of Delaware. “It’s an incredible and inspirational story and we will be telling it for many, many years to come.”
The Arc of Delaware’s Board of Directors and Management recently met to begin agency strategic planning for the next few years. Perhaps more importantly, we also reviewed and revised our Mission Statement and developed Core Values for our agency.

We were assisted in these critical tasks by our facilitator, Devona Williams, of Goeins-Williams Associates, Inc. We also borrowed liberally from The Arc of the U.S. and their “Core Values” and “Guiding Principles.”

In establishing these foundational guideposts for our agency, we embraced the fact that The Arc in Delaware and nationally is first and foremost an “advocacy” agency. Surely, we are proud of the services which our agency and others have developed throughout our history and continue to develop and refine. We also continue to aggressively champion important new services such as the Family Support Waiver in Delaware.

However, services are and will remain an important means to fulfill our central role as advocates. Our primary role will continue to be advocates for and with persons with I/DD and their families. We advocate for opportunities for these persons to lead full lives of choice, respect, equality and inclusion in our communities and our greater society.

As most of you know, The Arc of Delaware celebrated our 60th Anniversary a few years ago. July 26, 2015 also marked the landmark 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past several decades and the challenges of the coming years, these fundamental statements will hopefully provide essential focus for our agency’s vision for the future.

**Mission**
The Arc of Delaware promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and actively supports full inclusion and participation in the community through advocacy and services to individuals and their families.

**Core Values**

**People First** - The Arc of Delaware believes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are defined by their own strengths, abilities, and inherent value, not by their disability.

**Equity** - The Arc of Delaware believes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are entitled to the respect, dignity, equality, safety and security accorded to other members of society, and are equal before the law. The Arc of Delaware will advocate by encouraging governmental policies and public practices that will enhance the wellbeing of the population we serve.

**Community** - The Arc of Delaware believes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities belong in the community of their choice and have fundamental moral, civil and constitutional rights to be fully included and actively participate in all aspects of society. Our employees, Board of Directors, and volunteers are dedicated to this mission.

**Self Determination** - The Arc of Delaware believes in self-determination and self-advocacy. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with appropriate resources and supports, can make decisions about their own lives and must be heard on issues that affect their well-being. These decisions include housing and productive employment of choice.

**Diversity** - The Arc of Delaware believes that society in general and The Arc in particular benefit from the contributions of people with diverse personal characteristics (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender and type of disability).
In May 2015, Board Member Megan Fioravanti, RN, NCSN was named Delaware School Nurse of the Year. Ms. Fioravanti is currently the school nurse at Meadowood School in Newark, DE. She previously worked at A.I. DuPont High School for 17 years. Megan is a Johnson & Johnson School Health Leadership fellow, a recipient of The Caron Institute’s Medical Professionals Award, a nominee of the White House Champions of Change for Public Health and Prevention, and a 2013 recipient of the Christiana Care Health System Nursing Excellence Award.

Ms. Fioravanti has been a very active, valued and effective Board Member for The Arc of Delaware since 2011 and currently serves as our Board Secretary. She also volunteers as a community group home monitor for The Arc of Delaware. Additionally, Ms. Fioravanti is involved with community organizations including DFRC, Special Olympics, Down Syndrome Association, Families Speaking Up, and others.

In addition to her work as a school nurse, Megan is employed part-time as a nurse at Christiana Care and the University of Delaware. She is an American Heart Association BLS Instructor and is certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support. Megan is a member of Sigma Theta Tau, the national honor society of nursing. Congratulations Megan! We’re proud of you!
Self Determination Group Hosts Successful Fundraiser

In March 2014, The Arc of Delaware collaborated with several young assertive individuals to create a Self Determination Group. These young adults with intellectual disabilities have strengthened their teamwork through a variety of activities. The goal of the group, made up of nearly a dozen individuals, is to develop the skills to be self determined through self direction and planning activities.

The Self Determination Group celebrated its one year anniversary on April 25, 2015, commemorating it with a Car Wash and Bake Sale Fundraiser. The group exceeded their $300 fundraising goal and raised an impressive $500.

The Self Determination Group, led by its President, Jessica Hurtado, is currently planning its next fundraiser. The group also will attend The LIFE Conference in 2016. Meetings are held monthly on Saturdays at The Arc Newport office. Please contact Sheba Brown at The Arc if you are interested in joining the group.

Funder Spotlight: Walmart Foundation

The Arc of Delaware was recently honored to receive $25,000 from the Walmart Foundation’s State Giving Program to support our Employment Program. Through this program, we support 150 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in finding and keeping meaningful jobs in the community.

The Walmart Foundation’s focus on Career Opportunity supports many initiatives which provide opportunities through job training and placement, career guidance, and greater access to the resources that help people become self-sufficient.

People with intellectual disabilities experience an unemployment rate twice as high as the general population. The Arc of Delaware is committed to reducing high unemployment for this population by securing permanent jobs, offering livable wages and providing the supports needed to help participants retain and succeed in those placements.

We are extremely excited about this new partnership with the Walmart Foundation and continuing this work in the community.

Upcoming Events

September 19  Mid-Del Annual Picnic at Killen’s Pond State Park, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Call (302) 736-6140 for more information.

October 20  Friends Helping Friends Day at Boscov’s, Christiana and Dover.
Please call Sheba at 302-996-9400 for more information on how to get a 25% discount shopping pass and support The Arc of Delaware’s Self Determination Group.

November 13  Mid-Del Fall Dance at Cheswold Fire Hall, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

December 11  Mid-Del Christmas Dance at Cheswold Fire Hall, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Thanks for Teaming Up With Us

On Saturday, May 2, 2015 the Mid-Del Committee held its 15th Run, Walk and Roll. More than 200 people participated in a 5K or 1 mile course through the beautiful Wild Quail neighborhood in Wyoming, DE. The event raised a record $16,000 to support the committee’s recreation program!

For 15 years, this fundraiser has supported monthly recreational events for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Mid-Del area, including 9 monthly dances, 2 movie nights, and an annual picnic. The dances regularly draw crowds of 250 to 300 attendees.

This year’s increased focus on team fundraising brought out more than 15 teams. Team DeSanctis was the first team formed years ago and has since raised many tens of thousands of dollars at the annual event, including over $10,000 this year. Teams consist of family members of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and self advocates who proudly raise money for their cause.

We thank all of the teams, individuals, sponsors, volunteers, and everyone else who came out to support our work in this community. Whether you walked the 1 mile route or cheered from the sidelines, ran the race or rolled your way to the finish line, your participation made our 15th annual event a memorable and heartwarming day. Thank you!
I Believe...

I believe in The Arc of Delaware, and am committed to its mission to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and actively support full inclusion and participation in the community through advocacy and service to individuals and their families.

I believe in the clients we serve who impress me daily with their strength and determination to make their way in this world, a world that is often difficult for us to navigate. They deserve the same opportunities as you and me. That’s why I became a member of The Arc of Delaware years ago, and why I continue my membership each January.

I believe in you, and want to say “thank you” to those of you who are also members. To those of you who are friends of The Arc receiving this newsletter,

THE ARC NEEDS YOU. As membership chair, I encourage you to join our family. Joining is easy. You may do so online at www.thearcofdelaware.org, or by calling the office at (302) 996-9400 for a membership envelope. For a nominal membership fee ($10 self-advocate, $25 individual, $35 family, $100 business/organization or $500 lifetime) you can strengthen our Arc family. Membership will also now be offered to donors. JOIN TODAY. Recruit a new member. If you are able, please also consider paying the membership fee for a self-advocate. Add your voice to ours.

I believe that together our collective voices can make a difference.

I BELIEVE IN POSSIBILITIES!

Merry K. Jones
Membership Chair

Ursuline Christmas Project

The Ursuline Christmas Project, in partnership with The Arc of Delaware, brings Christmas joy to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Meg Kane Smith, a theology teacher at Ursuline Academy in Wilmington, coordinates the project which teaches students to pay it forward. This has become a Christmas tradition of giving which is now in its 10th year. Each year The Arc of Delaware gathers names of one hundred people with I/DD who live in group homes and who would not otherwise receive a gift over the holiday season. The list includes items which each person needs. Ursuline students from 9th through 12th grade purchase presents from the list, wrap them and put name tags on them for each individual receiving a gift. The gifts are delivered at a party held in the school Auditorium.

Over 50 students from 7th through 12th grade provide the food and participate in this munch-and-mingle event. The students welcome and chat with the guests while music teacher, Joe Louden, plays the piano. The talented Middle School choir sings and entertains guests. Guests who wish to share their singing talents also entertain the crowd. The Arc and Ursuline Academy are both very excited for this year’s event which will take place on December 14, 2015.
Staff News

Elizabeth (Liz) Harris became an official employee of The Arc working in the Accounting Department in December 2014. Previously, she completed two internships with us and recently received her BS in Accounting from Wilmington University. Liz continues to expand her role in the accounting department to help our company become more efficient.

Jasmine Smith began working as an Employment Specialist at The Arc in January 2015. She graduated from Gloucester County College with an Associate's Degree in Exercise Science in 2014. Prior to working at The Arc, Jasmine worked as a medical assistant for three years. She has experience through her career and education working with a variety of people, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Andrew Ziegler graduated from the University of Delaware in May 2015 with a Bachelor's degree in Health Behavior Science and a minor in Anthropology. He joined The Arc as an Employment Specialist in June, shortly after completing a one semester internship in our Newport office. Andrew first gained experience working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities as a Direct Therapist for the Brandywine Center for Autism.

Julien Nassini came to The Arc in March 2015 as an accounting intern from Wilmington University. He is an international student who hails from Togo, a small country on the West African coast. He obtained his BS in Accounting in June and has continued to work for The Arc part-time. He currently is pursuing a Masters Degree and commutes to Delaware every day from Philadelphia.

Recent Gifts

The Arc of Delaware is generously supported by the following corporations, agencies and individuals who have recently given gifts:

- **All-State Foundation** - $1,000 in support of the Mid-Del Walk/Run & Roll
- **Bank of America** - $30,000 in support of the Employment Program
- **Chichester duPont Foundation** - $20,000 to install barrier free lifts in a new home
- **Christmas Shop Foundation** – Funding for a new computer
- **DFRC** - $5,000 for Home Monitoring and Employment
- **Grant-in-Aid** - $12,730 to support the Outreach program
- **New Castle County CDBG** - $8,000 for the Outreach Program
- **New Castle County HOME** - $100,000 for accessibility renovations to community group homes
- **Palmer Home Fund** - $5,000 for elderly persons with disabilities in Kent County
- **Sussex County** - $750 for Outreach in Sussex County
- **Walmart Foundation** - $25,000 for the Employment Program
- **Welfare Foundation** - $75,000 for construction of a new community group home
- **Wells Fargo Community Connection Grant** - $1,000 in support of all programs
Volunteers are Love in Motion!

Have you considered volunteering to help your community, but don’t have a lot of time? We may have the perfect opportunity for you! We are looking for individuals to help us monitor our community group homes in New Castle County. The time requirement is minimal and monitoring visits are usually made during the evening hours when residents are home from work or day programs.

Monitors work in pairs and assist The Arc of Delaware with scheduled visits to one or more group homes. Monitors choose the number of homes that they want to monitor and are pre-scheduled to visit one or more homes. The Monitor’s role is to note any housing issues or concerns and identify areas where The Arc can improve the functionality, safety and accessibility within our more than 80 homes serving people with I/DD and other disabilities. Each home visit takes approximately one hour to complete. A brief written report to record your findings follows each visit. Training will be provided.

Please contact Linda Cox at 302-996-9400 or lcox@thearcofdelaware.org to volunteer or gather additional information. We look forward to working with you!