



HERALD

celebrating 40 Years of service

A message from the Executive Director and Board President

On a rainy day in January of 1972, a little known journalist named Geraldo Rivera embarked on a journey that would literally change the history of individuals with disabilities and their families. On that day, Geraldo visited the Willowbrook School in New York and exposed horrid and deplorable conditions.



That same year, The Arc of Somerset County was formed as a grassroots effort of parents seeking community-based programs for their children with special needs. The Arc quickly became an agency that offered families an alternative to institutionalization for their children.



As we reflect on the past 40 years of our service, it is inspiring to see the progress that we have made in upholding the civil rights of citizens with disabilities and embracing the gifts and talents that these individuals bring to our community. We would like to highlight three areas in which we have made tremendous strides: employment, housing, and children's services.

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iPads come to the Jerry Davis Center

The Arc of Somerset County is the recipient of a generous donation of 8 iPads from **Healing the Children New Jersey**. The iPads will be used to enhance the therapeutic benefits provided by our therapists to children under three years of age in our Early Intervention program. The use of iPads with children with special needs has been widely publicized and researched recently. Specifically, iPads provide children with disabilities with motivation, enhanced communication and fine motor skills, and increased access to a variety of applications that would not otherwise be available.



"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to expand our current therapies with the use of the iPad," states Jennifer Orlick, Director of Children & Family Services. "This technology will provide us with the means to make an even greater impact on the growth and development of the children we serve."

Persons served by The Arc hired by AT&T for National Convention project

Individuals working at The Arc's Branchburg Adult Training Center are getting into the political spirit this election year. Thanks to a contract with AT&T, the communications company providing products and services for both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, persons served by The Arc have been hired to assemble gift bags for convention delegates.

"We are particularly excited for this job because it includes tasks that can be completed by many people we serve – regardless of their level or type of disability," remarked Jim O'Rourke, Director of Employment Services.

"This contract will provide employment for a number of individuals with disabilities."

The timing for such work is critical as



well. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for individuals with a disability was 15% in 2011 – nearly double that of persons without a disability. Through its Employment Services program, The Arc

partners with local organizations to create and develop employment opportunities for persons served, and presently supports more than 260 adults in their pursuit of gainful employment.

"It is our mission to support growth and achievement at every stage of life," remarked Lauren Panarella, Executive Director. "We believe that the opportunity to work is vital to that achievement."



The Arc of Somerset County MISSION

The Arc of Somerset County provides quality services and advocacy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to support development and achievement at every stage of life.

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Employment

Historically, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities were unable to obtain gainful employment due to discriminatory practices and lack of public transportation. Often, adults with disabilities who were willing and able to work were not provided the opportunity to become productive members of society. With the passage of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) in 1990, employers were no longer able to discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability. In addition, the ADA allowed for reasonable accommodations that would assist individuals with disabilities to be successful in their employment endeavors. The ADA literally opened the door to gainful employment for individuals with disabilities.

In April of this year, Governor Christie signed a bill that would make New Jersey the 14th state to adopt the "Employment First" bill. This bill mandates that all young adults with disabilities who are graduating from high school be given the opportunity to seek competitive, community employment as their first option. Clearly this will pave a new path for our growing and diverse workforce.

Housing

Prior to the 1950's, families had little choice with regards to the care of their adult child with a disability. Large and inhumane institutions offered basic hygienic services in large wards and very little in the way of educational or habilitative services. During the next 40 years, Arc chapters nationwide began developing alternative housing options including community-based group homes, supervised apartments, and supported living programs. Each program was geared to the unique needs of the individual as well as their preference in living environments. Residential programs offered opportunities for community interaction and full integration of individuals with disabilities in their communities. Today, with the cooperation and assistance of local, state and national housing partners, individuals are being given the opportunity to hold their own lease and have ownership over their home.

Children's Services

Forty years ago, there were very few, if any, community services for children with special needs. Parents were often told to place their child in an institution, and children were provided with very little in the way of educational and therapeutic programs. The first program that launched The Arc of Somerset County was a small pre-school that had 3 staff members and 16 children. Today, 40 years later, we offer a full range of children's services and serve over 300 children in our various programs including Camp Jotoni, "Kids Night Out," "My Time" sibling group, developmental daycare, early intervention, and therapeutic play groups. These programs provide families with a variety of offerings to meet the unique needs of their children, thus supporting growth, development, and future successes.

Congratulations to all of the athletes that competed in the 2012 Special Olympics!



More than 400 "stepped up" for The Arc

The Arc of Somerset County held its annual Step Up For The Arc Walk & 5K Run on Saturday, June 2. Despite threats of rain, those who made it out to Duke Island Park enjoyed sunshine and blue skies! With more than 450 individual donations and contributions, we raised over \$29,000 for The Arc of Somerset County! The event would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors:

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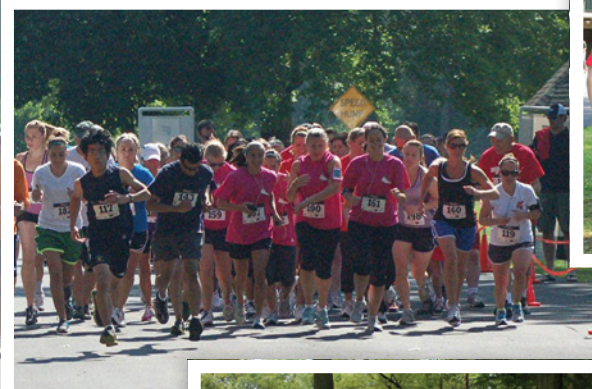
Top Fundraisers

Top Consumer Fundraiser - Paul Petitti
Top Individual Fundraiser - Eric Mandelbaum
Top Family Team - Scalise / Sensbach
Top Community Team - Cerminara Architects
Top Program Teams - Ardsley Group Home & Union Avenue Apartments

Top 5K Runners

1. Andrew Douglas (19:08) – 1st Place Male
2. Ryan Sigel (19:44)
3. Darian Siegel (20:57)
4. Grant Cowell (21:02)
5. Charles Walter (21:27)
6. Travis Chan (22:54)
7. Kyle Colonnese (23:09)
8. Karen Canetti (23:21) – 1st Place Female
9. Derek Shendell (23:45)
10. Jessica Burns (23:54)

**THANK YOU TO EVERYBODY WHO MADE THE 2012 STEP UP FOR THE ARC WALK & 5K RUN SUCH A GREAT SUCCESS!
WE'LL SEE YOU NEXT SPRING!**



The Power of Lasting F

“A family in harmony will prosper in everything.” -- CHINESE PROVERB

Having a child with a disability can challenge a family’s ability to cope. As such, The Arc strives to meet the needs of all members of the family rather than solely focusing on the child with a disability. From parent counseling to sibling support groups, The Arc’s range of programs impacts all members of the family. Perhaps what is most invaluable to our families is the social network of

other parents they meet. Here we share the story of three families that met at The Arc’s Jerry Davis Center more than twenty years ago. What began as a group of parents sharing a counselor and an hour each week turned into a group of families that share baseball games, parties, advice, support, and twenty years of monthly meetings at a local restaurant.



The Kennedy Family

“Becky is our beautiful and affectionate 21-year-old daughter. We enrolled Becky in The Arc’s EI program around her first birthday. Hearing that your child faces severe disabilities is overwhelming, and having The Arc’s support was invaluable. The Arc facilitated support session for parents, and we also participated in sessions for siblings. It was through these groups

that we met the other families who were in the same boat as us. Shortly thereafter, we enrolled Becky in daycare at Jerry Davis. The staff understood her unique needs and helped tremendously in her development. From there, we moved on to preschool and then an after school program where she was able to spend time with other young people like herself.

As of June, Becky began attending an Arc day program, and we are excited for what the future holds for her.”

– Eileen Kennedy



The Laffoon Family

“Becca is our 21-year-old daughter who inherited all the Irish looks in the family: red hair, freckled skin, and blue eyes. She came packaged with a twin brother, and also has an older sister and younger brother.

The Arc has been a solid rock for our family since Becca was an infant. Without a doubt, The Arc’s Early Intervention Program buoyed our marriage, our family life, our day-to-day survival, and our overall journey. The Arc was our lifeline as we learned about Becca’s medical and therapeutic issues, early intervention, and family support. And when she came of school age, it was The Arc’s guidance that made us confident in working with our school district.

The future for Becca is about to launch. Her recent graduated shifted our focus from the school she has known for 16 years to finding a day program that fits her needs. The Arc is still with us – supporting and guiding us every step of the way.”

– Michelle Laffoon



Friendships and Support

The Nivison Family

“Our 22-year-old son Eric loves sports, music, and has a wicked sense of humor! He began receiving early intervention services when he was six months old. By attending these sessions at the Jerry Davis Center, we found the greatest blessing: a network of other parents facing the same challenges. While Eric attended his sessions, my husband and/or I were able to participate in a family support group. Feeling we needed more time with each other, the parents created an evening support



group. Each month we would meet at a local restaurant. No RSVP was necessary as we assumed that if nobody else came then we would just enjoy a date night with our significant other. Each of the families in our group has a member with significant disabilities. The Arc has continuously supported all of us, regardless of our child's diagnosis.

Eric is now enrolled at an Arc day program in Hillsborough, and we look forward to even more opportunities for him in the future!”

– Lisa Nivison



“One of the most important factors that has contributed to our families' wellbeing has been the extraordinary group of friends who started this journey together. Over the years we have figured out things like where to buy the most affordable diapers or which restaurants are I/DD friendly. But more importantly, together we have tackled major issues like managing family dynamics and sibling issues, figuring out how to handle behavior problems, and getting through medical crises and hospitalizations. We've supported each other through the aging and death of our parents while managing our children with unique and never-ending needs. Together we've celebrated the accomplishments of our other children while coming to terms with the fact that we don't gain freedom as we age. In fact, our responsibilities to our children with disabilities get harder because we are older and more tired than when they were young. We all understand the complexities of each others' lives in a way few can. Our children are our bond, and it was The Arc that allowed us to realize the supportive power of meeting other families like ours.”

– Lisa Nivison, Eileen Kennedy, and Michelle Laffoon



Calling All Advocates

For one week in April, agencies, advocates, families, and legislators convened in Washington, DC for the annual Disability Policy Seminar. This year, the seminar focused on five vital pieces of legislation that could have a dramatic impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

- Protection and preservation of Medicaid and Medicare services and funding
- Protection of Social Security Trust Funds and Social Security Benefits
- Reauthorization of ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act)– to ensure all students are prepared for adult life including employment and higher education
- Passage of the ABL Act (Achieving a Better Life Experience), which would allow families to save money for the future of their children without jeopardizing their Social Security and Medicaid benefits.
- Support of the Affordable Care Act, which would allow for the expansion of access to affordable, quality healthcare for persons with disabilities.

Agency leaders from across the state will be meeting with their local legislators to promote the five priorities. This is a vital time for advocacy and we encourage and empower all family members and community partners to take an active role by contacting your local legislators regarding the topics that impact your family. Visit our website for information about how to get involved.

Did You Know...?

Did you know... Arc consumers have oriented more than 16 million cosmetic bottles for our customer Stoelzle-Oberglas in support of L'Oreal's local production line?

Did you know... The Arc of Somerset Shredding is expanding? Give us a call for all your shredding needs.

Did you know... we have added four new customers and renewed relationships with two others this year?

Did you know... We are always looking for additional projects for our production centers? Just call Britt Blomgren, Contract Sales Manager, at 908-707-0920 or email at brittb@thearcofsomerset.org.

Grants and Donations Provide Program Support

A Calcutta Affair donated \$1,103 to The Arc to support Camp Jotoni. The chic new Indian restaurant in Warren raised the funds through its grand opening.

The Knights of Columbus (Councils #11409 and #1432) raised \$537 and \$2,000 respectively for The Arc through their annual drives.

Magyar Bank awarded The Arc with a \$1,000 grant to support Kids' Night Out – a drop-off respite program for children with disabilities and their siblings.

Tricore Interactive awarded The Arc with a \$1,000 grant to cover supply costs for the group's volunteer effort at Camp Jotoni in June.



"A Lifetime of Opportunities" Appeal



As you know, The Arc of Somerset County is celebrating its 40th anniversary of providing advocacy and services for individuals with disabilities and their families. Recently we have had the opportunity to reflect on the many accomplishments of the past 40 years and to celebrate the advancements in community-based services that enhance the lives of those we serve. Our commitment to The Arc Mission remains stronger than ever, and we now turn our focus to the future:

We are excited about the advancements in the field of early intervention. From new techniques to innovative therapies, the youngest of our persons served are receiving the best possible early intervention services to help meet their developmental needs.

We are excited about new weekend respite programs at Camp Jotoni. This programming offers recreation and social opportunities for campers while also providing much-needed respite for our caregivers. Respite care is the most requested service from our families, and we strive to satisfy that need.

We are excited about being able to continue our mission of ensuring development and achievement at every stage of life – even for our persons served who are experiencing the effects of aging, dementia and cognitive decline. This type of programming would never have been possible 40 or even 20 years ago!

As we enter our 40th year, we ask you to join us in support. Your contribution will ensure that these and other services can continue for our persons served – both now and well into the future. We could have never imagined 40 years ago what we would have accomplished today. And with your support, we will be able to say the same thing in 40 years.



*Yes, I would like to support the
"A Lifetime of Opportunities" Appeal!*

"A Lifetime of Opportunities" Appeal donors will be recognized in our upcoming Herald, on our website, and in our upcoming email newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

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Phone _____ Email _____

I have enclosed a tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$_____.

Please contact me about Planned Giving opportunities at The Arc of Somerset County.

The Arc of Somerset County • 141 South Main Street • Manville, NJ 08835 • 908.725.8544 x610



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

141 South Main Street
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Save the Date

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

During the month of October, The Arc will honor our many community business partners that provide employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. Check our website for future updates about NDEAM events.

Arc Angel Gala

The 2012 Arc Angel Gala: "A Lifetime of Achievement" – our Ruby Anniversary celebrating 40 years of service – will be held on Friday, November 16th at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club. Join us as we honor Ethicon, a Johnson & Johnson Company. For additional information, please contact Tara Abbott at 908.725.8544 x610 or via email at taraa@thearcofsomerset.org.

Arc Honors Award Recipients at Annual Meeting

More than 175 staff, volunteers, community partners, and persons served attended The Arc's Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony on Monday, June 18th at the Somerset Holiday Inn. The Arc proudly presented the following awards:

Community Media Excellence
yoursomerset.com

Employer of the Year
Stoelzle-Oberglas

Distinguished Community Service
Henkel

Healthcare Professional of the Year
Dr. Lucille Esralew

Professional of the Year
Marv Beth Loughlin, LCSW

Educator of the Year
Trish McGinley

Volunteer of the Year
Christopher Haase

Direct Support Professionals of the Year

Debora Miller &
Florence Obado

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