

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **Grand Opening Set for The Arc Classic Crunch Chocolate Chip Cookie Factory**

Woodstock | The Arc Eastern Connecticut will host a Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening of The Cookie Factory, a vocational training micro-enterprise for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, at 22 RT 171 in Woodstock, CT. From 10am-12pm on April 26, 2023, neighbors, legislators, and the public are welcome to meet the bakers and staff of the agency's new commercial bakery and storefront.

The building also houses The Emporium, an upscale thrift store, and Connecticut's Donation Station, a redemption and recycling operation. The Cookie Factory, The Emporium and the Donation Station all prepare people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) for competitive employment with area businesses in fields of their choice.

"This is a dream that started in 2016," said Kathleen Stauffer, The Arc ECT's CEO, "when we first began selling cookies. Now, we're in 22 stores. With our own bakery, we can increase production, hire, and train more people, and have a great retail space for the public as well."

Stauffer also noted the integral role played by the agency's community partners, particularly its funders and the Mentoring Corps for Community Development, which advised the agency on product development, marketing, packaging and more. "This facility wouldn't have been possible without the help of private foundations, business development organizations, and other area partners. Our grand opening is a thank-you to everyone for their support and faith in us."

The public is invited to join the celebration, which will include free sampling of The Arc's Classic Crunch Chocolate Chip Cookies and assorted beverages; please RSVP to [dtift@thearect.org](mailto:dtift@thearect.org) or (860) 889-4435 x 116.

To learn more about the Arc ECT's programs in northeastern and southeastern Connecticut, please visit [TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org) or contact Denise Tift at (860) 889-4435, ext. 116.