



A Message From the President of the Board of Directors



Linda Rhodes

Why Did The Arc QV and The Arc NLC Merge?

The Story of The Arc Eastern Connecticut

Sixty-six years ago, parents in Quinebaug Valley and New London County created non-profit agencies to serve their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities

(IDD). **Jobs, homes, volunteer opportunities and full lives – so many dreams were realized!**

But challenges arose too. **State budget deficits led to a decade of funding cuts and calls for private providers to work more efficiently together.** As stewards of our founders' great legacies, our Boards of Directors felt a keen responsibility to ensure that their vision continued to thrive.

After a year's discernment, it became clear that joining forces was the smart — and the right! — thing to do.

After a year's discernment, it became clear that joining forces was the smart—and the right! — thing to do. **So now we will work together as one family: The Arc Eastern Connecticut.**

Our community partners, advocates and teams have responded with great enthusiasm. Together we will accomplish great things "In Partnership for Full Equality!"

PS – Please join us for **The Arc ECT Murder Mystery Dinner April 13 at Connecticut National Golf Course, and The Arc Film Festival at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center April 18!** For information, call Crystal (860.774.2827) or Denise(860.889.4435 x 116) today. <

A Message From the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc

We are family!

What's Next for The Arc Eastern Connecticut?

We share a common philosophy. We share common roots. **We are the largest chapter of The Arc in the state. We are The Arc Eastern Connecticut!** Together, we will be stronger advocates for our families and our agencies.

This Spring, our entire agency will roll up its sleeves. **From the people and families we serve to our Board of Directors and our Direct Support Professionals – every person will have a voice in formulating The Arc ECT's new Strategic Plan.**

A fair and empowering environment ensures our walk "In Partnership for Full Equality" with the people we serve.

Joint facilitations involving all levels of the team also are taking place, and **it's important that we welcome one another and work cooperatively.** A fair and empowering environment ensures our walk "In Partnership for Full Equality" with the people we serve.

Together, we are a formidable advocacy force for Civil Rights in Connecticut. Thank you for being on our team!

I hope to see each one of you soon at **The Arc ECT Murder Mystery Dinner Event April 13 at Connecticut National Golf Course and The Arc Film Festival April 18 at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center!** To attend, call Crystal or Denise today at 860.774.2827 or 860.889.4435 x 116. <



Kathleen Stauffer

A 5-year Fight—and We Won

Legislators' and The Arc's Perseverance Leads to Pay Raise for Direct Care Staff

This past May, after 5 years of fighting on behalf of The Arc ECT's employees, The Arc ECT CEO Kathleen Stauffer announced to the agency the passage of HB54-60, an act raising the minimum wage for providers of State-contracted services.

"This is a huge win for people in non-profit agencies working with marginalized and at-risk populations, who have traditionally received less than fair compensation for extremely difficult work," said Stauffer. The bill went into effect at the beginning of 2019, and in January, direct care staff at The Arc finally saw an increase in their paychecks. In 2014 The Arc New London County joined the United Way, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and SECTer to conduct a regional non-profit economic impact survey (NEIS). For the next four years the agencies met with state legislators and the Appropriations Committee to outline and publicize the economic value of non-profits to communities and the need to increase funding for people with IDD as well as fair wages for their caregivers.



There's work still to be done: The Arc ECT joins parents, caregivers and other agencies supporting people with IDD on 2/26/2019 at Family Hearing Day at the Capitol.

Because of this compelling evidence, combined local/state rallies, and increased pressure on state and local leaders, the legislature finally acknowledged the vital role played by non-profits and their staff and voted 88/62 and 29/4 to increase the minimum wage for direct care staff.

Noted Stauffer, "The dedication and efforts on the part of staff, caregivers, and families in phoning legislators, and advocating at the Capitol made this happen. Even when everyone said it couldn't be done, we never stopped fighting. This is the power of teamwork!" <

Real Work for Real Pay:

The Arc ECT Micro-enterprise Update

The Arc Welcomes Four New Businesses

With the new affiliation between The Arc NLC and The Arc Quinebaug Valley, The Arc Eastern Connecticut's commitment to providing training and work experience for people with IDD is stronger than ever. The Cleaning Crew has branched out into newspaper delivery for the Resident; the "Local Creations" consignment store and cookie business continue to grow, and the Farm Stand/CSA is gearing up for another great season.

The Arc ECT's micro-enterprises now include a northeast CT Cleaning Crew, Delivery Crew, and an expansive building in Woodstock housing The Arc Emporium and Redemption Center. All businesses are staffed by people we support. The Emporium offers gently used high-end clothing, furniture,



Ryan at the Redemption Center

vintage items, and local artisanal chocolate and honey. Over a million bottles and cans have been processed at the Redemption Center from area businesses and other community locations.

Sign Up Now for a CSA Share!

Community Supported Agriculture is back at The Arc's Farm Stand on Rt 117 in Ledyard—and it's bigger and better than ever. Our intrepid farmers are already starting seedlings in both our aquaponics facility and the on-site season-extending greenhouse, in order to get a jump on the season, which will be 10 weeks long this year and include over 23 varieties of vegetables, cut flowers and micro-greens, as well as yummy items from our bakery. Shares cost only \$250 but there's a limited supply—order yours now by contacting Ricky Wezner at 860.710.1969 or rwezner@thearcncl.org. <



We're ready for you!

2019 TES Internships Provide Valuable Employment Skills

The Transitional Employment Services (TES) program in Danielson has partnered with **Linda's House pediatric daycare and preschool** in Thompson to offer internships to its students. **Nicksa is The Arc ECT's first intern at Linda's House**, and is very excited to be offered such an opportunity in the community. As a Teacher's Assistant, she will be working with infants and preschoolers, some of whom have medically complex needs and/or IDD. **She will be learning valuable skills** that she hopes will help her pursue her career goal of working in the field of professional childcare.



Nicksa in her new uniform

Day Kimball Hospital has also agreed to partner with our TES program. **Up to eight participant interns will be assigned for six months to various departments** including Nutrition and Cafeteria, the Business Office, Housekeeping, the Gift Shop, and Behavioral Health.

The reception we've received from these two community organizations is heartwarming. We're so grateful that Linda's House and Day Kimball Hospital have **joined us in our effort to support people with IDD on their journeys towards competitive employment.** <

Planned Giving

Leave a Legacy

One sentence in your will can make **a lifetime of difference** for people with IDD. To leave a gift in your will, simply share your interest with your attorney or financial planner. Bequest language directs a predetermined gift or a percentage of your estate to The Arc Eastern Connecticut. It's that simple! For more information or sample language, please contact **Denise Tift, Director of Community Outreach**, at 860.889.4435 x 116. <



Bed & Breakfast Becomes New Employment Opportunity

Kate Reymundi, Board member at **Horses Healing Humans in Stonington** and host for the on-site Air B&B can't say enough good things about Cheryl and Makaella, the two new additions to the cleaning staff. **"They're wonderful!" she laughs. "I'm very**



Cheryl and Makaella

happy with their service." They're in charge of cleaning the main areas, the large kitchen, and the library/conference area, where many of the guests hold meetings and attend workshops. "I've known about The Arc for years—and I always buy your cookies for Christmas presents!" Kate has a teaching background at vocational/technical schools, and along with the women's job coach supervises Cheryl and Makaella, although **they're learning their duties at the historic home very quickly.**

Horses Healing Humans is itself a non-profit organization (horseshealinghumansct.org) that helps heal people with physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges through Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy. It offers school programs and programs for veterans as well. "Many guests come to the B&B just to be near the program," says Kate, so we want to create a very special experience for them, and Makaella and Cheryl really contribute to that." <



Making sure the guest linens are folded and stacked properly

Dustin Sets His Sights on Independence, Personal Growth

“I want to become more responsible. I think I’m getting there.”

A cold and rainy morning finds Dustin and three other hard-working members of **The Arc ECT’s Lawn and Landscape crew** clearing brush at a private residence in Sprague with their job coach. Working steadily through the rain, Dustin and the crew lug fallen trees and prickly vines into the woods, taking a brief moment to pose for the camera, then it’s back to work. “It’s kind of hard,” he admits with a grin, “but I like it, and I like the guys I work with. Besides, **I need to keep working if I want to be more independent.**” Independence is

the name of the game for Dustin these days, who has his eye on moving into his own apartment someday.



activities. Now he goes on trips with The Arc and other agencies, and last Christmas he came with me and his little nephews and nieces to Disney World and he was great with them. The steps he’s taken may seem small to some people, but they’re really big, really significant, to us.”

Dustin’s also been involved with The Arc ECT’s Community Life & Advocacy program, where being involved in group activities has made him more comfortable engaging in social activities on his own. **He**

“The steps he’s taken may seem small to some people, but they’re really big, really significant, to us.”
—Dustin’s Mom

“I know I’m not ready now,” he admits. “I have a lot to work on.” Dustin’s lived at The Arc ECT’s supported residence in Niantic since 2012, and the

staff, his friends and his family think he’s made great strides. “I have to keep taking care of myself, and my health, by eating right. **I want to become more responsible. I think I’m getting there.**”

Life hasn’t always been kind to Dustin. He was in 18 different foster homes before he was 9, when his current foster mom took him in. “She was tough, but that’s what I needed,” he admits. “I was a stubborn, angry kid. I wanted to see how much I could get away with. **I was mean to everybody. I’m really trying to work on that now.**”

Dustin’s foster mom agrees. “Dustin’s gained a lot more self-esteem and confidence. He really likes being part of a group, which is a big difference for him. Before, he was very self-conscious about joining events or

came in first in track and field at Special Olympics last year and also plays softball. “I’m a member of the volunteer fire department too,” he says proudly. “I help wash the trucks, and sometimes when there’s a call I help get equipment out of the truck. I’ve been in a lot of parades—I really like that.”



Dustin removes vines from a felled tree before hauling it into the woods

Like a good planner, Dustin’s made a list of goals and is saving as much money as he can. **“I’ve got a bank account, I budget my money, and I like the work I do.”** Next step: competitive employment with a community business. “I’ll know when I’m ready,” he admits, “but for now, I’m where I need to be.” <



The Lawn and Landscape Crew left to right: Dustin, Al, Andrew and Casey

Our Community Partners Make Dreams Come True

We're so grateful for the generosity and support of these organizations, who help further our mission of walking in partnership for full equality for people with IDD.

The **Dominion Foundation** provided \$4,863 to offset irrigation costs at our Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) micro-enterprise. The **Dime Bank Foundation** also assisted the program with a \$1,150 grant to purchase a mulch/drip-line installer. \$1,200 worth of much-needed lawn equipment was donated by **The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation**.

BlumShapiro, the **Towns of Waterford** and **North Stonington**, the **Elsie Brown Fund**, the **Oakdale Knights of Columbus**, the **AHEPA Foundation** and the **Savings Institute Foundation** generously donated a total of \$16,155 to support Community Life & Advocacy's Empowerment/Enrichment program. And the **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut's Women and Girls Fund** awarded \$5,000 specifically to our Voices support group for women.

Sprinklers will be installed at two supported residences thanks to **OPM's Non-Profit Grant** of \$100,302. **Norwich Public Utilities'** participation in the **Neighborhood Assistant Act** resulted in a \$45,790 contribution, which when combined with a **Comcast** donation of \$15,000 allowed us to install energy efficient windows at our Schem Street facility.

The **State Department of Transportation** funded \$46,000 towards an additional lift van for the agency. The Day's **"Make a Difference"** campaign, Royce Hoffman's **"Befriend a Family"** Christmas donation groups including **Millstone and Pfizer**, and **The Friends of G Foundation** provided household necessities, clothes, cash donations, gift cards, and toys to over 30 families and people in need at The Arc ECT's programs and residences during the holidays.

We're also deeply appreciative of the **many friends and individual supporters** who have donated to our Annual Appeal, which **so far has raised over \$19,500** to support inclusive and life-changing programming for people with IDD. <

The Arc Eastern Connecticut in the Spotlight

The **Arc NLC** and **Arc QV** merger has begun, and will be finalized on July 1st, so the spring and summer is going to be busy!

- ✦ In January, The Arc ECT announced its **new Board of Directors**, made up of members from both agencies' Boards.
- ✦ We welcome **Andrea Kaiser** as Chief Development Officer — a new position in the agency.
- ✦ CEO Kathleen Stauffer and Board member Michele Scott attended **The Arc National Convention** in DC this past November.
- ✦ The Arc ECT opened two new supported residences in late 2018; **The Arc Eastern Connecticut now operates 20 homes for 86 residents** throughout eastern Connecticut.

Youth Advocacy Group Hits the Gym



William gets some pointers on improving his abs

The Employment Transition Center's SPARCS (Students Peer Advocates Raising Community Support) program devoted February to **Health and Wellness**. Staff at **Renegade Fitness in Groton** provided the group with a tour and a private "training" session where students learned about all the different types of equipment including exercise balls, medicine balls, ropes, monkey bars,

free weights, etc. Andrew, one of Renegade's trainers, **showed the group how to do some core (ab) exercises**, and everyone took turns on different weighted machines and learned about keeping the equipment clean and disinfected. <





The Arc Through My Eyes by Cheryl Pedro

In this issue of *The Arc News*, columnist **Cheryl Pedro** interviews **Sue Desrosiers** of The Arc Quinebaug Valley, who will be consulting with **The Arc Eastern Connecticut** until the merger is complete on July 1, 2019.

Cheryl: What did you do at The Arc QV?

Sue: I was the Executive Director, so I ran the agency. Right now, because we've combined the agencies, I'm helping with the transition.

Cheryl: How long did you work there?

Sue: Eleven and a half years.

Cheryl: Wow! Are you looking forward to retiring?

Sue: Oh yes! I've been looking forward to this ever since we began talking about the merger.

Cheryl: Do you have any favorite memories?

Sue: We provided services to a young man who I played cards or dominoes with every time he visited. I really enjoyed that time. He passed away quite suddenly and I still miss him—he was very special to me.

Cheryl: What will you miss about working at The Arc QV?

Sue: All the people we work with, and the staff. I'm excited . . . and a little bit sad. But I can always go visit, right?

Cheryl: Right! What are you going to do after you retire?

Sue: Well, I'm just going to relax a little at first. Then I'll probably do some volunteer work—at a local soup kitchen or homeless shelter. I live on a lake so I might have to learn how to fish! <



Sue and Cheryl

The 4th Annual Arc ECT Film Festival Make a difference for people with IDD!

Please join The Arc Eastern Connecticut at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center for an

entertaining and inspiring evening of award-winning short films about people with IDD. Enjoy an evening of culture and fine food provided by Events By Go Fish, along with a quality silent and basket auction, and post-film desserts.



Determined to Dance is a contender for inclusion in this year's Film Festival offerings

100% of proceeds benefit The Arc Eastern Connecticut. Last year The Arc ECT served over 690 people with IDD and their families, providing a variety of residential, day, employment, health/fitness and enrichment opportunities.



WHERE: The Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center, 110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket, CT 06338

TICKETS: Individual: \$35; includes admission and hors d'oeuvres. Cash bar. Tickets can be purchased online at TheArcNLC.org,

via regular mail (125 Sachem St., Norwich, CT 06360) or at the door the night of the festival.

Our Sponsors receive many promotional benefits—please consider sponsoring this wonderful event. Donations of goods, services, or items for our silent auction are welcome!

- Premier Sponsorship.....\$5,000
- Studio Sponsorship.....\$2,000
- Producer Sponsorship.....\$1,500
- Red Carpet Sponsorship.....\$1,000
- Director Sponsorship.....\$750
- Talent Sponsorship.....\$250

To donate, please contact Denise Tift at 860-889-4435 x 116, or DTift@TheArcNLC.org for more information on sponsorship or volunteering. <

Dustin's Health-Conscious Shrimp Fried Rice

"I love Chinese food!" says Dustin. "But I know that take-out isn't the best thing for me."

Here's an easy, one-skillet recipe that's ready in 20 minutes, has layers of flavor and texture, and is far less greasy.

INGREDIENTS

2 Tbsp. sesame oil
2 Tbsp. canola or vegetable oil
1 lb shrimp (fresh or frozen), cleaned
1 c. frozen peas and diced carrots blend
1/2 c. corn (canned or frozen)
2-3 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 tsp ground ginger
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
4 c. cooked rice
2-3 green onions, trimmed and sliced into thin rounds
3-4 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp black pepper

PREPARATION:

To a large non-stick skillet or wok, add the oils and shrimp. Cook over medium-high heat for 3 minutes, flipping halfway through—don't overcook. Remove shrimp with a slotted spoon and place on a plate; set aside.

Add the peas, carrots, corn to oils; cook, stirring for 2 minutes or until vegetables begin to soften. Add the garlic, ginger; cook, stirring for 1 minute.

Push vegetables to one side of the skillet, add the eggs to the other side; cook to scramble, stirring as necessary.

Add the shrimp, rice, green onions; evenly drizzle with soy sauce, season with salt and pepper, and stir to combine. Cook 2 minutes, or until shrimp reheats. Serve hot!



The 41st Annual Strides Road Race

Event Draws Over Record Attendance

Fate always seems to smile on the Strides Road Race and this year was no exception. October 7, 2018 turned into a perfect fall day for over 320 racers of all abilities who covered the beautiful 5k and 10k courses at Camp Harkness and the surrounding Waterford shoreline route.

The annual event, including a 1-mile fun run/walk/roll around the camp, **raised nearly \$17,000 for The Arc Eastern Connecticut's Community Life & Advocacy program.**

CEO **Kathleen Stauffer**, Waterford 1st Selectman **Dan Steward** and race co-sponsor **Jack O'Keefe** presented prizes to the 5k and 10k winners. This was 5k winner Michael Vesce's first time running at Strides. "I'd definitely do it again—the race was a lot of fun. It's a great course, and it was so nice to see the community come

together and rally around a good cause."

"It's a great course, and it was so nice to see the community come together and rally around a good cause."

—Michael Vesce, 5k winner



Outback Steak House in New

London, our Title Sponsor who's provided incredible post-race feasts for 12 years in a row, was a big hit with runners and non-runners alike. Intrepid volunteers from the **US Coast Guard**, the **Cactus Jack Foundation**, **Mystic Cub Scout Pack 200**, and members of the **Goshen Fire Police** and **Waterford Police Department** made sure all parts of the event ran smoothly. Many thanks to our other generous sponsors, including the **21st Century Tolland Fund**, **MJ Sullivan Automotive**, **The O'Keefe Family Foundation**, and **Barbara Deindorfer, MD**. We couldn't do this without you. See you all again on **Sunday October 6, 2019!** And don't let the rain stop you — it never — lasts! <



The Arc
Eastern Connecticut

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Achieve with us.

The Arc NEWS

The Arc New London County is now: **4th Annual**

The Arc
Eastern Connecticut

FILM FESTIVAL

Tickets Available at TheArcNLC.org

Thursday, April 18, 2019
Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center

\$35 per Ticket

5:30 pm-8 pm
Hors d'oeuvres, Cash Bar,
Silent Auction

An inspirational collection of short films about and featuring people with IDD

PREMIER SPONSORS

CRIME AND PUN-ISHMENT

A 1920'S MURDER MYSTERY EXPERIENCE

Show provided by:

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT QVARC.ORG

90'S ATTIRE ENCOURAGED

Saturday, April 13, 2019
CT National Golf Club in Putnam

\$75 per Ticket

Doors Open at 5:30 pm
6 pm Cocktail Hour
7-9:30 pm Show
R- Rated, 18+

Sunday, October 6, 2019
Camp Harkness Park

Starting Gun Times:

9:30 am 5K & 10K
11 am Family Fun Run,
Walk and Roll

Everyone of ALL Ages & Abilities WELCOME!

SAVE THE DATE!