



# The Arc® NEWS

## New London County



TheArcNLC.org

### A Message from The President of The Board of Directors



Linda Rhodes

#### Ever had a job interview?

Discover a New Kind of Human Resources Department!

Do you remember your first job interview? Did anybody ask you about Star Wars . . . or Harry Potter?

#### Meet James Dexter, a young man with Down Syndrome.

James wants to work in human resources. But all his company will let him do is push the food trolley. So James takes matters into his own hands.

Join us Thursday, April 26, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research

Center. You'll be delighted – not just for James, but for a host of actors starring in short films about and featuring people with IDD. Enjoy great stories, food, spirits, and a silent auction!

All proceeds benefit the families we serve, funding a volunteer corps donating 1,379 service hours to our local community, support groups for survivors of sexual abuse, and similar vital programs.

You can change lives for people with IDD in New London County!

Join us Thursday,  
April 26, from 5:30 to 8 p.m.  
at Mashantucket Pequot  
Museum and Research  
Center.

PS – The Arc NLC Board and leadership team are creating a new Strategic Plan. You are invited to help take our mission "In Partnership for Full Equality" to a whole new level! Stay tuned! Your view matters! More details in Fall . . . 🍌

### A Message from The Chief Executive Officer of The Arc

#### We are speaking to YOU!

Advocates Speak Up to Legislature

Agency leaders used to speak for people with IDD. But if The Arc NLC believes we are "In Partnership for Full Equality" . . . why wouldn't people with IDD speak for themselves?

And so, at the Capitol, over time, people with IDD – supported by The Arc NLC's Community Life & Advocacy Program – began to speak up! One legislator, particularly, listened . . .

Sen. Ted Kennedy, Jr. stood on the lawn of the Norwich Fish and Game Association. Having met The Arc NLC advocates in Hartford, he wanted to see them in action. Kennedy was impressed that The Arc NLC pays people with IDD minimum wage for real jobs.

"I think this is a model that we can expand to other parts of the state — and the country, for that matter." Sen. Cathy Osten joined Kennedy, pointing out that real wages are a dignity issue for all people.

"I think this is a model that we can expand to other parts of the state — and the country, for that matter."  
— Sen. Ted Kennedy, Jr.

Keep this and other vital advocacy programs going! Don't miss The Arc Film Festival on April 26 at Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. Call Denise Tift at 860.889.4435 x 116 or visit TheArcNLC.org. 🍌



Kathleen Stauffer

## The Arc CT and Local Legislators Defend Benefits for People with IDD; Formica Fights for Seaside Proceeds

Though it's not a budget year, The Arc Connecticut, The Arc New London County, and area legislators are closely monitoring several issues. **Funding for new graduates with IDD and those in emergency situations** has been cut for the second year of the budget. Also of concern is the future of the **Community First Choice program**, a Medicaid option for the elderly and **people with disabilities, which assists people choosing to remain in their homes rather than go to nursing facilities.**

The Arc CT intends to work with AARP and other constituencies benefitting from this program, to prevent its elimination as of July 1, 2018.

Senator Paul Formica, co-Chair of the Appropriations Committee and Board member of The Arc NLC, is working tirelessly to insure that the **disposition of the former Seaside Regional Center in Waterford benefits people with IDD.** Win Everts, Executive Director of The Arc Connecticut, notes The Arc has been following this issue closely for years. By state statute, **proceeds from the Seaside sale must be used to create community-based placements for people with disabilities.**

However, the announcement in January that the facility will be jointly managed by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and a developer could jeopardize the agreement. Sen. **Formica continues to speak with DEEP, pushing for the sale of the property so people with IDD will benefit—as state law requires.** “My position continues to be that a better solution would be to sell the site to an interested development company for the \$8million originally proposed,” Formica said. “This money would go directly to support people with IDD as originally intended as well as leveraging the money to multiples beyond the sale price.” 🌱

### Real Work for Real Pay:

## The Arc NLC's micro-enterprise update

The Arc NLC's Farm Stand and Aquaponics program anticipates its best season ever. The 2017 pilot **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares sold out within hours of being advertised,** and the Farm Stand plans on offering more pre-paid shares this year. The regular supply of over 14 varieties of fresh organic produce also will be available to the public. (Remember: **the Farm Stand sells The Arc's homemade baked goods** too!) The Farm Stand plans to extend its growing season, thanks



*The new towers, installed in January, are ready for planting and can hold 164 heads of lettuce at a time.*

to a generous donation from the **Mystic Rotary Foundation**, which helped purchase a small 3-season greenhouse that allows for starting plants earlier and protecting tender vegetables.

Director of Community Enterprise Tom Murphy reported sales of over \$6,000 this past summer, and a new aquaponics extension, funded by the **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut**, means the Farm Stand can begin to supply restaurants. **The first two 8-week aquaponics crops will be basil and specialty buttercrunch lettuce,** but buyers can pre-specify other desired crops. The new system means more people can be hired and trained to work in this fast-growing field. Meanwhile, plans for the farm Stand to partner

with the Town of Ledyard to create a larger CSA on Town property continues! 🌱



*Another happy customer!*

***(What to cook with all that organic produce? See our delicious Eggplant Parmesan recipe on p. 7.)***

## Senators Kennedy and Osten visit The Arc's Landscape Crew during Disability Awareness Month

State Sen. Ted Kennedy Jr., D-Branford, and State Sen. Cathy Osten, D-Sprague, visited The Arc NLC's Lawn and Landscape Crew in October, in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Kevin and Andrew, with Job Coach Tim Bates, had just finished a large job at the Norwich



Fish and Game Association, one of several local properties that the crew landscapes. "You guys do awesome work," Alexis Laffey, secretary of the Association, told the crew. Also in attendance was the Arc NLC's CEO Kathleen Stauffer and Kathryn Lord, president of the Edward and Mary Lord Foundation, which has generously donated much of the equipment and the truck that the crew uses.

"This crew is doing a great job here," Kennedy said. While state law allows agencies to pay people with IDD sub-minimum wage, **The Arc NLC pays all its employees minimum wage or higher.** "That gives the workers a sense of pride because they get the same level of pay as anybody else around them," Osten noted. 🍌

## Planned Giving

*Leave a Legacy with a Bequest*

Did you know that 95% of all planned gifts are bequests? No matter what size your estate, you can leave a gift in your will! **Bequests to The Arc NLC create financial stability and ensure our longevity.**



Most importantly, they change lives for people with IDD. For more information, please contact **Denise Tift, Director of Community Outreach,** at (860) 889-4435 x 116. 🍌

## Eastern CT Chamber Honors Volunteer Corps at Annual Awards Breakfast

The Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce presented its Volunteer of the Year Award to The Arc NLC's Volunteer Corps at the Chamber's annual Business Breakfast December 1. The event, honoring area social service agencies and leaders, **recognized the Volunteer Corps for changing the way the community views people with IDD.**

Accepting the award on behalf of the group were **volunteer Megan Finch and Debbie Densmore,** Coordinator of The Arc's Community Life & Advocacy



*Members of the ECCoC and event sponsor Sava Insurance pose with The Arc NLC's Megan Finch and Debbie Densmore (both in pink).*

program. The group of 30 men and women performed **over 550 hours of service this past year** at over 23 events including fundraising road races, health fairs, fall cleanups, and senior center functions. **They were praised for their civic responsibility** and for demonstrating that people with IDD are an integral part of the community. 🍌



*The Arc NLC's SPARCS (Student Peer Advocates Raising Community Support) program started off 2018 by making "resolution books" to talk about using the program's learning tools for self improvement.*

## “We’re like sisters now”

*How challenging times and good memories made a family*

Heather, Kristina and Edie practically finish each other’s sentences. This past October they celebrated their fifth anniversary as roommates.

Kristina speaks proud of their shared time together. “It was October of 2012. We threw a great party.” Grandmothers, parents, and guardians—all came to the women’s comfortable home supported by The Arc NLC to celebrate their remarkable successes. **Previously, the women had been in situations that were less than optimal.**

**“We’ve had adventures, and we survived!”**

roommates. **“But we always work things out. We have to—we’re like sisters now.”**

**Living in The Arc NLC’s newest house, the three women are its first residents.** “Kristina and I were supposed to have someone else be the third roommate.” Edie doesn’t mind, though. “She dropped out so we got Heather, and we are so lucky!”

Heather smiles. **“I think we all like living somewhere where normal stuff happens.”**

“But do you remember when we first moved in?” Kristina laughs. “It was right after that big storm, and all the power went out . . .”

“We had to go across the street and get water from the pond to flush the toilets.”



*The women are also UConn Hockey fans*

had adventures, and we survived!”

**When they’re not at home, all three women have busy schedules.** Kristina’s been working in the cafeteria at Conn College for over 16 years. Heather’s a prep cook at a local restaurant, and Edie volunteers with

TVCCA, a soup kitchen and Meals on Wheels. “It’s fun,” she says. “I like doing that stuff for people.”



*Edie, Kristina and Heather at home*

**All three are accomplished athletes, and work out at the Mystic and Westerly Y.** Both Edie and Kristina are shotput enthusiasts who came in first at the Special Olympics state games last year. Heather prefers Track and Field. They all love softball and they ran the Strides road race last October together.

**The women also participate in The Arc NLC’s Community Life & Advocacy program, and enjoyed four days at Camp Harkness last summer, where they had the chance to socialize with old friends and make new ones.**

“But we still do lots of stuff together.” Edie remembers their Super Bowl party. **It’s doubtful the Patriots could find a more die-hard group of fans than these women,** who can rattle off player names and stats and proudly display posters and memorabilia in their rooms.

Do they have any advice for people who are sharing a home? The women grow pensive.

**“It’s important to have fun,” says Heather.**

**“Definitely.”**

**“And live every day like it’s your last,” adds Edie.** “They’re right,” says Kristina. “Because you never know.” Then they grin mischievously. “But we’re still gonna fight with each other sometimes. That’s what sisters do.” 🍌

## Our Community Partners Make Dreams Come True

*Without the help of these generous foundations and organizations, many of the services provided to people with IDD could not exist.*

Two of The Arc's residences in Norwich and Groton received much-needed energy conservation upgrades thanks to **Norwich Public Utilities, Groton Utilities and Comcast**, which participated in the Neighborhood Assistance Act program this year, sponsoring a total of \$43,039 in improvements to the homes' energy efficiency.

**The Savings Institute Foundation** once again assisted Community Life & Advocacy's Empowerment/ Enrichment program with a \$2,500 donation, and the **Niantic Rotary** also assisted the program with a \$500 award. The **Baker Costa Mallette Fund**, administered by the **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut**, generously donated \$4,900 through the Southeastern CT Women and Girls Fund for CL&A's "Voices" program for women with IDD.

**The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation** provided an additional \$18,500 for landscape equipment, including a trailer, to The Arc's Lawn and Landscape crew. The Landscape crew will also receive an equipment shed, to be funded and built this spring by the **Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce's 2018 Leadership Program Team**. And for this year's Farm Stand The Arc received a total of \$900 from the **Mystic Rotary** and the **Ledyard Garden Club** towards the purchase of a 3-season greenhouse.

The holiday-season generosity of local families and community groups was overwhelming, providing girls, warm clothing, and household goods –and even a new wheelchair--to participants, thanks to **The Day, Dominion's Befriend a Family employee group**, and the **Friends of G Foundation**.

Generous unrestricted donations this period included \$10,000 from long-time supporters at the **Elsie Brown Fund**, and \$4,000 from community partners **Martin and Arlean Bednar**.

## The Arc New London County in the Spotlight

**Debbie Densmore**, former life skills instructor, has been promoted to **Coordinator of the Community Life & Advocacy program**. Debbie was largely responsible for developing The Arc's Volunteer Corps. She's been with the Arc NLC for over 11 years with over 30 years' experience working with people with IDD.

The Board of Directors of The Arc NLC recognized outgoing President **Rick DeMatto** for his service to the Agency at its December 2017 Board meeting. Rick will remain with The Arc NLC Board, and has been invited to serve on **The Arc US Alumni Ambassadors' Council**. CEO Kathleen Stauffer continues as New England representative for the **National Conference of Executives** of The Arc (NCE) as well as a member of the Board of Directors of The Arc US.

### State Comptroller Gets a Lesson in the Art of Baking Cookies

**Kevin Lembo**, Connecticut's Comptroller, had a great time **visiting the Employment Transition Center (ETC)'s Culinary Arts Program in December**. Along with Assistant Comptroller **Elizabeth McDermott** and **Jeanne Milstein**, New London's Director of Social Services, he spoke with participant employees about their



responsibilities, including **making The Arc's now-famous Classic Crunch chocolate chip cookies**, and then, as instructed by a kitchen employee, put on disposable

gloves and started helping. **The crew makes about 100 packs of cookies per week**. "This is really impressive," Lembo laughed as he mixed cookie batter.



## The Arc Through My Eyes

By Cheryl Pedro

In this issue of **The Arc News**, columnist Cheryl Pedro interviews Claire, a member of The Arc NLC's Employment Transition Center. Claire graduated high school last year, but **State cutbacks to services for graduating students over 21 prevented her from attending the Employment Transition Center program** until funding was restored this past December. Cheryl knew that Claire was thrilled to be back with her friends at ETC, and asked her about herself.

**Cheryl:** What do you like best about coming here?

**Claire:** Seeing all my friends! And I love the cooking and baking program.

**Cheryl:** What are you guys making now?

**Claire:** Lots of cookies as usual. Plus magic bars, which are really good. I used to work on the landscaping crew too.

**Cheryl:** That's hard work!

**Claire:** Yes, but I liked it a lot. I also worked at the Senior Center.



Cheryl and Claire

**Cheryl:** Selling baked goods?

**Claire:** Yup, but now I just do the baking.

**Cheryl:** How many people are in your family?

**Claire:** There's my mom and dad and my two older brothers. My brothers don't live with us, but they come and visit a lot.

**Cheryl:** Do you have any hobbies?

**Claire:** I like to swim at the Westerly pool, and I ride a tandem bike with my dad.

**Cheryl:** I hear those go really fast.

**Claire:** Yes they do!

**Cheryl:** Are you going to do anything special for Valentine's Day?

**Claire:** Well, I'm going to send cards to all my family and friends, that's for sure! ⚡

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Arc NLC Film Festival Make a difference for people with IDD!

Please join The Arc New London County 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 MPMRC Catering along with a quality silent and basket auction.



"The Interviewer" is a contender for inclusion in this year's Film Festival offerings.

Last year's festival drew rave reviews! Audience members loved the auction items (and the surprise live auction), so this year we're extending the available bidding time. **100% of proceeds benefit The Arc New London County.** Last year The Arc NLC served over 660 people with IDD and their families, providing a variety of residential, day, employment, health/fitness and enrichment opportunities.

**WHEN:** Thursday, April 26th from 5:30-8:00pm

**WHERE:** The Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, 110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket, CT 06336

**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 Sponsor	\$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](mailto:DTift@TheArcNLC.org) for more information on sponsorship or volunteering. Tickets can be purchased online at [TheArcNLC.org](http://TheArcNLC.org).

## The Best Eggplant “Parmesan” . . . and it’s Vegan!

*You will love this heart-healthy eggplant dish! (To learn more about local produce options available at The Arc NLC’s Farm Stand in Ledyard, see page 2.)*

### Ingredients:

1 medium eggplant  
1/2 block firm tofu  
1 cup Daiya vegan cheese\*  
2 cups Japanese style panko crumbs  
3 large or 5 medium tomatoes  
2 small cloves garlic  
2 fresh basil tips (green, about 2 inches in length)  
2 fresh basil tips (purple, about 2 inches in length)  
2-4 tbs olive oil

\*Feel free to substitute with your favorite brand

### Preparation:

Cut eggplant into ¼-inch slices. Cut ½ tofu into 1/8-inch cubes. Core & slice 3 large or 5 medium tomatoes. Finely chop 2 cloves garlic, 2 purple basil tips, and green basil tips; mix together. Toss eggplant in large zip lock w/2 tbs olive oil). Place eggplant in paper bag w/2 cups panko crumbs and shake lightly.

Spray glass baking dish with non-stick vegetable oil. Layer half the eggplant across bottom. Sprinkle thin layer of panko on top. Add salt and pepper. Sprinkle ½ of tofu over eggplant and panko. Layer half the tomato slices over tofu and eggplant. Sprinkle ½ the garlic and basil over tomatoes. LIGHTLY sprinkle shredded vegan mozzarella over ingredients. Repeat. Add thin layer of panko over top. Salt and pepper. Sprinkle red pepper flakes to taste.

Bake 40 minutes; remove and drizzle olive oil over ingredients to moisturize. Bake for 10 minutes more. Turn off oven, let dish rest in oven for 10 minutes. Enjoy! 🍴



## Over 340 Runners, Walkers and Rollers Turn Out for the 40<sup>th</sup> (!!) Annual Strides Road Race

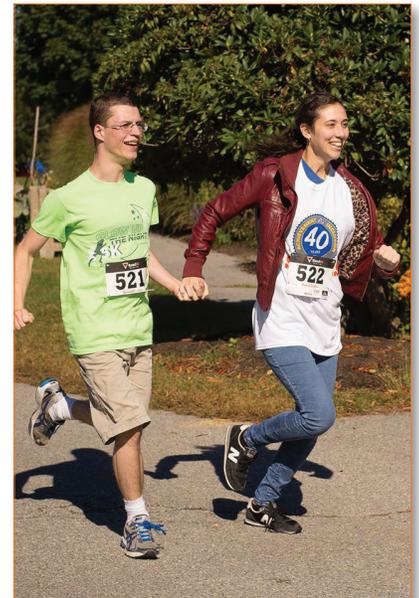


October 1, 2017 was a gorgeous day to hold the milestone **Jack O’Keefe Memorial Strides Road Race at Camp Harkness in Waterford**. Thanks to all racers, sponsors, and families, **The Arc NLC raised \$15,646 for its Community Life & Advocacy program**, which relies solely on United Way funds and community support.

Volunteers from **The U.S. Coast Guard Academy, Waterford High School, Dime Bank’s “Blue Crew,”** and The Arc NLC’s own **Volunteer Corps** helped

“I’ve been coming to this race for 20 years, and afterwards I do the mile-long fun run just to enjoy the beautiful venue. And the food’s amazing!” — Sheila P.

the event run smoothly. Longtime sponsor **Outback Steak House**, a Title Sponsor and race partner for over 11 years, provided **some of the best food ever served at a road race**. For many recreational and serious runners, Strides is the perfect way to wind down the racing season and support a great cause. Participant runners also made a great showing; some of whom were helped by **Coast Guard “buddy runners.”** The race is officiated by **SNERRO**, who’s been with us for all 40 years. Help The Arc NLC reach its goal of 400 runners this year! Come out and join us! **SAVE THE DATE: Sunday October 7, 2017!** 🍴





*Achieve with us.*

## The Arc NEWS



**The Arc**  
New London County  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**

Thursday April 26, 2018 5:30 - 8:00 pm  
Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center  
110 Pequot Trail, Mashantucket, CT 06336

**Celebrating  
People  
with  
Developmental  
Disabilities**



a collection of short films about  
and featuring people with IDD  
to change your life

### DONATE YOUR VEHICLE

The Arc's  
Vehicle Donation  
Program



**Tax Deduction!  
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**Call Today!  
1-877-272-2270**

Everyone of All Ages & Abilities WELCOME!



**JACK O'KEEFE MEMORIAL  
STRIDES  
Road Race**

The Arc  
New London County

CACTUS JACK  
FOUNDATION

#### Starting Gun Times

**NEW!** 5K & 10K  
9:30 am

**Family Fun Run,  
Walk & Roll  
11:00 am**

All races start & finish  
at Camp Harkness

**Sunday,  
October 7, 2018**

**Camp Harkness  
301 Great Neck Road  
Waterford, CT 06385**