

A Message From the President of the Board of Directors

Our Mission Guides Our Quality

Leadership Matters . . .



Diane Aubin

The Arc Eastern Connecticut's **Board of Directors values strategic planning**, and the agency's leaders are evaluated on their ability to create and implement strong plans.

Congratulations to Sue Gregoire, Michelle Torres and Alex Cabezas for stepping forward to serve on The Arc ECT's new Council for Leadership Excellence.

The Council is borne of strategic planning, and we trust these leaders to ensure that service quality and leadership remain strong.

For a decade, **The Arc ECT has maintained quality service delivery**

in the **98-100% range**, per our **quality service scores** from the state's Department of Developmental Disabilities.

The Council is borne of strategic planning, and we trust these leaders to ensure that service quality and leadership remain strong.

Our talented team and Chief Operations Officer Laurie Herring deserve credit. From our administrators to our trainers to our Direct Support Professionals, kudos to all! <



A Message From the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc

Inclusive Housing for all

Excellence and Independence . . .

Five years ago, a blurb in *The Day* caught my eye. **Federal dollars were available for inclusive housing for people with disabilities.**

We researched the opportunity, talking with the Department of Housing and the Department of Developmental Disabilities Services. Along the way, **we joined forces with New London Human Services Director Jeanne Milstein, Mayor Mike Passero and Eastern Connecticut Housing Opportunities (ECHO) President & CEO Julie Savin.**

More than \$17 million in construction investment for the project will benefit Eastern Connecticut.

Thanks to our local officials and our operations, technology and finance teams, **six apartments**

in New London soon will be available for people with IDD. More than \$17 million in construction investment will benefit Eastern Connecticut.

Thanks to our visionary Board and strategic planning, ground-breaking services are ongoing here at The Arc ECT. What a great community and team we have!

PS – Save the Date for the **35th Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament at the beautiful Connecticut National Golf Course on June 21, 2023!** <

For more information, call Denise at 860.889.4435 x116 or visit TheArcECT.org



Kathleen Stauffer

The Arc NEWS

Congratulations to our New and Returning Legislators!

The CT General Assembly began its 2023 session on January 4th, and The Arc ECT welcomed new and incumbent representatives for what everyone hopes is a year of advocacy and progress on a number of issues facing people with IDD and the people who support them. **Community nonprofits are 46% behind where they were in 2007**, despite two cost of living adjustments provided in response to **The Arc and other agencies' persistent advocacy efforts**.



CEO Kathleen Stauffer (R) congratulates newly-elected State Senator Martha Marx, who represents District 20. The seat was previously held by The Arc ECT Board member Paul Formica, who held the seat since 2015.

The Connecticut Nonprofit Alliance, the Regional Human Services Coordinating Council of the SECCOG, and The Arc CT presented their **2023/24 Agendas** at region-wide meetings this spring. The Arc ECT's CEO Kathleen Stauffer and Deb Monahan of TVCCA summarized **SECCOG's legislative agenda at RHSCC's meeting**, emphasizing how **rising costs impact providers**, outlining the problems that all non-profits are facing with staffing shortages. **The Arc CT's legislative priorities** echoed these concerns, and included **increased affordable housing for people with disabilities**.

The Alliance stressed the need for a 9% increase in funding for community nonprofits in FY24 and 7% in FY25. Thousands of state employees retired in 2022, providing a **once-in-a generation chance to make real, structural change in the behavioral health and IDD systems**. In February, the Senate Appropriations Committee, chaired by Sen. Cathy Osten, announced their support for increasing funding for community nonprofits this legislative session. **"We are fully committed to moving forward as we promised last year to finally provide the resources for the nonprofits,"** said Sen. Osten. <



Real Work for Real Pay: The Arc ECT *MicroEnterprise* update

Grand Openings and Golden Chips—The Cookie Factory is Open for Business!



What do our bakers enjoy about working at The Cookie Factory?
Nicki's response:
"Everything!"



After a successful soft opening last June at The Arc ECT's Cookie Factory in Woodstock, our team of bakers and job coaches is ready to formally introduce our newest micro-enterprise to the public! **Scheduled for Wednesday, April 26 from 10:00 am-noon**, the grand opening and ribbon cutting (by Northeast Chamber President Betti Kuszaj) **gives the public the chance to see the beautiful new facility**, meet the bakers, help thank our great community partners, and **sample our Classic Crunch Chocolate Chip cookies**. Director of Community Enterprise Jennifer Ricci is excited to share plans for the bakery. "Our cookies are available in stores throughout the region, and provide training for even more people with IDD who are interested in jobs with area businesses in this field."

The Grand Opening also marks the start of the Cookie Factory's "Golden Chip" Promotion. For two months after the grand opening, shoppers who find a "golden chip" decal in their bag of cookies will win a free platter of 150 cookies!

The Cookie Factory is located in our MicroEnterprise Center at 22 Rt 171, Woodstock, CT. <

The Arc **NEWS** is a publication of The Arc Eastern Connecticut

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Cluster Apartment Program Closer to Completion!

The Arc's **In-Home Supports Program** will soon be overseeing six apartments for people with IDD at the new **64-unit mixed-income rental development on Bayonet Street in New London**. Since the October groundbreaking, progress has been steady, with an anticipated opening date of late this summer. That's great news for seven people currently supported by The Arc ECT who are eager to move to their own apartments. In partnership with Eastern Connecticut Housing Opportunities (ECHO) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), **The Arc ECT is part of the project's plan to ensure safe, secure, and affordable housing to those in need**. Laurie Herring, COO of The Arc



Progress! The shell of the first of two mixed-income apartment buildings is nearly complete.

ECT, is excited about the construction's progress. "Our objective is to safely support people with IDD to live in their own homes, gain independence, and enjoy recreational and social opportunities. This is an inclusive, team approach—**Supports will be based on individual needs, and choices, and address daily living skills, health and safety, and community access.**" A variety of assistive technology is included in the construction of the units, and The Arc ECT will have a staffed office in the building. "We'll be collaborating with area organizations and groups to help new residents develop natural supports in the community," said Ms. Herring. "This is a wonderful opportunity and a great partnership." <

Attention Gardeners! Adopt our Sensory Garden This Year!

In 2019 The Arc ECT received a grant to create a **Sensory Garden**—a place where our participants could walk, sit, and explore a variety of shrubs and plants of different colors, scents and textures, and play "instrument sculptures" placed in the garden. **The garden is located at our Danielson facility, which is home to our Retired Seniors Program and Transitional Employment Services.** It's a beautiful place but needs lots of care, and **we're hoping that a community member who loves gardening will help us out by volunteering once a week** (or more) to keep the weeds down, the pathways clear, and the plants happy. No experience necessary! If you (or your group!)



The Sensory Garden at Cook Hill in Danielson

are interested, please *contact* Penny at 860.889.4435 or pnewbury@thearcct.org. You'll be providing a wonderful service for our participants, who love this garden dearly. <

Did you know . . .

The Arc Eastern Connecticut gratefully accepts gifts from **donor-advised funds (DAFs)**. If you have a DAF, please consider recommending to your financial advisor that they help support people with IDD with a gift to The Arc ECT. <



Receive **The Arc News** Online!

Help us switch to a digital mailing format and cut down on paper products by emailing dtift@thearcct.org, and **get your bi-annual The Arc News online!** <



—a creative initiative based on continued learning, consistency & respect

“We are having such a good time!” is not something you often hear from people chosen for a group tasked with nothing less than creating great leaders. But since July 2022, three enthusiastic staff members have been meeting with **team-building consultant David O’Brien with the goal of improving the quality of services for people with IDD through effective leadership.** “It’s been a real honor to be part of this



Sue Gregoire

initiative,” says **Sue Gregoire**, Director of Day Service Options at the Employment Transition Center in Groton. “We’re learning and growing together. We want to be able to act as a resource to everyone in the agency to show that **good leadership means modeling behavior that makes everyone feel engaged, respected, and valued.**” **Alex Cabezas**, Director of Residential Services for the Southeast, agrees. “Leaders who show compassion, consistency, and fairness let their own staff, and by extension the people we support, know that their opinions count. **The object of good leadership is, after all, improving the lives of the people we support.**”



Alex Cabazas

“The Council’s made great strides since July,” notes David. “We started by acknowledging the need for a uniform leadership strategy across the entire agency and thought of ways to keep leadership learning alive.” One of the activities being developed

especially for this purpose is a **“Leadership Conversation Series—”** regular open Zoom meetings hosted by a member of the Council where any team member can discuss topics such as **emotional intelligence, peer mentoring, dealing with conflict, and developing positive solutions to perceived obstacles.**

Michelle Torres is Lead Supervisor at the In-Home Supports program. “Being a part of this council is a way of connecting all aspects of the agency as a whole. And by ‘passing the baton’ to new members, there will always be new ideas that can lead to change.”



Michelle Torres

“We’ll know it’s working by the level of participation we get,” says Alex. “We’re pretty confident that if we can get managers across the agency practicing the principles of good leadership that we’ve been discussing, **we’ll see a definite drop in staff turnover, and a positive response in our participants.**”

David sees the Council as a great asset. “When I helped the Mohegan Tribe develop their Council, they decided to name their group in the Mohegan-Pequot language ‘One Who Shows The Way.’ This is a perfect description of how we hope the group at The Arc will be seen —as guides, role models, and resources for any manager in the agency.”



David O'Brien

Our Community Partners Make Dreams Come True

Our heartfelt thanks to these great organizations, who provided grants & operating funds to support a variety of vital programs between September 2022 and March 2023.

- ☀ **Eversource**, the **Jewett City Savings Bank**, and **ConnectiCare** contributed \$17,000 total as part of the **CT Neighborhood Assistance program**, helping us complete our multi-year project to install energy-efficient windows at our Day program facility in Danielson.
- ☀ **The Ledyard Garden Club** contributed \$100 to provide potting soil for our greenhouse.
- ☀ **Pfizer Connecticut Labs' Community Grants Program** provided our Community Integration Program \$1,252 for art and program supplies.
- ☀ The Gales Ferry Chapter of the **Knights of Columbus** once again generously donated \$1,000 from their Tootsie Roll Drive to help fund CL&A activities.
- ☀ The **State of CT Council on Developmental Disabilities** awarded The Arc ECT \$14,783 to replicate its successful Digital Literacy program for our participants in the northeast.

We're also deeply grateful to the **friends, family members, employees and their companies' matching gifts programs, and community partners** who have contributed to our Annual Appeal and made donations to specific programs and in memory of loved ones since September 2022. Thank you so much for supporting our mission and vision! <

In Memoriam

We would like to express our sympathy to the family and friends of the following people we support who have passed away since September 2022.

Cecilia "Cece" Daly died November 1, 2022. She lived in one of The Arc's supported homes for many years, and was "a lover of coffee, dancing, magazines, and gave the biggest hugs you could ever get."

Doris Briere, a participant in our Retired Seniors program for over 10 years, died this past December. She was 91. She loved cats, puzzles, and holding court, matched her nail color to her outfits, had a great laugh, and was dearly loved. <

The Arc Eastern Connecticut in the Spotlight

Tamika Coppedge joined the team in December 2022 as our Human Resources Administrator.

Amanda Olmstead, Life Skills Instructor with the In-Home Supports program, was promoted to Lead Supervisor in January.

Josh Wagner, who has been The Arc's temporary IT Support Technician since September 2022, became a full-time member of the team in January.

Annemarie Bellenoit, The Arc ECT's Chief Administrator, was recognized at the Eastern CT Association of Realtors' 2023 Volunteer Appreciation event in January for her two years as a member of their Board of Directors, Chair of the Grievance Committee, and a Major Investor with RPAC.

Alison Swanson joined The Arc ECT in January as the new MicroEnterprise Sales Manager. <

Self Advocacy Corner

—by Jamie Lazaroff, Self-Advocacy Coordinator



The Self Advocacy group was remarkably busy from August through Election Day 2022. The group reviewed the importance of voting, how to vote, how to use a ballot and what to expect when voting at the polls on election day. **On October 27, 2022, Self Advocates held a voter registration event at Quinebaug Valley Community College**, signing up potential

voters and checking to see if others were registered to vote in the 2022 election. **Our group has also trained other Self-**

Advocates on how to stay up-to-date on Arc National initiatives and how to sign up for action alerts on bills going through legislation. <



Jamie and Carmen staffing the Voter Registration booth at QVCC.



The Arc Through My Eyes by Kristina Emerson

In this issue of **The Arc News**, Cub Reporter Kristina Emerson interviews regular columnist Eric Sneed.

Kristina: How long have you been with The Arc?

Eric: Since 2015. I love living near the ocean, and I like the peace and quiet here.

Kristina: What do you do for fun?

Eric: I do a lot of the CL&A activities. I really like bowling. I'm trying to take care of my medical stuff these days, so I have to take it pretty easy. I like listening to music—I really blast it. Our group went to see WWE—that was great!

Kristina: You're so lucky—I adore WWE! Are you going to Camp [Harkness] this summer?

Eric: I hope so. I love the beach, and swimming. We have campfires at night and make s'mores.

It's my favorite place. But we'll have to see how my health is.

Kristina: What kind of movies do you like? I like scary movies.

Eric: Not me—I like the Food Network. I love making cookies.

Kristina: Tell me about your family.

Eric: My mom and dad live in Cromwell, and I have two brothers and two sisters.

Kristina: I hear you're a comedian. Who's your favorite comedian?

Eric: Franco [from K-Hits in Norwich]. He's great—he helped me with my comedy routine two years ago.

Kristina: Can you tell me a joke?

Eric: Not for this newsletter—they're all pretty naughty! <



Kristina and Eric

A Great Summer Fundraiser is Coming Up!



You won't want to miss our **35th Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament**. This year's golfing fundraiser celebrates the beginning of Summer on **Wednesday, June 21 at CT National Golf Club in Putnam**. We always enjoy great weather, and the event usually sells out, so sign your foursome up early!



Roz Etra (L, with CEO Kathleen Stauffer) always has a good time at the Tournament!

If you're a single golfer, don't worry—we'll create a foursome for you. Enjoy a day of fun prizes, great food, and raffle

items (including the hole-in-one car). Registration forms are online at **TheArcECT.org/golf**.

100% of proceeds from our fundraisers goes towards providing programs and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our residential, day, and employment programs.

If you or your business can't attend our events but would like to help out, **we'd love it if you'd consider sponsoring our 2023 events**, including our next **Jack O'Keefe Memorial Strides Road Race on October 1** at Camp Harkness. <

Questions? contact Denise

T 860.889.4435 x116 | E dtift@thearcct.org

The Arc NEWS

Salmon and Sun-Dried Tomato Pasta

With food prices rising, including fish, The Council on Excellence recommends this quick Spring recipe that tastes just as delicious if you skip the expensive fillets and go right for the can!

INGREDIENTS

14.75 oz. canned salmon
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Zest of one lemon
12 ounces whole-wheat penne pasta (or substitute gluten-free pasta)
1 (8.5-ounce) jar sun-dried tomatoes packed in olive oil
2 garlic cloves
1 cup (packed) fresh basil leaves
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup fresh spinach

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350; line a large baking sheet with foil.
2. Cook the pasta, reserving 1 cup of cooking liquid; drain.
3. Place sun-dried tomatoes and their oil, garlic, salt, pepper, and basil in the bowl of a food processor and blend until the tomatoes are finely chopped.
4. Transfer the tomato mixture to a large bowl and stir in the Parmesan cheese.
5. Add the pasta and flaked salmon to the pesto and toss to coat, adding enough reserved cooking liquid to moisten.
6. Toss in the spinach (and some pine nuts if you like!)
7. Season the pasta to taste with salt and pepper and serve.
8. Top with additional Parmesan cheese (optional). <



Another Great Strides Road Race in 2022

After a rainy Saturday, the weather cleared up on Sunday, as it always does, for our 45th Annual Jack O'Keefe Memorial Strides Road Race, held at Camp Harkness in Waterford. **Nearly 200 runners** enjoyed the 5 and 10k races plus the popular 1-mile fun run, walk, and roll around the Camp's beautiful grounds. Our **many generous sponsors including Gerardi Insurance, Berkshire Bank, and the Robert and Maureen O'Keefe**



The winners of the "Oldest Strides T-Shirt" contest

Family Foundation helped the event raise **over \$30,500 to continue vital programs and supports for people with IDD**. Runners raved about the food, sponsored by **Flanders Fish Market** and supplemented by the wonderful **Terry Brodeur Breast Cancer Foundation**. First place overall runners this year were Jay Long and Susan Berlam (10k), and Tom Palazzo and Shawn Marshall (5k). We had many new runners this year, who'd heard about the great course and prizes, and of course our "veterans," some of whom have been participating since the 1980s!



Runners of all ages participated!

If you haven't ever experienced Strides, fear not—**Sunday, October 1, 2023** is right around the corner! See TheArcECT.org/strides for registration details. Register early and save! <

STRIDES

Road Race





Eastern Connecticut
125 Sachem Street
Norwich, CT 06360
T: 860.889.4435

TheArcECT.org



IN
**PARTNERSHIP
FOR FULL
EQUALITY**

The Arc NEWS

SAVE THE DATES!



Grand Opening



Wednesday,
April 26, 2023

35th Annual
GARDNER JOHNSON MEMORIAL



Wednesday,
June 21, 2023



Sunday,
October 1, 2023