



TheArcECT.org

**The Arc**  
Eastern Connecticut

**NEWS**

IN PARTNERSHIP FOR FULL EQUALITY

FALL 2019

## A Message From the President of the Board of Directors



Linda Rhodes

**In Partnership for Full  
Equality. . .**

**Community  
Connection, Talent,  
and You!**

**T**hanks to all who participated in The Arc Eastern Connecticut's year-long Strategic Planning exercises.

**We Board members enjoyed rolling up our sleeves with our advocates and team to envision the possibilities ahead.**

In a bold move, the Boards of **The Arc Quinebaug Valley and The Arc New London County** last fall began discussing ways to work in partnership. It made sense to pool resources.

We engaged a strategic planning facilitator and saved critical dollars. Then, teams Northeast and Southeast set about discerning, reflecting and thinking Big Thoughts.

**Talks soon turned to a merger and creation of The Arc Eastern Connecticut; an important blueprint for the future emerged.** Customer-centric services, investment in a diverse, talented workforce, infrastructure and community engagement all became opportunities for strategic focus.

**The Arc is a powerful national civil rights movement.** Our new Strategic Plan will ensure our commitment to excellence and to walking in Partnership for Full Equality with you! We will share this exciting plan soon.

Don't miss our 42<sup>nd</sup> **Annual Strides Run, Walk & Roll on October 6<sup>th</sup>!** Register at [TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org) <

**It made sense to pool  
resources. We engaged a  
strategic planning facilitator  
and saved critical dollars.**

## A Message From the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc

**A Vision for Excellence and Inclusion**

**The Arc Eastern Connecticut  
Delivers Strategic Plan**

**S**trategic Planning is hard work, and I want to thank each one of you for sharing your thoughts, dreams and hopes for the future. We couldn't have done it without you!

As our Board of Directors committed to investing in yet another Strategic Plan, our advocates, our leadership team and our talented direct support professionals all weighed in.

**Excellence and our commitment to walking In Partnership for Full Equality drove our brainstorming process for a full year.**

**How will we deliver on  
this promise? It takes a  
team, and you are a  
critical part of the dream  
that is our Strategic Plan.**

Five Strategic Initiatives have emerged thus far:

- ★ We will **create and nurture** strong partnerships.
- ★ We will **invest** in a diverse and talented workforce.
- ★ We will **build** a facilitative infrastructure.
- ★ We will **be interactive** in our community.

How will we deliver on this promise? It takes a team, and you are a critical part of the dream that is our Strategic Plan. Following finalization and Board approval, the full plan will be posted at [TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org).



Kathleen Stauffer

Our Annual Appeal mails soon. **Please be generous!** <

## Alliance Advocates for Using CT's Surplus to Aid in Social Services Funding

Connecticut has a surplus for the first time in a decade, and that's good news for non-profits, including those that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). **Services for people with IDD are funded at current levels**, but agencies like the CT Community Nonprofit Alliance are pressuring Governor Lamont to use some of CT's \$100M surplus to increase allocations. "Simply put: **community nonprofits have taken the hit when budget times were bad**," wrote Gian-Carl Casa, president and CEO of the Alliance, which provides services to more than a half-million people. "It is important that the people they serve benefit as the budget improves."

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) worked to address this through its 2019 **ID Partnership Innovative Employment Outcomes Pilot**, to increase employment opportunities for people with IDD. It awarded \$25,000 to approximately 20 non-profit agencies including The Arc ECT, to help establish alternative **business models that would employ or encourage the employment of people with IDD**. Still, the Alliance believes the state should be doing much more. "It is important to understand that this surplus comes after **more than ten years of budget cuts that have fallen disproportionately on the state's safety net and impacted quality-of-life**," Casa added. "Community nonprofits house the homeless, work with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, treat people with substance abuse and other behavioral needs, manage food pantries, provide therapeutic arts and cultural opportunities and much more, even as demand has increased." <



### *The Census is coming!*

The Arc Eastern Connecticut is a member of the **2020 Census' Complete Count Committees program**. Visit us at [TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org) to learn more about why it's CRUCIAL for everyone to participate in next year's census. <

## Real Work for Real Pay: *The Arc ECT Micro-Enterprise Update*

Thanks to our Agriculture Angels—**The Eastern Connecticut Community Garden Association** and Coogan Farm Manager Craig Floyd—**The Arc's Farm Stand** was in great hands this season. Job Coach Jay Brear couldn't be happier. "We got great advice on soil amendments and pest management, which will **help us make sure the entire garden is producing optimally, especially next year**." Besides donating much-needed trellises and giving the Farm Stand a line on seaweed for composting, ECCGA will send Jay to a soils conference in late summer. Craig has been providing invaluable advice regarding **regenerative agriculture**, and how to **increase the crop yield to make sure we filled all our CSA shares this season and provided plenty of vegetables (and flowers) to the public**. With a full crew of participant employees working—including weekend hours—it's been a busy season, and it's not over yet!



Speaking of busy . . . **The Arc's Redemption Center in Woodstock** has had a banner summer, with 28 bottle and can recycling bins scattered around northeastern Connecticut **bringing in over 50,000 items a week for our 9 employees** to process over two shifts. Employees unload, sort, crush and send containers on their way to new lives as chair webbing or brand new items. The Center, located next to the Arc Emporium thrift store, is the only one of its kind in eastern CT. **Crew members are trained in the operation of the machinery, sorting, and feeding the machines** in this growing—and extremely important—field. The public can also drop off returnables directly at the Center for either donation or redemption. **Donations** greatly help defray our overhead costs so we can continue to provide these vital employment opportunities to people with IDD. <



## "I've wanted to do this for 20 years!"

### **Aaron realizes his dream of being a spokesman for Special Olympics**

Judging from the videos of Aaron's introductions of athletes and celebrities at this year's Special Olympics State Games, he was an enormous hit, working the crowd and ad libbing like an old pro. **Aaron became a Global Messenger in 2018** and takes his responsibilities seriously.

"This is a dream I've had for a long time, and it took me a while to get where I was ready," he admits. **The Special Olympics committee has been keeping track of Aaron's many volunteer and civic activities,** and his always-enthusiastic participation in Special Olympics, where he's won the gold medal in softball and volleyball.

He's **also known for his great sportsmanship, and desire to help other athletes** or those who are just starting to compete. He now represents Special Olympics with other Global Messengers at different athletic events in the community. **"I want to be able to represent The Arc as best as I can** so we can get more recognition and help make our program bigger so more people can participate."

Another dream came true this year — Aaron's teammates chose him to run in the torch run for the opening ceremonies this year. "Am I lucky or what?!" <



*Ryan Hanrahan from NBC interviews Aaron at the Opening Ceremonies, before he takes the stage.*

## A Tale of Two Gardens

The Arc has some incredibly generous partners in Danielson—resulting in two great gardens enjoyed by friends, families and the public. Families of people we support envisioned these gardens—one at a residence for 5 women, and one at our Cook Hill offices. The **Sensory Garden at Cook Hill Road** began with a \$5,000 grant from the **Mitchell D. Phaiah Foundation**, and with the assistance of other donors, an inviting 7,000 s.f. public space was created that includes fully accessible paths, shrubs



*Sensory Gardeners from L to R: Alison, Carole and Katelyn in front of the outdoor xylophone*

and perennials, tables and benches, and outdoor musical instruments. Major donors including **Charter Oak Federal Credit Union, Electric Boat Employees' Association, Sunset Nurseries, Jewett City Savings Bank Foundation, and Amarante's Winter Wonderland** contributed over \$30,000 in funds, materials and labor to create a space that stimulates the senses while allowing people to feel calm and safe to explore without feeling overwhelmed.

An **intimate and comfortable garden** was installed this past spring at one of our Danielson residences by Anne's family—Anne's lived here since 2015 and loves being outside. Its **garden-level patio is perfect for those with limited mobility** who like to relax as close to the garden and its beautiful plantings as possible.

Anne's mom, sister and the landscape designer who planned the garden attended a "grand opening" party at the garden on August 12, attended by family friends and all the residents, who pronounced it "just perfect." Anne's sister is **planning an expansion**—because one can never have enough garden space. From the smile on Anne's face you can tell she agrees. <

## Help us go Digital!

**P**LEASE email us at [info@thearcect.org](mailto:info@thearcect.org) or call (860) 889-4435 x116 to be able to **receive our newsletter via email** and receive regular updates, while saving trees and helping us keep costs down.

## **We're Tweeting Again!**

You can follow us again on Twitter @TheArcECT, for bite-sized versions of what's happening in the disability community in CT and beyond. <

## “When I go up there, I mean business”

*Eric's life includes karaoke, chicken parmesan, and making people laugh*

By Kathleen Stauffer

**W**hen Franco of K-Hits began putting together his latest Comedy for a Cause show to raise money for a local nonprofit, he knew where to find a comic. A member of The Arc Eastern Connecticut's Volunteer Corps, Eric had once shared the airwaves with Franco.

At The Arc's Strides Road Race fundraiser a few years before, on a particularly sunny day, **Eric and Franco brought a last-minute round of runners down to Camp Harkness, setting a new attendance record.**

“I'm excited to be doing comedy workshops with Eric. He's a naturally funny guy and should be given the opportunity to get on the comedy stage and entertain,” Franco says. “I'll probably learn a thing or two from him.”

Eric confesses to a bit of nerves. The Niantic resident says he doesn't want to get booed off stage. On the other hand, **Eric likes the limelight and celebrity. “I like being cool and stuff.”** An inveterate prankster, he has a knack for getting people laughing. Eric belts out karaoke with gusto every chance he gets. Among his favorites are Nickelback and Kid Rock. One Direction's “What Makes You Beautiful” is his signature song. Getting a feel for the room, getting the mood going with the audience drives Eric's love for the stage – and his confidence.

**“When I go up there, I mean business.”** Eric's an active member of The Arc's Volunteer Corps. He's also a pretty good cook and likes to make his mom's chicken parmesan. Will he share the recipe? Eric laughs. “I'm not telling you. That's my secret, and my mom's secret.”

Eric's mother Tammy lives in Cromwell. He has two brothers, two sisters and four nieces.

Video games, relaxing, enjoying large decaf iced

coffees and Dunkin' Donuts' new banana split flavor all are on Eric's daily to-do list. **Being on the air with Franco ranks at the top, though. Eric and Franco have a mutual respect for one another's comedic talent.** “Funny!” Eric says of Franco. “I met him at a race. It was incredible. Best feeling I ever had. Ever.”

Despite a minor case of nerves, **Eric has high hopes for his upcoming comedic debut.** “I'm planning on raising a lot of money,” he says.

“We're very excited to have Eric perform his routine at our fundraiser ‘Circle of Laughter’,” says Sharon Heddle, executive director of Disabilities Network of Eastern CT. **“It is important that the community we work with, people with disabilities, are represented as much as possible in all that we do.** Franco told us about this young man and his natural comedic talent. We are looking forward to the fun he will bring to our event.”

Comedy for a Cause, Sept. 21, 8 pm at The Bozrah Moose Lodge. To benefit the **Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut.**

For chicken Parmesan that's nearly identical to Eric's mom's, see p. 7. <



*Franco helps Eric perfect his upcoming act during a break in a Comedy For a Cause performance at the Eugene O'Neill Theater in Waterford.*

**“He's a naturally funny guy and should be given the opportunity to get on the comedy stage and entertain.”  
—Franco**



## 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.*

**Bailey's Team for Autism** awarded The Arc \$676.24 for program equipment.

**Charter Oak Federal Credit Union** provided \$721 for equipment in the Employment Transition Center's Life Skills Room and \$1,500 for technology upgrades in the northeast offices. The **Savings Institute** also donated \$2,000 towards these upgrades.

The **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut** and the **SeaChange/Lodestar Foundation** each granted The Arc ECT \$10,000 to help defray the costs of its merger.

The **Department of Developmental Services** awarded The Arc \$25,000 as part of its IDD **Employment Partnership** pilot initiative, for a 4-year marketing campaign to make the cookie production project completely sustainable by 2024.

The agency received its 4th commitment from **DOT's annual grant program** for \$48,000 for a 4-wheelchair lift van.

The **Ledyard Garden Club** once again generously donated \$200 to the Farm Stand for the purchase of seeds for this year's vegetables and flowers.

The **Mitchell D. Phaiah Foundation's** donation of \$6,926 will provide beautiful plantings for the Sensory Garden.

Community Life & Advocacy received grants from **Pfizer Connecticut Labs** (\$3,000), the **Eastern Connecticut Savings Bank Foundation** (\$1,000) and the **Gales Ferry Knights of Columbus** (\$1,000).

A **USDA Rural Business Development** grant of \$62,000 will cover the costs of soft construction costs and needed equipment at the Mechanic Street and Cook Hill Road Danielson offices.

**Workers' Compensation Trust** awarded The Arc \$5,453 for a hydraulic changing table and chair lift for its northeast day program.

We're also deeply grateful to our many friends, family members and community partners who have **donated over \$7,900 to our Annual Appeal since March 2019**. Your generosity allows us to continue to support inclusive and life-changing programming for people with IDD throughout eastern Connecticut.

## The Arc Eastern Connecticut in the Spotlight

☀️ Rain did not dampen the success of **The Arc Eastern Connecticut's first Annual Meeting** as a combined agency, held at our Cook Hill Danielson offices on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Tents were set up for the picnic-style meeting, **attended by over 100 staff, participants and friends**, and featuring awards to outgoing Board members, and plaques of recognition to **Sen. Cathy Osten, Rep. Anne Dauphinais**, and community partners **Barbara Deindorfer, Sunset Nurseries, and Quinebaug Valley Senior Center. Former Board members of The Arc QV and The Arc NLC** were honored for their services and dedication. **Sue Desrosiers**, retiring Executive Director of The Arc QV was honored for her service and 12-year commitment to the agency. The event also included longevity awards, from 5 years to an impressive 35 years of service.

☀️ The Arc ECT welcomes **Sonja Sieling-Boumenot** as our new Chief Talent Officer.

☀️ Congratulations go to **Pat Grygorcewicz**, new Deputy QA Officer, In-Home Supports, and **Yvette Hobson-Horton**, new Director of In-Home Supports. <

## Self Advocacy Corner

Hi! I'm Jamie Lazaroff, The Arc's Self-Advocacy Coordinator. I'm based in Danielson and I run **two Self Advocacy**

**Groups for people with IDD.** I also do a lot of work at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, **giving testimony and advocating for money and services for**



**people with disabilities.** I'm on the Council on Developmental Services that advises the Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the legislature on issues affecting DDS and its programs and services for Connecticut residents with IDD and their families. **Check out my post every Tuesday on The Arc's Facebook page!** If you'd like to join one of the self-advocacy groups, become a self advocate, or have any questions about the work we do, I'd love to hear from you. Write me at [selfadvocate@thearect.org](mailto:selfadvocate@thearect.org). <



## *The Arc* Through My Eyes by Cheryl Pedro

In this issue of *The Arc News*, columnist Cheryl Pedro interviews Abby Snyder, Receptionist at The Arc ECT's Danielson Offices.

**Cheryl:** How long have you worked here?

**Abby:** Since 2004. I graduated from Killingly High School in 2002 and heard that The Arc needed a receptionist. I had previous experience because of the computer classes I'd taken in school.

**Cheryl:** Do you like working at The Arc?

**Abby:** Oh yes. I get to meet a lot of people, and I do data entry and filing. I'm also on the Safety Committee. And I help plan The Arc's Golf Tournament each year, which is lots of fun. I do the ceremonial first putt!

**Cheryl:** You're also a member of our Board of Directors.

**Abby:** I am! It's really interesting. I'm the participant representative so people come to me with issues they're having and I report them to the Board each month.

**Cheryl:** What kind of issues?

**Abby:** Well, things like someone wanted to know how to get hold of staff in Norwich. And also people are letting me know their feelings about the merger, so I can tell the Board about that.

**Cheryl:** Where do you live?

**Abby:** I live on my own in an apartment in Dayville with my cat Daisy and my Beta fish Spencer. My mom lives nearby so we get to visit a lot.

**Cheryl:** Do you ever have any free time at all?

**Abby:** I like to stay in shape so I do Special Olympics. Soccer, Bocce, the spirit squad . . . and snowshoeing! Last year I was on Connecticut's Bowling team and we won the Gold Medal at the USA Games in Seattle—that was so much fun! I'm also a member of the YMCA in Putnam.

**Cheryl:** That's a lot!

**Abby:** I know! But I love it. <



## The 42<sup>nd</sup> (Can You Believe It?) Annual Strides Road Race is Coming Up!

**When:** Sunday, October 6, 2019

**Where:** Camp Harkness, Waterford, CT

**Time:** 5K & 10K races start at 9:30 am



Dust off those running or walking shoes and get ready for the best road race of the year—perfect for seasoned athletes, beginners, and spectators. Our 5 and 10k races, timed by SNERRO, offer beautiful scenery, prizes for individual runners and teams, and post-race food by our Premier Sponsor: **Outback Steak House** (Yay!!) There's a 1-mile family fun run/walk/roll around the beautiful grounds of Camp Harkness, games for the kids, visiting dignitaries (you never know who will show up at this great event) —something for everyone. ALL proceeds, including our much-needed Sponsorships, directly benefit people with IDD in eastern Connecticut.

### Interested? Of course you are!

Visit **TheArcECT.org** and sign up on line (or print and mail in the registration form).

For more information on the race or being one of our sponsors, call **Denise Tift at (860) 889-4435 x116**.

***Our Sponsors receive many promotional benefits—please consider supporting this wonderful event.***

We'll see you in October—it's the best time of year to run! <

IN  
**PARTNERSHIP  
FOR FULL  
EQUALITY**



## Eric's Chicken Parmesan

*Almost as perfect as his mom's! (although her sauce remains a secret)*

### INGREDIENTS

2 large eggs  
1 tbsp minced garlic  
2 tbsp fresh chopped parsley  
Salt and pepper to season  
3 large chicken breasts halved horizontally to make 6 fillets  
1 1/2 c panko breadcrumbs  
1/2 c fresh grated Parmesan  
1 teaspoon garlic or onion powder  
1/2 c olive oil for frying  
14 oz marinara sauce  
8 oz mozzarella cheese  
1/3 c fresh shredded Parmesan

### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven 430°F. Lightly grease a baking dish; set aside.

Whisk together eggs, garlic, parsley, salt and pepper in a shallow dish. Add chicken into the egg mix, evenly coating each fillet. In cover and allow to marinate for at least 15 minutes.

Mix panko breadcrumbs with grated Parmesan cheese and garlic powder together in a separate shallow bowl. Dip chicken into the mixture to evenly coat.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry chicken until golden and crispy, (about 4-5 minutes each side).

Place chicken on prepared baking tray / dish and top each breast with about 1/3 c of marinara. Top each breast with 2-3 slices of mozzarella and about 2 tbsp shredded Parmesan. Sprinkle with basil or parsley.

Bake 15-20 minutes, or until cheese is bubbling and melted, and the chicken is completely cooked through.

Serve over pasta and top with a little parsley. Yum! <



## Film Festival and Golf Tournament Contribute to a Great Fundraising Season



*Film Festival-goers ham it up on the red carpet*

ing of 3 films on April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center—a sponsor of the event. The audience was also treated to a special performance by participant dancers, coached by members of the Eastern Connecticut Ballet. **The event raised over \$25,800.**

Our deepest appreciation to all our generous sponsors, auction donors, and event volunteers for making these two fundraisers a success and helping us continue to provide programs and services for people with IDD and their families in eastern Connecticut. <

The Arc's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Film Festival and 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament drew record numbers of attendees this year, offering both cultural and athletic events in beautiful settings. The Golf Tournament, held on June 28<sup>th</sup> at Putnam's Connecticut National Golf Club and sponsored by Gerardi Insurance Services drew 150 participants and **grossed over \$46,000.** The highly coveted Gardner Johnson Memorial Award was presented to Putnam Bank for their **champion advocacy efforts on behalf of people with IDD.**

211 film-goers were treated to a silent auction and screen-



*A big crowd, and a great day for golf*



Eastern Connecticut

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[TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org)



*Achieve with us.®*

## The Arc NEWS



Register Online [TheArcECT.org](http://TheArcECT.org)

**Sunday, October 6, 2019**

Camp Harkness Park

**Starting Gun Times:**

9:30 am 5K & 10K

11:00 am Family Fun Run,  
Walk & Roll

**Everyone of ALL Ages  
& Abilities WELCOME!**



### Financial Planning Workshops For Families!

at 687 Cook Hill Road, Danielson, CT

**Wednesday, September 18, 2019**

**6:30pm: Planning for the Future**

**Wednesday, November 6, 2019**

**6:30pm: Government Benefits for  
Your Loved One with Special Needs**



&



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**more info: 860.889.4435 x116**

### 1950's SOCK HOP MURDER MYSTERY

"A Dance with Death"

Show provided by:



**Saturday,  
April 4, 2020**

CT National Golf Club  
in Putnam

**more info:**  
**860.774.2827 x707**



**SAVE THE DATE!**