



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities



empower

Real People, Real Progress

Issue 17 | Winter 2014

Comcast NBCUniversal & The Arc Launch Multi-Million Dollar National Partnership to Enhance Technology Access and Education for People with Disabilities

This year, The Arc will begin an exciting new partnership with Comcast Corporation that will support and expand digital technology opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Through a three-year commitment, Comcast and NBCUniversal will provide The Arc with \$3.7 million in cash and in-kind support, including airtime to promote The Arc's public service announcements on cable and broadcast channels and xfinity.com. The Comcast Foundation is also providing \$400,000 to support The Arc's national digital training program and to improve technology access and services by launching up to 12 Comcast and NBCUniversal Digital Literacy Learning Labs in major metropolitan cities.

The Arc will use the new funding to design an online resource center for cataloguing and rating apps, software and other digital resources. The 700 local chapters of The Arc nationwide will participate in designing and

COMCAST  NBCUNIVERSAL

contributing resources to the online resource center.

"Thanks to Comcast and NBCUniversal, The Arc has a tremendous opportunity to raise awareness across the country about The Arc and the population we work with, and this partnership affords us the ability to launch an exciting new program that could change the lives of people with I/DD. By learning how to get online, people with I/DD are in a better position to gain employment, expand their social circle, and be a part of the increasingly growing community that exists online," said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

"We believe that technology, and the doors it opens, can be a game changer for the disabilities community," said Charisse R. Lillie, Vice President of Community Investment for Comcast

Corporation and President of the Comcast Foundation. "Through this new partnership with The Arc, we hope to connect and empower this community with technology that can improve their lives."

Digital literacy is an important area of focus for the disabilities community and The Arc in this increasingly digital and online world. The majority of people with I/DD have limited or no access to contemporary and comprehensible information and communication technologies. In The Arc's nationwide survey, Family and Individual Needs for Disability Supports ("FINDS") in 2010, only 32 percent of people with I/DD were reported to be using computers; 13 percent communication devices; 4 percent GPS; and 6 percent video communications. This partnership will focus on assisting

Achieve with us.

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March 29: A Day for Awareness

The Arc Plans National Day Out Event for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March is national Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and The Arc invites you to join us on March 29 in a grassroots initiative to help raise awareness about people with I/DD.

What should you do? Simply make plans to go out somewhere in public on Saturday, March 29. That's all. Just plan a day out and about with friends and family or by yourself enjoying the things you like to do. And, in the process help raise awareness and generate some conversation about people with I/DD during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This one-day movement will serve to harness our collective power to gain allies, foster understanding, and dispel myths.

Year round, The Arc works to promote and protect the rights of people with I/DD to live, learn, work and play as valued and contributing members of their communities. We fight for legislation to remove barriers to full participation and inclusion and have been successful on many fronts. But



sometimes the barrier has nothing to do with the width of a doorway or an employer's hiring practices. Sometimes the barrier is as subtle as a nervous glance from an uninformed person in line with you or a family member at the market.

So, next month, on March 29, let's all go out and start breaking down those social barriers once and for all. This is your chance to personally help raise awareness about people with I/DD just by being yourself

and participating in the things you enjoy alongside others in your community without disabilities. If you are a person with I/DD, make plans to hit the movies, the park, your local shopping center or restaurant for a day out and maybe spark some conversation in the process. Or, if you are a friend or family member of a person with I/DD, make plans to enjoy a fun activity together in public and take the opportunity to show others that we're not so different after all.

Visit The Arc's website at www.thearc.org and find out more about this campaign and things you can do to join in. And spread the word using the hashtag #DDAware on social media during the month of March. Follow us online at www.facebook.com/thearcus or www.twitter.com/thearcus and be sure to show us what you do on March 29 by sharing your photos using the hashtag #DDAware. ■

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Mission Statement:

The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

The Arc

1-800-433-5255

The Arc Launches An Exciting New Diversity Initiative

This year, through generous funding from the MetLife Foundation, The Arc will launch a new diversity initiative. The goal of this initiative is to make the programs, services and supports offered by chapters of The Arc nationwide more accessible to culturally diverse populations with I/DD and their family members, and to ensure that our chapters are addressing the needs of the different cultures in their communities. To achieve these goals, The Arc will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the cultural competence within the network of nearly 700 chapters.

This assessment will include substantial input from The Arc's chapters as well as from current and potential stakeholders in ethnically and culturally diverse communities across the country. In the course of the assessment, The Arc will collect information about best practices in serving a culturally diverse population drawn from the disability field, as well as health care, social services and other non-profit and for-profit industry segments. As a result of the assessment, The Arc will develop a report that identifies the challenges developmental disability providers face when serving people with I/DD who come from diverse backgrounds and recommends solutions. Based on the report, The Arc will develop an action plan

MetLife Foundation

defining specific actions that can be taken by chapters of The Arc to achieve greater cultural competence.

"Organizations like the MetLife Foundation enable us to continue our work to

promote inclusion and civil rights for individuals with I/DD, and with their generous support we will be able to better serve communities across the country. The Arc has a network of nearly 700 chapters and those chapters represent a spectrum of cultural diversity. We recognize that for The Arc to be successful, we must find

ways to support our organization's growth to include more diverse populations," said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

If you want to share your chapter's work to promote diversity or offer any feedback, please email: info@thearc.org. We value your input as we begin working on this important initiative. ■



The Arc's Peter Berns accepts \$25,000 check from MetLife Foundation. From left to right: Cheryl Casper, Operations Manager, MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning; Kelly Piacenti, Assistant Vice President, MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning, and member of The Arc's Board of Directors; Peter Berns, CEO, The Arc; and Debra Cruz, Vice President, MetLife Global eBusiness & Digital Marketing.

In December, The Arc was chosen as the beneficiary of a social media campaign MetLife was conducting in conjunction with its MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning. For one day, MetLife donated \$1 for each "like" of a post about The Arc and \$2 for each comment (the cap for donations was \$25,000). The response was overwhelming with more than 38,000 "likes" and 2,000 comments. This was the largest response MetLife has ever received with a social media campaign!

Earlier this year, representatives from MetLife came to The Arc's national office to present CEO Peter Berns with a check for \$25,000 — the money that supporters like YOU helped raise! We are so thankful to our good friends at MetLife for the opportunity, and their generous donation, and thanks once again to you, our supporters, for making it happen! ■

A Champion is....



The Arc has had amazing champions, and without their efforts we could not have achieved all that we have over the past 60 plus years, and we would not be able to continue the important work we do today. Throughout the coming year, we will be spotlighting stories from a direct service provider, a family member and a self-advocate – each an amazing champion for those with I/DD. While their connections to the disability community may vary, together they have a shared passion for The Arc’s mission that unites them.

Do you have a story of a champion for The Arc? Perhaps you’d like to be a champion for those with I/DD by making a donation to The Arc? Become a part of The Arc’s movement and help us create opportunities for people with I/DD.

We want you to share your stories about the champions that inspire you. Laura Schroeder at Schroeder@thearc.org would welcome your email or call her at 202-534-3713. **Achieve with us!** ■

Being fearless

Never afraid to stand up to promote inclusion. No challenge is too great, no person too intimidating, and no hurdle too high.

Leading in their Community

Always willing to lend themselves to a cause, befriend those in need, and constantly looking for new ways to work with others in their community to create change.

Paving The Way

For the next generation of advocates, while always keeping in mind how hard those before them worked to get where we are today. The knowledge of their predecessors’ tireless advocacy drives them to work even harder for the champions that will come after them.

Solving Problems

Always finding a solution for a problem presented to them. Influencing decision-makers even if they aren’t on our side of an issue and opening their eyes to solutions that had not yet been considered.

Loyally Supporting the Cause

Willing to provide much-needed philanthropic contributions to The Arc at all levels to ensure that the programs and services offered at the local, state and national level will continue.

Partnership continued from page 1

people with I/DD to gain access to and make effective and safe use of the Internet, including social media.

“Online safety is a big issue for all of us, and as more people with I/DD get online, it’s incredibly important that they learn to do so in a manner that

protects them while allowing them the freedom to explore the online world. Our chapters are poised to provide this opportunity to people with I/DD, and I’m looking forward to witnessing how this program impacts their lives,” said Berns.

In early 2014, The Arc will be adding a new staff member to lead this new initiative. Look for updates on The Arc’s website, www.thearc.org, throughout the year as we build this resource. ■

Holidays in Motion at The Arc San Francisco



Stephanie Wilcox, RN, completing a dental screen on a participant.



The amazing volunteers for Holidays in Motion.



Clients enjoying the dance party portion of the event.

How do you make fitness and healthy eating fun? Easy – you involve delicious food and dancing like The Arc San Francisco did at their “Holidays in Motion” party. The goal of the event was to conduct HealthMeet® assessments and show participants that holiday celebrations don’t have to be unhealthy affairs filled with candy, cookies and soda to be enjoyable.

To kick off the holiday season while still keeping nutrition in mind, they served sandwiches, fruits and vegetables, and low-calorie granola bars for a tasty and healthy meal. The food was just a small part of the excitement, because the “motion” portion of the event included a Zumba class with a dynamic instructor to teach participants how to have fun while exercising, followed by a dance party with a live DJ.

One of the chapter’s regular volunteers, Stephanie Wilcox, RN, recruited eight of her colleagues to act as screeners. Stephanie and their other regular volunteer, Marilyn Petrich, RN, served as coordinators for the event, while the one-day volunteers staffed screening stations including height and weight, blood pressure, lungs, hearing, vision, feet and gait, and dental.

In keeping with the holiday theme, most volunteers wore holiday hats so that even the screenings were festive. Some clients signed up in advance, while others were recruited to attend the party. In all, 40 screenings were successfully completed at the event. ■

What participants thought:

“I liked it. It helped us learn about what to eat and not eat, how to be active, watch our weight and blood pressure,” said Sharon, 51, of the event.

Gabby, 23, echoed Sharon’s enthusiasm saying, “It gave us the opportunity to check our health. I liked that so many clients were a part of it!”

HealthMeet® leverages The Arc’s national network of 700 Chapters, national disability organizations, public health systems, health professionals, university systems, and other key stakeholders to reduce health disparities and increase the longevity and quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) by providing free community-based health assessments and individualized recommendations for follow-up care. Assessments focus on general health and body composition, vision, hearing, oral health, foot care, respiratory health, mental health and lifestyle factors such as diet and nutrition, physical activity, substance use, and access to health care.

HealthMeet® is a project of The Arc and is supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number 5U59DD000993-02 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for a grant award of \$938,745. ■

More Chapters to Provide School-to-Community Transition Programs

Thanks to a generous gift from the AT&T Foundation, The Arc’s School-to-Community Transition Initiative is supporting five additional chapters with sub-grants for new transition projects through 2014. These projects will connect individuals with paid employment opportunities and/or a degree/certificate-earning postsecondary education program. Recipients of the five new sub-grants are St. Louis Arc (MO), The Arc of Haywood County (NC), The Arc of Baltimore (MD), Allegany Arc (NY) and The Arc of Tennessee. ■

Photo right: University Participant (UP) Program participant, Zach Benton, hanging out between classes with one of his peer supports, Tiffany Love on Western Carolina University’s campus.



Life or Death Disability Case at the U.S. Supreme Court

Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear *Hall v. Florida*, a death penalty case concerning the definition of “mental retardation” (or ID as it is now called) that states may use in deciding whether an individual with that disability is protected by the Court’s decision in *Atkins v. Virginia*. In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled in the *Atkins v. Virginia* case that executing inmates with ID is unconstitutional. The Court is scheduled to hear arguments on *Hall v. Florida* on Monday, March 3, 2014.

Numerous expert evaluations have documented Freddie Lee Hall’s disability. One psychologist’s examination found organic brain dysfunction and severe cognitive impairment, possibly due to repeated head trauma and neuropsychological testing showing severe brain impairment. Another psychiatrist found that Hall is chronically psychotic, that he suffered violent child abuse, has organic brain damage, and is paranoid.



The lower court records include findings of severe and violent abuse of Hall during his childhood.

The Hall case is the first case the U.S. Supreme Court has taken on the issue of the death penalty for defendants with ID since the *Atkins* decision, which indicates that there could be a further clarification of states’ responsibilities under that decision. Specifically, the Hall case centers on whether the state may establish a hardline ceiling on IQ, refusing to consider whether anyone with an IQ above that level may actually have ID (despite the fact that use of such a ceiling undermines the purpose

of IQ testing and the professional judgment of the diagnostician, among other things). In Hall, the Court has been asked to address Florida’s decision to draw the line at an IQ of 70.

The Arc strongly believes that every individual with ID should be protected from the death penalty and applauds the Court’s decision to hear this case. In the past, The Arc has participated in a number of cases on this issue before the Supreme Court including *Atkins v. Virginia*. The Arc’s amicus (friend-of-the-court) brief was cited by the Justices in support of its ruling that the Constitution protects all defendants with ID. On December 23, 2013, The Arc submitted an amicus brief for the *Hall v. Florida* case. To view The Arc’s and all other briefs on this case, visit The American Bar Association website: http://www.americanbar.org/publications/preview_home/12-10882.html.

The *Hall v. Florida* case is not the only case pertaining to this issue in the news right now. Last year, Georgia resident Warren Hill’s appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to halt his execution because he has ID was denied. Hill’s lawyers filed a petition directly to the Supreme Court, stating that they had evidence proving Hill has ID. However, in Georgia, ID must be proven by the defendant “beyond a reasonable doubt,” the strictest standard in the country.

Many people in the disability community share The Arc’s belief that states should not be allowed to create a stricter or more limited definition of ID than the professionally accepted clinical definition of ID. To do otherwise allows the states to execute some people with ID while protecting others. This approach violates the *Atkins* decision and the Constitutional prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. ■



Cases like *Hall v. Florida* and Warren Hill’s highlight some of the many difficult situations facing individuals with I/DD in our nation’s criminal justice system. People with disabilities are 2-10 times more likely to be victimized compared to those without disabilities, and they are also overrepresented in the

criminal justice system overall. While those with ID comprise 2% to 3% of the general population, they represent 4% to 10% of the prison population, with an even greater number of those in juvenile facilities and in jails (Petersilia, 2000). So providing accurate, effective and consistent training for criminal justice professionals is critical.

Through a two-year grant for \$400,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), The Arc is developing a national center on justice and I/DD. This project will create a national clearinghouse for research, information, evaluation, training and technical assistance for justice and disability professionals and other advocates that will build their capacity to better identify and meet the needs of people with I/DD, whose disability often goes unrecognized, and who are overrepresented in the nation’s criminal justice system – both as victims and suspects/offenders. ■



Join us for

The Arc's 2014 National Convention

September 30-October 2, 2014 | New Orleans, LA

Registration opens this spring. Details coming soon at www.thearc.org.



Register Now for the 2014 Disability Policy Seminar

Make your plans to attend the 2014 Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. April 7-9. This event is your opportunity to cultivate new champions on Capitol Hill and advance the grassroots movement for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This unique platform offers you the opportunity to come together with other advocates, learn about the issues, and speak with your elected officials about what is important to you.

Find out more and register now at www.disabilitypolicyseminar.org.

Hosted by: The Arc, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE), and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)

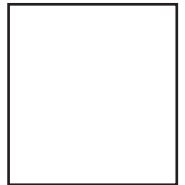
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Meeting High Standards!

The BBB Wise Giving Alliance National Charity Seal carries a lot of meaning for both donors and charities. After undergoing a rigorous evaluation by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance, The Arc is proud to have received their seal for meeting the Standards for Charity Accountability again this year! ■