

empower

REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

IN THIS ISSUE...

An International Convention
to Remember

A Path to Employment

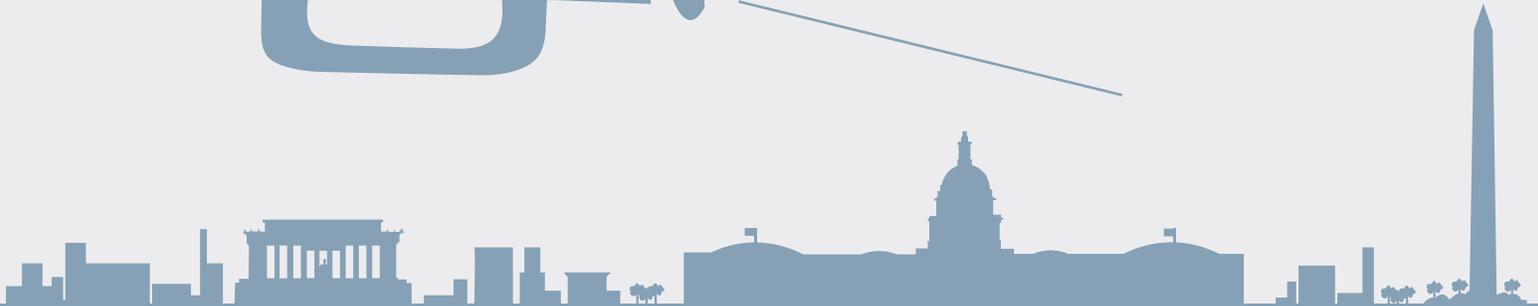
Healthier Lives Made Possible

#SHAPETHEFUTURE

Achievement Is...
Inclusion,
Community,
& education!



**GET INFORMED!
TAKE ACTION!**



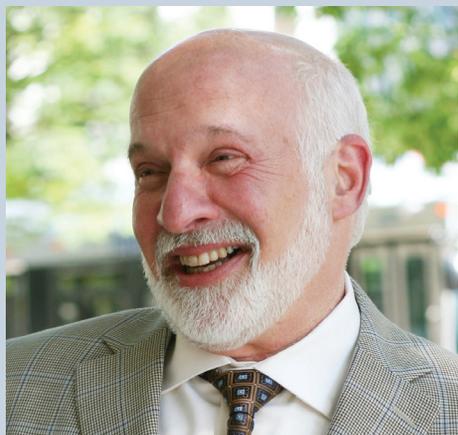
2017 Disability Policy Seminar

Save the Date! March 20–22, 2017

Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel

DISABILITYPOLICYSEMINAR.ORG

LETTER FROM THE CEO



A CONVENTION TO REMEMBER

Throughout the year, I travel to many of our chapters and interact with our members, staff, and the people our chapters serve. But once a year, during our National Convention, I have the opportunity to connect with hundreds of advocates across the country at once. Without fail, I leave feeling more inspired and energized each time.

This year my excitement was amplified by our partnership with Inclusion International. The best part of joining forces was the opportunity for self-advocates to connect. From the Global Self-Advocacy Summit to a general session about the future of self-advocacy and inclusion from the perspective of self-advocates, people with disabilities were at the forefront of the event.

We were thrilled to be joined by the cast of the Emmy-award winning show, *Born This Way*, and their parents. *Born This Way*, a docu-series following seven adults with Down syndrome, is a first-of-its-kind television program that is smashing stereotypes about people with disabilities.

These families took a big leap of faith, exposing every aspect of their lives to a huge television audience. They put their trust into Bunim Murray Productions, a legend in the entertainment industry, to portray their journey honestly and

with respect. Will JT become a rap superstar? When will Christina and Angel get married? I'm watching to find out—as are millions of viewers across the globe. We are grateful to these individuals and families for speaking candidly about their new found fame and what lies ahead.

We were also joined by brothers Walter and Owen Suskind, stars of the documentary *Life, Animated*, about their journey as a family using Disney films as a way to communicate with Owen, who has autism. Walter and Owen dove deep into their relationship, with Walter opening up about what it's like to be Owen's lone sibling, and his hopes and fears for the future. As Walter navigates early adulthood, he is always thinking about how Owen fits with his own trajectory, and vice versa. The brothers talk about dating just like any other sibling duo, navigating sexuality, break-ups and meeting new love interests. The attendees lined up to meet Owen and Walter and thank them for bringing their family's journey to the silver screen.

Thanks to those of you who attended, I enjoy meeting you and learning about your lives. If you missed it this year, join us November 1-4, 2017 in San Diego, California! ●

empower

Real People, Real Progress

AUTUMN 2016 | ISSUE 33

ELISE MCMILLAN

President | Nashville, TN

FRED MILSILO

Vice President |
Northborough, MA

CAROL WHEELER

Secretary | Washington, DC

DOUG CHURCH

Treasurer | Oak Hill, VA

RONALD E. BROWN

Immediate Past President
Dallas, TX

PETER V. BERNS

Chief Executive Officer

editor

KRISTEN MCKIERNAN

content manager

SARAH BAL

writer

PAM KATZ

production/art direction

VILA-SHEREE WATSON

graphic design

BETHANY GLAZE

consultant

TRUDY JACOBSON

The Arc

For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

1825 K Street, NW
Suite 1200
Washington, D.C. 20006
800.433.5255

thearc.org

Throughout this publication the term intellectual and developmental disabilities may be replaced with the acronym I/DD.

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME— AND SO WILL EMPLOYERS



For people with I/DD, the unemployment rate is shocking—85% of families report that their adult family members with I/DD are not employed.

Four years ago, self-advocates in Indiana voiced their concern about the lack of employment opportunities. The Arc of Indiana heard them loud and clear and began looking for solutions.

To address this issue, they built the country's first "Teaching Hotel." The Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI) is housed within a Courtyard by Marriott and provides people of all disabilities a postsecondary vocational training opportunity in hospitality, food service, and health care.

Students reside in the hotel for 10 to 13 weeks as they attend classes, receive hands on training, and gain experience through an internship. In addition to work skills, the students are improving their self-confidence, self-determination, soft work skills, problem solving skills, relational skills, and communication skills.

The first class graduated in March 2016. To date, six of the seven

graduates have secured employment. The seventh graduate is currently completing an internship. All seven students were living at home when they enrolled at EGTI. Today, five have moved into their own apartments.

One of those first graduates is Zach O'Connor. Zach received his certificate in Environmental Services. His goal was to move into his own apartment and work at Indian University's (IU) Health's Riley Hospital for Children. Zach has accomplished both of those goals, securing full time employment with benefits.

Zach isn't just employed—he's thriving. Recently, he received a note from the Director of Pediatric Perioperative Operations thanking him for his hard work in the Riley surgery waiting area and letting him know that his work and dedication were noticed and appreciated.

When you ask Zach how he's doing, he says he just does what's needed.

TOGETHER, WE ACHIEVED

We recently asked some of The Arc's members what achievement means to them.

Here's what they said...

He may be quiet and humble, but he is a catalyst for positive employment changes. In Indiana, students with disabilities often graduate with a certificate of completion instead of a diploma. This closes many employment doors as companies want people with diplomas or GEDs.

IU Health is one of Indiana's largest employers. As a result of their partnership with EGTI and getting to know Zach, they have changed their hiring policy to now include certificates of completion. This change will enable people with disabilities to apply for over 1,000 new support positions in the next 12 months.

Since EGTI's doors opened in January 2016, 22 students have completed the program and 17 are currently enrolled. Word continues to spread, and 2017 classes are filling up quickly.

The Arc of Indiana knew the program would be successful, but the full impact, especially on families, has exceeded all expectations. One parent recently summed it very well:

"We are so excited! Thank you all for what you do. How did we get so lucky? Jimmy deserves this opportunity and is blessed to have an upcoming job. Erskine Green has truly changed our lives just when we had just about given up hope. This is what it's all about folks! God bless!! #youguysrock!"

For more information, visit erskingreeninstitute.org.



Achievement Is . . . A Good Job

For Joe, it is developing his interviewing skills and getting a job in a hotel in National Harbor, Maryland.



Achievement Is . . . Helping Others

For Ashley, it is the joy she has when helping others and serving meals to those in need.

Help many more achieve this year, and for years to come, by making a gift today!

From now through the end of the year, a group of generous donors have pledged to **match every dollar you contribute.**

With your gift today, you can make achievement possible for individuals with disabilities.

thearc.org/donate

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

CREATING A CULTURE OF HEALTH WITH HEALTHMEET® AT THE ARC OF ALAMEDA COUNTY



Hayn Slocum

Meet Hayn Slocum—he is one of The Arc of Alameda County’s dynamic instructors helping to create a culture of health awareness at the chapter. Hayn came to The Arc as a volunteer to work with people with mobility issues. His background in physical

fitness and nutrition made him a natural choice to participate and complete the HealthMatters™ Train-the-Trainer course, offered by the University of Illinois at Chicago. This training is part of The Arc’s larger HealthMeet® program, designed to reduce health disparities and increase the longevity and quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Hayn has noticed people with ID making changes, like less junk food in their snacks and lunches. Participants talk more about what they eat and drink and the types of exercises they like.

The staff working with people with ID is also making an effort to be more conscious about their health habits by watching what they eat, exercising, and not smoking. They are more mindful of the amount of sodium in their diet, which raise blood pressure, and soft drinks are being replaced with water or lower calorie options.

Hayn works to ensure that The Arc’s health programs are inclusive by providing modifications, such as offering instruction in sign language for participants who are deaf; partnering participants who are blind with a sighted person to play basketball; and, providing adapted yoga for wheelchair users.

Hayn also infuses excitement by occasionally inviting special guests. Basketball is popular in Alameda County, which is home to World Champion Golden State Warriors. NBA Hall of Famer Gary Payton, formerly with the Seattle SuperSonics, came by to shoot some three pointers!

Leading a healthy lifestyle can be difficult, but Hayn has helped The Arc of Alameda County become a healthier and more fun environment. ●

STAR SUPPORTER

A BETTER PICTURE OF HEALTH

According to the Centers for Disease Control, adults with disabilities have a 58% higher rate of obesity than adults without disabilities. Lack of healthy food options, mobility limitations, and lack of opportunities to be physically active can contribute to the obesity rates of individuals with I/DD.



Celebrating healthy living at The Arc of Greater Houston

With the support of the Amerigroup Foundation, The Arc expanded the Health and Fitness for All program to three additional chapters: The Arc of San Antonio, The Arc of Greater Houston, and The Arc Tennessee. The chapters were certified in using the HealthMatters™ curriculum to educate small groups of people

in a classroom setting for 12 weeks. The program helps people with I/DD learn more about the importance of healthy eating and to incorporate healthy habits into their daily lives.

Preliminary data collected from pre- and post-tests demonstrated that 102 participants enrolled in the program and collectively lost a total of 123 pounds. In addition, 61 participants have increased their knowledge about healthy eating and nutrition.

Throughout the program, participants increased their activity levels and were more vigilant about portion control. For example, at The Arc of Greater Houston break time from vocational training typically consisted as a rest period. After the Health and Fitness for All program, some of the participants were using their break time to perform push-ups, sit-ups, and planks. Matt, a participant in the program at The Arc of San Antonio, has already been talking to his mother about what they should be eating at home.

Family, friends, and other community members came together at the end of each Health and Fitness for All class to celebrate the success of individuals in the program. The participants are enthusiastic about taking these lessons learned and supporting their peers to lead healthier lifestyles. ●

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS EVERYONE

Think about your day so far. Did you open your email? Read a story online? Check your bank account, traffic, weather, or a public transit schedule? These day-to-day tasks have become so intuitive for many of us that it's easy to forget how essential they are. For those with I/DD, these skills can make a world of difference by building bridges to community participation.

Through The Arc's partnership with Comcast NBCUniversal, chapters across the country are hosting "Learning Labs" to foster these digital literacy skills in their constituents. The classes' content varies between chapters based on individual needs, but most are centered on employment: email, typing, and Google tool skills to name a few. Many of the Learning Labs are tiered and offer lessons based on the various learning levels and support needs of participants. A curriculum was developed focused on basic, intermediate and advanced technology skills for Learning Lab lessons. Several chapters are hosting them more than once a week—and there are even waiting lists!

So far, the chapters include The Arc Prince George's County (MD), The Arc Baltimore, New Star Services (IL), Easter Seals Arc of Northeast Indiana, Inc., The Arc of San Francisco, and The Arc Lane County (OR). The Arc of the United States plans to assess the effectiveness of the Learning Lab instruction and eventually expand the amount of lessons so that Learning Labs can be offered to any chapter who is interested in hosting.

Through this simple exposure to the basics of digital technology, participants are building the skills that will support them to become more independent within their communities. Even simple tools can change a life in big ways.

In fact, many tools we use widely today started out as assistive technology for people with disabilities—including curb cuts, Siri and voice dictation, spell check, autocorrect, and more. By incorporating universal design for learning into our technology, and ensuring digital literacy training is available to the I/DD community, we improve the lives of both people with and without disabilities.

The skills being built in these Learning Labs are meant to translate into opportunities. At a recent Learning

Lab open house at The Arc Prince George's County in Maryland, two employers, the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation and Krispy Kreme, pledged to hire several people with disabilities. It's these connections, fostered through partnerships like ours with Comcast NBCUniversal, that result in a win for the future and independence of people with I/DD. ●

USING TELEHEALTH TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES



No one likes visiting the doctor for checkups. But what if you could have a doctor visit without actually going to the doctor? With the telehealth VGo device, this is possible—and is revolutionizing the doctor appointment as we know it. The device enables a person to replicate themselves in the VGo and move around as if they were physically

there. It allows you to see, hear, talk, interact, and move anywhere. This telepresence is transforming healthcare in the disability community.

Through a grant from the Verizon Foundation, two local chapters of The Arc, The Arc Macon in Georgia, and The Arc Gloucester in New Jersey, have been utilizing a VGo robotic device to provide telehealth care and health education to individuals with I/DD in their communities. Chapters have placed the VGo in various day and residential programs to allow their chapter nurses to closely monitor and address new and chronic health concerns. Through this technology, chapter nurses were able to provide more frequent and timely care to help improve the health of the individuals they serve. In a time when convenience is key and can make a world of difference, these chapters are on the frontlines of a healthier I/DD population. ●



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

1825 K Street, NW Suite 1200
Washington, D.C. 20006

thearc.org

NONPROFIT

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PRE-SORT

Achieve with us.®

Give the Gift of Stock



If you have stock market investments, one of the most financially wise ways to give is through the transfer of stocks or bonds. You can transfer ownership of appreciated stocks or bonds as a special gift to The Arc. In addition to your important contribution helping people with disabilities, your gift can have significant tax benefits for you. To learn more, contact us at plannedgiving@thearc.org or 202.534.3713.

You Hold the Key to Independence



Do you have an old or unneeded car, truck, boat or other vehicle taking up space? Give someone with I/DD the key to their independence by donating it to The Arc today. Proceeds benefit your local chapter. We accept any vehicle with a title and arrange free pick up or towing. Plus, your donation is tax-deductible! Call 1.877.ARC.CAR.0 or donate online by visiting thearc.org/donate-my-vehicle.



bbb.org/charity

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!



PHILANTHROPEEDIA
A Division of GuideStar



#11296

