



# empower

Real People, Real Progress

Issue 22 | Spring 2015

## *The Arc Across a Lifetime*

The Arc is proud to present its new PSA, *The Arc Across a Lifetime*! This inspirational PSA shows how The Arc helps enrich the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) throughout developmental stages: from birth, to school, to employment, to twilight years.

The stars of the PSA deserve all the credit for truly bringing to life The Arc's mission. It is our pleasure to introduce you to them and explain how while each one of these individuals are at very different stages, The Arc has played an integral role in their lives. We encourage you to visit our website ([www.thearc.org/the-arc-across-a-lifetime](http://www.thearc.org/the-arc-across-a-lifetime)) to view the PSA.

Thanks to Comcast NBCUniversal, it will air throughout 2015, and they have already committed funds for 2016 as well! We hope that this PSA will spread the message of full inclusion and the protection of human rights through The Arc's national services and advocacy efforts, as well as the community efforts of our 665 chapters across the country.

**Meet Simon:** The fourth child of Peter and Shana King, Simon, was born on September 9, 2014. Like most parents, they first reached out to friends to begin the process of figuring out what to do to get

Simon all the support he will need. A friend recommended that they contact The Arc of Northern Virginia, where Peter and Shana sought out information on Medicaid and any other programs designed to help Simon.



**Meet Patxi:** Patxi has always been an inquisitive learner. With support from The Arc his family learned how to be an advocate for his education. They were able to learn about the Special Education process,

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and his rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

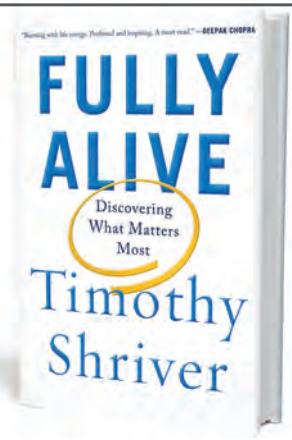
# Join The Arc During Our National Convention



Once a year The Arc's network comes together during our largest national event, and this year we have a lot to celebrate as The Arc turns 65 years old! We are calling all members, staff, families and advocates in The Arc's network to come to Indianapolis, Indiana and help us celebrate!

This year's convention is sure to be one to remember. The planning committee that includes leaders from Indiana and The Arc's National Staff are working to create a memorable event that will give attendees new and exciting ways to connect with their peers, learn from the thought leaders in our community, and of course leave feeling empowered and inspired.

We are thrilled to announce that Tim Shriver, Chairman of the Special Olympics and world renowned activist, will be our keynote speaker for the opening general session. He



will share his family's remarkable story and how it shaped his world view. In 2014, Shriver released a memoir, *"Fully Alive: Discovering What Matters Most,"* that offers a personal look into his life and the people who inspired him along the way. Attendees will also have the opportunity to interact with Shriver during a book signing that takes place during our opening reception (immediately following the opening general session).

Over the course of the two and half days, there will be more than 40 concurrent sessions for attendees to choose from with a wide variety of topics including (but not limited to) — education advocacy, disability policy, housing, program innovations, future planning, employee recognition and engagement, and employment.

Of course, our event will also be filled with a lot of fun (and some surprises too). We will be starting a new tradition with The Arc's Catalyst Awards Luncheon that will give us the opportunity to recognize the individuals and organizations that define our mission; the local host committee will put on an exciting tailgating party at the historic Union Station Grand Hall; and there will be a special reception for first-time attendees to help them get acquainted with The Arc's national staff and some veterans from The Arc's network.

A full schedule of sessions and events can be found on The Arc's Convention Website – <http://convention.thearc.org/>. Please join us by registering today. ■

## empower

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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's National Leadership and our 2014 Local Host Committee having fun during an event in New Orleans. From Left to Right: Barry Meyer, Executive Director of The Arc of Baton Rouge; Nancy Webster, Immediate Past President of The Arc's Board of Directors; Kelly Serrett, Executive Director of The Arc of Louisiana; and Peter Berns, The Arc's Chief Executive Officer.



# Unlock Your Employee's Potential with TalentScout

*"People with autism have a lot to contribute in all aspects of our society. In the workplace, their individual unique talents need to be maximized to benefit both the goals of their employer, and their personal desire to have and keep a job that adds meaning to their life. Far too many people with autism are left on the sidelines of our workforce, and entities that have recognized the benefits of hiring someone with autism are reaping the rewards. Whether it's the loyalty that someone with a disability may bring to their employer, or their unique skill set that gets the job done, people with autism are ready for hire," said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.*



The Arc is proud to announce the launch of an exciting new resource called TalentScout for employers to unlock the talents of people with autism in the workplace. One in 68 children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), and the unemployment rate of adults with disabilities, including ASDs, is 85%. That's an appallingly high number. With an increase in the prevalence of children being diagnosed with ASDs, it is more important than ever to ensure that people on the spectrum are able to find

gainful employment with fair wages, and that they are able to retain and be successful at their chosen careers.

With nearly 65 years of experience serving people I/DD including autism, The Arc is releasing TalentScout with the goal that it will give employers insight and tools to work with employees with autism. The kit will guide employers on how to ensure they understand what proper supports are needed and help them harness the full potential of employees on the spectrum. Its content is vetted by people with ASDs, and includes their first-hand accounts and insights as job applicants and employees. It is backed by the years of nationwide experience of The Arc's vast chapter network, and by Autism Now: National Autism Resource and Information Center.

"People with autism have a lot to contribute in all aspects of our society. In the workplace, their individual unique talents need to be maximized to benefit both the goals of their employer, and their personal desire to have and keep

a job that adds meaning to their life. Far too many people with autism are left on the sidelines of our workforce, and entities that have recognized the benefits of hiring someone with autism are reaping the rewards. Whether it's the loyalty that someone with a disability may bring to their employer, or their unique skill set that gets the job done, people with autism are ready for hire," said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

TalentScout is also a valuable resource for government agencies working to implement the President's initiative (EO 13548) to hire 100,000 people with disabilities into the federal workforce, as well as federal contractors bringing their companies into compliance with the US Department of Labor Section 503 rules on employment of people with disabilities. It is only one component of TheArc@Work, which is leading the way in developing innovative workforce solutions for the government and private sector by connecting employers with talented employees with I/DD and supporting the recruitment, on-boarding, and retention process. For more information contact Jonathan Lucas, Managing Director of The Arc@Work at [lucas@thearc.org](mailto:lucas@thearc.org). ■



# Celebrating Self-Advocates' Small Businesses



Every year at The Arc's national convention, Entrepreneur Alley draws talented and diverse self-advocates from all around the country who have built small businesses. Not only is the exposure a valuable (and profitable!) experience, but involvement offers the

opportunity to network with ambitious entrepreneurs as well as over 800 attendees. Join us at this year's Entrepreneur Alley at The Arc's 2015 National Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana from October 3rd – 5th. Stop by and

see what our innovative self-advocates have been creating! To participate in Entrepreneur Alley, reach out to Sarah Kennedy at [skennedy@thearc.org](mailto:skennedy@thearc.org) or 202-534-3720 today – *there are limited spaces available this year!* ■

## Preserving our Lifeline – What You Can Do to Help

While Medicaid and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) have so far largely been protected from deficit reduction efforts, there are looming threats.

Majorities in the House and Senate have voted for deep cuts to Medicaid and fundamental structural changes that would eliminate the entitlement to services and undo the system of supports and services for people with I/DD. Additionally, Congress must act by the end of 2016 to prevent a 20 percent across-the-board cut in SSDI benefits – but instead, on day one of the 114th Congress the House passed a rule creating hurdles to making the financial adjustment needed to prevent benefit cuts. And in both the House and Senate, Members have proposed bills to cut SSDI and create new barriers to work for SSDI beneficiaries.

We are in a fight to protect these essential lifelines for individuals with I/DD and their families. Now, more than ever

**DON'T CUT OUR LIFELINE**

**What Can You Do to Help Protect the Lifeline?**

**Connect with Your Chapter(s) of The Arc**  
The Arc has more than 660 chapters in 48 states and the District of Columbia. Are you a member of or a volunteer with a chapter? If not, why not? Reach out to your local state chapter to find out what activities they have planned to engage with your Members of Congress. If you do not have a chapter of The Arc in your area, consider connecting with other families, service providers, individuals with IDD, or allies to engage in some of the ways outlined below.

**Participate in The Arc's Action Alerts**  
The Arc has a big network of advocates across the country that stay informed and engaged on the issues by signing up on our website. When a vote is happening, fast, or an issue is heading up in Congress, the people on this list are called upon to make a call or send an email to their Member of Congress. You will also receive important updates on what is happening in Congress and federal agencies that impact people with IDD.

**Recruit Friends and Family to Join the Movement!**  
We are only as strong as the volume of support we can generate in any given issue. And convincing the debate about the importance of the help we can get. What's unique about the IDD community is that almost everyone's life is touched by someone with IDD, or someone related to a person with IDD, or someone who

knows a direct support professional, or a teacher who helps to educate a child with IDD. It's these people who will help us show our strength. To recruit people to join you and The Arc!

**When a critical vote's coming up:** Email your family and friends and ask them to take action. They may not want to sign up for another email list – but if the ask is coming from you, then, they may pick up the phone or send an email to help away their elected officials.

**Attend a Public Event Hosted By Your Member of Congress**  
When Members of Congress are back home in their districts, they often hold town hall meetings, office hours at grocery stores or libraries, or attend large community events so that they can hear from their constituents. But not all of these opportunities are widely publicized. So reach out to your Member's district office to find out where you might catch them in person, and follow them on Facebook and Twitter in case they post updates or events (see the social media guide). These don't have to be formal meetings – some of the most meaningful and influential interactions a Member of Congress can have are when they are out in the community and by chance, encounter someone with a disability. Here's an example:

**A Citizen Encounters Lewis at a New Jersey Event**  
See: [thearc.org](http://thearc.org)

All these opportunities, you can:  
• ask a question (see Key Messages)  
• share your personal story in connection to IDD

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we need your support! Join The Arc's movement by advocating to preserve these vital programs that individuals with I/DD and their families count on every day – go to [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org) to find resources to help you advocate to protect Medicaid and SSDI. The Arc

was built on grassroots advocacy, and now more than ever we need you, your family, your colleagues, and your friends to step up and take action. This summer will be a critical time as Congress may take up harmful measures that could impact the lifeline. There are several upcoming Congressional recesses during which you should engage with your Members of Congress to talk about the issues facing people with I/DD. You can simply call and leave a message for your Member of Congress, or attend one of their public events like a town hall meeting, or even request a meeting. Make sure you are on our Action List to get all the resources you need to be an advocate – sign up at <http://cqrcengage.com/thearc/home>.

Together we can make a difference in the lives of those with I/DD. You can also help us save their lifeline by making a much needed tax deductible gift today. Thank you! ■



# The Arc's Take on *Where Hope Grows*

## In Theaters Now, Available Digitally and on DVD This Summer

A new film starring a young man named David DeSanctis is sweeping the nation in hundreds of theaters this month, and The Arc had a sneak peak opportunity to view this film and provide promotional support.

*Where Hope Grows* is a story of redemption through hope and love. It tells the story of Calvin, a former professional baseball player who has failed in the majors and lives in a perpetual quicksand of self-pity. This all begins to change when he meets and befriends a grocery store clerk with Down syndrome, known as "Produce." "Produce" inspires all those around him with a gentle spirit of perseverance, and the movie gives us a wonderful opportunity to share and celebrate the contributions that our family members, friends, co-workers, and others with I/DD bring to their communities.

The Arc strongly believes that people with I/DD should be getting more roles in feature films, and DeSanctis steals the show. His performance is impressive, and we are excited to see what's next for him as he progresses in the film industry!



David DeSanctis in his role as "Produce" in *Where Hope Grows*

There are aspects of the film that provide the opportunity for further discussion, and so we have created a discussion guide to engage our chapters, members, and the general public in an honest dialogue about community inclusion and respect of people with I/DD. Visit our website, [www.thearc.org/file/wherehopegrowsguide.pdf](http://www.thearc.org/file/wherehopegrowsguide.pdf), to download the guide. For example, "Produce" is not referenced by any other name in the film — we find this unsettling and question why the other characters in the film have real names while "Produce" is only referred to by this nickname which can be seen as demeaning. We applaud many aspects of the film, particularly the portrayal of "Produce's" independence. The purpose of the discussion guide is to get the conversation started in your community, to educate those who watch the film and for open discussion.

Film is a powerful medium to connect with the general public, and educate about how people with I/DD should be included in the workplace, in community life, in their chosen faith, and in their relationships. There are aspects of the film that will undoubtedly help people understand and connect on an emotional level with our mission. And there are aspects of the film that disappoint — but therein lies the opportunity for discussion and understanding. So find out where the film is screening near you at [www.wherehopegrowsmovie.com](http://www.wherehopegrowsmovie.com), check back for details on its availability digitally and on DVD, and start the conversation in your community! ■



*Where Hope Grows* follows the developing friendship between two people with very different backgrounds. Written and directed by Chris Dowling, one of the characters is a grocery store employee who has an intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD).

The Arc of the United States is delighted that Mr. Dowling and producers Steve Bagheri, Simran Singh, Jose Pablo Cantillo and Milan Chakraborty hired actor David DeSanctis, a young man with Down syndrome, to star in this film. The film's optimistic message is portrayed through Mr. DeSanctis' character who influences his community with a gentle power that progresses through the story. The Arc's Conversation Guide was developed to help viewers reflect on the film's story and to specifically discuss the portrayal of a person with Down syndrome shown as an independent person who is fully included in his community.

After viewing this film we encourage you to join with others to share your views and continue the conversation. *Where Hope Grows*, coming to 400-theaters in the U.S. in May 2015 gives us a wonderful opportunity to share and celebrate the contributions that our family members, friends, co-workers, fellow students and others with I/DD bring to their communities.



# Catching Some Waves with The Arc of the St. Johns

St. Augustine is an active coastal community in northeast Florida, and The Arc of the St. Johns has seen a void as many men, women and children with I/DD were missing the opportunity to enjoy the ocean and connect to a caring and sharing community of avid surfers. In response to the obvious need, and the urgings of Andy and his friends, The Arc created **Surf Quest**, a free monthly event with trained and enthusiastic volunteers who introduce adaptive aquatic recreation using specialized surfboards and flotation devices for anyone with a disability. The **Surf Quest** season opened in March 2015 and will culminate with the **Black Ties and Board Shorts Awards Banquet** in September.

Andy truly captured the hearts and attention of the entire crew of trained and experienced volunteer coaches, virtually all of whom had little or no experience or interaction with individuals with I/DD. "Andy's Crew" found the way to get Andy into the surf and onto a surfboard for a half-dozen rides. Jordan is his ride-along, and said, "Andy's courage and effusive enthusiasm touched all of us, and we feel the same way about every one of these



Andy enjoying some waves!

guys. We'll be here for every event."

Not wanting to leave the joy of the waves, Andy has gone back to his computer to edit videos of his most recent surf sessions, adding his favorite Beach Boys' songs as the soundtrack. He has also created his shopping list for new wardrobe essentials for the next

**Surf Quest** event: some cool Ray-Ban sunglasses, a pair of wild flower-print board shorts with a matching tank top, and a big, big, fluffy towel.

Find Andy's action video on Facebook: Surf Quest — The Arc of the St. Johns. And, visit The Arc of the St. Johns website – [www.arcsj.org](http://www.arcsj.org). ■

We love being able to showcase the amazing work our chapters are doing. We are always looking for content for our blog, social media, and other publications. If you would like to share what your chapter is up to, please contact Sarah Bal at [bal@thearc.org](mailto:bal@thearc.org).



# The Arc's Catalyst Awards

The Arc's Catalyst Awards have been created to recognize individuals, businesses, and other organizations that are catalysts for achievement in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Each honoree has done something remarkable that helps fulfill The Arc's mission to promote and protect the human rights of people with I/DD. Their work embodies what inclusion truly means.

Furthermore, their contributions are of national significance because they advance public understanding and acceptance of people with I/DD in a variety of arenas — from employment and philanthropy to education and media. Each award illustrates what can be achieved and how we must move forward to create a fully inclusive society. The goal of these awards is to turn a national spotlight to individuals

and organizations that are setting an example of what our communities will look like when the civil rights for people I/DD are fully realized.

Nominations and self-nominations are invited in 5 award categories (advocacy, education, employment, media/entertainment/marketing and philanthropy). For more information, visit The Arc's website at [www.thearc.org/catalyst-awards](http://www.thearc.org/catalyst-awards). ■

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**Meet Jordan, Jamilla and Maurine:** Jordan keeps himself busy volunteering and working in a retirement community, escorting residents to various events such as balloon volleyball, exercise classes and concerts. Jordan especially likes playing Wii with the seniors and assisting them with arts and crafts as well as puzzles.

Jamilla is originally from Barbados and she lives with her mom in Silver Spring, Maryland. She's worked at Victoria's Secret and Michael's, is a big fan of the game Candy Crush, loves getting her hair and nails done, and loves meeting new people.

Maurine is a triplet who loves listening to music, going to concerts, spending time with friends, watching extreme sports (especially skateboarding), and science. She interned at PetSmart and has just been hired at Sunflower Café (a café and bakery created to provide vocational training to people with I/DD).

Both Jamilla and Maurine completed the Transitioning Youth Retail Project at The Arc of Montgomery County in Maryland. Jordan receives Vocational & Day Services from the same chapter. The support all three receive has helped them work in their communities. Together they know how to have a good laugh and enjoy life.



**Meet Charles:** Charles loves his job — working at Acadia Windows and Doors in Baltimore, Maryland for the past 9 years has given him a feeling of accomplishment, good pay and benefits, and a sense that he is part of a team. He receives job support services from The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region to help him retain successful, integrated employment.



**Meet Ted and Linda:** Ted and Linda both receive services from The Arc of Howard County in Maryland and have been together for about seven years. They have traveled extensively together, including a trip to the Bahamas, and are always ready for their next big adventure. A true gentleman, Ted will not let anyone else sit next to Linda at The Arc of Howard County social events. ■





For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities

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[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

*Achieve with us.*

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Real People,  
Real Progress

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## Donate that Clunker!

Do you have an old car that you need to get rid of? Consider donating it to The Arc before the end of the year so you can take a tax break and help people with I/DD at the same time. Simply call 1-877-ARC-2270 or fill out an online form at [www.thearc.org/donate-my-vehicle](http://www.thearc.org/donate-my-vehicle) and a representative will make arrangements to pick up or tow a vehicle, sell it at auction and deliver the cash proceeds directly to The Arc.



## Meeting High Standards!



[bbb.org/charity](http://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 again this year! ■

