

Officers

Fred Misilo – President

Fred Misilo has been a national board member since 2012 and current serves as President of the board of The Arc of the United States. He has served as the chair of the Policy and Positions Committee. He has served on the Legal Advocacy Subcommittee and on the Ad Hoc Committee on Planned Communities and Other Residential Alternatives for People with I/DD. He is also the Immediate Past President of The Arc of Massachusetts and a longstanding board member of that chapter. He has a long history of advocacy within the legislative and executive branches of Massachusetts government, including the position of Deputy Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services. Fred has devoted 37 years to The Arc's mission and looks forward to continuing his service on the national board. Fred is an Officer and Chair of the Trust and Estate Department and Chair of the Elder Law and Special Needs Practice Group at the law firm of Fletcher Tilton PC.



Carol Wheeler – Vice President



Carol Wheeler has been a national board member since 2012 and co-chaired the Diversity Committee. She served on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID) from 2011-13 and is a founding member of the Leadership Committee for Mason LIFE (a ground-breaking post-secondary program for I/DD students at George Mason University). A long-time Washingtonian, she has worked as a congressional office manager on Capitol Hill, Liaison for Women in the Carter White House, Executive Director of the bi-partisan Women's Campaign Fund, and Vice President for Government Affairs at the National Association of Broadcasters. Her volunteer work has included founding and coordinating the Washington chapter of Project Children, co-chairing a city-wide community action organization, co-chairing the Honorary Board of nationally recognized

provider of services to homeless women, and chairing a community 'Friends' group for a local elementary school. She founded and served as board chair of the Washington-Ireland Program for Service and Leadership and serves on the board of the South Africa-Washington International Program, organizations that identify, inspire and support emerging young leaders who are working to bring reconciliation and prosperity to post-conflict communities. Carol is the mother of a young adult with Williams syndrome.

Doug Church – Secretary



Doug Church has been a national board member since 2010. He has served on the Board Development Committee and Budget, Finance, & Audit Committee and was previous co-chair of the Resource Development Committee. In addition to his service at the national level, he's also an active volunteer at the local level who has served on the board of The Arc of Northern Virginia and as President of The Arc of Northern Virginia Foundation. Doug is a banker, with more than 30 years' experience in Northern Virginia and the markets served by First Virginia Bank, Inc. He currently holds the position of Chairman of Virginia Heritage Bank, an institution that has grown to an \$11 billion corporation during Doug's tenure. He is the father of an adult son with an intellectual disability.

Hugh M. Evans III – Treasurer

Hugh Evans has been a member of the board of The Arc of the United States since 2010, and he continues to serve on the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee. He remains active at the local level through his membership in The Arc of Baltimore. Hugh is a Past President of the Board of Directors of V-LINC, a nonprofit organization that focuses on promoting independence for people with disabilities through the use of assistive technology. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of Catholic Charities of Baltimore. He has extensive experience in investment management, financial management, and organizational development, working with both large and small companies and nonprofit organizations. He is the Vice President of Corporate Development and Ventures at 3D Systems, a leading provider of 3D printing. Hugh is the father of a young daughter with Trisomy 21.



Elise McMillan – Immediate Past President



Elise McMillan currently serves as the Immediate Past President of the board of The Arc of the United States. She began her national board career in 2004. Elise has served as a Co-chair of the Policy and Positions Committee that is responsible for developing The Arc's Public Policy Agenda and Position Statements. She is a Past President of The Arc of Davidson County and The Arc of Tennessee and remains actively involved with both chapters. Elise believes in the mission of The Arc and in including self-advocates in leadership roles in the organization. In addition to her work for The Arc, Elise is Co-Director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; Director of Community Outreach, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center; and Senior Associate in the Department of Psychiatry. Elise has an adult son with an intellectual disability.

Directors (Chapter Elected)

Laura Kennedy



Laura Kennedy has been active in NYSARC at both the statewide and local levels for more than three decades. She is Immediate Past President of NYSARC and the former president of the New York City Chapter of NYSARC, Inc. Deserving winner of numerous awards – including the 2000 Staten Island Woman of Achievement Award – and long active in her community, Kennedy serves as Executive Board Member for the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Council, Chairperson for the Council's Advocacy and Education Committees, Board Member for Friends of the College of Staten Island, and Board Member for Staten Island Mental Health Society, Inc. Kennedy also serves as Alter Guild Member for Christ Church New Brighton. Kennedy has residences both on Staten Island and in Essex, NY, in the Adirondacks.

Chloe Rothschild

Chloe Rothschild is a young adult with autism. She is on a mission to make a difference and help teach others about autism by sharing her own experiences. Chloe advocates through writing, speaking, and social media. She currently serves on various boards in the Ohio area and has been involved with autism advocacy for over five years. Chloe has had the opportunity to be a speaker the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence Conference, the Autism Research Institute Annual Conference, Milestones Autism Resource Conference, and the Autism Society of America National Conference. Chloe has shared her experiences with parents, school districts, health providers, and the larger public.



Mitch Routon



Mitch Routon, a member of The Arc Pikes Peak Region's Board and The Arc of Colorado's Board of Directors, is a strong self advocate in the Colorado Springs and larger Colorado community. His friendly, laid-back demeanor is paralleled by a quickness to speak out on injustices against those with disabilities. As a current board member for The Arc PPR, Mitch enjoys being involved in the non-profit in a variety of capacities. "I knew about The Arc PPR from growing up; my dad was a former board member and board president from 1994-2000," Mitch said. "I like being involved with The Arc PPR, because it's important to let people know that The Arc (advocacy) makes a difference. I want to do whatever I can to make sure that people who have disabilities have the resources they need."

Hussain Ismail

Hussain Ismail is a Pakistani-American marketing executive that has spent his career helping brands and non-profits tell their stories. Currently he is the Vice President of Marketing for VaynerMedia located in Brooklyn, New York. He began his career in the music industry, working at Interscope Records and Live Nation, working on artist releases and tours. Hussain was born in Pakistan but moved to the United States at a young age where he grew up in the bay area and has a sibling with an intellectual disability. Hussain was raised Muslim and has completed a pilgrimage to Mecca, but he currently identifies as atheist. While in most practical ways he identifies as Californian, his name, his ethnicity, and his family inextricably tie him to groups beyond that: Muslims in America, immigrants of all stripes, and Pakistanis everywhere.



Kathleen Stauffer



Kathleen Stauffer has been a member of the board of The Arc of the United States since 2014 and serves on the Policy & Positions Committee. She is the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc of New London County in Norwich, CT. She is a recognized leader in public policy advocacy and in individual advocacy for self-advocates. Her leadership skills have contributed to a strong track record for building dynamic teams, supporting people, and working with diverse communities and cultures. In the area of employment for people with I/DD, she advocates “real work for real pay.” In the housing arena, Kathleen’s chapter serves about 61 people with I/DD in community living homes. Kathleen serves as a member of the Steering Committee for the National Conference of Executives of The Arc. Prior to her involvement in IDD services, Kathleen spent 30 years in media working initially as an editor and journalist and later a group publisher.

Directors (Board Elected)

Dena L. Gassner

Dena Gassner has been a member of the board of The Arc of the United States since 2014, and serves on the Policy & Positions Committee. She is a Social Worker in Huntington, West Virginia, who has also engaged in public policy advocacy on the local, regional, state, and national levels on topics such as denial of services due to a lack of service providers who can provide systems navigation support. She has also presented to the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee and to the U.S. House of Representatives and spent considerable time at “Day on the Hill” events in Washington, D.C. She has also served as an advisory board member to the Tennessee Autism Summit. Dena has assisted many clients in navigating transition and vocational rehabilitation, and has given testimony before VR National Offices. Dena self-identifies as having been diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome as an adult; she has a 24-year-old son who is on the Autism spectrum as well.



Mary Gonzales



Mary Gonzalez has been a member of the board of The Arc of the United States since 2014, and serves on the Diversity Committee. She is experienced in public policy and an expert in leadership development. Over the years, she has trained many advocates and community organizers through an organization that she co-founded, The Gamaliel Foundation, which is known for its work in training community organizers and advancing social justice causes. She is a former member of the Illinois Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. Mary has been involved with many local chapters of The Arc in California, and has been a speaker at the National Conference of Executives Summer Leadership Institute and at NCE’s pre-conference training during the National Convention. Mary is recently retired. She had a brother with a developmental disability.

Directors Continuing Though 2020

Dr. Kruti Acharya



Dr. Acharya is a board certified developmental and behavioral pediatrician and internist in the Department of Disability and Human Development. She is the director of the Illinois Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and other related Disabilities (LEND) Program, an interdisciplinary graduate-level training program about leadership in disability, funded through the Maternal Child Health Bureau. Dr. Acharya cares for individuals with developmental disabilities using a lifespan perspective from childhood to adulthood. She is particularly interested in supporting adolescents and young adults with developmental disabilities as they transition to adult-systems of care. Her research has focused on the intersection of disability, ethics and genetic testing and how best to support families who are managing these issues. Dr. Acharya received her MD degree from Boston University. She completed a combined Internal Medicine-Pediatrics residency, followed by a fellowship in Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at the University of Chicago. She has completed training in medical ethics and served as faculty at the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics at the University of Chicago.

Grace L. Francis

Grace Francis has been a national board member since 2015. Several members of Grace's blended family experience disability. Positive social change is at the core of her personal and professional endeavors, and, as a result, her work and research focuses on family and disability policy, quality of life, family support, and positive post-high school outcomes for individuals with disabilities. She currently is an assistant professor of Special Education Adapted Curriculum at George Mason University. She formally was the director of the SUCCEED program, a residential college program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. In this role she partnered with the St. Louis Arc to enhance the program, meet the needs of students and their families, enrich the preparation of University of Missouri-St. Louis faculty and staff to teach and meaningfully include students with disabilities, and participate in community outreach to promote access to college after high school for students with disabilities.



Connie Garner



Connie Garner focuses her practice as Vice President for Disability Policy & Education Policy at the DC office of ML Strategies; she is also Executive Director for Advance CLASS, Inc. Her areas of experience include health care, mental health and substance use disorders, disability, long term care, and education. Prior to rejoining Foley Hoag in 2012, she was the Executive Vice President for Policy at United Cerebral Palsy (UCP). For 17 years, Connie served as Policy Director for Disability and Special Populations to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). She worked with the late Chairman Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, Sen. Christopher Dodd and Sen. Tom Harkin. She was the lead Democratic committee architect for the CLASS Act, the major long-term care legislation that is part of the Affordable Care Act; enactment of the landmark Mental Health Parity Act 2008; the 2006 and 2009 reauthorizations of the \$2 billion Ryan White CARE Act; the Family Opportunity Act of 2006; the 2005 reauthorization of Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and the 1999 Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act. Connie also served in the U.S. Department of Education as Director of the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council for Children with Disabilities and as the secretary of education's principal liaison on interagency healthcare matters. In addition to her work at the federal level, she has practiced as both a hospital and public health clinical nurse specialist, including as the nursing administrator for maternal-child health inpatient hospital units in the Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. areas. Connie earned bachelor's and masters of science degrees in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania and George Mason University, respectively. She also earned an educational specialist degree in policy from George Washington University.

Dr. Neil Hawkins

Dr. Neil C. Hawkins serves as the Chief Sustainability Officer and Corporate Vice President for Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) for The Dow Chemical Company, where he is in his 29th year of service. Hawkins is a global leader in sustainable business practices, EH&S management, and public policy platforms for global sustainable development. He led Dow's 2025 Sustainability Goals development, which aim to help chart a new course for business in global sustainable development. He holds doctoral and master's degrees from the Harvard University School of Public Health, as well as an undergraduate degree from Georgia Tech. He and his family are very active in advocacy for individuals with disabilities and are strong supporters of community and professional theatre, including The Purple Rose Theatre in Chelsea, Michigan. Hawkins has two daughters and resides in Midland, Michigan.



Dr. Christopher Metzler



Dr. Metzler appears regularly on The O'Reilly Factor and Fox News Strategy Room and CNBC where he provides expert commentary on U.S. and global affairs, politics, human rights, human capital, diversity and related issues. He travels extensively speaking to colleges, organizations and businesses in the United States and globally. He has also appeared on BBC News, Sky News, C-Span and The Fox Nightly Scoreboard. His radio appearances have included Brain and the Judge, The Monica Crowley Show, The Joe Madison Show, The Tavis Smiley Show and The Bev Smith Show. In addition to a Masters degree in Human Rights from Columbia University, he also holds a PhD from University of Aberdeen in Law as well as diplomas and postgraduate certificates in law. He is a member of The University of Oxford in Oxford, England as well as a member of Kellogg College at the University of Oxford. At Oxford, he read international human rights law leading to a law degree (MSt) in international human rights law from Oxford. A seasoned academic and legal scholar. Public figure with numerous TV and other media appearance. Global Inclusion Expert and nerd.

John Muller

John Muller is currently pursuing his PhD in Philosophy in Wisconsin. He is a former associate attorney at the law firm Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP. Since 2014 he has served on the Policy and Positions Committee of The Arc. Before joining MTO, Mr. Muller was a fellow and lecturer at Harvard Law School. Previously, Mr. Muller clerked for Judge Guido Calabresi of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and Judge Sandra L. Lynch of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. Mr. Muller received his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was an articles editor of the Yale Law Journal. He received his A.B., summa cum laude, from Dartmouth College. He has a sister with Down syndrome.



Kenneth Oakes



Kenneth Oakes has been involved in The Arc movement since he became a volunteer leader in The Youth Arc movement while in college. His career in special education spans over 40 years, and includes many different leadership roles in the disability and special education communities. He currently serves as Board President of The Arc of Pennsylvania. He is past president of The Arc of Philadelphia. He is currently an Adjunct Faculty member in the Education Department, School of Graduate Studies at Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia. He is also a Special Education Consultant for Foundations, Inc.. Before that, Mr. Oakes was a Special Education Director at the School District of Philadelphia, a Consultant with PaTTAN, and a special educator.

Kelly Piacenti



Kelly Piacenti has been a national board member since 2010. She has also served on the Diversity Committee, Resource Development Committee, and the Chapter Excellence Committee of the national organization. On the local level, she is also an active advocate who is a member of The Arc of Morris, New Jersey. She has been the director of the Metlife Center for Special Needs Planning in Somerset New Jersey. Kelly is a spokesperson for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who cannot speak for themselves. She has mentored self-advocates on the national board. She is the mother of a young son with developmental disabilities.

Valencia Faye Tate

Faye Tate is the Vice President of Diversity & Inclusion at CoBank and the former Director for Global Equality Diversity and Inclusion at CH2M. CoBank is a national cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. She spent six years at Kaiser Hill Company at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site. For over fifteen years, Fay has worked in various areas related to Diversity and Inclusion. She is focused on positioning diversity and inclusion as strategic business imperatives. Prior to Working for Kaiser Hill, Faye was employed at Denver Water where she managed water sales and real estate and worked as the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer and Small Business Liaison. She serves on the National Board of Directors for The Human Rights Campaign and the Board of Directors for the Metro Denver Chamber Leadership Foundation, Denver District Our Child Care Center and the Rocky Mountain Minority Suppliers Development Council. She has served on the Board of Directors for the Denver Athletic Club, Colorado Bright Beginnings, The Rocky Mountain Children's Choir and Colorado March of Dimes. She has a Juris Doctor Degree from the Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English Literature from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. She is the mother of a daughter with cerebral palsy, who is blind, and has an intellectual disability.



Jose Velasco



Jose Velasco is Vice-President of Operations and Strategy and co-leads the Autism at Work program globally at SAP. Jose has a 30-year IT/Software career that spans public and private sectors in companies ranging from startups to Fortune 50 enterprises. During his tenure of more than 20 years at SAP, he has occupied positions in product management, consulting, development, strategy, go-to-market and HR/diversity functions. He holds a Master Degree in Technology Commercialization from the University of Texas at Austin and B.S. in Computer Science from Tecnologico de Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico. He is a parent of two children with Autism.

NCE Designated Directors

Carrie Hobbs-Guiden (Immediate Past NCE Steering Committee Chairwoman)

Carrie Hobbs Guiden is Executive Director of The Arc Tennessee. She has over twenty-six years' experience working with people with I/DD and their families primarily through local and state chapters of The Arc in Tennessee, Arizona and Indiana. Carrie began her career as a DSP and has experience in secondary transition, employment, positive behavior supports, process improvement, program operation, and public policy and systems advocacy.

