

# empower

REAL PEOPLE, REAL PROGRESS

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# SAVE THE DATE

## *Elevate Your Advocacy*

### APRIL 23-25, 2018

RENAISSANCE DOWNTOWN HOTEL WASHINGTON, DC



**2018  
DISABILITY  
POLICY  
SEMINAR**  
WASHINGTON, DC

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



### 2017: A YEAR OF UNITY AGAINST THREATS

Elise McMillan, President  
The Arc

It is hard to imagine that 2017 is already coming to an end. Our network faced many challenges this year, from multiple threats to the services people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) rely on to live and work in the community, to the impact of hurricanes that devastated many states. Through all the challenges, The Arc's network remained strong, unified and resilient. I appreciate the stories that many of you have shared.

I feel a great sense of pride seeing such a resurgence in our grassroots advocacy. From Washington, DC to California, and every state in between we had advocates fighting for Medicaid and educating policymakers about the crucial supports and services that Medicaid provides. The threats on the table were serious ones, that would have decimated home and community based services for people with I/DD and their families, but our advocates remained vigilant. Engaging with their Members of Congress and their staff members, sharing their stories, and rocking their orange shirts, The Arc's presence was felt in every legislative challenge this year. We know that a new year will bring new public policy challenges and opportunities. We've shown the force of our movement and we will not back down when it comes to civil rights for people with I/DD.

The hurricanes that tore through states and territories left a path of destruction. Many of The Arc's chapters in Texas, Louisiana, and Florida sustained damage and the families that rely on those chapters ended up turning to them in their hour of need. Our chapter staff and volunteers in impacted areas worked over time to support those who were reliant on them. Even more inspiring was the outpouring of support from other chapters across the country in the form of donations, calls, and emails. You will read more about the impact on our chapters in Texas in this edition.

While this year was a trying one, it was one filled with victories and examples of what makes The Arc so powerful. We don't know what 2018 will bring, but I know we will face it together as a powerful network committed to inclusion. ●

*Elise McMillan*

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Real People, Real Progress

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

**THE FUTURE OF WELLBEING:  
A CONVERSATION WITH DEEPAK CHOPRA**



“Action without love is irrelevant. And love without action is meaningless. When you combine the two, then you have a different kind of activism—not an angry, strident activism, what I would call sacred activism.”

In November during The Arc’s 2017 National Convention, we had the honor of playing host to world-renowned author and inspirational speaker, Dr. Deepak Chopra. We invited Dr. Chopra to present a keynote session entitled “The Future of Wellbeing—Inspiring the Next Generation of Disability Advocates.” Dr. Chopra has a long history of philanthropic

work through the Chopra Foundation and this event was his first opportunity to connect with The Arc’s network.

In advance of the event, Dr. Chopra sat down with us to discuss his new book and what advocates in our network can do to prepare for the next 70 years of advocacy.

**Q:** In your new book, *You are the Universe*, you talk about a “human universe.” How do you think the concept of a “human universe” can be utilized by civil rights activists like The Arc’s network?

**Deepak Chopra:** I think we have to start by simply observing our own selves, without necessarily judging ourselves. The great philosopher Krishnamurti said,

“The highest intelligence is to observe yourself without judging yourself.” If you can, start with that self-awareness.



People have arguments about what spirituality is, I think the simplest definition is self-awareness. That is, it is awareness of sensory experience, awareness of your body, awareness of relationships, awareness of eco-systems, awareness of mental space.

In the beginning, just observing yourself while making choices, and having experiences. That begins a process of transformation. You will realize very soon that it is very possible for you, with no effort, to be more loving, compassionate, empathetic, have peace, and participate in love in action. We will never have social justice or economic justice, unless we consciously embrace love in action. Action without love is irrelevant. And love without action is meaningless. When you combine the two, then you have a different kind of activism—not an angry, strident activism, what I would call sacred activism.

**Q:** Can you discuss perception of the universe, visual images, and the power they hold?

**Deepak Chopra:** How you perceive reality is influenced by everything else. Thoughts, emotions and feelings, you change one and you change the other, they are inseparable. You are the creator of your personal reality, collectively we are the creator of a creative reality—our mind, body, and the rest of the world.

**Q:** What thoughts would you like to share with The Arc’s network as we look to the future of civil rights for people with I/DD?

**Deepak Chopra:** We should ask ourselves what is the gift that people with I/DD and all disability...give us. We can transform ourselves and be deeply embedded in the understanding of our inseparability, so that any discrimination of any kind and any injustice of any kind to our fellow human being is known as an insult to our humanity. ●

**HELP THE ARC EMPOWER  
OUR COMMUNITY OF  
ADVOCATES.**

**YOUR SUPPORT IS  
EMPOWERMENT**

When we join together and empower each other, we are stronger. Despite the numerous threats our community faced this year we remained unified and resilient, empowered to win the fight.

We need **your** support **now** more than ever to help empower thousands of people with I/DD to live their lives with the community inclusion, freedom, and dignity they deserve.

And that is worth fighting for.



**PLEASE SHOW YOUR SUPPORT  
AND MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY.**

**[thearc.org/empower](http://thearc.org/empower)**

# CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

## NO REST FOR THE WEARY: HURRICANE HARVEY AND ITS EFFECTS ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN BEAUMONT, TEXAS

By Hannah Colletti, The Arc Greater Beaumont

The flooding in Beaumont was unprecedented. Among those affected were people with disabilities. One after another, group homes flooded—and The Arc of Greater Beaumont opened our doors to temporarily house residents. Chapter staff and board scrambled to find air mattresses, tables, and chairs to make people as comfortable as possible.

People saved what they could carry. John, a client with cerebral palsy, had a change of clothes and shoes, a bag, a heat pack to help ease recurring shoulder pain, and a single family portrait.

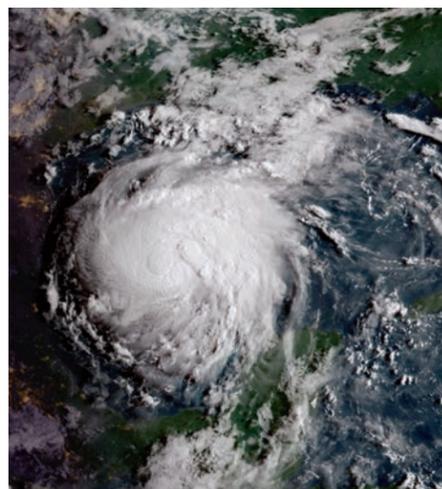
The stress was palpable, and conditions were cramped. Simple tasks like taking medicine became difficult due to water scarcity. We didn't have laundry or showers.

There were barely a few feet between beds. Sleep was hard to come by for those easily kept up by movement and noise.

Help and supplies came from fellow chapters of The Arc from across the country. The Arc of Colorado, The Arc of Aurora, and The Arc Thrift Stores in Colorado stepped up. Von Limbaugh, a board member of The Arc of Colorado, and his son Andrew packed up a truck loaded with 400 pounds of clothing, water, food, baby supplies, medical supplies, cleaning supplies, and toiletries, and started to drive.

Chapter staff across the country called offering donations. People brought in hot meals, water and fresh produce. Fortunately, within days, everyone had a more stable housing solution.

Our community is still adjusting to life after this cataclysmic event. For people with disabilities their housing and day to day routine have changed greatly, and they've lost much of what has long been familiar to them. Like any other local non-profit or small business, our bottom line has been impacted. Thanks to the spirit of our community, we have faith we will endure this hardship. And our hearts are full thanks to the generosity of our very special chapter network. We truly are a family. ●



# NATIONAL INITIATIVES

## PLANNING FOR A MORE PROTECTED FUTURE

Do you need help planning for the future? Do you have a family member or friend with an I/DD who needs help planning for the future? The Arc has new resources to help! The Arc's Center for Future Planning® supports and encourages adults with I/DD and their families to plan for the future. A plan is important through all stages of life, but especially for the future when a parent or caregiver is no longer able to provide support. The Center recently debuted new features to the website to support individuals with I/DD in the planning process. New videos and easy-to-read content help adults with I/DD and their supporters

learn about all the areas of planning—including decision-making, housing, financial planning, employment, and more. These resources were developed to ensure that everyone has access to a variety of information while they establish their vision and roadmap for the future.

The Build Your Plan® online tool also now allows adults with I/DD to create an account and begin to develop a future plan. This new feature encourages adults with I/DD to take control of their plan. Planning for the future can be difficult, but it is possible and necessary. Visit [futureplanning.thearc.org](http://futureplanning.thearc.org) to check out these new features to the website. ●

## 2017 CATALYST AWARDS

On November 3rd, The Arc presented the prestigious Catalyst Awards to five honorees, all of whom have made extraordinary contributions in the lives of people with I/DD.

"The diversity of the work being recognized is a shining example of how inclusion knows no bounds. Our hope is by honoring these catalysts for change, we inspire others," said Peter Berns, Chief Executive Officer of The Arc. ●



Award winners from left to right: Melvin Mar, John Ross Bowie, Representative Dr. Tim Brown, Lauryn Fraas, Cliff Sloan, State Senator Robert Ortt, Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, Sarah Herrlinger, Darren Minifie, Janette Barrios, and Carter Kirkpatrick

A full list of the accomplishments being honored can be found on The Arc's Catalyst Awards website at [catalystawards.org](http://catalystawards.org).



From Left to Right: Executive Producer of Speechless, Melvin Mar; Kurt Rutzen, member of The Arc's Board of Directors; and star of Speechless, John Ross Bowie



From Left to Right: Liz Mahar, Program Manager for The Arc and her sister Crystal Muro



Sarah Herrlinger, Director of Global Accessibility Policy and Initiatives for Apple



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We look forward to achieving with you in 2018!

Stay in-the-know in the year ahead.  
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