

Quarterly Newsletter
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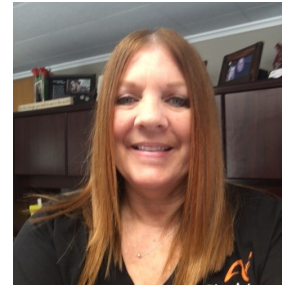
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A message from our Chief Executive Officer, Sandy Amato



Dear Friends of The Arc of Southington,

The past few months have been a mix of progress and setbacks. Since last spring, the individuals we serve have had lots of new experiences and proved to be eager self-advocates as they realized the road ahead with the unresolved state budget issues.

We have had to become more involved with the legislature than ever. The forced furlough days, draconian cuts to our budgets, and the overall uncertainty of the future of health and human service nonprofits and the role they play in a healthy Connecticut have weighed heavily on everyone involved in this field - including the wonderful individuals who rely on us to live fulfilling lives.

In spite of the looming cloud of budget cuts over our heads, we still managed to maintain a positive attitude and continue to plan for the future while enjoying all of the fun activities we could over the summer.

In June, we hosted our 4th annual variety show to a sold-out crowd! Everyone worked very hard to perform their songs in the Arc's *Got Talent!* Show raising money for our *A New Way* self-advocacy group.

The Arc of Southington celebrated its annual picnic in June at our headquarters in Plantsville. Guests were treated to a feast of Frankie's gourmet fast food and Rita's Italian Ice. Puppeteers, face painting, and an art show were also part of the festivities. In July, 20 of our residents were treated to an outing with the New Britain Bees to get the full experience of playing ball on the field. Our recreation team vacationed in Lake George for their annual trip.

We're planning some great fundraisers and events including an evening with psychic medium, Rebecca LoCicero on September 22nd, a Town-Wide Tag Sale on October 14th, and the Annual Recreation Halloween party on October 29th at the Cadillac Ranch.

Through the ups and downs, we know that we can count on you for your support, advocacy, and encouragement. We thank you for all that you do to help us succeed!

*For more information on how you can donate or get involved, please visit us at
www.ArcSouthington.org*

An Interview with Residential Program Supervisor, Laura Cirinna



How long have you been with The Arc of Southington? 11 years and 2 months.

Were you always in your current role, or have you had other positions here? I was not always in my current role. I started as a relief staff, and after six months I became a team leader which was a manager's assistant back then. Within that same year, I became a Program Manager for the West Street group home. I stayed there for a few years, then I managed both Watrous and Michaels Way group homes together. After which I came back to manage West Street again for several more years and then became a Residential Program Supervisor.

What do you like most about working here? Being able to advocate and enhance the lives of the individuals we serve. It's a very rewarding feeling to make a difference in someone's life. I consider the residents we serve as my extended family. When I go to the group home, I feel like a celebrity when I walk in. The overflowing of love and appreciation is noted!

What is one of your fondest memories during your time at The Arc? Having many fond memories during my time at The Arc, the one that is dearest to my heart is the time I was able to reconnect one of our individuals with her sister.

One day I asked Barbara R. if she had any siblings and she mentioned a sister in Rhode Island. I was able to make contact and find her location. We scheduled a day trip, and I took Barbara to Westerly, Rhode Island, for the sisters to be reunited. The feeling was overwhelming for me when the initial connection was made between the sisters. We ate lunch, they talked about memories, they hugged, they laughed, and at one point Barbara's sister brushed her hair for her. After lunch, I took them out shopping. When we returned, Barbara's sister was so grateful to me for making this reunion happen.

We planned another trip to visit again, but it had to be postponed due to her sister falling and needing rehabilitation. Shortly after, I received a call on Easter Sunday from Barbara's niece stating that Barbara's sister would not survive the night and was dying from cancer. That very day, I brought Barbara to Rhode Island to visit with her sister one last time. When we arrived she sat on her sister's bed and hugged and kissed her. I asked her sister if she remembered me and she said, "Yes, you're the sweetheart!" My heart melted. Barbara's sister passed that evening. Unfortunately, we were never notified about the funeral services as we had asked. This made Barbara very upset. I told her I would find out the details and I would take her back to Rhode Island to visit her sister's final resting place. I was able to obtain the information and Barbara and I took another trip. We purchased flowers to leave at her sister's gravesite and visited for a while. Barbara continues to take annual trips to visit her sister's gravesite.

To date, Barbara talks about the experience of reconnecting with her sister. We are both forever grateful to have been a part of it.

We've Created a You Tube Channel!

In response to all of the advocacy we've been involved with over the past few months several of our individuals created videos to voice their concerns about the budget cuts. This prompted us to create a space where we could house them all at the click of a mouse - so The Arc of Southington You Tube channel was born! We only have a few videos up right now, but moving forward we will include not just advocacy videos, but other snippets of what we're up to at our various events and milestones. You can check out our You Tube channel by visiting www.ArcSouthington.org/resources and clicking on the You Tube icon. Happy viewing!



New Britain Bees Host Arc of Southington for a Special Hands-On Field Experience



Amanda with John ready to play ball!

Imagine you're blind or developmentally disabled and given the chance to experience hitting a ball and running the bases. This became a reality for 20 individuals served by The Arc of Southington who were invited to interact with team members and participate in the thrill of playing baseball at a very special "field of dreams" event held at New Britain Stadium by the New Britain Bees in July.

The Arc of Southington individuals played their own game with Wiffle bats and balls, gloves and helmets. Professional players from the New Britain Bees and Lancaster Barnstormers helped with coaching and pitching for this one of a kind adventure.

The project, led by Bryce Weiler, is the first of its kind in Connecticut to offer people with disabilities the chance to fully enjoy America's pass time. Weiler, a blind individual who works with the Beautiful Lives Project, teamed up with the Bees to offer individuals with all forms of disabilities the opportunity to play on the field before games.

In addition, the program plans to offer disabled game spectators services such as interpreters for the deaf, braille menus and tactile cues for the blind, and noise-cancelling equipment for individuals with autism making New Britain Stadium one of the most disabled-friendly minor league baseball parks in the United States. The goal is to expand this program nationally.

For now, a very happy group of people with developmental disabilities in Southington can't wait for the next opportunity to play ball!



Hitting it out of the park!



What's up Carnezz?

You can check out all of the great pics from our programs and events on our Facebook page! www.facebook.com/ArcSouthington

A Profile in Goal Achievement



Mikol is a very determined fellow. For three years he has been a resident at one of our group homes in Wallingford. Mikol has a goal to one day live independently with minimal support. He has worked very hard in the past few years to bring himself closer and closer to that dream. In June of 2015, Mikol graduated from Sheehan High School. Upon graduation Mikol enrolled in the ICE T program at Lyman Hall to receive vocational training which he completed in June 2017. Mikol is now employed with Technical Allied in Wallingford.

In addition to his academic achievements, Mikol works very hard at his personal goals designed to help him become more independent. These include packing his own lunches, doing his own banking, taking care of his own laundry, and doing his chores. He has gone from refusing medications to self-medicating.

Mikol is well on the way to living independently. Though he's not quite there yet, he has made tremendous progress and we are confident that he will definitely realize his dream of independent living in the very near future.

A New Way Upcoming Meeting Schedule

As the Summer comes to a close, our monthly self-advocacy group meetings will resume. All meetings are from 6 pm to 8 pm the 2nd Wednesday of the month (unless indicated). Here is the schedule.

September 13, 2017

October 18, 2017 (note - this is the third Wednesday of the month)

December 13, 2017

January 10, 2018

February 14, 2018

March 14, 2018

April, May and June TBA due to Variety show scheduled practices.

If you would like more information about A New Way or are interested in joining, please contact Sandy Amato at 860-628-9220 ext. 140.

***New Location for Meetings!!
The Orchards
34 Hobart Street, Southington***



Mike Ruzzi, our Self-Advocacy Coordinator stands beside the "visually impaired individual" sign he advocated for in his neighborhood.

Recreation Update

The Recreation travel group enjoyed a 6-day trip to Lake George Village, NY in July. While there, they visited Great Escape Amusement Park, a Western ranch and high speed zip line, and a family fun center. Everyone enjoyed the pools, hot tub, fireworks, shops, restaurants, and lunch cruise on Lake George. It was a fun filled adventure for all.



Many in the Recreation group were treated to a night of world class wrestling at Muzzy Field in Bristol for "Wrestling Under the Stars". The event featured four Main Event matches and three Northeast Wrestling Tag Team title matches. Well known wrestlers such as Rey Mysterio, Big Sexy Kevin Nash, Hacksaw Jim Duggan and more were on hand for meet and greet photo opportunities. The whole group had a blast!



James, Ben and Chris with Hacksaw Jim Duggan

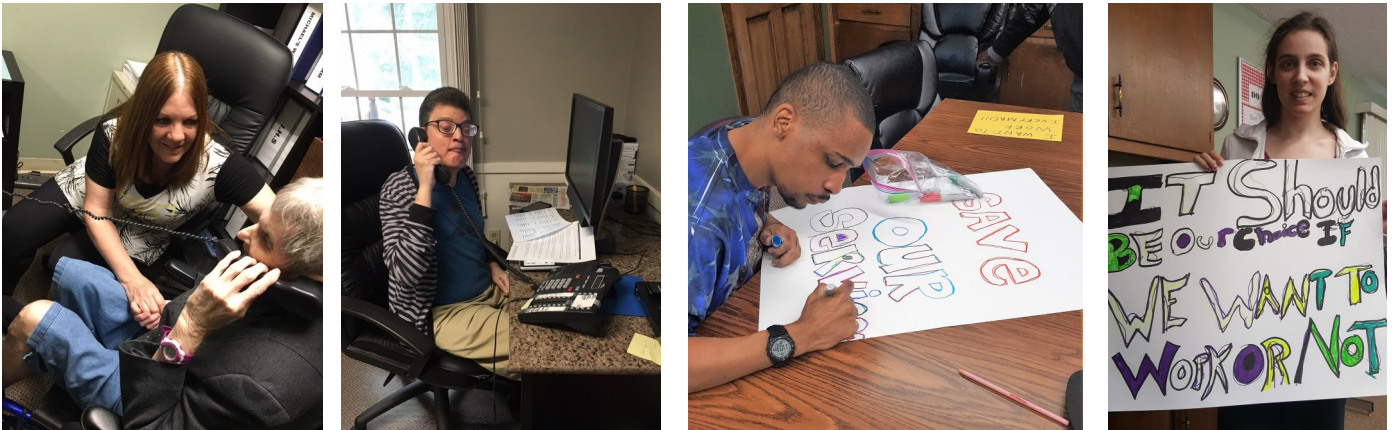


Rebecca, Jennifer, and Wendy ready for the show!

Advocacy in Action

Budget Update

With so much uncertainty about a biennial state budget we have been hard at work advocating for the disability community. We are facing unprecedented cuts to our budget which will impact all of the people we serve, our staff, and their families. The only definite in this situation are the very real cuts we have experienced so far - and the likelihood of experiencing them well into the future - as they potentially rise to ten percent in the next few months. We are not standing idly by. We've been actively working with our constituents, Arc Connecticut, and the CT Nonprofit Alliance to make our voices heard.



Calling legislators and making signs on furlough day #1.

There are a series of forced furlough days within the coming months because the state, absent of a budget, cannot reimburse us for day support services: October 25, February 28, 2018, April 25, 2018.

*Hundreds converged on the Capitol on August 23rd for a rally during furlough day #2.
The Arc of Southington was well represented!*



Upcoming Events

An Evening with Psychic Medium Rebecca Anne LoCicero



Friday, September 22, 2017 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM

Southington Grange #25, 137 Knowles Avenue, Plantsville, CT 06479

Tickets \$35. You can purchase them at www.ArcSouthington.org/Events

Please note—venue is NOT handicapped accessible.

Rebecca Anne LoCicero has been working within the New England area, nationally and worldwide for over 22 years as psychic medium!

“Messages from Heaven” is her main presentation involving direct, divine and accurate “readings” for the people from their loved ones who have died. Rebecca has an exclusive and unique way to present her messages. She is bold, brassy, honest, loud, outgoing, hysterically funny and full of joy!

She will entertain you and touch your heart as she talks about her connections “here and there” and the passageways in-between.

All ticket sales are final. Seating is limited! Tickets must be purchased before the event and are on a first come first serve basis. There will be raffles and light refreshments after the presentation. There is no guarantee of a personal reading. For more information call Jennifer at 860-628-9220 ext. 240.



Arc of Southington 7th Annual Town-Wide Tag Sale

Saturday, October 14, 2017 (Rain date is Sunday, October 15)

The tag sale is open to the residents, businesses and organizations of Southington, Plantsville, Marion and Milldale, and will be held at each individual location (times will differ for each participant).

To be included on the address list and map, download and complete the application by visiting (www.ArcSouthington.org/events) and return it with a check for \$15.00 made out to The Arc of Southington, 201 West Main Street, Plantsville, CT 06479.

For a \$20 fee, businesses and organizations can promote their specials, sales, and goods with a business card sized ad along with inclusion on the list by completing the Business Ad section of the application.

All must entries must be received before September 29, 2017. You can mail the check with your info, or stop by the Arc’s office to register.

Plan your shopping experience in advance by purchasing a listing and map for \$1.00 at The Arc of Southington office (201 West Main Street, Plantsville) from Oct. 10–13 between the hours of 9:30 am and 4:30 pm. Maps can also be purchased at Tops Supermarket (887 Meriden-Waterbury Turnpike, Southington) from October 7–14 during their normal business hours.

For more information call Krista at 860-628-9220 ext. 100.



201 West Main Street
Plantsville, CT 06479

Check out our website!
www.ArcSouthington.org

Save the Date!
Saturday, March 3, 2018
Our 26th Annual Gala—Aqua Turf
Details coming soon....

