



## ***A Message From the President of the Board of Directors***

### **Be heard in Hartford . . .**

***Calling all Parents and Advocates!***



Linda Rhodes

In 1952, local parents of children with intellectual disabilities gathered in a Groton living room, passed a hat and collected \$10.69 to create an education program. **Back then, students with IDD were not welcome in our public schools.**

**Advocates,  
it's time to say:  
"I matter!"**

Today, our agency serves half the state. We **are grateful to the visionaries who believed in full inclusion** and founded The Arc Eastern Connecticut.

**Advocacy and opportunity matter just as much today!** For two decades, we have heard that Connecticut is "too broke" to adequately fund opportunities for people with IDD.

Now, Connecticut has a big surplus. **Let's encourage Gov. Ned Lamont to walk "In Partnership for Full Equality" with us.**

**Advocates, it's time to say: "I matter!"** Parents, please tell the Governor: "My child matters!" **Join the fight for an 8% funding increase for Connecticut's nonprofits** this legislative session.

*PS – We hope to see you April 23<sup>rd</sup> for our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sock Hop at Norwich Free Academy. Enjoy dinner, dancing and a murder mystery, too! Call Denise: 860.889.4435 x116 for details or visit TheArcECT.org. <*

## ***A Message From the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc***

### **Facilities study underway . . .**

***Help Us to Envision The Arc ECT's Future!***

In just a dozen years, **thanks to our visionary Board, talented team, participants and families, The Arc Eastern Connecticut has quadrupled in size.**

As we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Arc ECT's Board-driven strategic plan ensures excellent, choice-based service delivery and team-based outreach. **The plan also calls for The Arc ECT to assess its facilities.**

Our commitment to excellence means we continuously reinvent ourselves. **How best can we flexibly, inventively serve?** The effort to answer that is underway.

**The Arc ECT strives to be a leader in service provision as well as a model employer.** Our facilities have a big impact on service delivery, cost-savings, performance excellence and team workplace satisfaction.

**Please step forward to share your own vision**

**for the future. We will be asking for your input!**

**The agency's facilities have a big impact on service delivery, cost-savings, performance excellence and team workplace satisfaction.**

*PS – Save the Date for the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament at the beautiful Connecticut National Golf Course on June 17, 2022! <*

*For more information, call Denise at 860.889.4435 x116 or visit TheArcECT.org.*



Kathleen Stauffer

## It's an election year—reach out to your legislators!

**T**his year, Connecticut residents will be voting for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and a US Senator. **Following 2022's legislative session is especially important** as we make sure our elected officials (and candidates) are thoroughly informed about issues affecting people with disabilities. **The Arc ECT's self-advocacy group, for example, attended the national REV UP Voting Campaign workshop** on Feb. 16 to discuss how to **make sure voters with disabilities in the state are registered, ready to vote, and have access to the ballot.**

The **Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) session began on February 9.** It includes the 151-member House of Representatives and the 36-member Senate. Due to the pandemic, all meetings are conducted virtually, which allows **every citizen the opportunity to attend any session.**

## Track Bills You're Interested In, and Listen in on Committee Hearings—it's Easy!

**Go to [cga.ct.gov](http://cga.ct.gov)** to see the schedule of hearings going on that day. **You can join any of these meetings, which discuss specific bills.** You can also see the **list of House and Senate bills**, and **find your legislator** based on your town of residence.

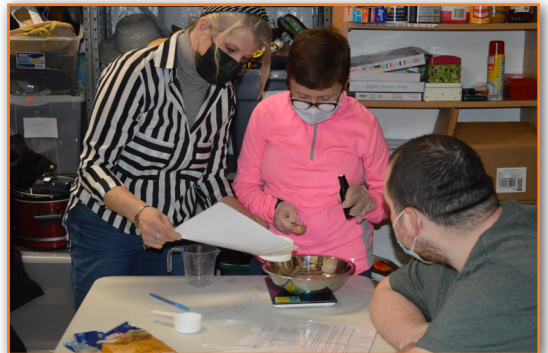
As bills are introduced, this site provides more information on each one and lets you track them. You can also **track bills by using CGA's Bill Tracking service**; all you have to do is sign up on that [cga.ct.gov](http://cga.ct.gov) page and you'll receive notices of when any action happens on a bill you're following.

Look for bills dealing with **employment opportunities for people with IDD, inflation, increased compensation for DSPs, increased programming for people with IDD in need of Day Support Options . . .** And keep track of the legislators introducing and co-signing the bills so you can write to them personally. <

## Real Work for Real Pay: The Arc ECT micro-enterprise update

### The Arc Invests in Expanded Cookie Production Facility

**F**ive new bakers watch attentively as their Job Coach explains the finer points of weights and measures in a culinary training class for employees of The Arc's cookie production micro-enterprise. While The Arc's Culinary program remains at the Employment Transition Center (ETC) in Groton, **the agency will be opening a bakery and storefront on Rt. 171 in Woodstock**, in the same building that houses The Arc Emporium thrift store and The Arc's Redemption Center/Donation Station. Most of eastern Connecticut is familiar with The Arc's Classic Crunch chocolate chip cookies, which are sold in over 22 locations throughout the region. **With grant assistance from partners including USDA, The Harvard Business Association, Dominion Foundation, and the Chelsea Groton Foundation, The Arc has transformed 1,200 s.f. of additional space in the building into a commercial kitchen and retail storefront.** Northeast bakery manager Marnie Hitchew couldn't be happier. "We'll have our own space to do everything from preparation to baking to packaging for wholesale delivery. There'll be a bakery counter so the public can buy cookies directly from us, and have a coffee while they're here."



*Samantha and Anthony learn measuring skills in a culinary training workshop led by Job Coach Melissa Naughton*

**The bakery is expected to open in early summer and will start out with five employees with IDD who will gain experience in preparation, baking, inventory, maintenance, and customer service.** "Everyone is so excited to begin work here," says Marnie. "I'm looking forward to seeing this business grow now that we have our own space and can begin to ramp up production." <



## The Virtual Prom Is On!



Heather, wearing her new gown, gets a matching manicure

The night of February 11 was pretty special for the residents of our supported home in Brooklyn. Crystal, Heather and Nicki had been preparing all day, trying on gowns and doing each other's hair and makeup. Afterwards, everyone went into the living room and joined the **virtual Night to Shine prom event for people with IDD**, sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation and hosted in this area by the **Quinebaug River Church**

**in Jewett City.** The church donated and hand delivered formal wear and other presents to all the residents. Prom organizers had to get creative this year due to the pandemic, and **replicated the evening online**, complete with red carpet, paparazzi, decorations, and Prom King and Queen crowns for everyone. **Attendees uploaded videos and photos of themselves at their respective parties**, which were shared on the Foundation's website, creating a prom with **over 100,000 guests from 34 countries.** The women—along with Angie, Stanley and others participating from their own homes — were thrilled.



Stanley in a party mood

"I had so much fun. This was a great night," said Crystal. Nicki agreed, adding "I got to wear my pretty dress. Please thank everyone at QR Church for the fun night."

"The residents had such a magical night," said House Manager Sherry Levesque-Weimer. "Everyone's missed going to dances—that was a big part of their socializing. This was a really wonderful experience for everyone." <



Angie was resplendent in her gown

## The Arc Wins Spot in NEON Employment Initiative

The Arc ECT was chosen to participate in the Department of Labor's **National Expansion of Employment Opportunities initiative.** James Hyman, our new Director of Employment Services, as well as support staff, will receive technical training from national experts to assist in transforming the employment program to **focus on providing supports that lead to Individual Supported Employment for the greatest number of participants.** Topics covered include customized employment, community engagement, effective outreach to employers, schools, and family members, and peer mentorship. The Arc ECT is also taking advantage of two additional initiatives—a **Customized Employment program** provided by the CT Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and a **CESP (Certified Employment Support Professional) certification program** through a grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut that provides training to administrative staff and certification of Job Coaches in all areas of employment supports. <

## Valentine's Day Fun For All

Community Life & Advocacy participants delivered Valentines and bundles of treats for residents of Chase Manor apartment complex in Norwich. On the Saturday before, Sunny, Sherri and Steven (from L to R) assembled 60 gift bags, which were welcomed by residents and staff with many smiles and thanks. <



## The Arc News Can Also Be Digital!

Do you want less paper in your mail? The Arc newsletter can also be sent in a digital mailing format.

**PLEASE email us at [dtift@thearect.org](mailto:dtift@thearect.org) to receive an e-copy of our newsletter** moving forward. We want to keep sharing all our news with you!

**Worried about getting too many emails from us?** Tell us you would like to opt-out of any other emails and just receive **The Arc News.** Problem solved! <

## “I’ve Got a Good Cookbook!”

Nothing beats the smell of lasagna . . .

—by Kathleen Stauffer

**A**nthony Boulais, 53, of Dayville likes to fish, cook, bowl, and put jigsaw puzzles together. He also loves to work.

By day, the Killingly High School grad mans the recycling machines at The Arc Eastern Connecticut’s Redemption Center and Donation Station in Woodstock.

“He’s very quick. He’s very neat. His space is always very clean,” says his supervisor, Marnie Hitchew. **Boulais runs anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 bottles and cans daily through the machinery** crushing and preparing materials for repurposing.

While they work, the Donation Station recyclers sing their favorite songs and occasionally prank one another. **Boulais explains why he likes his job so much.**

**“We’re treated equally.”**

*Anthony at work*

Outside The Donation Station, life can be different.

Boulais, a person with intellectual disability, dislikes being treated insensitively. **He wishes more people understood how much their disrespect bothers him.** “Sometimes people are just different,” he says of himself. Anthony most dislikes it “when people make jokes or ignore me.”

**The Donation Station is one of the places Anthony excels, and he wouldn’t change a thing about his job.** “There’s nothing hard about this!” he laughs.

At home, Boulais is a neatnick. “If something’s missing, I know!” Everything has its place. He doesn’t like looking for things like gloves as he heads out the door to work. On his return home, Anthony cooks dinner and cleans up the kitchen. Then, he watches movies and does his puzzles. He’s in bed by 9 pm.



**Anthony enjoys making lasagna more than anything else** because the bubbling cheese and sauce and basil fill the house with savory smells. “I get a kick out of that,” he says. Boulais uses hamburger or sausage in his lasagna. Usually, his roommate Wanda reads the recipe aloud while Anthony prepares the ingredients. **The key, he insists, is**

**recipe quality. “I’ve got a good cookbook.”**

Anthony’s favorite holiday is Christmas. Rather than cooking, he dines at his niece Amanda’s house. **Anthony and Amanda are close, and he looks forward to holidays at her place.** Usually, she alternates between turkey and ham.

Anthony never turns down a good meal. Still, a man has his preferences. “I’ll take the turkey over the ham,” he says. <

**See Page 7 for Anthony’s lasagna recipe . . .**

*(Previously Published in The Bulletin, Norwich, CT)*



## Our Community Partners Make Dreams Come True

*Our heartfelt thanks to these great organizations, who provided grants and operating funds to support a variety of vital programs between August 2021 and April 2022.*

The **Rotary Club of Norwich** provided funds for a sand spreader for the Lawn and Landscape micro-enterprise. The **Mary Duke Brown Family Fund** and the **Elsie Brown Fund** provided much-needed programming assistance.

The Arc ECT received grants from the **CT Department of Developmental Services** for employment program training supports and assistive technology for people with IDD living in the community. A technical assistance grant for enhancing our employment/job development component was awarded by the **US Department of Labor/NEON**.

**Jewett City Savings Bank** and **Killingly Building Products** contributed Neighborhood Assistance Act tax credit funds towards the replacement of windows at our Day program facility in Danielson.

The **American Truck Historic Preservation Association** donated funds from its annual truck show to assist with programming. **Knights of Columbus Chapter #7054** Gales Ferry's Tootsie Roll Drive continued to support our Community Life & Advocacy program. And **Pfizer Connecticut Labs** awarded funds to purchase a participant lift at our supported residence in Waterford.

*[Note: A grant from the **CT Department of Homeland Security/FEMA** was awarded to The Arc ECT in April 2021, to offset costs associated with the pandemic; it was inadvertently omitted from our last issue's list of donors.]*

We're also deeply grateful to the **friends, family members, employees and their companies' matching gifts programs, and community partners** who have contributed to our Annual Appeal since August 2021. Thank you so much for supporting our mission and vision!

*And a big thanks to all our anonymous donors who've contributed through Microsoft Rewards/Give with Bing; thanks for using this great platform. <*

## The Arc Eastern Connecticut in the Spotlight

The Arc ECT welcomes **Meghan Millette** to The Arc's nursing staff.

Deputy QA Officer Health & Clinical Services **Aimee Bourassa** received her CDDN certificate in January and is now a **Certified Developmental Disabilities** nurse. "We're so lucky to have Aimee on our staff," noted The Arc's COO Laurie Herring. "This certification is a great asset to the agency and the people we support."

The Arc ECT is pleased to announce that **Paula Kowalski**, Director of our Retired Seniors Program, is now also Director of the Transitional Education Program. **Dennis Walsh**, who previously held that position, was named MicroEnterprise Customer Service Representative.

**James Hymon**, formerly Assistant Director of Individual Services, is now our new Director of Employment Services, Southeast.

**Sue Gregoire** was also promoted from Supervisor at our Employment Transition Center to Director of Day Support Options, Southeast. <

## Self Advocacy Corner

—by **Jamie Lazaroff**, Self-Advocacy Coordinator

This past November, CL&A's Self-Advocacy group hosted Ariel Simms from The Arc US via Zoom. She gave an overview of The Arc US's "AEI" report—**Access, Equity, and Inclusion**. She talked about "What is an identity?" and explained that we all have several identities, and people with disabilities have an additional one, but it is not the only one. **So that when we advocate, we are advocating for the whole person, not just the disabled part.** This is why The Arc has aligned itself and is working with many different social justice movements.

One of the main points of the discussion was that this AEI initiative is focusing on the positive rather than the negative, and stressed **inclusion**. This campaign, and the "Call Me By My Name" initiative, focuses on what people can do and how they can support each other, "to assist and **make sure that each person that I work with can make their own choices, be part of a community of their choice, and feel accepted to be themselves.**" <





## The Arc Through My Eyes by Eric Sneed

In this issue of **The Arc News**, columnist **Eric Sneed** interviews Abimeleh “AJ” Caraballo.

**Eric:** What’s up, AJ?

**AJ:** 'Sup, Eric?

**Eric:** What’s your job at The Arc ECT?

**AJ:** I work for the In-Home Supports program, which means I do one-on-one support for you, like a mentor, to help you do daily things like go to appointments, remind you to brush your teeth—I’m basically like your best buddy.

**Eric:** Yes you are! What made you decide to work here?

**AJ:** I have a brother with IDD and I’ve always had a passion for helping people with disabilities. I feel like everyone should have the same rights and opportunities to do the things they want.

**Eric:** What’s your favorite part of working here?

**AJ:** The relationships that I build with everyone here—they’re unique, and very special.

**Eric:** So . . .you’re in the military?

**AJ:** Yes sir, I’ve been in the Army for four years; I have two years left. I’m a petroleum specialist based in Middletown. We provide the fuel for all military vehicles, even helicopters and planes.

**Eric:** How did you get chosen to be my one-on one?

**AJ:** Well, we’re both energetic, we both like to sing, we both love to talk . . . and we dress alike.

**Eric:** Yes we do!

**AJ:** I have a question for you, Eric. What’s your favorite part of me being your one-on-one?

**Eric:** No drama. [laughs.]

**AJ:** Roger that! <



## MURDER MYSTERY PARTY!

### Murder at the Sock Hop—Oh My!

The Arc’s super-popular **Murder Mystery Dinner Theater** interactive fundraiser is back—and there’s intrigue afoot as guests attend a **1950’s dance—and sumptuous 4-course meal**, only to discover that behind a poodle skirt or letter sweater beats the heart of a murderer!

Join in the fun on **Saturday, April 23, 2022** at the **gymnasium at Norwich Free Academy** (where else?) as The Murder Mystery Company’s professional improv actors help us make this an evening to remember. Wear your best 1950’s “glad rags” and participate with members of your team—or observe coolly and aloofly from the sidelines while toying with your clove cigarette. Dancing, prizes, a soda fountain—**this event is not to be missed!** <

### For more information, and to register:

Visit [TheArcECT.org/mystery](http://TheArcECT.org/mystery)  
or contact Denise at

T 860.889.4435 x116

E [dtift@thearcect.org](mailto:dtift@thearcect.org)





# The Arc NEWS

## Anthony's Lasagna Recipe

Here's the sausage version of one of Anthony's favorite dishes. It's quick, easy, and great for holidays too! A perfect Spring meal. (Read Anthony's story on page 4).

### INGREDIENTS

1 pound bulk Italian sausage  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste  
1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes  
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce  
3 teaspoons dried basil  
3/4 teaspoon pepper, divided  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 large egg, lightly beaten  
1 carton (15 ounces) whole-milk ricotta cheese  
1-1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese, divided  
12 no-cook lasagna noodles  
4 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400°. In a large skillet, cook and crumble sausage with onion over medium heat until no longer pink, 5-7 minutes; drain. Add garlic and tomato paste; cook and stir 1 minute.
2. Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, basil, 1/2 teaspoon pepper and salt; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until slightly thickened, 10-15 minutes.
3. In a bowl, mix egg, ricotta cheese, 1-1/4 cups Parmesan cheese and the remaining pepper. Spread 1-1/2 cups meat sauce into a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Layer with 4 noodles, 1-1/2 cups ricotta cheese mixture, 1-1/2 cups mozzarella cheese and 1-1/2 cups sauce. Repeat layers. Top with the remaining noodles, sauce and mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses.
4. Cover with greased foil; bake 30 minutes. Uncover; bake until lightly browned and heated through, 5-10 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before serving. <



## Strides 2021 — Running, Social Distancing and Sunshine Help the Cause!

The weather is always perfect, the crowd is always joyful, and the setting can't be beat. 2021's **44<sup>th</sup> Annual Strides 5 & 10k Road Race and Family Fun Run** was a great event, **raising over \$30,000 to support vital programming for people with IDD**. The over 250 participants included the young, the hard-core, the fleet of foot, the veterans, the Special Olympians, and many happy spectators and volunteers. **And we couldn't have done it without the support of our incredible sponsors.** PLEASE join us on **Sunday, October 2, 2022** at Camp Harkness in Waterford as we celebrate The Arc's **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AND the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Strides**. Mark your calendars!

Visit our Facebook page for photos of Strides 2021. A list of our **Event and Hero Sponsors**, can also be found on our website at [TheArcECT.org/strides](https://TheArcECT.org/strides). <



# STRIDES

Road Race





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*TheArc*ECT.org



IN  
**PARTNERSHIP  
FOR FULL  
EQUALITY**

## *The Arc NEWS*

# SAVE THE DATES!



**Friday,  
June 17, 2022**



**Sunday,  
October 2, 2022**

**HELP PEOPLE**  
with intellectual and  
developmental disabilities  
**NOW**

by partnering with  
The Arc Eastern Connecticut  
for all of our

**EXCITING 2022 fundraisers!**

**Contact Denise Tift Today**

**T: 860.889.4435 x116**

**E: dtift@thearcect.org**