



A Message From the President of the Board of Directors



Linda Rhodes

The COVID-19 pandemic struck, but it couldn't keep us down.

Thanks to each one of our dedicated Direct Support Professionals and Leaders at The Arc Eastern Connecticut for exemplary service during the pandemic. **Our 80%+ vaccination rate says it all: Health and safety matter!**

Thanks also to our hard-working legislators who passed not only a wage and services bill last

This ensures The Arc ECT's position as a leader in real-time vocational training via microbusiness success.

session but also a **Bottle Bill making Connecticut just one of three states to have a 10-cent redemp-**

"In Partnership for Full Equality . . ."

And the team keeps on!

tion fee on bottles and cans. This ensures The Arc ECT's position as a leader in real-time vocational training via microbusiness success as well as continued placement into community jobs for people with IDD.

Our gratitude to Mystic Seaport, too, for hosting **adaptive catamaran Impossible Dream next year to make sailing through the summer possible for people and families served by The Arc ECT.** By offering free access, the Seaport shores up its position as a strong and inclusive community partner.

Don't miss our **44th Strides Walk, Run and Roll, happening October 3** and benefiting the Community Life & Advocacy program. Register at TheArcECT.org/strides.

PS – Our Annual Appeal mails shortly. Please support us! <

A Message From the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc

Another Milestone!

Advocates win the fight for fair wages . . .

Thanks to more than ten years of advocacy, **families and people with IDD are finally seeing improved funding** and more flexible services. And thanks to ten years of fighting, The Arc Eastern Connecticut's **dedicated team received a \$16.50 minimum wage in July.** Please thank your hard-working legislators in Eastern Connecticut for passing this legislation!

Our team also deserves praise and gratitude for standing strong in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please keep masking and washing hands as surges continue. And please, please vaccinate!

Despite COVID-19, The Arc ECT's services and programs have never been stronger. In keeping with the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, a host of Clubhouse Day Supports rolled out amid pandemic challenges. **One hundred participants choose daily from a host of activity**

options, enjoying customized learning experiences from cooking to field trips to fitness routines.

Our Annual Appeal is mailing. **Please be generous!**

In keeping with the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, a host of Clubhouse Day Supports rolled out amid pandemic challenges.

P.S. – Don't miss the 44th Annual Jack O'Keefe Strides Road Race October 3 at Camp Harkness. Sign up at TheArcECT.org. <



Kathleen Stauffer

Legislative Updates

Increased Pay for DSPs. The Arc US, of which The Arc ECT CEO is a Board member, The Arc ECT, The Arc Connecticut and Connecticut's trade and disability rights advocates worked tirelessly in 2021 to get **federal dollars for increased human service funding and higher wages**. As a result, the state finally made it possible to **raise the minimum wage of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) to \$16.50 per hour this June**, with another increase in 2022 to \$17.25/hour. "Our success is directly due to the efforts of our team and self-advocates in phoning legislators and advocating at the Capitol," noted CEO Kathleen Stauffer. It's been a long fight—starting in 2014 when The Arc ECT joined the United Way, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and The Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (SECTer) in implementing a **regional nonprofit economic impact survey (NEIS), detailing the economic value of nonprofits to communities and the need to fairly compensate staff**. In the years that followed, The Arc

continued to push for increased wages via regular meetings with legislators, distribution of 2019 and 2020 voter guides, attendance at Capitol rallies protesting services cuts, and dozens of virtual "calls to action."



L to R: R. Brule, B. Furgueson, J. Courtney, J. Scheff, N. Lamont, S. Aiello, K. Stauffer, P. Formica

Funding For Camp Harkness: CEO Kathleen Stauffer was joined by The Arc ECT Board members Shannon Aiello and State Senator Paul Formica, along with Chief Marketing and Development Officer Bill Furgueson on July 12, 2021 at a press conference held by Governor Ned Lamont to announce **CT's investing \$500,000 in bonding to improve facilities at Camp Harkness**, beginning after the summer season. Congressman Joe Courtney, DDS Commissioner Jordan Scheff, and First Selectman of Waterford Rob Brule, also in attendance, all spoke about how valuable the camp is to the people we serve. <

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

The Arc ECT Helps Pass Bottle/Can Redemption Legislation. Thanks to the hard work of local legislators, recycling advocates, and The Arc's leadership, SB1037 was signed into law on June 16, **doubling the refund value for certain beverage containers from 5 to 10 cents starting in 2024**. "The additional revenue will be a huge help to supporting the Redemption Center," said CEO Kathleen Stauffer, noting that the **additional percentage the business would receive will help The Arc maintain its equipment and hire more people with IDD**. Look for several new donation bins outside public areas and campgrounds in northeastern CT, with more coming to the coast soon.

Our Cookie Business is Expanding! Check out CEO Kathleen Stauffer's June Norwich Bulletin column, featuring Jennifer Ricci, Director of Community Enterprise, and **The Arc's progress in expanding our cookie production business in Woodstock**. Located in the Emporium and Bottle Redemption/Donation Station building in Woodstock, the bakery will include a commercial kitchen, packaging area, and storefront for retail sales. **"With this expansion we'll be able to hire more people with IDD in a variety of positions,"** says Jennifer. "I'm really excited about our progress." Find out all locations where our Classic Crunch cookies are sold at TheArcECT.org.

Our Emporium is Open! Fans of high-quality used clothing, furniture and housewares were thrilled to see The Arc Emporium at 22 Rt. 171 in Woodstock **open once again as of this past March**. Hours are Monday-Friday 10:00 am -2:30 pm. Business is booming—please stop by! <



A happy Emporium customer

Weather Couldn't Dampen Enthusiasm at The Arc's Annual Picnic

Gloomy skies and heavy downpours didn't keep over 100 team members and guests from celebrating the year's accomplishments, honoring legislative and community partners, and recognizing long-term staff.

CEO Kathleen Stauffer and The Arc Board President Linda Rhodes presided over an evening of camaraderie, great food, and some fond remembrances under a tent at our Cook Hill Rd., Danielson's Sensory Garden facility. COO Laurie Herring



Friends and family of Judy Daviau behind the memorial bench dedicated to her and Gary Cote

and Chief Kevin Ide from the Dayville Fire Department gave memorial testimonies to former Deputy Chief of Day Services Judy Daviau, and long-time friend of The Arc Gary Cote, who both passed away this year. **Board member Shannon Aielo was honored for her years of service to The Arc and for the entire IDD community.** The annual **Leadership award** was presented to **Robert Brule**, Waterford's First Selectman, a long-time supporter of the agency and advocate for services for the disability community. Team members reaching employment milestones of up to 30 years were honored as well.



Tremaine Swinson celebrates his 20-year longevity award with Laurie Herring (L) and Denise Tift (R)



Robert Brule accepts the Legislative Award from Kathleen Stauffer (c) and Linda Rhodes

Sailing on the *Impossible Dream*

The adaptive catamaran *Impossible Dream* will be coming to Mystic Seaport next summer, and the Seaport is offering **free access to The Arc participants.** "This is a wonderful opportunity," said Chief Marketing and Development Officer Bill Furgueson. **"Sailing allows one to feel pure freedom.** Having our participants be able to experience such a magical moment is extremely gratifying to all of those involved in making this opportunity happen."



The Impossible Dream's accessible deck

Go to YouTube and Type in "*Impossible Dream: The Barrier-Free Catamaran*" to learn more about this great boat and its mission. <

The Arc ECT Staff Begins Certified Employment Support Professional (CESP) Training

Thanks to a grant from the **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut**, the Day Services Support Specialist and two Day Services Supervisors from Groton and Danielson attended a 5-day training at APSE, the national agency overseeing what could be called the **highest standards of competency for Job Coaches supporting people with IDD.** The extensive series of online workshops focused on both **developing relationships with area employers and accurately assessing participants' needs and skills**, in order to create the best fit possible. **The Arc hopes to certify 15 staff over the next two years**, with the objective of then being able to provide training to other agencies so they can prepare their own Job Coaches to participate in the extensive exam and certification process.

The move to a virtual training format means that more staff will be able to take advantage of the training—great news for our current and future job-seekers. <

The Clubhouse: Day Supports Have Never Been So Much Fun

As the last of the batter is placed into the cupcake tin, the participants smile with pure joy knowing this step – placing it in the oven to bake – is one of the final steps. Next, the participants huddle over aluminum bowls, making the creamy frosting they are going to place on the cupcakes – the final step during their day “Cooking in the Kitchen with Kim.” Well, not really the final step. The final step will ACTUALLY be **eating the cupcakes.**

After many meetings that began in March, The Arc ECT's Day Services team determined the **Clubhouse model** is the **best way to return to in-person supports in a post-COVID era.** “We knew we’d be starting gradually and cautiously,” said Jennell Ricard, Deputy Chief Quality Assurance Officer for Day Services. “We’re finding different ways to provide **multiple activities that wouldn’t put too many people in the building at once.** But we also want to give people a lot of choice in what they do every day.” Between Jennell and Day Services Support Specialist Crystal Levine, with input from the team and participants, the Clubhouse Model was born.

“The Clubhouse model has been going since April,” **reports Crystal. “We have about 100 participants so far. Everyone’s really happy with it.”** The Arc facilities in Gro-



Artists at work

ton, Norwich, and Danielson each create a monthly calendar of daily activities that include everything from art to cooking to health and fitness to culture and history. Participants choose which activity to participate in that day. “We’ve limited the group numbers,” explains Jennell, “so there’s a maximum of about nine people in each activity.” Each group, in turn, creates its own monthly calendar of what they’d like to do. “A group can also decide to take it easy one day and do an activity at their ‘home’ location so that **everyone’s comfortable, but distanced from other groups.**”

Crystal notes that **participants join at least one health and fitness activity per week.** “The pandemic got a lot of us out of shape, and we’re hoping that our ‘Workout Wednesdays’ activity—including chair exercises—catches on.”

One of the great things that’s come out of this model is that **so many of our participants and staff are getting to know each other across programs and towns.** The Danielson group, for example, loves traveling to participate in Norwich and Groton activities, including “Cooking in the Kitchen With Kim” at The Employment Transition Center in Groton. **“Kim always makes sure that the people we support are working as independently as possible,”** said Crystal. “Everyone has a great time, especially making the frosting while the cupcakes are baking, and then eating the results!”

The Clubhouse approach is exciting but challenging, admits Jennell, “because **we’re making sure that everything we do has a purpose.** Nobody’s just marking time—all the activities are educational and fun. **People build new skills and explore areas like science and culture.** One of the added benefits is that our DSPs, who are usually separated by the large area The Arc covers, are getting to know each other, sharing new ideas for activities . . . **we’re really building a unified team.**”

The Clubhouse hopes to expand its calendars to include the Senior/Retirement program in Danielson and our In-Home Supports (IHS) program participants in the near future. “In a post-pandemic world,” notes Jennell, “where there still aren’t a lot of public opportunities available, this model gives us a great safety net.” <



Nelson, with his bejeweled birdhouse

"In a post-pandemic world, where there still aren't a lot of public opportunities available, this model gives us a great safety net."

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 July 2020 and August 2021.

- ☀ AHEPA Foundation
- ☀ Bailey's Team For Autism
- ☀ Berkshire Bank Foundation
- ☀ Charter Oak Federal Credit Union
- ☀ Chelsea Groton Foundation
- ☀ Columbian Charities of CT, Inc. / Knights of Columbus #7054
- ☀ Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut
- ☀ CT Department of Developmental Services
- ☀ CT Department of Transportation
- ☀ Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
- ☀ Electric Boat Employees Community Service Assoc.
- ☀ The Edward and Mary Lord Foundation
- ☀ Norwich Public Utilities
- ☀ People's United Community Foundation
- ☀ The Towns/Cities of Killingly, Groton, North Stonington, Waterford, Norwich, and Old Lyme
- ☀ United Way of Southeastern Connecticut
- ☀ Workers' Compensation Trust



Foundation President Kathryn Lord (c) presents a check to Residential Services Director Jason Fletcher and House Manager Kera Swinson for window replacement at one of The Arc's supported residences in Norwich.

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 September 2020. Your generosity has helped further our mission of walking "in partnership for full equality" for people with IDD.

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

Amy Bourassa, a member of The Arc's phenomenal nursing team, was promoted to **Deputy Chief Quality Assurance, Health & Clinical Services**

Aaron Newton, one of CL&A's Volunteer Corps members, was recently elected to serve as an **officer on The Arc US' Council of Self Advocates**. Congratulations, Aaron!

Board member Shannon Aiello, this year's recipient of The Arc's Community Service Award at our Annual picnic, was also the lucky winner of the door prize, which she generously gave back "so the staff can order something they enjoy." A gracious gesture and a lovely end to a special evening.

Denise Tift, our **Director of Community Outreach**, graduated from the Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce's 2-year Leadership program this August.

More Great news—Our new **Chief Marketing and Development Officer Bill Furgueson** received the Eastern CT Chamber's Tourism Leader of the Year award in July. <

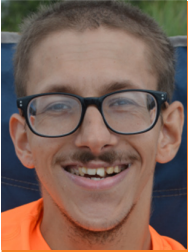
Self Advocacy Corner

-by Jamie Lazaroff Self-Advocacy Coordinator

The Self-Advocacy group has been very busy over the past 6 months. Since the group is part of the CT chapter of People First, we also have a Board of Directors, and trainings were conducted with the

new Board members in order for them to be able to run their own meetings, as I transition to more of an advisor role. The group also worked with multiple local police departments in partnership to **develop officer trainings on how to deal with people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in their community**. In our online meetings we've had many guest speakers including leaders from DDS and The Arc Connecticut. We've also identified legislative bills that affect the disability community, and I continue to update the group on their progress throughout the legislative session. <





The Arc Through My Eyes

by Eric Sneed

In this issue of **The Arc News**, columnist Eric Sneed interviews House Manager Heather Fellows at his home in Niantic.

Eric: How long have you worked at The Arc Eastern Connecticut?

Heather: 22 years. I've worked at some of The Arc's other residences, but I've been here for 17 years—a long time!

Eric: Why do you have to be on call 24/7?

Heather: I offer support and guidance for the staff, especially in case of emergencies. All our staff are really capable, though—that's why I don't have to be here all the time.

Eric: What's your favorite part about working here?

Heather: Seeing you and the guys every day—of course!

Eric: You worked really hard during the pandemic. How did you manage to do all that you had to do?

Heather: We all made sure everyone was safe. It was a tough year for everyone, but we all just kept going and we got through it, didn't we?

Eric: Yes we did! I hear you have a side job as a bartender. What's your favorite cocktail to make?

Heather: Your favorite—a Shirley Temple: ginger ale, grenadine, and of course a cherry.

Eric: What do you do in your free time?

Heather: I'm not really familiar with that term [laughs] but I like walking my dogs Chewbacca and Gracie, and I love gardening.

Eric: Does your family live close by?

Heather: Some live in Norwich, and I have relatives in Rhode Island and Canada.

Eric: Wow! <



Teams of all sizes are welcome!

or 10k courses starting at Camp. It's always a beautiful day at Camp Harkness, with good food, great swag for every runner, games for kids, professional race timers, and cash prizes for the winners in a variety of categories.

We also have a very popular 1-mile fun run/walk/roll around the grounds. All proceeds benefit programs and supports for people with IDD in communities throughout the region.

A HUGE thank you to our Platinum Sponsors: The O'Keefe Foundation, Berkshire Bank, and Gerardi Insurance.

For more information or to sponsor the event, contact Denise at (860) 889-4435 x116 or dtift@thearcct.org

Register NOW at TheArcECT.org/strides

See you there! <



Pre-Race Greek Pasta Salad

Here's a great late-summer dish to make that's easy, nutritious . . . and according to the Boston Athletic Association, perfect to eat the night before the Strides Road Race on October 3rd. Enjoy . . . and see you there!

INGREDIENTS

2 cups penne pasta
¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 teaspoons dried oregano
salt and pepper to taste
2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
10 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 small red onion, chopped
1 bell pepper, chopped
½ cucumber, sliced
½ cup sliced black olives
½ cup crumbled feta cheese

DIRECTIONS:

Step 1: Fill a large pot with lightly salted water and bring to a rolling boil over high heat. Once the water is boiling, stir in the penne, and return to a boil. Cook the pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the pasta has cooked through, but is still firm to the bite, about 11 minutes. Rinse with cold water and drain well in a colander set in the sink.

Step 2: Whisk together the vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, oregano, salt, pepper, and olive oil. Set aside. Combine pasta, tomatoes, onion, green and red peppers, cucumber, olives, and feta cheese in a large bowl. Pour vinaigrette over the pasta and mix together. Cover and chill for 3 hours before serving. <



2 Great Fundraising Events Help Lift Spirits and Celebrate People with IDD

The Arc's 5th Annual Film Festival, virtual this year, opened on April 22, 2021, with over 190 viewers, special performances by local celebrities Denise Walstra and Claire Humphreys, and **films celebrating the courage and creativity of people with IDD**. Offered free to students and educators, along with suggested discussion guides, the films sparked many insightful conversations. "It was such an inspiring and joyful program," said enthused Board member, Mary Ellen Snyder.

The weather cooperated, grudgingly, for our **33rd Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament**, bringing 30 teams of 117 cheerful and brightly-colored golfers to the CT National Golf Club in Putnam to help raise over \$39,000 for the agency. **Jay Brynes of Byrnes Agency Insurance in Norwich received the annual Gardner Johnson award** for his long-time support of the event and his advocacy for people with disabilities in the region. New features this year included CEO Kathleen Stauffer at the 18th hole, showing off her form in the photo at right, taking an extra putt for teams. Some of the great auction and raffle items donated by generous community members included Red Sox tickets, overnight stays with dinner at Foxwoods, and gift certificates to area restaurants and shops.

Neither of these events would have been possible without the **generosity of our many sponsors**, including event sponsors Berkshire Bank and Gerardi Insurance, who sponsored both events, and Rawson Materials (Tournament cart sponsor). Yale New Haven Health, Workers Compensation Trust, CT Business Systems, Linemaster Switch Corporation were top event sponsors for the Film Festival. <



CEO Kathleen Stauffer provides a fundraising "extra putt" on the 18th hole



Eastern Connecticut
125 Sachem Street
Norwich, CT 06360
T: 860.889.4435

TheArcECT.org



IN
**PARTNERSHIP
FOR FULL
EQUALITY**

The Arc NEWS

SAVE THE DATES!



**Saturday,
April 23, 2022**



**Friday,
June 24, 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