



The Arc NEWS

Eastern Connecticut

TheArcECT.org

IN
PARTNERSHIP
FOR FULL
EQUALITY

A Message From the President of the Board of Directors

Your Vote Matters!

Bring your voice to the polls . . .



Diane Aubin

A special education teacher by profession, I've always loved The Arc. Among my early academic scholarships was one from The Arc Quinebaug Valley.

Having served on the Boards of The Arc New London County (including as Board president) and on The Arc Quinebaug Valley, our decades-long fight for fair funding and wages for our talented DSPs and leadership team is very familiar.

As the new president of the Board of Directors of The Arc Eastern Connecticut, I am delighted that families and people with IDD will be seeing improved funding soon, along with more flexible services. And now The Arc

Eastern Connecticut's dedicated team is getting a \$17.25 minimum starting wage. A much-improved benefits package also lies ahead. Please thank your hard-working legislators in eastern Connecticut for passing this legislation!

Our decades-long fight for fair funding and wages for our talented DSPs and leadership team is very familiar.

These milestones show what we can do when put our votes to work! Please vote, and please support people with IDD along with our team at The Arc ECT in the coming year. Our Annual Appeal is mailing soon. Please be generous!

P.S. – Don't miss the 45th Annual Jack O'Keefe Memorial Strides Road Race Sunday, October 2, 2022 at Camp Harkness. Sign up at TheArcECT.org/strides. <

A Message From the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc

Excellence Matters!

The Arc ECT Team inspires a book . . .

Years ago, the late Rick DeMatto suggested that we write a book about The Arc Eastern Connecticut and our ground-breaking approach to excellence.

Every time Rick and I talked about The Arc, especially while he was Board president, he would mention it. As the coronavirus raged across America and we all sheltered from it, I realized that if we were going to put our story into a book, the time had come.

That book, called *11 Secrets of Nonprofit Excellence*, will be published early next year by Business Expert Press. One of the five largest publishers of business books in America liked our story enough to tell the world about us.

At The Arc Eastern Connecticut, excellence matters all day, every day. Thanks to each of you, and to the people we serve, for inspiring this book. When it comes to excellence in supporting people

with IDD, we can say that we wrote the book on it. Thanks for being on our team!

One of the five largest publishers of business books in America liked our story enough to tell the world about us.

Our 45th Annual Strides Walk, Run and Roll, is happening October 2nd and benefits the Community Life & Advocacy program. Register now at TheArcECT.org/strides.

P.S. – Our Annual Appeal mails shortly. Please donate! <



Kathleen Stauffer

A Historic State Budget Increase

Thanks in large part to advocates, friends and family members of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as nonprofit staff and participants statewide who have worked tirelessly for years advocating for increases in nonprofit funding, **the final state budget was passed, and includes more than \$220 million in increases for community nonprofits.** Included in this victory is a **\$36.5 million increase for agencies providing supports for people with IDD.**

"This historic budget wouldn't have been possible without **support from our team members, families participants, and compassionate community members, including The Arc Connecticut,**" noted The Arc ECT's CEO Kathleen Stauffer. "We are so grateful and honored to be part of this strong partnership." To learn more about the entire budget and nonprofit advocacy on a state level, please visit the Connecticut Nonprofit Alliance's website at: ctnonprofitalliance.org. <



Nonprofit Alliance President Gian-Carl Casa thanks legislators who helped push for the state increase, at a reception in Glastonbury in July.

Real Work for Real Pay: The Arc ECT *MicroEnterprise* update

The Arc ECT's **Lawn and Landscape crew** understands better than most that nature doesn't stop for COVID—this past winter and into spring and summer the crew had almost more work than they could handle, from clearing and sanding all the agency's parking areas to keeping up with their spring commercial accounts at area organizations and private homes. Thanks to **generous donors like the Edward and Mary Lord Foundation, the Norwich Rotary and the EB Employees Association,** the micro-enterprise received some spiffy new equipment including a truck bed sander, push mowers, and a commercial hedge trimmer. **The work may be hard but participant employees love it.** "Tim [their Job Coach] teaches us how to use a bunch of different tools and be really safe," says Dustin, a senior crew member. **"Our customers are really proud of our work.** And there's nothing better than being outside. Every day's an adventure."



Tim & Dustin with their new spring tools

The Arc's **Redemption Center and Donation Station in Woodstock** also received some new equipment this year. **"New upgraded sorting machines from our partners at TOMRA save hours of time** and allow the crew to process bottles and cans up to 40% faster," notes Director of Community Enterprise Jenifer Ricci. The business has also invested in additional donation bins—**currently there are 18 bins throughout the region where people can drop off their returnables,** and 18 indoor bins in local business break rooms and common areas. "These donations help us out immensely," says Jennifer, and are a big part of what makes the business sustainable." **Support from the community has been overwhelming,** especially this last June when donated bottles and cans were stolen at night outside the facility. Jennifer and the crew were extremely touched. "The response from people from all over was heartwarming," she said. "Individuals and families visited with donations and lots of support. We really are blessed to have such good friends and advocates here."



Anthony loves the new sorting machines

If you know of a public location or business that would be interested in a donation bin, please call us at 860.928.4727 x903. <

The Arc **NEWS** is a publication of The Arc Eastern Connecticut

Chief Development & Marketing Officer

Bill Furgueson

Editor & Writer Penny Newbury

Director of Community Outreach

Denise Tift

Creative Director S.D. Kadey

Designer E.R. Swain

Board of Directors

President Diane Aubin

Vice-President Gene Michael Deary

Treasurer Shannon Aiello

Secretary Attorney Ray Baribeault

Immed. Past President Linda Rhodes

Abby Snyder

Rebecca Durham

Senator Paul Formica

Erin Haggan

Emily Morrison

Mary Ellen Snyder

The Arc's 70th Anniversary

– Celebrating Founders Day

Over 140 team members, participants, legislators, Board members, and community partners attended **The Arc ECT's 70th Anniversary celebration** at Mohegan Park Pavilion in Norwich on June 28, 2022. "We've

always had an annual picnic to thank our partners and honor staff milestones," noted CEO Kathleen Stauffer. "Since 70 years is quite an achievement, **we decided to rename the event Founders Day** to mark the year when concerned families organized to advocate for equal participation in schools and the community for their children with IDD."



Shiela Hayes received the Community Service Award from outgoing Board President Linda Rhodes.

This year's **legislative award was presented to Sen. Paul Formica** for his tireless leadership as part of the Disability Caucus. **Shiela Hayes received the Community Service Award** for working with The Arc and many other agencies including the Norwich chapter of the NAACP, advocating for civil rights, equity of services in education, housing and the environment. **Sunny Murray was the recipient of The Arc's Volunteer Award**, for her dedication and perennial cheerfulness as a member of Community Life & Advocacy's Volunteer Corps.

The event also recognized **31 team members for reaching length of service milestones.**

Attendees had the opportunity to view **The Arc ECT's 70th Anniversary** video, featuring long-tenured team members and **showcasing a timeline of growth and supports for people with IDD.** To see the video on YouTube, go to "The Arc ECT 70th Anniversary." <



CEO Kathleen Stauffer (R) presented Tammy Elrod with a 25 year length of service award.

The Arc ECT receives Customized Employment Certification

– more options for job-seekers!

Thanks to grants from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, technical assistance from the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON), and staff training in Customized Employment from the CT Department of Social Services (DSS), **The Arc ECT's Employment program is now a certified Customized Employment agency**, authorized to receive referrals from DDS for people with IDD who are transitioning to individual supported employment with area businesses. Combined with CESP (Certified Employment Specialist) training and certification received by Job Coaches, **The Arc's Employment team is now well-versed in a variety of Employment First skills:** identifying participant needs and goals, accompanying people to the job interview or jobsite, and **working with employers to tailor the position to the individual's needs and skills.** Taking advantage of these two models as well as receiving SME assistance from NEON, the Day program's Service Support Specialist and the Employment Department's lead Job Coach are **designing a written training curriculum based on the best aspects of both Customized Employment and CESP certification**, so that every current and onboarding Job Coach can receive this training in-house. <

Election 2022

– Your Vote is Your Voice!

"Who gets picked to run the government makes a big difference for people with disabilities and their families. If we don't vote, then we don't get a say in what happens." —The Arc ECT <



Receive The Arc News Online!

Help us switch to a digital mailing format and cut down on paper products by emailing dtift@thearect.org, and **get your bi-annual The Arc News online!**

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! <

The Arc's Cookie Factory Opens in Woodstock!

—a MicroEnterprise on its way to sustainability



Five bakers beamed, looking at the massive pile of cookies they'd prepared for **The Arc's Cookie Factory soft opening this past July**. Their excitement was shared by all—The Arc ECT Board members, Leadership team, staff, clients, and members of the Woodstock, CT community—who attended this special event.

Today, the excitement remains palpable; customers are coming in a steady stream, buying bags and 3-packs of the factory's "Classic Crunch" chocolate chip cookie or purchasing a warm single, larger soft cookie. "People come from all over," says The Arc's Director of Community Enterprise Jennifer Ricci. She grins. "And they're not disappointed." **Participant employees operate all the equipment and wait on customers with professional precision.**

"We've been training for months," says Kimberly, who also works in The Arc's Emporium next door, and she's not exaggerating. **Everyone working in the kitchen received intensive instruction several days a week in the months leading up to the Cookie Factory's opening.** Notes Kimberly, "We studied how to weigh and measure ingredients, the difference between wet and dry ingredients, and why you need certain things in the batter so the cookies will bake right." Some bakers like Tiffany, however, have worked in our previous bakery in Groton, so she was oven-mitts-ready as soon as she started in Woodstock. "I love working here," she says. "The new bakery has everything. We have lots of space to work, and the customers are really nice."

Bakery Manager Marnie Hitchew and Job Coach Melissa Naughton supervise the employees, "though we don't need to do much," says Marnie. **"Everyone has a skill they're really good at."** Ali, for instance, is a whiz at scooping and measuring the cookie dough. "It's a lot harder than it looks," says Melissa. Ali smiles and gives a modest lit-

tle shrug. "Right now, these guys

can scoop faster than an extruder," adds Marnie. On the other side of the kitchen, Michael is in charge of washing the equipment. He admits he likes the feeling of accomplishment, keeping everything germ-free and gleaming. "Just call me Captain Clean," he jokes.

When all six ovens are at work, the Factory can produce 900 cookies every 28 minutes. "That's a lot of scooping," admits Ali. The bakery's busy schedule

doesn't end after all the cookies are baked in the morning. **The biggest job is packing the cookies.** "We do packaging after lunch, then everyone helps with cleanup," says Marnie. In addition to making cookies for commercial accounts (The Arc's cookies are sold in over 20 grocery and specialty stores region-wide),

the Factory also makes large and small custom platters and individually wrapped cookies for events and gatherings. "So far our biggest order for singles has been 1,500," says Marnie, "but with this equipment and our great workforce, it's no problem."

A woman comes to the door and asks where she can drop off donated clothing. Anthony directs her next door to the Emporium. Before she goes, she looks in and says, "Wait . . . is this a cookie store?"

"Yes, it is!" says Anthony.

Her eyes light up. "Oh, my goodness—well, just hold on, I'll be right back. This is my lucky day!"

The Cookie Factory is located at 22 Rt 171 Woodstock, CT and is open Monday-Friday 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM. For a list of where to find our cookies in stores, visit thearcct.org/culinary-arts. Plac-

ing orders: T: 860.928.4727 x906. Watch for notices of our Grand Opening, scheduled for Spring 2023! <



The Thursday morning shift: L to R: Job Coach Melissa Naughton, Michael, Nicki, Ali (behind Nicki), Anthony D., Kimberly, and Bakery Manager Marnie Hitchew.

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 May and August 2022.

- ☀ The AHEPA Foundation
- ☀ Big Y Community Bag Program
- ☀ Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- ☀ Eastern CT Savings Bank Foundation
- ☀ The Town of East Lyme
- ☀ The GHADA Foundation (CT Automotive Retailers Association)
- ☀ The Town of Groton
- ☀ Killingly High School Future Business Leaders of America
- ☀ The Town of Ledyard
- ☀ National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON)
- ☀ The Town of Old Lyme
- ☀ Peoples United Community Foundation
- ☀ Pfizer Community Grant Program
- ☀ Thompson Lions Club
- ☀ United Way of Southeastern Connecticut
- ☀ The Town of Waterford
- ☀ Workers Compensation Trust

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 and made donations to specific programs and in memory of loved ones since January 2022. Thank you so much for supporting our mission and vision!

We'd like to extend a special thank you to these donor organizations who helped make our Cookie Factory possible:

- ☀ The Chelsea Groton Foundation
- ☀ The Dominion foundation
- ☀ The Harvard Business Club/Greenwich Porsche
- ☀ People's United Foundation
- ☀ USDA

The Arc Eastern Connecticut in the Spotlight

CONGRATULATIONS!

Crystal Levine, Job Coach with Day Services, has been promoted to Service Support Specialist.

Former Lead Life Skills Instructor **Jaime Laflamme** has been promoted to Residential Manager at our supported residence in Dayville.

Paula Kowalski, Director of the Retired Seniors Program (RSP) in Danielson, will now also be the Director of Education and Transitional Employment Services (TES) for the northeast.

WELCOME!

Denisse Mateo is our new Chief Talent Officer.

Sally Masse is The Arc's new HR Assistant.

And we welcome our new Residential Managers **Julissa Arroyo, Aquinisha Burgis, Melissa Durand, Greg Goode, Bonnie Jones, Teal Nadeau, and Yulinda Williams.**

Self Advocacy Corner

-by Jamie Lazaroff

Self-Advocacy Coordinator



The weather is warm, and the Self-Advocacy group is heating up. The Self-Advocacy Department is growing as we have two new people on our team. Please welcome Ben and Cheryl.

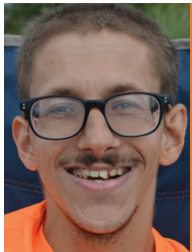
The group is expanding, as we are now offering a virtual meeting for our day support members in the Clubhouse [Day] program. These groups are a wonderful way for us to expand our reach and teach others about advocacy. In the first few months, members have learned about the history of the Disability Rights Movement and the basics of self-advocacy.

Our monthly Self-Advocacy group has set a goal of expanding their membership. They meet monthly to learn the skills needed to teach others in the community the benefits of advocating for oneself.

Over the next few months the group will be having guest speakers to talk about assistive technology and voting.

If you would like to learn more about the Self-Advocacy group and membership, contact Jamie at: selfadvocate@thearect.org.

The Arc Through My Eyes by Eric Sneed



In this issue of **The Arc News**, columnist **Eric Sneed** interviews **Shawn S.** from our northeast program.

Shawn: It's great to be here. When I look at the sun, I think I'm in a spotlight.

Eric: Today you are! How long have you been with The Arc?

Shawn: Quite a while, actually. I'm doing some peer mentoring activities now, and I'm part of the Self-Advocacy group. I'm hoping I can assist Jamie (the Coordinator) when we go to Hartford to advocate for more support for people with disabilities.

Eric: Do you do Special Olympics?

Shawn: I did track and field in another part of the state. I got a total of 8 medals!

Eric: What kind of music do you like? I like Uncle Kracker. How about you?

Shawn: I can relate to you—I love country music. Also EDM (Electronic Dance Music). For those who may be interested, I have some sick moves!

Eric: Do you play an instrument?

Shawn: I'm self-taught on the piano. My eyes are very bad so I play by ear. I've written some songs—one was for my mother, to show her I love her. And at a DDS event in Norwich I played piano with the band. I actually was famous! I got treated to a free lunch.

Eric: Do you like to cook?

Shawn: Well, because of my eyes I can't read recipes, but I adore cooking shows.

Eric: Me too!

Shawn: I love food—any type of burgers, and chili, and also chocolate and Reese's peanut butter brownies.

Eric: Do you have any pets?

Shawn: I have a dog Roxy and two cats—Bitsy and Gigi. I'd really like a seeing eye dog. That would be awesome.

Eric: Is there anything else you'd like people to know about you?

Shawn: I have a lot of respect for the military and the people who serve our country. I really want to go to a venue and sing the National Anthem for them. <



Shawn & Eric

Don't Miss Strides Road Race's 45th Year!

One of the year's most anticipated road races, Strides is celebrating a milestone this year and **our goal is 245 runners**, so don't wait—register today! **Held at Camp Harkness in Waterford on Sunday, October 2, 2022**, Strides has something for everyone, including 5k and 10k courses on **well-marked and supported routes** that draw elite runners, casual joggers, chair racers, and walkers.



It's a wonderful way to wind down the season, enjoy the early fall weather, or work out with your school or community running group.

Our 1k **fun run, walk and roll loops around the beautiful camp** and is great for kids, as well and those who just want to stroll and enjoy this beautiful location.

There'll be **great food and swag, fabulous raffle items, and prizes for top finishers.** <



Two of 2021's happy race finishers

For more information, and to register:

Visit TheArcECT.org/strides

or contact Denise at

T: 860.889.4435 x116 **E:** dtift@thearcect.org



Our great 2021 Strides volunteer team from Mitchell College

Bacon Cheddar Cheese Stuffed Burgers

—a variation on Shawn's favorite food, and a great fall barbecue treat that's easy to make

INGREDIENTS

8 slices bacon
1 lb. 85% lean ground beef
1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp ground black pepper

For serving: toasted hamburger buns, leafy lettuce, tomatoes, onions, ketchup, mustard, chipotle mayo

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the grill or a grill pan to medium heat.
2. Add the bacon to a skillet over medium heat (on the stove, not the grill). Cook 2-3 minutes per side until tender but not crispy. (it will finish cooking in the stuffed burger patties.
3. Remove from heat. Once cool enough to handle, finely chop into small pieces.
4. Add the chopped bacon to bowl with the ground beef, shredded cheddar, Worcestershire, & black pepper. Combine the mixture until the bacon and cheddar are evenly dispersed. Don't overmix. Form into 4 equally sized burger patties (or use a burger press/mold).
5. Grill the stuffed burgers over direct heat for 6 minutes, flipping halfway through for medium doneness. The burgers should have beautiful grill marks & tons of melty cheese oozing out! <



2022's Spring Fundraisers—Successful & Fun!

"This is such a unique idea," said guest Tim Gallimore from Mattern Construction, of The Arc ECT's April fundraiser. "I've never been to a Murder Mystery dinner but I'm so glad I came." That was the consensus of the



Crystal Simonson

nearly 100 guests who participated in "A Dance With Death—a 1950's Sock Hop Gone Sour" at Norwich Free Academy's gymnasium. Put on by the Murder Mystery Company, the evening was a great success. With the help of our great sponsors the night raised nearly \$25,000 to augment our programs and supports for people with IDD. A guest who deduced "who did it" agreed. "I really wanted to give my husband a fun night out after so many months being cooped up. I didn't know if he was going to enjoy it, but it's such a good cause, and I couldn't keep him off the dance floor."



Sock Hop attendees wore their best 50's duds and got into the act to find the killer (who turned out to be Board Vice President Gene Michael Deary!)

Our 34th annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament was just as successful, with 100 golfers enjoying great weather and the beautiful course at CT National Golf Club in Putnam, raising over \$31,000. The 70's theme inspired many teams to wear their best retro golfing togs. This year's Gardner Johnson Award was awarded to former Arc ECT team member Crystal Simonson for her dedication and commitment to the agency and its mission. A ceremonial putt by Groton Special Olympian Wes Williams began the event; his team of golfers was supported by longtime sponsor Gerardi Insurance.

"The community support for both these fundraisers was really heart-warming," said Kathleen Stauffer, CEO of The Arc ECT. "The events also gave people from all around eastern CT the opportunity to experience new and beautiful areas in our region, meet new friends, and learn about our impact in all the communities we serve." <



Best-dressed golf team 2022



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!



Sunday,
October 2, 2022



Spring 2023

HELP PEOPLE

with intellectual and
developmental disabilities

NOW

by partnering with
The Arc Eastern Connecticut for
all of our EXCITING fundraisers!

Contact Denise Tift Today

T: 860.889.4435 x116

E: dtift@thearect.org