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NEWS

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IN
PARTNERSHIP
FOR FULL
EQUALITY*A Message from the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc ECT*

Team Satisfaction Survey Success

Thanks for Sharing Your Opinion!

Kathleen Stauffer

We asked for your opinion . . . and you responded! **The Arc Eastern Connecticut's team satisfaction survey launched in January as an initiative of the agency's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.** More than 60% of the team responded, and we will continue to share results and chat in focus groups as **we create a response plan.**

Another Strategic Plan initiative calls for pivoting our microbusinesses – The Emporium, Donation Station,

Cookie Factory and Landscape Team – to profitability. **Thanks to Jennifer Ricci, The Arc's new Director of Community Enterprise, we are on our way!** Meanwhile, the businesses continue to train people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for real jobs in our community.

Thanks to our talented finance team, led by Terry Hickey, a full range of Payroll Protection Plan incentives rolled out for our team members during the pandemic. And thanks to Laurie Herring and our wonderful residential and day team leaders and staff, the agency successfully weathered the unprecedented challenges of an international pandemic while supporting people with IDD and their families.

Thanks to Laurie Herring and our wonderful residential and day team leaders and staff, the agency successfully weathered the unprecedented challenges of an international pandemic while supporting people with IDD and their families.

PS — Don't miss our VIRTUAL Film Festival on April 22 or the competitive 33rd Annual Gardner Johnson Golf Tournament on Friday, June 25. *Tickets?* Visit: [TheArcECT.org/film-tickets](https://www.thearect.org/film-tickets) and [TheArcECT.org/golf](https://www.thearect.org/golf)

*A Message from the President of the Board of Directors*Virtual Event of the *Season!**Film Festival Inspires Us All*

Linda Rhodes

For some years, The Arc Eastern Connecticut has wanted to involve local schools in The Arc ECT Film Festival to inspire young people to embrace one another's differences and abilities. **As you know, we have a way of turning challenges into opportunities.** When the coronavirus pandemic forced our bi-annual Film extravaganza online, our team realized a virtual event would allow us to connect with schools in a new way.

As a lifelong educator, I invite your school to join The Arc ECT for a full lineup of fun films starring people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at our **5th Annual Film Festival on April 22!** Local celebrities will offer added entertainment, too.

As a lifelong educator, I invite your school to join The Arc ECT for a full lineup of fun films starring people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

And please don't forget our 2020 Annual Appeal. If you haven't donated yet, it's not too late to remember The Arc ECT. Thanks also to Board and team members who continue to make progress and report on our exciting 2020-2023



PS — Please join us for the 33rd Annual Gardner Johnson Memorial Golf Tournament

at the beautiful Connecticut National Golf Club on Friday, June 25, 2021!

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

Tracking Legislative Efforts During the Pandemic

Great news! The COVID relief package that was passed in December 2020 was due in huge part to the advocacy efforts of nonprofits including The Arc.

Additionally, The Arc has sent a letter to the US House Committee on Education and Labor to ensure that any increase in the minimum wage is accompanied by a commensurate Medicaid increase to cover increases for direct support professionals.

Here in Connecticut, The Arc ECT's CEO Kathleen Stauffer and members of the leadership team have attended a wide variety of meetings with local and state representatives, trade associations, and the CT Non-Profit Alliance to make sure that the agency had as much up-to-date information as possible regarding funding, supports, safety/security measures, and testing/vaccination guidelines, and we've been sharing this information regularly on the Pandemic Update page on our website. (TheArcECT.org/covid)

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world."

– Eleanor Roosevelt



An advocate provides testimony at the 2020 in-person Family Hearing Day

The Arc CT has identified 27 bills that impact people with disabilities here in CT including issues of employment, transportation, housing, systemic issues, and education reform. Of particular interest is SB328 which addresses the waiting time for someone with IDD to receive services from DDS. Also included is bottle and can recycling legislation that by raising redemption costs would be of enormous benefit to both the environment and The Arc's Donation Station redemption center in Woodstock.



L– R (far left in the back) Shannon Jacovino, Representative Jay Case, Senator Cathy Osten, Representative John Hampton and Senator Paul Formica listen intently to testimony at the IDD Caucus Family Hearing Day in February 2020.



The Arc CEO Testifies at Appropriations Committee Hearing

CEO Kathleen Stauffer joined over 200 healthcare and disability advocates on March 2nd in presenting testimony to members of the Appropriations Committee in support of H.B. 6439, a bill proposing funding increases for human service agencies. Her testimony strongly requested funding to increase wages for The Arc ECT's team members. Stauffer also requested that vital services for people with IDD be expanded, including employment options. For an overview of Kathleen's testimony, [click here](#).

Real Work for Real Pay: The Arc ECT Micro-Enterprise Update

All cookies, all the time

more THAN JUST A
great cookie

Despite COVID-19, The Arc ECT's microbusinesses successfully pivoted to competitive models for employment.

The cookie factory is expanding and relocating to the Woodstock building on CT Route 171, which is also home to The Arc Emporium thrift store and the Redemption Center, now known as "Connecticut Donation Station." The new factory will feature a 1,200 sq. ft. bakery and storefront, exponentially increasing capacity and allowing for a greatly expanded wholesale business as well as a retail location.

And who doesn't love a delicious chocolate chip cookie fresh out of the oven? "This move will provide many more employment opportunities for people with IDD in the area," notes Director of Community Enterprise Jennifer Ricci. "We'll be able to employ and train people in culinary skills, inventory, packaging, sales and customer service. We're all very excited."

Currently The Arc is in process of procuring contractor bids to renovate the space. Previous funding from generous donors including the Dominion Foundation, Greenwich Porsche/Harvard Business School, The CT Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS), and the Chelsea Groton Foundation will cover bakery oven and associated costs. Additional grant funding will offset the cost of other equipment.

"Just when I thought I found my favorite [cookies], I tasted The Arc's Choco Chips. Tough competition!"

—George Baloga, Friend of The Arc ECT and cookie connoisseur



Cookies ready for the festival

The Art of Chocolate Festival, presented by Fairview Senior Housing and Healthcare in Groton, was virtual this year but no less delicious, thanks to all the chocolatiers and bakeries who participated in the Groton Utilities-sponsored event. The Arc ECT's "Classic Crunch" chocolate chip cookies, always a hit, were part of the Tasting Boxes prepared for attendees.

Lawn and Landscape News

Neither rain nor snow nor sleet nor pandemic stopped the intrepid Lawn and Landscape crew from keeping The Arc's residences and main office buildings clean, safe and snow-free this season. Even with a reduced crew, the business maintained all commercial accounts as well as garage clean-outs. The crew plans to be fully staffed for a cleanup-intensive spring season.



This is Dustin's second year with the Landscape Crew, and he couldn't be happier to get back to work!

Redemption Center in Woodstock is now the Connecticut Donation Station!

This season you'll be seeing colorful donation bins around Windham County, just waiting to happily take your recyclable bottles and cans. The Arc ECT's Redemption Center has rebranded as the Connecticut Donation Station! In the next few months, bins will be placed in New London County as well. Bottles and cans also can be dropped at the Center: [TheArcECT.org/donation-station](https://www.thearcect.org/donation-station) lists drop off/redemption days and hours.

Know of a business that would be a great location for a Donation Station bin?
Please call Jennifer at (860) 928-4727, x903 or email jricci@thearcect.org



Project Redemption has been relaunched and rebranded as Connecticut Donation Station.

Find a collection bin near you!

Putnam:

Putnam Dog Park

Putnam Farmer's Co-Op, Putnam Police Department, Harvest Moon Health Foods

Woodstock:

Chace Building Supply, Woodstock Valley Country Store, and The Arc's Donation Station

Thompson:

Thompson Chase Growers

Dayville:

Alexander's Lake

Re-Opening Day Services: Challenges and Opportunities

A pivot to safety-oriented programming offers opportunities for creativity and growth

Chief Deputy Quality Assurance Officer—Day Services, Jennell Ricard and the Day Services Managers met in February to develop creative and safe day service options for in-person supports when Governor Ned Lamont reopens agencies supporting people and families with IDD.

When allowed, in-person supports will open to all participants who have received both vaccines and passed the 3-week waiting period, although all health precautions (masks, social distancing, etc.) will remain in place. "We've actually been given a very valuable opportunity," notes Chief Operations & Quality Officer Laurie Herring, "to pause and right-set our day services in a way that's far more community based, individualized, and with an emphasis on an 'employment-first' option."

New service options could include:

- **Senior Services Option** allowing older people with health or other issues to have the choice of receiving day supports at home, individually in the community, or with a group.
- **Employment Options** that refocus peoples' goals and expand individual supported employment opportunities rather than group options.

"We need to make sure that people transitioning to employment with local businesses develop and maintain natural supports in their communities," Herring said, "including establishing a peer group and a personal and close relationship with their employer."



"We've been given a valuable opportunity to pause and right-set our day services in a way that's far more community based, individualized, and with an emphasis on an 'employment-first' option."

—Laurie Herring, COO

Thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, The Arc ECT's job coaches will receive training to become Certified Employment Support Professionals trained in supporting people with IDD to obtain and maintain competitive employment in community workplaces.

Attention! Camp Harkness Update

Due to continued uncertainty regarding the pandemic, The Arc ECT is able to offer day camp and VIRTUAL camp sessions ONLY this year.

For more information, contact Denise Tift at 860.889.4435 x116 or dtift@thearcet.org.

Pandemic Hits Low-Income Families Hard

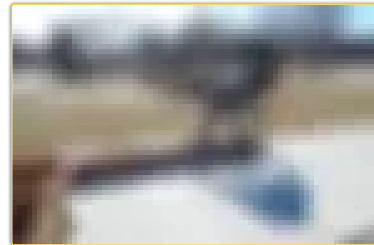
The following article is the latest by CEO Kathleen Stauffer, whose "Healthy Living" column appears regularly in the Norwich Bulletin.

It's our job to ensure the community is fed," says Dina Sears-Graves, Vice President of Community Impact for United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. Food insecurity or food availability and people's access to it always has been a concern of New London's Gemma Moran Food Center.

"But COVID took it to a whole new level," Sears-Graves, of Norwich, explains. "People who were employed and managing to buy food got laid off, and we began to see a whole new layer of need." The food center provides food for public distribution to 73 nonprofits throughout Southeastern Connecticut. Forty-two nonprofits, including The Arc Eastern Connecticut, also receive substantial grants from United Way to run non-hunger-related community programs enhancing regional wellbeing.



United Way manages another 10 mobile food pantries and the Moran Center itself. Ordinarily, the nonprofits and pantries combined feed about 1,300 people monthly. Need skyrocketed when COVID-19 struck. Now, United Way and its partners distribute food to about 1,000 people per day. USAID is helping United Way meet increased need via food boxes containing five pounds of meat, five pounds of produce, five pounds of dairy and 1 gallon of milk. Demand far exceeds supply. "We could give out boxes all day long," says Graves.



"People who were employed and managing to buy food got laid off, and we began to see a whole new layer of need."

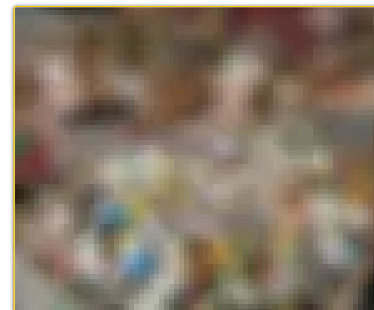
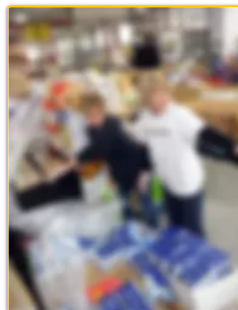
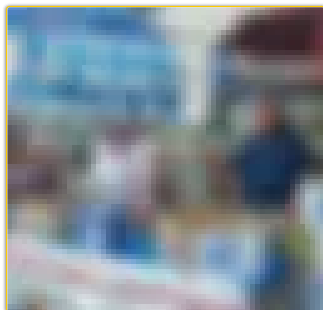
—Dina Sears-Graves
Vice President of Community Impact

Most hard-hit by the pandemic are the region's working poor. "When the pandemic struck, it was new faces we were seeing," Graves said. "And we are still seeing them. People who don't have resources to stockpile items get to the stores, and not having savings or assets, you can see what that would do to a population."

A bright spot is local generosity. "I can't tell you how many people drive by and stop with a check or cans of food. Sometimes a person looks like they might be struggling themselves, but they will hand us five dollars and say, 'Please give this to someone who needs it.'"

"It restores your hope in humanity," she says.

To donate to the Gemma Moran Food Center, go to: www.uwsect.org and hit "Click Here for Virtual Food Drive." Post-holiday donations are especially appreciated due to a seasonal lull. Families and people needing help can dial 211.



Our Community Partners Make Dreams Come True

*Due to the pandemic, The Arc ECT canceled the bi-annual Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, Film Festival and annual Golf Tournament in 2020. **Special thanks to our community partners, businesses that allowed us to retain ALL sponsorship dollars.***

Please support our loyal neighbors whose generosity sustained us:

- A & A Management, LLC
- Alarm Security Protection Co, Inc (ASP)
- Archambault Insurance Associates
- Bartol Heating and Cooling
- Berkshire Bank Foundation
- Bourque Household
- Byrnes Agency Insurance, Inc.
- Chace Building Supply of CT, Inc.
- Chelsea Groton Bank
- Comcast
- Connecticut Business Systems
- Durocher Household
- Eastern CT Savings Bank
- Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc.
- Gilman and Valade Funeral Homes and Crematory
- Hometown Heating LLC dba Hometown T&S Energy
- Jewett City Savings Bank
- Lisbon Tire, LLC
- Lupien, D.D.S. Household
- Macara Vehicle Services
- McGinn Household
- Miller Household
- Mutual of America
- Miyoshi America
- Norwich Public Utilities
- O&G Industries, Inc
- Pfizer Connecticut Labs
- Putnam Bank Employee Giving Program
- Putnam Bank - a Division of Centreville Bank
- Rawson Materials
- Daniel R. Santos, CPA, LLC
- Shaw Household
- The Nutmeg Companies Inc
- Titan Energy New England, Inc.
- Wheelabrator Putnam Inc.

Heartfelt thanks to organizations whose support since September 2020 enabled The Arc ECT to provide life-changing programs for people with IDD in eastern Connecticut:

- Bailey's Team for Autism
- The Joseph A. Baloga Trust
- Charter Oak Federal Credit Union
- Chelsea Groton Foundation
- The CT Department of Transportation's Van Grant program
- The CT Department of Developmental Services
- Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
- The Elsie Brown Fund
- The Town of Groton
- The City of Norwich's Community Development Block Grant program
- Norwich Public Utilities' participation in the Neighborhood Assistance Act
- The Town of North Stonington
- The Lisa Tate Fund
- Workers' Compensation Trust

The Arc ECT also is deeply grateful to the friends, family members, employees and companies' matching gifts programs, as well as community partners who have contributed over \$25,000 to our Annual Appeal since September 2020. Your generosity, even in the face of this crisis, continues to further our mission of walking "in partnership for full equality" for people with IDD.

The Arc Team . . . in the Spotlight

The Arc ECT Board Member Michele Scott Wins National Award



Michele Scott
Executive Director,
Health Education Center

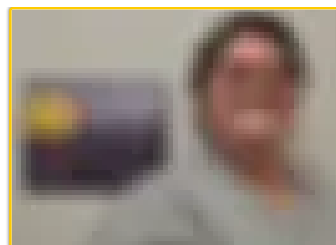
Executive Director of the Health Education Center in Norwich and a member of the Mashantucket Tribal Nation, was named a **2020 recipient of the annual "40 Under 40" Award from the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development.**

Nominated by their peers, the 2020 winners exemplify leadership, initiative, and, especially during COVID-19, resiliency and dedication towards their communities and businesses.

CEO Kathleen Stauffer praised Michele's commitment and enthusiasm. **"As a Board member and community leader, Michele has worked tirelessly to ensure that the voices of our most vulnerable citizens are heard.** She inspires our entire Board, and our agency, to be involved, active, and empathetic. We're so fortunate and honored that she's a part of our agency; no one is more deserving of this award."

Our Wonderful (and Expanding) Nursing Staff

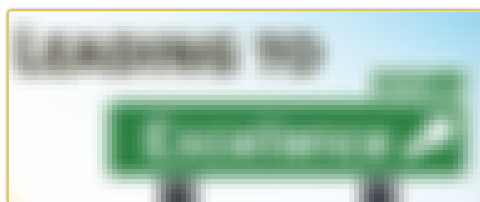
Thank you to all the Nurses who have held us together during this complicated time. Specifically, **thank you to Noreen Gravel, R.N.**, who has for many years guided our supports, taken our endless phone calls, and supported **the amazing nurses who work for The Arc Eastern Connecticut**. Noreen's commonsense approach always rings of compassion and competence. It's been hard to say yes to her decision to step down as our Nursing Supervisor. I'm happy to report that **she will continue to oversee Medication Administration**.



Aimee Bourassa, R.N.

On leaving, Noreen requested **a deeper level of communication between the nurses and the agency**. To address this, The Arc ECT added a **Deputy Quality Assurance of Health and Clinical Services** to its administrative structure. **Aimee Bourassa, R.N.**, formerly the nurse for Camp Harkness programming, has been promoted to DQA/H&CS and will oversee nursing supports and maintain the high quality of The Arc ECT's clinical supports. Additionally, former employee of The Arc **Rachel Levine** has returned as one of The Arc ECT's nursing staff.

In Other Agency News . . .



CEO **Kathleen Stauffer** was a keynote speaker at the **Connecticut State Organization of Delta Kappa Gamma's 81st Fall Conference** on November 7, 2020. Kathleen's talk at the virtual event was titled "Leading to Excellence," and **addressed three topics: what it takes to be excellent; how to build teams that deliver excellence; and how to create a plan**. Each strategy was illustrated with stories from her experience and upcoming book, *The 10 Secrets of Excellence*, which

emphasizes the value of a collaborative team approach to topnotch leadership and performance. According to DKG's newsletter, "attendees left inspired with great ideas to lead at school, in a job or in a chapter!"

Crystal Levine has taken a position as **Service Support Specialist**, providing Quality supports to Day Services.

The Arc ECT was saddened to learn of **the passing of Norma Cassettari** in November 2020. A resident of Putnam, Norma was the "Founding Mother" of The Arc Quinebaug Valley and a supporter of its programs for many years. **Norma also served as a member of our Board of Directors**.

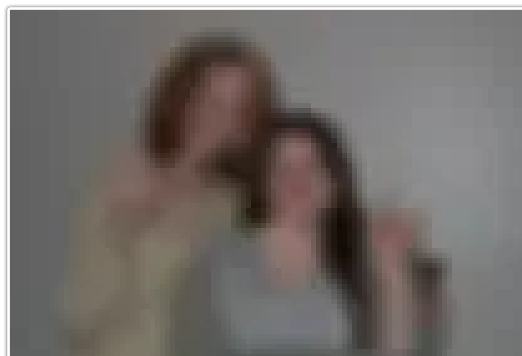
The Arc ECT's April Film Festival is THE Virtual Event of the Season!



The Arc ECT's **5th Annual Film Festival**, virtual in 2021 and highlighting great things accomplished by people with IDD, is also loaded with local talent. **Claire H. of The Arc ECT will be featured in one video filmed at The Garde Theatre in New London**, accompanying one of her favorite songs with ASL (American Sign Language). How long has Claire studied ASL? "Oh, since I was 2."

What started as a way to help Claire communicate with friends turned into a long-term passion, even as her own verbal skills dramatically improved. Claire took all the ASL classes that she could find, and through high school she was asked by teachers to work with kids who were non-verbal. "I liked helping out my classmates and teaching the younger kids. It's something I'm good at."

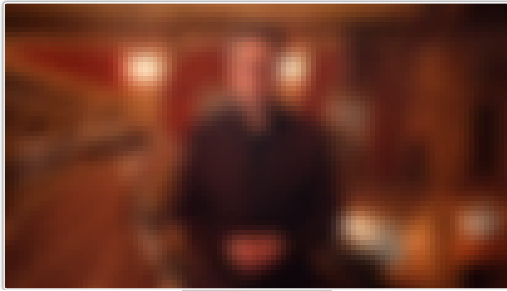
Claire's Mom Catherine agrees. **"We saw she had this incredible aptitude for ASL** so we enrolled her in classes at New London Adult Education and Manchester Community College, where she really excelled." She's been in several talent shows demonstrating her skills, and she even has a YouTube channel devoted to signing to different songs. [You can find it by searching "ASL Claire Anderson."] What's hardest about signing to a song? **"I don't just translate the words,"** Claire says, **"I have to translate emotions and feelings too."** And sometimes she'll go back and edit a song if she finds a better sign to capture a certain phrase.



Claire and her mom, Catherine

Claire hopes to start online classes at MCC in the future. Previously, she **worked in The Arc ECT's bakery and culinary program** and wants to continue in that field. "I'm also interested in acting and modeling," she says. Add ASL to that well-rounded portfolio and Claire's resume is complete.

Join The Arc ECT family April 22 for the **5th Film Annual Festival**, featuring VIRTUAL high-quality films, interviews with The Arc ECT's leaders, and some very talented performers . . . like Claire! Click [here](#) for more information and tickets, or to **sponsor** the festival!

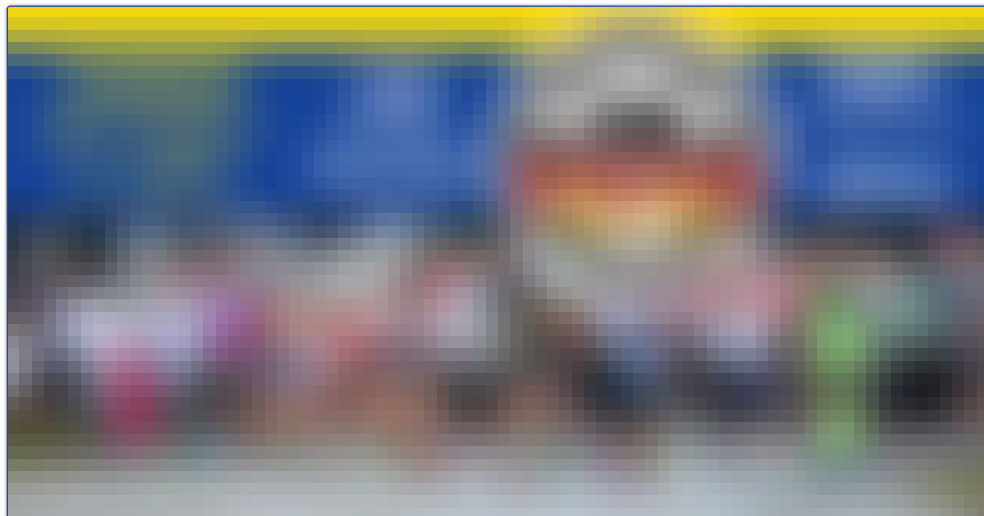
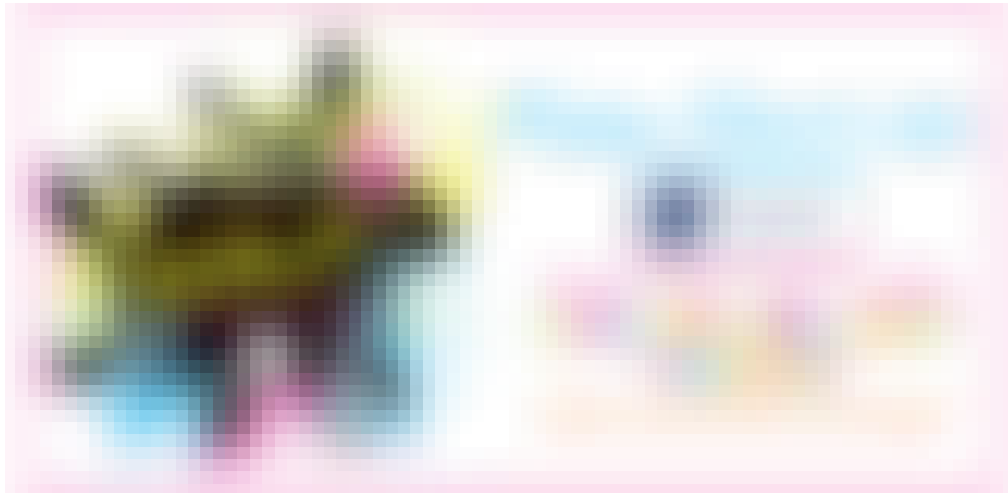
*Brian Scott-Smith*

Brian Scott-Smith will again host our film festival this year. You can also hear Brian weekly on his news podcast, **Connecticut East This Week**.

Visit the podcast website at connecticut-east.com to find out more.

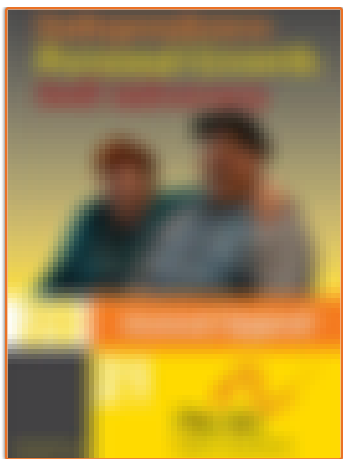


Show Your Support for People with IDD



2021 Tax Incentives . . .

One More Reason to Donate to The Arc ECT!



This year's tax incentives allow deductions of up to **\$300 (\$600 per couple) of charitable donations, even without itemizing.** This is great news for people who love to support good causes . . . like The Arc ECT! Take advantage of our monthly giving program this year and reap the benefits—it's a win-win!

This Issue's Recipe

Easy to Make (From Scratch!) Lemon Pound Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

There's no better way to celebrate Spring than with a super moist lemon cake. It's not overly sweet, thanks to the tang of the cream cheese frosting to balance it out. Every bite of this homemade lemon cake combines a burst of citrus with melt-in-your-mouth buttery tenderness.

Ingredients

For the Lemon Pound Cake:

- 1 cup (8 ounces) unsalted butter
- 1 cup (7 ounces) granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup (1 and 3/4 ounces) light brown sugar, packed
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon pure lemon extract
- 2 tablespoons lemon zest
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 large eggs plus 2 egg yolks
- 1 and 3/4 cups (7 ounces) cake flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

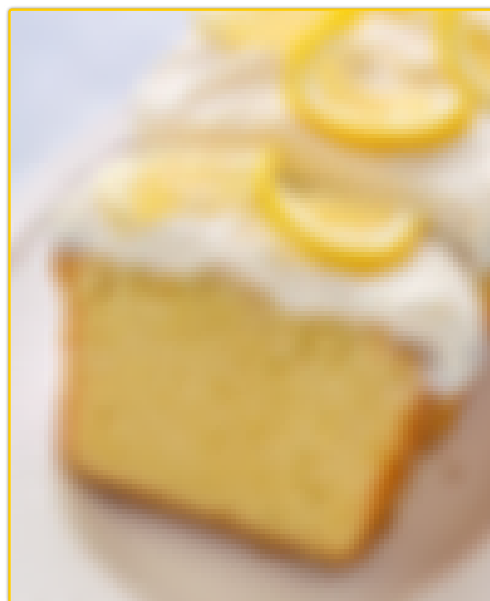
For the Lemon Cream Cheese Frosting:

- (1) 8 ounce block full-fat cream cheese, VERY soft but not melted
- 1/4 cup (2 ounces) unsalted butter, VERY soft but not melted
- 1/4 teaspoon pure lemon extract
- 2 cups (8 ounces) confectioners' sugar, sifted (more if needed)
-

Directions

For the Lemon Pound Cake:

1. Adjust an oven rack to middle position, then preheat oven to 375 degrees (F).
2. Spray a 9x5 inch loaf pan with non-stick baking spray; set aside.
3. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat.
4. Pour melted butter into a large bowl, then whisk in both sugars.
5. Add in vanilla extract, lemon extract, lemon zest, and lemon juice and beat well.
6. Add in the eggs and yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
7. In a separate medium-sized bowl combine the cake flour, salt, and baking powder.
8. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and gently whisk together until just combined.
9. Pour batter into prepared pan and smooth the top with a rubber spatula.



The Arc Eastern Connecticut, established by two groups of families in 1952, provides advocacy and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the entire region. Our services touch



The Arc Eastern
Connecticut
125 Sachem Street
Norwich,
Connecticut 06360

every aspect of a person's life: housing, employment/job development, vocational/micro-enterprise ventures, education, day programs, in-home supports, Senior services, health/fitness activities, and community involvement.



NEWSLETTER



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