

## Achieve with us!

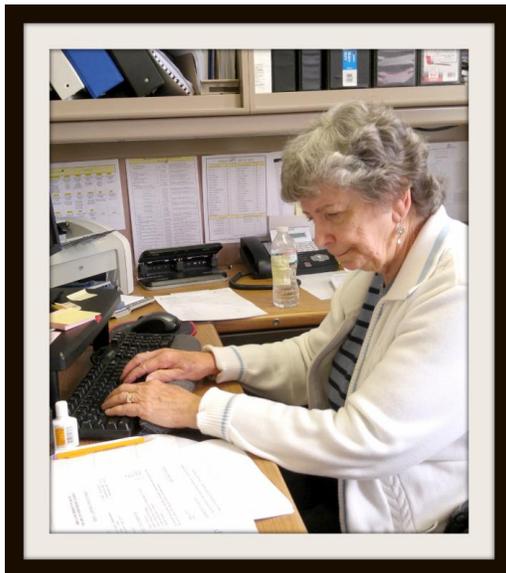
We're making a difference in lives all over Hunterdon County, join us!

# Moving Forward

Vol: 1 No. 2

Arc of Hunterdon

June 2016



Patty B, hard at work

## Then & Now

Patty Brazdovic was the first *Arc of Hunterdon* employee in the administration office. She was hired in September 1971. Patty described how it was in the beginning, "There was no Executive Director. The Board of Directors did it all. I was the only employee. Our budget was under a million dollars. At that time we were serving about 10 clients. We had only one adult center which was located on the Foran Estate in Flemington."

*Today, Arc of Hunterdon* serves just under 100 residential clients in group homes and supported living apartments. Additionally, we serve clients who attend our day programs and work with families throughout the county, reaching over 700 Hunterdon County residents. Patty says, "over the years, the dedication to our clients has stayed the same. They are loved and really cared for. I have seen the closing of institutions and the incorporation of our folks into normal everyday living as it should be."

When asked why she has stayed so many years, Patty said, "The way we respect the needs of the handicapped and the people who make this happen."

## Who We Are...What We Stand For

A lot has changed since 1954. We aren't the A.R.C. anymore; we have enough other acronyms. We aren't an association of any-named citizens anymore. We are The Arc. What does that mean? Well, nationally, The Arc provides a pathway, we offer support. We complete a circle, lead the way, make connections. We're a community network, we protect, we create a bridge to the future. We're a lot of things now in 2016, yet we struggle with our identity every day.



How do we explain what we do? We help people learn new skills, but we're not teachers. We facilitate medical supports, but we aren't nurses, you won't find scrubs here. We drive people where they need to go, but we're not chauffeurs. We help people pay bills and balance checkbooks, but there are no CPAs among us. Every day we balance emotional struggles and talk out better options, but most of us aren't licensed counselors. We do laundry, grocery shop, schedule oil changes, pick-up at pharmacies, advocate to insurance companies, cook dinner, pack lunches, plan vacations, give meds, repair wheelchairs, shovel snow, braid hair, plunge toilets, make beds ...the list of jobs is endless.

The most important piece though, is intangible. It's friendship. It's camaraderie. It's listening to the stories of past lives, hearing the dreams for future ones. Sitting together over a cup of coffee, or singing together on the morning commute; it's those little moments that keep The Arc going; that make us the family we are.

Our new logo tries to bring some definition to our role as The Arc. It was "designed to embody our mission and values," it "communicates our commitment to promoting and protecting the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes." Quite a mouthful.

To some, our new logo may be an orange swish; a Nike check of sorts. To us, it's "flowing shape reflects our embracing nature", representing the curve of support and growth through a person's life. The "burst of energy at the top right

is symbolic of how we support independence." A star shooting for its own life goals and happiness. That's the most successful day for us. When we can walk away. When a person has taken all they can from The Arc; they've learned skills, grown as a person, decided who they want to be... they walk away. And as sad as that seems, that's a successful day for us. That's why those intangible supports are the most important. The only thing we're left with are the memories of conversations over a cup of coffee and singing together on the morning commute.

Next time you see us in your neighborhood, remember, we are just The Arc. We don't need titles. No initials, we stand for nothing, ...and yet we stand for everything!



## Making an Impact in Local Business

A great big thank you goes out to Easy Flow Cookies (or also known as Jars of Joy) for donating over \$1,000 to *The Arc of Hunterdon*!

Easy Flow Cookies started off as a school assignment where the students of Wilkes University in PA, had to create a product, sell that product, and donate the money to an organization. Because Christine Walsh and Anne Stramara both have siblings with disabilities, they thought it would be a great idea to donate the money raised to *The Arc of Hunterdon*. On top of donating over \$1,000, Easy Flow Cookies also donated their time to *The Arc's* annual Bouquets of Baskets and Bags Tricky Tray that was held on April 16th! These student entrepreneurs were such an incredible asset to the success of the event and we can't thank them enough.

## Community Connections

April 1st was quite a show around here, our Arc Family was dressed from head to toe in blue! Why? April is Autism Awareness month and many individuals we support are diagnosed with autism. Each year *Autism Speaks* hosts "Light It



ArcWorks team, lighting it up blue

Up Blue" to raise awareness for autism. "Light It Up Blue" is an international awareness campaign that shines a light on the triumphs and challenges of living with autism. One in 68 individuals are diagnosed with autism. This campaign has had the Empire State Building, Tokyo Tower, Niagara Falls, bridges, and even world palaces turn blue over the years! This year, *The Arc of Hunterdon* was no exception. Almost 100 people here wore blue, spread awareness for autism, and raised \$400 to donate to the cause! Thank you so much to everyone who participated and thank you to Autism Speaks for raising awareness for a cause dear to *The Arc of Hunterdon's* heart.

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## Tricky Tray Success

Our 5th Annual Tricky Tray event was quite a success! Together, with over 500 people, we raised \$60,000 to assist in supplementing our programs. Thank you for all your support. We'll

be back (with bells) for year six!

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## Disability in the Mainstream

Rory O'Shea Was Here: This movie is a great story of two men (Michael and Rory) who both have physical disabilities and meet in an institution in Dublin, Ireland. Rory is upset about living in a care facility and makes it very clear that he would prefer to live more independently in the community. Due to his rebellious nature and combined with his physical limitations, Rory is denied a placement in the community. Michael has lived his whole life in a care facility and is not really aware of how to live independently in the community but is curious about it and is ready to experience it with someone his age. Rory is immediately able to understand Michael's difficult speech and they quickly become friends. The two gentlemen maneuver the system to start to experience life at its fullest together, when an unexpected turn of events and the life that they had started to build together changes dramatically.



This movie is funny, touching and wonderful! There are so few films about people with disabilities that portray them in the most human way. This movie encourages the viewer to take a look at life from a different angle and connect with the humanity of Michael and Rory. The actors who play Michael and Rory are both able bodied in life, but both do a wonderful job of accurately portraying the disabilities without mocking them. This movie is rated R for language, but it is a movie I would watch with older children or teenagers. It's very moving.

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### **From the Corner Office**

For the past eighteen months, The Arc of Hunterdon has been consulting with the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office in their efforts to create a special needs directory for residents of Hunterdon County called STAR (Special

Training and Registration). The directory is being designed to assist first responders and law enforcement when called upon to address an emergency situation involving an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The press release states: "Police Officers and other First Responders have encounters with individuals with various developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, and other mental health issues for various emergency and non-emergency reasons. Just as the reasons for each response differ, so do the individuals they encounter. Too often we read about unfortunate outcomes between first responders and special needs individuals arising from a lack of information available to the first responders."

The program will allow parents and legal guardians to provide information they believe is important to the well-being of their loved ones, wards, or clients. Information can include dislikes, fears, verbal ability, mobility, any violent tendencies, or more. It is important to note participation is completely voluntary.

"The information provided will be loaded into a database at the Hunterdon County Communications Dispatch Center. There, trained dispatchers will be

able to cross reference names and addresses with the database and instantly provide details to first responders to assist them with the situation and keep the individual safe."

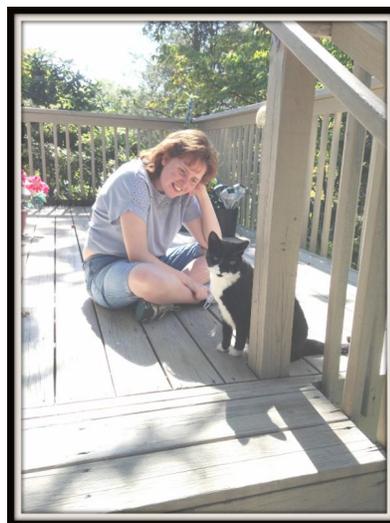
To register, simply complete this registration form:

<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/pdf/STaR/registrationform.pdf>

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## A Day in the Life

In our Self-Direction program, we offer day services to individuals who need a bit of support in their daily travels. One particular Arc employee, Kim, shares her day with us. Kim may be the one providing supports, but she's the one receiving the life lessons. Kim works three days per week with an individual with whom she's grown close.



Kim's friend enjoying the sunshine.

Their days start at 9am when Kim arrives at her friends' home and she's greeted with a beautiful smile. They sit and chat for a minute, deciding what she'd would like to do with her day and then the two women start out for their daily adventure(s).

Kim and her friend love to take walks and be outside so they typically start their morning with a casual walk and then head out to pick up lunch. They frequent ShopRite where she can choose what she wants for lunch and Kim can coach a bit about healthy choices. At check out, Kim offers prompting for a successful transaction, teaching money skills. Sometimes they visit restaurants to enjoy a lunch with one another or with other Arc friends; encouraging healthy relationships and typical social interactions.

After lunch, they likely get together with some friends to watch movies, play games, do crafts, or go for nice walks at the lovely parks in the Hunterdon area. They also enjoy bowling, visiting the library to look for books about cats, horses, and other farm animals. Kim's friend loves anything involving animals, whether it's a farm, pet store or zoo.

Getting out into the community to local stores is a great opportunity as well. When visiting local stores, this allows both ladies to get to know local neighborhoods and meet people in the community. When their adventures are

done for the day, Kim drives her friend home by 4pm. A job well done!

Kim says she loves the happiness she feels when working with her friend and how she can make her laugh. Kim tells us she has the best sense of humor, and surprises her with the best comments. For example, they can be driving along and she will spontaneously sing along to a song she hears on the radio. We can be out bowling with friends and she becomes their cheerleader, supporting them proudly. "My friend has taught me more about patience than anyone in my life, and has reminded me of the old saying, 'you never judge a book by its cover'. There have been some challenges, but working with my friend and her father (we are a team), we have the best times!"

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Jeff & Colleen, our fearless leaders, pictured with  
Mike Dalpe from Local #3

## Thanks For Your Support!

Every community donation makes a HUGE difference in the lives of a fellow neighbor. It provides them transportation to church on Sundays, it assists them in on-the-job training so they can start their next career, and it provides services for

endless relationship building supports. We'd like to specifically thank the Building and General Construction Laborers Local #3 for their \$250 donation, and the Somerset County Building Trades Council for their \$200 donation. We appreciate your commitment to the community!

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Become a  
**certified**  
Babysitter



## Special Sitter's Babysitting Course

Do you have a teenager? Know teens who babysit? Share our Special Sitter's Certification class with them. We're offering TWO this summer, by popular demand. Get CPR & First Aid certified in one weekend and learn how to become the most popular sitter in the community! Dates and registration at our website: [www.archunterdon.org](http://www.archunterdon.org).

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## MONTHLY PLEDGE



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If you are reading our newsletter in print and would like it electronically, please let us know on any social platform.

See what's happening on our social sites:



The Arc of Hunterdon County | 908.730.7827 | [www.archunterdon.org](http://www.archunterdon.org)

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