

Achieve with us!

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

Moving Forward

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Arc of Hunterdon

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The Samuel Drive residents and their support staff team, enjoying a holiday show

Feeling The Love

The employees at our Samuel Group Home work hard to enable and empower the ladies who live there. Upon visiting Samuel, one will witness staff pretending play scenarios with beloved dolls, dancing silly "Jeff Mattison" dances (our fearless leader, Executive

Director), singing Beatles songs, and more. A true personal connection is fostered between the employees and the residents, they talk about pets, children, husbands, and grandchildren. The residents provide a warm welcome when the employees come to work.

I've been a member of management at Samuel for over a year now, and I've experienced many outings with my friends, the residents. Always trying to include each employee and resident, creating a personal experiences for everyone, relationships mean everything to our group home team. I witnessed a dream come true with one of our residents who got to see a Beatles tribute band in Morristown. The ladies were rocking hard and told everyone after, "I saw the Beatles!"

Our employees are always going above and beyond for the residents. We spend the summer watching bands at Deer Path Park. We'll load up all the fixins' for a great picnic night in the park and enjoy each other and some music under the stars. We recently helped the residents enjoy their first

tailgate party, and they didn't want to leave. They sang and danced the night away.

When we went to the Bronx Zoo, it rained. You'd think that would damper their spirit, but no, it was so worth it. We enjoyed the entire day! The ladies never believed they could ride a carousel and thanks to the accessible accommodations they were in awe. We've helped the residents experience Jenkinson's Aquarium, Grounds for Sculpture, seasonal hay rides, apple picking, spa days at nail salons, Christmas Light festivals, Rain-forest Cafe, Broadway shows, Peddler's Village, and a Circle Cruise around New York. Our ladies know how to embrace life and see past their disabilities to live as fully as possible. I'm blessed to be a part of that. We all are.

It's life-changing when you spend time away with someone and they tell you "I've never been on a vacation before", "we can actually sleep in a hotel?" These are experiences we take for granted. Most of these moments are first times for our ladies. They never imagined they could do these things. We've witnessed beautiful progress in their lives. Challenging behaviors have decreased, they are more talkative and engaged. We have received many compliments on the residents being noticeably happier. We are a proud team and are honored to take care of these ladies, our Samuel family.



Family Resources

Support groups can be a valuable tool for your family. Joining a support group broadens your support network, gives you access to additional resources, and provides help with solving issues faced by people with disabilities and their families. *The Arc of New Jersey* provides a list of support groups throughout the state for individuals, parents, and siblings. Visit http://www.thearcfamilyinstitute.org/what_we_do/support-groups.html to search for groups in your area.





Jesse, proud at work

Making an Impact in Local Business

Our friend and self-advocate, Jesse, has been employed at ShopRite in Clinton since 2008. He started as a bagging clerk and currently works in the produce department. Jesse really enjoys stocking the produce and being part of that department. He gets along well with his co-workers, there's a great camaraderie. In fact, when we arrived at ShopRite for our interview, and asked one of the other produce workers if Jesse was around, a big smile came across their face and they were very excited for him to be interviewed about his job.

Jesse works four days a week and says having a job in the community gives him something productive to do. It makes him feel responsible, which is something we all enjoy. One of his favorite aspects of working in the community is that he gets paid! Who doesn't like pay day? Earning his own money allows him to spend it on things that bring him enjoyment. Jesse has a job coach through *The Arc of Hunterdon County's* Supported Employment department. He is very independent in his job and needs minimal coaching at this point. His natural supports have grown and he's doing great!

Congratulations to Jesse on successful employment and independence and thank you for being an example to all of us. Jesse provides a great reminder to be grateful for the employment we have and all of the things it brings to our lives.

It Takes A Special Someone

Twenty four years ago, Sue Kertesz, a mother with two young sons, saw an ad for an opening that had good hours that would work for her. She says, "I had no idea what *The Arc* was, but the minute I walked in the door I knew this is what I wanted." She added, "I have loved every minute working with the clients and the staff."

Around 1996, working at Point Breeze Day Center, one of our programs in Frenchtown, Sue noticed that many of the



Sue K. and LPN, Maggie, both enjoying their retirement party

"ladies" would arrive needing to have their hair combed. This led to a Beauty Day in the center. They get hair, nails, and makeup done to look fabulous. "They love it, it makes them feel good," Sue explained.

Over the years, Sue has done arts and crafts and sensory training with the clients at Point Breeze. She has taken groups out to help with Meals on Wheels and to do housecleaning at our local group homes. Lately she has been working in the kitchen making sure that each client gets the proper lunch. Everyone knows Sue is always in the kitchen! It's become her home. She loves it, and so does everyone who attends Point Breeze. It's not a typical day if Sue isn't there.

When she retired this winter, it was bittersweet. Sue is looking forward to spending time with her 2 year old granddaughter. But her connection with *The Arc* will continue as she provides respite for two clients who have become a part of her family. "And I live close by so I will be visiting," she concluded. Sue will always have a home with us here at *The Arc*.



Sue, Gail, and Cathy: enjoying an agency dinner event



We've Hit the Press

NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities featured some of our individuals in their current publication. Long time staff, Sue Kertesz, was interviewed along with some of our service recipients from our Point Breeze Adult Day Center.

View the article and some great pics [here](#).

Play to Win \$10,000!

We are all very excited for our upcoming [Bouquets of Baskets & Bags Tricky Tray](#) event. We have over 150 prizes, totaling almost \$100,000! It gets higher and higher each year.



Join us on April 22nd at North Hunterdon High School by [purchasing your ticket now](#). We typically sell out, so don't miss your opportunity. Want a sneak peek of all our great prizes? Visit our [Facebook event page](#) to get a glimpse.

Can't make it to the event? That's okay, you can still purchase a raffle ticket to be included in our \$10,000 Visa Card Raffle. No need to be present. Call our office, speak to an employee, or [visit our website](#) to get your lucky tickets today!



National Core Indicator Project

"The New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities is excited to participate in the NCI project through utilization of three of NCI's voluntary surveys. The Adult Consumer Survey is a face-to-face conversation between individuals receiving services and trained interviewers. The Adult Family Survey and Family/Guardian Survey, both of which are anonymous, are completed online (or via a paper version if necessary).

Invitations to complete the online surveys will be mailed by the

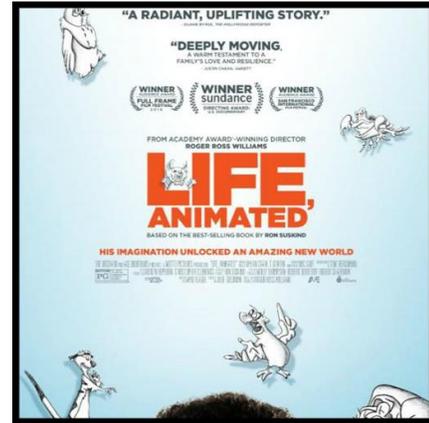
Division to family members/guardians, along with a [National Core Indicators Overview](#). The mailing will be printed on bright yellow paper, which will show through the window in the envelope. At the same time, Division staff will call randomly selected individuals to request their voluntary participation in a face-to-face interview."

Be on the lookout for these letters and please assist in the project.

Disability in the Mainstream

Life, Animated, a 2016 documentary, is based on the best selling book by Ron Suskind. It features Owen Suskind, who developed autism at the age of 3. His family was worried if Owen would ever interact with people in a meaningful way. Through animated films, like those of Walt Disney Company, Owen found a way to understand the world around him.

The documentary, which skillfully tells Owen's story, is available on Amazon Prime and as a download on iTunes and in some movie theaters to date.



MONTHLY
PLEDGE



Make your monthly pledge to impact the life of a neighbor near you by visiting [our website](#).



From the Corner Office

Governor Christie delivered his 2018 Budget Address this month, and sadly a salary increase for Direct Support Professionals was not included. While this is discouraging, it doesn't mean we stop pushing for this much-needed change. We will continue speaking

as advocates for our folks and the people who work tirelessly to support them well. Here's how you can help too:

Send emails, letters, and faxes to your local leaders. Get more people on board to see the critical role Direct Support Professionals play in the lives of our community neighbors. [Register to speak](#) at one of the public hearings being held this spring. Continue pushing, we know we will!

A Day in MY Life

Written by Daisy Rodriguez, self-advocate

I moved in with *The Arc of Hunterdon* in October of 2010. Before moving, I lived with my mom and our four dogs. I lived at Meadow Lane Group Home but it wasn't the best fit for me. I had trouble trusting people and was not interested in making friends. I didn't like taking medication, even antibiotics if I was sick. I would work, come home, and that's it.

Then, a couple years later, I moved to a different group home which was a great fit. While living there, I was able to open up to the staff and begin to trust people. I made friends and we enjoyed going out a lot. I started going to community events and met a lot of people there who became friends.

I got a job at *The Arc* office where I was able to help people and I felt important. They waited for me to come in to work each day for projects. I felt more comfortable taking medication with these new people when the doctors said I needed them to feel better.

I used to love living with my mom and I miss it at times, but *The Arc* gave me the ability to live on my own and become independent. When I lived with my mom, it was just me, her, and the dogs. Now I have friends, amazing staff, and people who I can always talk to. I feel that I have grown a lot since moving with *The Arc* and the staff here have helped me along with the way. *The Arc* is helping me reach my goal of living in my own apartment where staff helps a little when I go out. *The Arc* is like family to me and I love it here, they are good people.



Daisy enjoying her birthday at Hershey Park



Light it Up Blue

World Autism Month is coming in April!

Be sure to sport your best blue in support of the cause!

Light it Up Blue Day is April 2nd, 2017

The Arc of Hunterdon County | 908.730.7827 | www.archunterdon.org

See what's happening on our social sites:



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