

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 31ST, 2025



New Year 2025 Update

UPCOMING DATES

April is Autism Acceptance Month

- 4/6 Last day for Gertrude Hawk Fundraiser
- 4/28 Phillipsburg Area Job Fair
- 4/29 Hunterdon County Autism Awareness & Special Needs Resource Fair
- 5/1 REC Dave & Buster's Fundraiser
- 6/14 Hunterdon County Community Day



New Year and New Beginnings

From exciting Recreation vacations to community events and fundraisers to the day to day memories being made, we welcome you to rewind with us and take a look at what the past three months have looked like at The Arc of Hunterdon County. We are so excited for all that 2025 has in store for us!



In this newsletter you will find:

Latest projects, ArcWorks Updates, Rec Updates, and more. Keep Reading!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

New Press Release

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST, 2025



On Friday, February 21st, Hunterdon County Prosecutor Renée M. Robeson and Chief of Detectives Timothy J. Drew welcomed Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman, State Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin, and Acting Motor Vehicle Commission Chief Administrator Latrecia Littles-Floyd at the Hunterdon County Historic Courthouse to announce new efforts underway to assist law enforcement officers to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstandings during encounters with individuals who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or a communication disorder.

The new, voluntary designation is available to individuals with ASD or a communication disorder who want to indicate their diagnosis on their driver's license or non-driver ID.

Protect Medicaid Rally

THURSDAY, MARCH 6TH, 2025



Pictured above: The Arc of Hunterdon crew, The Arc of NJ Executive Director, Tom Baffuto, and NJ Council of Self-Advocates member

We had the incredible opportunity to send a group down to Trenton to attend the Medicaid Rally at the State House Annex yesterday. One of our self-advocates had been very vocal in expressing interest in attending and had an incredible experience being around other advocates and voices speaking up for their rights.

The atmosphere was electric with speeches of hope and positivity towards protecting the rights of the disabled community and other communities that would be affected by any cuts to Medicaid.

Medicaid is essential for the folks we support and any cuts to it will be directly impacting them. Please urge your Representatives and Senators to fight for no cuts to Medicaid!

Help us protect Medicaid and continue to provide support to this vulnerable community. Medicaid is an essential lifeline for individuals experiencing intellectual/developmental disabilities. Call/write/email your Senators and Congressman and urge them to vote no on any cuts to Medicaid!

- Medicaid helps provide our folks access to healthcare and long-term access at an affordable rate as well as Home and Community Based Supports (HCBS).
- Without proper funding to HCBS and Medicaid, thousands of New Jerseyans with disabilities could lose their independence and be forced into nursing homes or state-run institutions to survive.
- Medicaid creates thousands of jobs in the health care sector and increases employment for people with disabilities.
- Cuts to Medicaid would shift the funding onto New Jerseyans.

THE MARTIN PAPISH AWARD RECIPIENT



We here at The Arc of Hunterdon County are so excited to announce that Joann Colucci, our Associate Executive Director of Residential Services, will be honored with the Martin Papish Award at this year's Arc of New Jersey Awards Ceremony.

Joann has been working at The Arc of Hunterdon County for 33 years. She started her career as a DSP working at one of our Day Programs. Joann's commitment and love for her work and our folks propelled her career forward all the way to her current position as our Associate Executive Director of Residential Services.

When tasked with providing nomination letters for Joann, her coworkers had nothing but stories of dedication and commitment: "She often shares stories from her early days with the agency, providing direct support or job coaching, always focusing on the individuals she supported through the years, the impact each person has had not just on her life, but also on her personal and professional philosophy. She carries the essence of these individuals with her in the work she sets out to do each day and finds new ways to solicit input from people receiving services, to make certain that people receiving services are at the center of each decision."



"Throughout her tenure, Joann has played a key role in shaping our Day Program Services and, in recent years, significantly expanding and improving our Residential Programs. She entered the Residential Program with grace, bringing a wealth of experience from her work in our Day Program with a clear vision for transformation. Her tireless efforts have not only enhanced the quality of care we provide to all of our individuals, but has also fostered a supportive, collaborative environment within our direct support team. Joann truly makes the entire team feel like a family unit."

"One of the things I admire the most about Joann is that she is willing to make hard decisions, even if it will make her and her team's life a bit more challenging for a period of time. She does all of this for the greater good of the people we support and for our agency as a whole."

When asked about Joann, some of our folks lit up at the chance to express their love and admiration for Joann: "Joann has a good heart. She is a really nice lady and I like when she works with me. I really enjoy her company!"

"I like Joann. I think she is really nice."

"She is fun to be around and a nice person!"

"She is a good person and helps people."

Joann is one of the most hardworking and dedicated people to both our agency and those we serve. Her dedication and commitment is evident in all she does and we truly cannot think of anyone more deserving for this award!



DOUG YOUNG ADVOCATE OF THE MONTH

An advocate of the month is a person who is recognized for their work as an advocate for a specific cause. Advocates work to improve the lives of people by speaking up for their rights and needs. Each month, we're featuring advocates who engage with others to ensure priorities that improve the lives of themselves or others.

I am proud to announce our honorees:

- Advocate #1/Staff duo who have been working together to improve our Advocate's day to day life.
- Advocate #2 has been advocating for Recreation program trips, the Special Olympics, healthy eating, and, as of most recently, disability rights.



What did you advocate for?

Advocate- A boombox, iPad, and Nintendo Switch.

Who helped you advocate?

Advocate- my direct support staff.

How did it make you feel to advocate for yourself?

Advocate- it made me feel good! DSP- it made me happy that he was able to do the things he enjoys.

What does Advocacy mean to you?

Advocate- speaking up for myself. DSP- being able to help him do what he enjoys.

How do you feel about being Advocate of the Month?

Advocate- Makes me feel good! DSP- It's exciting to be recognized.



What did you advocate for?

Disability rights, I went down to the State House on March 6th for Medicaid rights with staff.

Who helped you advocate?

DSP staff, family, and friends.

What was the outcome?

I gained more confidence to speak up about what is important to me.

How did it make you feel to advocate for yourself?

It makes me feel good.

How long have you been with The Arc of Hunterdon County?

19 years, for one year in 2002 and ever since 2007.

What does Advocacy mean to you?

Doing things for other people to make a better world.

How do you feel about being Advocate of the Month?

I feel happy inside!

RESIDENTIAL FUN

CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES!



Our Residential Department has had a lot of fun these past few months! January kicked off with celebrating both the new year and some birthdays! We celebrated a birthday at Point Breeze and Ferncrest!

February was all about the buzz around the Super Bowl! Many of our folks hosted Super Bowl parties and got together to watch the big game and cheer on their favorite team! Our guys at Supervised Apartments went all out for the Super Bowl and cheered on their team with a Kansas City Chiefs themed cake!

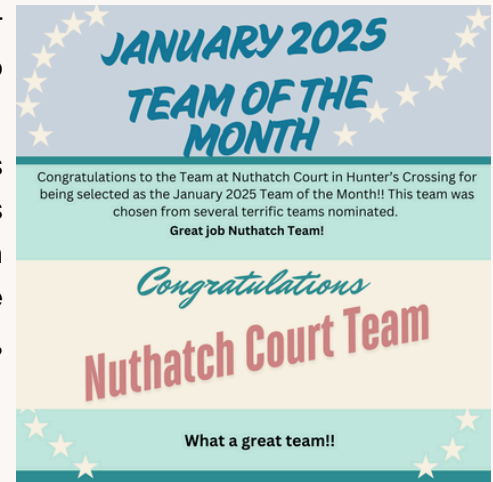


Our lovely ladies at Pinewood and Samuel took a joint trip to go see the North Hunterdon Theatre Organization's production of Mamma Mia! They all had a wonderful time and the show was incredible!

TEAM OF THE MONTH

We also wanted to take this space to recognize the hard work our staff puts in everyday to support our folks. We are excited to recognize our teams of the month for January and February!

Our team at Nuthatch Court was recognized this past January as our first Team of the Month. During nominations, fellow coworkers had this to say about our Nuthatch team: "The team at Nuthatch works to make sure both clients are given the best of care. We take pride in being able to work together. We communicate well, and we help each other out."



February recognized two teams, Alexandria East and ArcWorks, as

the Team of the Month! During nominations, fellow coworkers had the following to say about each team:

"The Alex East team are unsung heroes in the agency" "The team has great leadership from the coordinator & senior team members" "The team makes the work look easy but provides complicated support and handles so many challenges without complaint all while helping the men at Alex to have great lives!" "The team at ArcWorks has grown a lot & everyone seems to enjoy the work they do!" "The positive vibes make the day go

more smoothly and help the individuals to have a better day." "The team focuses on helping each other more and the supervisors are always setting an example of how to invest energy in doing more & doing better."

FROM YOUR FRIENDS IN FAMILY SUPPORT

OUR VISION IS A STRONG COMMUNITY WHERE ALL CITIZENS ARE FULLY INCLUDED.

Arc of Hunterdon Family Support provides Case Management services through a grant awarded by the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services. The grant allows our team to offer Case Management services to individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities who often live alone and are supported by family or the community in which they live. Most often candidates eligible for services through the grant are not eligible for services provided by the state of New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities, their budget is minimal. Initially, we receive a call from an individual, family, or concerned citizen requesting information on how to receive additional support. A Family Support Case manager will meet with the individual to observe their daily routine and determine where there is a need. If appropriate some of the services Family Support Case managers will offer are assistance with grocery shopping, how to make a shopping list, and how to budget while making healthy meal selections. We assist with scheduling medical appointments, advocating on appointments as needed, and helping with other life skills. Family Support Case Management allows individuals the opportunity to continue to live independently while living a life they imagine for themselves and to be an important part of the community in which they live.

Family Support is often the first point of contact for individuals and their families looking for services. The types of services that are requested may vary. The caller might be looking for assistance with applying for Social Security, and/or Medicaid, applying for services with the New Jersey Department of Developmental Disabilities, and assisting with the application process. We would advocate on behalf of the individual to the county and state offices as needed. Our office will assist with researching other community providers for services outside what we offer, for example, assistance with paying for utilities, looking for housing, or applying for rental assistance.

We must keep up with the constant changes made to the support and services system in New Jersey and how to access those services. We often rely on updates from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, the New Jersey Department of Developmental Disabilities, Arc of the US, and Arc of NJ. The information is up-to-date, reliable, and supported.

Arc of Hunterdon Family Support is a small department, but an important part of a network of people I'm proud to work with. Everyone in this field works very hard to make a difference in supporting and advocating for individuals and their families in a positive, impactful way that supports a person-centered philosophy.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." -Winston Churchill

KEEPING UP WITH RECREATION



Spring is in the Air! Designing our Spring T-Shirts



Recreation rang in the new year the right way! From their Open Mic night to Meet n Munch and visiting the DaVinci Science Center January was a busy month!

Recreation had a very busy February! From seeing the Harlem Globetrotters to their fundraiser with Chimney Rock Inn and ending the month with a trip to Mt. Airy Casino, the REC crew was very busy making memories!

March was equally busy with trips to Grounds for Sculpture, the NJ Botanical Gardens, and YESTERcades! Our REC crew is also very excited for their upcoming spring t-shirt fundraiser! Each design was created by our folks at REC and the proceeds will go directly to the REC program!

Looking Forward: The Recreation department is very excited for their return to Rocking Horse Ranch. Our REC crew took a trip up their last year and loved it so much they are set for another trip later this spring!

Recreation meets every week for various activities such as movie days, bowling, mini golf and more! They are open to expanding programs as well, if that is of interest to anyone.

WHAT'S UP AT ARCWORKS

WELCOMING IN THE WARM WEATHER

ArcWorks had a quieter start to the new year. January was mostly spent recharging after the busy holiday season. Our folks put in a lot of work to create wonderful decorations for ArcWorks and made it look so colorful and pretty!

Love was in the air all February at ArcWorks! Everyone was busy making Valentine's Day crafts and feeling festive! The energy and positivity at ArcWorks was electrifying all month long. There was also a lot of excitement around the Super Bowl with our folks split pretty evenly on who they thought were going to win! Everyone is anxious for Spring to come and warmer weather to arrive.

March was equally busy! From creating festive decorations for St. Patrick's Day to getting ready for Easter and the warm spring weather ArcWorks had so much going on, including lots of fun!



HELLO FROM HUMAN RESOURCES

IN THIS HR SECTION OF THE NEWSLETTER, WE WILL FEATURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PERIODICALLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Stronger Together in 2025

We wanted to spend some time talking about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). When we speak of organizational values, DEI, or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, is one of the pillars of the agency. The Arc of Hunterdon is a strong agency because of the people. Each and every person who is part of the agency brings something unique, comes from a walk of life that is their own, has a background that is special to them, and brings something that no one else can bring to the organization. It is only when we are all contributing, all honoring one another, and when each and every person feels valued, that we can do our best. To that end, the agency's Statement or policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is as follows. The Arc of Hunterdon County is committed to working to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive work environment in which differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected and able to reach their full potential. The Arc actively pursues and welcomes qualified candidates from all backgrounds and cultures and views diversity as a strength that builds value and improves the ability of the agency to stay true to its mission. The Arc of Hunterdon, and The Arc nationally as a movement, is founded on the core belief that celebrating differences and coming together is part of the fabric that makes our agency and our communities stronger. It's important that this is talked about and that every person who is part of The Arc of Hunterdon feels valued here for who you are and the contributions you make to living the mission of the agency.



Then President George H.W. Bush signing The ADA into law, June 1990

Bringing the Mission to Life: The ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, is a piece of legislation that was signed into law close to 35 years ago, after strong advocacy efforts by people with disabilities and supporters of people with disabilities. The scope of the ADA is broad, but at its core, the ADA indicates that people with disabilities need to be given equal access to most public places, transportation, employment, and equal opportunity to benefit from programs and services that are funded by the government; and reasonable accommodations that would make access to employment and opportunity to complete job duties possible for people with disabilities.

One way of thinking about this from a values-based perspective is that everything we do, in our community and in our agency, is made better if we can all be part and if we all have an opportunity to share ourselves and our talents. For everyone to be able to equally participate, barriers that inadvertently keep people with disabilities from being able to participate fully must be fixed so that they are no longer barriers. In some cases, this means making locations physically accessible for people with disabilities; in other cases it means making materials that people use more accessible; and in yet other cases it means changing the way programs run so that everyone is included.

As this is the HR column, when we talk about employment, the ADA says that most businesses must provide reasonable accommodations unless this would pose an undue hardship to the business. A reasonable accommodation is an adjustment to a job or a work environment or process that allows someone with a disability to have equal opportunity to get a job, perform essential job functions, and enjoy far-ranging benefits. Reasonable accommodations help all of us because they allow everyone to fully participate. As an agency, The Arc strongly believes that taking steps to be sure that everyone has equal access and equal opportunity to participate is critical because it is everyone coming together, sharing their talents, and actively participating that makes communities stronger and allows the agency to live its mission.

IN RECOGNITION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH



In recognition of Black History Month, this newsletter will put a spotlight on an advocate for independent living, Johnnie Lacy. Johnnie Lacy was born in 1937 and attended segregated elementary schools in the South. Her family moved to California when she was 10. Although she attended integrated schools but continued to feel the effects of informal segregation. “At 19, Lacy was diagnosed with polio, which briefly led her to become paralyzed and wheelchair-bound.”

She was never considered officially a part of the school and was not allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies. While many would face these barriers and back down, the discrimination Lacy faced only made her more determined to become active in the disability rights movement. “She often spoke of being excluded from the Black community due to her disability and from the disability community due to being a person of color.” She was a fierce advocate for the right of people with disabilities to live independently in the community. “Through her activism, she brought to light the intersectionality of race and disability and worked to tackle ableism in the Black community and racism in the largely white-dominated disability community.” Johnnie Lacy passed away in 2010 and left a legacy as a trailblazing champion for disability rights and a powerful voice for Black people with disabilities.

Sources: <https://www.innow.org/2021/02/01/johnnie-lacy/> <https://www.centerforlearnerequity.org/news/johnnie-lacy-an-advocate-for-independent-living/>

IN RECOGNITION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH AND WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

In recognition of both Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and Women’s History Month, this newsletter will put a spotlight on a fierce advocate and pioneer, Eunice Kennedy Shriver. “Eunice Kennedy was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on July 10, 1921.” After graduating from Stanford University with a degree in Sociology, she held multiple jobs, but in 1957, she took over the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, established in 1946 as a memorial to her oldest brother who had been killed in World War II. In this role she became a fierce advocate and supporter for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In June of 1962, she created a summer day camp, at her house in Maryland, for children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities as a way for the children and adults to broaden their capabilities in a variety of sports and physical activities. “From that camp came the concept of Special Olympics, an organization dedicated to empowering people with intellectual disabilities to realize their full potential and develop their skills through year-round training in sports and competition.”

1968 was host to the first International Special Olympics Summer Games. The games were held at Soldier Field and boasted 1,000 athletes across 26 states and Canada. Special Olympics, Inc. was formally established December 1968. The Arc of the United States, the Council for Exceptional Children, and the American Association on Mental Deficiency pledged their support this organization. Today, the Special Olympics is active in more than 150 countries and has over 1.3 million children and adult athletes competing. In 1984 Eunice was awarded the “Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for her work on behalf of persons with intellectual disabilities.” Eunice Kennedy Shriver passed away in August 2009 at the age of 88.



Sources: <https://www.specialolympics.org/eunice-kennedy-shriver> <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/the-kennedy-family/eunice-kennedy-shriver>

PUTTING THE FUN IN FUNDRAISING



Sip and Support

THERE IS NOTHING TO WINE ABOUT WITH THIS FUNDRAISER!

To celebrate the coming of Spring we are launching our Spring edition labels! The labels feature paintings created by our folks and are available now. The Arc of Hunterdon County receives a portion of each sale of our specially labeled bottles.

[CLICK HERE TO ORDER NOW!](#)



Spring Appeal is Here

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

We here at The Arc of Hunterdon County are grateful for the positive impact we are able to make in the lives of those we serve, but we need your support to truly blossom. **With the increased risk of significant budget cuts to Medicaid, this need is even greater now.**

Donate today to help support our advocacy and services, making inclusion possible. Every dollar goes towards enriching the lives of the individuals with disabilities that we support. **Please remember** [CLICK HERE TO DONATE!](#) **regardless of the amount, your gift makes a difference.**



Sensory Room for ArcWorks

CURRENT FUNDRAISING PROJECT

ArcWorks is very excited and appreciative for all the work and donation towards their sensory room. We have an Amazon Wishlist for anyone who would like to donate an item to our Day Program for the Sensory Room. Scan the QR Code to the right to see our wishlist! [CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE WISHLIST!](#)

Recreation Dine to Donate

MONTHLY EVENTS

Our Recreation Department like to thank the Lehigh Valley Phantoms for their support in gifting tickets to our folks. They would also like to thank Chimney Rock Inn, Moe's Southwest Grill in Branchburg, and everyone who participated in their recent fundraising events!

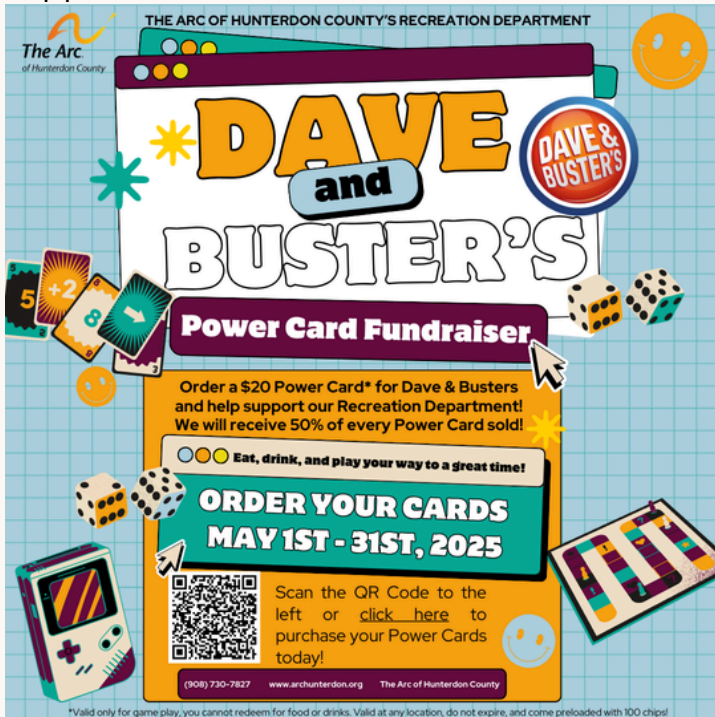


PUTTING THE FUN IN FUNDRAISING

T-Shirt Fundraiser

SUPPORT OUR RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Recreation Department is putting together a spring t-shirt fundraiser! This March they designed and created t-shirt designs to sell and raise money! Please be on the lookout for the link to our store and help support our incredible folks!



Help ArcWorks Get New Chairs!

FUNDRAISER ENDS APRIL 6TH

Now through April 6th we are participating in Gertrude Hawk's Spring fundraiser!! Though this fundraiser we will receive 40% of the total earnings.

Please see the flyer on the left for the QR Code to purchase!

[CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE YOUR CHOCOLATE TODAY!](#)



Dave and Buster's Power Cards

REC FUNDRAISER FOR ENTIRE MONTH OF MAY!
Our Recreation Department is also excited to be holding a Power Card fundraiser with Dave and Buster's!

From May 1st through May 31st you can order Power Cards for Dave and Buster's and we will receive a donation!

Every Power Card will come preloaded with 100 chips that can be used on any game at any Dave and Buster's location!

Support The Arc!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Self-Advocacy Meeting

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2ND

Our Self-Advocates are holding their monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 2nd! Topics of discussion will include: Advocacy Awareness- what does it mean to you, The Arc of NJ Spring Luncheon Virtual event on April 4th, Advocacy in the Community, and Self-Advocate of The Month nominations. If you are interested in attending please email Denise Snyder at: denise@archunterdon.org or call her at: 908-730-7827 x237

Hunterdon County Autism Awareness & Special Needs Resource Fair

TUESDAY, APRIL 29TH

In collaboration with the Hunterdon County CIIA and Hunterdon Health Special Child Health Services we would like to invite you to join us for an Autism Awareness & Special Needs Resource Fair. There will be provider booths as well as panelists speaking. Please scan the QR code below or click the link to register today!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)



Hunterdon County Community Day

SATURDAY, JUNE 14TH, 2025

We are once again attending the Hunterdon County Community Day hosted by the Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce! Come out to the Hunterdon County fairgrounds on Saturday, June 14th and stop by our booth!



LOOKING FORWARD

Thank You to Our Donors!

YOUR SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED

Charles Natale

Mary Alley

Cary Search

Chimney Rock Inc.

Carol Proctor

Beverly Landstrom

Christine Petruzzelli

Edward Peters

Elaine and Peter Buchsbaum

Janice Razza

Old York Cellars

Vincent Doherty

Moe's Southwest Grille

Robert Nazarete

Linda Lakatosh

Sherry Sutter

Kenneth Keane

Lucinda Chou



We Are HIRING

Multiple Positions Open!

- Direct Support Professional (DSP)
- RN
- LPN

WHAT WE LOOK FOR:

Are you a kind-hearted person who loves working with others in a meaningful way? The Arc of Hunterdon County may be the perfect place for you!

The DSP role includes: supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their homes. You will have a set schedule and tasks can include cooking, cleaning, assisting with personal needs, doing laundry, participating in community activities, attending social events, spending time with friends, etc.

Multiple shifts Available: Morning, Evening, Overnight

\$18 base pay (raise after probationary period)! Paid Holidays!

No experience required! 3 week paid training!

Vacations! 401k and Benefits!

APPLY NOW

Email our Recruitment & Retention Specialist with questions: sredington@archunterdon.org



We are Hiring!

Are you or someone you know looking for a job? The Arc of Hunterdon County may be the perfect place for you! See our flyer to the left for more details on open positions.

If interested in applying please reach out to our Recruitment and Retention Specialist Sean Redington via email at: sredington@archunterdon.org and click the link below to fill out our application.

[Click here to apply today!](#)



Meet our Staff/Board!

DIRECTORS LIST

Colleen Dennis

- Executive Director

Kathy Petrik

- Deputy Executive Director

Scott Feltes

- Associate Executive Director

Kellie Woodruff

- Associate Executive Director of HR and Client Advocacy

Joann Colucci

- Associate Executive Director of Residential

Earl McMillan

- Director of Residential

Melissa Duffy

- Associate Director of Residential

Cori Garofalo

- Director of Training and Staff Development

Jenny Holdorff

- Director of Medicaid Services

Patricia Brazdovic

- Co-Director of Human Resources

Suzanne Bechtle

- Co-Director of Human Resources

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We wanted to give a big warm welcome to our newest Board Members Carolyn Francis and Karl Heimerl!

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Kathy Walsh

- Board President

Jessica Lui

- Vice President

Jeffrey Mattison

- Second Vice President

Loretta Luzzo

- Treasurer

Elaine Buchsbaum

- Corresponding Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

- Betsy Ellis

- Nancy Coldreck

- Jean Paich

- Barbara Cromwell

- Carolyn Francis

- Karl Heimerl

BE SURE TO FOLLOW US!



[LIKE US ON FACEBOOK](#)
The Arc of Hunterdon County



[FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM](#)
[@thearcofhunterdon](#)



[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)
archunterdon.org