



# THE MESSENGER

*Achieve with us.*

Fall Issue, Quarterly Newsletter

November 2017

*Serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.*

## The Arc National Convention November 1 - 4 in San Diego, CA

By Smith Vil, Board member

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In the past 2 years, I have had the unique opportunity to attend The Arc National Convention. It has been truly great to participate in the exhilaration of this appreciable experience by linking and connecting with disability professionals and advocates from around the country. Again this year, I was stimulated with new ideas and best practices from our expert speakers. I attended a few of the innovative sessions and enjoyed the learning experience. My goal, going in, was to return with ideas and approaches that can make us, as an organization, more effective and efficient in meeting our goals and objectives to help and support individuals with mental illness (MI) and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Further, this was also an opportunity to network and exchange ideas with other professionals from other Arcs around the country.

lot of focus on diversity in our boards, in our staff, and the families we serve. How do we get them involved? The following is a link of the scheduled innovative sessions that took place.

[www.convention.thearc.org/](http://www.convention.thearc.org/)

This is the biggest conference dedicated by The Arc to the Intellectual and Developmental Disabled community, drawing hundreds of planners from around the country. The conference has an excellent reputation for providing priceless information in the industry. The networking opportunities appealed to me, as did the opportunity to learn from some of the industry's best. I was particularly interested in sessions on special education and advocacy, faith community inclusion and belonging, promoting independence and inclusion, promoting cultural differences since they directly associate with aspects of what we do for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. In addition to the conference sessions, the chance to network with other planners in similar situations was a very valuable experience. I was also able to interact with vendors in the exhibition hall. The opportunity to explore new technologies and discuss current methods with service experts was very worthwhile. I grabbed a few business cards. There is a lot out there for electronic record-keeping that is geared at the IDD community.

This conference was hosted by The Arc of the United States and was held at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina, 1380 Harbor Island Drive, San Diego, California 92101. The conference theme was "Innovate, Motivate, & Collaborate." The focus is on all aspects of the work we do at The Arc to protect people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families through public policy efforts as we champion the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. In addition, there was a



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The newsletter is also available online at [www.brocktonareaarc.org](http://www.brocktonareaarc.org)  
Check us out on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/Brocktonarc](http://www.facebook.com/Brocktonarc)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/Brocktonarc](http://www.twitter.com/Brocktonarc)).

I was enormously delighted with my conference attendance, and felt it was well worth the time and efforts (\$) made to get there. I gained valuable knowledge that can be applied in our organization. In addition, I learned new methods that may help cut our future costs. The networking experience was very valuable. I was able to converse with several industry experts who offered tips and useful information for particular dilemmas that parents of children with intellectual disabilities deal with daily. The conference was very well planned; however, Orlando had a better room setting for registration and for creating memories. The exhibition hall offered a welcoming, informative place to meet with vendors and view their products and services. In addition, the meals and refreshment breaks were enjoyable. I was very satisfied with all that I received at San Diego 2017 and hope to attend a future conference. We were represented from our chapter by me -Smith Vil, Eleonor Jean-Pierre, our Family Support Haitian Outreach Coordinator and Fritz Jean-Pierre, volunteer extraordinaire.

## My 2017 National Arc Convention Report

By Eleonor Jean-Pierre

Eleonor Jean-Pierre, BAArc's Haitian Outreach Coordinator in the Family Support Center, and Fritz Jean-Pierre, a volunteer who supports our Family Support efforts every month, recently represented BAArc at the national convention of The Arc.

Fritz and I were privileged to represent the Brockton Area Arc at the 2017 National Convention. The Convention was held in San Diego, California at the Marina Bay Harbor Sheraton Hotel. From our perspective the city of San Diego is a beautiful place.

The convention was an experience to remember because we had an opportunity to listen to guest speakers from around the world. The sessions we attended were enjoyable and at the same time stimulating. For instance Mary Gonzales, a member of the Board of Directors of The Arc, spoke about diversifying services to those with disabilities. She said we need to raise the bar and be more effective in distributing services to those who come from all backgrounds.

On the last day, Fritz and I had the chance to hear New York Times bestselling author Dr Deepak Chopra speak. In Dr Deepak Chopra's latest work, he said, "You are the universe. The greatest spiritual urge, the urge to change. We are from a universe of stars. It took the whole universe for you to exist." His words were very powerful and educational.

In conclusion, the trip was amazing. We were able to connect with professionals and advocates from around the world. In the end we will be using the knowledge we gained to help others in our community.



Fritz Jean-Pierre, Eleonor Jean-Pierre, and Smith Vil at The Arc National Convention

## CANCELLATION PROCEDURE

- The Brockton Area Arc will close for the day when Dial-A-Bat (The transportation company that transports the majority of our participants) determines that weather conditions are too hazardous for them to transport. Dial-A-Bat notifies their riders of the cancellation.
- The Brockton Area Arc will make a work cancellation announcement on the TV Channel 5 (WCVB)/website [www.wcvb.com](http://www.wcvb.com)
- A notice will also be placed on our telephone dial (508-583-8030) then press the Pound Key (#)
- The offices of the Residential Service Providers are notified by telephone.

## EMPLOYMENT FIRST NEWS

### Job Development

- **Nicole Divens** will be finished with her internship (first internship of the Goddard Foundation grant) at the East Bridgewater YMCA in early December. She has learned to work at the front desk, being an instructor for the Swim Ability class, and as a staff in the child watch room. She has been doing excellent. She is very hopeful to be hired there after completion.
- **Al Milne** works five days a week at Stonehill College for the company called Sodexo. He is the assistant to a head chef that cooks for up to 30 priests year round. He has been doing fantastic.
- **Christian Crooker** was also hired by Sodexo to work at Stonehill College in the student cafeteria where his main job is to maintain the drink area along with other tasks in the cafeteria area.
- **Dawn Griffin** completed a two day soft skills training hosted by the Collaborative on Employment groups in Auburn, MA and received a certificate after completing.
- **David Packard** got back into the Fast Track to Employment program and will complete it in early December.
- **Latheria Gilmore** increased her hours at her job at Massasoit in the cafeteria from two days to three days where she has been working for four years.

### Group Employment

- **John Pike** started working for USESI a couple times a week and is doing great.
- **Jovan Butler** has stepped up to be the main window washer for the time being while the others were not able to.
- **Doreen Nickerson** has taken on many weekly cleaning jobs at the Brockton Area Arc including cleaning the Day Hab floors and as a part-timer cleaning the Day Hab bathrooms.
- **Cathy Archer** has been doing an excellent job as the main Day Hab bathroom cleaner, as well as going to USESI a couple of days a week.
- The **Yard Crew** has had a busy fall and will be out doing lawns until the first snow flies or the leaves are all raked up, whichever comes first. There is a rotating group that accompanies two supervisors daily.
- The **Redemption Center** is bustling in their new digs. They are finding it much easier to sort with so much space. The Redemption Center employs a number of individuals consisting of regulars and a rotating group.
- The **USESI** site has proven to be a success employing three individuals four hours a day five days a week. It is hard work but keeps the employees moving.
- All individuals employed in Group Employment are earning minimum wage. BA Arc no longer supports piece rate.



Young Ladies Linking Arms activities. Having a great time at their Halloween Party and an evening at the Trampoline Place.

## Parent Date Night

Our Recreation Coordinator, Christina Grande, schedules and coordinates Parent Date Night. Here is an example of how it is advertised:

### **Parent Date Night**

Parents – make Friday's date night. Bring your children to the Brockton Area Arc to be cared for and entertained by qualified staff while you enjoy some one on one time. This program welcomes children with special needs and siblings ages 3 to 9 years.

**Fridays, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, January 5<sup>th</sup>  
5:00-7:30pm @BAArc  
\$5.00 fee, \$10.00 for siblings**

Here is what four parents had to say:

"I am so grateful for date night! Noah isn't an easy kid to take care of so it's tough for us to get out. I know he is in a safe environment so I'm able to relax and have a fun night out with my husband and great friends!"

-Shannon Paul

"We love Parent Date Night! It gives us the chance to get out, relax, and enjoy a night out without having to worry about all the things that are a part of our day to day lives. It's so wonderful that while we're out our kiddo has great time, is with other kids, and is in the care of some wonderful people that understand ASD. We couldn't ask for more, a big thanks to Christina and her crew at the ARC!"

-Pamela Merrihew

"Parent Date Nights have been wonderful. They give us a chance to connect with our significant others and friends, and they afford us all a much needed break. The kids always have a great time and I feel confident knowing they are in great hands. Thanks Christina!"

-Kimberly Forness

"Our family loves date night! And that includes our daughter. She gets so excited when we put it on the calendar. Sometimes we go out as a couple, and sometimes we use the evening to catch up with other Arc parents. We so appreciate the time to reconnect and re-energize."

-Melissa Winchell

Well done, Christina! Special thanks to our Recreation staff! Your efforts are appreciated  
Great idea!

## Holster Park

Five members of the Brockton Area Arc and staff took part in sprucing up the Timothy Holster memorial park in Brockton by planting 48 mums. Holster was posthumously awarded the bronze star for valor.



## Happy Feet Hikers Adventures

Today, happy feet hikers explored the Blackstone River and Heritage Canal State Park. While walking they were treated to scores of painter turtles sunning themselves on felled trees, one very large grass carp breaching the surface of the river, and droves of mirror carp swimming upstream. At the end of the trail we found an intact snakeskin full which measured close to 4 feet long. On the way back we were treated to a female cardinal checking in to say hello. We also encountered many other hikers all who greeted our group with a smile and a hello. When all was finished the hikers logged in two and a half miles.

## RENOVATIONS UPDATE

All of the renovations are completed. Only a few "punch list" items need attention. On November 14, the Building Inspector from the City of Brockton gave final approval to the renovation project.

We have begun moving our CBDS and Employment programming into the renovated space. As we vacate our temporary setting in our Family Support Center, we will begin to acquire new furnishings, computers, and other needs.

Plans for an "Open House" in early spring of 2018 are underway. The excitement of fully occupying our new space is building.

Achieve with Us.

# NEWS FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

For more information about items listed below, *unless otherwise specified*,

508-583-8030, ext. 224 (Kathy) or 219 (Danielle)

508-583-8030, ext. 223 (Cape Verdean) ext 311 (Haitian)

508-583-8030, ext. 209 (recreation)

## VIP Luncheon (Very Important Parents)

Brockton Area Arc Family Support Center hosts a monthly older caregiver parent support group. Danielle Latimore is coordinating this group. This group offers an opportunity to socialize and engage with each other, and to gain valuable information from our guest speakers. Older caregivers are concerned and overwhelmed with caring for their loved ones as they themselves plan for the future. The older caregiver support group welcomes a mixed group of ages!

Speakers have included: Alexandra Ribeiro from Senior Whole Health, an organization that specializes in community based services for individuals over 65 who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid; and Roman Davis and Pam McGowan, YMCA of East Bridgewater, who discussed the Y's health and wellness approaches, opportunities, and senior discounts.

In December, please feel free to join us for some festive entertainment at Brockton Area Arc. A member of the group who is a very talented performer, Mr. John Bruno, aka "MR. JOHNNY," will sing music from the 40's and 50's along with some holiday classics!

Please save your seat and RSVP to Danielle Latimore at the Family Support Center.



Parent Date Night attendees.

## PKU Screening Guidelines - An Update

We received the following information from the PKU Nurse Educator at Ashfield Health Care:

*Do you know anyone who is living with PKU?* PKU is a rare genetic disorder that is now diagnosed at birth via newborn screening. More than 50% of adults with PKU are not receiving the PKU care they need.

*Do you know the guidelines for PKU treatment have changed?* In 2014, the American College of Medical Genetics treatment guidelines were updated and people with PKU should be in treatment for life. It is never too late to return to treatment and see an improvement in symptoms. Symptoms of high phenylalanine levels include: Headache, Forgetfulness, Fatigue, Trouble focusing, Depression, Anxiety, Irritability and Isolation.

If you or anyone you know is living with PKU, please contact the BioMarin PKU nurse educator, Kim Jordan at 215-603-7062 or the local Biomarin Account Manager, Kathy Cody at 415-612-7025 to help get the care you need.

**Cleaning for a Reason:** Cleaning For A Reason is a nonprofit organization that serves all the United States and Canada. Their mission is to give the gift of free house cleaning to women undergoing treatment for any type of cancer. The goal is to let these brave and strong women focus on their health and treatment while the non-profit focuses on, and takes away the worry and work of, cleaning their homes— free of charge. They have recruited over 1,200 maid services to donate free housecleaning to women who are undergoing treatment for cancer. Since 2006, their partner maid services have volunteered their time to clean for over 26,000 women – valued at over \$6,900,000. Please check out their website: [www.cleaningforareason.org/](http://www.cleaningforareason.org/)

## Do you have an adult sibling with a disability? Join us for our Adult Sibling Support Group

Siblings play an important role in the lives of their brothers and sisters with disabilities. Siblings also have unique needs to discuss and address.

At our Adult Sibling Support Group we offer the opportunity to share stories and resources that empower more sibling voices to join the conversation. Life as a sibling comes with challenges and joys; we are siblings ourselves, so we understand. As a group, there is much that we can do to help.

Topics covered may include:

- Guardianship
- Financially supporting your sibling
- Decision making and the law
- Keeping your sibling safe

Goals of the Group:

- To improve adults siblings' wellbeing and resilience
- To empower adults siblings to be advocates for their brothers and sisters
- To support adults siblings in the transition to more involved roles in the brothers' and sisters' care and support as their parents get older
- To give adult siblings a voice within services for caretakers and disabled adults

Contact [Chickey@brocktonarc.net](mailto:Chickey@brocktonarc.net) for more information.

## 2017 Personal Best Karate Turkey Brigade

Brockton Area Arc is thankful for our partnership for the sixth year with Personal Best Charity (a partner with Personal Best Karate). 64 BA Arc families received Thanksgiving food baskets that included everything for a wonderful dinner (including a turkey). They were delivered to families' homes by many Personal Best volunteers and staff. This November over 3,000 Thanksgiving food baskets were delivered to families in Southeastern MA by Personal Best volunteers. The charity has provided Thanksgiving meals for 23 years and have fed 29,000 families over the years.

Danielle Latimore coordinated BA Arc's efforts. Danielle writes to Stacey Caron, the Program Director at Personal Best Charity, "Thank you and your staff again for your time and efforts on November 19th doing home deliveries to all the families. You were able to alleviate the many stressors that the holiday season may bring to many families who are the stay-at-home caregivers for their loved ones with intellectual/developmental disabilities, and the working poor by providing their holiday dinner and making blessings come true!" We are truly thankful!

## Felix and Friends Ice Skating Program

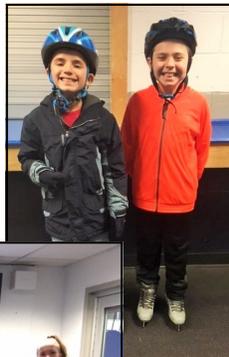
The Brockton Area Arc and FMC Sports recently partnered to offer an introductory ice skating program for kids and teens with special needs called Felix and Friends. Felix is the penguin mascot of FMC Sports.

The program ran for a total of five weeks at the Asiaf Rink in Brockton. Five skaters participated in the program and they all had great success! The first week of the program, all of the skaters needed help from the instructors, but by the last week each skater was able to move across the ice independently. The skaters not only developed their motor skills but they also built self-confidence. At the final lesson, a surprise guest made an appearance - Felix the Penguin, also known as Christina Grande. Skaters received achievement ribbons for their participation.

Thank you to Caroline Ciulla and Danielle Latimore for bringing such a wonderful idea to the table! Thank you to FMC Sports for donating the ice time for Felix and Friends so that every kid can have access to recreation!



Felix and Friends Ice Skating Program



### **BAArc to Host Parent Consultant Training Institute (PCTI)**

On nine Wednesdays, starting March 21, the Family Support Center at the Brockton Area Arc will be the site of this training on **educational advocacy** presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

The PCTI is an intensive training program designed to provide parents and professionals with a solid foundation in special education laws, procedures, and related subjects. The training consists of 40-54 hours of classroom instruction including, among others, the following topics:

- Basic Rights in Special Education
- IDEA and MGL c 71B legislative history
- Special Education advocacy and implementation of the law
- Writing Measurable IEP Goals
- Effective Progress and Hot Topics
- Neuropsychological Evaluations
- Academic Evaluations
- Discipline and Suspension
- Introduction to the Transition Planning Process
- Transition Assessments
- Section 504
- Families and Culture
- Effective Communication
- Problem Resolution Service (PRS) Complaints
- Mediation
- BSEA Appeals

Presenters include Federation staff, attorneys, and experts in the field of special education, representatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA), among others.

Upon completion of the classroom component, students participate in an optional internship program.

**Registration Fees: \$350 for Parents, \$450 for Professionals**

The registration fee includes handouts and other materials. Attendance is limited. Registrations will be considered until the class is full. Early registration is recommended. A withdrawal fee of \$100 will be charged for withdrawals from the class within two weeks prior to the first day of class. No refunds will be made for withdrawals made on or after the first day of class.

For PCTI course related questions, please contact Elizabeth Topaz at [etopaz@fcsn.org](mailto:etopaz@fcsn.org).

For registration or payment related questions, please contact PCTI's business office at 617-236-7210.

### **UPCOMING RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

The recreation calendar was updated recently with many happenings from December through February. Our recreation coordinator will start scheduling additional activities in the new year. There is something for everyone.

**For the latest information on all the activities, check out the [Calendar](#) on our website.**

- By highlighting the event in the Calendar, you will see more information.
- By clicking on the event, you will see all the information including appropriate age group and cost, if any.
- Under Services, Recreation Programs, you will be able to view the flyer for each age group.

**Please contact Christina Grande at [recreation@brocktonarc.net](mailto:recreation@brocktonarc.net) to register for these events.**

# HALLOWEEN FUN 2017!!

Our CBDS group had an on-site Halloween Party with games and snacks. Everyone got into the spirit with creative costumes.



Not to be outdone, the Day Hab had their own party. Everyone had amazing costumes!



# KUDOS

- To all the participants, families, and staff involved in our Sunday Recreation Program. **Medgine Dufrene** coordinates the Sunday Recreation Program which began with a staff meeting on September 10th.

At this writing, nine of the twelve sessions have convened. Dancing with **Karen Earley-Rodriguez**, Drums Alive with **Tracey Glynn**, swimming, outdoor games, Arts and Crafts, and Halloween fun have been favorite activities.

Our formula is great kids, great staff, great activities equal great fun. We thank the parents for entrusting their children with us. Well done everybody!

- To **Al M. and Dawn G.** for making the commitment to participate in this year's Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (MASS) Conference on Saturday, October 14th. The conference was attended by 500 people from across the state. Thank you for representing yourselves, our other self-advocates, and BAArc so well. Special thanks to BAArc staff members **Rob Biela** and **Linda Ford** for facilitating our attendance at the MASS Conference. Great effort! Well done to all!

- To **Heartbeats for Down Syndrome**. Your 13th annual "Buddy Walk" on October 1st at the Cardinal Cushing Center was a fabulous event.

The Brockton Area Arc was represented at the "Buddy Walk" by **Cathy A., David B., Dennis D., Kiabely G., Lee K., Joe M., Joanni P., Daniel R., Elvis S, George and Doris J., Jean S., Ernie O., and Jay L.** We joined the hundreds of other participants for the "Buddy Walk" and all the other activities. And, the food was good, too!

It was a great event on a beautiful day! Well done to our Heartbeats friends **Jessica Melville, Dawn Nichols, and Brandi Knuselman**. You organized another vey successful event. Congratulations and thanks for including us!

- To our **Heartbeats for Down Syndrome friends, Jessica Melville, Dawn Nichols, and Brandi Knuselman**. Your donation of \$1,000.00 to the Brockton Area Arc after your successful "Buddy Walk" is most appreciated. We are grateful for your continued support. We will put your generous donation to good use. Thank you very much!

## MEMBER RECOGNITION

### THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Marie Baker	Michael Bowden	Gabriella Brown	Shirley Catalano
Paula Cocchi	Beth Crowley	Mary Damon	Karen Earley-Rodriguez
Virginia Johnson	Joanne Jordan	Ugette Joseph	D. Sean Noonan
Diane Perry	John Rogers	Jose Santos	Louise Shaw
Nancy Smith	Linda Spiegel	Tom Taranto	Daniel Tracey
Joseph Utka	Maureen Viscardi	Dana Boardman	

### THANK YOU TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Marilyn Gustapon

Julie Rocher