Knowing the future is, of course, not possible. Predicting it can never be an exact science. We most certainly are allowed our best guesses at what might occur, but typically one can only create predictions based upon past and current knowledge. As everyone knows, without fail, life relentlessly throws us curveballs or even a high and inside brushback pitch or two. Please tell me we have not already forgotten about the early days of pandemic. Life was predictably going along pretty well during the winter of 2020, then March arrived and … WHAMMO!

As many of you know quite well, the public mental health system used to favor institutionalizing children and adults for no other reason than for having a mental, behavioral, or physical disability. Society in general thought that “it was better for them to be among their own kind.” That was proven to be a ridiculous notion with the onset of community-based placement and localized human services. School districts did much the same thing by not providing special education to all children simply because it may have cost too much, or, inexplicably, what good would it do? Constant and effective systems advocacy led by parents changed the collective mindset among legislative policymakers a long time ago, and a better way-forward emerged. We should never allow the current crisis-of-the-day, or some new-fangled social theory return us to those regrettable days.

The current pandemic has revealed serious gaps in our public mental health and special educational systems. We have an extreme need for direct care workers, yet we choose not to pay them what they are worth. The virtual world of education may have created a lost year of schooling for those who can least afford learning at a distance. We have also

Continued on Page 3
Congratulations to the Dove Award Recipients!

ADVOCACY HALL OF FAME AWARD 2021
Thomas Kendziorski, Esq., Executive Director,
The Arc of Oakland County, Inc.

ADVOCACY HALL OF FAME AWARD 2020
Mabel Higgs, Founder, Family Living Center, Inc.

JANET and PAUL MacCORMACK LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Jerry Rubin, Board of Directors, The Arc of Oakland County

ARC EXCELLENCE AWARD
Kimberly Pietrylka-Miller, Vice President,
New Horizons Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Lynn Maginity, Executive Director, New Gateways, Inc.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
Lisa Murrell, Executive Director, Community Living Centers, Inc.

PHILANTHROPY AWARD
Lee Yambura

PRESIDENT’S AWARD
Kevin Knoblock

SHELDON DUNN INSPIRATION AWARD
Amie Kupovits

AL CARTER VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Ehrhardt Family

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Dustin Bramblett

LEONARD CERCONE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Tara Marchand, Special Education Teacher, Clarkston High School,
Clarkston Community Schools

LEONARD CERCONE POST SECONDARY TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Shea Seckel, Teacher,
Waterford Lifetracks Adult Transitions Program,
Waterford School District

GOLDEN DOVE AWARD
Ray Hooton, Retired Special Education Teacher,
Wing Lake Developmental Center, Bloomfield Hills Schools

PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD
New Gateways, Inc.

INCLUSION LEADERSHIP AWARD
Brett Hanna, Physical Education & Health Teacher,
Waterford Kettering High School, Waterford School District

ROBERT THOMAS SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD
Patricia Christian, Campaign for Self-Determined Transitions Grant Coordinator,
Community Living Services, Inc.

VOCATIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Daniel Maselli, Customized Employment Facilitator,
JVS Human Services

RESIDENTIAL SERVICE AWARD
Bonnie Cowan, Assistant Home Manager,
Holcomb Haven Home & Olde Sturbridge Home

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Santos Perez, ESL Parent Resource Para-Professional,
Waterford School District

CONGRATULATIONS, TOM!

Please help us congratulate one of our very own — Thomas F. Kendziorski! Tom will be presented with the highly esteemed 2021 Advocacy Hall of Fame Award at our virtual Dove Awards presentation on Friday, March 19th. We look forward to honoring Tom for all he has done for our organization.

Tom has devoted much of his professional career and personal life to helping others and serving persons with disabilities. Over the past 38+ years, Tom has served The Arc as a staff attorney and since 1992 in the capacity as its Executive Director. He will be retiring in June of this year. Tom will be greatly missed!
ceased innovation for developing affordable housing because there seems to be a propensity for preserving the status quo while using precious tax dollars to change the philosophies of how services are provided to persons with disabilities. We need bold initiatives and leadership to overcome the challenges of today, for, they too will not last forever, and then we will be playing catch-up with people's lives over the course of the next few years.

An old adage is that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (attributed to writer and philosopher, George Santayana). I will admit that I have made a few mistakes along the way, but fortunately I have had the benefit of superb staff and board members to smooth over those rough patches. There is nothing quite like experience. My "spider sense" tells me to always put aside the things that cannot be changed, move on, and build towards the future.

My time in the leadership role at this chapter grows short. Living through my “final days” as The Arc’s Executive Director reminds me of my final year in command as a Rear Admiral in the U.S. Navy. Retirement loomed, but I was not permitted to “coast” during those final months and weeks. A comprehensive transition period with my successor was necessary to help direct the Sailors we represented. I could not let down. So, too, this will happen at The Arc. Soon, my successor will be announced and I absolutely look forward to watching from a distance as to how that individual leads our beloved organization to higher heights.

We are one of the premier chapters within our national organization. We are the tenth largest out of 600 nationwide. We are fiscally sound. We have outstanding volunteer and professional leadership that will not allow the agency to falter. With this knowledge, I can rest easy. The Arc of Oakland will be in good hands. I would not have wanted it any other way.

Having advance knowledge of the future is overrated. It would absolutely take all of the fun and excitement out of life. We learn as we go. We make errors. We become better at what we do. But, we have to keep pushing forward.

Continue wearing your mask, washing your hands often, and staying six feet away from each other. All my best …… TFK

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**TOOTSIE ROLL DRIVE 2021**

_by Thomas F. Kendziorski, Esq._

Greetings! Most of you know of me in my role at The Arc. However, I also participate in the annual Tootsie Roll Drive for children and adults with intellectual impairments sponsored by local councils of the Knights of Columbus. I now serve as the District Deputy (area director) for District 113, but still belong to my home council #5436 located in Waterford. I also still have a close relationship with my former council (#2569) in Royal Oak. Each has a need for volunteers from the membership of The Arc.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! This traditional community service project has financially supported our local chapter of The Arc for several years. Unfortunately, the membership of both councils has significantly dwindled over time, along with the number of workers who are able to work the streets and the designated storefronts during this annual 3-day event. I REQUEST THE HELP OF The Arc of Oakland County MEMBERSHIP TO ASSIST WITH SOLICITING DONATIONS FEATURING THE ALL-AMERICAN TOOTSIE ROLL!

We need as many of our members of The Arc as possible to volunteer for at least two-to-four hours of time on the weekend of Friday-Saturday-Sunday, March 26, 27, and 28, 2021.

Please contact me and let me know if you would like to sign up and work a storefront station in the downtown Royal Oak area, or in the Clarkston-northern Waterford area.

So, to sign up to work this year’s Tootsie Roll Drive and help out The Arc, simply fill out the sign-up sheet below and return it to me at The Arc office by March 25th. You may also e-mail me at The Arc office: tfk@thearcoakland.org, or by telephone: 248-816-1900 to sign up for a particular time and place. The “early birds” get the best spots and times!

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Name: _______________________________ Phone #: _______________________________

Location Preference (please check one): □ Royal Oak □ Waterford/Clarkston

Time/Date Preference: _______________________________

Please mail to: The Arc of Oakland County, 1641 W. Big Beaver, Troy, MI 48084 or Fax: 248-816-1906
I realize how important services and programs for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities are and I would like to help The Arc of Oakland County by:

- □ Being a Sponsor
- □ Donating an item to the Auction

Please accept my Sponsorship donation of:

- $1,000
- $750
- $500
- Other

Please recognize my name/company as follows:

Name___________________________________________________________
Address_________________________________________________________
City______________________State_________________Zip______________
Telephone: Day ______________________Night______________________
Email Address____________________________________________________

Please accept my Auction donation of:

☐ I will bring the donation to The Arc of Oakland County office on/before Friday, March 5, 2021
☐ I would like someone to pick up my donation

Please recognize my name/company as follows:

Name___________________________________________________________
Address_________________________________________________________
City______________________State_________________Zip______________
Telephone: Day ______________________Night______________________
Email Address____________________________________________________

Send donation and form to:
The Arc of Oakland County
1641 West Big Beaver Road
Troy, MI 48084-3501

How You Can Support The 2021 Dove Awards

Becoming a Sponsor

Sponsorship opportunities are available and include recognition in all event and media releases, in the program, in our agency newsletter, PROFILES and in our Annual Report.

A donation of $1,000, $750 or $500 to sponsor the Annual Dove Awards Program will help The Arc of Oakland County maintain programs and services at their present level.

Donate an Item to the Online Auction

Donating a new item to the Online Auction is another way to help and includes recognition in all event and media releases, in the program, in our agency newsletter, PROFILES and in our Annual Report.

We are holding an Online Auction of highly visible items that evening in conjunction with the program. Smaller items will be combined to make larger, packaged items that would be of interest to bidders.

Some suggestions are: gift certificates to restaurants, stores, salons and hotels; sports tickets and jerseys; theatre and opera tickets; days/weeks in your vacation condo/home; spa and fitness club packages; golf related items and rounds of golf; and electronics.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are having an online auction in lieu of our traditional silent auction. We are looking for new items for the auction!

Ideas: gift certificates to restaurants, stores, salons and hotels; sports tickets and jerseys; theatre and opera tickets; days/weeks in your vacation condo/home; spa and fitness club packages; golf related items and rounds of golf; and electronics. Any and all donations would be greatly appreciated!

To donate to the online auction, please email Allison at amurowany@thearcoakland.org.

Still In Need of Online Auction Items!

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are having an online auction in lieu of our traditional silent auction. We are looking for new items for the auction!

Ideas: gift certificates to restaurants, stores, salons and hotels; sports tickets and jerseys; theatre and opera tickets; days/weeks in your vacation condo/home; spa and fitness club packages; golf related items and rounds of golf; and electronics. Any and all donations would be greatly appreciated!

To donate to the online auction, please email Allison at amurowany@thearcoakland.org.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO THE DOVE AWARDS PROGRAM!

We are in this together! We are asking all of our members and friends to please consider sponsoring our 50th Annual Dove Awards Program this year.

You can donate securely online through PayPal on our website at www.thearcoakland.org or over the phone by calling our office at 248-816-1900. Any and all sponsorships are greatly appreciated.

The Dove Awards Program is vital to our organization. It brings minds and hearts together and reminds us of why we do what we do. Please help support The Arc of Oakland County and this meaningful event. We appreciate your generosity and support.

THANK YOU!
ASK THE ADVOCATE!

[TRICIA LUKER, THE ARC OF OAKLAND COUNTY’S SENIOR STAFF ADVOCATE, WILL BE WRITING ON TOPICS PERTAINING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION. IF THERE IS A TOPIC YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE COVERED, PLEASE EMAIL TLUKER@THEARCOAKLAND.ORG.]

PARENTS TAKING CHARGE IN THE MEDICAL ARENA

By Tricia Luker

Assuring appropriate care for and protecting the rights of your child in hospital settings can be very difficult. Even though there are many experts on medical care, there is only one ongoing "expert" – and that is you. Hospitals and medical people can be very intimidating. You need to arm yourself with information and skills to do the best job you can for your child.

Families have identified that obtaining information about their rights and entitlements is their primary need when faced with their child's hospitalization. The families' second need is for help in getting appropriate services once they have been specified.

You can tap many resources to help you solve basic problems during a hospital stay. Hospital staff should provide information on resources that may help you solve problems. Think of these resources as tools you use to solve the problems you and your child face. The fact is no one is as interested in these issues as you are. Be assertive in finding and using available resources.

It is important to be informed about your child's care: purpose of tests, procedures, medications, side effects, and risks. You also have the right to request a second opinion, and to question the doctor about concerns or things you do not understand. By learning about the hospital environment and the daily routines, and by asking questions and getting answers, you may feel more in control and better able to deal with the situation.

Many professionals, especially doctors, assume parents cannot possibly understand the complexities of their trade. The more specialized the diagnosticians, the less information they may give to parents.

On the other hand, parents are expected to give legal consent to their child's treatment and to sign release forms permitting a multitude of others access to records they themselves may be denied. Withholding information from a parent makes the parent feel helpless and powerless, intimidated and in awe of specialists. But this past paternalistic practice on the part of physicians and educators is no longer acceptable in today’s consumer-oriented society.

PARENTS TAKE CHARGE!! Learn to keep records. As soon as you learn that your child requires frequent health-related care, start a notebook. List every professional your child sees; by name, date and what you were told. Get copies of all clinical reports. Document telephone calls you make or receive by date, subject, with whom you spoke. Thorough documentation will help you obtain services more quickly and back up any claim you might have of insufficient services. You may want to use a three-ring binder or folder divided into sections. You often will be asked to provide information to a service program or a new professional your child is consulting.

Never leave the office of a doctor or other health professionals without understanding exactly what they mean. If necessary, ask them to illustrate what they mean by giving you an example. Knowing the correct terminology is helpful, too, so that you can explain the situation to other professionals such as your child’s teacher. Being able to communicate in their language gains you some respect too.

Obtain records of all testing from schools, whether psychological, intelligence, behavioral, or vision and hearing screenings. Take snapshots as you go along. It is a good idea to keep a copy of medical and lab reports too. After all, the information in these records is yours by law.

When you change residences, schools or doctors, a complete and up-to-date file best assures that services for your child will flow smoothly without needless delays. Persuasion, not anger, will be your best tool when faced with the task of convincing balky educators or medical personnel to see things your way. With documented facts and past records to backing up your position, they will take you seriously.

In summary, keeping good records gives you several advantages:

- You can see and show your child’s progress or deterioration;
- You validate your right and ability TO BE PART OF THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM;
- You increase your ability to effectively link all your child’s helping agencies together by keeping them abreast of actions taken by the others. [e.g. doctors, schools, therapists, etc.]
- You are better to convincingly press for those medical or educational services your child needs but is not receiving.
Nearly two years ago, we met with members of The Arc of Oakland County and introduced the Springhill Pooled Accounts Trust (springhillpooledtrust.org). Since that time, we’ve received many questions from the community regarding how a pooled special needs trust works, if you can have one along with an ABLE account (the answer is YES!), and the similarities and differences between an ABLE and pooled special needs trust. Thank you for allowing me to once again reach out to your membership to discuss the Trust, and share how it may benefit your family members, loved ones or people you serve.

Serving people with disabilities and ensuring that their very important public benefits are kept safe and secure is a concern for parents and guardians alike. Springhill Pooled Accounts Trust, managed by Community Housing Network (CHN) (communityhousingnetwork.org), is a special needs trust created to offer people with disabilities the opportunity to pool assets for investment and administrative purposes while preserving eligibility for public benefits.

We offer First- and Third-Party (can be future-funded) pooled trust options. Our no-minimum initial account deposit, low fee solution works hand-in-hand with ABLE accounts to supplement public benefits. For example, if a Trust beneficiary has SSI or Medicaid, we cannot directly pay for housing related expenses, however, we can fund an ABLE account from the Trust sub-account to make this happen. Every beneficiary’s situation is a bit different and we strive to find solutions that work, while abiding by guidelines from SSA and DHHS.

Our staff are employed by CHN whose mission is to strengthen communities by connecting people to housing resources. This allows us to offer Trust beneficiaries access to the full breadth of services (communityhousingnetwork.org/services/) available from CHN.

We invite you to learn more about Springhill Pooled Accounts Trust by visiting springhillpooledtrust.org, or requesting information: PAT@chninc.net or 248-269-1319.

2021 TAX GUIDE
FREE

PREPARED FOR PERSONS SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND/OR ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.

This authoritative income tax guide will prove to be invaluable for tax preparers, parents, and others concerned with tax deductions stemming from the care and support of a minor child, an adult, or other persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Issued annually for more than three decades, the 2021 INCOME TAX GUIDE was prepared by Thomas F. Kendziorski, Attorney at Law, and Executive Director of The Arc of Oakland County. The 2021 INCOME TAX GUIDE was written for The Arc Michigan and is copyrighted. The guide will be available online in mid-January.

Visit our website at www.thearcoakland.org and simply click on “Resources” and “Income Tax Guide” along the top of the screen. You may also view this tax guide on The Arc Michigan’s website at www.arcmi.org. Please call The Arc of Oakland County with any questions at 248-816-1900.
**NEW MEMBERS**

AS OF 2/16/21 WE HAVE 307 MEMBERS!

**JANUARY MEMBERS**


**FEBRUARY MEMBERS**


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**2021 Membership Goal**

2,000

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**March**

5 – Auction items due to The Arc office

19 – VIRTUAL 50th Annual Dove Awards Presentation!

26-28 – Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Drive

30 – The Arc of Oakland County Board of Director’s Meeting, 7 p.m.

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**April**

4 – Easter

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March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This public proclamation was issued with the goal of urging Americans to provide individuals with developmental disabilities "the encouragement and opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential.”

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**IN MEMORIAM**

Carolyn A. Flynn
Robert Kwapisz

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Designer & Editor, PROFILES

Allison M. Murowany