



Achieve with us.®

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www.thearcoakland.org

SECOND QUARTER 2025



Thank You for Making the 54th Annual Dove Awards Program a Success!

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our 2025 sponsors, donors, and attendees for making the 54th Annual Dove Awards & Online Auction an unforgettable celebration! On Thursday, March 13, 2025, more than 300 friends and supporters of The Arc of Oakland County gathered at Petruzzello's Banquet & Conference Center in Troy to honor this year's exceptional Dove Awards recipients.

We were delighted to welcome Brett Kast, Reporter for WXYZ-TV Channel 7 Detroit, as our Honorary Chairperson and Emcee, bringing his enthusiasm & professionalism to this special evening.

Thanks to your generosity, the 2025 Dove Awards Program was a resounding success, raising more than **\$15,200 through the Online Auction & Raffles** and **\$31,250 in Sponsorships**. These vital funds will directly support agency programs and services that empower children and adults with disabilities.

Relive the Moments! We are thrilled to share highlights from the 2025 Dove Awards Program inside!

Scan the QR code below to see exclusive videos featuring our inspiring award recipients!

Scan Here for the 2025 Dove Awards Recipient Videos



SAVE THE DATE!

The Arc of Oakland County 2025 Annual Meeting

MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025

The Arc of Oakland County Office | 1641 W. Big Beaver, Troy, MI

More information:

Visit our website and social media pages for further details soon!
www.thearcoakland.org



"From the Director's Chair"

By: Dawn Calnen



Recently, The Arc of Oakland County hosted one of our most inspiring events of the year — the Dove Awards. This special evening celebrated countless individuals who dedicate themselves to helping people with developmental disabilities live their very best lives. From educators and advocates to caregivers, employers, and community members, each honoree exemplified compassion, commitment, and the power of inclusion.

As we listened to their stories, witnessed their selflessness, and saw the impact they've had on others, we were all reminded of something powerful: one person's kindness, dedication, and support can change lives. The energy in the room was filled with hope, gratitude, and the understanding that we are all part of something bigger than ourselves — a community that uplifts one another. That spirit leads me to something meaningful I'd like to share with you.

When I was a child, gray, rainy days felt like a disappointment, especially if I had a baseball game scheduled. My mom, being the eternal optimist that she is, always found a way to lift my spirits. On those cloudy days, she would take out a sheet of paper, draw a bright, smiling sun, tape it to the kitchen window, and say, "See? The sun is shining today!" While the clouds were still there, that small gesture always changed my perspective.

As I've grown older, I've come to realize that we all have the power not just to see the light, but to be the light. Life brings cloudy days for all of us, but we can be the sun for others.

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Mission Statement

The Arc of Oakland County advocates for the rights and full participation of all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We strive to improve systems of supports and services; connect families; inspire our community and influence public policy.

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A kind word, a reassuring smile, or a simple gesture of encouragement can cut through the darkness.

That is exactly what we celebrated at the Dove Awards: individuals who inspire, uplift, and shine brightly — helping others live their best lives. Whether breaking down barriers, offering unwavering support, or simply reminding someone they matter, these honorees embody the very best of what our community can be.

Recently, I shared a book with our team and board called *Be the Sun, Not the Salt* by Harry Cohen. Its message is simple but profound: each of us has a choice in how we show up in this world. We can be like the sun — nurturing, uplifting, and fostering growth — or like salt, which corrodes and drains. The people we celebrated at the Dove Awards have chosen to be the sun, brightening lives and opening doors to kindness and possibility.

Even as we celebrate, we must also recognize the clouds gathering on the horizon. Right now, our community is facing serious threats of federal and state funding cuts to critical programs such as education, Medicaid, and Social Security benefits — lifelines for the people we serve.

Advocacy is at the heart of our mission. We are working closely with The Arc Michigan and The Arc of the United States to monitor these developments and fight for the protection of these essential services. We are making sure our voices are heard — but we cannot do it alone.

We share advocacy updates via email blasts and on our website, keeping our community informed and engaged. If you haven't already, please visit our website and sign up to stay informed. We cannot afford to be complacent — too much is at stake for the people who need our support the most.

As we look ahead and commit to meeting these challenges, it's also important that we continue to build a strong foundation for our future. In order to sustain and expand the programs and services we provide; we will be increasing our annual membership rates to \$65 for standard memberships and \$55 for senior memberships (age 62 and up). This change will help us remain responsive to growing needs while ensuring our services remain accessible and impactful.

We understand that any change in cost matters, and we remain deeply committed to providing meaningful value to our members through advocacy, education, and direct support. Your continued investment in our work makes all the difference. As I reflect on the challenges and opportunities ahead, I return to my mom's simple act on those rainy days. The paper sun taped to the kitchen window didn't change the weather — but it changed how I felt about it. Even when the clouds gather, there is still light to be found — and light to be shared ... DHC

SUCCESS STORY

A Journey of Inclusion: Celebrating 10 Years of the Dance Mobility Program

What started as a simple Facebook post has grown into a life-changing program for individuals with disabilities across the country. Evan Mountain, past owner of Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Bloomfield Hills, and Cheryl Angelelli, a Paralympic swimmer and accomplished athlete, took a leap of faith that would create an incredible opportunity for wheelchair ballroom dancers.

The Dance Mobility Program, now celebrating its 10th anniversary, began as an effort to introduce adaptive ballroom dancing to the community. Cheryl, searching for her next athletic challenge, and Evan, eager to bring inclusive dance opportunities to the area, joined forces to make this dream a reality.

Thanks to the generous support of the Reimagine Life Foundation, led by President Katie Spillane-Knight, this program is offered completely free to participants year-round. The foundation recognizes the importance of accessibility and has been instrumental in expanding the program, which has now reached participants nationwide.

One of those remarkable dancers is Rachael Kollman. A true adventurer, Rachael has always sought out new challenges, from adaptive skiing to art, and now, wheelchair ballroom dancing. Since joining the Dance Mobility Program several years ago, she has developed a deep passion for the sport, finding joy not only in dance but in the welcoming community it fosters.

Through the dedication of Evan, Cheryl, and countless supporters, the Dance Mobility Program has touched the lives of over 100 individuals, offering them an experience they never imagined possible. As we celebrate this milestone, we look forward to the next decade of breaking barriers, building confidence, and dancing toward a more inclusive future! Learn more at www.dancemobility.org.

The Arc of Oakland County proudly presented the 2025 President's Award to Rachael, Evan, Cheryl and Katie at the 54th Annual Dove Awards Program on Thursday, March 13, 2025.



2025 Dove Awards Recipients Congratulations!



**THE ARC OF OAKLAND COUNTY
ADVOCACY HALL OF FAME AWARD**
Judith Summers



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Suzanne Gipperich



INSPIRATION AWARD
Elizabeth Martin



POSITIVE IMPACT AWARD
Robert Wright



**COMMUNITY LIVING SUPPORTS
SERVICE AWARD**
Nikki Beedle



PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Advanced Teaching Concepts, Inc.



SUPPORT COORDINATOR AWARD
DeJeanne Huston



TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Melissa Kammeraad-Brown



VOCATIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Diane Wernette



INCLUSION LEADERSHIP AWARD
Kathleen Haener



EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Lea VanAmberg



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Rachael Kollman



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Evan Mountain



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Cheryl Angelelli



PRESIDENT'S AWARD
Katie Spillane-Knight



The Arc of Oakland County 2025 Dove Awards Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor — \$5,000



Diamond Sponsor — \$2,500



on behalf of:

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The Arc of Oakland County 2025 Online Auction, YETI Cooler of Spirits & Lottery Ticket Donors



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Buddy's Pizza
Dawn Calnen & Dave Malecki
Laura Carey
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Diane Wolfe
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2025 DOVE AWARDS CELEBRATION



THE ARC OF OAKLAND COUNTY RUN CHALLENGE 2025 — SAVE THE DATE!



JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN! WEEKEND OF SEPTEMBER 13-14, 2025
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES FOR FURTHER DETAILS COMING SOON!

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

with The Arc of Oakland County's Executive Director — Dawn Calnen

VIRTUAL EVENT
Thursday, May 8, 2025 6:00 — 7:00 p.m.

JOIN US for an engaging Community Conversations virtual event! Please scan the QR Code or visit The Arc of Oakland County's website at www.thearcoakland.org to register for this FREE event. Once you are registered, you will receive an email with the Zoom login information.

We look forward to collaborating with our members and friends!



SCAN QR CODE

Advocacy Resource Center Hours

Appointments will need to be scheduled for:

Monday: 12–5 PM
Tuesday: 9 AM–5 PM
Wednesday: 9 AM–1 PM & 4–5 PM
Thursday: 9 AM–2 PM
Friday: 9 AM–4 PM

Drop in hours:

Monday: 9 AM–12 PM
Wednesday: 1–4 PM
Thursday: 2–5 PM

We will also be offering evening hours one Tuesday of the month and extended hours one Saturday of the month by appointment

ASK THE ADVOCATE

Protecting Medicaid – How You Can Take Action

Medicaid provides **essential healthcare** to millions of children and adults with disabilities, allowing them to live healthier, more independent lives in their communities. However, recent discussions about federal budget cuts have raised concerns about potential reductions to Medicaid and other critical programs like food assistance. For families who rely on Medicaid, these discussions can create uncertainty and fear. You may be wondering:

What can I do to help? How can I advocate for the programs my loved one depends on?

The good news is your voice matters! Here are a few impactful ways you can advocate for Medicaid and ensure that these essential services remain available.

Contact Your Congressional Representatives

The best way to make a difference is by reaching out to your elected officials and urging them to protect Medicaid funding. Lawmakers need to hear directly from the people who are most affected by these decisions.

Find your representatives here: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)

When contacting your representatives, be prepared to **share your personal story** about how Medicaid has impacted your life or your loved one's well-being. **Personal experiences are powerful** and help lawmakers understand why stable Medicaid funding is critical.

Share Your Story & Raise Awareness

- Explain the **services your family receives** through Medicaid, such as therapies, home-based support, or behavioral health care.
- Highlight the **challenges you would face** if these services were cut or eliminated.
- Request that your lawmakers **oppose Medicaid cuts** and prioritize funding for disability services.

Stay Connected to Advocacy Efforts

Advocacy is more powerful when we work together! In addition to The Arc of Oakland County, some of the organizations that are central in advocating for adequate Medicaid funding are:

- The Arc Michigan ([arcmi.org](https://www.arcmi.org))
- The Arc US ([thearc.org](https://www.thearc.org))

You can also:

- Attend town hall meetings to ask questions about Medicaid funding.
- Organize or participate in letter-writing campaigns to policymakers.
- Encourage friends and family to call their representatives and voice their concerns.

Use Social Media to Make an Impact

Social media is a powerful advocacy tool! The Arc of Oakland's social media pages serve as a source of vital information for our community as it relates to issues at the State and Federal Government level. Our website is also always updated with information relevant to current advocacy efforts and opportunities to get involved. Individuals and families can spread awareness by:

- Posting about Medicaid's importance using hashtags like **#ProtectMedicaid** and **#MedicaidMatters**
- Sharing your personal story to help others understand what's at stake.
- Signing and circulating petitions that support Medicaid funding.

Stay Informed & Take Action

- Sign up for **policy updates** from disability rights organizations.
- Follow **state and federal legislation** that affects Medicaid.
- Vote for **leaders who prioritize healthcare and disability services**.

Your Voice Can Make a Difference!

Medicaid is a **lifeline for millions of families**, and together, we can protect it. By raising awareness and engaging with lawmakers, you can help **ensure that these vital services remain available** for those who need them most.

Want to get involved? Let us know— The Arc of Oakland County is always there to support your advocacy efforts! The best way to let us know you are interested in opportunities to participate in advocacy or share your personal story is to email us at info@thearcoakland.org. We look forward to supporting our community to ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to live their best lives!

PROFILES



PROFILES is published by The Arc of Oakland County | 1641 West Big Beaver Road, Troy, MI 48084 | 248-816-1900

AS OF 3/31/25 WE HAVE 1,123 MEMBERS!

NEW MEMBERS

JANUARY MEMBERS

Dana Byrd | Muhammad Farooq | Amina Gamble | Kathleen Hunter | Jill Manning | Michele Martin | Noal & Julie McDonald | Juthica Reddy | Rachel Reece | Lisa Schlaack | Jane Thorn

FEBRUARY MEMBERS

Robin Alford | Dana Bruton | Keisa Clark | Jessica Conklin | Evan Davis | Rose Grier | Kenneth Jones | Joe & Gerri Martucci | Mark Nicholas | Kimberly Norman | Dean Potter | Sri Sri Pathmanathan | Aixa Torres | Chun Yu

MARCH MEMBERS

Eric Bergsrud | Jatinder Bhinder | Nicole Brosch | Melanie Malak | Raymond Nicosia | Eric & Amy Rosenblum | Stuart & Fay Stone | Antonio Williams

The Arc of Oakland County Staff

Dawn Calnen, J.D. Executive Director	Monica Knoblock Director of Financial Management Services
Beth Lafata Comptroller	Megan Arnold Financial Management Services
Christie Kay Director of Programs & Operations	Ashley Ball Financial Management Services
Allison Murowany Director of Marketing & Communications	Megan Brandal Financial Management Services
Kiesha Lawton Forever Plan Coordinator & Membership Services	Leanne Cook Financial Management Services
Lisa Fuhr Fundraising Manager	Megan Hannigan Financial Management Services
Delia Eremie Accountant	Michelle Larzelere Financial Management Services
Jill Skornicka Advocate	Diane McDaniel Financial Management Services
Jessica Showers Advocate	Jessica Pfeiffer Financial Management Services
Katherine Kauffman Advocate	Garret Van Druen Financial Management Services
Serena Kulaga Communications & Leadership Administrator	Linda Yucha Financial Management Services
Jodi Rubin Office Administrator	

Board of Directors

Lisa Kowalski, President
Randall Meono, 2nd VP
Suzanne Marquardt,
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Jerry Rubin, Treasurer
Tom Quakenbush,
Past President

Delegates-at-Large

Shashi Bihani
Mark Buckley
Max Elliott
Tim Hatfield
Dawn Hayes
Ellen Hulverson
Patrick Kauffman
Paul O'Meara
Annamarie Kupovits

Calendar

April

8 - The Arc of Oakland County Board of Directors Meeting, 7 PM

22 - Earth Day

May

8 - Community Conversations via Zoom, 6 PM

15 - Global Accessibility Awareness Day

26 - Memorial Day

June

16 - The Arc of Oakland County Annual Meeting

19 - Juneteenth

In Memoriam

Jeremy Stevens
Karen Nieman
Ken Calvert



GORMAN'S
Home Furnishings & interior design

\$1,350 RAISED!

Gorman's 16th Annual Charity Recliner Promotion

**THANK YOU to Gorman's for your continued support of
The Arc of Oakland County!**

Thank You!