51st Annual Dove Awards Program and Online Auction

Wow! Over 300 people came together virtually on Friday, March 18th to celebrate the achievements of the 2022 Dove Award recipients! Thank you to everyone who logged on to watch this exciting program with us.

The Arc of Oakland County would like to extend a very special thank you to Deena Centofanti, Anchor & Reporter at FOX 2 Detroit, who graciously accepted our invitation to again host this year’s festivities. Deena is an advocate for people with disabilities and is dedicated to sharing stories and increasing awareness of underserved populations. Deena is a true ambassador of The Arc of Oakland County!

The event was a great success as we raised over $25,000 in Sponsorships and over $12,000 in the Online Auction. Thank you to everyone who supported this program!

More highlights and pictures of the 51st Annual Dove Awards Program can be found on pages 4-5 in this newsletter.

Watch the 51st Annual Dove Awards Program!
www.youtube.com/ArcofOaklandCounty

By: Dawn Calnen

Happy spring! It is hard to believe that this May will mark my one year anniversary at The Arc of Oakland County. The time is sure flying by! There have been so many inspiring moments, but none as inspiring as my first Dove Awards Program as the Executive Director, where we celebrated those within our community who demonstrate personal leadership, individual sacrifice, and professional expertise in advocating for individuals with disabilities. I have attended many past programs and it is always one of my favorite events. I am so grateful to our sponsors, silent auction donors, and those who purchased auction items! We raised over $37,000. Your support allows us to help so many people live their best lives.

This past month, a perfect example of this happened for one of The Arc members. This young woman’s mom died suddenly in January 2020. This past fall, her core provider, Community Living Services (CLS) reached out to The Arc asking us to assist in strategizing the next steps for her and to help her plan for her future, while she took on the responsibility of making the monthly mortgage payments to save her childhood home. She thrived! She made every single payment while we searched for an investor who could step in and take over the mortgage loan. What we didn’t know was

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SAVE THE DATE

The Arc of Oakland County’s Annual Meeting & Election of the Board of Directors

Thursday, June 16, 2022

More details, including the meeting location and speaker, will be announced soon and posted on our website and social media pages.

ADVOCACY SUCCESS STORY

Recently, The Arc of Oakland County was contacted to assist a member who was being evicted for violating their lease, because the police were called to their apartment due to a domestic disturbance. Once we started working with this individual, we uncovered that this person was actually a victim of domestic violence. We advocated for this member under a federal law that protects them. We were successful in our advocacy efforts, and this individual continues to live, safely, in their apartment. We are so grateful we were able to make a positive impact in their life.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

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

JOIN US! Our next Community Conversations will take place virtually via Zoom on Thursday, May 19, 2022 at 6:00 PM. Please visit our website at www.thearcoakland.org for the link and more information. Can’t make it this time? No problem! We plan to host at least one per quarter. Your thoughts and concerns are important to us!

We are looking forward to collaborating together!
that the loan was already in arrears when her mom passed, but the pandemic stalled any negative action from occurring. She received a foreclosure notice in February.

While we worked fast to gather what information we could, community partners Community Housing Network and Springhill Housing stepped up and donated funds to assist this woman, and The Arc team made a Hail Mary attempt to stop the house from being sold at auction. We leaned on several experts in our community to guide us through the arduous process and it worked! Her house was saved! This young woman will continue to live in her childhood home which is full of so many positive memories.

Our team at The Arc could not have done this without leveraging the relationships we have with our community partners. Whether it be Community Living Services, Springhill Housing, Community Housing Network, or attorney colleagues who guided me through legal strategies, everyone we asked for help was not hesitant to lend a helping hand to a member of our community who was in need. Through representing our values and staying true to our mission we have been able to cultivate tremendous relationships with other nonprofit organizations and community partners that have brought tremendous results for our members and the community. Building these relationships will continue to be a priority for not only me, but our entire organization. I’m so grateful that our organization and others in our community were able to come through for this young woman. We are BETTER TOGETHER!

In closing, on behalf of our board and team members, I want to thank our generous supporters for joining us in making life better for so many. We are excited to execute our recently created strategic plan, which includes several initiatives that will meet the unique needs of our members. I hope you have a great spring! …DHC

Meet Jill Skornicka – The Arc of Oakland County's New Advocate!

We are excited to announce that Jill Skornicka is our new Advocate! She will be starting her new position at The Arc of Oakland County in mid-April.

Jill has seven years’ experience working at Michigan Alliance for Families as a Parent Mentor, teaching families who have children/young adults with disabilities how to navigate and advocate for special education services. She spent more than six years as a volunteer with Friends of Different Learners supporting and advocating for families primarily in the Birmingham School District, holding many board positions including Co-President. Jill also has more than 19 years’ experience advocating for her son Sam, who has intractable epilepsy and is cognitively impaired. She has strong community connections and a broad knowledge of resources in Oakland County. She is passionate about helping others and improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. Jill enjoys spending time in northern Michigan with her husband, daughter, and son.

Shop on AmazonSmile & Help Support The Arc of Oakland County

The Arc of Oakland County is registered with AmazonSmile!

When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization from almost one million eligible organizations. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer’s selected charitable organization.
The Arc would like to thank the following individuals, companies, & organizations who generously contributed:

### PRESENTING SPONSOR
Patrick & Julia Heider ($1,800)

### PLATINUM SPONSORS — $1,000
- Barron, Rosenberg, Mayoras & Mayoras, P.C.
- CasaSanta Family
- DTE Energy
- MORC, Inc.
- New Horizons Rehabilitation Services, Inc.
- Harvey & Carol Rabinowitz
- Secure Planning Strategies

### GOLD SPONSORS — $500
- Liz & Ginny Bauer
- Ron & Pam Cheli
- Civitan Club of Pontiac
- Community Homes, Inc.
- Community Housing Network, Inc.
- Enstar
- Easterseals Michigan
- Susan Fezzy-Nagle
- Great Lakes Family Probate & Estates PLLC
- Lampertius & Associates, PLC
- Jo-Ann MacWilliams-Wolf
- Endowment Fund

### SILVER SPONSORS — $250
- Dave & Katie Andrea
- Chalgian & Tripp Law Offices
- ExpertCare Management Services, Inc.
- Barbara Fischer
- In Memory of AJ Fong
- Dennis & Laura Gannan
- Gorman's
- Dave Malecki & Dawn Calnen
- J. Douglas Otlewski
- Progressive Lifestyles, Inc.
- Joseph Gatsa
- Tom & Judy Quakenbush
- Simply Good Kitchen
- Springhill Pooled Accounts Trust
- In Memory of Jennifer Summers
- John Torrone

### BRONZE SPONSORS — $100
- A.J. Desmond & Sons
- Dolores J. Baran DDS
- Cary & Thomai Gersh
- Carl & Patricia Goecckel
- Sachinder Singh Hans & Bijaya Hans
- Beatrice Hill-Pack
- Randy & Suzanne Marquardt
- Nadine Milostan
- Steve & Tina Posey
- Kara Sprague
- Janice Stevenson
- William & Donna Titze
- Milton Wohl, CPA, P.C.
- Dr. and Mrs. Ken Wysocki
- Robert & Angela
- Buzzelli ($50)
- Lynn Schabinger ($50)
- David & Rosemary
- Thoresen ($50)
- Larry & Lynn Cronin ($25)

### Auction Donors

Congratulations to the Dove Award Recipients!

THE ARC OF OAKLAND COUNTY ADVOCACY HALL OF FAME AWARD
Mike Daley, Retired Customer Services Manager, Oakland Community Health Network

AL CARTER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD
Mary Jo Hollebrands, Registered Nurse Supervisor, MORC, Inc.

COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARD
Phil Hebel, Owner, Metro Cleaning Services

INSPIRATION AWARD
Emily Lourim, Founder, Lemonade Learning LLC

SHELDON DUNN INSPIRATION AWARD
Amit Agrawal, Trainer, Oakland Community Health Network

LEONARD CERCONE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD
John McAskin, Special Education Teacher, TRAILS Program, Royal Oak Schools

PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Progressive Lifestyles, Inc.

INCLUSION LEADERSHIP AWARD
Betty Weaver, Program Supervisor, New Gateways, Inc.

ROBERT THOMAS SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD
Lidia Alward, Case Manager, Open Arms Coordination Services, Inc.

VOCATIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Ron Aldridge, Job Coach, New Horizons Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

RESIDENTIAL SERVICE AWARD
Christopher Cohen, Direct Care Services

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AWARD
Jennifer Bishop, Instructional Aide, Waterford School District
Understanding Your Child’s Social Security Benefits

By Paul T. Landry, MI-UCP (Formerly UCP/Detroit)

Many parents become fearful when first applying for Social Security benefits for their child and worry about maintaining those benefits especially while receiving services from Community Mental Health (CMH).

It’s important to first understand that Social Security manages two distinct disability programs. 1) Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) which is based on an individual’s contributions to FICA while employed. 2) Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is for individuals who have not contributed into FICA.

If an individual has some work history, it is possible to be collecting both SSDI and SSI at the same time.

**Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**

Another way someone can receive SSDI is from a parent’s work record. A parent’s disabled child may be entitled to their benefits if the parent becomes disabled themselves, receives retirement benefits or dies. Then the parent’s disabled child would be identified as a Disabled Adult Child (DAC)/Child.

For example: Jenny, who is 18 years old, is disabled and begins receiving her SSI. When Jenny is 32 years old, her father begins collecting his retirement benefits and at that point, Jenny will begin collecting SSDI based on her father’s contribution into FICA (This WILL NOT decrease the father’s retirement benefits).

**SSDI while working:**

With SSDI benefits, an individual is either eligible or not eligible for their SSDI while employed. There are 2 important phases to know.

**Trial Work Period (Phase 1)**

An individual is first entitled to a Trial Work Period (TWP) which allows them to test their ability to work while receiving their full cash benefits. This is a nine-month period that does not need to be used in consecutive months, starting from the first month of earning above the Trial Work Period amount. The Trial Work Period amount is $970.00 for 2022.

This means, whenever the individual earns $970.00 or more in gross wages within a calendar month, Social Security will consider them to be using one month within their Trial Work Period. Trial Work Period does not end until the individual has accumulated 9 months that are counted within a 60-month period (5 years).

**Extended Period of Eligibility (Phase 2):**

At the conclusion of the Trial Work Period, as long as the individual continues to have their original disabling condition, the next 36 months (3 years) will be an Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE).

When the Extended Period of Eligibility starts, the individual will receive their SSDI payment only when their gross countable wages do not exceed the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) which is a monthly amount of $1,350.00 for 2022.

Individual’s may be able to use other work incentives which may allow them to offset some of their countable earnings. This may enable them to stay below the SGA level, which will allow them to continue receiving their SSDI benefit check. Work-related expenses pre-approved by the Social Security Administration.

***Please note that both amounts for the Trial Work Period and Substantial Gainful Activity may increase slightly at the beginning of each New Year depending on if there is an adjustment with the Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA).***

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

Supplemental Security Income is considered a needs-based program and automatically comes with Medicaid which is important when receiving services from CMH services and supports. With SSI, there’s an individual’s $2,000 ($3,000 couple) asset limit.

A way to save more than the allowed $2,000 asset limit is to open an ABLE account through MI ABLE (www.miable.org).

An ABLE account provides a way for people, whose disability began before the age of 26, to save money while maintaining eligibility for public benefits. Individual’s and other family members can deposit a combined total of $16,000/year into an ABLE account. Also, if you are working, you can deposit up to $12,060 more in 2022 if you are not participating in an employer-sponsored retirement plan.

Money deposited by other people and investment gains are not counted as income for federally funded need-based benefits. Money in an ABLE account is also excluded from the resource limit for federally funded need-based benefits like Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but with SSI only $100,000 is excluded.

Continued on Page 7
Money in an ABLE account can be used for qualified disability expenses which include things like, housing, education, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, and health care expenses.

**Working while receiving SSI**

As an individual’s earned income increases, Social Security will adjust the individual’s SSI payment based on the individual’s gross wages reported to Social Security. This is done by submitting all pay stubs that are received during the month at the beginning of the next month. The individual’s SSI payment will be adjusted based on reported wages that are received from the prior two months.

For example, if you were to submit a copy of all check stubs received for the month of January, at the beginning of February, to Social Security, March’s SSI check would reflect all income received during the month of January.

In general, when an individual begins to work, Social Security will calculate your SSI payment the following way:

\[
\text{(Gross Wages – $85.00)} \div 2 = \text{Total Countable Income}
\]

\[
\$841.00 – \text{Total Countable Income} = \text{New Adjusted SSI Payment}
\]

*This does not take into account the use of any SSA work incentives that could be used to maintain more of the individual’s SSI payment*

Below is a worksheet to show how an individual SSI is adjusted when they report their earnings. If someone were to work 25 hours a week making $12.00 per hour, their gross wages for the month would be $1,300.00. \((12/hr \times 25hrs/wk \times 4.33\text{wks/month})\)

How would this look:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Month 1</th>
<th>Month 2</th>
<th>Month 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Working</td>
<td>$1,300.00</td>
<td>$1,300.00</td>
<td>$1,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2022 Federal Benefit Rate/ SSI Payment</strong></td>
<td>$841.00</td>
<td>$841.00</td>
<td>$234.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$841.00</td>
<td>$2,141.00</td>
<td>$1,534.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State of Michigan Supplemental Check:**

In the State of Michigan, individuals are entitled to the state’s supplement of $42.00 a quarter ($14.00 a month), when they receive at least $1.00 of SSI benefit. If, for some reason, an individual’s earnings are such that they are not entitled them to receive an SSI payment, they would not be entitled to receive the state’s supplement for that month either.

Paul Landry has worked for MI-UCP for the past 25 years and is currently the Director of Employment Programs. Within the community, Paul serves as a board member for: Community Housing Network and The Arc Livingston and is actively involved with Leadership Oakland as a past board member. Paul is also involved with other community charities and serves as a public notary. Paul can be reached via email at plandry@mi-ucp.org.

THANK YOU to Gorman’s Home Furnishings & Interior Design for raising $2,900.00 for The Arc of Oakland County through their annual recliners event! We are grateful for their community partnership & generosity.

Please consider shopping at Gorman's for your furniture needs. You can shop in-person at any of their locations or online at their website www.gormans.com.

**MEMBER TESTIMONIAL**

“The Arc of Oakland County helped my mom and I in working with Social Security – getting my brother reinstated with them, getting him back on track with his payments, and not having to pay them back the tens of thousands that they claimed they overpaid him! For that, believe me, we are eternally grateful!”
AS OF 3/15/2022 WE HAVE 1,048 MEMBERS!

NEW MEMBERS

JANUARY MEMBERS
Gregory Lawson • Miguel Manduca • Mary Sitar • Lisa Standal
Sasikala Subash • Jennifer Thorpe

FEBRUARY MEMBERS
Alex & Mary Brodrick • Cara Culver • Kurt Kazyak • Andrew Kraniaik
Ann LeDuc • Nancy Robinson

MARCH MEMBERS
Syed Al-Neyam • Marlowe B’sheart • Steve Casey • Dedra Coleman
Kimery Collins • Natasha Goodman • Jennifer Hanawalt • Michael
Hoeppner • Alicea Kew • Landon Kzinowek • Jacob Lucas • Phebe
Meeker • Susan Merritt • Brandy Ogle

The Arc of Oakland County Staff
Dawn Calnen, J.D.
Executive Director
Beth Lafata
Comptroller
Allison Murowany
Director of Public Relations and Development
Kiesha Lawton
Forever Plan Coordinator and Member Services
Jill Skornicka
Advocate
Karen St. Anne
Bookkeeper
Rebecca Black
Office Administrator
Monica Knoblock
Director of Financial Management Services
Megan Arnold
Financial Management Services
Ashley Ball
Financial Management Services
Larry Bizon
Financial Management Services
Jessica Habbi
Financial Management Services
Michelle Larzelere
Financial Management Services
Diane McDaniel
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Leanne Mayes
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Garret Van Drunen
Financial Management Services
Linda Yucha
Financial Management Services

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Tim Hatfield
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Nadine Milostan
Paul O’Meara
Barbara Scott
Kara Sprague, Esq.
John Torrone
Ann Wiedelman

Calendar

May
10 – Free OUCARES Webinar (presented by
Dawn Calnen, The Arc of Oakland County)
on Alternatives to Guardianship and How to
Obtain & Retain Government Benefits, 6 PM
19 – Community Conversations with The Arc
of Oakland County, Zoom, 6 PM

June
16 – The Arc of Oakland County
Annual Meeting & Election of the Board of
Directors, 7 PM

IN MEMORIAM
Austin Howlett
John Taylor
Mary Karczewski
Maya Kridli
Dushan Moore

NEW STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS
Karen St. Anne joined our team in
January as the new Bookkeeper
Rebecca Black joined our team in February
as the new Office Administrator
Jill Skornicka joined our team in mid-April
as the new Advocate

WELCOME!