The Arc of Oakland County’s Holiday Appeal

Here is a sneak peek of our Holiday Appeal! We respectfully request your consideration of The Arc of Oakland County as you plan your end-of-the-year tax-deductible donations.

With your support, we have grown our advocacy team over the past year, and we are proudly going out into the community more regularly attending speeches and resource fairs. More people know who we are, and more people are getting the assistance they need! We need to keep up the momentum and continue to reach as many individuals and families as we can. With your help—we can do it!

Please remember to ask your employer’s human resources or payroll department if they offer a charitable matching gift program. These matches are often dollar for dollar, which doubles your charitable-donation power!

Together we are stronger! Join us and join our movement—to make sure every individual with a disability is living their best life! Thank you in advance for your contributions.

Wishing you a Happy Holiday Season!

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE ARC FAMILY TO YOURS

Scan Here to Donate This Holiday Season!

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.

"From The Director's Chair"

Greetings members of The Arc! I hope you had a wonderful summer filled with many happy moments. One of my favorite events this summer was celebrating my amazing mom’s 80th birthday. As we prepared to celebrate her birthday, I enjoyed reminiscing about how much support she has given to me in my lifetime. She has always been a pillar of strength for our family, and we are better people because of her. This year, The Arc of Oakland County celebrates its 55th “birthday”. I, too, reflect on the support The Arc has received from our amazing members and friends over these past 55 years. Just like people, organizations cannot succeed alone. They need to surround themselves with caring and loyal allies so they can thrive.

The Arc was born in 1967 when a group of concerned parents were sitting around a table discussing the challenges that their children with disabilities were experiencing. Unable to attend school, their children were born into a community where many doctors urged parents to send their loved ones to an institution. A well-known medical researcher named Ken Poirot once said, “Today is your opportunity to build the tomorrow you want”. These families refused to allow their children to be marginalized and receive diminished access to their community. This is how

Continued on Page 3
We Want to Hear From You!

PROFILES is The Arc of Oakland County’s newsletter and the primary communications link with our large membership. We want to hear what you’d like to read about!

Please scan the QR code to complete a short one question survey.

We are looking forward to sharing impactful and timely information that matters most to you and your family!

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

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

VIRTUAL EVENT

Wednesday, December 14, 2022
6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

JOIN US! Please use the QR Code or visit The Arc of Oakland County’s website at www.thearcoakland.org to register for this FREE event. We will email you the Zoom login information.

We are looking forward to collaborating with our members and friends.
change takes place. This is how The Arc of Oakland County was created. 55 years and thousands of achievements later, we are still fighting for your loved ones. We are beyond thankful for those who have joined us in that effort. Every membership, every volunteer, and every dollar you contribute is an investment in someone’s future!

In the coming weeks, we will be reaching out to invite you to make a gift to support our programs and services. When you invest in our success, what you are really doing is helping another community member thrive! You are the pillar of strength for The Arc of Oakland County family—building the tomorrow we all want for the individuals we serve! ...DHC

ADVOCACY IN ACTION!

CHANGE CAN BE HARD, BUT IT CAN ALSO HAVE A POSITIVE OUTCOME

There is a quote: “Change is hard at first, messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end.” This perfectly describes a situation for a family that we had the pleasure of assisting recently regarding a change of placement for their daughter. The student had progressed in a program outside of the district to a level where her home district now recommended that she attend an in district equivalent program, a less restrictive environment. Mom was concerned about moving her daughter because she was doing well with her current program outside the district, and because she was worried the new staff would not understand how to support her daughter effectively. There was also not the same level of trust with the home district as with the outside district, who had been educating her daughter the last couple of years. Mom did not feel that her concerns were heard at the IEP meeting held in the spring where the change of placement was discussed, so she contacted us over the summer to help her.

To assist Mom with her concerns, we first scheduled a meeting with the home district special education supervisor with a facilitator present from an organization called Special Education Mediation Services (www.mikids1st.org). Facilitators are a neutral party who can assist with the communication process which can be helpful when trying to address special education concerns. “A facilitated meeting is an early dispute resolution option which may be especially helpful during meetings involving complex or potentially challenging special education issues. The facilitation process is intended to promote effective communication, keep the meeting focused on the issues at hand, and prevent conflicts” (MDE Special Education Dispute Resolution Options).

At the facilitated meeting, the supervisor discussed plans to assist the student with a more successful transition to the home district including a couple visits to the school over the summer to meet students and staff as well as to get familiar with the new setting. A formal plan for communication was also discussed. However, Mom left this meeting still feeling concerned and not in agreement with the change of placement. Change can be hard for any parent and their child, but it can be especially hard for parents and their child with a developmental disability. As parents we worry if our child/young adult will be successful with a transition to new environments or staff, will the transition result in any regression or behavior issues, will the new staff understand our child’s needs, and will our child be safe. We met with mom after the facilitated meeting to review her dispute resolution options. Mom agreed to have another meeting with the district with a mediator present. Mom and I made a list of all her concerns and requests which we shared with the district prior to the meeting so they could be prepared to discuss each concern/request. Using a mediator brought some comfort to Mom because it can result in a written agreement. The meeting went well, as we reviewed and addressed each of mom’s concerns/requests regarding her daughter. The result was a written agreement, which included working on some transition meetings with staff for her daughter before school started to get to know them, allowing her daughter’s support staff from MORC to observe her in the classroom periodically during the school year, setting a meeting to review how her daughter was doing with the transition to the new school two weeks after school started with consideration for additional meetings, planning to hold an IEP meeting 30 school days after the transition to the new school, and plans to complete a full re-evaluation the following spring. The items written in the agreement helped Mom be more confident with the transition plan for her daughter.

When I checked in with mom two weeks into the school year, she said her daughter was doing great! She shared that her daughter participated in many new great activities at school and that she was sharing about those activities when she came home from school, which is something that she had not previously done. Mom also shared that her daughter has been participating in the program from the first day and has not stopped talking. It took a couple of meetings with the district, first with a facilitator and then a mediator, for mom to feel comfortable that her concerns were being addressed for her daughter, but the outcome has been positive. Change is hard at first, messy in the middle but can be gorgeous at the end.
How to Build a Strong Disability Case
Erika Riggs, Partner & Attorney, Disability Law Group

Filing for disability benefits through Social Security can be a long and frustrating process, but it does not need to be that way. As with any government benefits, including Social Security Disability benefits and Supplemental Security Income payments, applicants often feel overwhelmed by the seemingly never-ending amounts of paperwork, short deadlines, long wait periods for decisions, and lack of communication to name a few. However, there are a few key steps you can take proactively to help make the process smoother and build a strong disability case from the start.

The first and most important step in building your disability case is to see a doctor or medical professional, such as a primary care doctor, mental health provider, or other specialist. Maintaining visits with your doctor(s) is a good idea for anyone experiencing health problems so that they can strive to get the help they need. Secondly, when you visit with a physician or treatment provider, you are building a record which can be used as evidence to support your disability case. In conjunction with building a rapport with your doctor, we suggest that you also start documenting any symptoms you may be experiencing.

Here is where you can get creative. If you are experiencing symptoms which limit your ability to function and keeps you from working, then in addition to reporting the same to your doctor, you can also keep a log of your symptoms. You do not necessarily need to keep a diary, but a short log with dates and simple descriptions can help. For example, if you suffer from anxiety, you can keep a journal or written record of dates you experienced anxiety attacks and whether this caused you to miss an appointment or important event. If you have migraine headaches or seizures, you can add calendar notes indicating what day you experienced a migraine or seizure, how long it lasted, and if you needed to take a nap or rest. You can even ask your friends and family to help by writing letters regarding what they observe and/or what they may help you with, such as chores, remembering doctor appointments, grocery shopping, and/or self-care. This evidence can be introduced into your disability case to help prove you are disabled and can even be a deciding factor in whether you are approved or not.

Additionally, the Social Security Administration may ask you to attend doctor exams by a consultative examiner contracted by the government to obtain more information. It is vital that you attend these exams on time and ready to give as much information as possible. In this way, you are demonstrating your willingness to actively participate in your case and be compliant with their requests, as well as presents an opportunity for you to report your symptoms and limitations. While the results of these exams are not always helpful, your honesty and compliance are positive factors that will be considered.

While the paperwork presented throughout the process can seem daunting, there are some simple tips you can follow to help get you through. First, here again, it is essential that you fill out all paperwork requested of you, such as your ADL packet detailing what you do on a typical day, your function report, and other documents in a timely manner. When filling out paperwork, remember to never downplay any symptoms you may be experiencing or leave anything out; you can almost always submit more information and give further explanation if needed. Remember to include all of your conditions and symptoms when asked, and not only your most limiting or severe condition. Further, remember to always notify your Case Examiner of any updates regarding your case, such as new doctors, testing, hospital visits, or procedures, and any change of address or contact information. Providing updates as they happen will not only ensure Social Security has all evidence to evaluate the strength of your case, but also helps to expedite the process.

Last but not least, hiring a disability attorney is always a great choice. Here at Disability Law Group, disability is all we do, and we specialize in the process from the application through appeals. We draft special forms, called Medical Source Statements, for our clients to be completed by their medical providers which adds additional supportive evidence into the file. These forms are based on the unique situation faced by each client and can be related to physical, mental, and/or cognitive impairments. Sometimes these forms can even avoid the need for a consultative exam by one of Social Security’s doctors, and they can help expedited the process by presenting a strong case, showing an inability to work at any job. Always remember that you are not alone, and you can follow these simple steps to help present a strong case.
Accessing Services in Oakland County

As a person with an intellectual or developmental disability, parent, or guardian it may be difficult to know where to start when seeking services. Oakland County has two core providers that serve the IDD population: MORC and Community Living Services (CLS). To receive services through either of those providers an Access screening must be completed with Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN). The Access screening is a way to identify the eligibility of the person and what services would best meet their needs.

The person seeking services must be Medicaid eligible. In addition, their disability must be present before the age of 22 and diagnosis documentation must be provided. The Access screening will take about 1.5-2 hours and assess 7 different areas of daily living.

To qualify for services the person’s disability must result in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following categories:

• self-care
• receptive/expressive language
• learning
• mobility
• self-direction
• independent living
• economic self-sufficiency

Access screenings can be requested by calling 248-464-6363, or by visiting the Resource and Crisis Center in Pontiac. Walk-in appointments are received on a first-come, first-served basis. Emergency screenings can be requested during a crisis. The Arc of Oakland County can provide additional guidance for anyone who may have questions regarding this process. We understand that navigating the community mental health system can be confusing. We are always, only a call away!

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCILS — THANK YOU!

Thank you to these local Knights of Columbus councils who generously donated to The Arc of Oakland County in 2022. We appreciate your ongoing support and dedication! We are grateful to have community partners who share in our commitment to help individuals with disabilities live their best lives!

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TROY FAMILY DAZE

We had the privilege of partnering with the Troy Community Foundation and Troy Family Daze this year by donating bags and volunteering at the Special Children’s Day on 9/15. We look forward to next year!
How YOU can support The Arc of Oakland County!

Shop AmazonSmile & Help Support The Arc of Oakland County

It’s easy to get started!
Simply scan the QR code below, sign into your Amazon account, and confirm The Arc of Oakland County as your charity of choice. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases - at no cost to you!

Scan Here!

The Arc of Oakland County Annual Run Challenge
There’s still time to help us reach our goal of $20,000!
Thank you to everyone who has already contributed to this year’s Annual Run Challenge! Please consider making a donation to The Arc of Oakland County as we continue to help people with intellectual impairments and developmental disabilities to live their best lives.

Scan the QR code below or visit www.thearcoakland.org.

Gorman’s Home Furnishings & interior design is raising money for The Arc of Oakland County!

You can give a lifeline of hope and give the gift of comfort this season. Donate $50 to The Arc of Oakland County benefitting children & adults with disabilities and get $200 OFF any leather recliner from Gorman’s 10 best brands including world famous Stressless.

The promotion will run from November 25, 2022 through January 15, 2023.

Gorman’s Home Furnishings & Interior Design has supported nonprofit organizations and the community for over 25 years.

Dove Awards
We are grateful and excited to share that the 52nd Annual Dove Awards Program will be in-person this year!

Save the Date!
We hope you will be able to join us for a special night honoring our 2023 Dove Awards Recipients. The evening will include dinner, an online auction, awards presentation and more!

Friday, March 10, 2023
San Marino Club, Troy, MI
MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

"I would like to personally thank The Arc of Oakland County advocates for helping me secure my daughter's Power of Attorney ... something that had to be done. I truly appreciated having a loving and caring staff who understood the needs of our very special loved ones!"

Meet The Arc's New Team Members!

Lisa Fuhr – Fundraising Manager

Lisa joined our team in September. She has 20 years of experience in fundraising, event planning, marketing and communications. She began her career working in non-profit at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, MI Chapter where she spent 10 years focusing on event planning and logistics, volunteer recruitment, and donor cultivation through corporate and friends & family teams. She spent an additional 10 years with Community Housing Network, Inc. as the Special Events Manager, event planning, working with volunteers & in-kind donations, fundraising and managing relationships with private donors.

She is driven to improve the lives of people through her work and works diligently to connect people to the mission of the organization. She is committed to put in the effort it takes to make an event successful and memorable and loves being able to come face-to-face with supporters to build strong donor relationships.

“I truly love the work that I do, and I am so excited to get started as the Fundraising Manager here at The Arc!” -Lisa Fuhr

When Lisa is not working, she spends her time with her husband, 4 kids and her dog Daisy!

Jessica Showers – Advocate

Jessica joined our team as an Advocate this past May after completing her master’s degree in social work at Michigan State University. During her time at Michigan State, Jessica worked at the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute assisting with statewide research studies.

Jessica’s passion for serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities began when she worked respite care for an Oakland County family prior to moving away for college. This passion continued through college when she worked as a behavior technician with children on the autism spectrum and interned at the Office of Disability Resources at Delta College.

Outside of working at The Arc Jessica continues to assist with research studies at the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Institute and enjoys spending time with her fiancé and two cats.
AS OF 9/20/2022 WE HAVE 1,071 MEMBERS!

NEW MEMBERS

JULY MEMBERS
Kelly Burke • Molly David • Donald & Diana Douglas • Caryn Gallagher
Dexter Klein • David MacLean • Maria Price • Sheila Pugh • Dale & Kathleen Roeder • Debra Schultz • Jacquie Steir • Heidi Smith • Rhonda Taylor

AUGUST MEMBERS
Sue Custer • Roberta Fisher • Jill Gagnon • Elizabeth Gates • Elina Gelfand
Vinay Jain • Denise Moore • James O’Neil • Navin Patel • Zarna Patel • Karen Reinhout • Ronald & Mary Lou Stropoli • Margaret Tynes

SEPTEMBER MEMBERS
Felicia Ali • Judith Beltzman • Mark Brown • Julie Cohen • Julie Dwyer •
Janet Filip-McGee • Meghan Hovie • Lisa Judd • Claudio Kiriazis • Yianni Kiriazis • Kelly Kolecki • Rama Mantispagada • Paul & Barbara McCue •
Mary Beth Momchilov • Lizabeth Morton • Diane Quinn • Melodie Schilling

The Arc of Oakland County Staff
Dawn Calnen, J.D. Executive Director
Beth Lafata Comptroller
Christie Kay Director of Programs & Operations
Allison Murowany Director of Marketing & Communications
Lisa Fuhr Fundraising Manager
Kiesha Lawton Forever Plan Coordinator and Member Services
Jill Skornicka Advocate
Jessica Showers Advocate
Karen St. Anne Bookkeeper

Serena Kulaga Office Administrator
Monica Knoblock Director of Financial Management Services
Megan Arnold Financial Management Services
Ashley Ball Financial Management Services
Jessica Habbi Financial Management Services
Michelle Larzello Financial Management Services
Diane McDaniel Financial Management Services
Leanne Meyers Financial Management Services
Garret Van Drunen Financial Management Services
Linda Yucha Financial Management Services

Board of Directors
Lisa Kowalski, President
Tom Lias, 1st VP
Randy Meono, 2nd Vice President
Suzanne Marquardt, Secretary
Jerry Rubin, Treasurer
Tom Quakenbush, Past President

Delegates-at-large
Shashi Bihani
Max Elliott
Tim Hatfield
Ellen Hulverson
Patrick Kauffman
Julianne Lalik
Paul O’Meara
Kara Sprague, Esq.
Ann Wiedelman

NEW STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS
Lisa Fuhr joined our team in September as the new Fundraising Manager

WELCOME!

IN MEMORIAM
Carol Gray
Thomas Hite
Pamela Eldred Robbins

Calendar

October
11 – The Arc of Oakland County Board Meeting, Zoom, 7 PM

November
24 – Thanksgiving

December
13 – The Arc of Oakland County Board Meeting, Zoom, 7 PM
14 – Community Conversations with The Arc of Oakland County, Zoom, 6 PM

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