



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

Achieve with us.

The Arc of NJ Takes Advocacy to Capitol Hill

Representatives from The Arc of New Jersey, local County Chapters, families and self-advocates attended the annual Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC last month and pushed back against potential threats to Medicaid while meeting with 10 members of New Jersey's Congressional delegation or their staff.



These meetings were an opportunity to voice our strong disapproval of block grants and per capita caps - two proposals being discussed by lawmakers. In partnership with the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, advocates strongly opposed these policy proposals and explained to lawmakers about the devastating effects these changes would have on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We are happy to report that at the end of March, Speaker Paul Ryan announced that the House of Representatives would not be voting on the American Health Care Act. This was a big advocacy win and we thank everyone who participated in action alerts and weighed in with their representatives. We will continue to monitor any future threats to Medicaid and will keep you informed as news develops. More information about the "Protect the Lifeline" campaign can be found [here](#).

Self-Advocates and Family Members Testify at Budget Hearings

In addition to our advocacy in Washington, DC, The Arc of New Jersey continued to push forward with our State Budget campaign. As Chair of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, we are working to increase wages for Direct Support Professionals in the FY18 Budget. Executive Director Tom Baffuto and Board President Bob Hage testified before the Assembly Budget Committee and Self-Advocate Evelyn Ramundo testified before the Senate Budget Committee last month. The Arc of New Jersey continues to urge our State legislatures to address this important issue and recognize the critical work of our Direct Support Professionals. Finally, the Coalition recently launched our new web site which you can visit by [clicking here](#). In addition, be sure to like our [Facebook page](#) and



Self-Advocates Celebrate DD Awareness Month at the State House



More than 35 legislators and Department of Human Services Commissioner Beth Connolly helped recognize and celebrate Developmental Disability Awareness Month at an event hosted by The Arc of New Jersey's Self-Advocacy Project at the State House in March. The day was an opportunity to raise awareness about issues impacting self-advocates, including the importance of the direct support professionals in their lives. Self-Advocates spoke with legislators from across the State including Senate President Sweeney and members of both the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees and the

Senate and Assembly Human Services Committees. In addition, Commissioner Connolly delivered a proclamation from Governor Christie highlighting the occasion. She spent time speaking with Self-Advocates and she partook in our #ItMattersToMeBecause Campaign. In addition, the Self-Advocacy Project bestowed certificates and prizes to the winners of this year's bulletin board contest. The theme of this year's event and design contest was "Developmental Disabilities Awareness: It Matters to Me." Students in grades 3 - 12 were invited to design a bulletin board and/or video that incorporates the theme of this year's campaign and illustrates the students' acceptance of all people. To view photos from the event, [click here](#).

Middlesex County Bar Association Honors The Arc of NJ's CJAP Director

Congratulations to our very own Jessica Oppenheim, Esq., Director of the Criminal Justice Advocacy Program, who was honored last month by the Middlesex County Bar Association. Jessica was the recipient of the Criminal Trial Practice Award at the 12th Annual Practice Area Awards Dinner which recognizes outstanding service to the profession.



**DON'T CUT OUR
LIFELINE**

Do you or a loved one benefit from Medicaid, SSI, Medicare or the ACA (Obamacare)?

These "lifeline" programs are critical to supporting millions of Americans with disabilities to access healthcare, support services and community living.

Lifeline programs are under attack!

Every voice must be heard to educate the public and elected officials about the importance of preserving these vital programs.

**We need your help to "Protect the Lifeline"!
Go to bit.ly/protectthelifeline now!**

NJ Sprout Film Festival Returns Due to Popular Demand

sprout

making the invisible visible

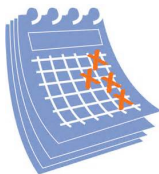


Pictured Above: Attendees at the 2016 Sprout Film Festival waiting for the screening to begin.

After a very successful inaugural year, the Sprout Film Festival will be back in New Jersey on

Saturday, April 29, 2017
Middlesex County College
West Hall, Parkview Room

Come join us for a screening of some of the most creative and heart-warming short films by and about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities from around the world. Tickets are now on sale at www.SproutNJ.org and you can watch the trailer for this year's event by [clicking here](#).



Save the Date!

The Annual Spring Into Advocacy Luncheon hosted by the NJ Self-Advocacy Project and the NJ Statewide Self-Advocacy

Network will be held Saturday, April 8 at The Imperia, Somerset. For more information, visit www.njselfadvocacyproject.org.

The 28th Annual Conference on Medical Care for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, hosted by the Mainstreaming Medical Care Program of The Arc of New Jersey, will be held on Friday, June 2 at the Westin, Princeton. To view a copy of the event brochure [click here](#). To register for the conference, [click here](#). The final day to register is Friday, May 19. If you have additional questions, contact Jennifer Lynch at 732-784-6397.



Pictured Above: Attendees at the 2016 Spring into Advocacy Luncheon.

Chapters of The Arc Kick Off "Step Up For The Arc 2017"

Step Up For The Arc is an annual statewide initiative of The Arc of New Jersey, with walkathons held locally by every county chapter. It's a fun, healthy and easy way to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Check out these upcoming Walks and [check this web site](#) often to find the event happening in your county.



- [The Arc of Monmouth - Saturday, April 8](#)
- [The Arc of Essex - Saturday, April 29](#)

Check Out These Upcoming Events, Webinars

- **Differentiating Problematic Sexual Behavior Related to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) vs Paraphilic Disorders: Pt2 ADULTS.**

[Thursday, April 6 at 1 pm](#)

During this hour-long webinar our speakers, Dr. Kim Spence and Dr. Eric Imhof, will begin a brief overview of literature regarding autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and problematic sexual behavior. Here the presenters will elucidate clinical differences in adult clients with ASD who engage in inappropriate sexual behavior versus clients with ASD and co-morbid deviant sexual interests. During this webinar, we will discuss best practices for assessment including differential diagnosis, risk assessment, identification of client needs, and how to respond with comprehensive multi-disciplinary treatment planning will be discussed utilizing a number of case examples.



- **Free Conference: Parent Forum and Opportunity Expo - Mercer County**

[Saturday, April 8 from 8:30 am to 1 pm](#)

These events are held throughout the state and consists of a Parent Forum that includes workshops on specific topics including support coordination, the continuum of community services, financial planning, eligibility requirements, and where to find help. The Opportunity Expo features a variety of exhibitors including: state and county government entities, community service providers, service coordinators, local health care support and recreation providers, additional information and referral services. Families will have an opportunity to be introduced to opportunities in their area as well as interview potential services to hire. This parent forum will also offer a free sibling retreat for the siblings of people with developmental disabilities 8-14 years of age.

- **Webinar: Including Siblings in Future Planning**

[Monday, April 10 at 6 pm](#)

Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute, SIBS NJ and Katie Arnold Executive Director of the Sibling Leadership Network as we honor National Sibling Day. The role of a sibling in the life of a person with an intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) is as complex as it is meaningful and often outlasts the parent-child relationship. It is important to communicate with siblings when starting to plan for the future needs of a person with I/DD. This webinar will explore what to think about when planning for the future and how to include and engage siblings in that discussion.

- **Lunch & Learn: Keys to a Smooth Transition**

[Tuesday, April 18 at 12 pm](#)

Public policy and advocacy are most effective when families, Self-Advocates and professionals work together. Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute as we discuss the importance of becoming involved and ways to make a positive impact on policies at the national, state and local levels.

- **Free Workshop: SSI & Medicaid**

[Tuesday, April 25 at 6:30 pm at The Arc of Middlesex](#)

This presentation will begin with a brief overview of The Arc of New Jersey and its programs and services. We will then address many important SSI and Medicaid issues that families may not be aware of.

- **Free: IEP Review With the Attorneys of Hinkle, Fingles, Prior, & Fischer, Attorneys at Law - Hunterdon County**

[Thursday, April 20 at 6 pm](#)

Are You Looking For Professional Guidance With Your Child's IEP? We are offering FREE regional IEP reviews for families who may have questions or concerns about their child's plan. Families will

have an opportunity to sit down with an attorney from Hinkle, Fingles, Prior, & Fischer to review their child's IEP, ask questions and discuss any concerns they may have about their school district. Space is limited and registration is REQUIRED to attend. Families will receive a free 30 minute IEP review. Contact Kristina Tosti at (609) 896-4200 to reserve your time slot.

Need help or more information? Want to become active in our advocacy network?

Visit our website to access lots of great information that can help you navigate service systems, find resources and keep you informed as to the important issues facing children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Join our advocacy network to add your voice to the thousands who are working hard to promote and protect the quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Visit our website

Join an Advocacy Network

The Arc of New Jersey | 732.246.2525 | info@arcnj.org | www.arcnj.org

STAY CONNECTED



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