



UPDATE FROM TRENTON

The Arc of NJ Advocates on FY20 Budget



In the month of March, The Arc of New Jersey celebrated Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, testified at multiple legislative hearings, weighed in on a number of I/DD related bills and advocated on the FY20 Budget. The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto testified alongside Lauren Zalepka, a family member whose daughter receives services from The Arc of Monmouth, at both the Senate and Assembly Budget hearings last month. Testimony was focused on the Direct Support Professional workforce crisis and the need to keep starting salaries above the state minimum wage which is set to rise in July 2019 and again in January 2020. Lauren's testimony to Committee members illustrated the important role DSPs play in the life of her daughter and why the state must act to ensure families like hers will continue to have the staff they depend on. To continue

reading, [click here](#).

Self-Advocates Celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month at the State House

Hosted by the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project, more than 40 Self-Advocates filled Goldfinch Square at the State House last month to raise awareness and celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and interact with legislators from across the State. Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson bestowed a proclamation from the Governor and took time to interact with participants and celebrate this occasion. In addition,



Assemblywoman Downey, Chairwoman of the Assembly Human Services Committee, and her district-mate Assemblyman Houghtaling, presented a joint legislative resolution to Self-Advocates highlighting their advocacy and designating March as DD Awareness Month. Self-Advocates also spoke to at least

Self Advocate, Director Talk Employment at APSE

New Jersey Self Advocacy Project Director Ashley Ritchey and the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network President Evelyn Ramundo presented at the Facing the Future/APSE (Association for Professionals in Supported Employment) conference last month at The Hyatt in New Brunswick. Ashley and Evelyn's workshop was entitled Addressing Employment Disparities through Self-Advocacy and the session focused on helping supported employment professionals build functional education on self-advocacy skills into pre-employment training and direct instruction, as well as how the development of these skills can positively impact the supported employment process. The workshop incorporated best practices in promoting self-determination skills along with ways to identify and develop natural supports to improve employment outcomes. **Pictured from left to right is Ashley Ritchey, Evelyn Ramundo and Erin Smithers, Information and Referral Coordinator for the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project.**



Medical Care Conference Brochure Now Available

The conference brochure for The Arc of NJ's 30th Annual Conference on Medical Care is now available. [Click here](#) to download your copy. The Conference will take place on Friday, May 31 at the Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village and is intended for everyone who is concerned about providing quality health care to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Registration for the event is open through Tuesday, May 14 so [click here](#) to purchase your tickets. If you have any questions, contact Jenn Lynch at JLynch@arcnj.org or 732-784-6397.



Pictured above: speakers from the 2018 Mainstreaming Medical Care Conference.

Chapters Host Spring Events, Fundraise



Each spring, the SCARC Foundation honors individuals who embody the mission of the organization as well as



Congrats to The Arc of Monmouth on their Silverball Winter Gala held earlier this month at the Silverball Museum Arcade in Asbury Park. The event featured red carpet photos, wonderful food from dedicated

being leaders in the Sussex County community. This year's event took place on Thursday, March 21, at Perona Farms and included dinner, an awards presentation, a silent auction, and a 50/50 drawing. All proceeds from the event are used to support services for individuals with developmental disabilities served by SCARC Inc. and SCARC Guardianship Services. Pictured here from left to right is Assemblyman Hal Wirths, Senator Steve Oroho, SCARC CEO Richard Lecher, SCARC Chair Andy Sharick and The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto. To view more photos, [click here](#).

local sponsors, a silent auction, and unlimited free play on more than 200 vintage and cutting-edge pinball and arcade games. Pictured here is Executive Director Tom Baffuto with The Arc, Ocean County Chapter Executive Director Laura Williams (far right), as well as board members and participants from The Arc Monmouth. [Click here](#) to view more photos.

Chapters Kick Off Spring with Step Up Walks

The Step Up For The Arc walks are 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. Make sure to [check out this page](#) for details about an upcoming walk near you! *Pictured right is The Arc of Somerset County's 2018 Step Up for The Arc Walk.*



On April 27th, three Chapters will host Walk-a-thons in a town near you:

- [The Arc of Essex County](#)
- [The Arc of Monmouth County](#)
- [The Arc of Somerset County](#).

Community Health Law Project Seeks Nominations



The Community Health Law Project will host their 32nd Annual Ann Klein Advocate Awards on Thursday, October 24, 2019 at The Wilshire Grand Hotel in West Orange, NJ. Nominations for the 2019 Ann Klein Advocate Awards and the Mike Lione Accessibility Award are due by May 1, 2019 and CHLP is now accepting nominations. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for more information and to download the nomination forms.

Check Out These Upcoming Webinars & Events

Webinar: Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Eligibility for Children with Disabilities (Under age 18)

[Tuesday, April 9 at 1 pm](#)

The process of applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children with disabilities under 18 years of age is very different from applying as an adult. Join us as Gina Diouf, District Manager, Social Security New Brunswick, and Everett Lo, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Office, discuss the eligibility requirements and application process for children age 18 and younger applying for SSI.



Sibshop: For siblings of children with special needs

[Saturday, April 6 and Friday, April 12](#)

Sibshops provide brothers and sisters of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities opportunities to share and connect with peers who "get it." Attending a Sibshop allows siblings a chance to meet one another in a relaxed setting. Children will have the opportunity to participate in fun activities such as "Dear Aunt Blabby," and group discussions designed to help children express the

joys and concerns of being a sibling of a child with special needs. Sibshops acknowledge that brothers and sisters of people with special needs, like their parents, may need support.

- Sibshop events are free.
- Open to children 8-12 years old.
- Click the link above to pre-register.
- After you complete the pre-registration form, you will receive a call to confirm your child is registered. Your child is not registered until you receive this call.

While Sibshops aren't therapy sessions, they can be therapeutic for some children.

Webinar: Including Brothers & Sisters of Children with Disabilities During the Transition Years **[Wednesday, April 10 at 6 pm](#)**

The relationship between brothers and sisters plays a very important role in the lives of both individuals with developmental disabilities and their siblings. During a student's transition years (14-21) when the family begins to plan for the future, it is critical that siblings are included in the process. Hosted by The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute and presented by Kristen Sellix, MSW, LCSW from SIBS NJ, this webinar will discuss why and how to include brothers and sisters during the transition years and beyond.

Lunch & Learn Webinar Safety Series: Supporting the Village: Helping Parents and Caregivers to Support Youths' Healthy Sexual Development, a 3-part series

[Tuesday, April 16 at 12 pm](#)

Part 3 - Adulthood 18+

As parents and caregivers, we worry about the health and wellbeing of our children. When we look through the lens of intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD), sometimes we get even more worried about lots of different things, like sex and sexuality. It can be difficult to know how or when to talk to children with I/DD about sex, particularly because we are afraid that they may be victimized. This 3-part webinar series is designed to increase parents' and caregivers' comfort in talking about sex and sexuality with their children. We will discuss the social, physiological, and emotional changes that happen before, during, and after puberty. We will provide tools and skills for parents and caregivers to support the development, independence, and success of their children.

Equal Justice Talks Webinar Series: Supported Employment for People with I/DD and Criminal Histories

[Thursday, April 18 at 2 pm](#)

Please join us for a one-hour webinar on the obstacles to employment for people with developmental disabilities and how having a criminal history can make it even more difficult to find and keep a job. In this hour-long webinar, supported employment professional Wesley Anderson, Director, Training and Consultation at The Arc of New Jersey will provide an overview of this issue and discuss positive ways to work with employers and outline effective options to help people with developmental disabilities and criminal histories succeed in the workplace.

Transition Conference: Free Parent Forum & Opportunity Expo (North Jersey)

[Saturday, April 27 at 9 am](#)

This expo will start with an opening session on why planning is critical and how to start a plan for your child with I/DD. The second session will explain SSI and Medicaid and why you need to apply. Attendees will then have a break to visit with our service providers who will have information tables set up. For the last session of the day, participants can choose one of three workshops focusing on different areas of interest.

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](#)

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