



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

Achieve with us.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Arc of New Jersey Urges Legislators to Address DSP Wages in FY19 Budget

The Arc of New Jersey continued to meet throughout the month of April with members of both the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees to advocate in support of increased funding to address the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce crisis. In our ongoing role as Chair of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, The Arc of New Jersey has spoken to legislative leaders, both Budget Chairs and other influential lawmakers about the ongoing struggles the disability community faces because of the low salaries paid to DSPs. To continue reading, [click here](#).



Meet Shaleta and John. Shaleta is John's direct support professional (DSP) providing the support he needs to live successfully in the community. NJ residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities like John rely on DSPs to survive. Check out this important video above that highlights the work of DSPs.



Pictured top: representatives from The Arc of New Jersey and The Arc of Bergen & Passaic Counties meet with Assembly Speaker Coughlin to discuss the FY19 Budget. **Pictured bottom:** representatives from The Arc of New Jersey and The Arc of Monmouth County meet with Senator O'Scanlon at his district office in Red Bank.

Want to see more photos and updates about our ongoing advocacy? Make sure you're following us on [Twitter](#) to get all the latest news and info!

NJ Goes to Washington to Advocate on the Hill



The Arc of New Jersey attended the Annual Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC last month and then met with members of New Jersey's congressional delegation to talk about the issues impacting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Representing The Arc of New Jersey was our First Vice President Kevin Sturges and Self-Advocate Barbara Coppens. Also advocating was Alice Siegel from The Arc of Bergen and Passaic, Carolyn Hayer from The Arc of Bergen and Passaic and The Arc of New Jersey's Board of Directors, and Bill Testa from The Arc/Morris. The Arc of New Jersey, in partnership with the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities, and other representatives from our group, met with eight of New Jersey's elected officials or staff from their offices. This included: Congressmen Smith, Pallone, Frelinghuysen, Pascrell, Gottheimer, Congresswoman Watson Coleman, and Senators Booker and Menendez. We advocated to protect Medicaid from any future cuts and stressed the importance of community living and the programs and funding that make an integrated life a reality. We also pushed back against the ADA Education and Reform Act and urged lawmakers to reauthorize the Money Follows the Person program, among other things.

Self-Advocates Elect New Pres., Honor Sen. Sweeney



The New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network held elections last month and selected Self-Advocate Evelyn Ramundo to lead the group as their new president. Elections took place at the April 30th Advisory Board meeting. We congratulate Evelyn and wish her the best of luck as she takes on this new role! Interested in getting involved with Self-Advocacy? Email Ashley at Arthey@arcnj.org and be sure to check out the group's Facebook page by [clicking here](#).



The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project hosted their 13th Annual Spring into Action Luncheon on April 7th at the Imperia in Somerset. More than 300 Self-Advocates from across the State attended the event. Honorees included Self-Advocate Arthur King, Paul Krings and The Arc AEROS from The Arc of Union County, and Senate President Steve Sweeney who was presented the Heroes Award. The Senate President addressed the crowd, spent time going table to table to meet with and talk with Self-Advocates and posed for photos with everyone who asked. Self-Advocates talked to him about the role DSPs play in their lives and other issues that matter to them. To view more photos from the event, [click](#)

New Report Shows Highest Rate of Autism in NJ

April is Autism Awareness Month and with it came a new report from the CDC that shows the prevalence of autism among children in New Jersey is the highest in the United States. In light of this report, The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto participated in a press call with U.S. Senator Bob Menendez regarding the results and subsequently spoke with a number of additional media outlets about the findings. Print and video clips can be found here:

- [News12 NJ](#)
- [NJ Spotlight](#)
- [Asbury Park Press](#)
- [WHYY](#)
- [The North Jersey Record](#)
- [88.3 FM](#)
- [WMBC-TV](#)
- [Press Release from Senator Menendez](#)

To continue reading, [click here.](#) To read a statement about the findings from The Arc US, click [here.](#)



Primepoint Donates \$10k to Support The Arc, Chapters

The Arc of New Jersey would like to thank Primepoint for their generous donation to our organization and to five local County Chapters of The Arc. Primepoint pledged \$25 for every assist that the New Jersey Devils recorded this season. With almost 400 assists this season, the donation totaled \$10,000! Included in the photo is Taylor Hall, a left wing with the NJ Devils. Hall was the team's assist-leader this year and we thank him for it! We are grateful to Primepoint for their support which enables us to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families living in New Jersey.



Chapters Step Up For The Arc 2018

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. To find out more about an upcoming Step Up event in your county, [click here.](#) Pictured right is Essex County Executive Joe DiVincenzo, The Arc of Essex Executive Director Linda Lucas and The Arc of New Jersey Executive Director Tom Baffuto at The Arc of Essex County's Building Tomorrows 5K Run, Family Walk, and Fun Fest on Saturday, April 28th.



County Chapters Celebrate at Annual Dinners



Congratulations to The Arc of Ocean and The Arc of Gloucester who hosted wonderful events in April. Pictured left is The Arc of New Jersey's Board President Joanne Bergin with Brick Mayor John Ducey, The Arc of New Jersey Executive Director Tom Baffuto, Brick resident Matthew Redmond and The Arc Ocean Executive Director Laura Williams. Mayor Ducey and Matthew received the Humanitarian of the Year Award and the 2018 Heart and Soul Award, respectively. On the right, Tom Baffuto is pictured with Jim Donovan, Co-Anchor of CBS 3's Eyewitness News This Morning and Eyewitness News at Noon and The Arc Gloucester and The Arc of New Jersey Treasurer Pam Corrigan. Jim gave a

wonderful keynote speech at The Arc of Gloucester's Annual Gala, "A Night Under the Stars," which was held on April 28th. Congratulations to both Chapters on their outstanding celebrations!

Family Institute Hosts First Sibshop, Keynotes Autism Event



On April 28, The Arc of New Family Institute held its first regional Sibshop. Sibshops provide brothers and sisters of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities opportunities to share and connect with peers who "get it." Two more events are scheduled for May, so make sure you register now by [clicking here](#). You can also view additional photos from this wonderful event by visiting The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute [Facebook Page](#).



Associate Executive Director Celine Fortin attended and spoke at "Breakfast for Families" at Kean University in Union on Saturday, April 7th. Celine talked to families about how to navigate the service delivery system, resources in the community, and the process for receiving services, among other things. She also took questions from family members and provided attendees with materials to help them support their loved one with I/DD. Celine is pictured here with members of the Student Occupational Therapy Association at Kean University.

Register Now for Mainstreaming Medical Care Conference

The Arc of New Jersey's Mainstreaming Medical Care (MMC) Program will host their annual Conference on Friday, June 1, 2018 at the Westin Forrestal Village in Princeton. This conference focuses on providing current, up-to-date healthcare information on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If you are interested in exhibitor and contributor opportunities, please contact Jennifer Lynch at JLynch@arcnj.org or 732-784-6397. The registration deadline is **Friday, May 18th**.

- To register for this event, [click here](#).
- To view the conference brochure, [click here](#).



Check Out These Upcoming Webinars & Events

Parent Forum and Opportunity Expo [Saturday, May 12 at 9 am at Clifton High School](#)

These events are held throughout the state and consist of a Parent Forum that includes workshops (45-60 minutes) 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 the chance to learn more about the resources in their communities and will also have the opportunity to speak with and interview potential service providers.



Sibshop - For Siblings of Children with Special Needs

[Click here to register for two May dates](#)

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.

Webinar: Centers for Independent Living and How They Help Connect Individuals to Supports and Services

[Wednesday, May 23 at 6 pm](#)

Centers for Independent Living, many of them funded through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, in the Department of Labor & Workforce Development, are community-based, consumer-driven organizations that provide information and referral, peer counseling, skills training, advocacy and a variety of services based on individual needs. Our presenter, Luke Koppish, the Deputy Director for the Alliance Center for Independence will provide information on how these services connect individuals with disabilities to the community and the supports offered along the path to their future.

Empowering People with Disabilities to Recognize and Report Abuse

[Thursday, May 24 at 1 pm](#)

This hour long webinar with Mark Starford and Kecia Weller will explore –

- How to recognize and support people with disabilities who have experienced abuse
- How to empower self-advocates to identify and report abuse

Mark Starford, Director of Board Resource Center, facilitates leadership of people with disabilities and development of person-centered services. Kecia Weller is a state and national peer advocate for people with disabilities. Her focus is to ensure people who experienced abuse and assault get the support needed to live self-determined lives. Kecia along with Mark produced a PSA titled "Abuse of Persons with Disabilities: The Silent Epidemic" and with The National Arc's NCCJD developed the "Talk about Sexual Violence" project.

Open House - Camp Jaycee

[Sunday, June 3 from 12 pm to 3 pm](#)

Camp Jaycee is a unique summer camp for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The camp is located in the heart of the Pocono Mountains. This Open House is for prospective campers, returning campers, families and service provider professionals and includes a free buffet luncheon. In order to attend, you must RSVP by **Friday, May 25**.

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

DONATE NOW!

