



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Achieve with us.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

Get Informed Ahead of Election Day with Guide

Every year, The Arc of New Jersey publishes a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Guide in advance of Election Day so that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have a better understanding when it's time to cast a vote. This year, New Jersey residents will choose a new Governor and will elect 120 members to the State Legislature. This includes 40 State Senators and 80 Assembly members. Our GOTV Guide will include important information about finding your polling location, registering to vote, and accessibility accommodations for those who need it. In addition, you will find submissions from Self-Advocates and a Family Member about why voting is such an important right and one you should be sure to exercise on November 7, 2017. When complete, a copy of the Guide will be available for download at www.gotvnj.org. In the interim, be sure to visit the site for additional information and resources.



The Arc to Bestow Awards at Annual Dinner

Each year, The Arc of New Jersey honors the "best of the best" in support, services and advocacy for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. It is with great pleasure that we announce the 2017 award recipients:

- **Legislator of the Year - Senator Steven Oroho (R-24)**
- **Legislator of the Year - Assemblyman John McKeon (D-27)**
- **President's Award - Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.**
- **Spirit of The Arc Award - Liz Shea**
- **Professional of the Year - Kevin Walsh, Ph.D.**
- **Healthcare Professional of the Year - The Arc Mercer Healthcare Center**
- **Volunteer of the Year - Christopher Corrigan**
- **Employer of the Year - Wawa of Neptune**
- **Bill Sackter Award - Colleen Watkins**
- **Distinguished Community Service - The Shining Stars Network**
- **Martin Papish Award - Pat Jones**
- **Communicator's Award - The Arc of Essex County**



The 2017 Annual Awards Dinner is scheduled for **Monday, Oct. 16** at the Imperia in Somerset, New Jersey. The event includes cocktails, dinner and the awards presentation. [Click here](#) for additional information and to register for this wonderful event.

Project HIRE Achieves 3-year CARF Accreditation



It is with great pride that we announce The Arc of NJ/Project HIRE's three-year accreditation for Community Employment Services: Employment Supports, Transition Services and Job Development from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Not only did The Arc of New Jersey/Project HIRE receive one of the best CARF survey results in the history of the program, but we were also bestowed the rarely awarded, "exemplary conformance to the standards" in reference to our Criminal Justice Advocacy Program. In fact, the CARF survey report noted, "[t]his exemplary program is something that should be duplicated to assist people with disabilities who face the criminal justice system in America and hopefully, end the high recidivism rate in this population." In addition, during the exit interview for the intense three-day survey, the surveyor noted that after reviewing more than 60

different agencies, The Arc of New Jersey/Project HIRE was not one of the best, but *the* best supported employment agency he had surveyed. We are very pleased with this result and the agency will continue to work tirelessly to improve services and outcomes for persons living with disabilities.

The Arc Mercer Welcomes Lt. Gov Candidate to SNAP Event

The Arc Mercer recently launched a groundbreaking LGBTQ community organization for people with special needs that is receiving high praise and which recently hosted a high-profile guest of honor. Late last month, Lt. Governor candidate and former Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver stopped by the Special Needs Alliance for Pride (SNAP) event in Trenton. She talked with members of the organization and highlighted the importance of diversity in our communities. The Arc of New Jersey was on hand to celebrate this innovative initiative and talk with Oliver who currently serves as an Assemblywoman representing the 34th District of New Jersey. She is the Democratic running mate of gubernatorial candidate Phil Murphy. The event also included Trenton Assemblyman Reed Gusciora who serves as an Arc Mercer Board Member. To learn more about the SNAP program and how this initiative began at The Arc Mercer, [read this article from NJ.com](#) or visit the [Chapter's web site](#).



CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

SCARC CEO Celebrates 45 Years on the Job



Last month, Richard Lecher reached an incredible milestone: he has worked at SCARC (Sussex County Arc) for 45 years. Starting in 1972, Richard was the agency's first CEO. Although SCARC was formed in 1957, volunteer board members administered the organization for the first 15 years of operation. Richard is the most tenured Arc chapter CEO in New Jersey, and one of the most tenured in The Arc of the US family. With that in mind, we wanted to turn the Spotlight on Richard this month to learn more about his years of service to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

1. What originally attracted you to The Arc family, and what has kept you a part of it for the past 45 years?

When I came to SCARC, I left a very enjoyable teaching job with teens

with disabilities in Roxbury Township (Morris County). I remotely knew the President of the SCARC board at the time, and after talking with him, he and the board offered me the job; and I ventured into the unfamiliar territory of a new career. Over the years, the job expanded, my interest deepened, and my obsession to excel at SCARC drove me along. It is unusual for a person to remain in one career choice for this long of a time, but God led me on the path of a great journey. ([To continue reading, click here.](#))



Self-Advocates Use 'Swag' for August Recess Advocacy

This past month, the members of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network's Advisory Board participated in The Arc of the United States' Congressional recess advocacy initiative with a "Recess Swag Box." They are pictured here in their awesome orange T-shirts!

Self-Advocates from The Arc of Atlantic County proudly wore their new apparel to a meeting with Congressman Frank LoBiondo who represents New Jersey's 2nd Congressional District.

In addition, Barbara Coppens attended a Town Hall event in Camden County that featured Congressman Donald Norcross and Assemblywoman Pam Lampitt.

Great job to all who participated!

Get to Know the NJ SAP Team Members

The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project was established to challenge individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to become involved in events, legislative policies, and issues that positively affect their lives or lives of others with disabilities. Over the past year, there have been a number of staff changes at the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project and we thought this would be a great opportunity to introduce you to the team and tell you a little bit about the work they do!

- **Ashley Ritchey**, MSW, became the Director of the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project in October 2016. Prior to that, Ashley worked with the Project as a Training and Technical Assistance Specialist for 5 years. Ashley is the Group Advisor for Council 1 of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network which represents Sussex, Warren, Morris, and Hunterdon Counties. She is responsible for the daily management of the Project, as well as the development and delivery of innovative workshops and community-based events for adults with disabilities statewide.
- **Erin Smithers** has worked as the Project's Information and Referral Coordinator for the last 5 years. She worked for The Arc of New Jersey's Project HIRE for 3 years before joining the Project. She is the Group Advisor for Council 2 which represents Bergen, Union, Essex, Passaic, and Hudson Counties. She also facilitates self-advocacy groups throughout New Jersey, delivers educational workshops, and connects groups to pertinent advocacy issues happening around the state.
- **Michael Pearson** is a Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator. Michael joined the Project team in March 2017. He previously worked with self-advocates at The Arc of Monmouth County. Michael is responsible for developing and presenting trainings for self-advocates and staff members around the state, while also serving as the Group Advisor to Council 3 of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network.
- **Daniel Pearson** is the Outreach and Communications Coordinator. Daniel joined the Project team in August 2017. Daniel is the Group Advisor for Councils 4 and 5 of the New Jersey Statewide Self-



Advocacy Network. Daniel coordinates workshops and events for self-advocates and Direct Support Professionals throughout the Southern New Jersey region.

- **Frankie Bayak** joined NJSAP as a Project Assistant in March 2017. She manages the Project's Facebook account and website, assists in preparations for the annual Fall Conference and Spring Luncheon, designs graphics for promoting the program and events, and provides general office support for the team.

Are you a self-advocate or do you know a self-advocate interested in learning more about the Project? We are here to help you and we encourage you to reach out for additional information and resources. **Contact Ashley** at Aritchey@arcnj.org and get connected today!



Self-Advocates Learn About the Process of Voting

In advance of Election Day, Self-Advocates want to make sure they're prepared when they head to the polls. That is why the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project's Council 2 invited representatives from the Union County Board of Elections to their recent meeting in order to learn more about the voting process. Those in attendance received hands-on experience with an accessible voting booth. This practice session will definitely come in handy on Election Day!

Self-Advocacy Network to Host 34th Annual Conference

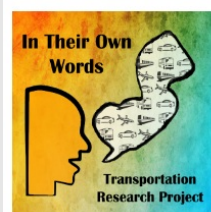
Self-Advocates from across the State will attend the 34th Annual NJ Self-Advocacy Network Conference at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Somerset on Saturday, September 16. This year's theme will be "United in Self-Advocacy" and the event will include a number of workshops on everything from transportation and healthy adult relationships, to legislative affairs and techniques for stress management.

[Click here](#) to download the registration form or email Frankie Bayak at FBayak@ArcNJ.org for additional information or questions.



"In Their Own Words" Podcast Goes Live!

For close to a year, the NJ Self-Advocacy Project has been interviewing people with I/DD, asking them how transportation in NJ affects their lives. The Transportation Research Project focused on the significant impact transportation - or lack of - has on the lives of people with I/DD. With more than 120 interviews posted, and more to come, the message is very clear that NJ's limited public transportation system is an enormous barrier to people with I/DD living included lives in the community. The interviews and resulting podcast, titled "In Their Own Words" is supported by a grant from the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities.



"There's no reason why an individual with a disability has to limit their life to things that are offered in a given county...it's ridiculous to limit [them]."

Read and hear the interviews at www.InTheirOwnWords.info. For more information about the project, call [732.749.8514](tel:732.749.8514).

Check Out These Upcoming Webinars

Webinar: Lunch & Learn: IEP Basics

[Tuesday, September 12 at 12 pm](#)

Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute as they talk about the IEP process, what to look for, and how to get started.



Webinar: The Journey to Community Housing with Supports

[Wednesday, September 13 at 6 pm](#)

Hosted by The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute and presented by Deb Werhlen from the Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey, this webinar will help attendees gain insight on how to utilize resources available to them from multiple sources to fund housing and supportive services.

Webinar: The Benefits of an Inclusive Education

[Tuesday, September 19 at 12 pm](#)

Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute as they discuss the benefits of an inclusive education and how you can make a difference.

Webinar: Understanding Supplemental Income Reporting Responsibilities

[Tuesday, September 26 at 12 pm](#)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility is determined on a month by month basis. If you or your loved ones receive benefits from Social Security, you have a legal obligation to report changes, which could affect eligibility for SSI benefits and Medicaid. Hosted by The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute and presented by David Vinokurov, District Manager for the New Jersey Social Security Administration Office in Trenton, attendees will learn how to report changes for your SSI benefits and avoiding SSI overpayments and underpayments.



**A Message from The Arc US:
Hurricane Harvey Update**

"The catastrophic flooding inundating Texas and surrounding areas has had a devastating impact on the children, adults and families our chapters serve, as well as our staff and volunteers. Through your support, we will be able to help chapters of The Arc in Texas and if needed any impacted chapters in Louisiana. Your gift will ensure that we will be able to continue to provide supports and services for individuals with disabilities and their families during this trying time. Help those affected by the hurricane today: <http://bit.ly/2gnsUMo>"

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

