



## Peter Berns, The Arc US CEO, Visits The Arc of NJ

The Arc of New Jersey was honored to welcome Peter Berns, Chief Executive Officer at The Arc US, to our Chapter last month to meet with Program Directors and our summer interns. It was a great opportunity to highlight the wonderful work happening in New Jersey and to learn more about the incredible initiatives Peter is leading the way on in Washington, DC. We appreciated Peter taking time out of his busy schedule to visit New Jersey and for engaging with our team members!



## The Arc Mercer Celebrates Liberian Independence Day



The Arc of Mercer County hosted a Liberian Independence Day Celebration on July 26, at their headquarters in Ewing. The event was an important recognition of the many Direct Support Professionals working at The Arc of Mercer with Liberian heritage. The event included a flag raising ceremony and a Liberian lunch. Representatives for Governor Murphy, US Senator Bob Menendez, and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman were on-hand to provide well-wishes and congratulations in honor of Liberia's 175th Independence Day.

## The Arc of NJ's Exec Director Honored at Golf Event



The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto was honored at The Arc of Monmouth's Golf Classic last month for his stalwart advocacy on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The event took place on July 25, at the Jumping Brook Country Club. All proceeds will go toward assisting individuals with IDD supported by The Arc of Monmouth County. ***Pictured from left to right: The Arc of Monmouth's Board President Lauren Zalepka and her daughter Dani Zalepka, Tom Baffuto, and The Arc of Monmouth's Executive Director Bob Angel.***

# Governor Declares July Disability Pride Month



Last month, Governor Phil Murphy declared July 2022 to be Disability Pride Month. The Proclamation states: "Disability Pride encourages individuals to join together in an effort to gain greater public understanding that having a disability is only one part of the many attributes of an individual and does not diminish an individual or lessen what an individual is capable of accomplishing." We thank the Governor for this Proclamation which recognizes those with disabilities living across New Jersey. To read the full document, click the image. Additionally, July 26, was the 32nd anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Learn more about this occasion, and the importance of the ADA, from the [New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project](#).

## Chapter Spotlight: Colleen Dennis, Hunterdon

Colleen Dennis began her tenure as the Executive Director of The Arc of Hunterdon County last month. With that in mind, we want to take this opportunity to congratulate her on the new role and learn more about her future plans for the Chapter.

1. **Tell us a little bit about your background and how you're using your past experiences in your new role.**

I have been with The Arc of Hunterdon for over 32 years, the agency only had 4 group homes, 3-day programs and a recreation program when I started. It has been an amazing journey to be part of the growth since I started. I had worked a second job previously at a Developmental Center and was working in



the for-profit world when I decided to change fields. When I met the individuals we serve, it was like coming home to family and I love how our family has grown over the years! Everything this agency does centers around "how best it will impact those we serve" and that is the motto I will continue to carry forward. [To continue reading, click here.](#)

## Local Chapter Happenings in the Month of July

Congratulations to all the honorees at The Arc of Monmouth's Annual Arc Awards ceremony which took place at the Middletown Arts Center last month. Pictured from left to right is The Arc of Monmouth's Executive Director Bob Angel, The Arc of Monmouth's Board President Lauren Zalepka and The Arc of NJ's Executive Director Tom Baffuto.



Congratulations to The Arc of Warren County on their July 16, Tri Mountain Lake Sprint Triathlon. The event included a ¼ mile swim, a 15-mile bike ride and a three-mile run. Pictured from left to right: Tom Baffuto, The Arc of NJ's Executive Director, Dana Huber from Dash Multisports, Annamaria Lalevee from The Arc of Warren County, John Whitehead, CEO of The Arc of Warren County, and Josh Huber from Dash Multisports.

## The Arc of NJ Thanks 2022 Summer Interns

**Pictured Top:** The Arc of New Jersey hosted 3 interprofessional graduate students from June 20, to August 5, from Rutgers University. They are Dayna Shin, a DDM candidate, Christina Fernandez, an MD candidate, and Sreyashi Ghosh, an MPH candidate. The EASI program connects the students with a community organization with the goal of developing a project to address social determinants of health. The students are developing a new portal for The Arc of NJ Family Institute that will guide families through the access and navigation for services for their loved one with IDD. **The Arc Information Center** should be live in the early fall.



**Pictured Center:** Dina Zayas is a MSW candidate from Boise State University, wrapping up her field placement with The Arc of NJ in early August. Dina is currently a middle school teacher in Elizabeth and is pursuing her MSW so as to become a school social worker. She has been assisting The Arc of NJ Family Institute with I&R and has been researching data on individuals with IDD and trends for future services and supports.



**Pictured Bottom:** Jake Papa is a rising junior Political Science Major at Rutgers University who assisted The Arc of New Jersey with research projects and policy work throughout the summer. Jake will complete his internship with us in the coming weeks. We are grateful for all his help and

we wish him the best of luck as he pursues his degree.



## Save the Date for the 38th Annual Self Advocacy Network Fall Conference

Join us for the 38th Annual  
New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network  
Fall Conference

**Save the Date**

Oct. 01, 2022

The 38th Annual NJSAN Fall Conference will take place on Saturday, Oct. 1, 2022.

The conference will be a free, virtual event on Zoom.

*'We'd love to have your input!'*

Fill out our survey or contact us:  
NJSAP@ArcNJ.org  
732.749.8514  
www.njselfadvocacyproject.org

The New Jersey Self Advocacy Network will host a virtual Fall Conference on Saturday, October 1, 2022. The event will take place via Zoom and is free to attend. [Registration will open in the late summer.](#)

## Tell Congress: Support the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act NOW!

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The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program provides critical support for millions of people with disabilities and their families to be able to afford necessities like food and rent. But it has many rules that make it hard for people to save money and get out of poverty. SSI has an asset limit that has not been updated since 1989. Assets include money in bank accounts, property, and savings. Right now, people who get SSI can only have \$2,000 in assets. Married couples can only have \$3,000.

These asset limits mean that people cannot save money and force people with disabilities into poverty.

**TAKE ACTION:** Urge your U.S. Senators to support people with disabilities and their families by cosponsoring the bipartisan SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act ([S.4102](#)) which would raise these asset limits.

Send an email to your officials with one click!

Title

Full Name

Address

City  (City and state not required)

Phone

Email

I am a member of The Arc and your constituents. Please support the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act (S.4102).

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## Board of Directors Approves New, 3-Year Strategic Plan for The Arc of NJ

In January 2022, The Arc of NJ began the process of developing a new Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2023 through 2025. A Strategic Plan ad hoc Committee was formed and a planning and development process took place which included 2 surveys and a virtual planning session. The final draft of the Plan was approved by The Arc of NJ Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting on April 7, and will be the blueprint for the activities of the organization for the next 3 years. Click the image to view the Plan.



## ALICE in Focus: People with Disabilities

On July 26, the United Way of Northern NJ released the ALICE Disability Data Dashboard which examines the data around people with disabilities who are "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed" or ALICE. The goal of the



project is to drive innovation, research and action around ALICE households. A New Jersey Leadership Committee was established, of which The Arc of NJ was a member, to provide input and assist with the data dissemination. [Click here](#) to see the New Jersey ALICE data for people with disabilities.

## Upcoming Virtual Events!

Click below to register for one of our many upcoming virtual events/webinars. And be sure to check out our [calendar](#) for other future events.



### Stay Healthy at Home - a webinar series hosted by the NJ Self-Advocacy Project - every Tuesday at 2 PM on GoToWebinar

The webinar series covers a variety of topics related to advocacy, life skills, employment, and civic engagement. Sessions are designed to be accessible to self-advocates, parents, and support staff. Live viewers can share comments, ask questions, and access resources. Live transcription is available.

- August 2: [\\*NEW\\* Team Building For Your Group](#)
- August 9: [REPLAY: Workplace Accommodations for Intellectual Disabilities](#)
- August 16: [REPLAY: Model Employee Perfect Your Personal & Professional Look](#)
- August 23: [REPLAY: The Picture Perfect Filter: Using Facebook & LinkedIn to Find Work](#)
- August 30: [REPLAY: Best Practice or Best Friend? The Value of Professional Boundaries](#)

### Healthy Lifestyles Project LIVE! - every Wednesday at 11 AM on Zoom

This interactive series of events is hosted by the NJ Self-Advocacy Project and focuses on activities to promote health and wellness education for students and adults with I/DD. Live viewers will be able to share comments, ask questions, and participate in activities led by professionals *in real time*.

- August 3: [Food for Thought: Interactive Recipe](#)
- August 10: [Music to My Ears: A Collaborative Song-Writing Session](#)
- August 17: [Art Therapy Session](#)
- August 24: [Music Together with Blue Light](#)
- August 31: [Art Workshop](#)

We also have Fitness Fridays at 1 PM: [Click here to register](#).

## A Message from The Arc of New Jersey

# Thank You

Thank you to all our generous donors who, over the past number of months, have made donations to support us. These critical funds will help us in our efforts to assist individuals with I/DD and their families, as well as our local county chapters, through the COVID19 crisis. To put your donation to work for individuals with I/DD and their families, [click here](#). If you have

questions or need assistance, our staff is here to help. [Click here](#) to access information about our Programs.

## Use Your Amazon App to Support The Arc of New Jersey

If you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support The Arc of New Jersey, Inc. in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.
2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
3. Follow the in-App instructions to complete the process.

If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon shopping App, update your App. Click [here](#) for instructions.



DONATE NOW!

STAY CONNECTED



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