



GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

The Arc Testifies at FY19 Budget Hearings

The Arc of New Jersey spent the month of March advocating to increase wages for the Direct Support Professional workforce in the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget. In our continued role as Chair of the Coalition for a DSP Living Wage, The Arc of New Jersey testified before the Senate and Assembly Budget Committees and urged legislators to add an appropriation to address this very critical issue. Our goal this year is to raise the wage by \$1.25 an hour. Executive Director Tom Baffuto was joined in the Assembly by Erika Fortune, (pictured right), a DSP from The Arc of Camden who told legislators how much she loves the work that she does, but how difficult it is to earn such a low wage. In the Senate, Tom was joined by Rene Leyva, a DSP from The Arc of Hudson who also explained how much he enjoys helping people with I/DD but that his wage of less than \$11 an hour makes it hard for him to pay his bills. To continue reading, [click here](#).



The Arc of NJ Hosts New DHS Commissioner at Annual Meeting



photos.

Families, self-advocates and representatives from the local county Chapters of The Arc had the opportunity to meet and speak with Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson at The Arc of New Jersey's Annual Meeting held Thursday, April 5. As the evening's honored guest, the Commissioner updated attendees about her work at the Department and took questions on a number of topics currently impacting people with I/DD and their families. Pictured from left to right: The Arc of NJ's Second Vice President Karen Murphy, President Joanne Bergin, DHS Commissioner Johnson, First Vice President Kevin Sturges, and Executive Director Tom Baffuto. The Annual Meeting was also an opportunity to look back at our organization's achievements from this past year. Please check out our [2018 Annual Report](#) for additional details and

Self-Advocates Celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month at State House



On March 5, 2018, 28 advocates and 20 Direct Support Professionals attended the annual Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month outreach event at the State House in Trenton. Legislators and Department of Human Services Commissioner Carole Johnson visited the display to meet with advocates and to discuss current New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network initiatives. Members of the NJSSAN received a proclamation from Commissioner Johnson on behalf of Governor Murphy and they were presented with a ceremonial joint resolution from Assemblywoman Jasey. To view photos from the event, [click here](#).

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](#).



SCARC Bestows Awards at Honors Dinner



Congratulations to SCARC on their successful Foundation Honors Gala Dinner which was held March 22, at Perona Farms in Andover Township. The event, which included live entertainment and was emceed by Heather Childers, co-host of "Fox & Friends First," was a wonderful recognition of community members and supporters of people with I/DD. Pictured from left to right, State Senator Steven Oroho, The Arc of New Jersey's Executive Director Tom Baffuto, "Fox & Friends First" Heather Childers, SCARC Board of Trustees Chairperson Andy Sharick and SCARC CEO Richard Lecher.

Criminal Justice Advocacy Program Conducts Training

Jessica Oppenheim, Director, Criminal Justice Advocacy Program, The Arc of NJ, is pictured right with Middlesex County Prosecutor Andrew Carey and the members of the Middlesex County Crisis Intervention Team Training Committee for the 40 Hour Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training. The

CIT Training was conducted at the Middlesex County Training Center on March 5 - 9. To learn more about our Criminal Justice Advocacy Program, visit their web site by [clicking here](#).



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 Forrestral 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.

- To register for this event, [click here](#).
- To download a copy of the Save the Date, [click here](#).
- To view the conference brochure, [click here](#).



Project SEARCH Seeks Students for 2018-19 School Year

Attention all families with 18-21 year old children with disabilities in the Greater Union County, New Jersey area: The Project SEARCH employment skills training program at Overlook Medical Center is now recruiting students for the 2018-19 school year.

Please [click here](#) to visit the Project SEARCH web site or [here](#) to download the information sheet which includes an overview of the program, the application process and relevant dates and deadlines.



Program Overview

Union County's
Project SEARCH®

Transferring Students with Disabilities to Work
Project SEARCH is a one-year, business-led, unpaid internship program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school that takes place entirely at a host business site. It provides students who want to work a chance to explore careers and develop transferable job skills. The combination of instruction and immersion in the workplace prepares young adults with disabilities to make successful transitions from school to productive adult life.

The Goal:
Independent adults working in a competitive environment

Internship Overview
Through the course of an academic year, Project SEARCH students participate in employment related instruction and rotate through two to three internships that are individually crafted to capitalize on each student's individual interests, and vocational goals and potential. Each rotation lasts about 10-12 weeks. Interns work closely with an on-site team, including an instructor, job coach and job developer. The team assists the intern until the task assigned can be performed independently. Agencies are available throughout the program year to provide vocational counseling and guidance. The on-site team, student, family, vocational rehabilitation counselor, and school representatives meet regularly to discuss issues, progress, and career goals.

Basic Eligibility Criteria

- 18-21 years old
- In last year of high school
- All academic requirements for graduation met
- Agree to accept diploma at successful completion of program
- Basic communication skills (verbal or supported by technology)
- Appropriate social, grooming, and hygiene skills
- Able to pass drug screening and background check
- Updated immunizations
- Ability to access and willingness to use independent transportation options
- Have independent living skills and lunch routine
- Meet eligibility requirements for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)
- Maintain appropriate behavior in the workplace
- Ability to take direction and change behavior if necessary
- Desire to be competitively employed

Check Out These Upcoming Webinars & Events

Webinar: Understanding the Sibling Experience Tuesday, April 10 at 12 pm

The relationship between siblings plays a very important role in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). As they care for their brother or sister with I/DD they are often overlooked as needing support themselves. Supporting siblings may help ease anxiety and make them feel comfortable in their role as a caregiver. Join The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute as we discuss the many joys and concerns of being a sibling of someone with an intellectual and developmental disability.



Webinar: Understanding Internet Safety for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Tuesday, April 17 at 12 pm

The Internet has dramatically changed the way we interact with the world. It has become a global means of communication in our everyday life. However the internet can also put people at risk for cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate material, online predators and the possibility of revealing too much personal

information. Hosted by The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute and presented by Ashley Ritchey, Director of the New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project, attendees will learn about internet safety and how to best support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities on the internet.

Trauma Informed Care: Understanding Sources of and Treatment for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

[Thursday, April 26 at 1 pm](#)

People with I/DD may experience trauma at any time in their life, as a single event or over many years. Mistakes can be made when we don't fully understand how trauma may be playing a large part in someone's life decisions and choices. Phillip Caruso, LPC, Clinical Supervisor, Northern Region, Trinitas Regional Medical Center, Crisis Assessment Response and Enhanced Services (CARES), will discuss what trauma is, how to understand it and how to effectively address the needs of a person with I/DD who has experienced trauma in their life.

Free IEP Reviews with the Attorneys of Hinkle, Fingles, Prior & Fischer

[April 12 at The Arc Gloucester and April 19 at The Arc Somerset](#)

Navigating through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process can seem overwhelming, but that's where The Arc of New Jersey Family Institute can help. We are offering 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](tel:609-896-4200) to reserve your time slot.

Parent Forum and Opportunity Expo

[Saturday, April 21 from 8 am to 1 pm](#)

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 one of three scheduled 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.

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!](#)



