



THE ADVOCATE



In the fifth issue of The Advocate, The Arc of Indiana County would like to welcome parents, teachers, school administrators, students, community members, Self-advocates, and the agency/organization service providers of Indiana and Armstrong County communities and beyond.

Volume 3, Issue 1

The Arc of Indiana County's mission... We strive to include individuals of all ages with intellectual/developmental delays and other disabilities into every aspect of our community and beyond. Achieving this by identifying barriers, building partnerships, and realizing positive solutions.

The Bi-Annual Newsletter
from The Arc of Indiana
County Fall 2022

Included in this issue:

- Smile from the Exe. Dir.
- Intern Introductions
- Summer and Fall Recap
- Health & Wellness
- Programs/Meetings
- Educational Advocacy
- 50th Anniversary 1973-2023
- Bark for The Arc
- Future Events
- Ability Spotlight
- Special Olympics
- Resources





A SMILE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I have learned that smiles come from many different places, every day, and, for me, I welcome every opportunity to smile and grin and add to my laugh lines! 😊

I welcome you to another fall season here at The Arc! I am very excited about the year to come and thrilled about all we have accomplished in 2021-2022! For those who have not met me yet, I am Michelle Jordan the Executive Director of the Arc of Indiana County and the Program Manager for Special Olympics Three Rivers Region 9: Armstrong Indiana Counties Program.

To recap our past year, the Arc developed new partnerships and created new programs/events and new community collaborations. We increased opportunities for community health and wellness, and community outreach through cost-free programming, clinics, and classes. We have increased our capacity to offer more educational advocacy for parents and students navigating the special education process. The Arc increased the ability to support and offer opportunities and training to parents empowering them in becoming their own self-advocates.

The Arc welcomed three new self-advocates to our Board of Directors in Oct. Their ideas and life experiences are so important to ensure that the Arc is inclusive and self-advocate driven, guiding The Arc to be in line with our mission, to include all individuals of all ages into every aspect of our community. Welcome, Jared Vought, Cecelia Mullen, and Ryan Johnson!



The Arc is grateful for our new corporate sponsorship with First Commonwealth Bank. The sponsorship with FCB assists with providing cost-free training and educational advocacy supporting the Indiana Community and beyond. We especially want to thank Rose Strittmatter for her collaboration and assistance. Pictured with Roxie Johnston, Arc Board President,



Jennifer Quilliam, Past Board President, and Operations Manager 1 ABP, and Rose Strittmatter Corporate and Board Services Manager at FCB.

January 16, 2023, at 6:00 pm the Arc will conduct our bi-annual General Membership Hybrid Board meeting. All members are welcome to come and meet our current

Meeting

board members and Arc employees. This meeting will address new officers and voting on the by-law amendments. The Zoom link invite and meeting documents will go out one week before the meeting.

The Arc office is now an animal-friendly space and we are so lucky that we come to work and get our daily dose of fur therapy with our office canine Blicky. She truly lightens and brightens our world! If you stop in and are hesitant around animals, please let us know, she is very calm and sweet, but we also understand the need to consider others' hesitancy, and personal space when it comes to animals.



Did you know that 2023 marks 50 years the Arc of Indiana County has provided advocacy, community awareness, education, and outreach to the Indiana community and beyond! We are gearing up to celebrate events that are self-advocate and parent-driven in 2023. Our slogan is "Honoring our past, inspiring our future, advocating for individuals with disabilities in our community and beyond" Check out the flyer in this newsletter of the upcoming events. I invite you to join us to celebrate "abilities, self-advocate/parent-driven advocacy, and community total inclusion awareness"

The Arc is a team, we work as a team, support as a team, and thrive because we are a team. With all the changes, updates, growth, and transformations over the last 2 ½ years, the Arc will continue to flex, evaluate, expand and strive to meet the needs of the disability community and their families, and doing so with a SMILE! My wish for all for the coming year is to find your joy, live your joy and be joyful, trust me it's contagious!



2022 Interns

Interns: Fall Intern: Heather Osterhout



"Hi, my name is Heather Osterhout. I graduated from Tyrone Area High School in 2019. I will be graduating from IUP in December with a bachelor's degree in Disability Services and a minor in Educational Psychology. When I was applying for internships, I found the Arc of Indiana County and I was hoping that they would have space for me as an intern. The Arc does so many amazing things for people in the area and even outside the area. This might even sometimes include the state of Indiana. The services that the Arc provides

are free and mean the world to families. It can be life-changing to receive the services that are best going to support you in your journey to success. The Arc of Indiana County is a great non-profit organization, the staff is super friendly and happy. As soon as I started, I felt so welcomed and there was no need to be nervous. The environment here makes you want to come to work and surround yourself with the people here."

Spring Intern: Alexis Jardine

We are welcoming Alexis as the Spring of 2023 Intern here at the Arc. "I'm Alexis, I'm from Mount Pocono, PA I attended High School at the Pocono Mountain West High School and graduated in 2018. I am a Disability Services Major and will be graduating in the Spring of 2023. I plan on attending IUP's Student Affairs in Higher Education Graduate Program in the Fall of 2023. I enjoy singing, dancing, listening, and creating music. I want to intern at the Arc of Indiana County because I want to help individuals with disabilities realize their potential for living, learning, working, and fully participating in the community. I believe that interning at the Arc of Indiana County will help me learn and develop my skills to achieve this goal in the future."



Summer and Fall Recap

During the Summer and Fall months, the Arc hosted several cost-free activities, trainings, and programs, starting with the Arc Kickball Classic Fundraiser. This event was held at Getty Heights Park, Saturday, June 25th, 2022. We want to thank White Township and Levity Brewing Company for a great Kickball Classic after-party hangout, continuing the beautiful day!



The “Act Up” theater workshops hosted by Eve Urban, a teacher with The Center for Applied Drama and Autism, were a huge success. The workshop/ improv opened up a world of opportunities for individuals to let loose and let their personalities shine! The Arc looks to offer the next workshops again in the winter starting with a Saturday in

January and the summer months to come. Check back on our website for future events.

The fifth Spirit of food class was held in July with 15 participants at the Chevy Chase Community Center, where the participants learned cooking basics using new recipes, guided cooking demonstrations, and learning all about food safety. The Arc is thankful to Sandy Toy for



graciously giving her time and talents to teach the cooking class.



The Arc continued hosting the Golden Onsite Dental clinics in August and September. Individuals with disabilities are at high risk of experiencing health disparities, especially when it comes to dental health. The summer/fall clinics experienced a dramatic increase in patients. The need is great in our community and The Arc will resume clinics starting again in the spring on April 18, 2023, from 11-3. To register a spot please



text "Arc" at 724-858-9295. Spots fill up quickly. All insurances are accepted any age and ability. (See flyer)

The Arc held a Voter's Clinic in September to ensure individuals with disabilities who are interested in voting and would like some assistance would have an accessible place to register and learn about what the voting process is like. Every vote counts and the Arc will continue to ensure no voice is left behind.

This was the first year also for Bark for the Arc. We had a run/walk race, a superlative contest for pets, a silent art auction, a basket raffle, and 50/50 tickets. There were pet vendors and area rescues on hand. It was a beautiful day and an event that we can't wait to do again. Planning has already started. Let us know if you are interested in being a part of the planning committee. Contact Becca Boston at bboston@arcindiana.org for more information.



Bark for the Arc

Supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities



The Parents Empowerment Colloquium (PEC) 2022 offered education and resources for parents and providers in the Armstrong and Indiana Counties to learn more about services and agencies in our area and beyond, giving guidance on self-advocacy for students with disabilities and their parents. Next year the Arc is planning on hosting the PEC 2023 at the Arc after-school hours, with childcare provided. Limited capacity for the next PEC in-person, but will also be offered virtually.

Check out our office updates! We would like to thank Sheesley Electric, USA Flooring, Shanks Plumbing, Caitlyn Boston, Mikey Boston, and Becca Boston for all their assistance.



Lobby



Handicap Bathroom



Conference Room



Playroom



We bring the dental office to you!

Our Public Health Team will Provide:

- Exam
- Cleaning
- Fluoride Varnish
- Treatment options if needed, including with a local dental provider
- Parent education and hands-on learning for families

The Arc is partnering with Golden Onsite Dental to provide individuals with disabilities a sensory-safe location to receive dental health check-ups. All insurances are welcome!

Upcoming dates:

April 20, 2023, 11 AM – 3 PM

June 22, 2023, 11 AM – 3 PM

FOR AN APPOINTMENT– Please Text: Arc to 724-858-9295

This is to reserve your spot to be seen. Please know that spots fill up quickly

and someone will be with you to schedule an appointment time.

The clinic will be held at The Arc of Indiana County (120 N. 5th Street Indiana, Pa)



Health Disparities Initiative Updates and COVID-19 Resources

The Armstrong and Indiana Counties Regional Workgroup continues to meet quarterly to address barriers and for this year we are focusing on barrier solutions. The Arc of PA released [the Barriers Report](#) this summer which summarizes the data collected this past year identifying barriers and disparities experienced during the pandemic by individuals with disabilities. We would like to thank all the individuals, service providers, and caregivers who participated in the regional listening tours throughout last year and this fall. The listening tours ensure individual stories and experiences are shared, heard, and documented to report back to the State Task Force, Department of Health, and the CDC.



**TEST KITS ARE NOW
IN!**

Come by the office to
pick one up

Office hours are 8:30 AM
to 4:00 PM Monday -
Friday

Health Disparities and COVID-19
Resources:

- www.arcindiana.org
- www.thearcpa.org
- www.cdc.gov
- www.health.pa.gov



A **BIG THANK YOU** to the
Center for Independent
Living of South Center PA
and the Department of
Health for the COVID test
kits!

Arc Meetings and Programs

The Local Task Force (LTF): On the Right to Education in Armstrong and Indiana Counties is an advisory group made up of consumers, advocates, and providers of special education. Consumers, both students with disabilities and parents/caregivers have the majority membership on the LTF.

Provider members represent area school districts, career, and technical centers, ARIN IU 28, and the Armstrong-Indiana Behavioral and Developmental Health Program. Advocate members represent agencies that serve people with disabilities.

LTF and PWP now have conjoined meetings and they are on the fourth Monday of the month. The meetings usually happen five times a school year. Next meeting Nov. 29th, 6:30 pm at The Arc of Indiana County.

www.arcindiana.org

www.iu28.org

[Zoom link for combined LTF and PWP](#)

Parents with Purpose (PWP): Monthly speakers and presentations addressing advocacy, secondary transition, and the special education process.

This group is a workgroup for parents, educators, and agency/organization professionals, to come together to address advocacy, transition, and special educational needs, concerns, interests, and all about the process. This group meets every fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 PM hybrid at the Arc of Indiana County. Next meeting is Nov. 29 at 6:30 pm. The Arc offers childcare with verified volunteers and Sheetz gas cards to assist with travel expenses. Go to the Arc website for meeting times and dates.

www.arcindiana.org

[Zoom link for combined LTF and PWP](#)



Both meetings are now combined. The next meeting is scheduled for **11/29/22 at 6:30 pm. This is due to the holiday this month.**

Next meetings—Nov.29th, Off Dec, Jan. 30th, Feb. 27th, Mar. 27th, Apr. 25th, May 29th, Off Jun, Jul, and Aug.

All Program meetings are at The Arc of Indiana County. 120 N 5th St. Suite 2 Indiana PA 15701

Indiana Voices for Equality (IVE):

Mission Statement: To advance the equal treatment of Black and Brown individuals through ethnicity awareness, education, and advocacy, using an open, and safe community discussion platform. To build bridges by listening, connecting, educating, and understanding inequality and to bring about positive change in every aspect of the Indiana community and beyond.

Vision Statement: Indiana Voices for Equality (IVE) serves as a safe place to engage in difficult conversations, where community members can share their voices on topics like discrimination, public policy, bias, inequality, and community issues. IVE will collaborate on equal rights initiatives and participate in community growth and inequality awareness.

IVE meetings have covered topics related to the local school district's response to racial discrimination and bias in general, positive police presence in our community, learning more about Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and community inclusion with our black and brown IUP student body. Anybody is welcome to join to be a part of this forum to ensure the equity conversation continues.

These meetings are quarterly, on the first Thursday of the month at 10 AM hybrid. Next meeting is on Jan. 5, 2023. Cohosts: Michelle Jordan mjordan@arcindiana.org Marty Dombrowski mdombrowski@cilscca.org

[Zoom Link for IVE meeting](#)

Community Disability Awareness Workshop (CDAW):

Why CDAW? This workgroup guides, introduces and educates individuals, professionals, and community members about the disability population and addresses community concerns, and develops positive solutions while building partnerships ensuring the inclusion of these amazing individuals empowering them to live their best lives!

CDAW meetings are every first Monday of each month at The Arc of Indiana County at 8:30 AM, hybrid.

At these meetings we have discussed the processes of Smart 911, Child Find, and how to go about getting signage in your community for your special needs child.

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Employment Coalition:

Through the Employment First Act, Act 36 of 2018, the Office of Governor Tom Wolf and the Governor's Cabinet for People with Disabilities has created the initial three-year plan that outlines the commonwealth's policy recommendations to implement the Employment First Act to improve employment outcomes for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Next Meeting Dec. 12 at 10am at the Arc.

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Educational Advocacy Program (EAP): Do you need an Advocate?

An Educational Advocate guides parents through the special education process. This includes how to prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, how to file a due process complaint, and find an attorney for legal representation.

The goal is to ensure that the school adheres to a child's IEP and makes a good-faith effort to help the student achieve his or her defined goals. The Arc of Indiana County serves as the parents leading resource for information and support for both Armstrong and Indiana Counties. Call for more information on the Educational Advocacy Program cost-free services today at (724) 349-8230



EAP EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Supporting parents, students, educators, community



Parent Quotes:

"My advocate has helped me navigate the IEP process for my special needs child. She helped me receive a communication device to help my child communicate with their teachers and peers. My advocate is very understanding and respectful. She went above and beyond to help me and my family. All of my questions were answered. The Parents with Purpose meetings were helpful to learn what's going on in the community regarding advocacy. I love my advocate!"-E.B. 2021

"The Arc helped guide me in so many ways. I wasn't afraid to ask questions anymore or say no, or ask for another meeting to then go over my concerns. I now know what questions to ask and get the right answers. I had difficulty understanding some of the school Jargon and my advocate explained things to me so I could understand. My advocate walked me through the IEP and explained it to me. It was wonderful to have a second pair of eyes" K.F. 2022





March 23rd, 2023,
is the Community
Partnership
Breakfast

Invites start
going out in
January

(\$20 a ticket)

Limit to 100
people



May 12th, 2023, is
the Gala


Tickets go on
sale in March
(\$75 a ticket)

Limit to 100
people

If you would like to become a member of the planning committee for the 50th Anniversary, please contact Becca Boston at bboston@arcindiana.org or Michelle Jordan at mjordan@arcindiana.org

The Arc of Indiana County is celebrating **50 years** of advocacy in the Indiana community and beyond! We are excited to host several events and invite the community to join us! Look for invitations for the Community Partners Breakfast and the 50th Gala, both held at the Hilton Garden Inn.

The Arc is looking forward to celebrating with community members, self-advocates, parents, educators and local providers. We would like to thank everyone who made 50 years of advocacy possible. The Arc of Indiana County is truly fortunate to be a part of an amazing, supportive and collaborative community.

Bark for the Arc
Supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities



Future Events



Bike and Trail Safety Training

Offering free bike helmets for up to 15 participants

Helmets are of different sizes. Participants will receive helmets based on size availability

Bike helmets are provided by the IUP Institute for Rural Health and Safety

Personal and Cyber Safety Training

How to protect yourself on the Internet

Personal safety tips

Confidentiality and protection



Family Fun Fest

March 25th, 2023, at the Indiana Mall, includes music, crafts, and educational activities

Hosted by The Children’s Advisory Commission annually

“Act Up” Theater Classes

Going to be offered in the Winter & Summer of 2023

Hosted by Eve Urban with The Center for Applied Drama and Autism

The first class is going to start in January

Check the Arc website for the calendar of events for exact dates and times. www.arcindiana.org





Our spotlight interview for the Fall of 2022 is with Ryan Johnson. Ryan is an athlete in Special Olympics, and he is a self-advocate board member here at The Arc. Ryan is involved in Miracle League, and he was also on the police kickball team during the Kickball Classic. You can spot Ryan running the Hoodlebug, riding his bike around town, stopping in at Sheetz to say hello, or at the Arc getting some good laughs in for the day.

Question: Why did you want to become a self-advocate?

Answer: I want people to be treated fairly and make sure everyone's voices are heard

Question: What is the most important part of being a self-advocate?

Answer: Making sure everyone has a say and is being heard

Question: What qualities does a self-advocate need to have?

Answer: Willing to help others and be responsible

Question: How does being a self-advocate make you feel?

Answer: Happy, excited, and nervous. I enjoy being on the board. It's something I've never done before. It's new for me

**ARMSTRONG
INDIANA
COUNTY**

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
PENNSYLVANIA**





**Special
Olympics
Pennsylvania**

**Spring Sports- Athletics
(Track and Field)**

1 Training site: Armstrong
School District

Kittanning PA

Saturday March 18th @ 10 AM

Winter Sports- Bowling

Saturday @ 12:30 PM

Indiana Location- Mohawk
Lanes Indiana PA

Armstrong Location- Kings
Lanes Kittanning PA

Tuesday and Wednesday @
6:30 PM

[Bowling Sign Up Link Here](#)

Special Olympics **NEEDS**
volunteers and coaches for
sports for the athletes to
continue the program.

Reach out to Michelle
Jordan for more information
at [\(814\) 441-7981](tel:8144417981)

[Link to Volunteer Process
Here](#)

Snowshoeing

Blue Spruce Park

Lakeside Lodge

Starting December 4th

Sunday @ 3 PM

Dine & Dance

Location: Kittanning Township
Firehall

In April exact time and date
TBD

Tickets go on sale in late
February

Athlete admission is free

Email

smileincluded@hotmail.com

for more information or
contact Michelle Jordan

[Winter Sports Calendar link
here](#)



**Villanova November 3rd -
6th 2022 Recap**

[Link to Villanova University
Media room Article](#)



PHI SIGMA KAPPA

ALPHA SIGMA ALPHA
DEVELOPING
WOMEN OF POISE AND PURPOSE

**ARMSTRONG
INDIANA
COUNTY**

SPECIAL OLYMPICS
PENNSYLVANIA



Special Olympics
Pennsylvania



Winterfest 2023

When: February 25, 2023 4:30 PM – 7 PM

Where: IUP HUB Ohio Room

319 Pratt Drive Indiana, PA

Parking at Robert E. Cook honors college lot or next to CO-OP Center



Fun night with snacks, sports activities, a dance troop performance, DJ/Dance, door prizes, and inclusive activities open to students' campus-wide and individuals with disabilities to build community inclusion!

For more information to get involved contact Michelle Jordan at smileincluded@hotmail.com

Ian Perras xdmz@iup.edu or Courtney Chamberlain jcpz@iup.edu

Parental and Educator Resources

- www.aapd.org
- www.ahedd.org Social Security Benefits Counseling
- www.autisticadvocacy.org Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- www.casecec.org Council for Exceptional Children www.cec.sped.org
- www.centeronlinelearning.res.ku.edu Center on Online Learning and Students with Disabilities
- www.chp.edu Down Syndrome Center downsyndromecenter@chp.edu Western PA
- www.co.mifflin.pa.us "Preserve PA" PA's COVID-19 Crisis Counseling Program Helpline 24/7.
- www.disabilityrights.org Disability Rights: Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DPR) is an independent, statewide, non-profit corporation designated as the federally mandated protection and advocacy. Pittsburgh Office (412) 391-5225
- www.dli.pa.gov Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
- www.ed.gov/ocr Department of Education email COVID-19@ed.gov Helpline 1-800-412-3481
- www.eita-pa.org/families/ Family Resources available through the Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA)
- www.elc-pa.org Education Law Center Helpline (412) 258-2120 Western PA
- www.includemepa.org is a resource from The Arc of PA. Include me is a new model for inclusive education and gaining meaningful employment for Pennsylvania's students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc of PA and Include Me believe all individuals with a significant impact of developmental and intellectual disabilities deserve equal educational and competitive employment rights. Our mission is to build and strengthen the inclusive education capacity for all public-school students and discover meaningful employment opportunities meeting PA's employee and employer needs. Include Me strives to ensure all impacted students have equal access to all aspects of life and the community throughout their lifespan. This website has various resources and important information for parents and their families.
- www.myodp.org Community Practice for Supporting Families
- www.ncset.org National Center on Secondary Education and Transition
- www.ncil.org Additional Resources Online: American Association of People with Disabilities
- www.aapd.com National Council on Independent Living
- www.paautism.org
- www.paoralhealth.org PA Coalition for Oral Health
- www.papromiseforchildren.com PA's Promise for Children connect Helpline 1-800-692-7288

- pafamilynetwork@visionforequality.org PA Family Network 1-844-723-2645
- Parent to Parent of PA www.parenttoparent.org
- Parent Center Hub www.parentcenterhub.org
- www.pattan.net PA Training and Technical Assistance Network has Publication Updates on their website
- <https://techowlpa.org> Technology for Our Whole Lives (TechOWL)
- www.wrightslaw.com Wrights law Special Education Advocacy
- McAndrews Law Office YouTube Videos. Topics: Getting Prepared for IEP Meetings

Local Resources:

- www.aibhdp.org Our vision: To develop a person-centered, community-oriented behavioral and developmental system that supports recovery and resiliency through hope, experience, advocacy, and education while ensuring dignity and respect to individuals.
- www.cilscpa.org Center for Independent Living of South-Central PA: Welcome to the Center for Independent Living of South-Central PA. The mission of CILSCPA is to Empower People with Disabilities to LIVE Independently. Begin your journey of self-discovery, personal fulfillment, and INDEPENDENCE at the Center of Independent Living. CILSCPA serves People with Disabilities; anyone, of any age, and any disability in Blair, Bedford, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Indiana Counties. The mission of the Center for Independent Living is to empower people with disabilities to live independently. This CIL strives through advocacy and collective action to remove physical and attitudinal barriers that prevent People with Disabilities (PWD) from exercising their rights, achieving personal independence, and participating fully in the life of the community. Programs, services, and pieces of training provided by this CIL teach consumers to take responsibility for their own abilities to live independently.
- cwinters@peerstarllc.com Peer Star LLC offers Community Support Programs CSP that include mental health consumers, family members, and professionals working together to help integrate natural support into the lives of those with mental illness. Armstrong County meets every 4th Thursday and Indiana County meetings every first Thursday via zoom. Contact Carol Winters at the email above to get the zoom information or call (814) 762-9875
- www.iu28.org The ARIN Intermediate Unit 28 Early Intervention (EI) Preschool Program provides a variety of programs and services for children from their third birthday until entry into school. Services for children during preschool years are provided at no cost to their families when the child is determined to meet eligibility requirements. Individual Education Programs (IEPs) are written to define the services that will be provided to those eligible children.
- www.iu28.org ARIN's Autistic Support Classrooms provide districts and families the opportunity to meet the complex needs of individual students within the community setting of the public school. Unique tools, strategies, and techniques are utilized to teach the students' academic and important social and behavioral skills. A highly individualized program is developed with a focus on the unique needs of each student.

Website: www.arcindiana.org

Facebook: The Arc of Indiana County

Email: info@arcindiana.org