



PRESS RELEASE

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RE: CollegeWorks Students Visit the Capital in Albany

Arc CollegeWorks - Inclusive Democracy in Action

On Wednesday, April 21st, five CollegeWorks students from the freshman and senior classes, along with their instructors, visited the State Capitol in Albany to participate in "Inclusive Democracy in Action" as representatives of The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, NYSARC. The group met with Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito and Senator Joseph Griffo to express concern over the State budget and to ask them for their continued support for programs and services provided by The Arc.

Mr. Ben Golden, Associate Executive Director for Governmental Affairs for NYSARC, Inc., joined the group as CollegeWorks met first with Senator Griffo off the floor of the Senate. The group spoke with him about CollegeWorks and had their picture taken with him. Senator Griffo then invited the students to come into the Senate. The Secretary of the Senate, Mr. Angelo Aponte, also greeted the group. Senator Griffo had the CollegeWorks students come up to the podium and posed for more pictures.

The students then went to the Assembly where they planned to speak to Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito off the floor, but were instead invited into the Assembly Room where the Speaker announced, "We welcome a group from the CollegeWorks program of The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter from Utica, NY". He then called each of them by name. Everyone in the Assembly applauded as the CollegeWorks group was seated. The group later took pictures with Assemblywoman Destito, who listened as they asked for her support for Arc programs and services.

Before leaving the Assembly Room, the students met Assemblyman Mr. Felix Ortiz, the new Chairman of the Mental Hygiene Committee, and explained to him about the CollegeWorks program. He told The Arc students how proud he was of them and thanked them for coming to Albany.

It was a wonderful experience. Everyone was very cordial to The Arc's CollegeWorks group as busy as they were. The CollegeWorks students expressed their gratitude and a real sense of pride. Several of the students said, "This was the best day of my life." They got on their cell phones as soon as they got in the van to call their families and friends to tell them about the visit.

The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, NYSARC is a non-profit human services agency which provides advocacy and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oneida and Lewis counties.