



Thanks to many great ideas from you, our staff, several steps have been taken and improvements made at The Arc.

Here are just some of what has been done over the past year:

- ✓ Quarterly site visits by executive staff, leadership and managers
- ✓ Residential pilots such as our Centralized Hiring Initiative
- ✓ Incentives offered for staff working weekend shifts
- ✓ Creation of an agency-wide inclusion committee to plan for a greater variety of community outings and activities for individuals
- ✓ Refresher courses offered on employee relations (i.e. stress, retaliation, fair treatment of others)
- ✓ Employee picnics/community softball tournament planned in July to recognize and thank our great staff and build morale.
- ✓ Input included in Core Values rolled out in 2012



Key to the success of any agency is feedback from the employees that provide the care and labor for it to function daily. As part of the Strategic Plan initiated in 2011 by Chief Executive Officer, Karen Korotzer, the Board of Directors and the executive/leadership teams, communication with staff at The Arc, Oneida-Lewis was emphasized through numerous focus groups.

Over the past year, in small focus groups of 10 and an all-staff day with over 100 employees in attendance, employees gathered to discuss topics including work shifts, staffing, communication, training, community outings, documentation, stress on the job, benefits and management. "At the all-staff day, organized for direct support professionals, we met off-site and discussed various topics. We broke into small groups with the task of brainstorming to gain ideas and work on solutions," said Frank Centola, director of residential services.

Focus group sessions will continue as a standard practice at The Arc and are both confidential and voluntary. Every idea is seriously discussed and analyzed. Ideas are implemented and they have made a positive difference for employees and people served by The Arc.

"We want everyone to have a voice that they know will be heard," said Karen. "It is integral to the success of our agency as we move forward in a changing political and financial climate that we work together to emphasize the positive and correct the negative. The common goal is providing services and supports that enrich lives."

To continue the stream of communication, The Arc will conduct an employee survey (see p.13) in the fall and focus groups are scheduled through the remainder of 2012. For more information about how you can become involved, please call 315.272.1532 or visit us online at [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org).

## UNUSUAL PACKAGES

Karen Korotzer, Chief Executive Officer



**Christopher enjoys having his picture taken with Karen during her recent visit to The Arc's Charles B. Wolken Summer Day Camp!**

Several years ago, during my break in college, I was offered a summer job as a teacher's aide for a summer-school program for children with behavioral challenges. It was one of the hottest summers on record, the school had no air conditioning, and I was assigned to work with 5- and 6- year-olds with serious behavioral needs.

I will tell you here, that I was in my early 20s and had no interest in working with children in my career. I thought this experience would be good to start getting human services experience, so I accepted.

I wanted to work with adults and was certain that I would have a lifelong career as a marriage counselor in private practice. I assumed this summer job was just that...a job. I thought it was just "a little something to get me through the summer with a little cash" until college started again.

I had no idea how wrong I was.

On the first day of this program, all staff had to be outside and welcome the children. As the buses pulled up and children ran off headed in all directions, the scene of excited children surrounded me. Teachers seemed to know exactly what to do and some even seemed to know many of the children. I began to feel that old familiar

feeling of the first-day of school jitters and wondered if I had made a terrible mistake accepting this job. Just then, a bus pulled up in front of me. The doors flew open and a little boy named Brenden jumped off, made a bee-line right for me, grabbed my hand, looked up at me with his big, beautiful blue eyes and said with absolute confidence, "You're going to be my friend this summer."

I thought to myself that he had no idea how wrong he was, after all, I was going to work hard helping adults with marriage problems, not befriend little children.

But, over the next few weeks, Brenden opened my eyes and heart to a completely new world. He taught me how to play again, how to have fun, and importantly, how to help our little friends who have more challenges in a single day than most of us do in a lifetime.

I remember one day, a little boy with autism in our class was having trouble. Brenden walked over to his friend, took his hand, and walked him back to circle time saying "You're okay, I'm here." It blew me away. I learned more in that moment about the "human" in human services than I would in any textbook.

In the end, Brenden was right. We did become great friends and saying goodbye to him was heart wrenching. I was so sad to see him get on the bus the last day and drive away. Unfortunately, I never did see him again but think of him often and hope he is having a wonderful life.

After that experience, I started working with persons of all ages with special needs, but my favorite group was children. I especially loved helping them connect with others.

Sometimes what you need is found in the most unusual packages. It's truly amazing how Brenden, a little boy of only five years, has impacted the lives of so many through what I have done in my career. I will always be grateful for what he did to help me find my bliss in a fulfilled career working with children and adults with special needs. I learned from him that we can always learn from others, no matter how they may come into our lives.

*Thanks, Brenden!*

*Karen Korotzer is the Chief Executive Officer at The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter. She can be reached at [kkorotzer@thearc.org](mailto:kkorotzer@thearc.org).*

### Legislative Contacts

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You may email story ideas to  
Aida Mariani at [amariani@thearc.org](mailto:amariani@thearc.org).  
Deadline for submissions is the first Friday in  
March, June, September, and December.

Past issues of newsletters are  
available on our website:  
[www.thearc.org/about/newsletter.php](http://www.thearc.org/about/newsletter.php)

## Anson Family Takes Part in Governor's Announcement on STANDARDS AND PRACTICES TO PROTECT PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES



Brett Anson visits with Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and other officials with his mother and father, Lisa and Patrick Anson (standing).

Each person who meets Brett Anson of Marcy can't help but fall in love with his personality and spirit - including New York State Governor Andrew M. Cuomo.

Brett, a 7 year old child served by The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, joined his parents, Lisa and Patrick, in Albany in May, where Governor Cuomo unveiled new legislation to establish the strongest standards and practices in the nation for protecting people with special needs and disabilities.

Governor Cuomo's legislation, which has now passed, will create a new Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, an initiative that will transform how the state protects over one million New Yorkers in state operated, certified or licensed facilities and programs.

"Governor Cuomo's legislation of the creation of the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs is a positive step to ensure that persons with special needs are provided greater protection from abuse and neglect," said Karen Korotzer, chief executive officer of The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter. "We are thrilled that the Governor is committed to keeping people we serve in our community safe with this new legislation. We are hopeful that consistent definitions of abuse and neglect across all state agencies will be carefully developed and with input from various stakeholders. We are glad to see the legislation has passed."

Lisa Anson says she has been very fortunate to receive services through The Arc and is an advocate for the positive, progressive and dignifying care that is provided through this agency, which serves 1,650 individuals with intellectual and development disabilities. "The Arc has helped us through so much and been a key part of Brett's team," said Anson. "When I was having difficulty with him eating and gaining weight, they gave me tips and ideas on feeding. When I needed more assistance with him at home because my husband was at work, they provided more respite hours. The truth is we could not have done this without The Arc, and they could not do what they do so well without the Brett's of the world." 

Learn more about the Justice Center at [www.Justice4SpecialNeeds.com](http://www.Justice4SpecialNeeds.com).

# *Congratulations* Employees of the Second Quarter



**Sue Osterhoudt, program manager in Residential Services,** is named 2012 Employee of the Second Quarter in the north region.



**Christopher Spink, habilitation specialist at the Fine Arc Day Habilitation program,** is named 2012 Employee of the Second Quarter in the south region.

## Cost Savings Initiatives (CSI)

*Vin Vetere, Chief Financial Officer*

Last year, as part of the Strategic Plan, a committee was formed to look at cost savings opportunities throughout the agency. The committee is made up of a cross section of the agency and each department in the agency is represented. The goals of the committee are to solicit ideas from staff, get the word out as to why cost savings are important and follow up on cost savings ideas that make sense and are in the best interests of the agency. CSI saved \$50,000 last year and \$33,000 so far in 2012.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

**Electricity Savings:** Art Plantz, director of facilities management, applied for and received a National Grid grant to update and upgrade the lighting in most of our commercial buildings. Although this opportunity only applied to our commercial buildings, we have achieved, on average, a 16 percent reduction in electricity usage in the last two quarters.

**Agency Vehicles:** Vincent Colgan, vice president for administration, has worked on a better system for the use of agency vehicles. Vehicles previously located at the Frankfort garage were reassigned to agency sites where they are more conveniently accessed. Russ Bell, director of information technology, developed a system within our network to enable reserving a vehicle in advance. The system was rolled out in March and all signs point to the positive!

Many thanks to CSI chair, Beth McCullough, and committee members Art Plantz, Karen Shanley, Karen Hoffman, Aida Mariani, Cindy Griswold, Joanne Donaruma, Carl Peters, Shari Cieslinski, Jennifer Rabideau, Josette Bilodeau and Michaleen Mahoney. 🌸



### Q & A with Vin Vetere

**How long have you worked at The Arc? What keeps you here?**

As of this June, I have been with the agency for 28 years. I started out as a junior accountant. I worked my way through college working at McDonald's that was located right next door to our 245 Genesee offices, the location that is now our parking lot! What keeps me here very simply is what we do, our mission, our purpose and our Core Values. This is a great place to work!

**What is your favorite part of your position?**

I think it is the variety. You may think sitting behind a desk and attending meetings can get monotonous, but each day is different and each meeting brings new challenges to overcome and problems to solve. I really appreciate the team approach that we utilize at the agency.

**Over the years you have experienced lots of change. What has changed that has really made a lasting impact?**

The establishment of the HRA benefit that we started a few years ago for our eligible employees has really been a big positive in that we have been able to help offset a significant amount of our of pocket medical costs. This is accomplished in large part by the additional funding provided by OPWDD for just this purpose.

## News from HUMAN RESOURCES

Thank you to all staff who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the open enrollment sessions. Those who attended have already received their HRA packets. Please contact Human Resources if you did not receive a packet and would like to have one.

The agency contributed \$1,100 to your HRA account for the 2012-13 plan year and an additional amount of \$551.16, for a **total contribution of \$1,651.16 for the 2012-13 plan year!** If you need an HRA debit card, please fill out a request form available in Human Resources.

A couple of changes that have occurred:

- As you know from last year, due to the health care reform act, HRA was considered first payer for anyone receiving Medicare (your HRA pays first until you deplete the account and then secondary insurance and Medicare pays). Anyone who is on Medicare can now elect a limited purpose HRA. What does this mean? A Limited Purpose HRA (LPHRA) will reimburse you for qualified Vision & Dental expenses. This type of HRA is not subject to Coordination of Benefits with Medicare. If anyone is interested in the LPHRA please contact me for the enrollment form. If you have a spouse who is on Medicare, you are able to waive him/her. If an employee enrolls in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA), has a spouse on Medicare and waived participation on the HRA enrollment form can still submit receipts for co-pays, prescriptions, etc... for the spouse for reimbursement on your FSA.
- The HRA will now reimburse eligible expenses for dates of service prior to 5/1/2012, as long as you were an HRA participant when the service was incurred.

To access your HRA account online, log on to: <https://jfaflex.LH1ondemand.com>

1. Your USER ID is your first initial, followed by your last name and the last four digits of your social security number.  
Example: jsmith1234
2. Your PASSWORD when you log in for the first time is: password. You will be prompted to change this password immediately. Once changed, you will have access to YOUR OWN ONLINE ACCOUNT!

If you have any questions, please contact Josette Bilodeau at 315-272-1536 or [jbilodeau@thearcolc.org](mailto:jbilodeau@thearcolc.org).

## FOCUS on Quality by Carol Webb, corporate compliance officer.

We all take great pride in the wonderful work we do here at The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter.

We believe that every person has the right to be healthy and safe. We believe the services we provide must be infused with dignity and respect – AND – we believe that every person has the right to define what those services are, based on personal life issues that are important and unique to that person.

We will face many challenges as we move forward into the new world of Medicaid, but no matter what these changes bring our top priority will continue to be the quality of our service provision. To assist us in this promise,

The Arc is currently undergoing national accreditation through the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL).

Accreditation will provide us with defined “outcome measures” which will assure that the quality of our service provision is actually identified from the individual’s perspective. The outcome measures will provide us with an objective determination of our service provision based on whether or not people are receiving services that assist them in achieving what is most important to them.

There may be times that the accreditation process might seem slightly challenging, but I sincerely believe there is no better team to take on this challenge than “Team Arc, Oneida-Lewis”.

I will keep you informed of the process as we move forward and I look forward to working with all of you in achieving this goal.

Carol Webb can be reached at [cwebb@thearcolc.org](mailto:cwebb@thearcolc.org).

# TAP-it TECHNOLOGY ARRIVES AT THE ARC

Thanks to the generous donors at the Friends of the Arc Foundation's Gala, individuals at the Venture program now benefit from having a *Tap-it* (Touch Accessible Platform Interactive Technology).

The *Tap-it* is an interactive learning center intended to serve each individual's special needs. The system allows individuals to learn at their own pace and reinforces skills that can be transferred to other computer-based learning applications utilizing the internet, educational software or communication devices.

The large touch sensitive screen supports the use of on-screen keyboards or voice recognition for typing, switch/scanning for mouse control or cause/effect programs, screen readers for text-to-touch speech capability, as well as screen magnification programs.



Heather Brown learns on the new TAP-it at the Venture program in Kirkland.

There are many benefits to learning with this technology," said Linda Cavanaugh, director of the Venture program. "It's a nice variety from the everyday routine to learning skills. It's much more interactive."



Photo L-R: Mary Jane Tottey, vice president of community supports at The Arc; Steve Gassner, vice president of the Friends of the Arc Foundation board; Beth Luvera, branch manager at First Niagara Bank; Debbie Cotton, area sales manager at First Niagara Bank; Karen Korotzer, chief executive officer at The Arc; Gail Miskowicz, vice president of operations at The Arc; and Vincent Vetere, chief financial officer at The Arc.

## First Niagara Bank Donates \$5,000 to The Arc, Oneida-Lewis

First Niagara Bank presented The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter with a check for \$5,000 in May, 2012. The funds will be used to help support Community and Family Services in Oneida and Lewis counties. These services include respite care, early intervention, Saturday Friends, After School Connections and many more.

"We are so grateful for the continued support of First Niagara Bank which recognizes that, without their generosity, we would not be able to fully fund these services and programs which are truly critical for the success of the 1,650 individuals we serve," said Aida Mariani, director of public relations and development at The Arc.

"We feel privileged to support hundreds of charitable organizations, giving special consideration to those that support and empower youth. First Niagara is proud to provide millions of dollars, thousands of volunteer hours and our professional expertise to community partners across our footprint," said Beth Luvera of First Niagara Bank.



Find us on  
Facebook!

The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, NYSARC



## MARY CIFARELLI Named Finance Director

Mary Cifarelli was recently promoted to the position of finance director at The Arc. Mary, who has been with the agency for 21 years, was previously the assistant comptroller at The Arc.

Mary received her bachelor of science degree in accounting from Utica College and a master's degree in health service administration from the New School for Social Research. Mary resides in New Hartford.

## Welcome New Members of The Arc Team



**Maureen Entelisano** has joined The Arc as executive assistant. Maureen earned an associate's degree in business from Cazenovia College and bachelor's degree in sociology from SUNY Potsdam.

Maureen has worked extensively in customer service and executive administration. Most recently she served as secretary to Mayor Brown, City of Rome, NY. Maureen has a great deal of energy and a very engaging personality. We are looking forward to you all meeting and working with her!

Maureen lives in Rome with her husband and son.



**Louis Manzo** has been appointed assistant director of business development in Vocational Services. Louis will help develop new business through direct sales and maintain existing commercial, state and federal contracts. He will also focus on maintaining customer satisfaction and the financial viability of business projects.

Louis is a graduate of SUNY Oswego with a bachelor's degree in business administration. Prior to coming to The Arc, he worked as a sales consultant. Louis resides in New Hartford with his wife and two children.



**Julian Galimo** has joined the Community Development staff as development associate. She holds a bachelor's degree in public communications from The College of Saint Rose.

Julian will coordinate, plan, promote and facilitate patron relations, fundraising and special events.

Julian will also coordinate all details required in developing publications, annual reports and informational brochures. Her activities are focused on the community and The Arc's relationships with patrons, sponsors and individuals.

Julian resides in Utica.



## Meet Ruth Ridgway, Arc Board Member

### When did you become involved with The Arc?

I began my involvement with The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter when my son was in a pre-school program at The Arc in the late 1970s. Then, I joined the board after speaking with a board member at a function in the community.

### What has your role been?

My role has been numerous and varied over time. I have served in all four officer positions, including president of the Board of Directors, and have been a member and/or chair of many board committees. I am currently chair of the Guardianship Committee. I have represented the Oneida-Lewis Chapter on the NYSARC Board of Governors for a number of years and served on the Board of Governor's Executive Committee as a Regional Representative and as the Association Secretary. I also serve on several NYSARC committees and

currently chair the Adult Services Committee. I joined The Arc speakers' Bureau and have made several presentations to organizations in the area on behalf of the agency. I have advocated for and with people with disabilities with legislators locally and in Albany.

### Why is The Arc so personal to you and your family?

My involvement with the Arc is not only that of a volunteer for a great cause, but is also much more personal since my husband and I are parents of a person with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our son was born just one month after the reports and pictures of the horrific treatment of countless individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities appeared in all of the mainstream media. These people lived at a state school on Staten Island. Those images, along with warm memories of visits to a "colony" (group home) supported by the Rome State School in the early 1950s (where my grandparents worked as house parents), lead me to raise my son with the supports he needs to be a contributing member in the community in which he lives.

### What inspires you?

When, as a board member, I visit the various programs of The Arc or speak to some of my son's peers, I am inspired. I see people with smiles on their faces, anxious to share with me what they are doing or what they hope to be doing in the future. I know that the agency is helping them toward achieving goals that are meaningful to them. But for me personally, I think the Guardianship Program is the heart of what The Arc and NYSARC are all about. This program is not for everyone, but when the need arises or when family and friends are no longer able to provide the guidance and assistance that some individuals require throughout their lifetime, this program steps up and helps people to make life changing decisions they would not or could not make on their own.

### What do you see for the future of The Arc?

The next few years for The Arc and other agencies that depend on government resources as a primary source of funding will be challenging for all. The Arc is fortunate to have extremely competent and energetic leadership throughout the agency. I am confident that with the unbeatable combination of new ideas, coupled with long term successful service delivery, Chief Executive Officer Karen Korotzer and her team will see the agency through the next few years of unprecedented change. I feel it is essential to provide the kind of supports people served by the agency need while maintaining a high quality of service. I also feel it is important for The Arc to be able to offer individuals and families a continuum of services that people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities can access throughout a lifetime using a person centered approach.

### Become a member of The Arc Board!

Are you interested in serving on  
The Arc Board of Directors?

We are looking for  
men and women in  
Oneida and Lewis Counties  
who want to enrich  
the lives of those with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities.

For more information,  
or to submit your resume  
for consideration,  
please call 272.1506 today!

# The Arc CORE Values

By Mary Jane Tottey, vice president of community supports

Compassion  
DIGNITY  
Dedication  
Person Centered  
-Family Based  
Progressive  
Integrity

The Core Values are alive and thriving at the Arc. The signs are posted and the lanyards are evident. The most important aspect is the many ways everyday that the Core Values are evident in the way we provide services at The Arc. The 4th Annual School-to-Work Year End Ceremony held recently at Utica College provided many opportunities to witness our Core Values in action.

The response of the students to the introduction of the School-to-Work coordinators left no doubt that these dedicated staff provided an abundance of meaningful real work experiences. As role models, the staff treated each student with dignity and compassion as they learned new skills and explored the world of work. The testimonial of Thirawit Zimbler, a student in the Life After High School program based at Utica College, spoke about his gratitude for the work life skills he learned to make him employable. He gave a special thank you to his School-to-Work Coordinator Crystal Hilts for the special assistance she offered that enabled him to "come out of his shell" and fully benefit from the program. Crystal's dedication to her role, coupled with the compassion she has for the students, is an excellent example of how the Core Values guide us.

Because of this innovative and progressive approach to employment readiness for individuals with intellectual and other disabilities, young adults have experienced a life altering opportunity that will set them on the course of independence and community participation.

Kudos to Joanne Donaruma, Jerry Switzer and all the School-to-Work staff who exemplify the Core Values of The Arc in the extraordinary work they do. Congratulations to the young adults from Clinton, Rome, Proctor, Oriskany, Brookfield, Waterville, New Hartford, New York Mills and Adirondack high schools who also participated in the year end ceremony.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### JULY

#### Lynda Ford Memorial Golf Tournament

Monday, July 23, 2012 - 1pm  
Valley View Golf Course, Utica

#### CollegeWorks Graduation

Tues, July 24, 2012 - 6pm  
MVCC Utica - IT Theatre

#### 1st Annual Arc Community Softball Tournament

Saturday, July 28, 2012 - 8am  
Wankle Fields, Utica  
All day family fun!!!

### SEPTEMBER

#### StageWorks performs "Snow White"

Friday, September 21, 2012 - 7pm  
Clinton Performing Arts Center

#### Nat'l. Direct Support Professionals Week

September 11-17, 2012

#### Autism Conference

Vernon Downs, Vernon, NY  
September 24, 2012 - 8:30am-5pm

### OCTOBER

#### Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month

##### "Bags for Babies"

Fundraising event to benefit  
Community and Family Services  
Thursday, October 18, 2012 - 6pm  
Valley View Golf Course, Utica

#### South Employer Recognition Breakfast

The Arc, 245 Genesee Street  
Vincent B. Colgan Training Center  
Date TBA

#### North Employer Recognition Dinner

Date & location TBA

### NOVEMBER

#### Employee Recognition Dinner

Monday, November 5, 2012 - 4pm  
Radisson Hotel - Utica Centre

#### Holiday Giving Campaign Begins

#### Annual Rotary Christmas Party

Friday, November 30, 2012  
MVCC Utica - Student Union

For information about any of the above listed events, please call Community Development at 315.272.1532.

## Kinsey Heading to WORLD WINTER GAMES



**Special Olympics**  
WORLD WINTER GAMES  
**PyeongChang 2013**



On January 26, 2013, Sylvia "Kim" Kinsey, who receives services from The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter, will travel to PyeongChang, South Korea to compete in cross country skiing events in the 2013 Winter Special Olympics.

Kim has been skiing since she was in middle school and has won a number of medals and ribbons over the course of her career. The selection process for Special Olympians is based on ability and so Kim practices and trains weekly to prepare herself. In the past, she competed in cross country skiing events at the Special Olympics Winter Games in Alaska. Kim participates in other olympics events as well and will be competing as a swimmer in the 2012 Summer Special Olympics in Buffalo, NY.

Kim currently works at the Turning Stone Casino and volunteers at a day habilitation program for The Arc. We will be rooting for Kim and wishing her all the best. You go girl!!!

## Fine Arc Artists Exhibit at NYSACRA



Rachel Lewis and Matt Petersen, artists who participate in the Fine Arc Day Habilitation program, had several pieces of their work displayed at the Annual New York State Association of Community & Residential Agencies (NYSACRA) Conference. The conference was held April 19, 2012, at The Sagamore Hotel in Lake George. Rachel and Matthew attended with Bobbie Tufte, day habilitation specialist in the Fine Arc program.

Beth O'Brien, service liaison with the program, says, "There is always a lot of interest in Matt's work. He is just an amazing illustrator and painter. Rachel favors drawing with colored pencils and her work has very clean lines. She is creative with various media, including origami. She painted the Adirondack chair raffled off in June to benefit the Fine Arc program."

Both Rachel and Matt, along with several other Fine Arc artists, have shown their

work at numerous local venues and in exhibits around NY State. The NYSACRA Conference exhibit included the work of many talented artists with intellectual and developmental disabilities from all around the state.

# Abilities Awareness

The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter hosts an Abilities Awareness Recognition Ceremony in celebration of National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (NDDAM)



**Judy & Terry Kain, owners of the Triangle Coffee Shop**

Marissa Falitico, constituent services liaison for Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, presented two awards at The Arc's Abilities Awareness Recognition Ceremony, one honoring Stephen Biro, Jr., an individual served by The Arc, and the other honoring the Triangle Coffee Shop for demonstrating dedication to the enhancement of the quality of life, by setting an example of what people with developmental disabilities can accomplish and on behalf of people with development disabilities.

"Stephen Biro, Jr. is a single father who is a great role model to his own children, very independent and is willing to go above and beyond to help his peers," said Erin Largett, assistant director of service coordination, who nominated Stephen for the award. "Stephen is very humble in his own acts, which was demonstrated in the past when he did a heroic thing by saving his fellow peers from a bus that caught fire. He is a caring, generous and brave individual!"

Triangle Coffee Shop, located on 244 Genesee Street in Utica, was nominated by Michelle Janicki, medicaid service coordinator, and Robert Wyzina. Throughout the years, the Triangle Coffee Shop has been a natural support system for many individuals served by The Arc.

"Robert is a regular at the coffee shop helping to do odd jobs like dishes, clean up and assisting the owners with preparation for the next day," said Michelle. "The owners and staff make him feel like a valued member of the community, helping him to gain self worth, self-esteem, and a place where everyone knows his name!"



**Photo above (L-R): Marissa Falitico, constituent services liaison for Assemblyman Brindisi; Joanna Greco, Arc board president; Karen Korotzer, CEO; Stephen Biro, Jr.; Stephen Biro III; and Erin Largett, assistant director of service coordination (north).**

## In The Kitchen with Mark Briggs

Anyone who is involved with the South Trenton IRA knows about Mark Briggs' cooking. Just ask!

Mark, a 2000 graduate of Mohawk Valley Community College's culinary arts program and employee of The Arc, enjoys being in the kitchen. Those who taste his creations enjoy it too!

DJ Sherry, a resident at the IRA, says, "Mark is an AWESOME cook." He especially likes Mark's homemade pizza. Arc employee, Dane Morat, disagrees. "It's his calzones!"

Mark responded with his characteristic humble smile. "I really like to cook. I do a lot of cooking at home."

Mark said that he and his wife do a lot of cooking for special events like birthdays and holidays. He admits that his favorite dish to prepare is lasagna. Once again, Dane couldn't resist a comment: "He makes a wicked macaroni and cheese!" Another smile from Mark. "I do have a pretty good recipe for macaroni and cheese. It's all in using the right kind of cheese. Extra sharp or serious sharp makes the dish."

Mark started at The Arc in 1999, as a residence counselor at the South Trenton IRA and was promoted to residence manager. Cooking, he said, is a skill that not everyone has due to lack of experience. "I was fortunate because I was in school when I started. But there were things I didn't know how to cook. One example is meatloaf." Mark has good advice for new staff whose cooking skills, or skills in a particular area might be weak. "The key is to watch staff who can cook." Pay attention to how they do it. I used to get up and watch their steps in making a meal. "I learned a lot," he said.

"Cooking for a larger number of people has its challenges. The individuals' diets make it more of a challenge. I used to make a lot of desserts, but we have to be careful now with anyone who is a diabetic



or has a diet restriction, but it's doable," Mark said. "Smoothies are great! I like to add yogurt and the fruit together. They are delicious and healthy."

Resident Ted Saunders is sold on Mark's cooking too. When asked, "Do you like Mark's cooking?" Ted smiles a big, broad smile. "Yes!"



### MARK'S MACARONI AND CHEESE

8 cups milk  
4 bars of extra sharp cheese  
12 Tbsp. butter  
12 Tbsp. flour  
1/2 loaf bread

Make a paste with the butter and flour. Slowly mix in the milk. Don't let the milk get too hot or it will burn. Add the bars of cheese. Add the cheese sauce on top of the macaroni. Toast 1/2 loaf of bread. Break up the bread and mix with butter in a pan. Spread on top of the macaroni and cheese. Bake in a roasting pan at 350 degrees for 1/2 hour.

## St. Patrick's Day Parade

On Saturday, March 17 over 50 individuals served by The Arc, Oneida-Lewis Chapter took their places as cheering spectators at Utica's 34th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Community and Family Services staff flew the Irish colors and reserved rows of seats in front of The Arc's administration building on Genesee Street to watch the largest St. Patrick's Day parade yet. Everyone basked in the sunshine of the unseasonably warm March day and appreciated having seats with an unobstructed view of the route.

For the 12th year in a row, The Arc's fun-loving, family presence contributed to the festivities of this great event. Charlie Brown, Maureen McKeivitt, Lisa Greco and Betty Brady (in photo L-R), along with others, donned green bowler hats, spun noise makers and tossed candies from their "pots of gold" out onto the parade route.



This year, for the first time, children in our programs joined adults for St. Patrick's Day excitement. The Arc was a bright group among the parade attendees and all marveled at the array of floats, marching bands, organizations, special vehicles, dance troupes and performers that streamed by. After the parade, Community and Family Services treated our individuals to a delicious buffet lunch in "The Adirondack Room" at The Soda Fountain in Remsen!

## Survey Says....

At The Arc we want to know what our employees think.

Through focus groups, a newly formed employee relations committee and an upcoming survey, communication is key to *Getting to Great* at our agency that now serves over 1,650 individuals and employs 750 in Oneida and Lewis counties.

Please look for The Arc survey in the fall of 2012. It will be an online format will include questions relating to job satisfaction, mission/purpose of the agency, Core Values, training, employee recognition, safety and environment and retention. The goal is to obtain 100% participation from staff. Computer work stations will be set up at all agency sites where staff can log in and take this CONFIDENTIAL survey.

"We want staff to know that their personal information cannot be identified through the survey so we can have the most honest information to move The Arc forward," said Faith Burke, human resources director.

Information on the survey will be posted throughout the agency in coming months, sent out via email notifications and placed on our Intranet. Thank you in advance for your participation and feedback!



Residential staff Kara Zimmerman, Chelsea Snyder, Michele Wilson and Tina Fiorini "ham it up" with MaryLynn Rebisz, the "good idea lightbulb" (center), at Residential Services All Staff Day.

MaryLynn dressed as a light bulb to represent the good ideas offered by direct support staff for solving some of the issues presented during recent Arc Focus Group discussions. The Residential Team worked in groups and shared their good ideas with fellow employees at the event.

## Susan's "Dreamer"

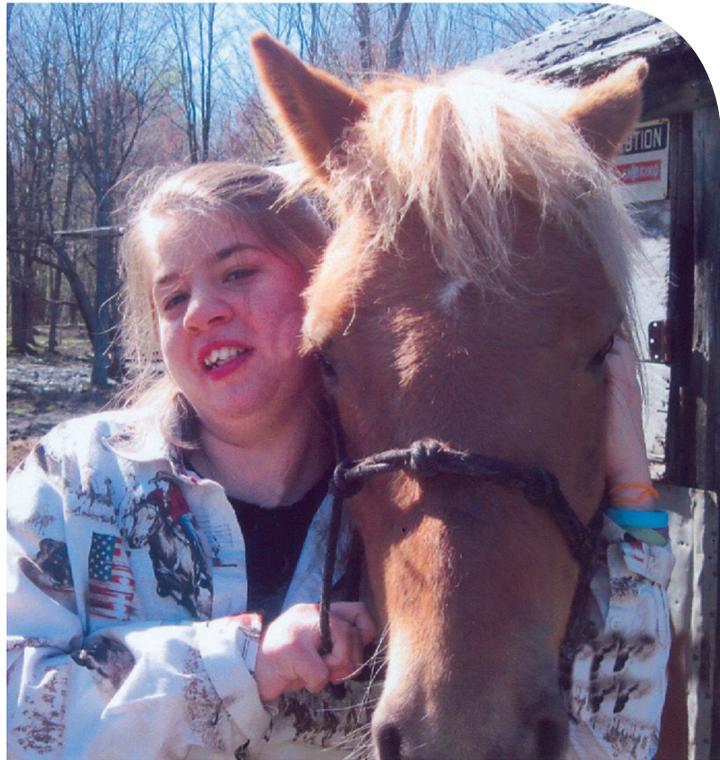
Parent and Arc employee Chris LaComb smiles when he explains how his daughter Susan came into his life, the profound impact she had on him as a person and the positive effect she had on everyone in his family.

Chris and his wife began pursuing custody of Susan when she was 26-weeks-old. She became the youngest member of the family that includes three other children: Joan, Michelle and Cynthia.

"We were told that due to some issues, Susan would never walk or talk," said Chris, "but, I guess my wife really decided to take on that challenge, and we did!"

Today, 22-year old Susan, who is diagnosed with cerebral palsy and is legally blind, does talk and she does walk. She benefits from services at The Arc's Stowe Street Day Hab program.

"Parents of children with disabilities have their challenges. But I look at it like this, special parents get special kids. Susan is a joy, a real gift to me and my family. She was my second chance to do things the right way," Chris said. "You know, each one of your children is different, but they each need and want the same things in life. They want positive attention. They have things they're interested in. They want to be respected."



Chris goes on to say, "For new staff, or for those in the community who aren't familiar or don't feel comfortable around people with disabilities, you have to get to know the person. They want respect. They are so grateful for the littlest things. I think about holidays like Halloween or Christmas when people we work with are sometimes so grateful for something as simple as a donut and a glass of cider. They have so much natural appreciation!"

Chris says, "Susan loves to attend Stowe Street Day Hab, and she loves horses." In fact, this April through the

"I Have a Dream" program provided by The Friends of the Arc Foundation annual auction, Susan's deep passion for horses inspired donors to fund her horse "Dreamer" to be prepared for riding.

"We at The Arc and the Foundation work each day to enrich the lives of our individuals," said Aida Mariani, director of public relations and development. "Through the services, programs and fundraising efforts at our agency, we pull together so that all who we serve are not alone."

## A Note from *Community Development*

The team in Community Development is busy planning another season of exciting events! Thanks to amazing staff and community members who provide an outpouring of support, from volunteer hours to donations and other resources, we know it will be a successful summer! Thank you!

We are kicking off the month of July with our employee picnics. On July 23rd we are hosting the annual Lynda Ford Memorial Golf Tournament at Valley View Golf Course. Then, join us at the end the month for a day of family fun at our First Annual Community Softball Tournament! See the Calendar of Events on p.9 for dates, times and locations.

We are interested in new ideas for events that will welcome businesses and all community members into the Friends of the Arc Foundation family. We want to hear from you! Please let us know of events that you would like to see happen in the future.

Please email Aida Mariani, director of public relations and development, at [amariani@thearcolc.org](mailto:amariani@thearcolc.org) or call 315.272.1532.

# The NOT SO SILENT Auction *Vegas Style*



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Visit photo gallery at [thearc.org](http://thearc.org) to view more photos of this event.



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1st Annual Arc  
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