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2018, Issue I

Exploring the Arts
PAGES 8–9
Dear Friends,

Ellen Gutmaker

Albert Einstein said; “Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.” Every year as we evaluate current programs and future funding, we realize just how important a role the arts play in what we do. From education to socialization, addressing ambulatory challenges to creating new mediums of expression, music and the arts have played an increasingly important and therapeutic part in what we offer here at Arc of Onondaga. Whether it be our five year long partnership bringing Arc individuals on stage at the Redhouse, tapping into the hidden musical talents of our program participants over at Midler Day Hab, bringing music education to the children at Parkside Children’s Center, or bringing toddlers and seniors together to share in intergenerational music programming, as you will read in this edition of Patterns, membership numbers are used to demonstrate to our elected officials just how many citizens support what we do. Your signature can advocate for so many who may not have the ability to advocate for themselves.

We’re excited to announce the details of our 24th annual Achievement Awards Dinner, happening on June 7th at Drumlin’s Country Club. We’re celebrating some truly outstanding honorees and are thrilled to be able share their stories with you in this edition. We have some exciting new additions to this year's Dinner including a Sweet Dreams dessert auction featuring confectionery creations from some of Central New York’s most esteemed bakers, our Wall of Dreams, which provides opportunities to help make dreams come true for those we serve, and online bidding for the silent and live auctions. Now you can bid from the comfort and convenience of your own phone. We also have our Diner’s Dream Raffle in which you can win $1,200 worth of gift cards to restaurants around the area. The Dinner is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and all of the money raised goes right back into funding special programs and projects for Arc. It’s not too late to reserve your spot. Details about the event and how to purchase tickets start on page 5.

Let’s hope spring is officially here to stay! It will soon be summer and as always, it goes right back into funding special programs and projects for Arc. It’s not too late to reserve your spot. Details about the event and how to purchase tickets start on page 5.

Remember, if you want to keep up-to-date on all of the latest happenings here at Arc, make sure to “like” us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram and Twitter, and send us your email at GoGreen@arcon.org so we can add you to our eblast list.

As always, your feedback is welcome.

A Message From the Executive Director

A new Membership Drive has again begun, and I ask that as we enter into this new year, you seriously consider becoming a member. The human services field as we know it is rapidly changing and your support is needed to ensure the benefits and services we have in place today can remain for future generations. As you will read on page 10 of this edition of Patterns, membership numbers are used to demonstrate to our elected officials just how many citizens support what we do. Your signature can advocate for so many who may not have the ability to advocate for themselves.

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Syracuse News Conference Highlights Need to Increase Pay for Direct Support Workers

Last March, after eight years without a significant adjustment in wages and recent increases in the minimum wage, Governor Cuomo pledged his support to include $55 Million in the NYS Budget to compensate a living wage for Direct Support Professionals. The Governor’s call to action was in large part due to the success of the statewide grassroots campaign, bFair2DirectCare – a workforce funding effort striving to provide living wages for those who support individuals with developmental disabilities.

This past December, AccessCNY and Arc of Onondaga held a news conference at the OneGroup Center on N. Clinton Street in Syracuse highlighting the need to continue to increase pay for direct support workers. Parents, siblings and self-advocates shared their stories of the meaningful, compassionate and necessary work DSP’s perform day-in and day-out to support the more than 4,000 individuals with disabilities who depend on them and the agencies that provide services. *“I’ve lived in New York my entire life,” said BJ Menter, a sibling whose late twin brother received services from Arc. “I love this state. And if there is one thing I know, in a crisis, New Yorkers come together because we are family. I call on the Governor and all our representatives to acknowledge the enormous pay disparity, which exists for those New Yorkers who perform the very demanding and difficult job of caring directly for our children, our siblings, our friends. This is NOT family taking care of family! They deserve better from us.”

Across the state, over 125,000 people with developmental disabilities, who often cannot speak for themselves, depend on the care of direct support professionals to live, work and learn as part of their communities. These non-profit professionals perform difficult and intimate work with some of our state’s most vulnerable citizens.

Non-profit providers rely on government support for 90% of the funding for these services, 80% of which goes directly to staff wages. Staff members are entrusted by the state and deserve a fair rate of pay for the vital care they provide. This is a call to action to remind state leaders that direct care not-for-profit agency workers are agents of the state who need a fair rate of pay that reflects the complexity of their work.

Photo above from left to right: Paul Fisselbrand, self-advocate, Janie Rolon, direct support professional, BJ Menter, sibling, caregiver and guardian
employment possibilities for people with disabilities through their commitment to providing
them. A company that leads by example, Image Integrator is able to show the breadth of
shift times to accommodate bus schedules and the capabilities of the people who work for
the company to try to find the best match for their skills and aptitude, and even adjust
their strengths. They consistently work to place employees in different positions throughout
the time they need to learn new tasks and improve their production output, while focusing on
acquired while working for them. Image Integrator personnel allow supported individuals
helped previous employees move up to other positions by using the skills and opportunities
obstacles. Currently employing six individuals supported by Arc, Image Integrator has
disabilities into their daily workforce and is dedicated to helping those we serve overcome
which recognizes a local business that works to integrate individuals with developmental
disabilities into their daily workforce and is dedicated to helping those we serve overcome
obstacles. This year, Arc of Onondaga’s Guardianship Committee, which has received
statewide attention from other Arc chapters which have worked to model their
committees in much the same fashion - working with the person, not just for the person.

Arc Achievement Award

Dennis Vanderheiden, Founder and CEO of Athletes in Tandem, will receive this year’s
Achievement Award. Athletes in Tandem, a 501C(3) non-profit, pairs athletes with disabilities
with community runners, enhancing their quality of life by allowing them the opportunity
to participate together in sporting events. Based out of Fort Collins, Colorado, Dennis has
travelled the country providing those who wouldn’t be able to participate in competitive
races the opportunity to compete for the first time with the help of adaptive jogging strollers.
Athletes in Tandem is the heart and soul of the Arc Race, and this year, will enjoy its fourth year
of partnership with 25 tandem teams competing in the half marathon and 5k runs, and the 3k
Family Fun Walk. Dennis is very much hands-on, providing training for first-time Athletes
in Tandem runners, Arc athletes, and their families. His efforts have not only touched the
lives of those served by Arc of Onondaga, but people nationwide, proving that community
inclusion is best illustrated through inspiring others and sharing a common passion.

Mary Carol and Robert J. Fisher Founders Award

The Mary Carol and Robert J. Fisher Founders Award recognizes those who have made
significant and long-term contributions to Arc of Onondaga, and this year, we are proud to
recognize Arc of Onondaga’s Guardianship Committee. In the fall of 2012, the committee
initiated a new way of delivering guardianship services by implementing the “Primary
Guardian” strategy, which changed the focus from making decisions for an individual to
making decisions with the individual. Every individual receiving guardianship services is
assigned to one committee member and although the committee works together as a group
to make decisions, the participants receive individualized attention from one person in
particular, forging a very personal relationship. Primary guardians celebrate birthdays and
holidays together, attend doctor appointments and community events, and advocate on
behalf of the individual. Arc’s person-centered approach to providing guardianship services
has received statewide attention from other Arc chapters which have worked to model their
committees in much the same fashion - working with the person, not just for the person.

Robert D. McAuliffe Community Service Award

Image Integrator, LLC will receive this year’s Robert D. McAuliffe Community Service Award
which recognizes a local business that works to integrate individuals with developmental
disabilities into their daily workforce and is dedicated to helping those we serve overcome
obstacles. Currently employing six individuals supported by Arc, Image Integrator has
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shift times to accommodate bus schedules and the capabilities of the people who work for
them. A company that leads by example, Image Integrator is able to show the breadth of
employment possibilities for people with disabilities through their commitment to providing
new opportunities to all those under their employ.

Person of the Year Award

Cleo Hamilton

The Person of the Year Award recognizes a person with a developmental disability who
has demonstrated significant progress towards living an independent, inclusive life to their
fullest potential, and this year’s recipient, Cleo Hamilton, has done just that. Diagnosed
with autism and learning disabilities, Cleo had some pretty clear life goals in mind. He
wanted to graduate high school, get a job, and attend college at Syracuse University.
While in high school, he enrolled in the Employment Training Program, a program
which helps individuals gain the valuable skills needed in a competitive workforce,
and has since obtained a permanent position at the Goodwill Store in Syracuse. He
then enrolled in Syracuse University’s Access College Program. Currently in his third
semester, Cleo is fully immersed in college life. With the assistance of a mentor, he attends
classes, and has made connections with professors and peers. He participates in all peer-
to-peer events, encourages other students to pursue interests, and is a co-captain of the
InclusiveU Otten team - for which he has already reached half of his fundraising
goal. Cleo also helps lead orientation classes making new students feel welcome. He
meets with his TA once a week to make sure he is staying on track and is receiving As in
all of his coursework. Cleo will eventually graduate from the program with a Certificate
of Completion in Human Services. His new life goal is to work with others who have
developmental disabilities.
Arc’s 24th Annual Achievement Awards Dinner
Thursday, June 7, 2018
Drumlins Country Club
315-476-7441 x 1147
www.arcon.org/events/dinner

An Evening of Extraordinary Dreams

Sweet Dreams Dessert Auction
Bid on your favorite confectionery creations donated from some of CNY’s best bakers.

Wall of Dreams
Help make a dream come true!
Some dreams are big and some are small. Browse our Wall of Dreams, created by the people who are supported by Arc and see if there’s something you have or have access to - tickets to sporting events, movie passes, special experiences – that can make someone’s dream come true!

NEW THIS YEAR
ONLINE BIDDING
View and bid on the vast array of live and silent auction items from your own phone.
Auction opens May 23, 2018 at
www.bidpal.net/arcdinner

Extreme Home Makeover
These are your dollars at work

Arc operates 22 residences across Onondaga County – serving over 100 people with developmental disabilities so they can live inclusive, enriching lives to their fullest potential in a community setting. At last year’s Arc Achievement Awards Dinner, our “Raise-Your-Paddle” live auction raised funds to help renovate the home on Teall Avenue. This older home was in desperate need of some major remodeling to make the living space more accessible and comfortable for the gentlemen who reside there. Plans included a new kitchen and living room makeovers, and relocating the bathroom. The kitchen was over 30 years old and in poor condition. The dishwasher was a portable model that was rolled over and hooked up to the sink.

A total of $5,420 was raised from “Raise-Your-Paddle” the night of the Dinner. All of those dollars went towards the total cost of the project. The Arc of Onondaga Foundation awarded a grant in the amount of $11,554 for kitchen cabinets and new appliances for the remodeled kitchen, and Arc of Onondaga provided funding for the balance of the project with renovation funds provided by Office of People With Developmental Disabilities.

Plans for the remodel included removing walls to create open space on the first floor, renovating the kitchen, living room and bathroom, and removing the small back entry steps. The steps were replaced with pressure treated steps and a 5’ by 6’ landing for ease of entry and egress to the home.

The project was administered by Arc Facilities staff. The majority of the construction was performed by a group of retired tradespeople known as the Silver Hammers. Architects were hired to plan for all design aspects of the project. Electrical and plumbing work was contracted out to licensed professionals. The residents were involved in choosing the cabinetry, wall colors and flooring.

As the photos show, the result of this renovation has transformed the space, making it more accessible, functional, and inviting for everyone who lives and works there.
What happens when a 2,000 year old mirror made by an evil troll and wizard is smashed to pieces and falls to earth? The beginnings of an epic adventure of a young girl desperate to rescue her friend from the ominous grips of the Snow Queen. In a journey like no other, Gerda must encounter the treacherous seas, witches, talking crows, robbers, and some determined reindeer to rescue Kai from the Queen’s entrancing clutches. A classic fairy tale of good versus evil, Hans Christen Andersen’s “The Snow Queen” was first published in 1845 with the rock musical adaption “The Snow Queen: A New Musical” making its stage debut in 2013.

Thanks to a grant from the Arc of Onondaga Foundation, Arc program participants, teen thespians from area high schools, and local talent were able to take the stage in The Redhouse’s Theatre Experience Series; which feature family-friendly productions focused on creating educational experiences for participants and audiences members while representing unique members of the community, celebrating diversity, and offering leading artistic experiences for all.

Music For Life

Music is a wonderful way for people of all generations to connect. The Arc of Onondaga Foundation recently granted funds to enable the senior population at our Salina Day Program to interact with the youngest members of the community in an intergenerational exploration of music and dance called Music For Life. Founded by Syracuse native Tamar Frieden, Music For Life combines music and movement to enhance brain development through the incorporation of motor, social and cognitive skills. Collaborating with the Salvation Army’s Head Start program, Arc seniors have a weekly experience aimed at building a relationship between music and self-confidence, with the joy of movement, music, and making new friends at the root of the endeavor.

Music Together

It’s always a great day when Kalli Essig from Blue Bird Music Together visits Parkside Children’s Center! Music Together provides the opportunity for kids to move, play, learn, and make music. A pioneer in school music education and childcare settings, Music Together combines research-based, comprehensive curriculum and award-winning music with developmentally appropriate activities to grow young minds.

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Taking the Show on the Road

After their debut caroling last December at Arc of Onondaga sites, the Midler Melodies (formerly known as the Midler Singers) have taken their show on the road. Led by Jeffrey Kerr and Lorenzo Brown, DSP’s with musical backgrounds at Midler Day Hab, the group has made quite a name for itself in Syracuse.

“It all started with singing Christmas carols while bell-ringing for the Salvation Army,” said Jeffrey. The group would go to the mall as part of their community service outings and just sing. It didn’t take long for these two music lovers to realize there might actually be more to this story than merely spreading holiday cheer. They started practicing songs a day or two ahead of the show. “We started simple,” said Jeffrey. “Sing as loud as you can. Sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.’ There was a keyboard that was donated by a family member and we thought, well, might as well use it.” Before long, Midler’s program manager, Scott Montroy, suggested they consider taking their talents on the road. “We went Christmas caroling at the sites and had so much fun we decided to prepare a Valentine’s Day show. Then, we were asked to do the Arc Dinner, then some community events, then our Facebook Live holiday concert. We went from the building, to the sites, to the world,” said Jeffrey. Now the Midler Melodies can be seen almost anywhere including their new endeavor, delivering singing telegrams. Because their popularity in the community continues to grow, the Midler Melodies have received two grants from the Arc of Onondaga Foundation. One for funding to purchase musical equipment, and the other for branded Midler Melodies tee shirts in which they wear at all public appearances.

The group rehearses approximately two hours a week and enjoys lots of karaoke time in-between. “Karaoke helps with choir a lot,” said Jeffrey. “It’s a safe, encouraging environment where staff and participants can feel comfortable.” The group changed their name from the Midler Singers to the Midler Melodies in July, after they performed at the ADA march in downtown Syracuse. Since then, they’ve performed at the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce luncheon, for Community Options, Syracuse University basketball games and had another Facebook Live Valentine’s Day event. "I think the Midler Melodies is a wonderful representation of Arc and Midler,” said Lorenzo. "We’re a diversified and talented crew, and we’re excited to share with our community what we already know!"

Photo above: The Midler Melodies surprise Meredith Burrows on her birthday with a singing telegram laced with a little bit of love and a whole lot of laughs.

The Arts Experience is a partnership of Hobart and William Smith Colleges and the Collaborative of NY. The festival is an opportunity for participants, including people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, the college community, and the general public to explore various means of expression through the arts. The program offers a full week of inclusive, enriching arts-based experiences for Arc of Onondaga program participants so they may become fully immersed in a world of creative expression and performance. Some of the workshops include interactive theatre and music performance, creative movement, recycling trash into art, digital art creation, making stationary, drumming, gardening, salsa dancing, drawing, weaving, tai chi, singing, and much, much more.
Support People With Developmental Disabilities With Your Signature - Become a Member

Membership numbers are used to demonstrate to our elected officials just how many citizens support what we do. The larger our membership, the larger influence our advocacy efforts will have with legislative and governmental officials - supporting tens of thousands of children and adults who have developmental disabilities and cannot advocate for themselves.

Your membership helps NYSARC chapters:

- Influence policy and funding decisions of county legislators, boards of education, community services boards, village and city administration
- Advocate for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities
- Fund information, education, advocacy and support programs for parents, family members and the general public
- Help people with developmental or intellectual disabilities plan for their own services
- Find volunteers for critical programs and policy efforts
- Develop legislative agenda that reflects the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Provide leadership and training opportunities
- Build coalitions with parents and professional organizations in planning and implementing public policy on a statewide level

Download your membership form today at: www.arcon.org

Giving Thanks...Giving Back...Spreading Cheer

The holidays are always a busy time at Arc of Onondaga, and 2017 was no different. Whether it was remembering all that we are thankful for at the Thanksgiving Dinner, or celebrating with loved ones at the annual holiday party, Arc employees, program participants and family members were able to spend the holidays surrounded by good cheer, great times, and those they care about most.

Our friends at SEFCU once again showed their generosity this past December, delivering over 50 sets of coats, mittens, hats and scarves so our children at Parkside can stay warm this winter. Thank you for all you do!

In the spirit of giving back and making a difference, Arc’s Participant Advisory Council organized their first-ever Thanksgiving food drive, donating over 165 pounds of food to the Food Bank of CNY.

A year later and the Midler Melodies are stronger than ever! To celebrate their year of making it big, they held a Facebook LIVE event this past holiday season which was viewed by over 1,500 people.

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Download your membership form today at: www.arcon.org

REGISTRATION OPEN

Goodie bags and t-shirts for all participants
Finisher medals for all participants
Enjoy post-race snacks and beverages

Arc Race 2018

5K • Half Marathon • 3K Fun Walk • KIDS 1 Mile Fun Run
Saturday, September 8th
Long Branch Park, Liverpool

www.arcrace.org
Arc of Onondaga is one of the largest providers of services to people with developmental disabilities in Onondaga County serving thousands of individuals and their families and employing 500 people. With nearly 40 different sites throughout Central New York, Arc provides a wide array of services including residential, day, employment and clinical, and recreation programs. In addition to these supports and services, Arc operates two major subsidiaries: Parkside Children’s Center, an integrated preschool and Monarch, a vocational program and outsourcing company with corporate partners throughout the region.

| SERVICES: Arc of Onondaga is an Equal Opportunity Employer |

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