

Arc of Onondaga



# PATTERNS

TURNING DISABILITY INTO ABILITY



The Sky's The Limit!

PAGE 10

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

Grant Provides Recreational Opportunities.....3  
Joslin Award Winner.....4  
Arc Race Celebrates 25 Years.....6



2019, Issue III

## A Message From the Executive Director



Ellen Gutmaker

Dear Friends,

If I could sum up our 2019 advocacy efforts in one word, it would have to be: inclusion. As I look back on 2019, I realize that inclusion was at the forefront of all of our endeavors. I ask that you take a few minutes to read about the Lee family, and how we were able to work together to provide inclusive opportunities for their son Andrew in the community. About our first-ever Wings for All airport rehearsal program which brought together five community organizations in partnership so families struggling to fly to destinations with loved ones with disabilities could rehearse in a real-time setting. Or, of our Joslin Award winner Arthur, who was fearful to advance his career goals in life because working during normal office hours (instead of at night) meant he had to communicate with people. As you will read in this edition of Patterns, whether it be through events in the community, partnerships with other community-minded organizations, or working one-on-one with individuals and their families to achieve goals, community inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.

We're excited to announce that our newest fundraiser, Pasta for a Purpose, will be back for its second year this March. What makes this event so enticing? Its relaxed atmosphere! Come as you are and bring the family for a casual, buffet style dinner in a festive and relaxing environment. Sample some of the best pasta dishes around and help support a good cause, the Arc of Onondaga Foundation.

The Arc of Onondaga Foundation's Annual Fund Campaign is in full swing, and I hope

you will consider making a gift. Money raised through the Foundation goes right back into the services and programs we are able to provide for our individuals here at Arc of Onondaga; services and programs that may otherwise go unfunded.

This year, thanks to the Arc Foundation, over \$91,000 was granted to the agency so people we support can lead more independent and inclusive lives. We were able to: get individuals who expressed interest in exercising and personal health moving by purchasing treadmills and exercise bikes, implement safety and privacy standards by buying a wheelchair scale so residents can be weighed in the privacy of their own homes instead of having to leave every week, and provided dance lessons for people at our Lancaster day program. Two multi-terrain wheelchairs were added to our recreation fleet. The wheelchairs were designed to navigate unpaved surfaces for outings to places such as parks, beaches and nature trails. Hydraulic tables are now being utilized at three of our day hab clinics to minimize the risk of harm to people receiving services, and a sit-to-stand lift was purchased to make transitions easier for those requiring assistance from a bed or a chair to a wheelchair. When you make a gift to the Arc Foundation, you're ensuring the services and projects we are able to provide today will be available well into the future, even when funding may not be. Please detach your pledge form on page nine of this edition of Patterns and mail it back in today.

I hope you have as much to be thankful for this holiday season as we do here at Arc of Onondaga. As we look forward to another exciting year, on behalf of myself, the board of directors and all of those we support here at Arc of Onondaga, I'd like to extend many heartfelt thanks and warm wishes for the New Year.

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 Twitter or Instagram, and send us your email at [GoGreen@arcon.org](mailto:GoGreen@arcon.org) so we can add you to our eblast list.

As always, your feedback is welcome.



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## Arc of Onondaga Awarded \$48,000 in Grants from NYSARC Trust Services to Support Recreational Opportunities

Arc of Onondaga was awarded \$48,000 in grants from the Trustee Management Board of NYSARC Trust Services to provide recreational opportunities for individuals supported by Arc's recreation and guardianship programs. Arc has received similar grants in years past which have been used to host a variety of events including a medieval Masque, an ugly sweater holiday party, a night of dinner and dancing at a masquerade ball, and the oldie but goodie, day trip to Alexandria Bay.

NYSARC Trust Services administers supplemental needs trusts (SNT) that can make dramatic improvements to the lives of people with disabilities while enabling individuals to maintain eligibility for public benefits programs, such as Medicaid and SSI. In 2019, NYSARC Trust Services awarded a total of \$2,933,000 in grants to The Arc New York Chapters statewide.

This year's grant supported three different recreational events and many guardianship activities including: the Hollywood Spring Fling dance attended by over 200 people, the back-by-popular-demand and sixth consecutive year running A-bay boat trip and luncheon cruise in New York's pristine Thousand Islands, an ugly sweater holiday party for individuals and their families, and numerous guardianship picnics, parties, dinners, trainings and gifts.

NYSARC Trust Services has administered supplemental needs trusts since 1972, helping more than 20,000 people with disabilities protect their eligibility for government benefits and improve their quality of life. Their trust programs give people with disabilities the opportunity to remain in their communities with greater comfort and independence while providing peace of mind to their family and loved ones. NYSARC Trust Services administers first- and third-party supplemental needs trusts, pooled trusts for income and resource (asset) protection, and individual trusts. When protecting settlement proceeds with a NYSARC Community Trust, they can also administer Medicare Set-Aside (MSA) accounts. For more information, visit them online at [nysarctrustservices.org](https://nysarctrustservices.org).



## Conquering Fear: This Year's 2019 Joslin Award Winner



Photo left to right: Katie Tucci, CNY account representative for NYSID, Arthur Harris, Ayisha Crockrell, lead vocational supervisor for Enclaves, Jim Pitts, Enclaves manager

*“I didn’t think I’d like it, but now I realize I love it. Being aware is half the battle and making the right decisions will determine how far you’ll go in life. I’m gonna keep on going.”*

“I was scared, but I knew I had to try it. Jim kept saying, ‘give it a shot Arthur,’ and now I’m just so glad I did,” said Arthur Harris, New York State’s Industry for the Disabled (NYSID) 2019 William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award winner. Arthur has been working on NYSID Preferred Source contracts for over nine years - conquering many fears to be where he is today, and is a perfect example of what the Joslin Awards Program exemplifies: personal success and independence through Preferred Source employment.

As part of a mobile cleaning crew, Arthur spent many years working janitorial at various sites in Syracuse. His supervisory team recognized that he not only had the skills, but experience to take his employment to the next level and work independently at his own site; Arthur was reluctant. “Prior to joining Monarch in 2010, Arthur had over 20 years of janitorial experience and possessed something that is very important for working alone at a site: the ability to self-correct. We tried to encourage him as much as we could to take the leap, and

he just didn’t want to. Confidence was holding him back. But, with constant encouragement and a little bit of persuading, Arthur agreed to try out his own site at Nixon Park. He’s been there ever since and is flourishing,” said Jim Pitts, manager for Monarch’s Enclaves program.

Arthur knew there were some things he needed to work on, the biggest of which was his communication skills. In the past, he wouldn’t ask for help when he needed it, he didn’t know how to share when things went right or wrong, and he couldn’t accept constructive criticism or use it as a tool to improve his work performance. Working at Nixon Park has changed that. “I was scared of the office setting. I start at 4:00 p.m. when people are still in the building. I’m used to doing my own thing. At Nixon, I have to be flexible. I play it by ear. If someone is in the conference room, I go to another part of the building first then go back. I had to learn to switch up my routine. It’s much different than working after hours. I learned when to talk and not talk. At Nixon, we have

a good understanding on both sides of what needs to be done. When I get constructive criticism, they give me a chance to correct on my own without going back to my supervisors. They treat me like a regular worker. They treat me with respect. And it’s all because I learned to be a better communicator.”

The William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award is NYSID’s annual people-centered awards program which recognizes exceptional vocational and personal success on Preferred Source jobs. In October, and in commemoration of National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, Arthur was honored at a ceremony at Arc’s administrative offices. Executive Director Ellen Gutmaker, accompanied by Katie Tucci from NYSID, presented Arthur with a certificate and check, honoring him for all of his hard work.

“I didn’t think I’d like it, but now I realize I love it. Being aware is half the battle and making the right decisions will determine how far you’ll go in life. I’m gonna keep on going.”



5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Experience the "power of penne" with a mouthwatering buffet of 4 pasta dishes along with salad, bread and dessert

*Cash bar available*

**GIFT CARD GRAB**

Win a prize every time!

Grab a gift card of \$20 or more to establishments throughout the CNY area \$10 to enter, 100% chance of winning

\$25 per person

Tickets available at [www.arcon.org](http://www.arcon.org)

When you support the Arc of Onondaga Foundation, you're helping to make a lasting impact upon the people in our community with developmental disabilities. Every year, the Foundation awards grants to Arc of Onondaga to help fund projects that otherwise might go unfunded.



**Arc Race  
2020**

**Registration Opens March 1st!**

[www.arcrace.org](http://www.arcrace.org)

5K • Half Marathon • 3K Fun Walk • KIDS 1 Mile Fun Run

**Saturday, September 7th  
Long Branch Park, Liverpool**

## Dunkin' Run Arc Race Celebrates 25 Years in CNY



The Dunkin' Run Arc Race celebrated 25 years in the CNY community this past September at Long Branch Park in Liverpool. Emceed by 93Q's Amy Robbins, the day offered a little something for everyone including kids and family activities, local vendors, free snacks and refreshments.

Twenty five years ago the Race started as a half marathon and 3K and had fewer than 300 participants. "We were the only fall half marathon in Central New York," said Dale Marris, director of operations for Arc of Onondaga, who not only helped to spearhead the inaugural event but is also an avid runner. "It was a really great turnout and everyone was very excited about our new event. Runners used it as training for full marathons later on in the fall."

This year, the annual event registered almost 1,000 participants and hosted a half marathon, 5K, 3K Family Fun Walk and a Kids 1 Mile Fun Run. It also marked the sixth anniversary of Athletes in Tandem – a program which pairs community runners with athletes with disabilities so they can compete in outdoor sporting events. After the race, children and families stayed to take in the continually growing Family Fun Zone which included bouncy houses, games, prizes, and visits from local mascots.

"We're just so excited that we can continue to grow and change things up a little every year," said Ellen Gutmaker, Arc's executive director. "The weather was perfect, the attendance was great, and the support from the Central New York community was phenomenal. It's sometimes hard to keep momentum high when you've had an event like Arc Race as a staple in the community for so long. There's a lot of competition with other races these days, so keeping it fresh is key. We're continually looking for ways to improve while keeping the foundation of what we set out to do 25 years ago at the forefront: raise awareness in our local community so people with developmental disabilities can live full, inclusive lives to their fullest potential."



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



## The Love Quilt

A year in the making, ArtSurge officially unveiled their quilt project "Celebrating Love" at this year's Ugly Sweater Holiday Party. It took the hands of 25 people and the better part of the year to bring the 15-tile masterpiece to fruition. The quilt has found a permanent home at Arc's Wilbur Avenue administrative offices, and will be on display for all who visit the building the view.



## Thank You UPS!

Thanks to the generosity of the UPS Foundation. Arc of Onondaga received a grant for \$16,000 to purchase a new car! The vehicle will be used to support people who are enrolled in our Community-Based Pre-vocational program to expand their vocational and employment opportunities.



## Good Tidings of Comfort and Joy!

The crew at National Grid celebrated the season in cozy style at their Holiday Pajama Party. Food, fun and festivities were had by all.



## Good Times, Great Neighbors!

Court street residents baked, decorated and delivered cookies for their neighbors this holiday season - spreading a little cheer to whomever they met. Even their favorite local convenience store was excited to be a part of the deliveries. Being a part of the community and giving back, that's what inclusive living is all about.



## Pet Therapy Thursday!

The holidays can be stressful, especially for those who work full-time. Thanks to our dedicated Wellness Committee, dogs and volunteers from PAWS of CNY came to Arc's administrative offices to spend time with our employees. The visit brought employees together, allowed many to de-stress, and most importantly, put smiles on many faces.

For the families of the people we support, community inclusion comes through various activities that provide the opportunity not only for their loved ones to experience the community, but for the community to experience their families. For the Lee family, it means participating in routine encounters we take for granted, and joining in community events they never thought possible. The Lees recently shared their thoughts with us about their experiences.



The Lees navigating through Syracuse Hancock International Airport after their Wings for All rehearsal in collaboration with United Airlines and ExpressJet

“Andrew has flown many times. A few years ago, when we traveled to Florida, we had a very difficult time. He wanted to get out of the airplane after boarding. Since then, we have never traveled with Andrew by air. The Wings for All airport rehearsal program was a perfect opportunity for us to practice traveling by an airplane with Andrew and see how he would respond; in preparation for a real trip in the future. I am sure families having a child with disabilities are not sure if they can travel by air. This program, provided by Arc and their partner organizations, can benefit them all. We are so appreciative for what it has done for us.”

“Our son participated in the Athletes in Tandem event at the Arc Race for the first time this past September. We never thought of Andrew ever being able to join in a race. We were not sure whether he could tolerate such an event, and worried whether he could sit in the stroller for almost an hour without asking for water. What if he wanted to quit in the middle? It turns out that Andrew had no problem and enjoyed racing! Even though he doesn't run by himself, he sees others running, feels the outdoor air, and becomes a part of the crowd and their excitement. We look forward to participating in the event next year. We are thankful that community events like Arc Race exist for people with disabilities to participate in, and for community volunteers like Mary Kate Wassel, Andy's tandem athlete, who ran with him across that finish line.”



Andrew crossing the 5k finish line at the Dunkin' Run Arc Race with community runner Mary Kate Wassel

**Community inclusion.** It's a term you hear more and more of these days.

For Arc of Onondaga, it's our goal for the people we support and their families. Whether it's being a good neighbor, volunteering in the community, or supporting people with their career goals through vocational training, Arc of Onondaga strives to support people to be active members of their community.

**When you support the Arc of Onondaga Foundation, you're helping to make a lasting impact upon the people in our community with developmental disabilities. Every year, the Foundation awards grants to Arc of Onondaga to help fund projects and initiatives that otherwise might go unfunded. In 2019, over \$91,000 was granted.**

**When you give to the Arc of Onondaga Foundation, you're ensuring that people with developmental disabilities can lead a purpose-driven, dignified and inclusive life to their fullest potential. Thank you for supporting our mission!**



Please detach and send to 600 S. Wilbur Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13204

### Arc of Onondaga Foundation - Annual Appeal Pledge Form

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diamond Circle – \$10,000 & up      | <input type="checkbox"/> Leader – \$250 - \$499   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruby Circle – \$5,000 - \$9,999     | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate – \$100 - \$249 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platinum Circle – \$2,500 - \$4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> Founder – \$50 - \$99    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gold Circle – \$1,500 - \$2,499     | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter – \$25 - \$49  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Circle – \$1,000 - \$1,499   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Gift: \$ _____     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Circle – \$500 - \$999       |   |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Enroll me in the Monthly **Impact of Giving** Club! I would like to donate (please check one) **minimum \$25 a month:** \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 a month \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 a month \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other amount Your donation will automatically be charged to your credit card month

I have included Arc of Onondaga in my estate plans  I would like more information about giving a gift and receiving income for life

Please invoice me  Enclosed check  Visa  MasterCard  American Express  Discover

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual gifts of \$500 or more entitles you to membership in the Legacy of Love Society. Included in any contribution is a complimentary membership in Onondaga County Chapter of NYSARC, Inc. Your membership is needed to send a message to legislators that the community supports Arc and its mission. Your name and address will not be shared with other entities for purposes of solicitation. Please initial on the line following this paragraph to decline this free membership. \_\_\_\_\_

## Wings for All Takes Flight in Syracuse

*An inclusive airport rehearsal program helps people with developmental disabilities navigate the stressful factors associated with flying*



Airports and airplanes can be overwhelming, especially for people with special needs. They are filled with unexpected and overstimulating experiences including noises, lights, sounds and people. The hustle and bustle alone is enough to produce anxiety in even the most seasoned of travelers, yet for a family travelling with a person with a disability, it can be outright overwhelming. This past November, Arc of Onondaga, in partnership with United Airlines, ExpressJet, Syracuse Hancock International Airport and The Arc US, was excited to introduce Wings for All to the Syracuse community. An airport rehearsal program for people with autism and other intellectual disabilities, Wings for All aims to alleviate some of the stress that people with disabilities and their families experience when travelling by air by providing families with the opportunity to experience and learn about how their loved ones will react to different stimuli in the airport.

From checking-in and receiving boarding passes to waiting in line and passing through TSA security, 20 Central New York residents

and their families were given the opportunity to practice navigating the busy airport during normal operation hours. "Every customer deserves to enjoy and be comfortable throughout their travel experience and working with Arc of Onondaga helps us ensure that thousands of families across the country feel welcome when they travel with United and United Express," said Jill Kaplan, United's president of New York and New Jersey. Once through security, families were able to locate their gate and wait to begin the boarding process.

Once on board, travelers stored their suitcases in the overhead bins, listened to airline security announcements, buckled in to prepare the main cabin for takeoff, and enjoyed complimentary beverage service and snacks. "We did everything except take off," said parent Alba Rivas, whose son has autism and is not comfortable around loud noises or people in his space. "Flying in particular encompasses two of the things that can be triggers for him simultaneously. But, he wants to go on a trip together, and this experience might seal the deal for me. He's doing great."

Sometimes, there is a lack of understanding among airport and airline staff - leading to confusion on how to handle accommodations or unexpected behaviors when a flyer is overwhelmed or nervous about navigating the air travel process. Combined, these barriers lead to hesitation and fear, inhibiting participation in air travel. As a result, people can miss out on new experiences and connecting with family members and friends that live far away. "Wings is a great example of how to be a good community partner, considering the

air travel experience of all," said Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh who was also at the event. "Arc of Onondaga, the Syracuse Hancock International Airport and the other participating organizations are helping to provide people with autism and other developmental disabilities the resources necessary to travel to and from Syracuse, feeling confident and prepared."

"We knew this was going to be a great event, but I'm not sure any of us were prepared for how impactful it would be," said Ellen Gutmaker, Arc's executive director. "To know some of these families and their struggles to travel firsthand and to witness their experiences both positive and challenging is eye opening. One of travelers hasn't seen their extended family in years because they live overseas. Another has a dream to go to Disney, and believe it or not, getting there is the hardest part of the trip."

After their journey, families gathered for a reception on the first floor of the airport where they were greeted with food, refreshments and giveaways. All participants received complimentary t-shirts and noise cancelling headphones, and everyone was greeted by comfort dogs - which are at the airport at least six times a week and more during busier travel periods. "We're really proud to have been able to bring Wings for All to the Syracuse area. The support we have received from United Airlines and the Syracuse Hancock International Airport speaks volumes to their commitment to making our community more inclusive for people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. We are truly grateful," said Ellen.





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# SERVICES:

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.

<b>Clinical Services</b>	<b>476-7441</b>	<b>Parkside Children's Center</b>	<b>468-1632</b>
Horizons Clinic	Ext. 1167	Evaluation Services	
<b>Community Support Services</b>	<b>476-7441</b>	Family & Parent Support	
Day Habilitation	Ext. 1751	Pre-School	
Community Habilitation		School-Age Transition	
Senior Retirement		UPK for SCSD	
Community Recreation		<b>Residential Services</b>	<b>476-7441</b>
Respite On-site		Residence Living	Ext. 1160
Summer Fun		Supportive Apartment Living	
ArtSurge		<b>Administrative Offices</b>	<b>476-7441</b>
<b>Family Support Services</b>	<b>476-7441</b>	Office of the Executive Director	Ext. 1122
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