

The Arc Voice

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY FOR PEOPLE WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO EXPERIENCE MORE MEANINGFUL AND SATISFYING LIVES

Advocating in a Down-Economy

From the
Executive
Director,

Lauren

Mullis

Despite the tough economic times that we all are facing, it is important to remember that we need to continue to advocate on behalf of those who need support the most. With a new administration and public officials comes new agendas and challenges. We must not let fear of our economic situation interfere with asking these new officials for what is needed for those with disabilities to live a productive and meaningful life.

A variety of issues will be addressed in the upcoming long sessions at the state and federal level including economic stimulus, SCHIP legislation, affordable housing, transportation, etc. The Arc of Mecklenburg will work hard to communicate with you regarding how these proposed items and bills may affect people with disabilities.

To get involved and learn more about the happenings at the state level please visit www.ncleg.net to track bills, locate and communicate with your State House and Senate representatives, and follow meetings and issues before the General Assembly.

To find your Federal Senators' and Representative's phone numbers, you may use a searchable [online congressional directory](#) or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202)224-3121 and ask for your senators' and/or representative's office.

It's important to note that telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. However, you should ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment. After you identify yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/ Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S. ___/ H.R. ___)."

You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call.

Another great resource for public policy matters that directly affect individuals with disabilities is The Arc of North Carolina Policy Blog - www.thearcnc.blogspot.com. This website is the most up to date resource for important policy issues.

To receive Action E-Alerts from The Arc of North Carolina directly to your email inbox please sign up by visiting www.arcnc.org and inputting your name and email address into the Action Alert & Electronic Newsletter item on their homepage.

Being a part of the legislative process is critical to the advancement of people with disabilities and I hope that you all will join us in advocating for the rights of all. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding public policy please feel free to call me anytime at 704-332-4535 x 102

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Holiday Party Thank You

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the 2008 Holiday Party. It was a great success with lots of good food and fun for everyone.



A BIG thank you goes out to the local businesses that contributed items to our silent auction fundraiser to help us raise much needed funds to continue our programs and services.

- Coastal Kitchen
- Disney
- Hilton Center City
- Vino 100
- Carolina Panthers
- Charlotte Knights
- Charlotte Bobcats
- Charlotte Symphony
- Home Depot
- Lifestyle Family Fitness
- Massage Envy South Park
- M3 Foundation
- Starbucks
- Target
- Trader Joes
- Birkdale Golf Club

A special thank you to our board members and the volunteers who generously donated items for our silent auction, your support is very appreciated! We would also like to thank our board member Tommy Lopez for providing some great music for the event.

Community Education Update

2009 Summer Camps

Since the two Exceptional Children summer programs (Metro Summer Enrichment and Pre-K Developmental Day Summer Program) are not mandated by law, they will not be in operation during the 2009 summer. This means that many more families within the Charlotte area will be looking for summer camps this year. Please note that Summer Camps are limited in the

Charlotte area but are in HIGH demand. So register early to insure you have a space for your children to attend.

Local Summer Camp Resources

Family Support Network has a 2009 Summer Camp Directory for children and adults with disabilities which gives different camps throughout the region. You may download a copy of this directory at www.familysupportnetworknc.org or contact Sabrina at 704-332-4535 or sabrina@arcmeck.org to have a hard copy mailed.

Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Therapeutic Recreation Division has many different summer camps available for children with disabilities within the Charlotte Area. For more information on camps available please contact the Marion Diehl Center at 704-527-0237.

Charlotte Eagles for Autism Soccer Camp
The Charlotte Eagles and Learn from the Pros™ are thrilled to be partnering with Autism Speaks Greater Charlotte Chapter to offer a soccer camp specifically for children with Autism. This half-day camp will be filled with fun filled activities for these very special kids while teaching the basics of the world's most popular game - soccer! Camp staff will include players from the Charlotte Eagles Professional Soccer Team and the Charlotte Lady Eagles W-League Team. Eagles for Autism Soccer Camp- June 15-19, 2009 Freedom Park - Charlotte, NC 9 AM - 12 PM Additionally, this soccer camp is free for children with autism! For more information, contact the Charlotte Eagles at (704) 841-8644 x43 or camps@charlotteeagles.com.

Save the Date for Education Workshops for 2009

Saturday May 2nd - What to do after high school?

Saturday May 30th- L.I.F.E.™ Process Workshop where parents will have a clearly defined legal and financial plan for themselves, their family and loved one.

Saturday August 8th - Back to School Preschool to Elementary School

Saturday October 3rd- Newly Diagnosed: What's Next?

Please contact Sabrina regarding the time and place of these workshops at 704-332-4535 ext. 103 or via email at sabrina@arcmeck.org

Wrightslaw 2009

The Wrightslaw Seminar works to provide accurate, up-to-date information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities. The purpose is to educate and inform parents, advocates, attorneys, educators, health care providers, and others who represent the interest of children with disabilities and their families.

Date: Thursday, February 5, 2009

Time: 9:00 am to 4:30 pm

lunch is not provided

Place: Charlotte Scottish Rite

4740 Randolph Road

Charlotte, NC 28222

Keynote Speaker: Pete Wright

**\$50 per person / \$75 per couple
(couple rate includes 2 books to share)**

\$75 per professional

(CEU's and CLE's are included in registration)

***Registration Costs Includes 2 Wrightslaw Books ***

Register online at www.arcmeck.org/wrightslaw

with your pay-pal account.

For More Information:

Sabrina McCracken

704-332-4535 ext 103

Perdue pays surprise visit to hospital:

Troubled Cherry mental institution has been the scene of assaults and neglect.

By: Lynn Bonner / Charlotte Observer

Posted: Saturday, Jan. 24, 2009

N.C. Gov. Bev Perdue spoke with administrators, workers and patients Friday during a surprise visit to the state's troubled mental hospital in Goldsboro. Perdue promised during her campaign that she would go unannounced to state institutions at a time when patient neglect at Cherry made national news.

"She wanted to get a good look for herself, inside the doors of Cherry," said spokeswoman Chrissy Pearson. Perdue declined to be interviewed about the trip.

In a prepared statement she said: "Today I let the leaders of Cherry Hospital know that I've raised the bar for state government. With dedicated, hands-on leadership we can work to ensure that North Carolina's mental health institutions provide high quality patient care."

She spent about 90 minutes at Cherry and visited the building where assaults have been reported, as well as a treatment building, and the administration building. The federal government has stopped insurance payments to the hospital because inspectors deemed it dangerous.

Staff largely ignored a dying man who sat in a chair for nearly a day without food in April of last year. While the hospital was under scrutiny for neglect that led to the patient's death, two workers beat a patient and threatened a witness last August. Doctors who once worked at Cherry have described unsettling conditions such as the smell of urine in the halls and noise from physical fights penetrating the walls while they tried to interview patients.

Lanier Cansler, state Department of Health and Human Services secretary, accompanied Perdue on her trip. Cansler said he did not feel unsafe or see any fights.

"There are people who are dedicated to the patients and the hospital," he said. "Any problems we do have, we plan to address them." Cansler would not say what specific comments or advice they gathered.

The state has a long to-do list for Cherry. A management company is running the hospital. Eventually, a permanent director will take over. The state is planning to break ground on a new mental hospital in Goldsboro this summer.

And the state wants to get the hospital back in shape so it can qualify for federal money again. The state is losing about \$800,000 a month in federal payments.

Winning federal approval "has got to be a top priority," Cansler said. "It's costing a lot of dollars the state can't afford right now."

The state has had problems with all of its mental hospitals in the last two years, with the federal government threatening to stop paying for patient treatment at all five hospitals the state operated during that time.

Cansler said he plans to visit all state institutions in the coming weeks.

Florida senior leads campaign to ban 'retarded'

By NATALIE HOFFMAN: Register Staff Writer for The Napa Valley Register

January 24, 2009

Napa High School senior Tayler Tildsley is well aware of the power of words.

The president of Napa High's Best Buddies Club — which fosters friendships between students with intellectual disabilities and teens without them — launched a campus-wide campaign this week to ask students to drop an often-heard term from their vocabularies.

"I want people to be more aware of what they say and not to be afraid of correcting people" who use the word, she said.

The word in question? "Retarded."

Tildsley, 17, said the word is outdated when used in reference to people who are living with developmental disabilities. She said using it is even worse when students rely on "retarded" to place a negative connotation on a person, idea or event. Either way, she said, hearing it in the school's hallways or in the classroom is hurtful to students with disabilities.

In hopes of raising awareness about the issue on campus, Tildsley kicked off a week-long "Ban the 'r' word" campaign Tuesday, creating and passing out hundreds of informational buttons and fliers and covering the school's walls with posters. The campaign has just three more days to go, and although the majority of student comments about it so far have been positive, she said, there are also critical remarks.

"Everyone seems pretty excited, but I've also had feedback like, 'Why does it matter?' or 'It won't change anything,'" she said.

Tina Agans, a special education teacher at Napa High who has 22 years of experience in her field, said her fellow teachers support Tildsley's efforts to help students make a change for the better.

"All the teachers I've talked to think it's a great idea. ... People can be very mean and it's hard enough to go through (high school) without people making fun of you," she said.

Laura Clark, a 17-year-old Napa High senior with a disability who is also Tildsley's longtime buddy through the Best Buddies club, said only good things can come out of asking students to be more aware of what they say and how it affects others.

"I think it's really cool. ... It teaches people not to make fun of us," she said, adding that a few of the interests she shares with Tildsley include choir class and watching movies.

For her part, Tildsley said she became inspired to jump-start the campaign at Napa High after attending an international conference in Bloomington, Ind., in July. The event drew scores of Best Buddy presidents from across the globe.

Tildsley, who was vice-president of her school's club last year, said her chapter of Best Buddies boasts 24 pairs of students who enjoy movie nights, lunch together and other regular activities. Members of the group who are not living with disabilities come from all walks of life, "from jocks to nerds," she said.

"The great thing about Best Buddies is that both sides benefit from it," she said. We're dedicated to (people), not to a club, and we're here to break the walls of stereotypes."

Thought You Might Like to Know...

Did you know that The Arc of Mecklenburg is currently working with other area agencies to help create a guide for parents and young adults with disabilities on the transition process from school to life? Once this guide is completed it will be widely disseminated. Training will also be provided to Charlotte Mecklenburg School teachers regarding the topic of transition.

We Are...

- We are a well-established network that connects families and people with developmental disabilities to community resources.
 - We create awareness of developmental disabilities.
- We lobby legislators to ensure all the needs of people with developmental disabilities are met. (i.e. education, housing, services and funding)
 - We help people with developmental disabilities access services and the supports they need.
 - We encourage personal empowerment and self-advocacy.
- We educate the community about receiving, embracing, and engaging people with developmental disabilities in all facets of the community.

Membership Application

Renew Your Membership Today!

NOTIFICATION

Your Membership Goes a LONG way to help The Arc of Mecklenburg help those with disabilities and their families! Please become a member today!

It's TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!



Sign up for:	Price
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Advocate	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Sponsor	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Arc Friend	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/> President's Club	\$1000

Total: _____

Method of Payment	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Check	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	_____
	Phone _____

Credit Card # _____	Exp. date _____
Signature _____	



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Aktion Club's of Mecklenburg County



First Annual South Mecklenburg Aktion Club Talent Show!

The Kiwanis South Mecklenburg Aktion Club had its first annual Talent show at the Memorial United Methodist Church on January 9. There were 11 Aktion clubbers that participated in the Talent Show in front of their fellow members as well as friends and families.

There was singing, comedy, karate, poetry, and even an Elvis Presley dancer/singer who showed off their talent. The crowd seemed to really enjoy the Talent Show and didn't want it to end.

The judges were tough on the competition and unfortunately, there could only be three winners. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winner's in order were Susan Summers, Calvin McIlwain, and Alan Richards. The Talent Show was a very successful event for the Aktion Clubbers and they are looking forward to the next one and taking their talent on the road to show off for the Kiwanis clubs.

A BIG Thank you goes to all the Kiwanians that were present to support the clubbers! It was a packed house.



Charlotte Checkers "Night on Ice" Fundraiser 2009

All Three Mecklenburg County Aktion Clubs will be selling tickets again to a Charlotte Checkers Game to raise money for their projects. We will be selling tickets to the Saturday, February 21st game where the Checkers take on the Florida Everblades. Game time is 7:00 pm. (This is a half hour earlier than in year's past). Tickets will be \$15.00 each this year. Nearly half of the proceeds will go back to the Aktion Clubs! Let's sell hundreds this year! To purchase your tickets contact Lauren at 704-332-4535 x 102

Aktion Club Calendar of Events:

- *February 13—Aktion Club South Mecklenburg Regular Meeting 7:00 pm at Memorial United Methodist Church*
- *Saturday, February 21st—Aktion Club night at The Charlotte Checkers Game! 7:00 pm at Time Warner Cable Arena*
- *March 13—Aktion Club South Mecklenburg Regular Meeting 7:00 pm at Memorial United Methodist Church*
- *March 27—Lake Norman Aktion Club Regular Meeting 7:00 pm at the Boy Scout Hut at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church*



What's the future of our Aktion clubs?

The Arc has been doing a lot of creative thinking in regards to all of our programs. Over the course of the next few years we would like to transform our Aktion Clubs into clubs that are for people with AND without disabilities. We have had immediate success with our new K-Kids program, which is an inclusive club for kids and we would like to model our Aktion Clubs in the same way. It's all about integration and learning about each other's ABILITIES.

THE Arc

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The Arc of Mecklenburg County is dedicated to working with individuals with cognitive and intellectual impairments. We promote dignity, inclusion and choice for individuals and their families through advocacy, education, and support services.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

We are on the Web! Check us out at
www.arcmeck.org



Help us save money!! Each returned newsletter costs us 60¢. Please keep us updated with your address changes.

Announcements

- The Arc wants to give a big THANK YOU to Beverly Vale and the Lap of Love Ministries of Candlewyck Baptist Church. Those wonderful ladies made it cozy for the preemies in the NICU by making over 50 blankets.
- K-Kids will be meeting Feb.21st at Brixx's Pizza to start off the night for the Checkers game.
- March 14 K-Kids will be teaming up with Tripp's of Charlotte to do a trail bike ride/hike at Colonel Francis Beatty Park in Matthews from 9am-12pm. Bikes, helmets, and lunch will be provided. If you have any questions or will like to attend please contact Francine at 704-332-4535 x101.
- Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools is holding there Transition Fair on Thursday, April 16,2009 at East Mecklenburg High School in the cafeteria from 5pm until 7:30pm. The purpose of the Transition Fair is to educate and inform parents, students, and educators of the services available in Mecklenburg County for people with disabilities.

PRIDE Magazine

Check us out this month in the December—February issue of PRIDE magazine. We are featured in a generous article located in the health section, which focuses on people with disabilities here in Charlotte.