The Arc of Mecklenburg County, Inc. June / July 2009

The Arc Voice

Creating Opportunities within our Community for People with Cognitive Impairments and their Families to Experience more Meaningful and Satisfying Lives

From the Executive Director, Lauren Mullis

Inside this issue:

From the Executive Director	1
Development News	2
Community Education Update	3
Disability Awareness News	4
Disability Awareness News	5
Membership Application	6
Aktion Club Update	7
Announcements	8

Now is the Time...for Action!

It seems to be the theme of the year - tough times, shrinking budgets, economic hardships and crisis situations. 2009 has been one of the toughest years, and it is unfortunate that it is only half way over. But at least, it is half way over. We can all hope that 2010 will be better!

If there was ever a time for you to get involved in an advocacy movement, this is the time. As the state legislature ponders over the state budget and looks for places to make cuts, we need to be vocal in our insistence that they do not cut services for people with developmental disabilities.

For years, we have struggled to get to where we are with services. And in one years time all of that hard work could be erased leaving a disaster in its wake. As much as we try to explain our need for NO CUTS, we are facing a tough reality. I urge you to pick up the phone and call your representative. They are willing to listen to you. The more we can remind them about our needs the more it will stay in their minds. You can reach your representative by calling 919-733-7928. If you are unaware of who represents you, you can find that information by going to http://www.ncleg.net/.

Please read the full update from Dave Richard, The Arc of NC Executive Director, on the happenings at the state level for people with disabilities on page 5 of this newsletter and take action! If you have any questions, you can always contact me at 704-332-4535 x 102

In other "Time for Action" news, I hope to see you all for our upcoming Arc Angel Annual Awards Dinner Fundraiser. This event, scheduled for Friday, June 19th at Park Rd. Baptist Church from 6-8 pm will be our largest fundraiser of the year and we need you to attend to make this a success!

As you all know, The Arc of Mecklenburg is facing some tough times with our own budget, due largely in part to the United Way scandal. In order for us to remain strong advocates for people with disabilities and their families during these critical times, we are going to need the support of people who will invest in our organization. You can find more information on this annual event on page 2 of this newsletter.

The day after our Arc Angel Annual Awards Dinner Fundraiser, we will be at the Joseph-Beth Booksellers store at SouthPark Mall from 10:00 am—2:00pm passing out vouchers for customers to have 20% of their purchase donated directly to The Arc of Mecklenburg County. In addition, we will have a booth set up educating shoppers on the services we provide. More information on this event is located on page 3 of the newsletter and there is a flyer with your vouchers included in this newsletter as well.

While it is certain that we are facing tough times, it is also certain that we can survive these tough times by coming together and supporting what is important. I hope to see you all on June 19th & 20th and hope that you all will also get involved in some grassroots advocacy! Just remember: *Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.—Margaret Mead*

Lauren Mullis

The Arc of Mecklenburg County, Inc.
4108 Park Rd. Suite 200
Charlotte, NC 28209
Phone: 704/332-4535
Fax: 704/332-3148
www.arcmeck.org

Board of Directors 2008-2009

Victor Hart- President
Patrick Pruden- Vice-President
Alice Bostic- Secretary
Adam Silver - Treasurer
Donnie Simmons- Past President

Lisa Brown
Iris Boyd
Stephaney Gaddy
Sara Marie Miller
Laura Newell
Ryan Platt
Eric Ritchie
Kathleen Summers
Jeff Tracy
Katherine Trela
Avi Williams
Shamika Williams

Staff

Lauren Mullis– Executive Director

Sabrina McCracken—Community Education Coordinator

Francine Patton - Child Advocacy & Volunteer Coordinator

Meika Garner - Development Coordinator

Steve McIllwain - Program Assistant

Information in this newsletter is provided to inform members of options only and does not imply any endorsement of the service item or event by The Arc. Financial Information about this organization and a copy of its license are available from the State Solicitation Licensing branch at 888/330-4989. The license is not an endorsement by the state.

Sponsors of the Arc Angel Awards Dinner

Arc Angel Sponsor ($1,000)

LANCE INC.

Ms. Dorothy Mullis

Community Supporter Sponsor ($500)

Developmental Disabilities Resources

Arc Friend Sponsors ($350)

- Presbyterian Hospital
- Pineville Kiwanis Club
- Clayton Parsons CPA
- Luna Lounge
- Miller Electric
- Ms. Sara Marie Miller
- Dr. & Mrs. Dupuy
- Ms. Alice Bostic
- Ms. Iris Boyd

We are grateful to the sponsors that have donated to our mission and have provided us with the critical funding that is needed to continue our programs and services. ***If you are interested in being a sponsor in honor of someone you know and love or would like to be a sponsor in support of the children and adults that we serve please contact Meika Garner at 704-332-4535 ext. 104 or meika@arcmeck.org.*** A small ad will be placed in our program if you would like to dedicate your sponsorship to someone or even a group. We would also appreciate any leads for sponsorships. So if you know and individual or business that we can contact about being a sponsor please let us know and we can provide them with the necessary information and speak with them about the different sponsorship opportunities that we have available.

We are very excited for the Awards Dinner this year and hope that you will join us for this membership meeting and celebration. We would like to make the correction that the event will begin at **6pm** on Friday**.**

Arc Angel

Arc Angel Awards Dinner
6pm to 8pm
Friday June 19, 2009
Park Road Baptist Church
(3900 Park Road, Charlotte, NC)

Community Education Update

Save the Date!!!

The Arc of Mecklenburg County BOOKFAIR

Saturday, June 20,2009 10am until 2pm

Joseph-Beth Booksellers-Southpark Mall

4345 Barclay Downs Drive

Charlotte, NC 28210

Join us for shopping and/or a meal

Come help support The Arc of Mecklenburg County while you purchase your Father's Day gifts and/or summer reading materials.

The Arc of Mecklenburg will receive 20% of all Voucher purchases made in the bookstore and 10% of all purchases made at Bronte's Bistro!

Email or Call Sabrina to get vouchers to send out to your family, friends, and co-workers! (Enclosed you will also find 3 vouchers!)

704-332-4535 ext. 103

From the *American Academy of Pediatrics 2009*

Once viewed simply as a nice way for babies and parents to cuddle, skin-to-skin contact also called Kangaroo care is now recognized as offering benefits to both babies and their parents. Several recent randomized clinical trials showed Kangaroo Care is associated with improved temperature, more quiet sleep and less time crying as well as improved exclusivity and duration of breastfeeding following discharge. Furthermore, Kangaroo Care has been linked with enhanced breast milk production, improved parent-child relationship, and slightly better test scores on developmental test at 6 months. Although further studies are needed, this early work suggest that skin-to-skin holding (Kangaroo Care) might offer substantial benefits to babies and moms.

The Charlotte Fire Department has created a Special Populations Program which helps Emergency Personnel within Mecklenburg County be prepared in a situation where there is a higher need for assistance. They are able to enter this information directly into their computer system. By doing this, when a special needs location calls in, the Fire Department can notify personnel before arriving on the scene of the special needs.

Examples of the special needs circumstances are: If the people have difficulty evacuating the residence in an emergency situation, if a person is bed bound or wheelchair bound, if a person simply would not understand how to respond in a situation. There are many situations that would apply; these are only a few examples.

The Special Populations Program simply asks for the following information:

- Address – please include names of the apartment complex and the apartment number/letter if applicable
- Telephone number – including all emergency contact information
- Name of the client needing assistance – in case of dependents please include the name of the parent/caregiver also

Tell the CFD why the person needs assistance. An example of why this is important would be in the case of an autistic child who upsets easily. It is better that the CFD be prepared than to go into the situation and risk anyone getting hurt.

Supply the CFD/Special Populations Program detailed instructions of how to find the client's sleeping area, i.e. first floor, back right corner. This will help the CFD get to the special needs person more quickly than entering a house and not knowing where to look.

Share special instructions – many of our elderly citizens install a lock box with a key and give the CFD a code so that they do not have to force entry to the home. It is helpful to know if there is oxygen stored in the home. Are there any animals loose in the home and do they bite? Is there a hidden key on the premise? Also, if there is any immediate medical attention to know.

Due to HIPPA laws, the Special Population Card is careful about what information it places in their system. They do not put names into any type of document that the public potentially has access to. They limit the information to only what is necessary to ensure the safety of the citizen of Mecklenburg County.

For more information regarding the Special Populations Program, please contact 704-336-2441.

A Genetic Clue to Why Autism Affects Boys More

By ALICE PARK Alice Park Wed May 20, 5:50 pm ET

TIME

Among the many mysteries that befuddle autism researchers: why the disorder affects boys four times more often than girls. But in new findings reported online today by the journal *Molecular Psychiatry,* researchers say they have found a genetic clue that may help explain the disparity.

The newly discovered autism-risk gene, identified by authors as CACNA1G, is more common in boys than in girls (why that's so is still not clear), and the authors suggest it plays a role in boys' increased risk of the developmental disorder. CACNA1G, which sits on chromosome 17, amid other genes that have been previously linked to autism, is responsible for regulating the flow of calcium into and out of cells. Nerve cells in the brain rely on calcium to become activated, and research suggests that imbalances in the mineral can result in the overstimulation of neural connections and create developmental problems, such as autism and even epilepsy, which is also a common feature of autism.

"Our current theories about autism suggest that the disorder is related to overexcitability at nerve endings," says Geri Dawson, chief science officer of Autism Speaks, an advocacy group that provided the genetic data used by the study's authors. "It's interesting to see that the gene they identified appears to modulate excitability of neurons."

For the new study, researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), combed the genetic database of the Autism Genetic Resource Exchange (AGRE), a resource of DNA from 2,000 families with at least one autistic child. The scientists focused on the more than 1,000 genetic samples of families in which at least one son was affected by the disorder, prompted by the results of an earlier study using the same database, which identified a rich autism-related genetic region on chromosome 17 that contained genetic variants more common in boys than in girls. While nearly 40% of the general population has the most common form of CACNA1G, one variant of the gene was more prevalent in autistic boys, researchers found. "There is a strong genetic signal in this region," says Dr. Daniel Geschwind, director of UCLA's Center for Autism Research and Treatment and one of the study's co-authors. "But this gene doesn't explain all of that signal or even half of it. What that means is that there are many more genes in this region contributing to autism."

That's not surprising for a disorder as complex as autism - actually, a spectrum of developmental disorders involving impairment in language, social behavior and certain physical behaviors - with symptoms that range widely in number and severity. So far, studies have linked a handful of genes, all of which play a role in the way nerve cells connect and communicate, with autism spectrum disorders. It's likely not only that a large number of genes contribute to the disorder, but also that a different combination of genes - as well as unique interactions between genes and environment - are responsible for each individual case of autism.

So it's certainly a daunting challenge to begin teasing out the individual genes that may contribute to autism, as the UCLA team has with CACNA1G, but databases like AGRE make the job slightly easier. The next step will be to try to use known autism genes to help develop screening tools or early interventions. "We are going to have a much better understanding of the causes of autism over the next five to 10 years," says Dawson. "We're in a period of great discovery."

From The Arc of North Carolina's Executive Director, Dave Richard:

May 22, 2009

This week the House of Representatives have come to grip with what a 4.5 billion dollar deficit will look like and have begun their attempts at a spending plan with out increased revenues. The results will be disastrous for all North Carolinians and even worse for NC citizens with disabilities and their families.

In the Department of Health and Human Services the Committee is expected to reduce spending by 1.35 billion dollars. This cut must come from the 4.9 billion dollar state funds in the DHHS budget. A 20% cut is terrible in its own right but the DHHS only has 1.713 billion dollars that is not in the Medicaid program matching federal funds. Of the remaining 1.713 billion over 700 million is in the Division of MHDDSAS. Any dollar cut in Medicaid adds an additional 2 dollars to the impact of the cut.

If the legislature doesn't raise revenue we can expect significant reductions in CAP/DD/personal care services/ state funded developmental disabilities services/vocational rehabilitation services and much more.

In education, class sizes will increase dramatically, teacher assistant's positions and other support services will be eliminated and the school year will be shortened by 5-10 days. Community colleges who train workers for our field will be slashed as well as University programs that produce teachers and professionals who support people with disabilities will be severely cut.

In essence the gains we have all worked for in the past 20 years will be eliminated in one budget year! This will also add to the revenue crisis because more jobs will be lost in our economy causing the economic condition of our state to worsen.

We are working with the administration and the General Assembly to help them look at areas to cut that will do the least damage but no amount of focus will make these cuts acceptable.

Often when the state has a budget shortfall legislators and departments will suggest cuts that are untenable just to have the public react. This may be the case this time but no legislator or member of the administration is saying this. They continue to indicate these cuts are necessary because we will not raise revenue.

I believe we can still make a difference but it will be necessary for Chapters of The Arc, our members and all others who care about people with disabilities and their families to make talking to their legislator the highest priority! If members of the general assembly understand that their constituents want them to raise revenue to save the states vital services they will be more likely to act. What I am certain of is if we fail to respond people with disabilities and their families will see significant and life changing reductions in the supports and services offered by North Carolina.

Please be looking for alerts from us asking you to take specific actions. Please be prepared to act and to engage all of your networks to do the same. This time your action will be the difference.

The Arc of Mecklenburg County will continue to keep you informed regarding budget matters as information becomes available. You can also keep up with events as they happen by visiting: www.arcmeck.org (online resources: Disability News / Call to Action)

Thought You Might Like to Know...

The Arc of Mecklenburg County has a Facebook page & a Twitter Page! Now you can get involved with us through these online networking sites! Join our Cause on Facebook & follow us on Twitter to be kept up to date on daily happenings.

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
☐ Self-Advocate	$20
☐ Individual	$30
☐ Family	$35
☐ Corporate/Sponsor	$100
☐ Arc Friend	$500
☐ President's Club	$1000
Total:	_____

Method of Payment

☐ Check

☐ Visa

☐ MasterCard

Name

Address

Phone

Credit Card # Exp. date

Signature

The Arc of Mecklenburg County
4108 Park Rd. #200
Charlotte, NC 28209

Phone: 704-332-4535
Fax: 704-332-3148
generalinfo@arcmeck.org

Aktion Club's of Mecklenburg County

Thank you!!!!!!!!

Goes out to the Matthews Kiwanis and Matthews Landscape Manager Pat Meehan for their helping hands in the Aktion Club's Adopt a Spot

Adopt A Spot

The Aktion Clubbers of South Mecklenburg met in Matthews to plant flowers in front of the "Welcome To Matthews" sign at Carmel Baptist Church. they are looking forward to decorating

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.

Talent Show!!!!!!!

Yes, the Talent Show on July 17th is approaching fast and all Mecklenburg County Aktion Clubs are getting ready for a night to remember. All Aktion Clubs are having their pre-Talent Shows in June to determine who will represent their club in July.

The BIG EVENT, will be held on July 17th at 5:30pm at Philadelphia Presbyterian Church located at 11501 Bain School Rd Mint Hill.

Dinner will be catered by *Bob-B-Cue Restaurant* at a cost of $8.00 per plate. Plates and raffle tickets will be sold at the Talent Show in July to raise money for The Arc.

Please come out with your friends and families to support the Aktion

Clubbers and have a great time with fun, fellowship and laughter.

This event is completely sponsored by The Mint Hill Kiwanis Club. A BIG Thank You goes to them for their leadership of this project.

Aktion Club Calendar of Events

June 3 & 17—Aktion Club Char-Meck/Nevins regular meeting 9:00am at Nevins Center

June 12—Aktion Club South Mecklenburg regular meeting 7:00pm at Central United Methodist Church

June 26—Lake Norman regular Aktion Club meeting 7:00pm at Boy Scout Hit at Mount Zion United Church

July 1 & 15—Aktion Club Char-Meck/Nevins regular meeting 9:00am at Nevins Center

———July 17———

All Mecklenburg Co. Aktion Clubs are meeting at 5:30pm at Philadelphia Presbyterian Church.

11501 Bain School Rd Mint Hill

Call Steve at 704-332-4535 ext.106 for any questions.

THE Arc

OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, INC.

4108 Park Rd. Suite 200

Charlotte, NC 28209

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHARLOTTE, N.C.
PERMIT NO. 995

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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.

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

United Way of Central Carolinas

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

Announcements

- Umar's Art Center is looking to enroll new members into the art program. The students learn a variety of paintings, pottery, jewelry, and digital photography. If this is an interest contact Elleen Schwartz at (704)348-0994. You don't have to be a UMAR resident to participate.

- Help The Arc's K-Kids by donating school supplies so they can stuff bookbags for their community service project in August. We need bookbags, pencils, pens, paper, crayons, glue etc. Let's help get the kids prepared for the new school year with supplies.

- The Disability Awareness Night at Knights Stadium (sponsored by Mass Mutual, Exceptional Parent Magazine & A Special Needs Plan) is scheduled for Friday, July 10th. Game time is 7:15pm. More information will be forthcoming on how you can get your tickets to this annual fun summer time event.