

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*

~You're Invited!~

The Arc of Mecklenburg County Board of Directors and Staff would like to cordially invite you to attend our **First Annual Festival of Trees Viewing Party**. This fantastic event will be held on Thursday, December 17th from 4—8 pm at The brand new Ritz -Carlton Hotel in Uptown Charlotte. This event will be a new version of our annual holiday party.



The Ritz -Carlton is located at 201 East Trade Street—Charlotte, NC 28202. It is on the corner of College and Trade Streets. Parking is available at the hotel—however, it will cost \$18 to valet park your car. There are other parking decks available in the vicinity (Epicenter parking is located directly across from the hotel on Trade St.)—and rates vary. We would like to suggest as an alternative to parking in a deck—you can park at a light rail station and take the light rail train in to Uptown. The Ritz Carlton can be easily accessed from the Arena /Charlotte Transportation train stop.

Members of The Arc of Mecklenburg will be able to attend this event for only \$5.00, self-advocates for only \$3 and the general public for \$10. Come and enjoy light hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, a silent auction, and beautifully decorated trees by our sponsors in a glorious ballroom at the hotel.



This first time event is raising much needed money for The Arc and our programs. With the support of community partners and sponsors we will be able to reach our goal. The Day of Decorating for our sponsors was held on November 30 and everyone had a great time preparing their trees to be displayed for our guests.

Tree Sponsors include: The Charlotte Checkers, The Charlotte Bobcats, Carolinas HealthCare, Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation, The Home Depot, Johnny's Red-Bowl Asian Cuisine, K-104.7, Network Cabling Systems, Jason's Deli and The Arc of Mecklenburg County Board of Directors.



The Silent Auction will have an array of fantastic items to bid on as well. This will be a great place to pick up those last-minute holiday gifts for friends and family.

We hope to see you all out at The Ritz-Carlton on Thursday, December 17th for our viewing party and some holiday cheer.

Lauren Mullis

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2009 Festival of Trees & Viewing Party

We are hosting our very own Festival of Trees event this year to help to raise money that will help us to continue our programs and services. Trees will be displayed at the Ritz-Carlton in Uptown Charlotte beginning Tuesday, December 1, ending Tuesday December 29. As part of the Festival of Trees and in place of our traditional Holiday Party we will host the Viewing Party. At this event you will have a chance to see all of the beautifully decorated trees that have been sponsored. The Viewing Party is on Thursday, December 17 from 4:00 to 8:00pm at the Ritz-Carlton located at 201 East Trade Street. There will be a silent auction, light hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar. Tickets will be sold to attend, guests \$10, members \$5, and self-advocates \$3.

sponsors of this event include:

- The Charlotte Checkers
- The Charlotte Bobcats
- Carolinas HealthCare
- Jason's Deli
- Network Cabling Systems
- Johnny's Red Bowl Asian Cuisine
- Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation
- The Arc of Mecklenburg County Board of Directors



- The Home Depot
- K-104.7

To Help

\$20 will print and bind ten resource guides for Charlotteans with developmental disabilities and their families.

\$30 will cover six hot meals and an informational guide for parents with children in the neonatal intensive care unit.

\$50 will provide the materials necessary for a community service project for the Aktion Club, a self-advocacy group for adults with developmental disabilities.

For more information or to donate, visit arcmeck.org.

Meika Garner: 704-332-4535 x 104 or meika@arcmeck.org

Lauren Mullis: 704-332-4535 x 102 or lauren@arcmeck.org

Arc Angel Mail Request

This year we have reached out to our membership for their end of year giving. We are desperately trying to continue the level of service that our clients expect but, we have been met with some extreme adversity in this economic climate. We have been diligently raising money through fundraising efforts and grants however, we are still struggling. It is our hopes that as members you understand the value in the services and programs that we provide and that you will consider our agency in your giving this holiday season. We would genuinely appreciate your support.

Education Update

The Wal-Mart School-To-Community Initiative

The Arc of the United States has been awarded a \$3M grant by the Walmart Foundation. The Walmart Foundation School-to-Community Transition Project is a three year grant which begins on July 1, 2009. \$2.25M will be sub-granted to local chapters of The Arc throughout the United States

The Arc will search out programs, services and supports that result in better school-to-community transition outcomes for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) including Autism. A Steering Committee and Expert Advisory Panel, comprised of young adults with disabilities, parents, family members, professionals, academics and school system and government officials will advise The Arc in the development of a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Up to fifty chapters of The Arc will be selected to receive multi-year sub-grants. As a condition of participation, sub-grantees will be required to implement a rigorous and practical system of evaluation that will be determined by The Arc of the United States

Throughout the course of the project, educational resources will be created and disseminated to foster the start-up, expansion and/or improvement of school-to community transition services within The Arc's network of chapters across the country. At the conclusion of the project, an assessment report will be created describing the outcomes achieved by the funded programs with an eye toward the future replication of successful program models.

The impact of the project will be better transition outcomes, specifically greater inclusion and involvement of youth with I/DD and autism in independent living, employment, post-secondary education or vocational training, and community, social and civic affairs.

The Arc of Mecklenburg County has submitted a Letter of Intent to apply for this grant. We will be working on the RFP in partnership with other local agencies that we are currently partnering with on transition initiatives through the Mecklenburg County Best Practices Committee. We will keep you posted on the outcome and future of this important endeavor.

Thank You

The Pineville Kiwanis Club raised \$6,200 for The Arc of Mecklenburg County at their annual golf tournament in September. We appreciate their hard work and commitment to our cause!
Business Leaders of Charlotte (BLOC) also helped The Arc of Mecklenburg by donating half of the proceeds from BLOCtoberfest, an outdoor music festival in Uptown Charlotte.

U.S. Study finds prevalence of Down Syndrome births up sharply

November 30th, 2009 From [Pediatrics](#), [Reuters/ABC](#):

The prevalence of Down syndrome at birth rose by more than thirty percent in 10 U.S. regions from 1979 to 2003, according to new work by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, found that nearly 12 babies per 10,000 born in 2003 had Down syndrome, as compared with about 9 babies in every 10,000 born in 1979. It found that Down syndrome was more common among Hispanics and whites than among African Americans, and was more often found in boys than in girls.

Dr. Adolfo Correa of the CDC's National Center on Birth Defects, one of the study's authors, told Reuters that the increase in prevalence is probably caused by the increasing trend toward later child-bearing. Women over 35 are five times more likely than younger women to have children with Down syndrome, he said.

Correa said the research couldn't determine what effect widespread prenatal screening and selective abortion have had on the incidence of Down syndrome.

Because the incidence of Down syndrome at birth is increasing and medical advances are lengthening the life expectancies of people with the disorder, the researchers said, the number of people with Down syndrome is likely to increase over time.

The scientists concluded that more research is necessary to determine whether health services are meeting the needs of people with Down syndrome across the lifespan, and suggested the development of registries to track the development and health needs of people with Down syndrome throughout their lives.

The ten regions studied were Georgia (5 metropolitan Atlanta counties), California (11 counties), Colorado, Iowa, North Carolina, Arkansas, New York (excluding New York City), Oklahoma, Texas and Utah. Arkansas reported the smallest prevalence of Down syndrome at birth, at 9.7 per 10,000, while Utah reported the highest, at 13.7.

Rosa's Law to End Term 'Mentally Retarded'

Mental Retardation Slurs Have Long History, but Cost Nothing to Change, Say Advocates

BY SUSAN DONALDSON JAMES

Nov. 18, 2009—

On any given day at the mall, the sports field or the movies, 8-year-old Rosa Marcellino hears people say, "That's so retarded," or "You're such a retard."

"Even good kids use the word, not realizing that they're talking about people like my sister," said Rosa's brother Nick, a Maryland 14-year-old.

"We're not allowed to use the words at my house, it would be just like saying a curse word," said Nick in testimony to Maryland legislators. "We're also not allowed to use other words that are hurtful to minorities or people who are different."

Rosa -- who Nick calls the "smartest person I know" -- has Down syndrome and is now at the center of a bill in Congress to strike the term "mentally retarded" from the federal lexicon.

Last January, Nick, who is a freshman at South River High School in Edgewater, Md., convinced his state legislature to change the official phrase to "individual with an intellectual disability."

The law would affect how Americans refer to the more than 6 million adults and children who are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities.

"The word retarded is slang to call someone stupid, and we know Rosa is not stupid at all," Nick told ABCNews.com. "Words are important."

So important that Nick and his family were there Tuesday as Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., introduced a bill in the U.S. Senate.

The solution, Mikulski said, is to be called Rosa's Law, and it will cost taxpayers nothing.

"It brings us out of the dark ages and into a world of evolved sensibilities by retiring an archaic term that equates the person with the disability and substituting it with a term that references the type of disability," Mikulski told her fellow senators.

Today, the proposed federal health insurance bill from the House of Representatives still uses what many consider to be an offensive term, referring to "a hospital or a nursing facility for the mentally retarded."

And even in Maryland, the term must be used to comply with U.S. Census designations.

It all began as a family effort when Rosa's elementary school changed the coding on her education plan from "health impaired" to "mentally retarded," said her mother, Nina Marcellino.

"When I came home and told the kids, they didn't know it was the word people used to describe their sister," she told ABCNews.com.

The school principal agreed to drop the designation and Rosa's sisters Gigi, 12, and Maddie, 10, set out to get petitions signed.

The family enlisted the support of Maryland state delegate Ted Sophocleus and ultimately changed the wording in the health and education code at the state level.

Nick, a lacrosse player and a "quiet kid," became the family spokesman, his mother told ABCNews.com. "I am so proud of all my kids."

Rosa, who plays soccer and loves math and science, is particularly proud of her family's efforts.

"She doesn't really know what the law is about, but she's excited that she gets her own law," said Nick. "And we thought she should be treated equally."

At the turn of the 20th century, children like Rosa were institutionalized and the prevailing thinking was that they should not interact with so-called "normal" people.

Those who were intellectually challenged were labeled "feeble-minded" in federal statutes. But by the 1960s, that term was thrown out for "mentally retarded." By 1990, Congress passed the Americans With Disabilities Act that outlawed many forms of discrimination against disabled people, but it wasn't until much later that terminology changed.

In 2006, the American Association on Mental Retardation voted to change its name to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

By 2008, The Associated Press struck "mentally retarded" from its stylebook -- the Bible of mainstream journalism.

"My sister might be one of the smartest kids I've ever met, and that's the truth!" Nick told legislators. "It might take her longer to learn some things, and you can't always understand everything she says. She'll never be 'just like' most people, but hopefully, neither will I."

Today, most advocacy groups use phrases like "mentally challenged" or "intellectual disability" or the broader term, which also encompasses autism and cerebral palsy, "developmental disability."

"Mental illness, more than any other disability, has gone through these iterations of names," said Donald Freedheim, professor emeritus of psychology at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio.

"It's so prevalent, kids calling kids dummies -- it's always a derogatory term," he told ABCNews.com. "We've gone through moron, imbecile to mentally sub-normal to mentally deficient. You can practically write a history of mental retardation."

And no sooner does one term change than the new replacement becomes "stigmatizing," he said.

Still, he agrees the words need to change. "It's a horrible added burden to children and families."

Ron Drabman, a clinical psychologist and former director of psychology training at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, said schools need to do more than just change words.

"Words are important, but it's more important to protect children," he told ABCNews.com. "But it's much more difficult."

"The question to ask is, do we want to cause this hurt to other people, when, in fact, it doesn't cost us anything?" said Drabman. "It's the reasonable thing to do."

As for Nina Marcellino and her family, the issue is larger than just changing the lexicon.

"It was more than words to us," she said. "We all felt like you cannot separate what you call people from how you treat people. Attitudes have been changing and everybody felt that with a new term, it was a new beginning."

Thought You Might Like to Know...

The Arc of Mecklenburg County is beginning the recruitment process for positions for our Board of Directors. Terms will begin in July and will last for three years. We will have several key members rotating off in June and need to fill several positions. If you are interested in joining our team and helping The Arc advance its mission please contact Lauren Mullis at 704-332-4535 x 102

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!



<u>Sign up for:</u>	<u>Price</u>
<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 <input type="checkbox"/> Check <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard	Name _____ Address _____ _____ _____ Phone _____
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Credit Card #	Exp. date
Signature	



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Aktion Club's of Mecklenburg County

A BIG THANK YOU goes out to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Aktion club for their part in the canned food Drive held in November. Aktion Clubbers collected a box full of canned food and donated the box to Loaves & Fishes for needy families. Nice work Aktion Clubbers!

Congratulations goes out to Lake Norman Aktion Club's newest elected president and officers. Danny Dimola was elected as the new President of the Lake Norman Aktion Club along with Chris McCall as Vice President, Jonathan Singer as Treasurer, and Robby Payne as Secretary. Roger Porubsky and Preston Hutto will serve as advisor assistants. The new officers have already made a difference by scheduling a canned food drive, clothing drive, and a fundraiser to give back to their community. Congratulations again to the new officers!

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 South Mecklenburg Aktion Club kicked off their Samaritan's Feet project in November. Peter Rieke spearheaded the project with the help from Kiwanis of Pineville, The Matthews Kiwanis, and The Mint Hill Kiwanis. Emily Morgan, from The Arc of Union County along with Monroe Aktion Clubbers, John Dainotto, and a host of families and friends assisted. Everyone made sure that the children overseas received a very needed pair of shoes. Great job everyone.

Aktion Club Calendar of Events

- *Charlotte -Mecklenburg Aktion Club Regular Meeting*
Every 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month
9:00am at Nevins Center
- *Lake Norman Aktion Club Regular Meeting*
Every 4th Friday of the month
7:00 pm at the Boy Scout Hut at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
- *South Mecklenburg Aktion Club Regular Meeting*
Every 2nd Friday of the month
7:00 pm at Memorial United Methodist Church

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

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.

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 of Mecklenburg received a grant from The Speedway Children's Charities Fund for our K-Kids program. K-Kids is an all-inclusive program that focuses on character building, self-esteem enhancement, and leadership development for children ages 6 to 12. Participants engage in recreational, social, and service activities that help them to learn first hand how to focus on the abilities of one another and respect their differences. A BIG Thanks goes to the Speedway Children's Charities for helping to keep our K-Kids program in operation!
- K-Kids will be going on a bike/hike ride on Saturday, February 13, 2010 at Colonel Francis Beatty's Park in Matthews sponsored by Trips for Kids Charlotte. To RSVP contact Francine Patton at (704) 332-4535 ext 101.
- Donations are needed for Noah's Arc project we need: bottles, wipes, lotion, powders, onesies, hand sanitizer, word finder books, etc. Any donation is greatly appreciated!!

****NEW NEWSLETTER CYCLE BEGINS NOW****

The Arc of Mecklenburg is adjusting the frequency in which newsletters will be distributed due to budget and staff cuts. Newsletters will be distributed by season or four times a year. However, you can get up to date information about The Arc of Mecklenburg, our programs and events by visiting our website www.arcmeck.org or joining our cause on Facebook or following us on Twitter.