

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*

March is Mental Retardation Awareness Month

Since 1979, The Arc of the United States has sponsored National Mental Retardation Awareness Month in March. During this month, The Arc will be focusing our efforts on increasing public awareness of mental retardation and related developmental disabilities. It is our goal to enhance the community's understanding of the issues affecting people with mental retardation.

On Saturday, March 8th from 9:00 am—12:00 pm we will host a workshop for parents about the general curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities, and how it applies to parents. This workshop will be held at St. Matthew Catholic Church and is free to anyone wishing to attend. Please contact 704-332-4535 x 16 to sign up today and please read the article on page 3 of this newsletter for more information on this workshop.

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On Friday, March 28th The Arc is hosting an Advocacy Luncheon with special guest speaker, Ellen Russell, from The Arc of NC. This Advocacy Luncheon will be open to anyone interested in learning more about the current state of affairs for people with disabilities in the state of North Carolina and how you can get involved in working to make a difference in the lives of those with developmental disabilities. More details will come to you soon regarding this event.

This is also The Arc of Mecklenburg's 55th Year Anniversary! All year long we will be unveiling different events and awareness campaigns to promote The Arc and the work that we have done and will be doing for future generations.

Stay tuned...

Staff Changes at The Arc of Mecklenburg County:

Please help me in welcoming the newest members of The Arc Staff! Mr. Steve McIllwain is our new program assistant. Steve will be working part time with us helping with such activities as our NICU program, Aktion Clubs and SibShops as well as helping with Safefest in May. Welcome Steve!

Sabrina McCracken is joining our staff full time as our Community Education Coordinator. Sabrina was an intern for The Arc of Mecklenburg in 2004 and has been a loyal member and volunteer since. Sabrina will be primarily responsible for our Resource Guide, education workshops and conferences as well as general awareness of our mission and values. Welcome back Sabrina!

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Holiday Party

Our holiday party at the Prevue Lounge in NoDa was a great success and we would like to thank everyone who came out! We truly enjoyed the opportunity to spend time together over the holidays.



We had a great spread of food that everyone indulged in from Townshends Gourmet. We raffled off gift certificates to Tony's Pizza and Cabo Fish Taco for those who were in attendance every hour. We also provided information about our programs and services for those who wanted to learn more. Throughout the evening we conducted a silent auction with beautifully appointed baskets created by our very own, Francine.



We would like to thank Tony's Pizza, Cabo Fish Taco, Trader Joes, and Disney for their donations. We would also like to thank our board members who donated baskets, which were a huge hit, with a little something for everyone.

The Barron family is in our thoughts as they cope with the loss of Edward Lee and Johnny Barron, beloved family members and friends. We would like to thank them for selecting our agency to honor their loved ones by requesting that donations be sent to us in their memory. The donations that we received were greatly appreciated and have helped us to better serve individuals with disabilities and their families here in Charlotte.

Bequeaths and willed gifts are a great way to leave a legacy of a family member or friend. Their memory will live on in the lives of adults and children with disabilities that we touch everyday through our programs and services. If you are interested in more information please can contact us at The Arc of Mecklenburg County 704-332-4535.

Community Education Update

What is Access to the General Curriculum for students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities, and How Does it Apply to me as a Parent?

Attend this workshop on March 8th at St. Matthew Catholic Church from 9:00 am–12:00 pm.

Contact The Arc of Mecklenburg at 704-332-4535 x 16 to register for this FREE training for parents!

Presentation Description

Parent involvement in student learning has always been of great importance. This need has become even more apparent with recent federal legislation requiring high academic expectations for ALL students to in the area of reading, mathematics, and science.

Based on scientific research, the presenter will share data, videos, and instructional materials to support the use of systematic instructional strategies to promote academic achievement in the area of adapted literature, story-based math instruction, and inquiry-based science.

IEP alignment will be discussed, as well as finding a “solid ground” on the debate of functional verses academic instruction.

Learning Outcomes

Ability to answer these key questions:

- Why are we teaching academics now?
- What should I see my child learning in the classroom setting?
- Is there any research to support teaching academics to this population of students?
- How can I help support my child in his/her learning?
- Where can I find information to help my child with academics at home and school?
- How can this information help me during my child's IEP and parent/teacher conferences?

Bree Jimenez's will be the featured speaker on March 8th for this training!

Bree Jimenez is currently a grant liaison with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, for the Reading, Writing, Math, & Science for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities grant. With a team of researchers, she helps design and conduct research in the area of general curriculum access. She has written chapters for General Curriculum textbooks, and is a published curriculum writer. Bree has experience teaching students with moderate/severe disabilities for 7 years. She has spent extensive time writing extended content standards for NC-DPI, as well as training educators and administrators on alternate assessments in the state of North Carolina. Bree travels nationally to conferences, school systems, and local LEA's conducting in-service for teachers, parents, and service providers of students with moderate/severe disabilities on assessment and general curriculum access. Bree is also a special education doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

SAFE FEST: A FESTIVAL ON SAFETY COMING THIS MAY!

We have recently been granted a person-powered grant from the United Way for an event to educate children and adults with disabilities and their families about safety. We have begun working with our Leading the Way Team and are in the process of securing a date and place for Safe Fest 2008. The team is very excited to be working with The Arc of Mecklenburg County. Our team consists of a charismatic group of working professionals who have devoted a great deal of time and energy to make this project a huge success.



This event will be a great reason to get out in the community and learn helpful information and tools about how to keep your families safe. We have many great ideas and plans for the event so please keep an eye out for additional information!



Action Alert!

...Bringing You Advocacy Issues from The Arc of NC

New Waiver Development Update

We Need Your Input!

January 25, 2008

The Division of MH/DD/SAS has been working on the new waivers. As you may recall from our last E-Alert, the current CAP-MR/DD waiver expires in August 2008 and the Legislature has mandated the development of tiered waivers. The state has requested and is expected to receive authority to extend the current waiver until the end of December 2008 in order to have adequate time to develop a waiver plan that best meets the needs of North Carolinians.

The development of tiered waivers will mean that the waiver that a person receives will be based on their support needs; i.e. Tier 1 will support people with greater independence and less support needs while Tier 4 will serve people with medical fragility and significant behavioral support needs.

The Arc continues to advocate for more flexibility in the waivers, the ability for families and individuals to self direct their supports and services, and for more ability for the Local Management Entities (LMEs) to manage the waivers. To date, the Division has been receptive to input and is attempting to make the waivers user-friendly.

We want to continue to provide positive and rational feedback on how to make the waivers work best for individuals and families. To that end, we really want to know your thoughts. For now **the feedback that would be most helpful is your thoughts on what is currently working, what is hopelessly broken, and what needs to be repaired with the current waiver.** Please let us know what you want to see in the new waivers so that we can formulate our advocacy position.

Send an e-mail to lquzman@arcnc.org with what you would like to see with new waivers. Your ideas and suggestions will be used to shape our positions and advocacy as the new waivers are developed.

As drafts of the new waiver plan begin to emerge we will make sure you have the information and we'll make sure you know how to provide your input and feedback. For those of you who are not familiar with the waiver, we have created an [Information Page](#) on our website.

If the link above does not work, just go to our home page: www.arcnc.org and you'll see a link to [Service System Information](#).

6 Planning Tips For Parents

By Ryan F. Platt; Personal Strategy Group

Will / Designating a Guardian. While a will and the designation of a guardian after a parent is unable to care for a minor child is important, it is critical for those parents of children with special needs. This is usually a very difficult decision, due to the fact families feel they do not want to burden a friend or family member with the life-long commitment of caring for their child. In some cases, the care needs of the child may be so demanding that a guardian other than his or her siblings will be required. Parents need to make this determination while they still can, and the designation of the guardian will be done within their will.

Please keep in mind that an adult child may require a guardian before the parent dies—meaning the parents health deteriorates to a point they can no longer care for themselves or their adult child. It is therefore important to begin making a transition to a new guardian while the parent is able to assist in this process. You can do this in the form of co-guardianship.

Set up a Trust. Any funds that are left to a child with special needs, whether from an estate, life insurance, retirement plans, extended family members (grandparents) should be left to a trust. Leaving this money to a properly drafted trust (Special Needs Trust), by an attorney who specializes in this area of law, will allow the child to continue to qualify for the essential government benefits of Medicaid and SSI. Please keep in mind that there are various types of Special Needs Trust, so the correct one must be used for your specific situation.

Buy enough Life Insurance. A parent is irreplaceable, but the reality is someone will have to fill in. Many times it is not just one or two people but a combination of family and friends. Almost always, these family and friends will have financial obligations of their own and will not be able to financially support their special needs loved one. This is why it is so important for the parents to consider the life-long needs of their child, the expenses government benefits will cover, and the expenses they do not. As with the trust, there are financial planners who specialize in this area and they can help you determine these costs. We find that most families use life insurance to cover these life-long expenses because it provides more money at their death than they could have ever hoped to save during their lifetime.

Write your L.I.F.E.™ Journal. This document provides the next caregivers of your loved one instructions on how to provide the best care. It gives these caregivers a head start because it tells them all the things you have learned through years of interaction and care for your child. It is a document the parents write that includes three major areas – Medical History of Child, Day-to-Day Living Advice, and your wishes for the rest of their life.

Share your Plan. It is critical to share what you have done with extended family members. It is all too common for parents to assemble a great plan with all the proper pieces in place, and then a well-intending grandparent leaves money to the child and this act of benevolence undoes the entire plan. This event most often disqualifies the child from future government benefits which can total hundreds of thousands of dollars over their lifetime.

Make it a Team Effort. Find professionals, such as an attorney and financial planner that work in the Special Needs arena to assist you with this planning. Just like you would not have your Family Doctor perform your brain surgery, you do not want a generalist to complete your Special Needs Plan. You should also have the attorney you choose and the financial planner you choose work together because it is critical to coordinate the financial and legal pieces so the money flows into the proper legal instruments.

For more information on Special Needs Planning please visit www.aspecialneedsplan.com or call Ryan Platt at 704-236-7717

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!

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: _____



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!

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

Credit Card # _____	Exp. date _____
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Signature _____

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Aktion Club of South, North & Central Mecklenburg



Saturday, February 23, 2008 is the Fifth Annual "A Night on Ice" Charlotte Checkers Fundraiser benefiting all three Aktion Clubs in Mecklenburg County. Game time is 7:30 pm at the Bobcats Arena in Uptown and we will be playing against the Florida Everblades.

Tickets are only \$12.00 and half of the proceeds will go towards projects and events for the clubs. This is a wonderful opportunity for The Aktion Clubs to raise much needed funds to help the community through service projects.

For more information on how you can purchase tickets for yourself, your corporation or your non-profit please contact Lauren Mullis at 704-332-4535 ext.11. We accept cash, check or Visa / MasterCard.

Let's make this the biggest Charlotte Checkers Fundraiser to date!



- *Friday, February 1st—The South Mecklenburg Club goes bowling in Matthews!*
- *Friday, February 15th: Regular Meeting Aktion Club South Mecklenburg, 7:00 pm at Central United Methodist Church*
- *Saturday, February 23rd: 5th Annual "A Night on Ice" Charlotte Checkers Fundraiser to benefit The Aktion Clubs in Mecklenburg County!*
- *Friday, March 14th: Regular Meeting Aktion Club South Mecklenburg, 7:00 pm at Central United Methodist Church*
- *All Lake Norman Club Meetings are To Be Announced*



The Association of Self Advocates of North Carolina are pleased to announce that the 2008 Annual Self Advocates Convention will take place March 14-16, 2008 at the Benton Convention Center located in Winston-Salem, NC. This year's very special Keynote Speaker will be Julie Petty, Chair of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE).

We invite you to attend and support this exciting and empowering event that will bring self advocates from across the state to gather, learn, and share experiences from within their communities. To be a part of this incredible convention, visit our website at www.asa-nc.org and download your registration form. This year's registration fee is only \$85.00 per person for the 2-day event which also includes three meals!

We have arranged for a block of sleeping rooms at two hotels, both of which are in close proximity to the Benton Convention Center, for the special low rate of \$95.00 + \$12.11 tax for a total of \$107.11 per night double occupancy.

We look forward to seeing all of you March 14-16 at the Benton Convention Center for 2008 Annual Self Advocates Convention!

THE Arc

OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, INC.

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Charlotte, NC 28205

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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*



**United Way
of Central Carolinas**

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

Announcements

- The Therapeutic Recreation Division (Park and Recreation) is looking for volunteer coaches and buddies for the Adaptive Baseball League for youths and teens, ages 6-21, with disabilities starting up in March 15- May 10, 2008. To volunteer you must be 18 years of age. If you are interested in volunteering contact Vernice Gallon at 704.432.3049
- The date for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Transition Fair held at East Mecklenburg High School has been changed to April 19th from 5:00—7:30 pm.
- IEP Training to be held on Feb 5th (Part One) & February 12th (Part Two) at the Children & Family Services Building located at 601 E. 5th St in the training room. You must RSVP to attend this event by calling 1-800-962-6817; ask for Dawn Moore. Dinner will be provided. Support for this training is brought to you by: The Arc of Mecklenburg, Council for Children's Rights & ECAC.
- March 28th is the date for The Arc of Mecklenburg's Advocacy Luncheon with Ellen Russell as our guest speaker from The Arc of NC. More details are to come.