

The Arcticate

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“Unwavering Dedication”

In an article published in Psychology Today, March 2017, author Joseph A. Shrand, M.D. reminded readers that in 1938 Orson Welles terrified our nation when his War of The Worlds radio drama aired. “Almost a million people listened, believed, and were terrified: Earth was being invaded by Martians. New York has been destroyed! The result, according to Dr. Shrand, was that divisions between nationalities, religions, even sports teams, faded away, as humanity faced a common enemy. “Effortlessly we were reminded that we are one group, one species, one global community needing to come together to save ourselves. To save each other”, he wrote. We all know that specific groups of people have their own unique perspectives. To further complicate matters, individual members of groups have their own way of viewing the world. Today, with a world population of over 7 billion, it is difficult to imagine what it would take for every group, and individual, to relinquish their own perspective in lieu of a common purpose. It’s a heavy thought. Yet, continued Dr. Shrand, despite such differences, we ALL want the same thing: to be valued by another person. All of us. We don’t need to be invaded by Martians to recognize this basic human truth that binds us all. Without question, Arc staff know,



and live, the understanding that to value each other is what matters most. Let me share..... In the early days of this pandemic, when very little information was available, I witnessed unwavering dedication. Without skipping a beat, our staff accepted the necessity of changes in schedules, changes in protocols and practices. Despite the challenges before them, Arc staff continued to be there for those in their care. Many staff expressed that there was no other way. In their eyes their Arc family needed them and they could not let them down. Some folks shared their concern that this could be a frightening time for many of our folks, and maybe the stability of seeing their regular staff day in and day out could ease any fear. Simply because folks missed each other, Mari Pizur in Recreation organized a 20 plus car parade. Members of The Friends of The Arc Auxiliary and Arc staff decorated cars. With horns beeping, cheering passengers drove past every residential home. Seeing familiar smiling faces lifted spirits and meant so much to individuals,

families, and our staff. Arc staff understand the perspective of those they serve and “Being willing to take on the perspective of another oozes respect. Respect leads to value. Value leads to trust, and trust feels great”, Dr. Shrand shared. Every Arc team member, including the administrative staff, service managers & specialists to our direct service professionals, each has dedicated themselves to doing their best during a very challenging time. Our Board of Directors and I thank you.

Sincerely,
Maryclaire



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President's Message



Hello Everyone, I hope this message finds you and your family well. As we just moved into June, let us not forget to hold all the men and women, who serve in the military, in a special place in our hearts as we reflect on Memorial Day. The purpose of Memorial Day is to memorialize the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their

country. We spend time remembering those who lost their lives and could not come home, reflecting on their service and why we have the luxury and freedom that we enjoy today.

This past year, as president of The Arc of NEPA, I have been inspired. As the year began, Maryclaire and her staff, with the guidance of the Board of Directors, have started many wheels in motion, expanding into Luzerne County and starting a volunteer business, name TBA and both of these initiatives are to better serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). As we

move forward, please stay committed to this wonderful organization by renewing your membership. There is strength in numbers and we need you to be a part of this great cause. As we celebrate 65 years, I have great expectation that the Boards and staff will stay focused and steadfast in its mission of protecting, advocating and assuring a good quality of life for the consumers in their care.

A sincere thanks to all of you, Maryclaire and the staff, for the privilege of working with you this past year and the confidence placed in me for overseeing the governance as we move forward. A very special thank you to the groups who are under The Arc umbrella for your wonderful and tireless work and commitment on behalf of people with I/DD. It is greatly appreciated. Hoping for better days in the future, wishing you all wellness, health and an enjoyable summer.

Respectfully,
Ann Hoffman
President

Exec's Corner



As we make our way through Covid, we've turned our attention on what services for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities will look like on the other side of this pandemic. We understand that we must be cognizant of individual and family need for support and services, recognizing that safety for staff and

consumers is paramount. Although no one has a crystal ball, there are things we know today that will help us to shape services in the upcoming months.

We know that facility based services are not appropriate in either the red or yellow phases, as categorized by Governor Wolf. In our current phase in Lackawanna County we can consider services to individuals in their home and/or provide remote options. Mari and Holly in the Recreation Department jumped into remote activities early on. Kelly Peters, Mike Williams, and staff, are now developing a plan to determine individual need, desire, proper protocols, and service design for individuals served in the Adult Day Program. As you might imagine, there are numerous factors to consider: exposure control, safety measures, and individualized re-integration strategies. As we move forward we must also consider that many individuals we serve are vulnerable to complications from a Covid infection. Additionally, it may be necessary to help some folks accept wearing personal protective equipment.

Facility based services can open once we are in the green phase. What will the service look like? Will we serve smaller groups? Must we consider staggering start times, attendance days? How can we provide safe transportation? There are many questions.....

Thankfully, both the Lackawanna Susquehanna BHI/DEI County Office, and other groups such as The Arc of Pennsylvania, and PAR, have begun discussing reintegration with providers like The Arc of NEPA. With additional guidance from the Office of Developmental Programs, we are certain that we can move forward with a comprehensive plan to reopen safe, facility based and community participation services that are responsive to individual needs.

With increased expenses and reduced revenue, many service providers across the commonwealth were at risk of closing their doors. The impact of which would risk critically needed supports. Therefore, we asked Governor Wolf for financial support to stabilize the network of community services across the state. I am pleased to tell you that Governor Wolf signed House Bill 2510, committing \$260 million dollars in Emergency COVID-19 Relief Funding to support the community-based system. We are grateful. We are also grateful to each staff person at The Arc of NEPA for their continued dedication in this challenging time.

Maryclaire Kretsch
Executive Director

Protect Most Vulnerable

Editor: I follow The Scranton Times-Tribune's COVID-19 coverage and want to bring light on the forgotten faces of essential workers who care for our neighbors with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Direct support professionals work 24/7 in homes across our community where they cannot practice social distancing given the nature of their work. They support adults who need assistance with personal hygiene, nutrition, connecting with loved ones, taking medications, and other tasks — all despite having as hard a time as medical professionals in securing personal protective equipment. Many folks we serve are medically compromised. Exposure to COVID-19 is a concern.

Members of the staff at the ARC of Northeastern Pennsylvania are heroes, not only in our eyes, but to individuals and families who rely on them. They, too, face risk of exposure to the virus. Yet these exceptional people remain

dedicated to those they support. Gratitude isn't enough.

In a system of care already challenged with a staffing crisis, working through the pandemic has been a formidable task. Disability service providers across the state are at risk of closing because they lack the resources necessary to cover equitable compensation for these essential workers.

As leaders of the commonwealth consider the budget for the next fiscal year we ask that Gov. Tom Wolf recognize the responsibility of our government to care for our most vulnerable citizens. We urge funding that is necessary to pay our essential workers fairly, ensuring the services and supports critical to Pennsylvania citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

MARYCLAIRE KRETSCH

THE ARC OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA, SCRANTON

Parent Group at The Arc!

A new Parent/Guardian/Caregiver group is forming at The Arc of NEPA. The idea for the group came from parent Eileen Williams, with the mission of bringing family and caregivers together to share resources and information and develop a feeling of belonging and support. The group will host presenters on topics of interest, bring groups together to answer questions and share ideas to build a community of support for families within The Arc of NEPA network. The parent/guardian/caregiver group will meet quarterly, with the first meeting tentatively taking place on Thursday, July 23rd at 10 am, via ZOOM or at The Arc 115 Meadow Ave Scranton. It will be a meet and greet with an overview of programming at The Arc, and include an opportunity for feedback on future topics of interest, as well as, how each of you have dealt with or are dealing with the quarantine and how you are coping. Please contact rpolishan@thearcnepa.org or erempe@thearcnepa.org to RSVP or if you have any questions.

Employee Spotlight: Please Meet Mandy Colville

I'm Mandy Colville and I have been an advocate at The Arc of NEPA since 2018. My background as an Elementary and Special Education teacher has given me a strong understanding of every student's right to an appropriate education. My commitment to the disabilities community grew once I became a mother to children with disabilities myself and saw the challenges we faced. My children have inspired me to work on making changes for the better in schools and communities for all individuals with disabilities.

I began providing support, outreach and resources in Pike County 8 years ago since forming the North PPODS and Friends group. I also remained very involved in the Delaware Valley School System as well as serving on the Center for Developmental Disabilities Board of Directors for 7 years. My experiences lead me to helping individuals advocate for their rights and expanding resources in our rural area.

As an advocate for The Arc of NEPA, I continue my training in educational advocacy and disabilities rights to best be able to assist the individuals we serve.

Overall my mission as an advocate is to give parents the tools and resources they need to become better advocates for their own children, further the inclusion movement and help make positive changes in communities for all individuals with disabilities.



Mandy Colville
Advocate - The Arc of NEPA
(570) 561-3285

Around The Arc

Grant News:

The Arc made requests for assistance to help with the COVID-19 Pandemic. During this crisis, several foundations and community groups were able to be counted on and they were there to help. We are extremely grateful to the following: Scranton Area Community Foundation; Human Resources Foundation; Schwartz-Mack Foundation; Luzerne Foundation; Scranton Rotary. The kindness and generosity we have in our community is second to none. The Arc is very fortunate to have such excellent relationships with these fine folks.

Grant requests continue for on-going capital expenses, as well as, several other endeavors such as continuing education, expansion and volunteer opportunities.

Auxiliary Information:

We recently received a \$1,000 donation from Gerritys to help support the Theater program - Arc Stars on Stage. It is our goal to continue the educational and fun learning experience that the Arc Stars enjoy. We are looking at a later start for rehearsals toward the end of the year.

Foundation Overview:

The Foundation Annual Meeting is set for Tuesday, June 16th at noon - a ZOOM invite will be sent.

Plans for the Golf Tournament for 2020 are scheduled for October 5th at Glen Oak Country Club. We are very proud and happy to announce that Bobby Robbins will be celebrity chair of this year's tournament. Bobby is an avid golfer and medalist for Special Olympics. In 2015, Bobby competed in the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles, bringing home a silver medal with his partner, Jeff Snyder. He and his family are very excited to be a part of this event and we are thrilled to have their enthusiasm. We are working with Glen Oak to have a great event. I will keep you posted on the plans as we get closer.

Just a little bit of information...

The first membership mailing for 2020 will be heading your way soon. Your renewals are vital to our organization. As you know, the more members we have the more votes we have when it comes to legislative issues affecting the folks we serve.

Do you know anyone who would like to donate their car? We have recently been enrolled in The Arc Vehicle Donation Program which accepts all cars, trucks, motorcycles, RVs regardless of their condition. Please visit our website for more information.

I believe most know that The Arc has a Memorial/Honorarium program. Several of you utilize this way of expressing your thoughts and remembering your loved ones, friends, neighbors, etc. We are very grateful for your generosity and please continue to let us send along your notes.

Please do not forget about using Amazon Smile, when you shop - Amazon gives! AmazonSmile is a program where Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization selected by each customer. It is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charity every time you shop, at no cost to you. Soooo, when you shop on Amazon, please think Arc and Happy Shopping.

Advocacy Update - by Roseann Polishan

Advocacy is going strong during the pandemic. We continue to work to help individuals and families understand their rights and obtain services and support during these difficult times.

There have been no waivers to Special Education laws and regulations. We have been doing webinars and trainings to stay on top of all advocacy areas. We are working with our clients to be sure they have access to education, resources and information. We are attending Virtual IEP meetings and helping families through the process of using Zoom and other technology. Extended school year and a return to school in the fall is a big concern for families right now. We are available to assist with any and all advocacy needs.

Our Advocates Educational Tips for Families During COVID19

- 1) Keep notes or a log on what is going well and working and what is not with your child's at home education.
- 2) Request a meeting with school staff to discuss your concerns and questions.
- 3) Try some stress relief activities, exercises and build in downtime to maintain your child's well being and focus
- 4) Come up with a schedule that works for your child, use visuals, photos, or timers.
- 5) Stay positive, you are the constant steady in your child's world!

Shopping!!!



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Please do not forget about using Amazon Smile; when you shop - Amazon gives! AmazonSmile is a program where Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization selected by each customer. It is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charity every time you shop, at no cost to you. Soooo, when you shop on Amazon, please think of The Arc and Happy Shopping.

ZOOM Fitness



ZOOM Fitness is every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We have Dancing with Marianne on Mondays at 2:00 p.m., Music with EJ the DJ on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and Yoga with Mindy on Fridays at 1:00 p.m. All of these fine folks really help with physical and emotional health. Many individuals from all of our services join in the fun and we are grateful to be able to provide this outreach to help people during this time.

Some quotes from the ZOOM Fitness Team:

"When Wednesday comes around and I ask, "Mark are you going to do EJ today?" - Pat K. He says "yea man" - Mark K.

"Zak sets his alarm to be sure he is on at the right time. It has become an important time in his week!" - Kelly K. Zak K. says, "I love my Zoom time!"

"Thanks for the ZOOM activities. They are fun and I love seeing my friends. I miss them!" - Sheila C.

"Tommy H. was super excited to join in the weekly virtual dance party sponsored by The Arc of Northeastern PA and hosted by EJ the DJ today! Thank you so much Mari Schimelfenig Pizur, EJ, and your entire staff for making this happen! We miss you all!" - Eve H.

"I love it!" - Hunter P. "He never misses!" - Roseann P.

Zoom Zoom Zoom

The Arc

Recreation Department
would like to make a
BIG SHOUT OUT!!!!

to EJ the Dj, Marianne Scrimalli Davis, and Mindy Hill for being our entertainers and keeping us moving with an hour of fun and physical activities 3 days a week. These Zooms are keeping our Recreation Arc family together in these very trying times.

If anyone is looking to join in with these great Zoom activities please contact Mari or Holly at 570-207-0825.

Leave a message and we will contact you with information you will need to stay connected with friends.

**Thank you
Thank you
Thank you.**

NEPA Gives - Benefitting The Arc Stars Theater Program

NEPA Gives—a one-day online giving extravaganza that's all about giving back to the community. Scranton Area Community Foundation, The Luzerne Foundation, Greater Pike Community Foundation, Wayne County Community Foundation, and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Nonprofit & Community Assistance Center (NCAC) have teamed up to host NEPA Gives.

For 24 hours—from 12:00 a.m. to 11:59:59 p.m.—on Friday,

June 5, 2020, donors made secure donations to their favorite local nonprofit organizations through the NEPA Gives online platform. Donations to participating nonprofits were enhanced with bonus funds provided by NEPA Gives sponsors—making donor dollars stretch further! Nonprofits were also eligible for cash prizes. Thank you so much for your support!

All proceeds benefitted The Arc Stars Theater Program.



Remembering Our Beloved Auxiliary Board Members

Over the years, we have said, "Goodbye" to some of our friends and it has been painful to know that we won't be sharing a lunch or "happy ending" sundae with them or hearing about their families and listening to their stories. They are missed in so many ways... The Auxiliary board, who is more of a family, was built by ladies who are blessed with extraordinary gifts and

talents and they all complement each other in beautiful ways. When one of our family members passes away, we cherish their memory by continuing their stories and talking about how much we miss them. Eileen Williams has been working on a project that will remind everyone of who these ladies were and how important it is to keep their memories alive.

Please remember these kind and courageous women...they will forever remain in our hearts:

Pat Albrecht

Connie Wolff

Claire Maldonato

Jeanne Gardier

Liz Toms



The Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community is an annual fundraising walk that benefits local health and human service agencies.

Highmark Inc. coordinates and underwrites the cost of the walk so that 100 percent of the money raised by walkers goes to the participating nonprofits.

The primary goal of the walk is to help participating organizations raise money for their individual missions. In 2019, the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community raised 1.4 million for the 209 participating organizations. One hundred percent of the funds raised through this event go directly back to the participating organizations. The secondary goal of the Walk is to energize community members to

have a greater hand in their health by becoming or staying physically active.

Some of the folks at The Arc-NEPA have taken advantage of the beautiful weather and started their walking to feel good, have fun and benefit The Arc! We would love for you to join us!!!

Out of an abundance of caution and for the protection and safety of our Walk participants and volunteers, the difficult decision has been made to modify all seven 2020 Highmark Walks for a Healthy Community to an online only fundraiser and virtual walk for this year's campaign.

This modification ensures that our participating organizations

are still able to fundraiser, via our online platform, while not putting participants at risk of further spread of the COVID-19 virus in a mass gathering situation. This change is also in accordance with the CDC's recommendation of social distancing and avoiding mass gatherings.

While this year's Walk for a Healthy Community throughout Pennsylvania and Delaware will be online and virtual only, this approach provides the 273 local nonprofit health and human service organizations a way to safely participate and raise funds.

Details of the changes in regards to fundraising incentives, T-shirt distribution, and donation deadlines are provided below.

Changes for the 2020 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community:

A virtual walk is a real walk, but it's on your terms! Anytime between May 9 and June 30, you choose how and when you walk (treadmill, park or trail, or around the neighborhood). It's your choice! You also pick the time of when you start and stop!

This year to keep up the momentum of individual fundraising, the minimum amount raised to receive a T-shirt is \$15 before June 30, 2020. T-shirts will be distributed to organizational leaders in July.

Lehighton Parade



Eugene Lapos holding the signs he made for his friends at The Arc. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By Maria Rehrig

It's been way too long since the The Arc of Northeastern PA staff saw members.

On Saturday they arranged a parade for their 22 members who live in Carbon County. With signs, balloons and decorations, Arc members and staff filled with tears when they saw each other for the first time in two months.

Established in 1950, The Arc's mission is to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities while supporting their inclusion in their community throughout their lifetimes.

"We take them out and do everything you and I like to do - we go to movies, we go to plays, we go shopping, we go to flea markets, hiking, walking, ice cream, pizza," Mari Pizur, manager of recreation and advocate, said.

Pizur said it's been difficult for both the staff and Arc members to adjust to not seeing one another due to the COVID-19 regulations. She said they hold gym classes and other activities through the webchat feature called Zoom, but not all members have the capability to attend.

The Arc has also been reaching out to members through phone calls and sending cards and coloring pictures, but Pizur said everyone missed seeing each other. She said it's hard for some of the members to understand why they couldn't see their friends, which she said could lead to feelings of abandonment.



Staff members Brenda Fritzing, left, and Stephanie Bongo minutes before leaving to visit their first house in Carbon County for the Arc parade. / MARIA REHRIG



Arc member Samantha Siani holding the sign she made while standing outside of her home on Saturday. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An Arc staff member of nearly 13 years, Sheila Hartranft thought about what she and the organization could do to bring the members together, and had the idea to organize a parade in which the Arc staff would visit each home of every member in Lackawanna county. After it proved to be a success, Hartranft said they decided to do the same for Carbon.

After decorating two of the Arc's vans, the company vehicle and the staff's personal cars, the staff members and volunteers set out to visit each member, many of which were waiting with excitement to see their friends.

"We were told they were coming to visit us around 2:30 p.m. but Samantha started watching for them around 2," said Diane Siani, a parent.

Diane's husband John said The Arc

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Decorated personal car before leaving for the parade. / MARIA REHRIG



Volunteers and staff members of The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania minutes before leaving to begin the parade for their members in Carbon county. / MARIA REHRIG



The decorated company car displaying a message for all Arc members. MARIA REHRIG/TIMES NEWS



James Marblestone, volunteer for The Arc, gets ready to take a drive to see the members after two months. / MARIA REHRIG

The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania Holds Parade of Gratitude

WNEP- Author Elizabeth Worthington, May 7, 2020

For residents in group homes managed by The Arc, the stay-at-home order means they can't see some of the staff members they're used to seeing every day.

LACKAWANNA COUNTY, Pa. — It was a celebration, a reunion, and an expression of gratitude all rolled into one.

Honking their horns, driving by in cars adorned with signs that say, "We love you" and "we miss you," and handing out bags of treats, administrators from The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania, an organization that serves individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, were joined by friends and family in a parade of gratitude.

"We usually celebrate St. Patrick's Day together, Easter together, and that was all taken away from us, so we thought we'll bring it to them!" Mari Pizur said.

"For all of our staff that come in seven days a week, 24 hours a day, not only just to provide care for the folks that we serve, but to minimize the impact of this pandemic. So today, we say thank you," Maryclaire

Kretsch said.

This was just one of the group homes across Lackawanna County visited by the caravan of cars filled with staff, administrators, family, and friends.

Staff members at this home in Scott Township say it was an important reminder to their residents that everything is OK.

"It's absolutely fantastic to see these guys, I mean our folks really sometimes don't understand everything that's going on, and it gives them such relief to see people's

faces that they haven't seen in a couple months," Lisa Jezorwski said.

The residents also made signs for their visitors to welcome them to their home.

"The smiles and just the interaction is so nice. We miss it so much, waiting for this virus to end, and I know it's a long way off, but we need to see each other and let everybody know we're supporting them," Pizur said.

For now, all they can say is "until next time."



Calendar of Events

June

NEPA Gives - Virtual Day of Giving
June 5th

Foundation Annual Meeting
June 16th

Highmark Healthy Virtual Walk
May 9th-June 30th

Annual Board/General
Membership/Recognition Event
TBA

Please Mark Your Calendars 2020

July

Parent Group Meeting
July 23rd

September

United Way Day of Caring - TBA

Fall Festival - Waldorf Park
Sept. 13th

PPODS North Buddy Walk - TBA

October

PODS Buddy Walk - TBA

Golf Tournament - Glen Oak CC
Oct 5th

November

Night at the Races - TBA

December

Poinsettia Sale
Week of Dec. 7th (tentative)

Cookie Walk

End of Year
Foundation Solicitation

Holiday Show at Arc

Holiday Party - Fiorelli's
Dec. 13th

Lehighton Parade

(Continued from page 7)

has always been a social outlet for his daughter Samantha, and he was happy the organization was still able to provide that despite the virus.

"They really took a negative with the virus, and turned it into a positive," John said.

Marge Lapos, parent of Arc member Eugene Lapos, said it was more than she was expecting. She said her son was outside holding signs and ringing bells while he waited to see everyone.

"It's hard because he usually goes to the day programs but everything was taken away," Marge said. "He really needed something like this to make him happy and lift his spirits."

It wasn't just the Arc members and their families that enjoyed the experience. Many of the staff members said it was one of the best things they could've done for both the staff and the members.

Stephanie Bongo, Arc staff member, said that seeing everyone after with smiles on their faces made her heart happy.

"Putting a smile on their faces and their parent's faces is why I did this," Hartranft said. "They are my concern 24/7/365 ... they are family and not just people we

provide services to."

Although all events are currently postponed until further notice, those with development or intellectual

disabilities and their families are able to contact The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania to get involved.

Visit www.thearcnepa.org.

Raising Spirits in Carbon County

By: Sheila Hartranft

Saturday May 16, 2020 was a beautiful day in Carbon County, it was to be filled with laughter and tears of joy. The staff, previous staff, friends and a volunteer of The Arc in Carbon County decorated our vehicles and was set by 12 noon to parade past the homes of each of our 22 members. We headed to our first home with excitement and we were greeted with Denise's smile which was big enough to light up the dark and a wonderful home made sign. We blew horns and yelled and waved to each other with goosebumps and tears. As we made our way along to our next home we had people not affiliated with The Arc turn and wave to us as we traveled along. We went to many towns and each stop we made brought tears to our eyes as we saw our members for the first time in almost 2 months. We ended our journey of love and friendship in Lehighton at a local

grocery store to make sure we saw our 1 consumer who was working. The store personnel were wonderful and excited for her to step outside to visit with us. We may be a small group here in Carbon County but we are a group who has become more like family with all of our members and their families. We are thankful for this opportunity to express how we feel. We have plans to send colored pages and include a page for them to color and send back to us. Also in the works is a pen pal opportunity where each member will be given another participant's name and will then send that person a card they signed. We hope that this brings them joy and lifts their spirits during this difficult time. Our staff included Sheila Hartranft, Brenda Fritzinger, Tara Tessitore, Carly Snyder and Stephanie Bongo. Our former staff member was Kelsey Kuntz and her sister Christy and our volunteer, Jim Marblestone.

We are excited to share that The Arc of Northeastern PA has been selected by GIANT store leadership to benefit from the Bags 4 My Cause Program for the month of June!

For the month of June, The Arc-NEPA will receive a \$1 donation from each purchase of the \$2.50 reusable Bags 4 My Cause Bag at the GIANT store located at 1550 Main Street, Dickson City PA.

In this time of uncertainty due to COVID-19, supporting local non-profits has never been more important. That is why the GIANT Bags 4 My Cause Program will continue as planned. Supermarkets are still busy, and shoppers are still buying Bags 4 My Cause Bags as a way to give back.

GIANT

we've been chosen for the
GIANT BAGS 4 MY CAUSE PROGRAM!



When you buy this bag this month,
a \$1 donation will be sent to us.

*Good Friends Never Say Goodbye
They Simply Say "See you Soon"*

Allen "Listen To Me"

What a terrible time in our lives to part with a loved one. Some people in this world, like Allen, deserve much more fanfare than we can humbly offer today. After a life fraught with early loneliness, then his own extreme adherence to self preservation as a result, and defensiveness – until we got to know him, until he found reasons to trust, Allen finally taught us to give up on our early theories on how to support him; and Allen taught us to just simply listen to him.

Federal Judge James Munley passed away recently with a resumé longer than both of my arms. One of the Scranton diocese most popular servants, Father Joseph Sica, passed in recent days as well. Neither were afforded the passing adulation and large-scale sendoff that they clearly deserved due to this circumstance of necessary isolation. Allen passed alone on Wednesday and he never saw it coming. After overcoming every single thing that was ever thrown his way, he succumbed to this travesty that reflects a modern world, when he was simply enjoying having come into his own, years earlier - enjoying life on his terms. So I think sometimes life, then death, prove the simple truth that we really are all created equally. Because Allen goes quietly to his most well deserved place with the very well known and the not so well known. In his case, however, he is given a pass -- with a lot less explaining to do than the rest of us will have to substantiate at our own time of reckoning. Fighting through hardships since his birth, defending himself as his own guide to his life's map that he must have forged as a child, he finally landed in places of peace, with the acceptance of love in his life, and most especially- trust. And then.... He lived. And he lived well.

Allen was such a unique person; his story was well known, state wide. He was the subject of many experts in the field of doing what we do. I was the unfortunate servant to a protocol that clearly defied my earlier statement that Allen simply needed us to listen to what was important to him, and not us. A lesson I took away from these thoughts is that simple things in this life matter. Reading the silent cues a person gives. Listening when words aren't spoken. Giving someone the dignity of risk to do things their way, instead of the way you, or any expert, might think is better.

In the end, Allen Siderowicz's legacy is triumphant, and the build up from the brief history I offer this morning should in no way imply that this isn't a happy story, or Allen wasn't a conqueror; an achiever, an inspiration, and a success as a man in this world. Happy is the man who forges his own path and his own identity. Strong is the man who never relents in getting there. Blessed is the man who rests knowing he prevailed through it all.

Allen did find happiness. His first crew cut, after years of wearing longer hair, I will never forget. That was a long time ago. That was one of those cues I spoke of - an overdue crew cut and an 'ah-ha' moment of clarity. One of the beginnings of a symbiotic understanding on forging a real relationship with Allen, and that aforementioned trust. Ice cream, shoes and laces, Walmart, and

Happy PA Kindness Day!!!

Fred Rogers regularly used 143 as his special code for "I Love You" - based on the number of letters in each word.

As we celebrate #143DayInPA, on May 22nd, The Arc believes it is especially important to show our gratitude to our DSPs who are vital to the services we provide.

Thank you for all you do!



many other simple pleasures followed. Simple pleasures, the simplest of pleasures, that had to be obtained by the strongest human being I have ever met. Not long before his passing, he enjoyed a private vacation, in spite of all his physical challenges. Strong to the end.

I imagine that Allen's personal revelation that he had succeeded in achieving peace and harmony on his own terms must have been very fulfilling, with a calming, well-deserved "I told you so" opportunity to blare out to the whole world. It wasn't the case. Allen just settled into being a wonderful, inspirational man. And those of us in his world settled into a place where the past didn't much matter, and our service, support, and love was our honor.

Allen is gone far from here to the most peaceful of all those places he worked so hard to find. I can't help but wonder if he'll seek out those he used to know, the last of his cherished generation we knew; or if he'll be welcomed to long lost souls we'd never know. It could be that he'll just be in his own, enjoying real tranquility. No one has ever deserved more.

by Pat Quinn

Leave a Legacy

Remembering... The Arc's founding parents, concerned community members and friends have passed on a legacy of commitment to a new generation. Today, we seek to sustain this legacy.

Building... Looking toward tomorrow may often be intimidating, but at The Arc we continue the mission and grow with the needs of the children and adults we serve.

Leaving a Legacy... By giving a gift to The Arc, you are ensuring a bright future for the people served in our programs. Estate giving allows for a variety of ways for individuals to choose the support most appropriate for planning their legacy: Outright cash gifts, designated life insurance policy, bequests, real estate.

*Good Friends Never Say Goodbye
They Simply Say "See you Soon"*

James "Jimmy" Melnick The Quiet Warrior

I wish we knew Jimmy prior to 1982. The youngest of nine children, in a family that knew that disability knows no social or economic boundaries, but no doubt worked so hard to simply make things work, Jimmy - ever the quiet warrior, must have carved his own path every minute of the day; from his earliest days at home, until his move to Pennhurst, all those many years ago - we can admire Peter and Sophie, Jimmy's parents - society gave them no other help.

I do remember Jimmy's move back to Scranton. Some of us were on the front end, but soon in turn came Dottie who had contact with Jimmy's late sister Rose. A large loving family, with two sons back home. We would sit Jimmy and Peter together at dances at the University of Scranton when I was in college. Peter remembered Jimmy. I'm sure Jimmy returned the pleasantries in his own way. And fast forward to today, Jimmy's niece Colleen is here and he is blessed for having you in his life. Your mother Connie, who couldn't be here today, but showed so much love to Jimmy, also showed you the way to loving Jim and staying involved. There are so many who couldn't be here today because of this unprecedented time we're living in. Jimmy touched scores of lives; caretakers and friends who just loved every simple thing about him, and his trust in them....; us...when he loved you. I'd love to see a parade for Jim, but it's almost appropriate that the quiet warrior have a quiet send off.

So why the "quiet warrior"? I was thinking about so many times early on when Jim, who was so docile by nature, would stand up for himself - give someone a push if they got too close. And Jimmy would tough out the myriad of physical ailments he endured, and only come to let you know in his own way that he really needed to be checked, or that he really felt ill. He just quietly bore so much. We forever confused his laughter with his nervousness - lots of times - but for the most part, as Jimmy became a member of community every bit as important as you and me, the laughter was just real. Happy. Happy to be dressed impeccably; to retire, to be out and about, to sit on his porch swing and take in a much calmer world than he was used to. He had arrived. These are my favorite memories of Jimmy.

"Sometimes quiet people really do have a lot to say; they're just being careful about who they open up to" - Susan Gale.

Jimmy experienced more than any of us ever will; and survived - persevered - and enjoyed all that was overdue to him in a world that took too long to catch up to right and wrong. All of you here make up that "right". No parade. Just a quiet porch swing, a few straws, some good food, and Jimmy finding his 'niche' once again, as he always has, no matter where he's been. I think he's in "God's pocket", as the old folk used to say. He certainly deserves to be the very first in line.

by Pat Quinn

#NEPACVID19

During these uncertain times, The Arc-NEPA is grateful for the generosity of the NEPA COVID-19 Response Fund. Thank you to the Scranton Area Community Foundation and its donors and partners for rapidly providing support enabling us to sustain our essential services during this crisis.

To learn about how you can make a difference through the NEPA COVID-19 response fund, please visit <https://safdn.org/covid19>

We are incredibly grateful for the generous support from donors, foundations, businesses, and funds in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

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Together, through the NEPA COVID-19 Response Fund, we are quickly deploying resources to local nonprofits in need affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Learn more at safdn.org/covid19.



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