

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG 2: About The Arc
Community Advocates

PG 3: Every Vote Counts!

PG 4: Journey of Hope,
Upcoming Events, &
Thank You



TORCH LIGHT

The Arc Community Advocates Newsletter - Summer 2018


The Arc
Community Advocates



Ribfest is here! August 2nd-4th at the Arcadia Creek Festival Place in Downtown Kalamazoo. As one of the original festivals held downtown, Ribfest is now in its 33rd year and attracts over 10,000 people each summer. Proceeds from the Kalamazoo Ribfest go to benefit the Arc Community Advocates, who first started the event. So come out and enjoy delicious food while supporting a great organization.

The event features national and local rib vendors that sell ribs and chicken in outstanding barbeque sauces. To

compliment the rib vendors, additional food vendors will be offering beer and spirits, side items and sweet treats to top off the food experience at Ribfest. The event will also bring in national rock and country musical artists, local bands, plenty of fun activities including children's crafts/games, People's Choice Rib Competition, and the exciting contest for Best Ribs in Kalamazoo. For more information please visit: <http://kalamazooribfest.com>



STAFF

Susan Rush

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Beverly McBrien, LMSW

DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

LaTaynia Conant

MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR

Annie Gaertner

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY
ADVOCATE

Sue Mumma

OFFICE ASSISTANT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kelley Howard

CHAIR

Karen Longanecker

VICE CHAIR

Phil Copeland

SECRETARY

DIRECTORS AT-LARGE

Cheryl Besser

Chase Grounds

Lauren Harkness

Jason Long

David Ullrey



"I am beyond fortunate to have been introduced to The Arc Community Advocates. They have helped me organize, plan, rethink and question my child's education. If I have a question, concerns or just need to get something off my shoulder I have been able to do that with them. I truly appreciate the fact they don't just look at what I am doing with my child as paperwork. They see my child. They advocate for my child. They want my child to grow, learn and have the best opportunity in the school, after school, and in the community. Having someone on your side is an incredible feeling."

-Anonymous Client

Have you considered remembering The Arc Community Advocates in your will?

A bequest or planned gift is a simple way to make a tremendous difference for years to come. For more information please contact Susan Rush at srush@communityadvocates.org or 269.342.9801 x 103.

MISSION

We exist as an advocacy organization to make it possible for each person with a developmental disability to participate fully in all aspects community and to support the effort of each individual to determine his/her own future.

VALUES

As an affiliate member of The Arc, Community Advocates believes:

- Everyone is a valued, contributing member of their community.
- The Arc helps self-advocates and their families by creating opportunities, so that they can achieve their goals.
- The Arc fosters respect and protects the human rights of people with I/DD and their families.
- For over 65 years, The Arc has been a family-focused, grass roots organization.
- The Arc is the resource of first choice for people with I/DD and their FAMILIES regardless of the diagnosis and at all stages of life.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS



Mid-term elections in November 2018 are turning out to be very important to the health of our democracy. Speigal Online reports: “democracy faced its most serious crisis in decades.” It went on to note that, “the right to choose leaders in free and fair elections, freedom of the press and the rule of law are under assault and in retreat globally.”

The people (1 in 6 voters has a disability) have the power through advocacy and through voting to choose candidates, who respect the rule of law, respect the constitution, and who aren’t bought by political action committees (PAC’s). Are you registered? How do you get registered?

To register to vote, you must be all of the following and apply at least 30 days before an election:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old by Election Day
- A resident of Michigan
- A resident of the city or township where you are applying to register to vote.

You can begin the process here online at www.Michigan.gov/sos, at the local Secretary of State office or attend a voter registration drive. The next drive in Kalamazoo County is on August 4th at LaCrone Park. Keep an eye on our website (www.communityadvocates.org), or our facebook page for more upcoming registration events.

We Need Your Voice! Entitlements (Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security) and the ACA are under attack! The current Congress is moving behind

closed doors and in a partisan fashion to make cuts to the very benefits that provide vital supports and services to individuals with disabilities. They are moving to do so before mid-terms in November. Call or write your elected officials and let them know how cuts will affect you!

Each state elects two senators to the United States Senate for staggered 6-year terms. Senators represent the entire state. Michigan’s senators are:



Debbie Stabenow, Democrat
Senior Senator for Michigan
Since Jan 3, 2001 (Next Election in 2018)
202-224-4822

<https://www.stabenow.senate.gov>



Gary Peters, Democrat
Junior Senator for Michigan
Since Jan 6, 2015 (Next Election in 2020)
202-224-6221

<https://www.peters.senate.gov>

Each district elects a representative to the U.S. House of Representatives for a two-year term. Representatives are also called congressmen/ congresswomen.



Fred Upton, Republican
Representative for Michigan’s 6th
Congressional District
Since Jan 5, 1993 (Next Election in 2018)
202-225-376

<https://upton.house.gov>



In 1987, one man's dream of riding his bike across the country came true. What he did not know was the inspiration and motivation his trek across America would give to The Ability Experience. The very next year his ride inspired The Ability Experience to create the largest fraternal fundraising and awareness event of its kind, the Journey of Hope. Today the Journey of Hope covers 32 different states, cycling over 12,000 miles combined, it is solely comprised of members of Pi Kappa Phi and continues to spread a message of acceptance and understanding for people with disabilities.

Journey of Hope is a cross-country bicycle trek beginning in San Francisco (North), Los Angeles (South) and Seattle (TransAmerica) and ending together with all teams in Washington, D.C. (view route map here). The event raises funds and awareness for people with disabilities. Simply put, the Journey of Hope is a ride with a purpose. Make no mistake; this is not a simple ride. Journey of Hope is about many things. It is about challenging the norm. It is about serving our communities. It is about finding out more about ourselves than we ever imagined. It is about having a dream. It is about a mission. It is about hope.

Join The Arc Community Advocates in welcoming the cyclists on July 28th, 2018 at Woods Lake Park from 3:00-5:30 p.m. There will be lunch and fun for everyone!

THANK YOU!

The Arc Community Advocates has been awarded a grant for Families and Individuals Navigating Decisions (FIND) from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation including the John E. Fetzer Institute Fund of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

COMING UP

ANNUAL MEETING

Save the Date - September 18, 2018, please watch your mailbox for more detailed information!

ARCTOBERFEST

October 24, 2018 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel from 6:30-9:00 p.m. Join us for our biggest fundraiser of the year! It will be an exciting evening of entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, open bar, and a live and silent auction.

3901 Emerald Drive,
Suite B
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
P 269.342.9801
F 269.342.4638
communityadvocates.org

