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# TORCH LIGHT

The Arc Community Advocates Newsletter - Spring 2018

  
The Arc  
Community Advocates

## FIND - Families & Individuals Navigating Decisions

If you are a parent and/or individual affected by an intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD), you know trying to FIND supports and services can be a dizzyingly and an often-frustrating experience.

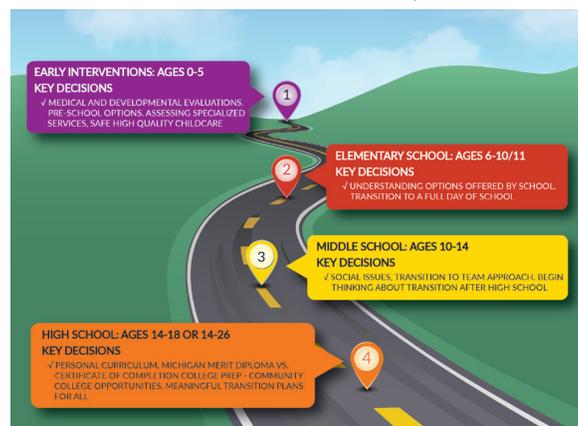
What services do you need at what key point(s) in the life of the person with the disability? You are not alone if you say “I don’t know”? The Arc Community Advocates has been working behind the scenes for the past several months to evaluate our services and trainings and instill a proactivity to educate & empower individuals and families affected by I/DD. Not only to assist with the present, but to emphasize a forward-thinking preparedness for themselves or their child.

FIND - Families and Individuals Navigating Decisions, is an approach that keeps individuals and families abreast of important decision points across the lifespan. The two main goals are: 1). Connect/familiarize families with

our free advocacy services and training as early as possible, and 2). Wherever an individual and family connects - keep them connected and engaged across the lifespan!

In our new brochure is the FIND roadmap for key decisions (pictured center) across the lifespan and

a listing of our advocacy and training. We are working with a host of other like serving agencies and providers in the community who also want the best options for each family and/or individual unique situation and goal(s).



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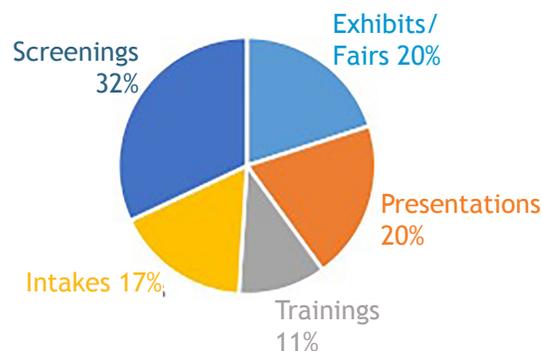
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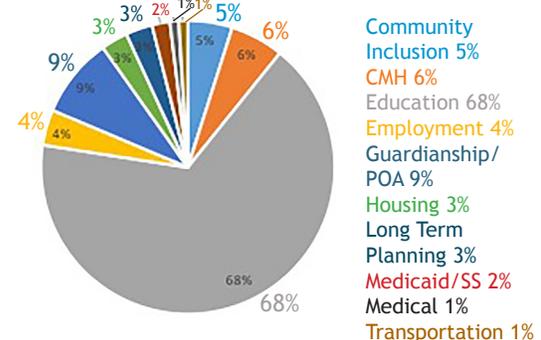
David Ullrey

## The Arc Community Advocates Service Stats 2017

2017 Total Served - 433



Goals - 126



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](mailto: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 60 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.

# Alternatives to Guardianship



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Arc Community Advocates provides a training about **RETHINKING GUARDIANSHIP?**

Visit our website for more information!  
[www.communityadvocates.org](http://www.communityadvocates.org)

## GUARDIANSHIP: THE OPTION OF LAST RESORT

In the past, Guardianship was sought for a variety of reasons including medical, contractual, administrative convenience, financial decisions, sex and related issues, what happens when parents and/or family are gone? Essentially, many (schools, providers, lawyers and judges) still promote guardianship through public declaration of incompetence and removal of rights, independence and freedom as THE option.

As part of a statewide coalition to change this trend, The Arc Community Advocates subscribes to position that: “Recognizes the importance for persons with disabilities of their individuals autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make their own choice.”

Each state has a varying law, the most impactful is a ruling by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court “Persons cannot be deemed incapacitated if their impairments are counterbalanced by friends, family, or other support.” In re: Perry, 727 A2d 539 (Ps. Sup. Ct. 1999).

Did you know in Michigan that a guardian is not required to meet their ward? Did you know that regardless of a guardian, no one is less vulnerable? Worried about bad decisions? One does not have to have a disability to make bad decisions in life! So what are the alternatives? It is supported decision making - the individual remains their own guardian with assistance from a variety of supports including:

- Advisors, Advocates
- Person-Centered Planning
- Power of Attorney
- Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare
- Protective Orders
- Trusts - Amenities, Payback, Pooled
- Finances - Representative Payees and other options

The Arc Community Advocates offers advocacy for alternatives to guardianship including Power of Attorney and Durable Power of Attorney. Let’s reverse the trend of the 51% nationally and 73% in Michigan who have through legal means, lost their freedom, liberty, independence, autonomy, and sovereignty.





## SAVE THE DATE 12TH INCLUSION CONFERENCE

**MARCH 27, 2019  
WMU FETZER CENTER**

### 11th Inclusion Conference: A Great Success

In March, The Arc Community Advocates and several other partnering agencies got together and held our 11th Inclusion Conference. We more than doubled last year's attendance with over 150 people who came to learn and network.

We had 17 exhibitors for our resource fair and 16 different breakout sessions that ranged from "Learning about Head Start" to "How to Disclose your Disability at Work".

This annual event is meant to create awareness and builds capacity to support a growing need in our community.

We would like to thank all the agencies, presenters, sponsors, volunteers and committee members who helped us make this conference such a great success!

### COMING UP

#### JOURNEY OF HOPE

On July 28th join us for an afternoon filled with friends, food, and lots of fun! Journey of Hope is a cross-country bicycle trek that rides over 12,000 miles in over 32 states bringing awareness for people with disabilities.

#### RIBFEST

Tickets are on sale now! Come on out anytime to Arcadia Creek Festival Place Downtown Kalamazoo, MI between August 2-4 to taste a variety of ribs and enjoy great entertainment. RIBFEST was first started by The Arc Community Advocates and continues to be a benefit event for our agency.

**CSM**GROUP



**H & H Painting Company, Inc.**

#### **THANK YOU**

If you have visited our office recently you may have noticed we have redesigned our entrance and put up some divider walls! We would like to thank the following businesses for donating their time, effort, and expertise in enclosing our office and making it secure.

### UPDATED BRANDING

The Arc has updated their branding with a fresh new color and graphics. If you haven't noticed already, we have redesigned our newsletter, our new website is live, and an updated agency brochure was recently released! Over time, updates to aspects of the brand need to be made to remain relevant.

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