The Arc™
Community Advocates

2025 Annual Report

Achieving more, together.

Report Dates: January 2025-December 2025

communityadvocates.org

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Our Team

- Nikki Statler, Executive Director
- Anne Gaertner, Director of Outreach & Advocacy
- LaTaynia Conant, Marketing & Communications Coordinator
- Sarah Carmany, Legislative Liaison
- Kallie Griffin-Pena, Individual & Family Advocate
- Stephanie Sutton, Individual & Family Advocate
- Jackie Van Horn, Individual & Family Advocate

Board of Directors

- Kelley Howard, Chair
- Heather Jach Turner, Vice Chair
- Jackie Bigelow, Treasurer
- Lisa Carnell, Secretary
- John Argo
- Brenda Buyce
- Nick Cahill
- Max Hornick
- Jennifer Patrick

Letter From The Executive Director



Nikki Statler

As I write this letter, I am still relatively new to The Arc Community Advocates. While the work reflected in this report took place before I joined the organization, my first few months have given me the opportunity to learn from the people who made it possible and understand the impact of this organization.

What has become clear to me very quickly is that our impact is deeply personal.

It is a parent leaving a meeting better prepared to advocate for their child. It is an individual gaining greater voice and choice in decisions about their life. It is a school and family finding a path forward together. And sometimes, it is simply having someone beside you who understands the system and reminds you that you do not have to navigate it alone.

Behind every number in this report is a person whose needs, hopes, and future are uniquely their own.

Letter Continued

I am grateful to our staff, Board, members, donors, funders, partners, and community supporters who make this work possible and help build a more equitable and inclusive community.

As we look ahead, we are intentionally building partnerships that can expand our reach, strengthen connections to resources, and create new opportunities for the people we serve. We will continue helping people navigate important decisions while ensuring the voices of people with disabilities remain at the center of the conversations that affect their lives.

There is much to build upon, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to help lead The Arc Community Advocates into its next chapter.

Thank you for being part of it.



2025 At-a-Glance

207
Individual/Families Served

6
Counties Served

85%
Individual/Family Goals Accomplished

30
Community Events Attended

Advocacy Impact



We provide advocacy, guidance, and resources to individuals with disabilities and their families as they navigate systems, services, and important decisions. Much of our work this year focused on educational advocacy, helping families navigate the special education process, understand their rights and options, and advocate for the supports students need to succeed. We work alongside families, schools, and community partners to encourage collaborative, person-centered solutions. Across all areas of our advocacy, our goal is to provide individuals and families with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to make informed decisions and advocate for the lives and futures they choose.

184
Screenings

207
Intakes *(64 returning individuals and families)*

1503
Contacts Made

884
Hours Spent in Contacts

Those We Serve

Stronger Collaboration - School Partner

The Arc Community Advocates have been instrumental in bridging the gap between our school and the families we serve. Their ability to foster clear, respectful communication has strengthened the collaboration between us and parents, ensuring that everyone is on the same page and working toward the best outcomes for each child. This open dialogue has proven invaluable in creating a trusting relationship with families.
What stands out most about The Arc Community Advocates is their commitment to preparing parents for every step of the process. They take the time to explain potential challenges and outcomes, making sure that families understand both the possibilities and limitations of what we can offer. This transparency has been crucial in helping families feel supported and empowered, rather than overwhelmed.

Confidence to Advocate - Family Served

Working with an advocate has been an absolute game changer for our family. Navigating the world of IEPs and 504 plans can feel overwhelming and confusing, but they provided the guidance, knowledge, and support we needed to advocate effectively for our child. We no longer felt alone on an island.

230
Goals Developed

85%
Accomplished

14%
No Longer Being Pursued

1%
Goal Has Changed

Joseph A. Cekola Memorial Endowment Fund



$123,233

Awarded to 29 families.

Thank you for my sensory items!

This past year, the Joseph A. Cekola Memorial Endowment Fund provided $123,233 in financial assistance to 29 different families. The mission of the Fund is to provide financial support to families with permanently disabled children who desire to maintain their family unit by caring for their child at home. Through this support, families are better able to access the resources and assistance needed to provide care while keeping their loved ones surrounded by the comfort and support of family.

Community Outreach



Building awareness, strengthening partnerships, and connecting people to support.

Our work extends beyond individual advocacy. Through outreach, education, and intentional partnerships, we connect individuals and families to information, resources, and support. Strong relationships with schools, nonprofits, service providers, and community partners help expand our reach and create clearer pathways to support throughout the communities we serve.



Partnership In Action

Connected with 1,275 professionals, community members, and family members through 30 events, conferences, and presentations.

INTEGRATED Services of Kalamazoo

FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES A SOURCE OF HOPE

roi residential opportunities inc.

FAMILY BOUND strengthening the ties that bind

VB ISD

DISABILITY NETWORK SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN

MRC Putting Abilities to Work.

Michigan Alliance for Families Information Education Support www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

POKÉGNEK BODÉWADMIK

KRESA Transforming Futures

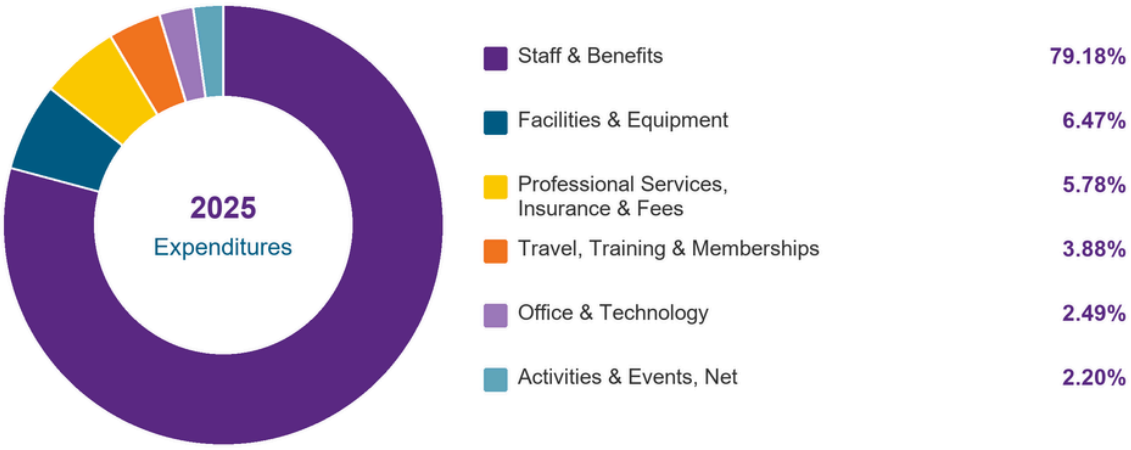
ASK FAMILY SERVICES SHARING EXPERIENCES STRENGTH & HOPE

2025 Financial Summary

$617,247 – Revenue & Support
$498,435 – Operating Expenditures
$118,812 – Net Revenue

In 2025, The Arc Community Advocates invested in the people, expertise and resources that make advocacy possible. Our expenditures supported advocacy, education and community outreach, along with the everyday operations that allow our team to provide dependable, person-centered support.

We are grateful to the donors, funders and community partners whose investments help The Arc Community Advocates remain a trusted, independent resource for people with disabilities and their families.



**Figures reflect 2025 operating activity. Cekola Fund assistance is reported separately. Event income is netted against event expenses.*

Our Supporters

The Support Behind Our Advocacy

Our work is made possible by individual donors, foundation partners, and community supporters. We gratefully recognize support from Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation, Harold and Grace Upjohn Foundation, Marvin & Rosalie Okun Foundation, Gary Sisters Foundation, and Enna Foundation.

United Way of South Central Michigan support and dedicated Michigan Alliance for Families advocacy funding through The Arc Michigan also helped support our work. A $100,000 distribution from our endowment provided additional resources in 2025.

Help Sustain What Comes Next

Annual gifts and flexible operating support help sustain the people and day-to-day work behind our advocacy. We invite individuals, foundations and businesses to invest in The Arc Community Advocates continue service to individuals who experience a disability and their families.

Every Gift Matters

Your generosity helps The Arc Community Advocates continue providing advocacy, support, and opportunities for individuals who experience a disability and their families. Thank you for being part of our community!

The Arc™
Community Advocates

Achieve with us.

Mission

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

Looking Ahead

The work reflected in this report gives us much to celebrate and even more to build upon. We are focused on reaching more individuals and families, strengthening community partnerships, creating new pathways to resources, and ensuring people with disabilities remain at the center of decisions that affect their lives.

The next chapter will be built together. Achieve with us.

Stay Connected

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