

TORCH LIGHT

The Arc Community Advocates Newsletter - Spring 2019



HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

By Susan Rush, Executive Director

In this day and age of social change and as good stewards of grant and donor dollars, one may wonder how we know we are making a difference? For 66 years, The Arc Community Advocates has been the leading Advocate for individuals with a wide range of diagnosis across the spectrum of intellectual and developmental disabilities in Kalamazoo County.

As a society, we have gone from thinking that individuals with disabilities needed to be institutionalized and contribute little to society to recognizing that individuals with disabilities make huge contributions, belong and can thrive in every community. Most individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities just need additional supports to reach their goals and there is no one size fits all.

Our supports and services can be as simple as an information and referral service, helping individuals and families become empowered and their own self-advocates, to complex assessment of cases in education that require not only

a clinical understanding of the dynamics, but also knowing the law and statutes that the education system is required to follow. In addition, we can help you plan the long-term future for your child or adult with a disability. We also advocate for the rights of individuals through the local, state, and federal levels of policy.



Our services are personalized to meet the needs of the individuals at whatever stage of life they are in or approaching. We record hundreds of client contact hours each year and attend various types of meetings. We know the relief parents feel when we walk alongside them to help advocate for their child. The Arc Community Advocates remain committed to speaking up and speaking out to ensure equity and access to the community for all individuals!

COMMUNITY EVENTS & TRAININGS



It's important to know your rights. In this workshop we will be discussing the laws which protect people with disabilities in the areas of employment, housing, education (K-12 & post-secondary), public places/access, voting, and transportation.

The information in this workshop is intended as an overview for the purposes of advocating for your rights, we are not providing legal advice.

This event is free and open to the public. Select the location and date that works for you and RSVP to Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x120 or grunwellm@dnswm.org and let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

St. Joseph: Thursday, May 2 9:00 - 10:30
Disability Network Southwest Michigan | 2900 Lakeview Avenue

Kalamazoo: Wednesday, May 8 12:30 - 2:00 Disability Network
Southwest Michigan | 517 E. Crosstown Parkway

Battle Creek: Friday, May 10 9:00 - 10:30
United Way of the Battle Creek & Kalamazoo Region | 34 W. Jackson Street, Ste. 4B



MICHIGAN ALLIANCE FOR FAMILIES WORKSHOPS

Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF) will be hosting workshops in both our Kalamazoo and St. Joseph offices in the coming months. MAF is a statewide resource to connect children with disabilities to resources to help improve their education. For more information about MAF programming visit them at www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org.



At Disability Network's St. Joseph Office:

Extended School Year

Wednesday, May 29 | 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Inclusion: Free & Appropriate Education

Wednesday, June 26 | 8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

At Disability Network's Kalamazoo Office:

Getting & Keeping the First Job

Wednesday, May 1 | 11:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.



www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

JOURNEY OF HOPE

JULY 27TH
MILHAM PARK
3:30-5:30 P.M.

For the past several years, The Ability Experience and Pi Kappa Phi members have come together with The Arc Community Advocates for an afternoon of creating awareness for people with disabilities.

We spend the afternoon getting to know each other, playing yard games, grilling out and promoting that disability doesn't mean "inability".

The Ability Experience is the philanthropic initiative of the Pi Kappa Phi fraternity that remains, to this day, an unparalleled success in the Greek world. Founded in 1977, they strive to instill a passion for lifelong service in their fraternity members while helping to empower people living with disabilities.



The Ability Experience creates experiences that promote the abilities of all people and works to eliminate the labels that unfairly define us, especially for those living with disabilities.

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.

This event is free and you, your family, and friends are invited to join us at Milham Park on July 27th from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. to learn more about The Ability Experience visit <https://abilityexperience.org/>

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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.

LOCAL SUMMER CAMPS DISABILITY SPECIFIC

*Looking for something to do this
summer? Check out these great
camps available this summer!*



The Holley Institute Conductive

Learning Center
Deaf/Hard of Hearing
Brooklyn
www.holleyfv.org

AG Bell Summer Camp
Deaf/Hard of Hearing
Jackson
<https://agbellloft.com>

Camp Tuhsmeheeta

Blind/Low Vision
Greenville
www.camptuhsmeheeta.org

Autism Center of Excellence

Autistic
Kalamazoo
www.wmuace.com/asc

Lions Bear Lake Camp

Blind/Low Vision, Deaf/Hard
of Hearing, Juvenile Arthritis,
Autism Spectrum Disorder
Lapeer
www.bearlakecamp.org

Camp Discovery

Epilepsy & Chronic Health
Conditions
Pinckney
[www.epilepsymichigan.org/
camp- discovery](http://www.epilepsymichigan.org/camp-discovery)

Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind Camps

Blind/Low Vision
Camp Optimist
Ottawa County
www.oubmichigan.org

YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin

Special Needs
Middleville
www.grymca.org/camp

More camps for students with
disabilities:

[ASWS.org/Resources/
CampsandRecreation.aspx](http://ASWS.org/Resources/CampsandRecreation.aspx)

Conductive Learning Center

Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida,
Motor Delays
Grand Rapids
www.conductivelearningcenter.org

[VerySpecialCamps.com/
Michigan/Special-Needs-
Summer-Camps.shtml](http://VerySpecialCamps.com/Michigan/Special-Needs-Summer-Camps.shtml)

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