

TORCH LIGHT

The Arc Community Advocates Newsletter - Summer 2019



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR- EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY

By Susan Rush, Executive Director



Ahh yes, school is just around the corner, for some it means excitement, for others, especially individuals and families affected by intellectual and or developmental disability, it may mean anxiety, frustration and uncertainty for the future of their child.

For The Arc Community Advocates, it is a chance to educate and empower parents and students to be self-advocates and to help with a solutions-based approach to help bridge any gaps between the school and the families.

Sixty-eight percent of our free services is in Special Education Advocacy and it is not uncommon for us to be carrying over

100 open cases during any one school year that range from early on education to transition to adulthood. Our partnership with the Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF) and other like serving agencies like ASK Family Services helps to build a navigational foundation for families through collaborative training and parent mentoring.

Finally, our Systems Advocacy is how we hold governmental and educational entities accountable in the implementation of law, policy, procedures and an equitable education for those we serve. We share that information with you because together, our voices impact social change and the rights of all students to access the best education possible and entitled by law. From the first bell in September throughout the year, we are here for you!





COMMUNITY EVENTS & TRAININGS

Ableism 101 (Battle Crk)

September 5 @ 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Ableism 101: Everything you know about disability is (probably) wrong!

In its simplest form, ableism is the belief system that tells us it is better to be non-disabled than it is to be disabled. Ableism also examines disability discrimination on a systemic level by looking at the ways our society designs physically and socially segregated systems. Join us as we discuss and examine harmful cultural ideas around disability.



Ableism 102 (Kzoo)

September 24 @ 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Ableism 102: Next Steps in Dismantling Ableism

An all new workshop that will take your ableism knowledge and awareness to the next level.

NOTE: Ableism 102 is only available to people who have attended Ableism 101.

The workshops are free and open to the public. Contact Miranda at (269) 345-1516 x 120 to register. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

This is a fragrance-free environment. Please do not wear perfume, cologne or other scented products.

MICHIGAN ALLIANCE FOR FAMILIES WEBINARS

Join Michigan Alliance for Families Parent Mentors for a series of FREE webinars for parents and caregivers preparing for the new school year. All webinars take place on Thursdays. Each topic is presented twice, at noon and 7pm. A webinar is an online presentation. Attend the entire series or just the ones that interest you most.

Register here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6673070609902074891>



September 5 - Preparing for Your Next IEP Meeting with Debbie Rock and Genevieve Hecht

September 12 - Effective Advocacy and Communication Tips with Emilie Mullins and Stephanie Nicholls

September 19 - Advocating for Inclusion with Clare Brick, Joyce Dearhamer, Emilie Mullins

September 26 - Do I Really Need an Advocate? with Kristen Columbus and Nicole Miller



www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

ARCTOBERFEST

OCTOBER 17, 2019
RADISSON PLAZA HOTEL
6:30-9:00 P.M.
\$50.00/PERSON



Arctoberfest is our annual premier auction fundraiser for the Arc Community Advocates. Held this year on October 17th at the Radisson Plaza Hotel in downtown Kalamazoo from 6:30-9pm. \$50 per person includes heavy hors d'Oeuvres open bar and live music for the night.



Since 1953, The Arc Community Advocates has provided FREE advocacy and systems navigation support services for individuals and families affected by intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. In order to do so, we must raise money and write grants to meet the need in Kalamazoo County! Much of our advocacy is in education (68%) helping families navigate the maze of laws and processes in Special Education.

What a great way to get awesome deals on various packages and even a week stay at a beautiful South Haven Condo, support a local non-profit, and have an endless couple hours of fun! We still have opportunities for businesses and individuals to donate items, gift cards, sponsorships. Eat, drink, be merry and bid often!



GRAB YOUR TICKETS ONLINE -
WWW.COMMUNITYADVOCATES.ORG
CLICK ON THE EVENTS
SECTION.

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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.

ANNUAL MEETING - SEPTEMBER 17TH



THE ARC COMMUNITY ADVOCATES BOARD & STAFF INVITE YOU TO THE 2019 ANNUAL MEETING

September 17, 2019 - Watch for invitations in the mail for more details.

Join us to learn about the state of the agency, policy updates, and members vote on any new board members or by-law changes. Light refreshments will be provided.

PARENT CHECKLIST FOR BACK TO SCHOOL



SCHEDULE

- ☐ Any medical/dental or other checkups needed before school starts
- ☐ Start moving toward bedtime routines
- ☐ Talk to your child about starting school and help him/her work through any back to school jitters

PREPARE

- ☐ Re-read IEP to be sure you understand it and that it meets your child's needs.
- ☐ IEP Binder with all special ed paperwork
- ☐ A school year calendar to keep track of absences, important conversations with staff, suspensions or specific events you want to remember.
- ☐ Medical records for any medical special needs.

TO DO

- ☐ Visit school with child before school starts, check out the playground or library if available.
- ☐ Attend Back to School night, let teacher know if your child has an IEP or 504 plan.
- ☐ Send a note to teacher requesting a quick meeting around 3-4 weeks into school to personally provide copy of IEP or 504 plan.
- ☐ Make copies of all school communications and insert into your IEP binder
- ☐ Remember, if it's not in writing, it didn't happen!

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