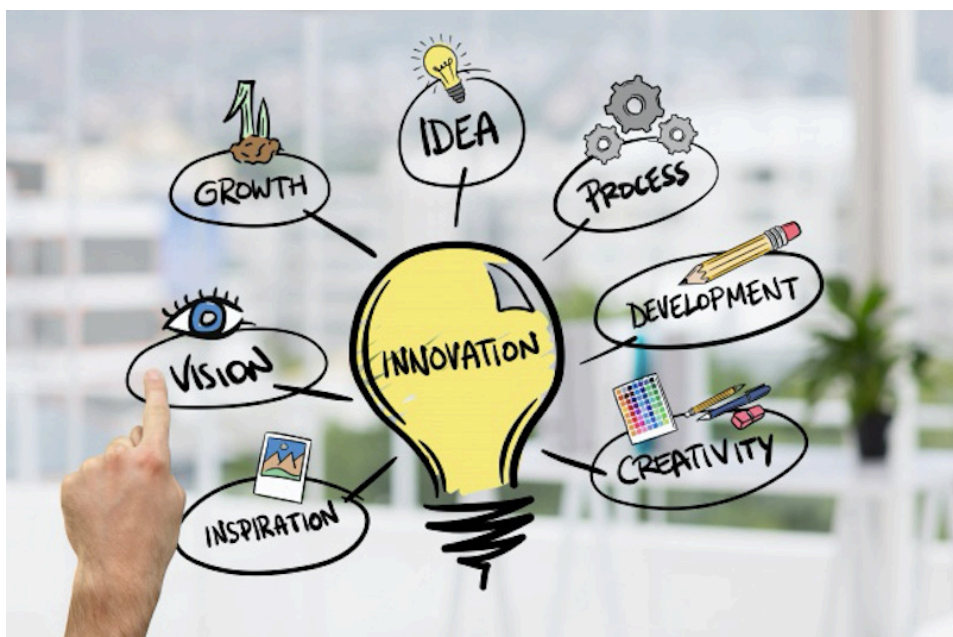


TORCH LIGHT

The Arc Community Advocates Newsletter - Winter 2020



13TH ANNUAL INCLUSION CONFERENCE PROMOTES INNOVATIVE INCLUSION



Innovation in its modern meaning is “a new idea, creative thoughts, new imaginations in form of device or method”. *Innovation is often also viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs.*

When we think about innovation, we may not always think about how it can impact inclusion. This year, we will be celebrating Neurodiversity, a growing vision where neurological differences

are recognized and respected as any other human variation.

On March 11th, individuals, families, providers, educators, professionals and other community members will come together for the 13th Annual Inclusion Conference where we will dive into neurodiversity and other forward-thinking topics.

A wide-variety of exhibitors will be on hand, for networking, with the latest best practice, supports, and great information that makes the most impact for inclusion

and for individuals that experience intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Join us as we support each other in the journey for a truly inclusive community, where everyone is connected and valued.

For more information please visit:
<https://communityadvocates.org/inclusion-conference>



COMMUNITY EVENTS & TRAININGS

FUNDAMENTALS OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES & DEMENTIA

*Presented by: Laura J. Ruhle, CT | Dementia and Disabilities Supportive Services Program
Coordinator at Alzheimer's Association - Greater Michigan Chapter*



People with developmental disabilities (DD) are living longer than ever, and with longer life comes an increased risk of dementia. Join us to learn the risk of dementia for those with DD, the unique signs and symptoms of dementia in this population; and how to best respond to changes in behavior, personality, communication, and self-care abilities. If you need additional accommodations please state them at the time of registration. Light refreshments will be served. **REGISTRATION IS FREE AND INCLUDES 1.5 CE's.**

FEBRUARY 27, 2019

2:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

3901 EMERALD DRIVE, KALAMAZOO, MI 49001

Pre-registration encouraged. To register call LaTaynia Conant at 269-342-9801 ext 105 or email her at lconant@communityadvocates.org

DO'S & DON'TS: ASSISTANCE ANIMALS



Have you been wondering what a service animal is and how they are different from an emotional support animal? Then this workshop is for you. Businesses, Organizations and people with Service or Emotional support animals have been finding this presentation helpful in learning there rights and were each animal is allow to go, what questions they can ask and what to do if an animal is not acting like a service animal.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020 3:00 - 4:30 PM

DISABILITY NETWORK SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN, 517 E. CROSSTOWN PARKWAY - FREE

RSVP to Miranda Grunwell at 269.345.1516 x120 or online at bit.ly/assistanimals2019

This is a fragrance-free environment. Please do not wear scented products to this event. Thank you!

NEWS & UPDATES



A FORK IN THE ROAD

By Susan Rush



We all have forks in the road throughout our lives, some we cause and some are just life. Some are easy, some are agonizing. I have one of those “just life” decisions by which I announce my retirement from The Arc Community Advocates effective December 13th for health reasons. Having the privilege of serving as Executive Director for almost four years, I have had the pleasure of meeting some wonderful individuals and families affected by I/DD. Individuals and families who never stop advocating for the best life possible, who acknowledge the social/human rights progress we have made, but realize there is much work still to do.

Then, there are the dedicated professionals who stand shoulder to shoulder with

individuals and families to add to the collective voice for equality and quality of life for individuals and families affected by disability. These folks work tirelessly for social change. The Arc Community Advocates will soon celebrate 67 years of service to Kalamazoo County and beyond. Our history has not been without challenges, however, being around for 67 years, the agency has always focused on how to best meet client needs, we continue to listen, educate, empower and advocate with and for those we serve.

With almost 20 years of experience in the human service field, I am proud to have served not only Kalamazoo County, but Calhoun County. I thank you all for the well wishes and your confidence in me these nearly four years. I wish you well in the years to come!

**FROM EVERYONE AT THE ARC
COMMUNITY ADVOCATES
WE WANT TO SAY:**

*Thank you for all of your hardwork
and support as the Executive
Director. The Arc Community
Advocates would not be where we
are today without your knowledge
and dedication.*

STAFF

Sheldon Schwitek
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Beverly McBrien, LMSW
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY

LaTaynia Conant
MARKETING &
COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR

Anne Gaertner
INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY
ADVOCATE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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TREASURER

DIRECTORS AT-LARGE

Chase Grounds
Lauren Harkness
Steve Leep
Teresa Tucker

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
Sheldon at sschwitek@communityadvocates.org
or 269.342.9801 x 103.

WELCOME SHELDON SCHWITEK NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Sheldon comes to Community Advocates with more than 30 years of experience supporting people who experience disability which began with the birth of his youngest brother when he was 13 years old.

With a firm grounding in Person Centered Work through long associations with Inclusion Press and the Toronto Summer Institute, Sheldon's focus has always been on encouraging people to "dream bigger" as a pathway to true citizenship. He is passionate about people living meaningful lives of contribution in their communities.

In 2011, Sheldon began to work with The Center for Positive Living Supports and their implementation of a Culture of Gentleness in Michigan. This work solidified his knowledge that relationships and community connections are fundamental to a safe and happy life.

Recently, Sheldon has been working nationally and internationally weaving together his experience in Person Centered Work and mentorship as exemplary tools to assist people to realize full potential as citizens.

The key message in Sheldon's work is that all people can lead lives that are rich and meaningful and that this is the our most important work. He is excited to continue to deepen his practice and understanding of this work at The Arc Community Advocates in Kalamazoo; a community that is committed to social justice for all.

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