

Achieve



A publication of The Arc of Atlantic County, serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1961

Summer Camp Helps Children Soar to New Heights

What an amazing summer it was for The Arc's 22 campers who attended the Milton & Betty Katz JCC's Camp By The Sea this year! Because so many of you helped make this program possible with your donations, we wanted to pass along a few of the many success stories from camp. Enjoy!

Kyle's Story, by mom Isabelle Mosca

"Kyle, now 13, has attended Camp By The Sea since he was seven. That first year got off to a rough start. Kathi Lentz from The Arc called me about five minutes after I dropped him off at the JCC. 'Please bring a new set of clothes for Kyle.' She said. 'He jumped into the pool, shoes and all.'

This was counselor Mike Barnes first interaction with Kyle. Little did he know that reaching out a hand to the rambunctious redhead would change his life. Mike got into Kyle's head and gained his trust over the next eight weeks. He played and danced with him, and took him on field trips. He let Kyle be Kyle, which resulted in spontaneous lunchtime serenades on the microphones and a greeting for all whom they encountered. He opened up Kyle to the world around him, and helped him to trust in others.

When Kyle returned to school in the fall, the teachers all asked what he did during the summer since he was so "joyful and engaged". He went from living in his own world to making connections with others, and even high-fiving everyone in his path. "He went to Camp By The Sea," was our answer. The



Arc of Atlantic County has made this all possible with their program.

Now, years later, we are still in touch with Kyle's counselors whose names never fail to bring a smile to

Kyle's face. They have taught our son to connect with the world around him in many ways.

Parasailing this summer was just another achievement in a long list of personal bests for Kyle. He trusted that all would be okay with his counselor Evan, and it was. Fear was not an issue. He may have autism, but it does not have him. Camp has taught Kyle to soar."

Nathan's First Solo Swim, by counselor Rachel Myers

"This summer was six-year-old Nathan's first year at Camp By The Sea. He loves to play in the water and is almost always the first one to jump in and get wet. But up until recently, he would only do so with an adult by his side.



During swim lessons, Nathan started out by getting comfortable with putting his face in the water and kicking his feet while holding onto his counselor, never allowing himself to be away from an adult. One day, however, Nathan was given two green noodles to support himself with while kicking, and he just took off from there! He was encouraged to kick without holding onto his instructor, and he did! He kicked all the way down the long side of the pool grinning from ear to ear as he put his hands out in front of him, and motored as best as he could with his legs.

For the rest of camp, Nathan was able to go under the water more, and became more confident in his abilities. He requested the noodles when in free swim and was able to go under the water without being uncomfortable. Nathan insisted on swimming 'by himself' and made great strides this summer in independence!"

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New Housing Partnerships Provide Affordable Alternatives

A year and a half ago, Susan Madden was a full-time student at the Richard Stockton College, living on campus and with a bright future ahead of her. But her whole world changed when her sister and only source of family support suddenly passed away. It was the end of her spring semester and her student housing contract was about to end. With nowhere to go, she packed up what she could carry and headed to the Atlantic City Rescue Mission.

Friends knew there had to be a better option for Susan, so they reached out to The Arc for help, knowing that Susan's diagnosis would make her eligible for our services. Social Services Director Nicole Terzakis immediately met with Susan at the Rescue Mission to see how she could help her get back on her feet.

Meanwhile, Arc CEO Deborah Davies had been working on a new, exciting opportunity with Seashore Gardens, a local assisted living facility which was opening an apartment building, called Seashore Housing, for seniors 55 and over, with 10 slots for people with disabilities of any age who would be supported by The Arc of Atlantic County. The criteria required the individuals to meet a certain income status and have minimal support needs. Susan seemed like the perfect fit



Susan loves her one-bedroom apartment at Seashore Housing. Here she is pictured on the sofa she received courtesy of The Arc's thrift shop.

and became the very first person to apply for housing.

Susan was accepted and moved in six months later, after living temporarily at Stockton and later in a church. She furnished her entire apartment with donations from The Arc's thrift shops and received a rebuilt laptop from Enroute Computer Services of Egg Harbor Township to replace one lost during her transition.

With the support she's received from The Arc and Seashore Housing, Susan was able to finish her degree and move on with her life. She graduated this past December, got her driver's license, began a part-time job, and volunteers.

Susan is one of several people with I/DD who have found affordable and accessible housing alternatives through The Arc's partnership like this one with Seashore Housing, and it really seems to be working out. Terzakis says, "This has been a great partnership. We educated the senior residents about the people we are supporting and now it's become a great little community. The seniors say The Arc residents 'are like our grandchildren!' They often hang out with their neighbors in the community room, cook for each other, play poker and more. We look forward to more opportunities like the Seashore Housing partnership."

Ellen Moskowitz Appointed President of New Jersey Group for Self Advocates



Ellen Moskowitz of Mays Landing has been appointed president of the advisory board of the New Jersey Statewide Self-Advocacy Network, a group made up of thousands of people in New Jersey with intellectual and developmental

disabilities who work together to advocate for themselves and exercise greater control over their lives.

As president, Ellen attends and prepares the agenda for monthly meetings at The Arc of New Jersey in North Brunswick where she works with fellow advisory board officers on action plans to address concerns of self advocates across the state. These issues range from enforcing the Olmstead Act, which gives people with I/DD the right to live in the community; educating the community about

person-first language and ending the R-word; transportation; housing; and employment. Ellen is also chairperson of the New Jersey Self Advocacy Club Council 5 (Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties) and briefs other officers on her council's activities.

Ellen recently attended the Self Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) conference in Minneapolis where she was a workshop leader on advocating for oneself in medical situations. "We talked about how doctors sometimes disrespect people with disabilities by only speaking with our staff instead of to us, the patient, like we're a bump on a log. We recommended that individuals should go in to the doctor's office alone, and invite staff in only if there is a question or issue," Moskowitz said. "The conference overall was great. I exchanged business cards with a lot of people. It was neat to learn what happens at other Arcs across the 50 states and what they do to help out their people with I/DD."

Attention Caregivers:

Attend The Arc's New Support Group Designed Just for You!



The Arc of Atlantic County is now offering a monthly support group for caregivers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, held on the third Thursday of each month from 6-8PM at The Arc's office in Egg Harbor Township.

The group is facilitated by The Arc's nurse and Rutgers University Master's in social work student Gail Ward-Kajander, and experts on topics ranging from financial and future

planning, behavior management and other areas are often brought in as well.

"We address some of the pressing issues and barriers to service that caregivers face. Our goal is to help alleviate

some of the stresses you experience before they become too big for you to handle. Without proper support, anxiety and depression can often set in. It's important to make sure you're taking care of yourself as well as your loved one, and we're here to help you cope," Ward-Kajander says.

"Even if you already have the information and resources you need, maybe you're looking to just connect with others who are going through the same emotions and situations you are. We're here to provide that support as well," she says.

This free meeting includes light refreshments and, if needed, a support person to be with your loved one while you attend the meeting. To register, please contact Gail at 609-485-0800 ext. 210 or by email at gwardkajander@arcatlantic.org.

New Career Exploration Program Kicks Off this Fall

It's certainly a rough world out there for job seekers. Fewer opportunities are available, especially for those with limited skill sets like new graduates. For some, internships, apprenticeships or volunteer experiences help build the skills needed to find employment. But what is available for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who need to enhance their skills to become employable?

The Arc of Atlantic County recently launched an internship program called the Career Exploration Program. The goal for each participant is to enhance their skills, build their resume and become gainfully employed. At the end of the internship, each participant will apply to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for employment services.

Interns will do the bulk of their training in The Arc's established gel candle program and at The Arc Makes Cents, too! Thrift Shop. Their Career Coach will help them work on three main goals.

Goals will also be met through training in areas of hygiene and attire for the workplace; dealing with stressful situations or difficult people; handling money; filling out job applications; using computers, and more.

In the candle program, participants will learn

how to make and market their product. They'll ask local businesses to sell their product and will be responsible for tracking inventory and collecting the proceeds from each location. They'll also sell their products at craft shows where they'll practice working with money and speaking about their product to potential customers.

At the thrift shop, interns will learn how to accept and sort through donated items and prepare sellable items for the sales floor. They will also place items on the sales floor, ensuring that items are placed in the appropriate size, color and category. They will learn how to fill out time sheets, and how to work independently and with coworkers.

Kathi Lentz, operations director of the program says, "We're really excited about the possibilities this program offers. Individuals are getting the opportunity to learn new skills and brush up on old ones. They are kept busy during their five hours in the program and they can leave each day with a sense of accomplishment"

If you or your loved one are interested in The Arc's internship program, please contact your DDD case manager or call The Arc at 609-485-0800 for more information.



Tiffanie learns how to sort through donations and prepare sellable items for the sales floor at The Arc Makes Cents, too! Thrift Shop in Northfield.

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Community Rallies to Support Arc Programs



Arc CEO Deborah Davies, center, with Our Children Making Change president Laura Dulac, right, and fundraiser Isabelle Turner at the Our Children Making Change closing ceremonies.

Young Philanthropists Raise \$3,000 for Children's Program

A very generous and hardworking group of children spent their summer raising money for charities, including The Arc of Atlantic County, as part of their involvement with the nonprofit organization Our Children Making Change. On August 14, Arc CEO Deborah Davies accepted a check at the group's summer closing ceremony in the amount of \$3,000. Davies says, "We are extremely touched by the efforts of this wonderful group of children. The money they raised will help children with special needs in our weekly Saturday Program, a five-hour respite program that gives children time away from their families where they make crafts, play games, go on trips and much more. This respite program provides families with a needed break from caring for their loved one, while giving children a chance to make friends and spend time with their peers developing important skills."



Kathi Lentz and Lori D'Alessio (left and right, in black) present Print Art CEO Carl Blase, center, and staff with a 'Thank You' canvas featuring the handprints of every child in The Arc's summer camp program as a token of gratitude. The artwork currently hangs in Print Art's lobby.

Print Art Donates \$2,000 to Arc Summer Camp Program

Our 2012 Summer Camp Appeal closed with more than \$5,700 in donations, which helped support 22 children with special needs at Camp By the Sea held at the JCC in Margate. Our top contributor was **Print Art, Inc.**, an Egg Harbor Township-based commercial printing company just down the street from our office on Delilah Road. "We were contacted by Doug Powell, CFO of Print Art, in early May after they received our letter asking for summer camp support," said Arc Chief Development Officer Deborah Jewell. "The company's executives committed to raise funds through employee campaigns, their vendors and their own corporate support. We were completely blown away by their efforts when they told us they had raised \$2,000 in a very short time. Donations like this enable us to support more children at summer camp, an experience that changes the lives of the campers who participate," Jewell said.

Thank You for Helping Us Grow!

Donors listed* made a gift of \$25 or more between May 1, 2012 and August 31, 2012

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*Donors listed in bold contributed to the community phase of the "Build The Arc" campaign to build more affordable and accessible housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If you would like to contribute to the campaign, please contact Deborah Jewell at 609-485-0800 ext. 135 or djewell@arcatlantic.org.