



HERALD

A MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director



Lauren Panarella

In February, NJ Governor Corzine released his proposed budget for the fiscal year 2008-9. Included was an appropriation of \$40.6 million to keep

the cost of providing services to people with disabilities at its current rate. However, given that the cost of providing care has increased, this amounts to a budget cut for The Arc of Somerset County as well as other service providers.

As an advocacy and service agency, it is our mission at The Arc of Somerset County to support the rights of children and adults who have special needs. To achieve our mission, we are facilitating a Self-Advocacy Group that is run by and for people who have developmental disabilities. (See article to the right.) We are also participating in government forums and partnering with legislators to establish laws that ensure the rights of the citizens we serve.

During this time of stretched resources and fiscal constraints, we find ourselves advocating not only for individuals, but for resources as well.

Presently, more than 8,000 families throughout the state are on a "waiting list" for the placement of a loved one

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Congratulations to New Self-Advocacy Group

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities from The Arc of Somerset County have formed their own Self-Advocacy Group. The mission of the Self-Advocacy Group is to encourage more people with disabilities to lead independent and productive lives. Already, the group has appointed officers, launched monthly meetings at the Valley Park Adult Training Center, and established clear objectives. Among those objectives are to recommend revisions to the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities' "Personal Rights of People with Disabilities," raise public awareness, and give support back to the community.

Presently, the Self-Advocacy Group is preparing to send care packages to soldiers stationed in Iraq. Through two bake sales, the group has



Pictured, from left to right, are Barbara Cornelius, Karen Ennis, Karen Stanchak, Alison Malnak, Evelyn Ramundo, Dawn Prag, Kirsten Marri, Cliff Pierre, and Brian O'Malley.

raised enough money to pay for half of the \$500 postage required. Anyone who would like to contribute funds to help cover the balance of postage is welcome to contact Karen Ennis, Director of Continuous Improvement, at 908-725-8544, ext. 612.

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A Message from Edmond A. Brown, President

Dear Friends,

As we approach the final quarter of the fiscal year which begins April 1, I am pleased to share with you my heartfelt optimism. The Arc of Somerset County continues to display strong indicators that reflect our ability to achieve steady organizational growth. We are well positioned to continue administering sustainable programs and vital services in our county for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

With the Board of Directors' recent appointment of Lauren Panarella as Executive Director, we will roll out a progressive strategy and galvanize the local community around public policy issues that affect our consumers. As you read this issue of the *Herald*, I hope you will feel, as I do, the passion and commitment of our Self-Advocates who



Edmond A. Brown

have organized themselves to take responsibility for their own hopes and dreams. Or feel inspired by reading about consumers who are making an important impact on the economy by doing "good jobs" from which they take home a paycheck and their dignity.

To advance our mission in undertaking advocacy and outreach initiatives, we need your membership support.

Please do your part to help those in our community who have intellectual and developmental disabilities—renew your membership or become a member of The Arc of Somerset County today.

Warmest regards,

Edmond A. Brown
President

The Arc of Somerset Mission

The Arc of Somerset County helps people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families realize their dreams by providing lifelong advocacy and quality services.* We also promote the prevention of developmental disabilities.

*The word *families* includes all biological family members, as well as friends, caregivers, guardians, and advocates.

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Those who would like to donate food and personal items for inclusion in the care packages will find collection boxes—decorated by members of the Self-Advocacy Group—situated near the entranceways of the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Center in Manville and the Adult Training Centers in Branchburg, Valley Park, and Green Brook. For a complete list of recommended donations—such as phone cards, baby wipes, drink or soup mixes, and hand warmers—please contact Karen.

“Working with our advocates is inspiring,” said Karen. “Their energy and enthusiasm reminds me of what’s really important.”

Advocacy is more critical now than ever before. “The Self-Advocacy Group is concerned about the increasing amount of money the state is withholding from their disability checks,” Karen explained. “The amount withheld has increased from 50 to 75 percent. A person who was receiving \$250 a month, from a total of \$500, is now receiving only \$125!”

Even though the government provides housing and groceries, individuals who have disabilities depend on their disability checks to cover other necessities ranging from toiletries and clothing to furniture and over-the-counter medicines. “What’s left in the disability check barely

covers even one of those monthly expenses, not to mention leisure activities,” Karen noted.

STANDING UP FOR PERSONAL RIGHTS

“Our advocates are articulating what’s important to all individuals who have developmental disabilities, including those who are unable to speak for themselves. Their strength of character and skills are admirable,” Karen continued.

“Our advocates have even reached out to other service providers to invite their members to participate in the group’s activities.”

Officers of the Self-Advocacy Group are Evelyn Ramundo, President; Brian O'Malley, Vice-President; Barbara Cornelius, Secretary; Dawn Prag, Treasurer; and Cliff Pierre, Sergeant at Arms.

In addition to Karen, facilitators include Alison Malnak, Arc Employment Consultant; Kirsten Marri, Support Specialist; and Karen Stanchak, Individual Habilitation Program Coordinator. “We provide assistance,” Karen clarified, “but the advocates are driving this process.”

Said Lauren Panarella, Executive Director, “We are proud of the Self-Advocacy Group and are confident that they will achieve their mission. We also value the group’s leadership in advocacy matters.”

For more information, contact Karen at 908-725-8544, ext. 612.

Lauren Panarella Appointed Executive Director

The Board of Directors of The Arc of Somerset County is thrilled to announce the appointment of Lauren Panarella to the position of Executive Director for The Arc of Somerset County, effective immediately. For 18 years, Lauren has demonstrated exemplary commitment and dedication to serving individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by assuming key roles and positions in numerous programs at the organization.

Among those positions were Residential Program Manager, Assistant Director of Residential Services, Support Specialist, Acting Director of Employment Services, Family Support Coordinator, and Associate Executive Director. Most recently, as Acting Executive Director, Lauren provided the organization with quality leadership and a dedicated, strategic vision.

Now as Executive Director, Lauren will execute the strategic plan, strengthen The Arc of Somerset County’s relationships with members of the community, and champion fundraising and the solicitation of corporate donations to benefit more than 1,000 children, adults, and families in Somerset County.

Lauren holds a B.A. in Psychology from Rutgers University, an M.A. in Guidance Counseling and Educational Leadership from Montclair University, and a Post Master’s Certificate in Family Therapy. She holds a State of New Jersey Rehabilitation Counselor License and a Social Worker Certification.

Lauren’s extensive accomplishments and warm-hearted commitment continue to be great assets to the entire Arc community. Congratulations to Lauren!

Building a Career Path For Direct Support Professionals

The Arc of Somerset County has joined a statewide initiative to build a career path process for direct support professionals (DSPs). The initiative is a pilot project of the NJ Direct Support Professionals Workforce Development Coalition to increase the capabilities, professional skills, and rewards of being a DSP in NJ. Only eight other agencies statewide are participating in this pilot project, which is being funded by a grant from the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities to reduce the high turnover rate of DSPs.

This partnership between agencies and the state addresses the current crisis involving DSPs, specifically the need to provide them with additional training, a living wage, and incentives to remain in direct care. "Unless there is a clear, voluntary, and accessible statewide process to enhance training and skills—in which competencies are linked with salary increases—there will be no systematic way to provide employees with incentives to remain in the field of providing direct support to people who have disabilities," said a representative from the NJ Direct Support Professionals Workforce Development Coalition.

DSPs who apply and are accepted to participate in the pilot project will enjoy a greater sense of professionalism and job satisfaction derived, in part, from increased knowledge, skills, salary, and recognition. The pilot project utilizes the Internet-based *College of Direct Support*, and provides a mentor to assist participants in completing their online courses.

"Our hope is that this process will provide incentives to people who would like to remain in direct care, resulting in a reduction in turnover, while, at the same time, enhancing professional skills," said Karen Ennis, Director of Continuous Improvement. Most important, individuals who have developmental disabilities benefit from the increased skills of DSPs, consistency of care, and an increase in dependable caregiving relationships.

For more information about this pilot project, please visit <http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/boggscenter/projects/index.htm>, then click on Direct Support Workforce Development, or contact Karen Ennis at 908-725-8544, ext. 612. To learn more about national initiatives, you can visit <http://www.youneedtoknowme.org/>.

Save the Date!

"Ask the Advocate" Day on April 22

Ask the Advocate Day is scheduled for April 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at The Arc of Somerset County on 141 South Main Street in Manville. (See article on back cover.)

Membership Meeting on April 23

A Membership Meeting for The Arc of Somerset County is scheduled for April 23 at 7 p.m. at the Manville Municipal Building on 325 North Main Street in Manville. All are invited to attend. For more information, please contact Tara Abbott, Assistant Director of Development, at 908-725-8544, ext. 610.

2nd Business Partnership Awards Fest on April 25

The 2nd Business Partnership Awards Ceremony is scheduled for April 25 for companies that employ consumers to work at their sites. For more information, please contact Alfie DeMoss at 908-725-8544, ext. 613.

Book Sale at Camp Jotoni on May 9, 10, & 11

Camp Jotoni and the Warren Lion's Club are holding a Book Sale on May 9, 10, & 11 at Camp Jotoni on Old Stirling Road in Warren. Meanwhile, on every Saturday in April, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., new and used books are being collected at Camp Jotoni. For more information, please contact Debbie Weisman of the Lions' Club at 908-542-1580.

Free Pampering for Caregivers on May 10

Caring for Mothers and Others—including fathers and guardians who provide caregiving to consumers 24/7—is scheduled for May 10 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featured will be an afternoon of pampering, including lunch and respite

care, offered to caregivers free of charge! For more information, please contact Mary Atchey, Assistant Director of Family Support, at 908-725-8544, ext. 624, or Sharon McClellan, Social Worker, at 908-725-2266, ext. 635.

"Step Up for The Arc" on May 17

The 2008 Walkathon is scheduled for May 17 at Duke Island Park on Old York Road in Bridgewater. Potential sponsors who would like to purchase space on The Arc of Somerset County T-shirt, and walkers who wish to organize teams, are invited to contact Tara Abbott, Assistant Director of Development, at 908-725-8544, ext. 610. To create your own fundraising page, please visit www.firstgiving.org/thearcofsomerset.

Annual Expo, Election, Membership, and Awards Celebration in June

This year's Annual Expo, Election, Membership, and Awards Celebration is scheduled for June at the Somerset Hills Hotel in Warren. For more information, please contact Alfie DeMoss at 908-725-8544, ext. 613.

Somerset County Patriots Game on August 16

All proceeds from the fundraiser at the Somerset Patriots Game on August 16 will be donated to The Arc of Somerset County. Potential sponsors are invited to contact Tara Abbott, Assistant Director of Development, at 908-725-8544, ext. 610.

The 2008 Arc Angel Gala on November 14

The 2008 Arc Angel Gala fundraiser is set for November 14 at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club in Far Hills. Stay tuned to subsequent issues of the *Herald* for more information.

John Kuzian and Students Donate \$1,300 to Walkathon

John Kuzian, a history teacher at Northern Highlands Regional High School in Allendale, and the father of Joseph Kuzian, a former student of the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Center, donated a check for \$1,300 on behalf of his students to the Walkathon set for May 17. Students of business teacher Robert Merrilees raised the money as part of their entrepreneurial class project, which included selling merchandise on eBay.

After raising \$1,300, the students decided to donate the money to the Walkathon in honor of their history teacher, Mr. Kuzian, and his son. Joseph, 4, attended the Preschool Disabled Program at Jerry Davis, and has since been mainstreamed into public school.

Alfie DeMoss, Director of Development, was moved by the generosity of these students and their teacher. The entire Arc community extends their heartfelt gratitude.

Alfie DeMoss, Director of Development at The Arc of Somerset County, accepts a check for \$1,300 from John Kuzian, a history teacher at Northern Highlands Regional High School.



SJP Properties Donates \$17,000 To The Arc of Somerset County

Elaine and Steve Pozycki of SJP Properties donated \$17,000 to each of several nonprofit organizations, including The Arc of Somerset County, in honor of their outstanding contributions to the community. Ms. Pozycki presented the check to Executive

Director Lauren Panarella at a reception on November 27 at the Somerset Hills Learning Institute in Bedminster.

Other recipient organizations included the Matheney Medical and Educational Center in Peapack, the Midland School in North Branch, the Somerset County United Way in Bridgewater, the Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center in Oldwick, and the Somerset Hills Learning Institute.

Ethicon, a Johnson & Johnson company, announced the awards as a unique philanthropic initiative of SJP Properties. The initiative resulted from an agreement between Johnson & Johnson and SJP Properties in which part of the sale and development of the Somerset Corporate Center in Bridgewater would be applied to charitable donations.

"The generosity of people like Elaine and Steve Pozycki serves to improve the lives of many who have developmental disabilities," said Lauren. "We thank them on behalf of the entire Arc community."



Photographer: Hal Brown

From left to right, Elaine Pozycki of SJP Properties, Executive Director Lauren Panarella, and Consumer Rhona Levine.

Welcome To New Hires!

Welcome to The Arc of Somerset County's newest employees, listed below in alphabetical order by division and title.

- In *Administrative Services* is Jamon F. Watson as Executive Assistant.
- In *Employment Services* are Daycia D. Lee, Monica A. Medwin, Steven J. O'Donnell, Eucabeth Nyabonyi Ogendo, and Jason L. Stukes as Support Counselors.

- In *Residential Services* are Olayinka I. Akeju as Residential Manager, Peter Wanjohi Kieni as Overnight Counselor, Bolanle Abiodun Falowo as Substitute, and Ann Marie Christie and Lydia Wangari Kiruri as Support Counselors.

"Congratulations," said Lauren Panarella, Executive Director. "We look forward to a long and productive partnership with you."

"Tea With Honey" Fundraiser Nets More Than \$38,000

The ninth annual Tea With Honey fundraiser on February 10 at the Olde Mill Inn in Basking Ridge raised more than \$38,000 in net revenues. The revenues will support children's programs at the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Center (JDECC), Camp Jotoni, the Parents and Children Together (PACT) program, and Family Support Services.

Co-Chairs Alyson Binder, Lisa Dudzik, Kathy Krell, Katie Mohan, and Janet Petrillo led the 20-member Tea With Honey committee in designing and organizing this seamless, fun-filled event. "The creativity and initiative of these remarkable women will benefit more than 325 children and their families who receive services through The Arc," said an enthusiastic Laura Liebel, Director, Childhood Services.

Amid the gaiety of Hawaiian luau decorations, children helped their parents bid on auction items, such as a trip to Hershey Park. Adding to the enthusiasm was Annie Forgione and the boys and girls from Annie's Playhouse, who sang and danced for the children.

Kerri Mandelbaum of Warren designed a Giving Tree for the 2008 Tea With Honey fundraiser. Artistically inclined, Kerri conceived of the Giving Tree last year, as a community service project to complete her Bat Mitzvah. Once again, Kerri decorated the Tree with hearts listing donations ranging from \$50 to \$500, along with the special gifts each donation would buy, including a computer touchscreen, musical instruments, or camp T-shirts.

The entire Arc community extends a Hawaiian *mahalo* or "thank you" to all of the talented and generous committee members as well as the attendees and donors who made this event so memorable. Said a grateful Laura, "We could not have done this without you."



During Tea With Honey, an audience of children sat in wonderment of the singers and dancers from Annie's Playhouse.



From left to right, Kerri Mandelbaum of Warren and Josie Dudzik of Basking Ridge stand in front of the gaily decorated Giving Tree.



Pictured, from left to right, are Tea With Honey Co-Chairs Alyson Binder, Katie Mohan, Kathy Krell, and Lisa Dudzik. Not shown is Janet Petrillo.

Photographer: Debbie Weisman

Business Partners Honored at Premiere Awards Ceremony

The Arc of Somerset County held its first Business Partnership Awards Ceremony on February 29 at the Branchburg Adult Training Center. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to companies that contract with the adult training centers (ATCs) to complete projects in-house. More than 200 adults with disabilities provide NJ companies with reliable and cost-effective services.



Christopher Corvino

"We were pleased to recognize our clients and thank them for our long-standing and highly valued partnership," said Christopher Corvino, Director, Employment Services.

Those who received a Certificate of Appreciation include: ACCSES NJ, Argyle Industries, Associated Mailing Service, Bair Financial Services, Baldwin & Obenauf, Bridgewater Wholesalers, Chubb, Delia Associates, Discovery Orchestra, Health-Care Institute of New Jersey, Jeros Tackle Fishing, Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, Lincoln Services, Micro Fasteners, MMI/Healer, Niagara Conservation, Ortho Biotech, Oticon, Plexis Innovative Technologies, Professional Management Associates, Raritan Valley Community College Foundation, Shell Packaging Corp., SmileMakeover Solutions, Somerset County Business

Partnership, Somerset Patriots, Specified Technologies, Stoelzle-Oberglas, Suydam Insurance, Synergy Direct Marketing, Timberlane Woodcrafters, Top Safety Products, TRIMLINE Medical Products, VIA Data & Marketing Services, Viking Termite and Pest Control, and Vitakraft.

All executives from these companies spoke very well of their experiences working with The Arc of Somerset County. Diane Lester of Discovery Orchestra relies on Employment Services to prepare large mailings. "We are pleased with both

the quality and the excellent service we receive," Ms. Lester said. Rick Webber of Shell Packaging, a supplier to Oticon, said that the assembly work provided by consumers surpasses that of independent packaging companies. And Tom Ellison from Synergy Direct Marketing describes The Arc's fulfillment work as outstanding.

After a nearly decade-long relationship, Richard Jacobson, President of TRIMLINE Medical Products, is looking forward to expanding business opportunities with The Arc of Somerset County.

"When our contract was first awarded, consumers were assembling 2,000 blood pressure cuffs a week," Mr. Jacobson said. "Now they are assembling 10,000 a week."

Business partners who were unable to attend the awards ceremony received their Certificates of Appreciation in the mail. They were also invited to attend the second Business Partnership Awards Ceremony scheduled for April 25 for companies that employ consumers to work at their sites.

Christopher is grateful to all of the companies for providing consumers with an opportunity to be part of their larger community and receive satisfaction from a job well done. "Thank you for recognizing The Arc of Somerset County as an effective business partner," Christopher said.



Richard Jacobson

Trina Trent and Cheryl Brantley Receive NJ Certification as Career Evaluators

In December, Trina Trent, Assistant Director, and Cheryl Brantley, Acting Manager, from Employment Services, received their New Jersey Vocational Evaluation Certificate from the State University of New York in Buffalo Division, and can now conduct functional assessments at the Adult Training Center in Branchburg. The assessments help determine whether high school graduates with developmental disabilities are best suited for employment in the community or in sheltered workshops.



Formerly, people with developmental disabilities had to rely on a private evaluator or the New Jersey Division of

Vocational Rehabilitation Services to conduct a functional and situational assessment. "Now we can complete the evaluation here," explained Trina.

Added Christopher Corvino, Director, Employment Services, "Trina and Cheryl's certifications not only expand the capabilities of The Arc of Somerset County, but they demonstrate our commitment to ongoing education as a learning organization." Congratulations to Trina and Cheryl!



Trina Trent

Cheryl Brantley

Employee Services Reaches Highest Sales Figures

DID YOU KNOW... that sales during the first half of the fiscal year reached nearly \$120,000—an average of \$20,000 a month? This is 40 percent higher than last year's sales. Congratulations employees and staff!

DID YOU KNOW... that one of the highest monthly sales figures in the history of Contract Services occurred during the past eleven months? Thanks to everyone on The Arc of Somerset County team!

DID YOU KNOW... that on February 29, Employment Services joined Development in hosting its first Business Partnership Awards Ceremony? This gave us an opportunity to network with business partners and say, "thank you."

DID YOU KNOW... that, over the last six months, the TRIMLINE Medical Products team assembled more than 1.25 million tube and connector sets used to produce blood pressure cuffs?

DID YOU KNOW... that, already, in 2008, employees in Green Brook, Gannett, and Valley Park assembled 90,000 repair kits and 30,000 vent component kits for Oticon, a leading hearing aid manufacturer?

DID YOU KNOW... that employees in Branchburg spearheaded the process of manufacturing more than 1.6 million cosmetic bottles for the L'Oreal assembly line?

DID YOU KNOW... that we are always looking for projects for our production centers? Those who need help with projects are welcome to contact Britt Blomgren, Contract Sales Manager, at 908-707-0920 or brittb@thearcofsomerset.org.

LEARN MORE... The Arc of Somerset County employs more than 200 adults with developmental disabilities at four local production and training centers. Our diverse workforce provides services to an equally diverse customer base ranging from pharmaceutical, marketing and medical device companies to food service, pet products, financial services, hardware and sub-assembly, energy conservation, cosmetics, and direct mailing businesses.

Employment Services is committed to providing customers with a reliable and cost-effective alternative to in-house assembly, packaging, cleaning, mail handling, and light office tasks. As an added benefit, companies that recognize The Arc's contribution increase the visibility of people with developmental disabilities within their community.



1. Anthony Washington assembles name tags for Baldwin & Obenauf. 2. Staff member Janera Bell and Barry Bohler review daily totals. 3. Elvina Grimes creates labels for Vitakraft sirloin tips. 4. Donna McHugh tapes boxes. 5. Adam Walck ensures quality control for Vitakraft dog food. 6. Michael Thomas assembles tubes for TRIMLINE. 7. Carmen Candeleria packages beef tips for Vitakraft. 8. Tom Boney assembles tubes for TRIMLINE.

Students Partner with Employment Services During "Service Learning Day"

Employment Services hailed this year's annual Service Learning Day with Bernards High School students at the Branchburg Adult Training Center (ATC) on January 18 as the most successful ever. Now in its third year, Service Learning Day gives juniors and seniors from Bernards High School an opportunity to enhance their awareness, sensitivity, and ongoing support of individuals with developmental disabilities. The faculty at Bernards High School has selected Service Learning Day to commemorate Martin Luther King Day and the spirit of serving others.

Students participated in a series of sensitivity exercises designed by members of The Arc of Somerset County staff. The exercises, which simulate some of the challenges experienced by individuals who have developmental disabilities, included putting on a shirt and buttoning it while wearing oven mitts, folding a towel without using your hands, and looking into a mirror and writing your name backwards. After participating in the exercises, the students paired up with consumers to form work teams and complete projects side-by-side for the rest of the business day.



Arc consumers welcomed their new partners with characteristic openness and warmth. Students Ben Fischberg and John Husveth, who had participated in Service Learning Day last year, expressed how good it feels to work with such kind and friendly people. Ben admired the significant contributions made by people with developmental disabilities, particularly through programs sponsored by The Arc of Somerset

County, while John commented on the respect they shared.

Students Dallas Harvey and Shelby Wojnar, who also participated in the program last year, were equally enthusiastic. Dallas was happy to learn more about people with disabilities, and to know that he can improve someone else's life through volunteerism. Shelby, who had to leave Branchburg early to attend a ballet audition at The Juilliard School in New York City, says that Service Learning Day has made her a better person. Moreover, Shelby aspires to sharing her talent as a ballerina with those who have developmental disabilities.



The students were accompanied by teachers Carolyn Benner, Lynda Burns, Julian Overton, and Kathy Thorn, all of whom have supported the program since its inception in 2005. Ms. Benner noted how well Arc employees relate to the students. "During Service Learning Day, students experience what is different about people with disabilities as well as what is the same," she said. Commented her colleague, Ms. Burns, "The insights students gain are invaluable. Students learn that a person's differences in no way define who he or she is." Added Ms. Thorn, "Service Learning Day always brings out the best in students. They leave Branchburg glowing."

To everyone at Bernards High School, thank you for this mutually inspiring partnership!

"Kids Night Out" Frees Parents To Go Out and Have Fun

During the January 25 "Kids Night Out" Program at The Arc of Somerset County in Manville, attendees aged 3 to 12 helped a friend celebrate her 7th birthday. "We crowned our birthday girl, and she was so pleased that she began singing Karaoke style to songs on a hip-hop CD for kids," said Coordinator Elizabeth Sanford. Other party highlights included the Walt Disney movie, "Monsters, Inc.," as well as chocolate and vanilla cupcakes. "We had a lot of icing faces," Elizabeth recalled, laughing.

On the third Friday of every month, The Arc of Somerset County offers parents "Kids Night Out" so that they, too, can go out and have a good time. The fee for the evening is \$35 for children with special needs and \$15 for their siblings. Light snacks are provided, but parents are encouraged to feed their children dinner beforehand.

To reserve your child's place at "Kids Night Out," please call Mary Atchey, Assistant Director of Family Support, at 908-725-8544, ext. 624.



Area Organizations Spread Holiday Cheer To Jerry Davis Students

As 2007 came to a close, several area organizations and individuals spread holiday cheer to students of the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Center (JDECC):

- On December 7, children from JDECC participated in the "Festival of Trees" at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge. Among those delighted to see the ornaments they had decorated now adorning wreaths and trees were, from left to right, Olivia Swierszcz, Ryan Sorocina, Michelle Danilczuk, Sophia Starzynski, and Alex Niewiadomski.
- On December 10, students from JDECC's After School Program visited the Bridgewater Mall to see Santa and tell him what they wanted for Christmas.
- On December 11, preschoolers from JDECC joined children from other schools at the annual holiday lunch held by the Watchung-Warren Rotary Club at the Watchung Hills Country Club in Warren.
- On December 13, the Somerset County United Way in Bridgewater gave gifts that were donated by the community to the children who attend JDECC.
- During the week of December 17, Ridge High School students dressed up teddy bears and distributed them to the students at JDECC. The delighted students embraced their new furry friends.
- On December 19, students from JDECC's Private Preschool and Preschool Disabled programs visited the Far Hills Country Day School in Far Hills to attend a holiday party. *(Far Hills students visit Jerry Davis twice a month to volunteer their time, while learning about individuals who have developmental disabilities.)*
- On December 20, Santa took time out of his busy schedule to visit the children at JDECC. The eyes twinkling beneath the red hat and the white curly wig belonged to Tommy Donovan, husband of Susan Donovan, former teacher and Somerset Arc board member.

Said Laura Liebel, Director, Childhood Services, "We are most grateful to all of these organizations and individuals. Their thoughtfulness has brought joy to our children."

Area Organizations and Residents Donate Holiday Parties, Theatre Tickets, and Gifts

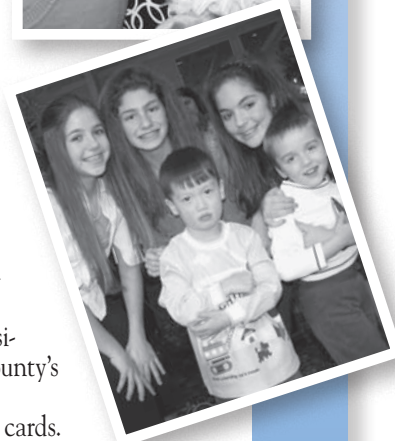
Over the holidays, several area organizations and individuals treated adults with developmental disabilities to entertainment and gifts:

- On November 30, Residential Services held their annual winter dinner dance at the VFW Post 2290 Hall in Manville. Nearly 270 people attended, many of whom frequent the "Come and Dance" program on Monday nights. Revelers danced to music provided by Janus Wojcik and her band.
- On December 1, the Raritan Valley Community College provided The Arc of Somerset County with more than 20 free tickets for residents to see the College's performance of "A Christmas Carol."
- On December 9, for the 12th consecutive year, the American Legion and residents at the Union Avenue apartments hosted a holiday party for people with developmental disabilities at Post 12 in Bridgewater. The American Legion also donated \$500 to The Arc.
- On December 15, June O'Neill and her five stepchildren held a holiday party at the Commons apartments in

Bridgewater. Residents from the apartments made gingerbread houses and Christmas stockings, then played bingo.

- The Somerset County United Way in Bridgewater donated holiday gifts for residents living in The Arc of Somerset County's group homes and apartments. The gifts included clothing, DVDs, CDs, and gift cards.
- On January 26, Bonnie Sovinee, former Director of Development, provided 19 tickets donated by the NJ Ballet in Livingston for consumers and their families to see *Sleeping Beauty* at the Raritan Valley Community College. Said Consumer Brian O'Malley, "This is the first ballet I've ever attended; now I am a big fan."

Said Lauren Panarella, Executive Director, "Displaying a genuine holiday spirit, several area organizations and individuals took time out of their hectic schedules to brighten the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Their generosity has created many happy memories."



Brunswick Automotive and Mobility Professionals Donate 2000 Mercury Sable

Margaret Jennings was in dire need of a vehicle to transport her daughter, Marcie, to medical appointments and daily support services. The Jennings' station wagon was more than 30 years old and in constant need of repairs. A friend who had been donating repairs worried that the car would fail inspection by the Division of Motor Vehicles this past February.



From left to right are Marcie Jennings, Bob Schickler, Margaret Jennings, Mary Atchey, and Cindy Mesko.

Bob and Len Schickler, owners of the Brunswick Automotive and Mobility Professionals in North Brunswick, and their Marketing Specialist, Cindy Mesko, came to the rescue by donating a 2000 Mercury Sable station wagon. Brunswick Automotive is a full automotive, mobility and adaptive equipment service center that customizes vehicles to fit the special needs of the company's clients.

"Mrs. Jennings and her daughter, Marcie, were thrilled with their new car," said Mary Atchey, Assistant Director of Family Support. "Mrs. Jennings had been very concerned about passing inspection and transporting Marcie to various appointments. This was such a relief."

The 2000 Mercury Sable had been donated to Brunswick Automotive by a professor who needed to upgrade his vehicle to a van which contained a lift. Cindy Mesko plans to tell the professor that his donated vehicle was put to very good use.

"I can't find the right words to express my appreciation to these generous people," Mary said. "Thank you Bob and Len Schickler, Cindy Mesko, and the professor for your generosity."

Jamie L. Roos Appointed Chaplain Consultant

Jamie L. Roos was appointed Chaplain Consultant of The Arc of Somerset County in July. "Originally, Jamie was assigned to our organization to fulfill a service requirement of the Clinical Pastoral Education Program at The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School," said Lauren Panarella, Executive Director. "We were so pleased with the services Jamie provides that we asked her to become our Chaplain Consultant on a part-time basis."

As a Chaplain Consultant, Jamie provides worship services every Thursday at the Branchburg Adult Training Center (ATC), and bible studies three times a week at the Commons Apartments in Bridgewater and the Adult Training Centers in Valley Park and Green Brook. Jamie also provides one-on-one counseling to individuals who are in need of support.

"I've visited some of the group homes and day programs, and I'm planning to go to all of them," Jamie said.



Jamie L. Roos

Jamie helps members of The Arc community honor their own faith—to make connections and attend services at their preferred place of worship. "It's really important to have the support of your faith community," Jamie said.

She was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister by the New Jersey Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on March 15. As a Diaconal Minister, Jamie believes it is important not only to understand spirituality, but to act on it. "Some people don't realize just how much individuals with disabilities have to offer. But everyone has unique gifts and are needed to help make the world a better place."

Formerly, Jamie was Volunteer Softball Coach for children with disabilities in Union, Volunteer Youth Group Advisor and Confirmation Teacher at St. James Lutheran Church in Gettysburg, PA, and Volunteer Junior High Youth Group Advisor for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Somerville and Calvary Lutheran Church in Cranford.

Jamie describes The Arc of Somerset County as a phenomenal organization. "The entire community has been very supportive."

2007 Arc Angel Gala Celebrates 35th Anniversary of Providing "A Wonderful Life"

On December 1, The Arc Angel Gala at the Hamilton Farm Golf Club in Gladstone raised net profits from 37 percent in 2006, to 57 percent in 2007. Introducing the theme, "A Wonderful Life," was Eileen Bradbury, Gala Chairperson and 2nd Vice President on The Arc of Somerset County Board of Directors.



Board member Brian O'Malley and his guest, Susan Huck.

The 2007 Gala marked The Arc of Somerset County's 35th anniversary in providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Honorees included volunteers from local branches of HSBC for helping to clean up Camp Jotoni. Accepting the Arc Angel Award, on behalf of HSBC, was Heidi Pote, Director of Business Systems, Technology & Services

and a former Camp Counselor. Also honored were six seniors from high schools throughout the area, each of whom received a Baccarat crystal angel for their enthusiastic participation in the "Angels Among Us" program. The students' outstanding volunteerism ranged from mentoring peers who have developmental disabilities to fundraising and coaching children. Congratulations to Rachel Burns, Manuela DeOliveira, Anna Helck, Colleen Mazzei, Jacki Rosenzweig, and Christopher Simone!

"Thank you to the many donors and partners who have made this year's Arc Angel Gala such a huge success," said Lauren. "A special thank you to Eileen Bradbury and the Sub-Committee Chairpersons Carol Fanning, Kristin Fanning, Robin LaMonte, and Deborah Weisman — as well as all Committee members. We could not have accomplished this elegant fundraiser without you."



"And we look forward to seeing you at our 2008 Gala set for November 14 at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club in Far Hills. Information on the Gala will be featured in subsequent issues of the *Herald*. Please save the date!"



Eileen Bradbury (second from the right) stands beside her husband, Edward Bradbury (on the far right). From left to right are Eileen's sons, Ryan Bradbury, his guest, Lindsey Ruterbories, and Dan Bradbury.



From left to right are recipients of the "Angels Among Us" awards, Colleen Mazzei, Manuela DeOliveira, Anna Helck, Christopher Simone, Rachel Burns, and Jacki Rosenzweig.

The volcano painting (left), done in acrylic by Arc resident Rhona Levine, sold for \$350 as one of the Gala's silent auction items. Congratulations Rhona!

Gala photographs by Debbie Weisman.

Local Church Makes Special Donation

In January, Mark Allison, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Somerset Hills, presented a check for \$771 to The Arc of Somerset County. Mr. Allison's Congregation routinely takes up a special collection for organizations that perform impressive work within the community. "The name of The Arc kept coming up," Mr. Allison said. Consequently, Mr. Allison

asked for a tour of the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Center. He and his daughter, Kelly, were so impressed, that Kelly offered to volunteer her services to support the organization's summer programs. Thank you, Mr. Allison and members of your church for their kind donation, and Kelly, for your generous spirit. We look forward to seeing you this summer!

Executive Director, continued from page 1

with disabilities in a community residence. Many of these are families in which the primary caretaker is elderly or ill and can no longer care for his or her child. Together, we must engage the entire community in securing the financial and human resources required to meet this most pressing need.

As a member of the community, you can help in the following ways:

- Join The Arc of Somerset County to receive newsletters and “action alerts” on key advocacy issues. A membership enrollment form is enclosed with this issue of the *Herald*.
- Contact your District’s Senators and Representatives to inform them of action alerts and how they can help.

- Visit The Arc of NJ’s website at www.arcnj.org to receive the most updated information on the issues facing individuals with developmental disabilities, and learn how you can help.
- Stay tuned to the *Herald*. Beginning with our Spring issue, we will feature “The Advocate’s Corner,” with the most recent information on our progress and priorities.

By taking these simple steps you will join The Arc’s advocacy efforts to ensure that all individuals in the community have an opportunity to receive the services and support they need to lead full and productive lives. Thank you.

Best regards,

Lauren Panarella
Executive Director

Ask the Advocate on April 22 About Individualized Education Programs

Parents and guardians who have questions about their child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), or about their rights within the special education system, are invited to attend Ask the Advocate Day on April 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at The Arc of Somerset County on 141 South Main Street in Manville.

Stephanie Kramer, The Arc of New Jersey’s Director for Education Advocacy, will meet parents and guardians

at 25-minute intervals at no charge. Remember to bring your child’s IEP to the meeting!



Respite care can be reserved in advance. To schedule an appointment and/or respite care, please contact Mary Atchey, Assistant Director of Family Support, at 908-725-8544, ext. 624. Said Mary, “We look forward to seeing parents and guardians on April 22.”



Where people with developmental disabilities
learn to live their dreams.SM

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