



ARC Life



AUGUST | SEPTEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1

ISSUE 1



SATURDAY KIDS' DAY

What child wouldn't enjoy spending a Saturday playing in a pool, on a playground, or someplace fun in the community, such as the spray park? For children who participate in the Ontario ARC Saturday Kids' Day program, that time represents consistent opportunities to have fun and socialize in a safe, comfortable environment. It is also the only time when many of their families and caregivers can get respite time. More than half of the children who participate are autistic. *Continues on Page 5*



Ontario ARC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to assisting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. We offer personalized services and supports that promote independence, recognize individual uniqueness and value quality of life.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joseph M. Bognanno, *president*
Lynne H. Erdle, *vice president*
Michael R. Sheridan, *treasurer*
Elizabeth Palmatier, *secretary*

Patrick Boyle
James Colizzi
Gretchen Daugherty
James Gerling
Robert Gleason
Peter Lijewski
Chuck McCausland
Norma McWilliams
Mary Kate Morrell
Deborah Proffitt
John Schuppenhauer, Esq.
Christine Supple
Kathy Wegman
Deborah Wilbur

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

William Castiglione

PUBLISHING TEAM

Writing, design and layout
In House Graphic Design, Inc.
+ Cindy Lee Associates

Photography

Jan Regan Photography

Would you like to be a regular ARCLife reader? Go to our website (www.ontarioarc.org) for our online version or call 585.394.7500 and ask to be added to our mailing list.

Participate in our blog at ontarioarc.blogspot.com

Ontario County Chapter of NYSARC, Inc.
3071 County Complex Drive
Canandaigua, NY 14424
585.394.7500
www.ontarioarc.org

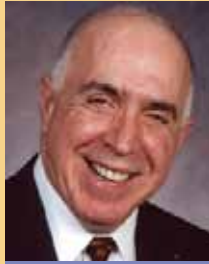


United Way
of Ontario County



On the Cover, Top: One Saturday a month, Ontario ARC takes participants to play in the community. Bottom: Aimee Gilbert gives Max Pogoda a lift and encouragement.

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



William Castiglione,
Executive Director

In July, I sent many of you a letter letting you know my retirement plans had changed and I would instead be staying for a few more years to help with a number of very special projects.

In May, we introduced a new employment service for people with developmental disabilities that combines part-time work with “personal enrichment” activities such as healthy living, music, art and computers.

Early next year, we will open our Autism Center, a partnership with other local organizations designed to support individuals with autism and their families.

I am also looking forward to working with our Board of Directors on the establishment of the Friends of ARC Foundation, which will focus on raising much-needed revenue to help offset state/federal cuts and to fund new service initiatives.

If you have questions on any of these projects, please feel free to give me a call. In the meantime, I appreciate the support I have received from our Board of Directors, staff, program participants, families and friends. I look forward to continuing to serve this great organization.

Sincerely,

William J. Castiglione
Executive Director

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Autism Center
- The Friends of ARC Foundation
- Abbey Employment Service

THE SPEAK UP CAR WASH!



Participants and staff chip in to clean cars in support of Ontario ARC Speak Up and Speak Out self advocacy group. Pictured, Left top: Erik Campbell bringing them in! Right: Stephanie Bodine (left) and Adam Beca (right) wash them up. Left Bottom: And they leave sparkling clean after Fred Cossey (left) and Amy Latona (right) rinse them off!

STAFF COMPLETES AUTISM TRAINING

This fall, four staff members will complete an extensive training program with Caroline I. Magyar, Ph.D., a full-time associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry. She specializes in neurodevelopmental and behavioral disorders, including assessment and treatment of children and adults with autism spectrum and related disorders. This is the first training of its kind Ontario ARC staff will have completed.



Caroline I. Magyar, Ph.D.

"The fact that Ontario ARC is looking at bridging the gap from school age to adult services is a much needed service in the community. Their motivation to develop quality services in this area is high and their passion is evident."

Dr. Magyar

Noreen Quinn, senior associate executive director; Maggi Sullivan, coordinator of autism services; Michael Kephart, applied behavior specialist; and Kathy Kananda, transition coordinator will complete the second of two sequential courses presented by Dr. Magyar. They've completed part one, covering autism spectrum disorders across

the lifespan, including characteristics, assessment, treatment needs, and evidence-based interventions, as well as program development for individuals with autism. For phase II, they will be applying what they learned to planning a transition program and finalizing a proposal.

"The fact that Ontario ARC is looking at bridging the gap from school age to adult services is a much needed service in the community," says Dr. Magyar. "Their motivation to develop quality services in

this area is high and their passion is evident."

While Ontario ARC has been serving people with autism in its various programs for a long time, the organization is looking at refining its skills to meet the uniqueness of this disability

and improve the ways it meets the needs of people with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

"We are very fortunate to have Dr. Magyar partner with us," says Bill Castiglione, Executive Director of Ontario ARC. "She will make the entire organization better through her expertise and way of working with people." ✨



With the help of John Hurlburt, barriers created by lack of transportation to work, shopping and recreational activities will be torn down.

OPEN ROAD

People with disabilities in Ontario County now have another tool to help them achieve independence: wheels. Ontario ARC has hired John Hurlburt to teach participants to use public transportation. The program is funded by a \$64,000 grant from the New York State Department of Transportation's Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program and New Freedom program. "Transportation can be a huge barrier for people when they are looking for a job. It is our hope that this will help reduce that barrier," says Michele Wistner, director, employment services for Ontario ARC.

Those who complete the course will have the knowledge and confidence to use public transportation to get to and from work and recreational activities, or even call a cab if necessary. ✨

MEG BAXTER AWARDED LORI BRIZZEE SCHOLARSHIP



Meg Baxter was surprised and excited to receive the Lori Brizzee Scholarship at graduation ceremonies for Canandaigua Academy.

Ontario ARC has awarded Canandaigua resident Meg Baxter its Lori Brizzee Scholarship of \$1,000 in recognition of her strong work ethic and desire to help others. The scholarship is given to one senior at Canandaigua Academy attending Finger Lakes Community College and majoring in Human Services or a related field.

"I was so excited to have been chosen – honored, really," says Meg, adding it was an awesome moment to hear her named being called at graduation. "It is so encouraging to know that Lori didn't let Muscular Dystrophy stand in her way of college or working. I know I will work hard and be the best I can be."

Lori Brizzee – who had muscular dystrophy and spinal atrophy – faced a

number of adversities yet didn't let any of them keep her from achieving her goals. Lori worked for Ontario ARC for 20 years and was a senior vocational coordinator. The agency began the scholarship in 2006 after her passing.

"For those of us who knew Lori, this is a nice honor to her memory," says Noreen Quinn, senior associate executive director of Ontario ARC.

Meg struggled all through school. "She really accepted her limitations and embraced them instead of feeling sorry for herself," says her mother, Anne Baxter-Roxburgh. Meg made the honor roll, was named captain of her cheerleading squad, and "Most Dedicated Athlete" by her teammates. ✨

WELLNESS INITIATIVES RECOGNIZED

The Rochester Business Journal recently recognized Ontario ARC with its “Wealth of Health” award for working to make the lives of staff and participants healthier. The efforts noted included: the agency cookbook, “Healthy Eating Tastes Good,” developed by a nutritionist and used in all the residential homes; internships for Finger Lakes Community College massage students who provided massage to participants and staff over a six week span; “Smoke Free ARC” (see related article); exercise classes held at the Eberhardt Center (Zumba is coming this fall) and “Walk for Life.” ✨



Pictured left to right: Lynn Reiser, Cherith Keeton, Noreen Quinn, Marsha Fuller and Mickey Reed.



Robert Quinn, proudly displaying the 41 merit badges he earned.

ROBERT QUINN JR. EARNS EAGLE SCOUT

Robert Quinn Jr., a participant in the Ontario ARC College Experience Program at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, recently achieved Eagle Scout after earning 41 merit badges and spending a little more than a year on his Eagle Scout project – completion of a Children’s Garden at Happiness House.

“Robert has worked diligently through the years on being self-reliant. He is truly a great example to others on how hard work pays off. Robert is a great asset to his community,” says Shirley Wells, community habilitation assistant at Ontario ARC.

The 24-year-old is autistic and was given extra time to fulfill Eagle requirements.

Becky Castano, community habilitation specialist at Ontario ARC notes Robert has “grown tremendously in the past four years and scouting has had a lot to do with that.” ✨

HONORING OUR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

The week beginning September 12 is “National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.” Roughly 400 of the 500 staff members at Ontario ARC are Direct Support Professionals. They work directly with the individuals the organization serves on a daily basis, seven days a week. These dedicated staff form meaningful relationships

they have, it’s a credit to the individuals who work here that we’ve been as successful as we have been,” says Bill Castiglione, executive director of Ontario ARC. “We continue to look for ways to support and recognize our Direct Support Professionals.”

Each program area will celebrate the week in a unique way. In the past, some have sent

“The Direct Support Professionals are the front lines of our agency. In dealing with the individuals we serve, they assure the atmosphere of respect we hold dear and epitomize the agency’s values,”

Ann Scheetz



Direct Support Professionals like Theresa Fletcher provide day-to-day interactions with participants like Pam Kreuter and develop meaningful relationships that last a lifetime.

with the people in Ontario ARC residences, day programs and recreation programs. It is this relationship building that helps individuals with disabilities learn and develop the skills and confidence they need to become comfortable in and involved with their communities.

“Our programs are only as good as the people who work there. If you look at what we ask people to do and the responsibility

breakfast or fruit baskets, while others have held ice cream socials.

“The Direct Support Professionals are the front lines of our agency. In dealing with the individuals we serve, they assure the atmosphere of respect we hold dear and epitomize the agency’s values,” says Ann Scheetz, associate executive director of program services with Ontario ARC. “It is an honor to celebrate them.” ✨

"NEXT STEP PREP" OPENS IN SEPTEMBER

Starting September 18, Ontario ARC will host a young men's group for those with autism, aged 14 to 21. Next Step Prep, which will simultaneously provide respite care for families, will take place over a six-week period and provide communication and social skills training as part of the transition period of high school. The goal is to enable participants to be successful in a vocational or volunteer situation in the community following high school. It will do so by assessing individuals' skills and needs, working to make them less anxious about social interactions, and then teaching teamwork and social cues and norms. This includes matters as simple as saying "Hello" in the morning or as complex as recognizing facial cues and body language.



Mike Kephart and another staffer who will be chosen soon will run the young men's group.

Mike Kephart, applied behavior specialist at Ontario ARC, as well as a direct support professional who is expected to join Mike, will run the program. Ontario ARC clinicians have a combined total of more than 100 additional hours of specialized training in Autism Spectrum Disorders. A Family Day at the end will be used both to assess progress and celebrate efforts and successes at the six-week mark. ✨

INTRODUCING LOUIS WIESNER



Louis Wiesner

Louis Wiesner has joined Ontario ARC as director of transportation and facilities. Lou oversees the Finger Lakes Bus Service, as well as the maintenance and facility needs of the

agency's Community Learning Centers, residential homes and offices.

"Louis' diverse experience in facility operations and business makes him a great fit for this role," says Brenda Estey, associate executive director of support services.

Wiesner previously held director positions at a local engineering firm, the University of Rochester's Medical Centers and Eastman School of Music. ✨

Saturday Kids' Day Continued from Cover

"Families appreciate knowing their loved one is having fun, but is safe, with competent staff – and hopefully even making friends," says Noreen Quinn, senior associate executive director of Ontario ARC. "Ultimately, this program serves both participant and family."

The program, for children aged 5 and up, operates two Saturdays each month: one on-site at Eberhardt Center, and the other in the community. Staff members (one per every three children) have good information about the kids so they can readily handle health or other issues that arise.

Considering the ratio of participants with autism, communication specialists helped develop the program to address the special communication needs of children with autism. A picture board enables participants to convey their need or interest to a staff member visually if they have trouble doing so verbally. Staff also work with each child to create a book with word or visual prompts about what they did that day to serve as an aid in sharing information with family later.



Breanna Ruffing (left), Chris Dwello (top right) and Judy Perry (bottom right) have fun getting wet at the Spray Park. Saturday Kids' Days are all about the fun and smiles, whether in the water, the park or at the Eberhardt Center.

Cyndee Jepsen, recreation program manager, says she's seen many success stories over the years. One example is that of a boy with autism who required one-on-one and would not enter a room with a group who evolved in the program to not only

interacting with everyone, but also initiating much of the interactions.

"We can't take autism away. What we can do is support them in learning other ways to communicate through the autism," explains Cyndee. ✨



SMOKE FREE ARC

Ontario ARC's implemented "Smoke Free ARC" on April 1, 2010, making all of its properties and programs smoke free. The move was part of the organization's comprehensive wellness program.

"We didn't just surprise participants and staff with a policy change. As a wellness initiative, we worked with them to provide the support they needed to quit or reduce their smoking," explains Noreen Quinn, senior associate executive director of Ontario ARC. Ontario ARC provided free patches, gum, lozenges and cessation classes to both participants and staff.



"We have people who really stopped smoking because of this. It's a big accomplishment," says Noreen. ✨

FUN AT THE CARNIVAL!



Left: Kristen Lersch watches John Mohrman play the duck pond game at the July 22 Ontario ARC carnival at the Eberhardt Center. Top right: Barb Passalacqua (left) joins in the fun with Donica Halls (middle) and Tanya Howell (right). Bottom right: Liz Hedger (left) and Pilar Nadal (right) clown around at the carnival.