

Around The Arc

News of The Arc of Chester County

Summer 2012

Living Mosaic: Look What 500 Milk Jugs Can Do



Upcoming *events...*

**2nd Annual Arc of Chester
County Golf Outing**
11:30am
September 24, 2012
@ Penn Oaks Golf Club,
West Chester, PA

Arc Art Archives Clearance
Stock up and save on your
favorite cards & prints. When
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gone. Don't miss out!

Shop online 24/7
www.arcofchestercounty.org

Shop @ The Arc
Monday - Friday,
10:00am - 4:00pm

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Message from the President - Tom Beckett

Dear Friends,

Earlier this year, we told you about The Arc's "600 by 60" Facebook campaign. We're almost there! Thank you to everyone who has embraced social media and is helping spread the word about The Arc.

Through Facebook we've been able to share photos almost immediately, remind our friends of upcoming events, and get critical information, such as advocacy alerts, out quickly. We've also been able to hear from you as you've interacted with us by "liking" posts or asking questions. Please, keep it up.

Our efforts on Facebook are just part of a concerted effort to raise awareness of The Arc's services and how we help 3,000 people with disabilities and their families each year. We know what great work we do. We're working on sharing the news.

Can you help us? When you're finished enjoying this newsletter, would you pass it on to a friend, neighbor, or co-worker? Let them learn what we're up to. Thank you for your help spreading the word.

Sincerely,

Tom Beckett
President

Walk & Fun Day Raises \$18,000-plus



Left: Braden Finley from Team Tater Tot gets a kiss from the Phillie Phanatic. Team Tater Tot was the largest team with more than 60 walkers. **Right:** Walkers from Team Joshua. Team Joshua won awards for highest fundraising total and gifts from the most donors. Visit www.facebook.com/arcofchestercounty for more photos.

Special Thanks to Our Corporate Sponsors...

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Thanks to equipment provided by Goshen Fire Company Stations 54 & 56, The Arc's living mosaic, pictured on the cover, came to life at The Arc Achievement Walk & Fun Day on June 10, 2012. Thank you to everyone who answered our call for gallon and half-gallon jugs as well as everyone who participated in the photo opportunity. What a great way to celebrate The Arc's 60th birthday.

More than 300 members of The Arc family were part of this year's event. Want to be part of the fun next year? Join the walk committee! Contact Catherine Binz at (610) 696-8090 ext. 202 or cbinz@arcofchestercounty.org to learn how you can help. Planning will begin soon, and we want your ideas.



My Story

by Milana Sablich

On March 23, 2010, I gave birth to a beautiful, healthy nine pound eight ounce baby boy. The day was perfect, the birth was a relatively good one, and the hope and joy of the future were bright and full of excitement and unknown adventures. I had so much love in my heart that I knew this was one special little, but big, baby boy. Eli we called him, short for Elijah. My father and his father were present to decide on the name, Elijah Wayne. My father and his father decided on the name Elijah, and Wayne is my father's name. Little did I know then how special my baby boy's name would be to me and how my drive for his little life would relate.

Eli lived life as a normal infant and toddler, meeting milestones appropriately without any concern. He was a lovable, well-tempered, passive little guy. Always smiling, and of course, always eating. He enjoyed Mickey Mouse greatly! Again, at the time around his first birthday, I was not really piecing together how he truly loved Mickey Mouse—but only Mickey Mouse Clubhouse. No other Mickey would suffice. Eli began dancing a very happy excited dance every time Mickey would come on. As time passed and Eli became 15 and 16 months old, Mickey was the only thing that made him happy, brought him joy, and made him happy dance along with constant running from the living room to the kitchen and back again and again.

When Eli was 16 to 18 months old, he didn't progress much. He still found the same comfort and joy in Mickey Mouse and running back and forth, but that was it. He became increasingly inward and solitary. Eli could find only his own comfort

and was unable to communicate and even point. He cried tears of frustration because he was unable to let me know what he wanted, and I was unsure of what to offer. I began to question and feel concerned. Why wasn't he pointing? Why wasn't he looking at me, hugging me, finding comfort in me, following my commands? All of these began to raise red flags. I felt scared, lost, and lonely especially because as all these observations were apparent to me, they weren't to everyone else. The famous "running man" happy dance he did with Mickey continued, but it brought more disgust and angst to me than it brought laughter and joy while watching him.

That was when I called Chester County Early Intervention. From the moment I called and expressed my concern—my broken heart of concern—I didn't feel alone. They came and evaluated my baby boy. They, too, saw many red flags. Within two weeks of the evaluation, I received a call and was informed that there was an agency available to take on my boy's case. The Arc of Chester County was able to take him on with all three disciplines he was approved for: speech therapy, occupational therapy, and a teacher. Starting the second week of December 2011, therapy began at home. Eli was 19 months old. As my girls Judy, Connie, and Kathy said, "there weren't any lights on" at that time. That was definitely the case.

Moving forward to now, Eli has been with The Arc for nine months, and he has come a long way! Many, many thanks to my wonderful, knowledgeable, and very compassionate team of girls, Eli is learning, growing, communicating,

(continued on next page)

“My Story” continued...

seeking comfort, and attempting to play. He plays with himself, next to, and with others. He is smiling, laughing, and enjoying time with family. He is eating at the table, bathing/showering, brushing his teeth, transitioning well, coping with change better, and learning more coping skills. He attends The Arc’s ABLE program for two-year-olds with autism. He is able to participate at his program and enjoy going. Eli doesn’t cry as much anymore, except for the typical things a two-year-old cries for, but it is not out of frustration or not getting his needs met. And most importantly, he is being the best he can be at this time—a precious 27-month-old little guy!

Eli still enjoys his Mickey Mouse, but he now also enjoys other Disney characters! He enjoys music and singing, lots of things/activities that we learned he likes while working with our team. They, my Arc team, have taught me, my mother, his father, his sister, and very close friends all how to provide care for Eli and how to build on Eli’s strengths in regard to everyday living. My Arc team taught us how to focus on Eli’s strong visual skills to help him best learn and show Eli what it is we are doing and planning to do to best manage any transition

meltdowns.

We all owe The Arc of Chester County a huge thank you for their time, their effort, their effective communication skills with myself and family and their compassion to not give up on my baby boy. My team has treated my son, family, friends, and me with the utmost respect in providing education and care. They make us all feel like Eli is their primary concern. A mother can’t ask for anything better than that. I am grateful I still have almost a year left to work them.

As I mentioned earlier, my Arc team came into my life at such a time of desperation, disgust, and feeling of loss, and they truly were amazing. A short while after Eli’s therapy started, we lost my father to cancer. Eli was his world, his soon-to-be sports prodigy. As stated, Eli was named after my father. With that, we all as a team of family, friends, and therapists, will strive and commit to make Elijah Wayne the best boy he can be for my father, Wayne Sablich. My girls embraced that, I will be forever grateful because with them—Judy, Connie, Kathy, Lisa, Nella, and Anne and the rest of the Arc team—there is hope, joy, and an immense amount of love for Elijah and his future.

Employee of the Year: Diane Speroff

Diane Speroff exemplifies all of the qualities related to the Rosanna Basilio Tavoni Award, especially for continuing to demonstrate her ever-present commitment to those served by The Arc of Chester County. During her more than 20 years as an employee at The Arc, she has always been willing to go above and beyond the job requirements such that she stands out from others.

As a speech therapist, Diane works with children in both the classroom and home early intervention programs. She helps them lead more independent lives by teaching them the communication skills they will need to be successful. Diane is always “thinking outside the box” and exploring new methods to help children have a “voice.” She brings creativity and enthusiasm to her position at The Arc, especially in developing technological strategies to increase communication skills. She has become the “technology expert,” helping not only children but staff who are still struggling with the computer and social media age.

Diane has worked with the development department to submit various grants for assistive technology. As a result, The Arc has been able to secure several iPads for our early intervention classrooms as well as specialized software designed for children with disabilities. She has also become an expert in programming the voice output machines some children have learned to operate with their heads or their eyes when their hands are immobile. During her tenure, she has internalized the core values of The Arc to become a valued employee who demonstrates outstanding professionalism.



Diane works collaboratively with all staff, exhibiting the values of team membership. Her workday does not end at the end of the regular school day; you can usually find her at The Arc into the evening developing new ideas and creative strategies. She shares her knowledge with everyone in order to help children function throughout the day at school and provide parents with suggestions and strategies for home. Diane truly enjoys seeing the children learn and improve their skills.

It is with great pleasure that The Arc of Chester County recognizes the commitment, generous spirit, and dedication of Diane Speroff and presents her with the Rosanna Basilio Tavoni Employee of the Year Award for 2012.

invest in The Arc

All gifts are important to The Arc of Chester County, regardless of their size or method.

It's not too early to be part of our 2013 Milestones Campaign, which runs through June 30, 2013. Gifts of \$25 or more entitle you to an Arc membership.

Have you asked your employer for a matching gift? We can help with the paperwork. You can also ask the human resources department at your company for instructions or a form. This is a great way to leverage your own gift.

Make a workplace donation to the United Way. Our donor choice code for the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey is 500. Simply write in The Arc of Chester County for other United Ways.

Clip those box tops from your favorite General Mills products. The First Step classroom program participates in Box Tops for Education. Simply drop off your box tops next time you're at The Arc. Each top is worth 10 cents, which adds up.

Clear space in your driveway by donating your car. Call 1-877-ARC-CARO or visit www.thearc.org to get started.

Remember The Arc in your will. We can help with the details.

To learn more about how you can invest in The Arc, please contact Stephanie Cory, director of development, at (610) 696-8090 ext. 210 or scory@arcofchestercounty.org.

Yes, I want to help reach Milestones...

Enclosed is a gift of \$ _____.

Name(s) _____

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Charge my gift to my Visa MasterCard Discover Amex

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Exp. Date _____ CCV # _____

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My employer _____ will match this gift.

This gift is in honor of memory of:

I have included The Arc in my will.

Please make checks payable to The Arc of Chester County and mail to 900 Lawrence Drive, West Chester, PA 19380.



From the
Executive Director -
Diane Carey

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that it was 15 years ago I started at The Arc. I was new to Pennsylvania having relocated with my husband for his job. I was also new to the disability field. I still remember how welcoming everyone was: clients, families, staff, and volunteers alike.

So much has changed. Do you remember our office at the Oaklands Corporate Center in Exton? I do. We barely fit! I couldn't get into my office because it was crammed with boxes and computer equipment. I knew immediately that The Arc needed a home of its own, which we moved into in 2001.

The capital campaign that built us our wonderful home on Lawrence Drive was The Arc's first foray into serious fundraising. I am so proud of the growth we've made over the years in engaging the community and expanding our support. We used to rely on merely government funding, the United Way, and the Arc Art program. Now, we have strong relationships with generous individuals, foundations, and corporations like you. Similarly with our better diversity of programs, we're able to better weather tough times when funding is lost or at risk for a specific program.

I am also so proud of The Arc's award of the Seal of Excellence from the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations for completing the Standards for Excellence® Program. We were the second organization in Chester County to have our performance and stability validated by this award. We're still one of only 54 organizations in Pennsylvania and 200 nationally to achieve this distinction.

Even after all this time, I'm still surprised by the number of volunteers who approach me each year wanting to help The Arc. Whether it was through an existing volunteer, an Arc staffer, or one of our community partners, word is getting out about us. The Arc is fortunate to be part of such a caring community here in Chester County. We are always grateful to individuals who are so giving of their time and want to help children and adults with disabilities.

Warmly,

Diane Carey

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Our Mission

To advocate, educate, and provide services to empower individuals with disabilities and their families to enhance the quality of their lives.

Affiliated with the United Way, The Arc of Pennsylvania, and The Arc of the United States



Time to Golf: 2nd Annual Outing

Mark your calendar for Monday, September 24, 2012. The Second Annual Arc of Chester County Golf Outing will be held at Penn Oaks Golf Club in West Chester. The day will begin at 11:30am with registration. Per-person and foursome registration includes lunch, 18 holes of golf with a cart, and dinner. Space is limited to 104 golfers, so register now to reserve your spot.

The scramble format will help keep players moving quickly through the course. Contests, including longest-drive and putting, will add to the excitement. Maybe it will be your drive that wins a new car this year with a lucky hole-in-one.

Even if you're not a golfer, there is still fun to be had. Join us for the dinner-only option and stay for the silent auction that will feature a variety of fabulous items to bid on for a good cause.

A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available. There is something for every budget. Ad book sponsorships start at \$60 and hole sponsorships are only \$125. Contact Phil Rogers at (610) 325-9050 for full details. You can also register to play or purchase a sponsorship online at www.arcofchestercounty.org. We are also accepting gift certificates and new merchandise for the auction.

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