

# Abilities

FALL 2011

Newsletter of The Arc of Schuyler

## Our Mission

The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.



Visit our website to  
Join our FREE  
Email List

**Looking for a creative holiday gift? Gifts to The Arc in memory or in honor of your loved ones can benefit projects such as our Sensory Garden. Read more on page 4!**

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## Turning Our Challenges into Opportunities

Message from Harold J. Hoffmeier, Jr., Board President and Jeannette Frank, Executive Director

### The Challenge

The Arc of Schuyler and many other organizations in our field are confronting difficult challenges as we adjust to changes in our levels of funding. We now must do more with less but are determined to turn our challenges into opportunities for the people we support and our organization.

### The Opportunities

\*The acquisition of a new home in Burdett marks progress in our goal to offer smaller home settings for the people we support. It also affords us the opportunity to operate our residences more efficiently.

\*As the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders becomes more prevalent, we continue to build our resources for people and the families that support them.

\*By offering our vocational services through the Ticket to Work program, we continue to work to increase the employment rate among people with disabilities. Our Medicaid Service Coordinators can help members of our community navigate the recent and numerous changes in Medicaid Service Coordination at the state level.

\*We are proud to offer a variety of curriculum-based courses that teach valuable life skills for people participating in our Day Services.

The challenges have opened doors to new opportunities and this newsletter explores those opportunities and the services we are pleased to provide to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

## Service Coordinators Work FOR People with Developmental Disabilities

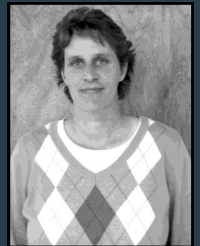
Service Coordinators assist people in making choices, finding individualized services, and are committed to user satisfaction. Ensuring supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in New York State can be a complex and sometimes confusing process. A good, independent Service Coordinator can help people understand the supports and services available while assisting in navigating this system.

Service Coordinators help the people they are supporting by advocating, planning individualized services, and maintaining important records. They will always involve the person they are supporting and the person's support system (family members, friends, and advocates) to develop plans for service.

Service Coordinators at The Arc are experienced professionals ready to help. Please read more about our Service Coordinators featured at the right on page 3. If you're interested in meeting with one of our Service Coordinators, please call Nikole Piper, Director of Service Coordination, at The Arc. Learn more about Service Coordination and eligibility criteria at our website.

## Meet Our Service Coordinators

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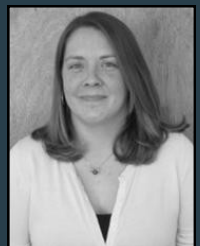
**Lisa Crouch**

"No one knows all the answers, but I'll always do my best to help you find the one that works for you."



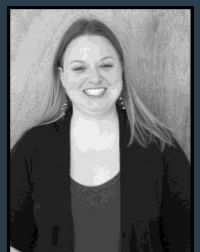
**Jill Drehmer**

"Let me be the bridge to your future."



**Amanda Jakubowicz**

"I'm here to help you."



**Nikole Piper**

"I have a passion for possibilities."

## Plans Progress for New Home in Burdett

The Arc of Schuyler recently purchased a home on Tug Hollow Road in the village of Burdett and is selling its community residence on Church Street in Odessa. The development of the new home and the sale of the house in Odessa are steps in The Arc's plan to operate our residences more efficiently and offer the benefits of smaller home settings to the people we support.

The house on Church Street in Odessa has been operated as a community residence since 1981. At that time, the two-story wood framed structure was the alternative to institutional care, designed to accommodate 13 people who needed ample living space. "A lot has changed in the past thirty years," said Jeannette Frank, Executive Director of The Arc. "People with developmental disabilities need privacy to thrive just like anyone else. Smaller homes with single bedrooms and accessible designs are what is desired and required today by the people we support and their families."



Five residents of the Church Street residence in Odessa moved to this house on Decatur Street in Watkins Glen.

In February 2011, five residents of the Church Street house moved into a smaller ranch style home on Decatur Street in Watkins Glen. The Arc hopes to have the remaining six residents at Church Street moved into their new home in Burdett in early 2012. "Selling the Church Street residence and operating two smaller homes will ultimately help us save money and other resources at a time when we're facing very difficult federal funding reductions," Frank said.

The Arc is taking steps to address the needs of aging individuals by planning for appropriate home modifications and incorporating accessibility features during maintenance and facility repairs at the residences it operates. Renovations will be made to the recently acquired home in Burdett that will allow people residing there to "age in place" as their medical needs change. Modifications will include accommodations for people who may develop mobility or visual impairments as they age.

El Rayess Architects is the company working on the renovation project and American Precision is the construction company implementing the renovations. Both the construction of the house on Decatur Street and the purchase of the house in Burdett are made possible by financial support from the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. Money from the sale of the Church Street house will help offset the construction costs of the house in Burdett.

**Find Out More About These Resources and Services on Our Website:**  
[www.arcofschuyler.org](http://www.arcofschuyler.org)

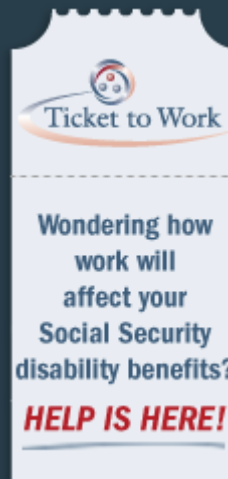
### Autism Resources

Through our affiliation with The Arc of the U.S., we are pleased to be able to offer resources and information on autism spectrum disorders. The Autism NOW initiative of The Arc is the nation's source for information on community-based solutions for individuals with autism, other developmental disabilities, and their families. In addition to Autism NOW, we have pulled together additional resources including links to websites, books, and other helpful tools on our website.



### Ticket to Work

The Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program is an employment program for people with disabilities who want to enter or return to the workforce. The Arc is an Employment Network that can partner with Ticket holders to create individualized career paths through our Glen Industries division. People receiving Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability can work without losing their benefits and our certified Work Incentives and Benefits practitioners can help benefit recipients and their family members understand how working will affect benefits.



### Day Services Class Catalog

The Arc of Schuyler Day Services program is committed to providing quality instruction, skill development, and training in daily living activities. These activities foster independence, establishing personal goals, and promote community involvement that will enable people to contribute to their community in meaningful ways. By participating in a variety of movement and dance, music, studio arts, and general interest courses, people are able to enhance their skills and find new ways to creatively express themselves. Visit our website to view the catalog and find out about eligibility for these services. There are opportunities for visiting artists and volunteers to assist in our classes as well.



## Meet Our Service Coordinators

### Lisa Crouch

**Medicaid Service Coordinator, Early Intervention Service Coordination—Children Birth to 3 Years, Bachelor's Degree**

I'm open-minded and knowledgeable about the available services in our area. I'm willing to explore new ideas with the people I support and like to use creative approaches. I grew up with two sisters, one of whom was born with Down Syndrome. She has always been, and continues to be, an important and influential person in my life. I joined The Arc of Schuyler in 1994 and have held various positions providing me ample experience assisting people with developmental disabilities and their families in choosing services best for them.

### Jill Drehmer

**Medicaid Service Coordinator, Bachelor of Science Degree in Social Work**

I believe people deserve to be treated with dignity and allowed opportunities to achieve their goals and dreams. I'm a compassionate person, and having a mother with a disability has given me insight into a person's need for quality supports and services, as well as a dedicated Service Coordinator. I have had direct experience working with people with disabilities, instructing courses, and finding creative ways of helping people of all abilities learn new skills.

### Amanda Jakubowicz

**Medicaid Service Coordinator, Brokering, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology**

Growing up, I had a family member with Cerebral Palsy, and my positive experience with this person sparked my passion for working in the human services field. I have worked with people diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome, traumatic brain injuries, and other developmental disabilities. I enjoy using my professional experience, administrative skills, and knowledge of available programs and services to help the people I support maximize the opportunities available to them.

### Nikole Piper

**Director of Service Coordination, Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology**

My approach to service coordination is person-centered. My goal is to be a reliable and knowledgeable resource for the people I support. Prior to becoming the Director of Service Coordination, I was the Transitions and Children's Service Coordinator, which included working in the Schuyler County Early Intervention program. I am also currently overseeing the Family Reimbursement program, providing information and referral for individuals and families.

## Commemorative Garden Dedication

**Thank you for your contributions in honor of Jim Wilson and for helping us build our Commemorative Garden.**

Bailey, Haskell & LaLonde  
David Bartone  
Sharon Bingell  
Marc and Susan Brandt  
Bernard and Betsy Burns  
Kathy Burns  
Bill and Mary Castiglione  
Jackson and Patricia Clark  
Janet Cotton  
Rev. Dan Corretore  
David and Marilyn Dalrymple  
Mike and Betty DeNardo  
Catherine Discenza  
William and Irene Elkins  
Executive Directors Association  
Of NYSARC, Inc.  
Sandra Forrest  
Jeannette Frank  
Cathy Fritz  
Augie and Helen Gates  
Bob and Kathleen Gilliam  
Matthew and Denise Hayden  
Harold and Betsy Hoffmeier

Jeanne Johnson  
Peter and Marcia Kasprzyk  
Robert Kelchner  
Jerry and Shirley Kohena  
Lyle Lehman  
John Mariano  
Paul and Alice Marx  
John McHale  
James Norton, M.D.  
Ted and Nina Papperman  
Kyle and Erin Pond  
Relph Benefit Advisors  
Henry and Susan Rocholl  
George Roets  
Sayles and Evans  
Harold and Judith Shafer  
Ted and Barbara Specchio  
Duane and Mary Spilde  
Michael and Kaye Stamp  
Stillman's Greenhouse  
Betty Vinti  
Tom and Carol White  
Kenneth Wilson

On National Unity Day, October 12, our employees, friends in the community, and people receiving supports at The Arc gathered at a dedication ceremony. This ceremony commemorated our new garden constructed at 210 Twelfth Street to honor our recently retired Executive Director, Jim Wilson. Jim's successor, Jeannette Frank, explained that Unity Day was a fitting day to hold our garden dedication because, "Jim symbolizes unity, bringing people together, recognizing people for their similarities not their differences." Many attendees wore the orange or an orange ribbon in honor of the day.



*Commemorative Garden in honor of Jim Wilson. See more photos on our website. Gifts made in honor of Jim Wilson help us build our Endowment Fund and contributions can help with our Commemorative Garden.*

## Honor and Memorial Gifts Can Help Us Build a Sensory Garden

Leadership Schuyler is a professional development program sponsored by Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development and the Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce. It is designed to expand skills of individuals who are interested in building their knowledge of community issues to fulfill future leadership roles in the Schuyler County area.

A group of students from the Leadership Schuyler Class of 2009 chose to volunteer their time and talents to The Arc of Schuyler by assisting in the development of a concept design for a sensory garden for residents living at our residence on Canal Street in Montour Falls.

Using their design, we have completed the hardscape improvements and are now ready to proceed with the plantings. The area is graced with the beautiful hibiscus (Rose of Sharon) pictured at right. This hibiscus was donated as a memorial made in the name of Linda Mikiewicz, from her brother, Bill Mikiewicz. But much more is needed to complete the vision for this garden.

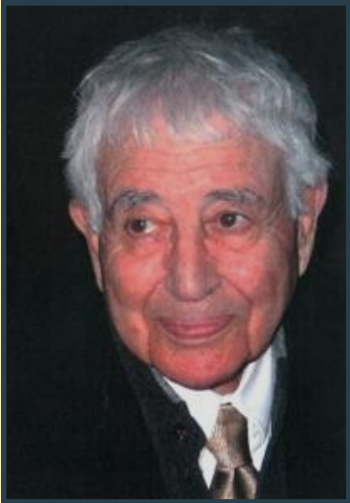


*This Rose of Sharon was planted at our Canal Street residence in Montour Falls in memory of Linda Mikiewicz. We are continuing to develop the sensory garden and will be adding more plants in November.*

Memorial or tribute donations are an ideal way to honor a friend or loved one. Your contribution can be designated to assist with a project such as this sensory garden. A sensory garden is intended to be enjoyed by visitors with and without disabilities and can provide a stimulating journey through the senses and positive learning experiences.

You can make a donation to The Arc by clicking the donate button on our website or by mailing your contribution to: The Arc of Schuyler, 203 Twelfth St., Watkins Glen, NY 14891. For more information about gift giving or helping with our sensory garden project, contact our Director of Community Relations, Holly Baker, at 607-535-6934.

## Remembering a Valued Volunteer, Lou Leach



The Arc of Schuyler lost a great friend this year with the passing of Louis Leach. Lou, a member of The Arc of Schuyler's Board of Directors for 15 years, served in various volunteer capacities. Of special note was the guidance and direction he provided as a member and later chairperson of the Board's Human Rights and Incident Review committees. These committees provide oversight and guidance to assist the Board and staff in finding this balance.

He was an outspoken advocate for preserving people's dignity and human rights and his influence was felt and appreciated by all. Jeannette Frank, Executive Director, remembers Lou as a humanitarian who would argue in favor of a person's privacy and self-expression when he thought people may be being too restrictive or overprotective in their recommendations. "Some people can't verbally express

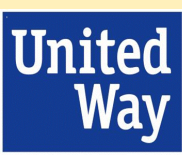
their wants or desires, so we need someone like Lou to make us think, 'if this person could speak for themselves, what kind of support would they say they want?'" Frank said.

Jay Hoffmeier, President of the Board of Directors, remembers Lou's teachings, "We have the dual responsibility of teaching people the skills to lead more independent lives while keeping them safe and, as any parent knows, this can sometimes be a hard balance to achieve."

Lou will be sorely missed. His family has requested that memorials be made in Lou's honor to The Arc of Schuyler.

## Thank you for your gifts in memory of Louis Leach

- Max and Dorothy Allen*
- Howard and Jean Best*
- David and Marilyn Dalrymple*
- William and Patricia Ellison*
- Jeannette Frank*
- John Horner*
- Delores and William Kennedy*
- Margaret Leach*
- Harold Mueller*
- Lillian Mueller*
- Kevin Perman and Susan Miller*
- The Shepherd Center*
- Joe and Molly Story*
- Robert and Helen Sullivan*
- Ralph and Catherine Teti*
- Steven and Pamela Tichenor*
- Nicholas Tussing*
- Employees at U.S. GAO*
- James Wilson*
- Daniel and Karen Wood*
- Sheldon and Doris Yuspeh*



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