

The
Arc
Of Schuyler

James E. Wilson,
Executive Director

203 Twelfth Street
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

607-535-6934
Fax: 607-535-2666

www.arcofschuyler.org

Chapter NYSARC, Inc.
United Way Agency



Activities

**A Lifetime of
Supports
for People
with
Developmental
Disabilities**



Executive Director's Message - *Believing in dreams and making a difference*

It all began in 1978, with a group of parents and a small work activities center known as Glen Industries. Today, 30 years later, The Arc of Schuyler offers a full array of supports for people with disabilities and their families, from birth through adulthood.

As you would expect, the supports needed by a family with a young child vary greatly from those of a teenager living at home, a young adult who is seeking opportunities to exercise their independence and define their personal niche in life, or an individual looking toward retirement. Therefore, the services of The Arc must be flexible, individualized, and ever changing. Our person centered approach embraces individuals and their dreams. This is key to meeting challenges of providing life long supports. These challenges keep The Arc of Schuyler a dynamic place.

Our Service Coordinators are trained professionals who help families' access information, supports and services, as well as, monitoring the quality and satisfaction of what they receive. Supports are available starting at birth, through early intervention services. We also work with the Watkins Glen, Odessa-Montour, Dundee, Bradford and Trumansburg school districts to assist families through Committee on Special Education meetings to secure the right school placement, programs and supports.

Vocational training opportunities exist for teenagers, either on site at The Arc or in community based settings. These opportunities are currently available through a Model Transition Project under the auspice of the Greater Southern Tier Board of Cooperative Education Services and through direct contracts with the schools.

We have expanded our in home supports program to accommodate more young people whose families are looking for recreation and respite choices in the evenings, on weekends, and on school holidays. Home supports include a family reimbursement program that allows a family to hire a caregiver of their own choice and/or provides other financial assistance to cover the extra costs associated with caring for a family member with a disability at home.

In addition, we continue to offer high quality day service options, such as day habilitation and pre-vocational training. These services offer social and work readiness skill building augmented with occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech pathology, psychological, nursing, and nutritional supports, as needed.

The Schuyler County community has been fantastic in embracing people with disabilities as productive, contributing citizens throughout our 30-year history. Your ongoing support of our mission is a major reason we are able to celebrate our role in the community.

This issue of Abilities will introduce you to some people you may already know. They have been kind enough to share their stories with us as to how the community and the supports through The Arc have directly affected their lives. Our commitment is to people with developmental disabilities and their families, and to fulfill the trust they have put in The Arc to be there to provide individualized life-long supports.

“Our person centered approach embraces individuals and their dreams. This is key to meeting challenges of providing life long supports.”



James E. Wilson, Executive Director



President's Message - Celebrating 30 years

2008 is a very exciting year for The Arc of Schuyler as we mark our 30th year of providing supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. There is so much to celebrate and we hope you will join us!

Thank you to all who came out on February 9 for the Steak Dinner at the Montour Moose Lodge. Funds raised from this event directly benefit recreation programs at The Arc of Schuyler, such as Special Olympic programs, the summer picnic, and the HUGE holiday party for individuals and families who are part of The Arc family. A special thanks to the Moose Club members who have organized this dinner on our behalf for 16 years, especially Warren Osborne, Dan Jenkins, and Mike Donnelly. We sincerely appreciate your efforts.

Our "Chance of a Lifetime" raffle, with a first prize of two tickets to the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia on April 10, 2008, has proven to be a hit. Relph Benefit Advisors of Pittsford, NY donated the tickets and round trip airfare for this unique opportunity. Funds raised will be used to build our endowment fund. Designating a donation for The Arc of Schuyler's endowment fund is a way to ensure The Arc's legacy and array of supports continue for decades to come!

There are other 2008 events listed below. Take special note of our annual dinner and birthday celebration on Friday, May 16, 2008 at the Watkins Glen Community Center. Watch for more details on the surprises we have in store.

As you help us mark our successes, we ask that you consider the challenges and remember those who have had a major impact on the changes that have occurred over the years—our founders, parents, volunteers, employees and people with disabilities.

Much has been accomplished in three decades; people with disabilities and their families have many more choices and opportunities than ever before. This has been the goal of The Arc of Schuyler, and our accomplishments have been made possible, in part, through your ongoing help and support. Thank you.

The Arc of Schuyler Calendar of Events

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March

Look for news and articles about developmental disabilities in the media, our newsletter, and on our web site, www.arcofschuyler.org.

Annual Membership and Fund Drive

March - June

Open House

March 8, 1-5 p.m.

203 Twelfth Street, Watkins Glen

In recognition of Youth Art Month, in conjunction with The Arts of the Southern Tier and Watkins Glen Schools.

Masters Tickets Raffle Drawing

March 10, 5:30 p.m.

Hazlitt's 1852 Vineyard

Tickets \$100.00 each, grand prizewinner receives a trip for two to the 2008 Masters Golf Tournament in Augusta, Georgia.

Annual Report

May 1

Special 30th Anniversary section

Annual Dinner and Birthday Celebration

May 16

Watkins Glen Community Center

More information to come about our annual dinner and meeting, complete with awards and music by Flame, a talented rock band that showcases abilities, not disability.

Summer Picnic

June 27

Havana Glen, Montour Falls

Golf Tournament

August 15

Watkins Glen Golf Course

Glen Industries Open House

October 15

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Holiday Party

December

Watkins Glen Community Center

For friends and families of The Arc

Person Centered Planning Sets the Course

To truly help a person with a disability achieve their dreams and desires there must be flexibility in the supports that are provided to them. The Arc of Schuyler empowers people with disabilities through person centered planning, a continuous process that places the individual with a disability at the center of all decision-making and planning, allowing the person to decide which supports they wish to receive to reach their goals. There is a strong focus on the use of existing natural and community supports rather than designing new service systems specific to people with disabilities. Strengths and capabilities of the person are the primary focus for plan development versus the traditional needs based planning. The person with a disability chooses a circle of support, which is a group of people committed to taking needed action and assisting the person throughout their journey to meet their life goals.

For more information on person centered planning, contact Cara Furiosi-Clarke, Director of Community Supports at The Arc of Schuyler.

Family Support Services

The Arc of Schuyler provides a coordinated program of support, technical assistance and follow-up for families. Accessing other services and resources; including financial assistance, helps to maximize the options available to the individual with the disability and the family.

Service Coordination is a program that links families to services. Defined, it means: "The set of logical steps to assure that individuals receive needed services in a manner that is both supportive and cost effective."

Services include:

- Information and Referral
- Family Reimbursement Fund
- Guardianship
- Advocacy
- Respite and Recreation
- Service Coordination
- Early Childhood Services
- Individual Support Services
- In-Home Residential Habilitation
- Home Care

Help is just a phone call away... (607) 535-6934.

Let The Arc Be Your Navigator

When a family learns that their child has a developmental disability, gaining access to the necessary services and supports available in the community can be an overwhelming task to undertake. The Arc of Schuyler wants you to know that you are not alone; a professional Service Coordinator from our agency can help make things easier.

Service Coordinators advocate for persons with disabilities and their families. They help with the necessary paperwork to apply for financial assistance through programs, such as Social Security Income and Medicaid, and connect families with general services in the community that reflect the person's needs and desires.

For assistance in learning about eligibility for Service Coordination or other supports, The Arc is the place to start. Developmental disabilities are:

- Chronic and long lasting
- The result of a cognitive or physical impairment or both
- Manifested before the person attains the age of 22
- Likely to continue indefinitely
- Results in functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:
 - Self care
 - Receptive and expressive language

- Learning
- Mobility
- Self direction
- Independent living
- Economic self sufficiency

The five types of developmental disabilities are mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and other neurological impairments, which include brain injury, spina bifida, and Tourette's syndrome, among others.



Nikole Piper, Service Coordinator, getting to know the whole family; Bethany, Julie and Bailey.

The Right Start for Bethany



Bethany Riley shows off her reading skills.

When Service Coordinator, Nikole Piper went to Bethany Riley's home for the first time in 2006, the five-year-old girl did not talk and her social skills were not age appropriate. "Bethany wouldn't greet me," she said. "She would run away and displayed a lot of self stimulating behaviors."

Bethany was diagnosed with autism at two and a half years of age. Her parents enrolled her in an early intervention preschool program, specifically an intensive classroom for children on the autism spectrum, at the Franziska Racker Center in Ithaca, NY.

Nikole met the Riley's when Bethany was old enough to leave the preschool system. Her mother, Amanda, was concerned about how Bethany would transition to kindergarten, behave on the school bus, and how the other children would respond to her daughter. A mother of four, Amanda was at the point of considering home schooling Bethany.

As a Service Coordinator, Nikole's role is to provide advocacy and assistance to Bethany and her family by helping them to identify and obtain the supports or services that

Bethany needs. Working in partnership with Bethany's parents, Nikole also monitors and evaluates services, as well as, assists with the steps and paperwork necessary to obtain services. Simply put, a Service Coordinator acts as a "single point of entry" into a complicated and sometimes confusing system.

"I make sure that Bethany's services are person-centered and individualized," explained Nikole. "I write a service plan with her and her parents, and we balance what she can do with what her needs are. This plan provides a guide for everyone relative to the help and support we can provide Bethany. I visit once a month and share information about new research and services that are available. There are so many different things and ideas to consider, along with advances in the field."

Fortunately, Bethany's parents had much in place when Nikole came on the scene, such as Social Security Income and Medicaid to help cover some of the extra expenses a family can encounter when they have a child with a disability. Nikole and Bethany's family concentrated on advocating to get the right set of supports during Bethany's transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Today, Bethany is in an inclusive classroom at South Seneca Elementary School in Interlaken where she has the help of an aide and individual therapies, including speech. She has made new friends and rides the bus appropriately. "She's come a long way," says Amanda. "Now we can understand anything Bethany has to say."

Nikole enjoys the change as well. "Bethany calls me by name and shares her toys and writing with me. It's amazing to see how much she's grown in the past two years. With the increase in the diagnosis of children with autism, it's extremely important that families know they can reach out to organizations like The Arc for information, resources and support."

Amanda appreciates the partnership between The Arc of Schuyler and her family. The Family Reimbursement program is one method of support that has been a welcome resource, covering the cost of a computer for the Discrete Trial Trainer, an educational software program that Bethany loves.

Many of the families Nikole has encountered are dealing with a family member who has the diagnosis of autism. Throughout the year Nikole is involved in lots of training around autism spectrum disorders and early intervention. She taps into trainings in the region, such as behavioral management, adaptive technologies, and understanding school requirements for individual education plans.

Amanda would recommend The Arc of Schuyler to any parent of a child with disabilities. "The Arc is a good place to start," she said. "They are person centered and supportive, helping us to evaluate what's best for Bethany."

From School to Work

Cory Harrison was honored as Rotary Student of the Month last October for helping with sports teams at Watkins Glen High School and being an overall good student. His teacher, Mr. Cole, recommended him for the honor. This was not the first time someone has stepped up for Cory.

As a 9th grader at Watkins Glen High School, Cory wanted to find a job. Noting that he possessed a number of strengths that an employer would value, such as politeness, punctuality and a good work ethic, Cory's special education teachers contacted The Arc of Schuyler to connect him with The Arc's School-to-Work program through Glen Industries. In no time at all, he found himself at Seneca Shine, The Arc's auto detailing work site.

According to his mother, Mary Harrison, Cory would love to be a police officer or join the military, but the fact that he has a shunt and only one kidney has left him with physical limitations that may prevent him from completing any rigorous training.

Now a senior in high school, Cory has to decide what his next step will be. Jackie Lynch, his Rehabilitation Services Coordinator through Glen Industries, is helping him explore his options.

"His high school connected him with Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, which will provide financial support if he chooses to pursue a college or training program. Or he can remain at Seneca Shine for a period of time while he increases his work skills to assist him in future community job placement. Cory enjoys what he does and is a dependable worker," she explained. "Increasing Cory's options is what's important to all of us."

In talking about Cory's future, it's clear that Jackie is sensitive to his comfort level and to his family's input into the process, and that all of it must be taken into consideration before a plan is made. As Cory expresses interest in possible career paths, Jackie also can help him connect with shadowing opportunities.

Jackie has also made a referral to connect Cory with recreational and social opportunities. Among the possibilities are bowling, Special Olympics, movies, taking part in community events, and whatever else he wants to do. "We work with families to create the right opportunities," she said.

As a single mom for 12 years, Mary is glad that The Arc is there for Cory. "They have good ideas and support."

Cory can also receive residential services from The Arc, but at this point, home with his mom is where he plans on staying.

"The most enjoyable part of my job is helping individuals learn what their full potential is and to feel the pride that they should feel when they get employment in the community and are part of the workforce," Jackie added.

According to Jesse Schubmehl, teacher's aide, Cory will probably stay at Seneca Shine until he feels comfortable moving on. In the meantime, he noted, Cory keeps himself busy with weightlifting and body building, as well as volunteering around school. "He managed the football program here, and now is the official videographer for the girls' basketball team," he said. "He's always the first one to help, which makes him a pretty special person."



Cory takes pride in his work at Seneca Shine.

Glen Industries

The Arc of Schuyler provides vocational rehabilitation programs for teens and young adults with developmental disabilities or other barriers to employment, as well as job placement and training support services, so that they may obtain and maintain the employment of their choosing.

Our services include:

- Vocational evaluation
- Personal adjustment training
- Work adjustment training
- Vocational counseling and referral
- Supported employment and job placement
- Job coaching
- On-the-job training
- Ongoing support and follow-up



Jackie Lynch, rehabilitation services coordinator, provides Cory Harrison with support and encouragement as he considers his career goals.

Glen Industries is certified by the New York State Department of Education under the Office for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, and the United States Department of Labor.

Living in the Community

If you live in Watkins Glen, then chances are you know Larry Tanner and Tom Havens. Larry is an avid sports fan who attends all of the local high school games. Tom has breakfast most mornings at Savard's Family Restaurant and in the summer can be found enjoying the concerts in the park. With the help of The Arc of Schuyler, both men have become familiar faces in the community.



Tom and Larry enjoy playing pool at their apartment.

Larry and Tom started with The Arc as adults, leaving school and moving from their family homes in Odessa and Montour Falls respectively, into a community residence in Odessa, NY. As they became more independent, the two men moved to an apartment in the Village of Watkins Glen. Denise York is their Service Coordinator at The Arc.

"Both men integrate themselves into the community well, and people think highly of them," she said. "Their apartment is conveniently located so that they can get to the things they enjoy on their own."

"I've gotten to know a lot of people in town," Larry said. "I live right downtown near restaurants and the movie theatre."

Tom knows many people in town. He has been invited to spend holiday dinners with members of the community and they treat him like an extended member of their family. He has his regular stops in town and socializes with those he meets.

Becoming as independent as possible is what Larry, 60, and Tom, 51, want at this point in their lives. Living in their own apartment allows them to come and go as they please for errands, work, entertainment, and handle most of their own cleaning and shopping.

The Arc's direct support staff visit the two men on a regular basis to help fill any gaps they see in daily living skills, nutrition and budgeting. For example, The Arc is the representative payee for Larry, which means that he's assisted with his bills, but he always has his own spending money. Tom is his own representative payee, and handles all of his bills and finances on his own.

Both men also hold down jobs at Glen Industries. Larry rides the bus or his bicycle to his job, where he's currently assembling guest bags for a tourism group. Tom walks to work at the Take a Break Café, where he helps make pizza, washes dishes, stocks shelves, and busses tables.

When they have leisure time, Larry and Tom have no problem getting involved in community activities. Larry has expanded his sports hobby to include soccer and visiting with other fans. Tom enjoys doing puzzles, crocheting scarves and blankets, and going to yard sales. Occasionally the two take advantage of The Arc's out-of-town recreational opportunities, such as traveling to the New York State Fair or to New York City to see "The Lion King" on Broadway.

As their Service Coordinator, Denise helps Larry and Tom think about their current goals as well as the future. "Tom and Larry have no problem telling me what they want," she said. "We meet on a regular basis to review and update their service plans, which give a summary of their lives, families, education, interests, needs, strengths and desires for the future. Tom and Larry identify the goals that they would like assistance in achieving and it is my job to try to help find the supports so they can achieve those goals."

For Larry, he is thinking about going to New Orleans to listen to jazz, and for Tom, it would be obtaining a job at a restaurant.



Larry Tanner (left) and Tom Havens (right) look forward to visits with their Service Coordinator, Denise York.

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Mission Statement

The Arc of Schuyler is committed to securing for all people with developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and play. This is accomplished by creating an environment of independence, productivity and integration through individualized services.

The Arc is further committed to reducing the incidents and limiting the consequences of developmental disabilities through education, research, advocacy and the support of family, friends and community.

Through the successful pursuit of quality and justice, The Arc provides leadership in the field of disabilities and develops the necessary human and financial resources to attain its goals.

The Arc also provides community leadership by participating in a wide variety of activities that make our region a better place to live for all citizens.

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