

“Why an Arc?”

A Three Pronged Approach to Mission Success: Harnessing the Passionate Advocacy of Loving Families at the Local, State, and National Levels

Robert A. Pruznick, CEO

Readers of *New Horizons* are familiar with our accomplishments here in Warren County. There is clear evidence that we are fulfilling our mission: helping people with intellectual disabilities lead good lives; helping parents balance their caregiving responsibilities; and expanding community understanding and inclusion. What may be less obvious are the invaluable contributions towards our progress that are orchestrated on the state and federal levels. When our founders organized the Warren Unit of the Association for Retarded Citizens in 1954 they joined a national movement whose New Jersey component was already chartered five years earlier. In concert with these two parent governed umbrella organizations we have had maximum positive impact on public policies that benefit our programs and services.

I am writing this piece as I am attending The Arc of the United States’ annual Public Policy Seminar in Washington DC, preparing for Congressional visits at a critical junction in the history of federal funding for entitlements such as Medicaid and Supplemental Social Security. Restrictions may be legislated in the near future that would cripple our ability to properly maintain existing services and imperil greatly needed expansion. This first rate governmental education symposium brings together a broad coalition of disability groups and provides broad and deep perspective on how to influence the political sphere. The governmental advocacy that our national counterpart performs has always been the major return on investment from our affiliation with the largest and oldest organization dedicated to meeting the needs of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. To accent this fact, the conference featured a celebration of the 35th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act that was spearheaded by The Arc

But thanks to the recent ambitious tenure of Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc/US, the benefits of belonging to this network are multiplying. As a preliminary tactic in the quest to reverse our relative obscurity with the general public, Mr. Berns has been working on uniform nationwide branding of all the affiliated chapters. Now that this goal has almost been achieved he has engineered a relationship with Comcast/NBC Universal that has the potential to launch a highly effective awareness campaign. This effort is part of a comprehensive initiative of chapter engagement. These supportive programs target a range of issues: meeting healthcare needs, autism resources, technology development, cultural competence, supported employment development through CareerBuilder, avenues to mini-grants and foundations, planned giving support, and access to a large library of videos and webinars.

Peter highlighted this revitalized chapter support project at the annual meeting of The Arc of New Jersey on April 9th, fully illustrating the powerful synergy of our three historical components. Led by the dynamic advocate Tom Baffuto, our statewide counterpart has an unparalleled reputation in Trenton and throughout New Jersey as the premier voice for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. All of our elected officials, from the Governor on down, look to The Arc/NJ for principled leadership in this sphere of human services. The same is true of the relevant bureaucracies such as DDD, DOH, DCF and DVR. Tom has been especially masterful as a voice of reason in the crucial fee-for-service transition process, championing adequate rates for service providers. As a sentinel for fairness and quality outcomes Mr. Baffuto and his team of well-respected professionals are essential allies in our constantly changing environment. His success translates into constituent safeguards and improved local chapter capabilities. And where there are service gaps and needs for statewide coordination, The Arc/NJ has always been a precious innovator with programs like Mainstreaming Medical Care, Equal Justice, Project Hire, The Family Institute and Planning for Adult Life. Our state chapter has been a beacon for our progress, a clearinghouse of vital information for service recipients and a media broadcaster for our cause.

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The Arc
of Warren County

**SINCE 1954,
PROVIDING QUALITY
SERVICE AND SUPPORT
TO PEOPLE WITH
INTELLECTUAL AND
RELATED
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES.**

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“Why an Arc?” *Continued from front page*

In summary, we are extremely fortunate that we have such competent allies within The Arc family. Working together we will always be **the source of solutions** for all our consumers and their loyal families.



**NOTICE OF ARC MEMBERSHIP MEETING
ELECTION OF OFFICERS
THURSDAY, MAY 21 AT 6:30 pm**

Members of The Arc of Warren County are requested to meet Thursday, May 21 for election of officers to The Arc’s Board of Directors, as mandated by The Arc’s by-laws which stipulate an annual membership meeting, held in May, for the purpose of electing officers to the board for 2015-16. This meeting will take place at The Arc offices at 319 W. Washington Avenue, 3rd floor, Washington, NJ 07882.

If you have any questions regarding your membership status, please contact Leslie Schott at 908-689-7525 x202.