

Helping people with developmental disabilities in our community

**The Arc**  
of Atlantic County

# Achieve

A quarterly newsletter for Members and friends of The Arc of Atlantic County

Winter 2010

## Coming Up...

**March 23: Rally for Respect.** 10:00 am to 12:00 noon at Rutgers University's Busch Campus Center, Piscataway, NJ. Registration required. Call 732-246-2525, x30.

**March 31: A Tribute to Patrick Kennedy.** The Arc's 2010 Tribute Dinner and Silent Auction. 5:30-9:00 pm at Caesars Palladium Ballroom in Atlantic City. RSVP by 3/24.

**May 2: Arc Idol.** The Spotlight Players performing arts club's 4th annual variety show. Milton and Betty Katz JCC, Margate, NJ., 2:00 p.m. Cost: \$4.00. Contact Becky Eisele at 609-485-0800 ext. 267 for more information.

**June 14-20: Shoprite LPGA Classic,** at Seaview in Galloway. Select The Arc when purchasing tickets at [shopritelpga-classic.com](http://shopritelpga-classic.com) and 50% of your ticket sale will come back to us!

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## A Tribute to Patrick Kennedy: Celebrating a Legacy of Advocacy and Inclusion

Since the early 1940s, members of the renowned Kennedy family have been some of the most ardent advocates for the rights and social inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through their political influence, reputation, and sincere belief in civil rights, they've created organizations and enacted legislation that benefits millions of Americans with developmental disabilities and their families.

In 1946, the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation was established to enhance the quality of life and increase awareness of people with developmental disabilities. In 1961, the same year The Arc of Atlantic County was founded, John F. Kennedy organized the President's Committee on Mental Retardation. In 1968, Eunice Kennedy Shriver formed the Special Olympics, and in 1990 Ted Kennedy helped pass the Americans with Disabilities Act. And the list goes on.

On Wednesday, March 31, 2010 at our sixth annual Tribute Dinner and Silent Auction, The Arc of Atlantic County will honor the life and work of

yet another member of the Kennedy family who commits himself to promoting the rights and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities: U.S. Representative Patrick Kennedy.

Kennedy has served as a member of the House of Representatives from Rhode Island for 21 years—half of his life. He is a co-founder and a co-chair of the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus, whose mission is to educate members of Congress and their staff about Down syndrome. Additionally, the Caucus supports legislative activities that would improve Down syndrome research, education and treatment; and promote public policies that would enhance the quality of life for those with Down syndrome.

Recently, Congressman Kennedy announced that he will not run for reelection after eight terms in congress. This will be the first time in more than 60 years that a member of the Kennedy family is not serving in Congress. This year's Tribute Dinner and Silent Auction offers our friends a unique opportunity to honor Patrick Kennedy and the mark that both he



and his family have made in the field of developmental disabilities as public servants, while also raising much-needed funds for The Arc's programs.

The Arc would like to thank Honorary Chair Alyce Parker, Presenting Sponsors Harrah's Entertainment and AtlantiCare, Platinum Sponsor Atlantic City Electric, and emcee Robin Stoloff for their support of this year's Tribute.

Tickets are \$125 and include a cocktail hour, silent auction, dinner and program where Congressman Kennedy will share his story. To purchase tickets, contact Jennifer Rowles at 609-485-0800 ext. 137 or visit [www.arcatlantic.org/KennedyTribute.asp](http://www.arcatlantic.org/KennedyTribute.asp). Please reserve tickets by March 24.

## Achieving real choices: A Home of His Own

George Karrish, 50, began to dream of owning his own home when he was 18 years old. And not just any home, either. He hoped for a one-story, with a screened-in porch, not too big or too fancy. Perhaps in the country. A home with enough room to entertain his friends, and one that maybe someday he could share with a wife and family.

Years ago, having a developmental disability would likely have been a barrier to George ever reaching his dream. But through the support of a caring network of people including his family, friends and Arc staff coupled with his own personal commitment to his goals, George's dream of owning his own home came true on November 18, 2009 when he signed the contract on a three bedroom ranch home on a corner lot in Pleasantville.

"You don't know how good it feels to own something," George said on his settlement day.

George has received assistance through The Arc's Supportive Living program since he moved to Atlantic County in 2001 from another agency in order to be closer to his brother and parents. With the help of his job coach, George was almost immediately hired at a local nursing home in the maintenance department and has enjoyed work-

ing there full-time, with benefits, ever since.

George explains how he was able to accomplish his life-long dream of home ownership.

"I had been saving since after the first month that I started working at Meadowview. Every other month I'd put money in my savings so I could build it up. Arc staff Renee Bird and Nichole Bonjean helped me with the realtor and looking at places, and the money situation. We had six eyes keeping aware of what was going on."

George loves the freedom to do what he wants to his home. He's going to make one bedroom an office and a gym, and the other will be a guest bedroom. He's also eager to work in his yard when the weather gets warmer. "I'm going to plant a garden in the spring, maybe some broccoli, tomatoes and squash. I'd like to get a shed to keep all my tools. Maybe down the road I'll build a screened-in porch, too."

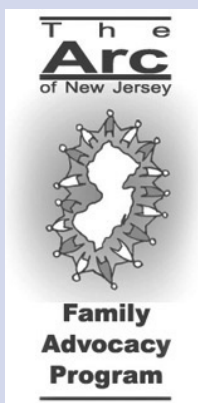
When asked what advice he'd give to other service recipients looking to own their own home, he had this to say: "Just keep working, saving your money, listen to advice from your friends and staff. Owning your own home is like heaven. You're more independent, more responsible and free. You don't have to listen to your landlords; you can do what you want."



*George opens the front door to his new home on settlement day in November.*

## Help Ensure Your Loved One's Future: Join the Family Advocacy Program

With the serious economic issues facing New Jersey, agencies like The Arc are dealing with serious budget cuts that could impact the services your loved one receives. You can help prevent these cuts by joining The Arc of New Jersey's Family Advocacy Program, which provides you with the information and resources you need to speak to policymakers about how budget cuts will impact your family. When you join, you'll become a part of the e-mail based Families Network. To join the Family Advocacy Program, go to [www.arcfamilyadvocacy.org](http://www.arcfamilyadvocacy.org) or contact Denbigh Shelton at [dshelton@arcnj.org](mailto:dshelton@arcnj.org).



## Foundations Give \$27,000 Since July

The Arc of Atlantic County thanks the following foundations for their support of Arc's programs:



*TD Bank's Scott Campbell and Dean Hedelt present Arc with a check*

Atlantic County Office of Cultural Heritage	\$2,800
Dylan Kelsey Kolojeski Foundation	\$500
The Gold Foundation	\$2,500
Kahrs Charitable Foundation	\$7,000
Milton & Betty Katz JCC/Alan Perskie Fund	\$5,000
The Monica Buckley Memorial Foundation	\$20,000
National Inclusion Project	\$4,726
Ocean City Home Bank Foundation	\$3,000
The Stroser Foundation	\$1,600
TD Charitable Foundation	\$3,000



## Lending a Hand: Holiday Donors Respond in Record Numbers to Help Arc Families

When social services director Nicole Terzakis

kicked off The Arc's 2009 Holiday Partners program this past September, she wasn't optimistic. More families in need than ever before were signed up to receive food baskets and holiday gifts. The news reported daily on the ever-increasing unemployment rate in the region, and the response to her solicitation letters was slow. As the holidays loomed closer, she feared that she might not be able to match all 55 families—or more than 200 individuals—who were depending on The Arc and community donors to help them have a joyous holiday.

Through the help of the local media and an Arc email campaign, however, word about the Holiday Partners program spread. "Once the word got out, we were flooded with donors adopting families, donating gifts and gift cards, and holding food and toy drives," says Terzakis. "I really thought this would be our worst year ever, and it turned out to be our most successful. We had a 42% increase in donors since last year."

In addition to many repeat donors, The Arc also welcomed a host of new supporters this year. Atlantic City's Hard Rock Café staff adopted a six-member, single-parent family from Atlantic City and treated them to a special holiday luncheon at their restaurant, where they presented them



*The Ardis family enjoyed a delicious lunch and loads of gifts this Christmas, courtesy of the Hard Rock Cafe in Atlantic City.*

with gifts and gift cards to grocery and department stores.

Maureen Gilbert from the Richard Stockton College Office of the Provost, which has adopted a family for several years, forwarded The Arc's email throughout the college, recruiting the school's softball, girls cross country and field hockey teams and the Social Work Club, all of which adopted a family.

School children also participated in the program, with students from the Marsh School in Absecon's second grade class donating four boxes of gifts, and Belhaven Middle School in Linwood continuing their support by adopting three families.

Many casino employees got involved this year as well, with the Borgata sales department adopting an Atlantic City family in lieu of a pollyanna. All four Harrah's properties par-

ticipated in a gift drive for several families. Other local participating businesses included Shore Memorial's Sterile Processing Department, the English Creek Lockheed Martin team, Yoga 9 owner Laurie Green and her patrons, Greg Petit of Hit and Run Sports, Harbor Pines Golf Club, Sea Oaks Golf Club, and the Gold Foundation.

Terzakis noted that these efforts make a world of a difference in the lives of the families who benefit. "Many of the families in our services are single-parent or single-income households. They struggle every day to make ends meet while caring for their loved ones, making the holidays extra stressful."

Linda Johnson, who works for the FAA, has been a Holiday Partner for years, choosing to donate to the same family each year. She has built a relationship with the family and delivers the gifts in person. "I have been very fortunate with all that I have received in my life, and I wanted to pass that appreciation forward to a family in need. I love what I do, and I hope that someday my current holiday partner will remember the joy she had during the holidays and sponsor a family when she is able. I encourage others to do the same!"

Want to become an Arc Holiday Partner, too? Call Nicole Terzakis at 609-485-0800, extension 201 and she'll put you on the mailing list for next year.



### And the Top Team Fundraiser Is...

...Team Saturday Program, who raised \$1,820 for our 2009 Step Up for The Arc Walk in October! Congratulations and sincere gratitude go to the entire team, made up of staff and children who participate in our weekly Saturday respite program. Thanks especially to team members Annie Damiano and Lori D'Alessio who raised a large part of the team total. This year's walk brought in more than \$19,000. Turn to the back of this issue for a list of donors that includes anyone who gave \$25 or more to support our walkers!

## Thank You for Helping Us Grow!

(Donors listed made a gift of \$25 or more between October 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009)

Susan Able • Amy Ackerman • Dr. & Mrs. Sergio Aguilar • America's Charities • Mr. & Mrs. B. Robert Anderson • Madeline Andrews • Richard Antczak • Mr. & Mrs. Alan Arcuri • Agnes Armao • Mr. & Mrs. Drew Armao • Gene Arnone • Art Picture Framing • Atlantic Forest #11 Tall Cedars • Baird Foundation • Claire Baker • Holly J. Baker • Mr. & Mrs. Sheldon Bank • Carmen Bannon • Ellen Barbieri • Robert Barbieri • Cinnie Barnett • Barbara Barresi • Leah K. Barrows • Donna Baszner • Mr. & Mrs. Howard Bateman • Mr. & Mrs. Sean Batohie • Baumgardner Construction Co. Inc. • Pat Beebe • Mr. & Mrs. Elliot Beinfest • Lori Bentz • Mr. & Mrs. Charles Berenato • Helene Berlin • Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bernstein • Beta Sigma Phi • Mr. & Mrs. John Bieniakowski • Mr. & Mrs. Dean Birth • Joycel Birth • Robin Birth • Scott C. 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# The Arc of Atlantic County

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### Mission

The Arc of Atlantic County improves the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. Through direct services, advocacy, education and prevention activities, we work in partnership with individuals and their families to make choices possible about how and where they live, learn, play and work.

### Vision

People have the opportunities and supports they need to live the lives they choose.

Deborah Davies, Ph.D.  
*Chief Executive Officer*

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\* Family member or an individual with a developmental disability.

## The Arc to Celebrate 50 Years of Service

Dear Friend,

As I write this letter, I have before me a copy of The Arc of Atlantic County's Articles of Incorporation, dated February 25, 1961, almost 50 years ago. The signatures are of four members of the original Board of Trustees, who were parents of children with developmental disabilities. In these signatures, I see the dreams of parents who believed their children deserved more than society was willing to give them at the time. And having been at the helm of this agency for the latter half of its existence, I feel confident in saying we have lived up to their dreams, and then some.

During the past fifty years, we have helped thousands of people transition from institutions to residences in the community, sometimes even their own, like George. We have helped people discover and hone their abilities through recreation and vocational services. We have helped families navigate the system at the most critical moments in their lives and provided them with the respite they sometimes need when caring for their loved one at home...and so much more.

To help us begin to plan our 50th anniversary, I'd like to know more about you. If you're a donor, why do you give? If you're a service recipient, how has The Arc helped you? If you're a family member of someone who receives services, what are your hopes for your loved one's future? Feel free to send me a letter, or email me at [ddavies@arcatlantic.org](mailto:ddavies@arcatlantic.org). I am eager to hear your stories. Your stories are what truly keep us moving in the right direction.

Warmly,

Deborah Davies, Ph.D.  
Chief Executive Officer

