



# The Guardian

Fall 2015 - Winter 2016 • Volume 67 No. 1 • Annual Report Issue



## The Arc of Essex County Spreads Holiday Cheer



The Arc of Essex County celebrated the holiday season in style with a number of our consumers this December.

Residents of The Arc of Essex County group homes and day program participants joined members from the West Essex UNICO on Sunday, December 13 at the Notre Dame Church in North Caldwell. Consumers enjoyed a homemade Italian meal prepared by UNICO members, followed by dancing, fun, and a visit with Santa. Each resident, day program participant, and caregiver was treated to holiday gifts thanks to the generous members of the West Essex UNICO.

On Wednesday, December 16 The Arc gathered at the Knights of Columbus in Livingston where Housing Assistance



Program (HAP) families were treated to a full holiday experience complete with lunch, raffles, holiday music, balloon and face painting artists, and a visit with Santa! Holiday toys were provided by Rutgers University Big Chill 5K Race participants and SaxBST, as well as new winter apparel donated by The Arc of Essex County employees and board members.

Additionally, frozen turkeys were provided for each family by Shop Rite. To round out the holiday meal, turkeys were supplemented with holiday food items provided by The Arc of Essex County's day programs and the Greater Newark Conservancy. The Livingston Rotary and The Arc of Essex County Board President Brad Hopton generously funded the party.



The celebrations continued on Thursday, December 17 with the students of the Stepping Stones School. The kids welcomed Santa with great enthusiasm as he passed out gifts, enjoyed holiday treats, and spent time with their friends and families before winter break.

Finally, The Arc of Essex County board members and members of the executive management committee traveled to four group homes on Sunday, December 20 to spread holiday cheer by singing holiday carols. The residents enjoyed the visits and songs as they prepared to celebrate the holidays.

The Arc of Essex County hopes everyone had a great holiday season and extends our best wishes in the new year.



# Second Annual Uncorked & Uncapped Wine, Beer, and Food Fest Raises \$78k!



On Thursday, September 24th, The Arc of Essex County held its second annual Uncorked & Uncapped: Wine, Beer, and Food Fest at the Westminster Hotel in Livingston. The night was abuzz with a variety of activities and tastings for the more than 250 attendees to enjoy. The evening featured a wine pull, homebrew competition, silent auction, awards ceremony, and capped off with fine wine, craft beer, spirits, and restaurant samplings from more than 30 local establishments.

The evening's proceeds surpassed last year's earnings, totaling almost \$78,000. These funds will directly support The Arc's many programs and services that assist people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Essex County.

"All of the food and beverages at the event were truly outstanding," said Livingston resident and The Arc of Essex County Board Member, Marnie McNany. "In its second year, Uncorked and Uncapped is getting bigger and better. I enjoyed the repeat-favorite cheeseburger sliders from Verona Inn and the Australian wines from The A-List. We are already looking forward to the event in 2016!" Other guest favorites included an assortment of cheeses from Whole Foods Market in

Montclair, and the Pumpkin Ale from Climax Brewing.

As always, The Arc honored the individuals and groups who have been integral to the agency's success, including:

- **Corporate Partner Award:** Todd W. Polyniak, CPA, SaxBST
- **Public Partner Award:** Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Mayor of West Caldwell and Business Administrator of East Hanover
- **Community Partner Award:** Knights of Columbus - East Hanover, Fairfield, Livingston, Montclair, Short Hills, and Verona

A special **Lifetime Achievement Award** was given to John O'Brien, Secretary of the Board of Directors for The Arc of Essex County, for his amazing and unwavering support of The Arc for more than 40 years.

The evening wound down with the crowning of the "2015 Uncorked & Uncapped Brew Master." John Byrne of Hopatcong, NJ, Jim Cully of Catawissa, PA, and Jan Chwiedosiuk of Stirling, NJ took home prizes for their home brews.

The entire event could not have been possible without the help of our sponsors: SaxBST, Connell Foley, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, PSE&G,



Oratory Prep, Bird Pharma Consulting LLC, Primepoint HRMS & Payroll, Ulta Beauty, Benefit Management Solutions, Certified Financial Services, EdPowerment, friends of Mayor Joseph Tempesta, Jr., Gallagher Bollinger, Jonathan J. Proce Foundation, Leshner Franchino & Co., TD Bank, and Secretary of the Board of Directors for The Arc of Essex County, John O'Brien.

This year's Uncorked & Uncapped: Wine, Beer, and Food Fest was a success thanks to every vendor, sponsor, honoree, attendee, volunteer, donor, and staff member who assisted. **Save the date for the 2016 event, returning to the Westminster Hotel on Thursday, September 29th!** If you know of any restaurants, breweries, or wine vendors interested in participating, please contact The Arc of Essex County's Director of Development and Communication, Heather Comstock at 973-535-1181 x 1224.



## Four Women to Call Roseland Home in Early 2016

In early 2016, The Arc of Essex County will welcome four ladies home to the 16th group home and 26th residential program operated by the agency. Acquired in June of 2015, The Roseland group home is currently undergoing renovations including various barrier-free/accessibility improvements, adding front/rear wheelchair ramping, converting an existing bathroom to a handicapped accessible space, upgrading the lighting, and installing a full fire suppression system.

The Arc anticipates that the residents, three of whom currently reside in The Arc's Crisis Group Home in Newark, will move into the Roseland home in February or March of 2016. If you are interested in welcoming the ladies home, stay tuned for housewarming registry information.

The acquisition and renovations would not be possible without the generous contributions received from the Essex County Division of Housing and Community Development, the NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the Roseland Affordable Housing Board.



### Welcome Anthony Home for the Holidays by Contributing to the 2015 Holiday Appeal

Before moving into his very own apartment, Anthony Bushko was carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders juggling family obligations. That all changed in late September when he moved into an apartment through The Arc of Essex County's Supportive Living Apartment Program. Now, Anthony lives a better life, a more independent life, thanks to The Arc of Essex County.

Read Anthony's inspiring story of turning his dreams into a reality, as told by him,

in The Arc's 2015 Holiday Appeal by visiting [www.arcessex.org](http://www.arcessex.org). Then, take action to ensure The Arc of Essex County can continue to help individuals like Anthony set goals, achieve dreams, and create lifelong memories by making a donation. With every donation made, The Arc of Essex County will send your personal message to Anthony welcoming him home.

To make a donation to The Arc's Holiday Appeal, visit The Arc of Essex County's website, mail checks to 123 Naylon Ave., Livingston, NJ 07039, or call (973) 535-1181 ext. 1227.



### DAY PROGRAMS ATTEND SECOND ANNUAL

## Shining Stars Prom

On Tuesday, June 23rd, The Arc of Essex County crowned the annual Prom king and queen during the 2015 Prom themed "Shining Stars." Charles McKinney from Community Link and Nikita Brown from SWOP took home the titles.

The prom featured an afternoon of dancing, singing, food, and fun at The Nutley Parks and Recreation Building. Volunteers from Prudential helped set up, serve lunch, and brought their enthusiasm to the dance floor. Additionally Anderson's Florist in Montclair provided boutonnieres and corsages for all prom attendees while Petracca and Sons catered a portion of the food.

This annual event offers approximately 100 day program participants the opportunity to enjoy a traditional prom experience. The highly anticipated event will return in June 2016. Follow The Arc of Essex County on our social media channels to get a sneak peek into the 2016 prom theme!

# Camp Hope 2015 Filled with Adventures, Sun, and Fun for 130 Campers



On Friday, August 14th, Camp Hope's 59th season came to a close. Throughout the summer, campers old and new enjoyed the seven themed weeks and programs. Highlights included Around the World in Four Days concluding with a Fourth of July barbecue, Camp Spirit Week when campers dyed their hair crazy colors and mismatched their socks, and Active Adventure Week complete with a visit from the firefighters of East Hanover!

All of these wonderful activities and more could not occur without help from the following donors: The Newark Fresh Air Fund, The Orange Orphan Society, The Lillian Schenk Foundation, Novartis, United Way of Northern New Jersey, Ronald McDonald House Charities, United Way of Millburn/Short Hills, and Irvington CDBG.

Camp Hope is a seven week summer day camp program in East Hanover for campers with intellectual and

developmental disabilities. Camp runs Monday through Friday, 9 am to 3 pm, starting in July and ending in August, with transportation provided for campers living in Essex County and the surrounding areas. Camp Hope provides traditional camp activities including supervised swimming and outdoor fun with modified sports, arts & crafts, and music. While enjoying these activities, attention is also given to daily living skills, peer interaction, socialization skills, and developing appropriate behaviors.

The 2016 Camp Hope Season will run from July 5 to August 19, 2016. The application will be available in early February. The deadline is rolling with a final deadline in late spring. Applications, deadlines, and additional details will be posted to The Arc of Essex County's website in early 2016. Please visit [www.arcessex.org](http://www.arcessex.org) for more information.

## CAMP HOPE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES IN JANUARY 2016

# Through Play, Imaginations Run Wild

Through play, children experience wonder and excitement. Imaginations run wild, friendships flourish, and learning becomes fun. And, without realizing it, children develop and grow. Beginning in early 2016, The Arc of Essex County and Camp Hope will launch the Create Play initiative with a goal of raising \$200,000 to revitalize the campground recreation spaces and add new facilities and features.

Funds raised will be used to build a brand new, handicap-accessible playground, construct a new open-air activity pavilion, resurface and reinvigorate the basketball court, refurbish the splash pad, and more.

This initiative will ensure that for seven magical weeks each summer, campers can continue to join together to challenge themselves, form lasting friendships, and simply have fun. We hope you will join us and reinvest in and revitalize the camp grounds that have been the background for countless memories. Together we will preserve the history of Camp Hope's charm, while improving its infrastructure and sustainability.

To learn more and participate in The Arc of Essex County's Create Play initiative, contact Heather Comstock at (973) 535-1181 ext. 1224 or [hcomstock@arcessex.org](mailto:hcomstock@arcessex.org).



# 18th Annual Building Tomorrows 5K-Run, 2-Mile Walk, and Family Fun Fest to Return April 16



On Saturday, April 16th The Arc of Essex County will host the 18th Annual Building Tomorrows 5K Run, 2-Mile Walk, and Family Fun Fest at Bloomfield's Brookdale Park featuring a USATF sanctioned 5K, a fundraising walk, and fun fest complete with games, arts & crafts, music, and other family activities!

This annual event raises money to support The Arc of Essex County's 1,500 consumers and the dozens of programs and services they attend each year. Back by popular demand, the Student Ambassador program is now accepting applications (deadline of March 1, 2016). Student Ambassadors will inspire and motivate people to become involved in the Building Tomorrows initiative. Ambassadors are the face of the event and use their

personal stories to inspire, engage, and educate the community. Candidates for the program are elementary, middle school, or high school students with an intellectual or developmental disability or those who have a close tie to someone with I/DD.

If you plan to participate, why not make it a group event with your family or coworkers? Consider forming a team with family, friends, or being sponsored by the company you work for!

## Register:

[www.runorwalk.org](http://www.runorwalk.org)

## Ambassador Applications:

[www.arcessex.org](http://www.arcessex.org)

## Questions:

Brielle Cummings, 973-535-1181  
or [bcummings@arcessex.org](mailto:bcummings@arcessex.org)



## Reach CRC Staff Taps Into Training to Save a Life

On Thursday, September 17th Reach CRC staff member Francesca Pierre's quick thinking saved program participant Patrick Valdellon's life.

During lunch time, Patrick began choking on his food. Francesca immediately asked fellow staff members to call for help and began performing the Heimlich maneuver. After several attempts, she successfully dislodged a piece of chicken nugget that had been blocking his airway.

"What went through my mind [in that moment] is 'No, this is not going to happen. Not on my watch. You're going to be okay. No matter what, you're going to be okay,'" said Pierre following the day's events. "I just tried to contain myself, think step-by-step through the trainings [provided by The Arc], and remember what I was taught in order to deliver the way I delivered."

"Francesca's quick thinking and reaction saved Patrick's life," said Sergeant Paul Stabile of the Caldwell Police Department in a letter of commendation following the event. "I would like to thank her for how she reacted in a stressful situation."

*The Arc of Essex County would like to recognize the dedication and care Francesca delivers to her program participants each day and thank her for her quick response to save Patrick's life.*

## Employees Honored at Annual Recognition Event



On Wednesday, October 7th, The Arc of Essex County honored the long standing commitments and dedication of employees at a luncheon at The Manor in West Orange. Recognizing employees who celebrated milestone anniversaries, The Arc's Executive Management Committee and members of the Board presented employees with certificates of recognition. Thank you for your service!

# Corporate and Civic Groups Key to Camp Hope, Kickball Tournament, and Prom Success

The Arc of Essex County Day Program's Prom, the coveted kickball tournament championship, and seven weeks of fun and sun at Camp Hope are spring and summer highlights for many of the individuals who attend day and recreation programs offered by The Arc of Essex County. This year, The Arc was excited to share participants' experiences with groups of volunteers from corporate and civic organizations who hailed from Massachusetts to Florida. The groups' participation helped each program run more smoothly and enhanced the experiences for program attendees.

From June 16th – 18th, three separate groups of volunteers from Vivint volunteered their time at Camp Hope to put the final touches on the facilities before camp opening on the 29th. The group of volunteers, all from Florida but working out of Florham Park for the summer, assembled furniture and recreation equipment, organized the arts & crafts room, and thoroughly cleaned the classrooms and kitchens in advance of the Camp Hope open house. The spouse support group for Vivint employees, Elevate, returned to camp in mid-July to facilitate arts & crafts projects and games for the campers. Both groups of volunteers

brought their high-energy, enthusiastic efforts to ensure the best experiences for campers this summer.



On June 23rd, volunteers from Prudential continued to volunteer their time with The Arc of Essex County. After joining The Arc at the 17th Annual Building Tomorrows 5k Run, 2-Mile Walk, and Family Fun Fest in April, Prudential employees were excited to join day program participants at the annual prom themed "Shining Stars." Volunteers helped set up, serve food, and danced the afternoon away with prom goers. Prudential volunteers would return to The Arc of Essex County in early August to serve up popcorn, snow cones, and cotton candy during Camp Hope's annual carnival.

The week of July 13th brought a group of teenagers and their chaperones from St. Mary's Church in Shrewsbury,

Mass. to The Arc of Essex County for a week of service coordinated through the Archdiocese of Newark. The group spent their first day assisting with the Day Programs' kickball tournament in Branch Brook Park in Newark. The next three days included games and fun with campers at Camp Hope. The group rounded out the week at the Community Link day program helping declutter, organize, and thoroughly clean areas that desperately needed it.

"The student volunteers were bright, warm, friendly, polite, and extremely hard working throughout their time here," said **Liz Eisen, Program Manager at Community Link**. "We felt truly honored and blessed to have the pleasure of their company and assistance to make our building a better place for all to enjoy."

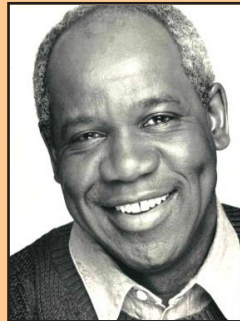
The Arc of Essex County would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of the volunteers who have joined us this year. If you have a group of individuals and/or colleagues who would like to volunteer your time with The Arc, please fill out the volunteer interest form on our website: [www.arcessex.org/volunteer](http://www.arcessex.org/volunteer). We look forward to welcoming you to The Arc Family!

## Board Members, Volunteers, and Friends Remembered for Dedication



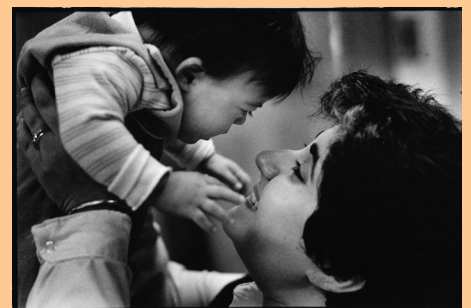
**Ron Carr, Sr.** of Fairfield was a member of The Arc of Essex County for more than 45 years. During his time with The Arc, Mr. Carr also served in a variety of leadership positions including

a stint as Board President from 2002-2006. He also represented The Arc of Essex County as a delegate to The Arc of New Jersey. His civic connections with the Fairfield Knights of Columbus sparked a 20 year relationship which continues today.



**Clarence Crawley** of Montclair served on The Arc of Essex County's Board of Directors for more than 25 years in a variety of leadership roles including chair of a number of subcommittees.

He also represented The Arc of Essex County as a delegate to The Arc of New Jersey from 1990-1998.



**Susan Wright** was active with the Arc since the birth of her son, William "Billy" Wright. Billy attended Stepping Stones School, where Sue and her daughter Meredith volunteered. Sue and her husband Rick also helped run the annual golf fundraiser for many years. The family remains part of the Arc community, as Billy currently attends SYA.

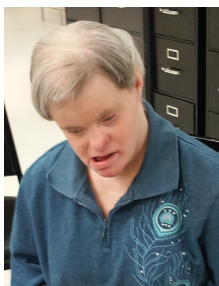


# Remembering Treasured Consumers



**Michael Zablocki** joined The Arc family in 1982, residing at the Nutley, Bloomfield, Belleville, and Seven Oaks Group Homes.

While living at Belleville, Mike became best friends with another resident, John. They spent 20 years together, enjoying vacations across the United States and Canada.

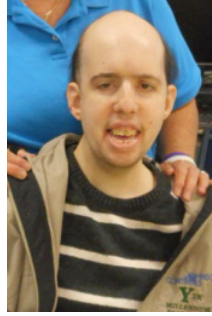


**Patricia Cherba** attended The Arc of Essex County's Opportunity Zone day program for more than

10 years. Although a very quite person, she touched the hearts of many staff and consumers.



**Frank Mattson** moved into the very first group home in Newark more than 40 years ago and most recently resided with his best friend at the supervised apartment in Maplewood. Known in his early days as "Godfather", Frank was the in-charge guy wherever he lived. Underneath his gruff exterior was a heart of gold. He worked as a TV repair man for many years and enjoyed cooking. He would often prepare large meals for anyone unable to cook.



**Greg DiLorenzi** attended The Arc of Essex County's Special Young Adults (SYA) program for 15 years. He loved computers,

typing, telling stories, and word search puzzles. He typed 60 words a minute and was the program's official greeter, welcoming people to the program each and every day.

**Nathaniel Rosebure** joined The Arc family in 1988, residing at the Livingston Group Home. He especially enjoyed family time during the holidays, on birthdays, and special occasions. A foodie at heart, he always enjoyed his mom's homecooked meals and listening to gospel, R&B, and jazz music. He looked forward to attending church each Sunday and participating in worship and fellowship.

## RESPITE SERVICES IMPACTED BY STATE TRANSITION

# DCF Fee-for-Service Changes

Beginning January 2016, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) transitioned all respite services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities under the age of 21 from a contract-based system to a fee-for-service system. Families currently enrolled in The Arc of Essex County's agency-hired, Saturday, or self-hired children's respite programs will be impacted.

This shift will enable DCF and the Division of Children's System of Care (CSOC) to extend more respite services to families and optimize the utilization of available resources. Enrollment in The Arc of Essex County's children's respite programs will expand, decreasing the time period families have to wait to receive services and increasing the variety of available programs.

The Arc of Essex County alerted families impacted by this change in early December 2015 and conducted a series of workshops to answer questions and provide support as the statewide changes took effect. Agency-hired and Saturday group respite families will encounter minimal changes. Families who are enrolled in The Arc of Essex County's self-hired respite program will need to complete additional paperwork and ensure their self-hired workers meet statewide requirements.

The Arc of Essex County is available to answer any questions families may have throughout the DCF fee-for-service transition. A web page will be available on The Arc of Essex County's website in the coming weeks to guide self-hired respite families through the changes and requirements in the new system. For any questions regarding the state-wide changes, or assistance in accessing services as the requirements change, please call The Arc of Essex County at (973) 535-1181.

## Travel Club Takes Ocean City by Storm

This past September, six members of the travel club and two staff of The Arc of Essex County enjoyed a 5-day, 4-night trip to Ocean City, Maryland. The trip featured an abundance of activities including Sunfest, the largest music and kite festival in the area, great local seafood, mini golf, a hayride on the beach, a visit to Ripley's Believe It or Not, swimming in the hotel pool, and an old time photo complete with antique clothing!





# The Arc<sup>®</sup>

of Essex County

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## Stepping Stones Footprint Expands; Shapiro Center Relocates to New Central Location

Fall, The Arc of Essex County unveiled a new Stepping Stones logo and completed a seven month expansion and renovation project increasing the agency's presence in Roseland. By acquiring space on the first floor of the Stepping Stones School, The Arc of Essex County created a new space for all early intervention and education programs including Stepping Stones and The Shapiro Center.

and open house on Tuesday, November 17th.



*Members of The Candle Lighters executive committee pictured with Linda Lucas, CEO of The Arc of Essex County.*

More than 30 people attended the open house to tour the new space and join The Arc of Essex County in thanking The Candle Lighters and the New Jersey Department of Education for their contributions to fund the project. For additional information or to view the new facility, please contact Sue Brand, Director of Education and Early Childhood at The Arc of Essex County.

**Please join The Candle Lighters for their annual Tricky Tray which benefits The Arc of Essex County on Sunday, February 28th at Mayfair Farms in West Orange.**



123 Naylon Ave., Livingston, NJ 07039  
[www.arcessex.org](http://www.arcessex.org)

### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STAFF

Linda C. Lucas  
Chief Executive Officer

Kathleen Hinnigan-Cohen  
Chief Operating Officer

Minelly Cummings  
Chief Financial Officer

### GUARDIAN STAFF

Heather Comstock  
Senior Director of Development & Communication

Nancy Whitman  
Director of Communications

Brielle Cummings  
Special Events and Development Coordinator

## Guardian Angels

Bob's Discount Furniture Charitable Foundation, Inc.  
Catholic Human Services  
Fresh Air Fund

Glen Ridge Community Fund  
The Ralph M. Cestone Foundation  
WBGO Kids Jazz Fall Concert Series