

SPRING 2025

The Articulate

Day on the Hill

Tuesday May 6th, Advocates Katie Foley and Roseann Polishan headed to the Capitol in Harrisburg PA to participate in the Arc of PA's "Day on the Hill" to advocate for rights for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some of the top issues include DSP wages, the waiting list for Medicaid Waivers, Early Intervention and Special Education Funding, nursing for Complex medical needs and increased dental benefits.

They started off their day at the Press Conference in the East Wing, where they heard the rallying call that disability rights are human rights from Sherri Landis, Executive Director of the Arc of PA, along with a number of Senators and Representatives, Self Advocates and family members. Then they spent the day meeting with 7 legislators,



then dropping off packets to 9 additional legislators' offices and networking with other advocates.

It was a successful day of advocacy and they are hopeful it will turn into votes for these important areas of legislation!

Roseann Polishan
Lead Advocate




The Arc[™]

Northeastern Pennsylvania

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President's Message



This newsletter is my final Harrah. My stint as board president is almost over, and soon I will become a "back bencher". My two years at the helm of The Arc of NEPA have been quite eventful. The first event that shattered our peaceful existence was the knowledge that we were soon

to be surrounded by a construction and "site prep" operation. Both still exist and will for the foreseeable future. Our fervent hope is that once all is done, we will benefit ultimately with a parking lot that will finally accommodate our fleet. The second event that demanded our undivided attention was the news of Maryclaire's retirement. A search committee was formed, and we entered into the unknown. Our committee members were committed to the task and faithfully remained on the job until our task was completed. Also, our co-chair, Vicki, did a masterful job in providing us with professional guidance. After

much deliberation, the committee decided that the absolute best person for the position was Marsha Pigga, and she is now our new executive. She brings to the position years of experience in the non-profit field and has held executive positions which has allowed her to move into her new position with The Arc with a great deal of confidence. Whatever success I might have had during my tenure is directly attributable to the board members of The Arc. They are deeply committed to The Arc's mission and care very much about our consumers. The executive staff and the DSP staff have been a joy to work with and to experience firsthand their commitment to the mission. Thank you all for being there. I will miss you. And now the house lights have been dimmed, and I move to the front of the stage and take my last bow. I move back and the curtain falls.

Sincerely Yours,
Bill Burnell
Board President

Exec's Corner



With the beautiful warmth of summer upon us, my heart is truly full as I step into the role of Executive Director at The Arc NEPA. From the moment I connected with our deeply committed staff, our devoted Board of Directors, our passionate volunteers, and the truly remarkable individuals we are so privileged to serve, I

felt the powerful heartbeat of this organization and its profound dedication to making a real difference right here in our community. I am so eager to build upon the incredible foundation that has been laid, and I want to extend my deepest gratitude for the overwhelming support and assistance I've already received from so many of you. A special thank you goes to our former Executive Director, Maryclaire Kretsch, for her thoughtful guidance, and to our Board of Directors for their unwavering support during this transition – it means the world to me.

The vibrant energy of the changing seasons perfectly reflects the exciting progress unfolding in our local landscape! The WaWa development and the exterior renovation at Meadow Avenue are both advancing beautifully, with the anticipation of a Fall completion buzzing in the air! It's truly a testament to collaboration, and I'm deeply appreciative of

the incredible teamwork between our staff, Board of Directors, and the skilled project teams as we navigate these developments. Their collective efforts are absolutely key in ensuring a smooth process, maintaining a safe environment, and allowing us to continue our important mission without interruption. We're all so thrilled about these positive changes that will soon enhance our community.

Looking ahead to some of The Arc's exciting summer events, I'm particularly excited about The Arc's 25th annual golf tournament! I understand this event has been a vital cornerstone of our fundraising efforts for many years, and I extend my sincere appreciation to Eileen and Carol for their exceptional dedication in its organization. Understanding the profound impact of this event, I'm truly excited to be part of this tradition and to connect with you all on the green.

Furthermore, I am also delighted to learn about the preparations underway for The Arc's summer camp! It's clear that this program is a highlight for many of the individuals we support, providing valuable opportunities for enjoyment, building friendships, and fostering personal growth. The dedication of Mari and the Recreation Team is instrumental in the continued success of this cherished program, and I look forward to learning more and visiting during the summer to see

(Continued on page 4)

Autism Awareness and Acceptance with Fox News

Katie Foley and Roseann Polishan from the Advocacy Department were featured in news segment interviews on Local Fox 56 during the month of April for Autism Awareness and Acceptance.

Katie was interviewed by reporter Samantha Durante about some of the controversy on autism in the news as of late. Katie was quoted the following in regards to the potential for individuals with autism.

"Parents like Kate Foley, an advocate with the Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania, agree. "For many years, people with disabilities were told to stay in institutions. How are we supposed to know what they're capable of if we didn't take the

chance to find out what they're capable of," said Foley.

Roseann was interviewed by Reporter Elizabeth Haikes about Autism awareness month highlighting local resources and early intervention and was quoted the following "support can also come from places like The Arc Northeastern Pennsylvania. Lead Advocate Roseann Polishan says her work is deeply personal, as her son was diagnosed with autism when he was two years old. "I want him to be the best he can be. I feel like he has unlimited potential. He needs a lot of support to have a happy, successful life and he has a lot of challenges. I just want to help him the best I can, but he has the same right as

everyone else," said Polishan.

The segments also featured that "The Arc works to connect families to resources and advocacy throughout the community" and they shared Arc of NEPA website and resources.

View the full interviews here:

Katie Foley:

<https://fox56.com/news/local/they-can-do-anything-local-reactions-to-rfk-jrs-statements-on-autism>

Roseann Polishan:

<https://fox56.com/news/local/autism-awareness-month-highlights-local-resources-and-early-intervention>

Burke Family Community Impact Award

The Inaugural Burke Family Community Impact Award was presented to Roseann Polishan on March 21st at the quarterly Advisory Board meeting of the The Lackawanna-Susquehanna County Behavioral Health/Intellectual Disabilities/Early Intervention (L-S BH/ID/EI) Program for her advocacy efforts for individuals with disabilities throughout Lackawanna and Susquehanna counties. It was a wonderful honor for Roseann to be acknowledged for the work she is so passionate about with this inaugural award established by The Burke family in honor of their brother Donald Burke.

According to the county website, the (L-S BH/ID/EI) program's primary goal is to facilitate the inclusion and full participation of all persons with behavioral health and intellectual disability needs in their local community. It organizes itself to proactively address the planning, development, procurement, management, and evaluation of services, thereby enhancing consumer satisfaction and positive personal outcomes.



Photo pictured Left to right: Mr. John Wiercinski (Chairperson), Mr. and Mrs. Burke, Ms. Roseann Polishan (Award Recipient), Ms. Miki Drutchal (Administrator).

The L-S BH/ID/EI Program assumes a leadership role in collaboration with individuals, families, advocates, providers and local government to ensure full participation of persons

in their communities. This mission goes hand in hand with The Arc of NEPA's mission of advocating for full inclusion and self determination for all individuals with I/DD.

The Family and Friends of Schiff's Restaurant Service Employees

Submitted by: Holly Lewis, Recreation Department

As winter ends the first thing that comes to my mind is.....Summer Camp! Preparation begins, camp counselor recruiting, Activity books, camp applications, activities, and most of all the excitement that we all soon will get to spend another great summer camp together again! In the middle of March we received an email from a mother of one of our return campers with some great news. She wanted to sell t-shirts for autism awareness to her family and friends of Schiff's restaurant service employees and donate the proceeds to our Arc Summer Camp this year (2025). We were so excited and honored to receive that email, so we also included their t-shirts for sale throughout our adult day program at The Arc of NEPA. Alicia (employee of Schiff's also mother of camper) wanted to present the donation to us on Friday, April 25, 2025. Everyone wore their autism awareness shirts with excitement and presented a check totaling \$270.00!!!!!! With much gratitude we thank you, thank you, thank you all for your generous support.



Exec's Corner

(Continued from page 2)

the magic firsthand.

In addition to these exciting events, I'm incredibly proud to highlight the remarkable achievement of our Lead Advocate, Roseann Polisan. Roseann's dedication to advocacy has been recognized with the Inaugural Burke Family Community Impact Award from LS BHIDEI! This prestigious award recognizes Roseanne's unwavering commitment to advocacy and the significant positive impact she has made in our community. We are

so fortunate to have Roseann on our team.

These past few months have been invaluable as I've had the opportunity to listen and learn from so many of you – gaining a deeper understanding of your experiences, your aspirations, and your insights on how we can collectively enhance The Arc's impact in Northeast Pennsylvania. I am confident that through our collaborative efforts, guided by open communication and shared values, we can strengthen our programs, advocate effectively for inclusion and equity, and create even more opportunities

for the remarkable individuals we support to thrive.

My door is always open, and I welcome your thoughts and feedback as we move forward together. United in our mission and with the steadfast commitment of our board, I am confident that we will achieve great things in building a future where every individual, regardless of their abilities, is valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential. Thank you for all you do!

Warm regards,
Marsha Pigga
Executive Director

Thank you, Maryclaire

The Friends of The Arc Auxiliary honored Maryclaire Kretsch for her dedication to the mission of The Arc. Her unending compassion to the folks served by The Arc was second to none and for that we will be forever grateful. Many, many kudos to Maryclaire for her 44 years of service that touched so many lives.



Seated: Jean Biggar, Chris Arcangelo, Nancy Crafferty, Mary Murphy Fox. Standing: Pat Kwiatkowski, Linda Kusy, Eileen Rempe, Maryclaire Kretsch, Carol Burke, Corolla Sawka, Betty Moreken

Theater Program



Lackawanna County

The Friends of The Arc Auxiliary received a \$4,000 grant from the Lackawanna County Community Arts and Culture for the 2025 Community Programs!

Day Program Fun - Welcoming Spring



Please mark your calendars:

The 69th Annual Membership Meeting and Awards Luncheon for The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania will be held on

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

at La Buona Vita, Dunmore

starting at 12:00 noon.

*There will be a luncheon followed by:
The Annual Meeting & Presentation of the Awards.*

Toyota Purchases Spring Flowers to Benefit Arc Responds!



The Strong and Coura'Jess Foundation

Throughout the month of September, The Aktion club held a sock sale to raise money for breast cancer awareness month for October. The socks were all different shades and styles of pink with ribbons to bring awareness. The Aktion club decided to donate all the proceeds raised to a local cancer foundation, The Strong and Coura'Jess Foundation. The Strong and Coura'Jess Foundation is a local foundation created by Jessica Rutkowski who was diagnosed with Stage 4 Triple Negative breast cancer in 2019. During her time receiving treatments, Jess found peace through benefits of holistic therapies (massage therapy, salt cave therapy, floatation therapy, etc.). Because of the benefits she found with these therapies, Jess envisioned creating a non-profit organization to help those in the community benefit from these same therapies.

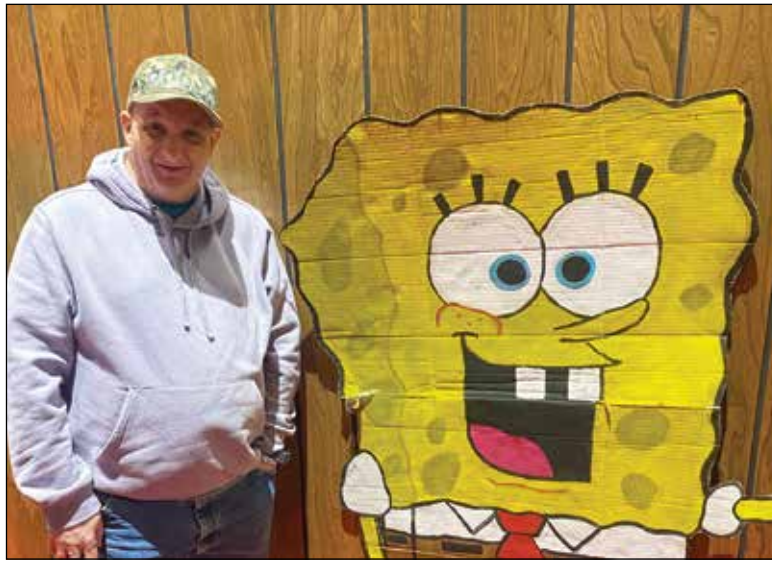


Jess passed away in 2021, but her family and close friends have taken her idea of organizing a non-profit organization and brought it to reality. The foundation is partnered with local businesses The Salted Pixie, Relaxations by Tori, and The 11th Element to sponsor sessions for those going through treatments. The foundation also

sponsors "Chemo Care Bags" full of items that Jess found useful during treatments. These bags are delivered to cancer centers in both Dunmore and Wilkes-Barre to be given out to patients receiving treatments.

For more information on The Strong and Coura'Jess Foundation please visit them on Facebook!

*Community Participation Services Visits Riverside High
For Their Spring Production of Sponge Bob!*



Adult Day News

Spring is bringing many smiles to the day program. We started off by taking part in Hootie Hoo day to scare off the lingering winter.

Aktion club sponsored the materials for the new sensory boards on the wall by Special hab.

Recently we had a day at the races. All individuals picked the horse they thought was their lucky one. If they

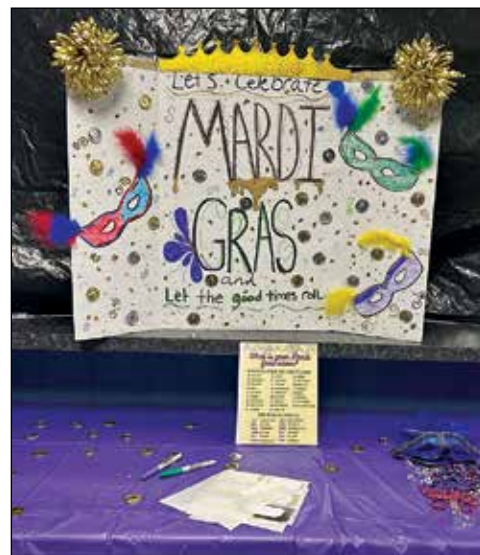
were right they got to pick up a prize.

The Aktion club Kiwanis Luncheon this year was "Travel to the Tropics" themed. The cafeteria really did look like a sliver of paradise all thanks to the helping hands.

Valentines day, Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's day and Easter were all amazing holidays on the floor.

We are so thankful to have an amazing team at the day program who can work together to create all these and many more meaningful days.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amy Craig



Sibshop Project



Thank you to Autism Awareness NEPA for awarding a grant for The Sibshop project run by Kate Foley. We will begin with Teen Sibshops over the summer at Coffee Inclusive in Pittston and a second shop for children ages 8-12 in collaboration with Misericordia University starting at the end of August. For more Information please contact Katie Foley kfoley@thearfnepa.org.

Pictured: Dolphus Teart; Marsha Pigga, Katie Foley, Tara Quinn



The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania is excited to announce receipt of a \$10,000 grant from the Scranton Area Community Foundation. The grant was approved for

The Adult Day Program Renovations. With the funding received from the Scranton Area Community Foundation, The Arc-NEPA will improve the overall appearance, handicapped accessibility, natural light and smooth pick-up/drop-off of the Meadow Avenue building following demolition/construction. The Arc will make the necessary renovations to secure a safe, accessible and stable environment for individuals with IDD/A, staff, volunteers, vendors and visitors.

Leave a Legacy

Remembering... The Arc's founding parents, concerned community members and friends have passed on a legacy of commitment to a new generation. Today, we seek to sustain this legacy.

Building... Looking toward tomorrow may often be intimidating, but at The Arc we continue the mission and grow with the needs of the children and adults we serve.

Leaving a Legacy... By giving a gift to The Arc, you are ensuring a bright future for the people served in our programs. Estate giving allows for a variety of ways for individuals to choose the support most appropriate for planning their legacy: Outright cash gifts, designated life insurance policy, bequests, real estate.



WE ARE HIRING!

Looking for
talented
individuals to join
our team.

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🌐 <https://thearcnepa.applicantpro.com/jobs/>



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Please save the date!!
Sunday, October 5, 2025
Scranton High School

The Aktion Club ALOHA

Recently, The Aktion Club had an ALOHA great time and enjoyed their afternoon with special guests - the Kiwanis Club of Scranton! The Aktion Club is a community service group of adults with developmental disabilities. Each club has four primary goals: To develop initiative and leadership skills; to provide experience in living and working together; to serve the community and to prepare for useful citizenship. The Aktion Club is co-sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Scranton.



Marsha Pigga, Arc Executive Director; Kate Holod, Kiwanis Club of Scranton President





Northeastern Pennsylvania

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March 31, 2025

Achieve with us.

*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities
and their families.*

The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania Names Marsha Pigga as Executive Director

The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania, a non-profit organization committed to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities IDD, has named Marsha Pigga their new Executive Director. The Arc-NEPA is a grassroots organization formed in 1955 by a group of parents seeking public education for their children with IDD. Since that time a growing number of parents, neighbors, and members of the business and professional communities have faced numerous challenges in advocating for children and adults with IDD.

Previously, Ms. Pigga was the Executive Director of Domestic Violence Service Center which is a nonprofit organization committed to working towards an end to the problem of domestic violence in our culture. Domestic Violence Service Center is founded in the belief that violence in the home is a crime, primarily committed against women and children, which has a devastating impact on the lives of all family members and society as a whole.

Prior to the Domestic Violence Service Center, Marsha served as the Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Northeastern Pennsylvania where she delivered over 20 years of experience in non-profit administration providing mission-focused results through team-oriented strategic processes. Her culmination of experience working in mental health counseling and mental health administration fostered her success in creating a culture of care to further the mission.

Ms. Pigga holds a MA from Marywood University and a BS from King's College. She served as a Student Assistance Program Regional Trainer and Commonwealth Prevention Alliance State Board Member and is a former member of the Scranton Counseling Center Board of Directors, Trauma Informed Care Community Committee, NEPA Task Force Against Human Trafficking and the University of Scranton Graduate Nursing Program-Community Advisory Board.

"We are thrilled to welcome Marsha Pigga to The Arc," said Bill Burnell, Board President. "She brings an impressive combination of experience, vision, and energy. Her passion for service aligns with The Arc's mission of ensuring that people with IDD in Northeastern Pennsylvania are valued, respected, and fully included in the community."

Pigga expressed enthusiasm about joining The Arc. "I welcome the opportunity to lead an organization that has such a wonderful impact on the community," she said. "To continue the mission and hard work will be a privilege."

Respectfully Submitted by:
Bill Burnell, The Arc Board President &
The Arc Board Officers and Members



The Education Committee was notified by the Lackawanna County Arts and Culture department that they will support The Arc Angels on Stage theater project. We have also received funding from Gerrity's as a proud supporter; the Church of the Epiphany has granted us support for the program and the proceeds from NEPA Gives (more info below) also assists with costs associated with the project.

NEPA Gives is a one-day online giving extravaganza that's all about giving back to the community. For 24 hours—from 7pm to 7pm – Thursday, June 5th and Friday, June 6th, donors will make secure donations through the NEPA Gives online platform. More information to follow and as always, we appreciate your support!

Welcome to The Arc Family!

*Please help us welcome The Arc's new employees!
We're glad to have you on the team!*

Shannon Coleman

Ashim Magar

Monika Mojsa

Janasia Turner

Travis Boyer

Marcel Geslicki

Amanda Novak

Mya Rodney

Breanna Singer

Tyrie Carter

Christine Cushing

Lisa Long

Marsha Pigga

Emily Jacobus

Honorariums



Celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, special events are all beautiful moments to be honored and cherished. Remembering your loved ones, friends, neighbors, co-workers is a wonderful way to let them know how much you care and that you are thinking of them. We can help relay those messages for you.

When you send The Arc a donation along with the name of the person(s) being honored, we will send a pre-printed card to the honorees, letting them know that a donation was made in their name and who sent the gift. It's a great way to say, "I Care" and benefit The Arc!

Memorials

We also have a Memorial Program which sends your sympathy and condolences when a loved one passes away. We are here to assist you in making your wishes known.



Advocacy Happenings



Katie Foley attended the Coffee Inclusive bakery opening. She enjoyed the refreshments and the company!



Katie Foley attended the caregiver resource fair in Luzerne County. Katie was available to answer questions and educate the participants on the services The Arc provides. She also gathered information from other non-profits who attended.

Donate Your Vehicle

An Easy Way to Turn Cars into Cash for Charity



The Arc Vehicle Donation Program accepts all

cars, trucks, motorcycles, RVs, regardless of the condition of the vehicles.

Towing is free to the donor. If you want to donate your vehicle, please click on the link on The Arc's website www.thearcnepa.org or call 1-877-272-2270. All you will need to do is provide the year, make and model of a vehicle, the general condition, the vehicle identification number and the title of the vehicle of the must be available for information purposes when calling. All vehicles that are donated to our program must have a clean title. Please indicate The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania as the chapter to receive the proceeds of the sale of the vehicle.

Donating is easy!
It may be tax-deductible.



Tune in Saturday, 9-10 A.M.
WILK 103.1 FM

SPECIAL GUEST

Katie Foley

Advocate

The ARC
Northeastern PA

 thearcnepa.org


The Arc
Northeastern Pennsylvania



We had a great time being welcomed by Bob Cordaro this past March, not once, but twice on the Bob Cordaro show to talk about all the wonderful things that The Arc does every day. I also sat down with Laurie Cadden this past April to chat about Autism Awareness month and how best to support our community.


Pike County Resource Fair

On April 15th, The Arc Advocacy Department coordinated a resource fair at Delaware Valley High School in Pike County. The event was held in conjunction with the Special Olympics Northeast Region Track and Field Invitational. Over 500

people attended this event, including students, parents and professionals. There were 30 local providers showcasing their services and it was a great way to inform the community of the amazing resources we have available.



Pictured: Marsha Pigga and Kelcey Langan Castaldi



Castaldi Physical Therapy · Follow

Feb 17 · 🌐

Proceeds from our shirt sale will be going to [The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania](#) ! 🙌💙

"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."

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month! 🧡

If you would like to order a shirt, comment/message/call/carrier pigeon 🐦 by Friday, February 21st!

\$12 / shirt, 2XXL and youth sizes available!



This was my first time ever attending a Buddy Walk. It made my heart smile to see so many children who enjoyed themselves. Everyone was so excited to participate in the walk! I am so glad I had the opportunity to not only witnessed such a great event, but also have been able to answer questions, and pass out information pertaining to The Arc of NEPA!

Aisha Scott



Northeastern Pennsylvania

115 Meadow Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505



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- Up-to-the minute alerts about the latest on Capitol Hill so you know when to take action;
- Discounted registration to our annual national events such as National Convention;
- Access to exclusive insurance coverage rates through our partner Mercer
 - Includes Group Term Life Insurance, Health Insurance such as major medical, Medicare supplement, life line screening, hospital income, and accidental death and dismemberment insurance.
 - Coverage and availability may vary by state.

Stay Informed!

Membership Registration

New Member

Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Type of Membership

___ \$25.00 - \$49.99 Friend

___ \$50.00 - \$99.99 Sponsor

___ \$100.00 - \$499.99 Supporter

___ \$500.00 - \$999.99 Benefactor

___ \$1,000.00 + Partner

Please remit to:


The Arc
Northeastern Pennsylvania
115 Meadow Avenue
Scranton, PA 18505