

# The Arcticulate

Getting to Know  
Sara Wolff story  
on page 6.



## That's right, "Words Do Matter!"

Submitted by Jeannie Lally, Director  
The Arc of NEPA Advocacy Services

It's November 14, 2011 and Senate Bill 1115 is on the way to Governor Corbett's desk. The Governor's signature will mark major progress in the disability community's effort to remove the 'mental retardation' terminology; aka: "THE R-WORD" from our Commonwealth's language.

Last year the Federal government, as well as many municipalities, made this move. Over half of the United States has already removed this archaic and often offensive language. We applaud Senator Dinniman, from Chester County for his tremendous support and leadership. The Senate unanimously agrees with the Senator's; 'Words Do Matter' Bill. And so do we!

Titled as 'updating and modernizing certain terminology' we all know it is more; it is about people; it is about respect and dignity. More succinctly, it speaks to the core values that we convey when we address our friends with intellectual disabilities.

This major advocacy effort sought to amend the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act of 1966 by renaming it the Mental Health and Intellectual Disability Act. By redefining this language it also dictates how the term will be used by the Department of Public Welfare. Some, but not all, county offices have changed names.

For example, The Lackawanna Susquehanna Behavioral Health, Intellectual Disability, Early Intervention Program. Yes, that is the BH, ID, EI! Lengthy, but exact, and no one is offended. We are working toward Carbon, Monroe and Pike undergoing similar updates.

This bill was first introduced and referred to Public Health and Welfare in February 2011. We are so very grateful for State Senator Andrew Dinniman's dedication and commitment to doing the right thing. Similarly, we thank Senator's Greenleaf, Brewster, Costa, Erickson, Fontana, Rafferty, Stack, Tartaglione and Vance for their support.

Locally, Sara Wolff, Arc-NEPA Board Member, is a dedicated advocate for individuals with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. Sara promotes awareness and understanding among educators, employers and community professionals through personal appearances and speaking engagements. As a member of The Arc Auxiliary Education Committee, Sara has spoken to third grade students in many area School Districts. She talks about eliminating the "R" word, and replacing it with a different word such as "Respect." She has the children sign a pledge not to use the "R" word. Sara, along with the Education committee will continue their presentation at area elementary schools educating on the importance of acceptance and diversity. (Getting to Know Sara Wolff, page 6)

I believe it is important to note that Senator Dinniman introduced SB 1115 following a 'Speaking for Ourselves' event. This self advocacy group, along with many others (including The Arc of NEPA) asks people to pledge that they will abstain from saying the words 'retard' or 'retarded'. Not only have we promised that we, ourselves, refrain, but that we actively discourage others. That is not always so comfortable; but it is necessary. And, I suggest that you try it; because it is the right thing to do and it feels good! It is not only evidence of supremely outdated labeling but translates to negative thinking....thinking about people that we care about!

*So, to all our friends with intellectual disabilities, CONGRATULATIONS on a great move forward!*



Northeastern Pennsylvania

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# President's Message



Greetings from the President's Desk...

As we prepare for the holiday season, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all of you. The Board of Directors for guidance and leadership; the excellent staff for their continued dedication towards

their profession; and to our wonderful support groups: the Arc Foundation, the Arc Auxiliary, PODS and PPODS for their assistance in creating awareness and raising funds—all to benefit our consumers.

Moving forward, I promise that we will remain

focused on the challenges we face, guardians of those who are in our care, stewards of your generous gifts and to remain a fiscally sound and responsible organization.

As you plan your end of year giving, please consider a gift to The Arc of NEPA Foundation. Your gift will be greatly appreciated by those we serve. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of this personal request.

Turning the page on yet another year, I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

Respectively,  
Alexandra "Sandy" Yantorn



## Exec's Corner

At this time of year I am always reminded of those things for which I am extremely grateful. I am so proud to have been affiliated with

The Arc for so many years. It is the premier national organization that serves the direct care and advocacy needs of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. We at The Arc of NEPA are so very fortunate to have the best Boards of Directors and greatest group of staff that anyone could hope for. I was reminded of this just recently when I received word from Pat Quinn, our United Way in-house campaign chair, that the staff had reached and even surpassed our "stretch" goal of \$15,000. In my opinion, considering all things, this is a truly remarkable achievement.

The interest and commitment of our Boards of Directors (The Arc Board and The Arc Foundation Board) is also exemplary. That was made clear to me at our recent Board retreat, where we present "The State of The Arc" and our proposed strategic plan for the future. With the continuing support from all levels of our organization, our future is very bright indeed.

Some other "Arc" news: We have a new state Executive Director. As you may have been aware Steve Suroviec, who had been our state exec for eight years, recently left to become the new head of PA State Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation. Jeanne Downey, the President of The Arc of PA, recently announced that Maureen Cronin has been selected as our new state

Executive Director. Maureen will be leaving her current job as the Early Intervention Services Director of PA. She comes to us with senior management experience in state government, extensive work in public policy making and program administration, and has a demonstrated commitment to advancing inclusion and community integration. We would like to extend a warm welcome to Maureen from NEPA.

The Arc Auxiliary is going strong. The recent community recognition dinner for Sara Wolff was a tremendous success; their book reading on inclusion to 3rd grade students continues with strong support from school districts, and many fund raisers and community events are planned (including the current poinsettia sale).

...and congratulations to the PODS of NEPA and PPODS (Pocono Parents of Down Syndrome) for their extremely successful Buddy Walks held in October.

We move forward with some trepidation regarding the recently announced state rate cuts to services for people with intellectual disabilities. We are still analyzing how this will affect The Arc and our programs. What we do know is that continuing local support from our community is even more essential than ever. Please be generous when asked to support The Arc and what we stand for.

Happy Holidays one and all, and thank you from all of us for all you do.

Respectfully Yours,  
Don Broderick

# The Harvest Hoedown

It goes without saying that the Meadow Ave. rafters resounded like never before on October 20th, 2011. The Harvest Hoedown was THE ultimate successful event!

It was all borne this summer at the Aktion Club convention in Altoona. Dan & Galla, a musically talented couple, entertained the group with such dynamic energy that it immediately became apparent that this program was to be a must for our group in Scranton.

This live musical act was like no other. Their love of music and the fun they have while performing is contagious and motivates each one as they interact with their audience. The show was unique with its "oldies", country, patriotic, Russian music and so much more. The afternoon day - programmers were on their feet singin' and dancin' like there was no tomorrow -

only to be outdone (if that was possible) by the evening Rec group that REALLY rocked! This was a day that will not soon be forgotten by program participants and staff.

Dan and Galla are definitely on the calendar for next year.



## Upcoming Events

The Arc Recreation department is sponsoring The 14th Annual Friends of The Arc Holiday Party at Fiorelli's on Friday, December 9th. There will be a special "Guest" appearance along with door prizes, holiday raffles and music provided by E.J. the D.J. Cost is \$26.00 person.

We will celebrate the holiday in Carbon county on Sunday, December 11th at 12:00 noon at the American Legion. The party will feature dancing and a special guest.

The Twelfth Annual Christmas Program will be held on Friday, December 16th at 12:30 p.m. Please join in the holiday celebration.

The Friends of The Arc Auxiliary is having a Cookie Walk Sale from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. on December 16th in The Arc Conference Room. All are welcome to enjoy the wonderful baked goodies.

The Arc-NEPA will be closed for the holidays on December 23rd, December 26th, December 30th and January 2nd.

The Arc-NEPA's 12th Annual Golf Tournament Monday, June 25, 2012.

*Have a joyous  
holiday season!*

## Christmas Gift Suggestions:

*Submitted by: Jeannie Lally  
from 'Oren Arnold'*

To your enemy: Forgiveness

To your opponent, Tolerance

To a friend, Your Heart

To a customer, service

To all, Charity

To every child, a good example

To yourself, respect



# Residential and Adult Day Services

By Patrick T. Quinn

I must start with hearty congratulations to the Meadow Avenue Adult Day, Community Residential, and Lifesharing Programs- all of which scored 100% in recent Department of Public Welfare/Office of Developmental Programs licensing inspections. Achieving a perfect score is an ominous task; achieving perfection across different services is commendable. Hats off to Kelly Peters, Barb Slocum, Barbara Day, Jill Padfield, Sheila Nealon, Jason Koelsch, and Amber Dougherty for all their efforts. To those staff in their charge, who deliver our services day in and day out- thank you for all that you continue to do in support of those we serve. As I stated in a previous newsletter, your reputation precedes you and you are second to none.

Congratulations to Barbara Day on her graduation from the White Haven Center "Leadership Development Institute". Barbara was chosen to represent the Arc of NEPA in this cross-systems effort to enhance the skills of emerging leaders working in this field. Participants included White Haven Center and other state employees,

members of the WHC Relatives and Friends Association, and our Barbara, representing our agency and the community services system. I had the opportunity to hear Barbara speak during a recent visit to one of the LDI classes, and I can attest that in her characteristic fashion, she made me proud to call her a co-worker. We are pleased to continue our bridge-building efforts with the Center and having Barbara become a part of this ongoing effort is very rewarding.

Shifting gears, I must now address the success of this year's United Way employee campaign at the Arc. I must admit, with the economic climate we are in and continued uncertainty as to our budget going forward, I was hesitant to set a goal of \$ 14,000 for our in house campaign. I spoke with many of you who had concerns about your ability to give. Others of you adjusted your pledge from previous years, but managed to participate in the campaign yet again. I stated on numerous occasions that no pledge was too small. I am delighted to report that not only did we reach our goal- a feat in and of itself- but we surpassed it with a total of \$15,000 +. This is a remarkable achievement,

and testament to the Arc of NEPA commitment to the greater good of our community. It gives me great pride to call you my co-workers. Thank you, once again.

Finally, we are embarking on a new Quality Management Plan for calendar year 2012. The "Quality Forum" will be monitoring and measuring progress on the elements of the plan. We will be working on three focus areas as a part of this plan: offering our program participants the opportunity to share in the interviewing and hiring practices for those staff who may be working with them, facilitating a consumer-driven panel of Adult Day services participants who will provide input on the future of Day Services, and finally, sharing a common goal with the Lackawanna/Susquehanna County office, we will work toward reducing the number of incidents of Individual to Individual (program participants) Abuse by 10% in 2012. These focus areas show our commitment to both self-advocacy and individual safety.

Thank you again, as always, for all that you do. Please stop in anytime if I can assist you in any way.



Appearing in the photo at the flag ceremony are: (L to R)- Patrick Quinn, Director of Residential and Adult Day Services; Agnes Keller and Ed Chorba, Seniors Program; Nancy Frank, Robinson Park Site Supervisor/Program Specialist; Don Broderick, Arc of NEPA Executive Director; State Representative Kevin Murphy; Vivian Dudek, Seniors Program; and Kelly Peters, Manager of Adult Day Services.

On Thursday, October 6th, 2011, State Representative Kevin Murphy visited the Robinson Park Seniors Program and made a special presentation of two new United States and Pennsylvania State flags to be flown at the park.

Representative Murphy took time to visit all the program participants and staff at Robinson Park. This was his second trip to the Arc; Representative Murphy visited the Meadow Avenue Adult Day Program shortly after taking office in 2009.

The Arc of NEPA is grateful to Representative Murphy for his continued advocacy for people with Intellectual and developmental disabilities.

# Knights of Columbus Appreciation Dinner



The Knights of Columbus Appreciation Dinner was held on November 22nd. These fine gentlemen help The Arc to raise around \$12,000 a year. They have the Measure-Up campaign, coin canisters and Arc-Knight. Their dedication to our organization for over the past 30 years is outstanding. We think they are a wonderful group and are very pleased with all their support.

*From l - r - first row: Peter Kanton; George Schneider, Jr.; Stan Stravinskias; Richard Kovaleski; Anthony Spataro; James Minicozzi; Wesley Minicozzi*

*Second row: Dave Cimino; John Scalandre; Mark McDade; Roger Getz; Mike Polednak; Charles Vagnarelli*

*Third row: Drew Olick; Ron Mroczka; Gene McAndrew; Paul Vilgos; John Cicco; George Schneider, Sr.*

# NEPA's 11th Annual Golf Tournament

The Arc-NEPA's 11th Annual Golf Tournament was held on Monday, September 19th, at Glen Oak Country Club. A beautiful day was enjoyed as it has been for the past 11 years.

We recognized Glen Oak for their service and dedication toward our tournament. We are grateful to them for their kindness, understanding and commitment to the tournament. We had 43 golfers, 12 major sponsors, 27 hole sponsors and 13 cart sponsors which will give a netted over \$11,000! We can't thank the committee and board for all their help. The committee chairs Carol Chisdak, Pat Cole and Mark Lynn are incredible to work with and I am looking forward to another successful event next year! Please mark your calendars... Next year's event will be on Monday, June 25, 2012.





# How to Get Into the Holiday Spirit When You Don't Feel It Any More!

By Mari Pizur

If you have lost that Christmas spirit, you're not alone. The stress of the holidays can be overwhelming at times, making you wish you could escape. If your holiday spirits missing maybe you could change some old traditions. Here are a couple of ideas on how to get into the Holiday Spirit when you don't feel it any more.

- Try to see Christmas through a child's eyes. Small children often have a wonder and excitement about Christmas that can't be matched by adults. Try spending a day with a child that you know, doing something simple like looking at Christmas lights or reading a Holiday story. That's a great way to uplift your spirits!

- Take a day for yourself that doesn't have anything to do with the season. Sometimes, you just need to step away from the stress and craziness. Take a day off and do something that you love to do or try something that you have always wanted to do. If you can't take a day, take a couple of hours for yourself.

- Help eliminate the stress and try to delegate duties. Stress can rob you of the Christmas spirit in a hurry. Rather than trying to do it all, cut back and let others handle various aspects of the holiday preparations. Make choices that will make you happy.

- Start a new family tradition. Decide on family time you will all enjoy, that won't cost money and yet you have fun. Look for activities that will be low-stress, but

fun for everyone. Focus on having fun!

- Step back from the commercialism of the season. Many people find that their spirit returns when they look for the meaning of the Holiday and avoid the hectic commercialism.

- If you have time volunteer at a local organization or focus on simple activities and gifts. Make things simple, simple decorations, simple gifts and simple dinners. Enjoy!

- Finally wish everyone you see a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season!

On behalf of the Recreation Department, I would like to extend the happiest, healthiest and stress free Holiday Season to one and all! Enjoy!

## Getting to Know Sara Wolff

The Friends of The Arc Auxiliary of Northeastern Pennsylvania honored Sara Wolff for her "Extraordinary Dedication as an Advocate for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities" on Sunday, October 2, 2011.

Sara is an amazing young woman and a skilled motivational speaker on behalf of people with Down Syndrome and other disabilities. She is the daughter of Dennis and Connie Wolff of Moscow and has one sister, Jennifer, and two brothers, Jeffrey and Randy. Sara is a proud graduate of North Pocono High School. As her Senior Class Project she organized the first "Buddy Walk" in Lackawanna County. (October 9th was the 10th Annual Buddy Walk in this area) Following graduation she has successfully completed work in courses at Keystone College and Lackawanna College. Sara is a Lector at St. Catherine's Church in Moscow and is employed as a Law Clerk at O'Malley and Langan P.C, in Scranton as well as serving as a Community Volunteer. She is also employed by Keystone Community Resources as an



Photo People: Eileen Williams, Don Broderick, Msgr. Kelly, Jamie Setta Murray, Mrs. Sandy Collins, Father Joseph Sica, Beth Gaughan, Randy Wolff on the left. Jennifer Wolff Motichka, Todd O'Malley, Esq & Godfather, Ms. Liz Ey, Father Bob Simon, Ken Smith Rep, Mrs. Kristy Cahill Tolicastro & Mr. Jeffery Wolff on the right side.

instructor for staff on sensitivity issues.

Sara has served on the Board of Directors of The National Down Syndrome Society in New York, the Board of The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the State Board of The

Arc in Harrisburg where she serves as Board Secretary.

As a member of The Arc Auxiliary Education Committee Sara has spoken

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# Getting to Know Sara Wolff

(Continued from page 6)

to Third Grade Classes in many area School Districts. It is believed that talking to students of this age will help promote understanding of people with disabilities and perhaps in the long run decrease bullying. Sara has Down Syndrome, but prefers to call it "Up Syndrome." Her uplifting attitude is contagious, and no children who hear her speak will return to their classrooms without remembering that positive message. Sara also talks about eliminating the "R" word (RETARD), and replacing it with a different word such as "Respect." She has the children sign a pledge not to use the "R" word. This is quite a unique presentation, and the Education Committee along with Sara Wolff, plan to continue to present to some new third grade classes this year, including more schools in Scranton. She tells her own story with her PowerPoint Presentation, discussions and reading books to the children, (In her PowerPoint she includes her pictures with Barbara Walters, Meredith Vierra, Bill and Hillary Clinton and "The Rock" - all of whom she has met through activities with the National Down Syndrome Society). Student teachers from



*Celebration Committee: seated - Connie Wolff; Jeanne Gardier; Betty Moreken; Sara Wolff; Ann Hoffman; Carol Burke. Standing - Marie Maddi; Maron Bielovitz; Michele McDade; Eileen Williams; Eileen Rempe; Betsy Youngblood; MaryCarol Kanton; Nancy Crafferty; Corolla Sawka*

Marywood University are partnering in this project.

Besides her local speaking, Sara has addressed groups of students, teachers, legislators, doctors and nurses from all over the country including Princeton, New Jersey, Portland, Oregon, St. Louis, Missouri, Memphis Tennessee, Austin, Texas and San Francisco, California. She has also traveled to Oklahoma, West

Virginia, Washington DC as well as several others and will continue her travels to build awareness.

Sara's objective is to be a dedicated advocate for individuals with Down Syndrome and other developmental disabilities, promoting awareness and understanding among educators, employers and community professionals through personal appearances and speaking engagements.

## Arc Education Committee

### **Committee Chairs:**

**Betty Moreken and Nancy Crafferty**

The Arc Education Committee, featuring Sara Wolff, visited two Scranton elementary schools this fall. Kennedy Elementary and Whittier Elementary third grade students listened as Sara brought her inspirational message to them. Sara told of the successes she has attained in her life through a supportive family and full inclusion as a student at North

Pocono School District. The education committee members read "Taking Down Syndrome to School" to the third graders and completed a work sheet with them.

Sara and the committee also visited Forest City Elementary School and continued to bring the message to "End the 'R' Word" to their third grade students. Children in all the classes where this program has been presented have been attentive and well behaved.

They understood Sara's message of fair and equal treatment to all children, and had wonderful questions for her. After seeing Sara's slide show that included her with many famous people she has met, one boy asked, "Are you a millionaire??" Sara's answer was no, but she further explained that she has so many friends that she feels like one. The Arc Education Committee and Sara plan to visit more third grade classes in the future based on Sara's speaking schedule and commitments.



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*Sign Up!*

## Membership is the key...

You can help. Become a member of The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania today. Benefits include:

- National, state and local newsletters with current information on intellectual and developmental disabilities
- The opportunity to participate in The Arc affairs at a local, state and national level.
- Attend conferences, conventions and seminars at a reduced cost.
- Discount prices on publications.
- Insurances services, credit card programs and long distance telephone services.

*Stay Informed!*

### Membership Registration

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Renewal

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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\$50.00 - \$99.99 Sponsor

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