



The Arc
Oakland County

Profiles

Achieve with us.

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MAY - JUNE 2011

Is Special Education Mandate for 22-26 Year Olds In Jeopardy?

Editorial by Thomas F. Kendzioriski, Executive Director

Oh boy! Here we go again. A few of our elected officials in Lansing and a learned minority of education “experts,” not parents or consumers, are once again talking about possibly doing away with Michigan’s 22-26 mandate for special education services. I am all for conserving precious tax dollars and using them more efficiently, but the distribution of these funds and the outcomes should also be used in an effective manner. The proverbial idiom that fits quite nicely here is, “... being penny-wise and pound-foolish.”

Yes, Michigan is the only state that mandates special education beyond age 21. This has been our law since 1971. In addition to the state’s basic per-student foundation allowance (about \$7,000), the remaining costs are made up using other state (30%) and local/county (70%) funds to support students within this population cohort. There are now approximately 3,300 students in this age category statewide [see, J.J. Thompson, Ph.D., December 2009, presentation slides to the Council for Exceptional Children]. Oakland County Intermediate School District statistics show that we have about 1300 in this age group --- almost 40% of the state total!

These experts claim that by eliminating Michigan’s 22-26 mandate, taxpayers will annually “save” approximately \$35 million dollars (about \$11,000 per student). Really? How? Are our school districts suggesting that we shift the cost center for this age group on to the local Community Mental Health Authority instead? Swell. So, let me get this straight. Instead of the taxpayer cost being borne by school district budgets, we will place it upon the local CMHA that is already trying to financially fit ten pounds of mental health

services into a five-pound Medicaid funding bag? Keep in mind that nowadays very few non-Medicaid (a.k.a., “general fund”) dollars fund public mental programs. Again, how does that save precious taxpayer dollars? It seems to be merely a shift from one tax entity to another; that is, a case of going someone else’s budgetary ox.

There is no doubt that the current delivery system for special education services between the ages of 22-26 is based upon a tired, archaic model. Take a real look at your school district’s program. Does it truly teach vocational and transitional skills that actually lead to job placement or even job-readiness by age 26? Or, is it merely a place for an adult student to practice and train before the inevitable transition to a mental health system’s day activity, supported employment program, or worse, sitting at home doing nothing all day long? Unfortunately, I think it is one of the latter.

I read from (December 2010) “The Report of the Education Round Table Committee to Governor-Elect Rick Snyder and his Administration” that if we are not careful, with more students unable to achieve a high school diploma due to increased academic requirements, we will have more students “opting” to receive special education services until age 26. Is this merely academic supposition to justify a particular viewpoint or does real proof actually exist that those unable to meet diploma criteria are clamoring for the current offerings of post-18 educational programs? Dr. Jacqueline J. Thompson, quoted earlier, indicated in her slide presentation material that indeed there has been a 26% increase between the years 1999 (2,387) and 2009

(3,208) of students receiving 22-26 special education services. Hardly a monumental raw figure, unless you choose to use only the percentage, which seems to demonstrate at first glance a more dramatic a change. When viewed on a graph, the increase is basically flat to slightly increasing over a ten year period. That is a long time! Many other factors could be at play here for even that modest increase over the past decade. I have always believed in the old adage, there are “... lies, damn lies, and statistics.”

I fear that this sort of broad logic implies that some high-ranking education administrators may be more concerned about their financial bottom-line rather than students successfully transitioning into adult life. These dire economic arguments have been made for years, especially during the 1960’s when the mandatory special education movement gained momentum. A common argument in those days was, “why expend ANY money on students who will never learn anything useful?” Thank goodness that the federal special education law from its outset contained a fundamental premise that “all children can learn,” and that there will be a “zero reject” in place to ensure that all have access to educational services.

What will the school districts do with the \$35 million? Probably build a new gym, put in astro-turf on a football field, build a new administration building, etc. You just know it will not go back into special education services. Parents will still beg for additional para-pro support, or the latest in assistive communication technology gear. Parents of higher-functioning young adults may have to just go begging.

Continued on Page 2

MISSION STATEMENT

The Arc of Oakland County advocates for the rights and full participation of all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We strive to improve systems of supports and services; connect families; inspire our community, and influence public policy.

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Okay, the bottom line is that doing away with the "mandate" for special education from 22-26 is not a part of Governor Snyder's budget proposal. It is also not a proposal of the Michigan Department of Education. It is in the minds of a very few "cut everything" politicians, but then again, it ALWAYS is. But I digress. What is and should be discussed is whether we should change the Special Education Rules to allow a local district to "IEP" a student say, into a nearby supported employment agency (e.g., New Horizons, JVS, etc.); or, one WITHOUT the requirement for costly teacher and para-professional supervision. The goal should be to teach best practices vocational skills in a setting that closely resembles a real-life work environment with real-life employment expectations.

The "Round Table" group that I referenced earlier suggests that "... the transitional program could be delivered by paraprofessionals with an emphasis on community living skills, recreation, and employment, where appropriate." They go on to suggest that "... a strong alliance with local ARCs, Community Mental Health, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and local centers for independent living could expand current cooperative contracted agreements to include students between the ages of 22-26." Fair enough, but who pays?

The Arc of Michigan's position is that this concept may be acceptable along the lines of promoting and improving upon "transition" services. Along with our state office, I absolutely think we should continue to advocate for continuing the 22-26 special education age mandate for all those without diplomas who desire to continue learning job and life-related skills. This should be available for all students, not just those in the most severe eligibility categories. We should also continue the IEP requirement for this age group too, and the cost center should remain with school districts.

The bottom line of the aforementioned Round Table of experts is this: "... whether Michigan in 2011 can afford to be the only state providing the services it does until the age 26?" My answer is an emphatic, YES; of course. We cannot afford not to do so! The Michigan taxpayer desires good results. Let us design a better way.

I would like to know what you think on this subject. Send me your thoughts at: tfk@thearcoakland.org. Happy Spring! TFK



Activities Program for Seniors with Disabilities

JVS offers a day program for senior with disabilities Monday—Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The program serves adults with chronic mental illness, developmental disabilities and other special needs.

Based at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) in West Bloomfield, the JVS Activities Program goes several steps beyond existing options for individuals with special needs by combining consumer choice with numerous opportunities including a specially adapted pool, gym, track and access to ongoing leisure and cultural events. Participants may engage in selected activities at a multitude of community events.

They are always looking for new program participants. If you know of anyone who can benefit from these services, please refer them to Dina Rudashevski at (248) 661-8100, ext. 11 or email Dina at drudashevski@jvsdet.org.

Activities Program I: Serving Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Other Special Needs

The program for individuals with developmental disabilities and other special needs focuses on enhanced quality of life through community integrated and diverse activities. Its purpose is to enhance social, emotional, physical and cognitive functioning along with consumer empowerment.

Activities Program II: Serving Adults with Chronic Mental Illnesses

Quality day programming is provided to consumers with chronic mental illness to enhance the quality of their lives by involving them in activities that are enjoyable and socially rewarding. The purpose of the program is to provide stimulating experiences in environments that promote interpersonal growth with peers and staff. The goal is for consumers to gain a more positive sense of self through a greater connection to others within the community.

Learning & Games

- Cooking Classes
- Clothes Painting
- Arts & Crafts
- Board Games/Puzzles
- Card Games
- Charades/Pictionary
- Library
- Videos

Exercise and Leisure

- Swimming
- Dancing
- Volleyball
- Hockey
- Horseshoes
- Gym/Track
- Kickball
- Basketball

- Indoor Gardening
- Sing-along & Karaoke

Outings

- Belle Isle Park
- Kensington Park
- Greektown & Comerica Park
- Shopping Malls
- Bowling & Billiards

- Putt-putt Golf
- Holocaust Museum
- Detroit Science Center
- Morley Candy Factory
- Canterbury Village
- Chrysler Museum
- Coe Train Ride
- Detroit Zoo
- Greenfield Village

NEWS YOU CAN USE!

Two Anti-bullying State House Bills Introduced

Recently there were two Anti-bullying bills introduced. HB 4163, introduced by Rep. Potvin, a Republican, is the broader of the two; it's identical to the House bill passed last year by the House but never taken up by the Senate. It doesn't define specific characteristics leading to bullying but does state that bullying conduct is "reasonably perceived to be motivated by animus or by an actual or perceived characteristic". HB 4173, introduced by Rep. Meadows, a Democrat, explicitly lists distinguishing characteristics of the subject of bullying. The bills also differ in what schools are required to do in developing anti-bullying policies. Both were referred to the House Education Committee.

To learn more, please visit the links to both bills— www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billintroduced/House/pdf/2011-HIB-4163.pdf and www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billintroduced/House/pdf/2011-HIB-4173.pdf.

Save the Date! The Arc National Convention

Join The Arc for the National Convention in Denver, CO, September 17-19, 2011. Each year, hundreds of advocates, volunteers, chapter staff, professionals and experts come together to share inspiration and resources in a lively atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration.

Register to attend this year's convention for informative presentations on issues important to the intellectual and developmental disability community, hear from experts and professionals, participate in setting the direction of The Arc and its advocacy efforts, network with peers and enjoy special events.

To register, or learn more, please visit www.thearc.org.

Autism NOW Website Launches Next Phase

On April 1, www.autismnow.org launched its next phase with more in-depth content and resources to help individuals and families living with autism. The launch was planned to coincide with Autism Awareness Month. Autism NOW is a national initiative of The Arc funded by a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and is charged with becoming the nation's source for resources and information on community-based solutions for individuals with autism, other developmental disabilities and their families.



"TOOTSIE ROLL DRIVE 2011 REPORT" by Tom Kendziorski

The 2011 Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll/Mentally Impaired ("M.I.") Drive is now history. Members of The Arc of Oakland collectively helped raise (gross) almost \$4,800 --- we were \$3.50 shy! The Arc of Oakland County will receive about \$3,900 from the Bishop Gallagher Knights of Columbus Council #2569 in Royal Oak that will directly benefit children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities within our community. The net amount is less because we must cover our expenses, such as, Tootsie Rolls, aprons, and refreshments for workers. Each council is also required to forward 20% of what is collected locally to the Knights of Columbus state council for distribution to state-wide organizations serving those with special needs. A handful of other Oakland County councils regularly donate a portion of their Tootsie Roll dollars to The Arc of Oakland County: Auburn Hills, Milford, West Bloomfield, Clarkston, and Walled Lake. Thanks, Gentlemen!

Palm Sunday weekend occurred during mid-April this year, and the weatherman kinda' came through for us with a few sunny-windy days, a little rain, and unseasonably cool weather. Thirty-five good friends and members of The Arc of Oakland County persevered to help make this a successful event! I would like to publicly recognize the following folks for their most enthusiastic support and commitment to the cause.

The Arc of Oakland County members and friends

John Kendziorski, Tami Kendziorski, Donna Yates, David Loeffler, Sandra Loeffler, Jerry Richart, Vickie Denny, Matthew Denny, Alexis Denny, Josie Bongolan, Joyce Bongolan, Hazel, Tampalas, Joe Murowany, Allison Murowany, Marlene Glac, Kathryn Butler, Bob Buzzelli, Carol Gray, Hilary Gray, Lorenzo Waters, Dave Karjala, Chuck Karjala, Jerry Rubin, Jody Rubin, Alex Adah, Rosemary Rangi, Ron Cheli, Pam Cheli, Angel Cheli and last but not least, the "Chicks for Charities" members: Sheryl Kossick, Brenda Gile, Nikki Rinaldi, Pam Elliott, and Lori West.

Thank you and see you all next year!

IN MEMORIAM

James F. Bliskey — Ronald J. Briskey — Julie Straw — Karrie D. Wujcik



41ST ANNUAL DOVE AWARDS PRESENTATION AND BANQUET

Over 325 people came together on Friday, March 25th to celebrate the achievements of the twenty-three award recipients at the 41st Annual Dove Awards Presentation and Silent Auction at the San Marino Club in Troy. The Arc of Oakland County would like to extend a very special thank you to **Deena Centofanti**, from FOX 2 who graciously accepted our invitation to emcee this year's festivities. Deena did an amazing job and we were honored to have her there!

We would also like to thank everyone who participated in the Silent Auction and Apple iPad2 Raffle. The Arc of Oakland County raised over \$12,000 thanks to your support and generosity. Please visit our Facebook page for more 2011 Dove Awards pictures.

Congratulations To The 2011 Dove Award Recipients

JANET and PAUL MacCORMACK LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Michael Vincent, Director of Training, Macomb Oakland Regional Center, Inc.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Leslie Hunt, Instructional Aide, Kingsley Montgomery School, Waterford School District

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD

Lena Griffin, Home of Your Own Supervisor, Ridgeside Program for JARC

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Elizabeth Kelly, Host, Director of Marketing and Executive Producer, A Wider World— PBS TV Show

ARC EXCELLENCE AWARD

David Reed, Michigan Performing Arts Talent Show Photographer



EXCEPTIONAL ADVOCACY AWARD

Kimberly Hoga, Senior Employment Coordinator,
New Horizons Rehabilitation Services, Inc.

PUBLIC IMPACT AWARD

Micah Fialka-Feldman

GOLDEN DOVE AWARD

Janet Stack-Miller, Director of Special Education, Holly Area School District

MEDIA AWARD

Sandra Ali, Anchor and Reporter, WDIV/TV Channel 4

SHELDON DUNN INSPIRATION AWARD

Jeff Guthrie

INCLUSION LEADERSHIP AWARD

Anthony Naiman, Daily Support Professional

AL CARTER VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Arlene Lee, Office Supervisor, Macomb Oakland Regional Center, Inc.

COMMUNITY LIVING AWARD

Crumb Road Personal Residence— Walled Lake,
Michigan Innovative Lifestyles, Inc.

YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTEER AWARD

PJ DeCuir

ROBERT THOMAS SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Rebecca Borst, Supports Coordinator,
Macomb Oakland Regional Center, Inc.

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD - VOCATIONAL

Dorian Kirejczyk, Job Coach, JVS

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD – RESIDENTIAL

Sophia Thornton, Home Manager, Childs Lake Group Home,
Community Homes, Inc.

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AWARD – SCHOOL

Christine Wall, Special Education Classroom Assistant,
Donelson Hills Elementary School, Waterford School District

FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY SUPPORT AWARD

Lois Trimm, Teacher to the Outreach Ministry Program,
Five Points Community Church

LEONARD CERCONE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD - SECONDARY

Pat Knebler, ASD Teacher, Van Hoosen Middle School,
Rochester School District

LEONARD CERCONE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD - POST SECONDARY

Lisa Gestro, Teacher, Visions Unlimited

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Holiday Market, Royal Oak, MI

PROVIDER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Angels' Place, Southfield, MI





SPONSORSHIPS

The Board of Directors and Staff of The Arc of Oakland County would like to thank the following companies, organizations, and individuals for their continued support

Knights of Columbus Select Councils
from Oakland County

PLATINUM SPONSORS — \$1,000

The Autism Society of Oakland County
Huntington Bank

GOLD SPONSORS — \$500

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and Don L. Rosenberg
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Mark and Ann Wiedelman

Tom and Mary Kendziorski (\$325)
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BRONZE SPONSORS — \$100

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Secure Planning Strategies and Minoti
Rajput
Sensible Solutions, INC. and Ed Dolikian
John Torrone
Lynn and Corey Wert
Ina Mae Wilcox



AUCTION DONATIONS

The Arc of Oakland County would like to thank the following individuals, companies, and organizations who generously contributed items for the Silent Auction

220 Restaurant
 Alex Adah
 JoEllen Alvarez
 Jerry and Midge Appel
 Bahama Breeze, Troy
 Walt and Mary Banacki
 Beans & Cornbread: A Soulful Bistro
 Beaumont Hospitals
 Best Western Sterling Inn
 Black Finn, Royal Oak
 Cynthia Bliskey
 Bordine's
 Brianne Faye LLC
 Buddy's Pizza
 The Capital Grille, Troy
 Caribou Coffee, Troy
 Carol Lewis Day Spa
 Ron Cheli
 Mrs. Estelle Chulig
 Michael and Kathy Chutorash
 Clear Channel
 Comcast
 Cookies by Design, West

Bloomfield
 Costco, Madison Heights
 Crazy Joe's Tanning, Troy
 Curves, Rochester Hills
 Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Denny
 Detroit Institute of Arts
 Detroit Lions
 Detroit Pistons
 Detroit Red Wings
 Detroit Tigers
 The Detroit Zoological Society
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 Hagopian Word of Rugs
 The Henry Ford
 Holiday Market
 Home Depot, Madison Heights
 House of Watchbands
 Michele Jacoby
 JARC
 J. Alexander's
 Jax Kar Wash
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Kendziorski

Kona Grill
 Lisa Kowalski
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 Lamphere Center
 The Lark
 Leon and Lulu
 Tom Lias
 Lily's Seafood Grill and Brewery
 Lucky Strike, Novi
 Macy's Westland
 Maggiano's, Troy
 Suzanne Marquardt
 Diane McDaniel
 Media Period
 Karen Mellott
 The Melting Pot, Troy
 Michigan Opera Theatre
 Monterrey Cantina
 Morley Candy Makers
 Joe and Allison Murowany
 David Nauman
 Neiman Marcus
 New Horizons Rehabilitation Services, Inc.
 Oakland County Parks & Recreation
 Oakland University Athletics Department
 Ocean Prime
 Paint A Miracle Art Studio
 Paint Creek Center for the Arts
 Panera Bread
 Pewabic Pottery
 PF Chang's, Troy

Precision Tune Auto Care,
 Royal Oak
 Prestige Portraits
 PRP Wine
 Rochester Conservatory of Music
 Royal Oak Golf Center
 Royal Oak Music Theatre
 Royal Park Hotel, Rochester
 Jerry and Judy Rubin
 Stagecrafters Baldwin Theatre
 Streetside Seafood
 Swan Creek Candle Company
 Sweet Lorraine's
 Henry, Barbara and David Taylor
 John Torrone
 Town Tavern
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 Velvet Nail Lounge
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 Department of Theatre
 WDIV
 Tim and Amy Wenger
 Caron Whitener
 Katie Winkler, Esq.
 WJBK
 WXYT— The Ticket
 WXYZ
 WWJ/ WKBD
 Lee Yambura



38th Annual



Talent Show



It was a perfect Spring morning as over 250 students, music therapists, teachers, parents, volunteers, and friends joined The Arc of Oakland County on Wednesday, May 4th for the 38th Annual Michigan Performing Arts Talent Show! This years performance was sponsored by the Order of the Alhambra, Manresa Caravan #217 from Northville, the Birmingham Musicale, the Birmingham Community House and The Arc of Oakland County.

Joel Alexander, WJR Radio 760 jetcopter pilot, graciously accepted our invitation to emcee the program again for the eleventh year.

ACT 1:

**BERKLEY HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT ORCHESTRA featuring
LANCE VARDON**

Instrumental Ensemble: "Carillon" by Georges Bizet and "Baltic Dance"
by Kirt N. Mosier
Music Therapist: Lisa Barnett
Orchestra Director: John Robertson

ACT 2:

LANCE VARDON

Instrumental Solo: "Autumn Sketch" by William L. Gillock
Music Therapist: Lisa Barnett

ACT 3:

LINDA MICH

Instrumental Solo: "Blue Danube"

ACT 4:

KATIE WEIDIG

Vocal Solo: "Soul Brother"
Music Therapist: Lisa Barnett

ACT 5:

THE PONTIAC MUSIC THERAPY STUDENTS

Vocal Ensemble: "They Don't Care About Us", "Pray", Eenie Meenie",
and "The World's Greatest"
Music Therapist: Vicki Barnes

ACT 6:

MICHAEL BOLDEN

Instrumental Solo: "Ode to Joy" by Beethoven
Music Therapist: Vicki Barnes

ACT 7:

THE KENNEDY BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Vocal Ensemble: "Hold My Hand" and "One In A Million"
Music Therapist: Vicki Barnes

ACT 8:

THE JERRY L. WHITE PERFORMING ARTS GROUP

Vocal Ensemble: "Pray" by Justin Bieber
Music Therapist: Gayle Owens

ACT 9:

AMY SOMERVILLE

Instrumental and Vocal Solo: "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and
"On My Own"
Music Therapist: Lisa Barnett

ACT 10:

THE JERRY L. WHITE PERFORMING ARTS GROUP

Vocal Ensemble: "African Violets and Rap Music"

Music Therapist: Gayle Owens
Teacher: Amanda Watkins

ACT 11:

STEVEN KEROS

Instrumental Solo: "Peacherine Rag"
Music Therapist: Cheryl Pope

ACT 12:

THE JERRY L. WHITE PERFORMING ARTS GROUP

Vocal Ensemble: "Getting To Know Us"
Music Therapist: Gayle Owens
Interpreter: Shawn Spearman

ACT 13:

SCOTT WIGHTMAN

Vocal Solo: "Ring of Fire"
Music Therapist: Lisa Pearson

ACT 14:

THE JERRY L. WHITE DRUMMING GROUP

Musical Ensemble
Music Therapist: Gayle Owens

ACT 15:

KAREN MacDONALD

Vocal Solo: "Fields of Gold" by Gordon Matthew Thomas and
"Grease" Medley
Music Therapist: Patrice Morris-Weaver

ACT 16:

MOSES FIELD SHINING STARS CHOIR

Vocal Ensemble: "I Will Remember You" by Sarah McLachlan and "I Can
See Clearly" by Johnny Nash
Music Therapist: Kwona Martin

ACT 17:

GREGORY LEGGETT

Vocal Solo: "Ordinary People" by John Legend
Music Therapist: Kwona Martin

ACT 18:

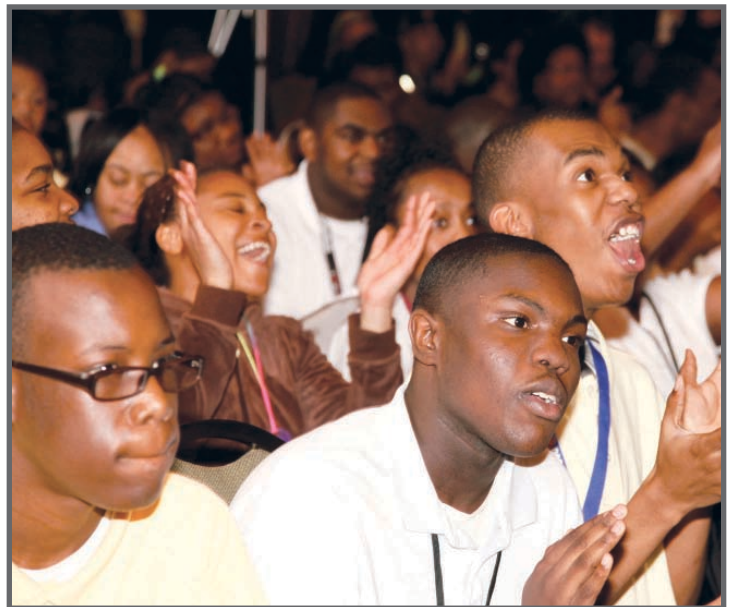
SARAH SANDELANDS

Vocal Solo: "Thank You for the Music"
Music Teacher: Mary Anne Fischer

ACT 19:

LISA PIRSCHER

Instrumental Solo: "The Ocean of Life"
Music Therapist: Darlene Herm





2011 Annual Meeting
ELECTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Wednesday, June 8, 2011 - 7:00 p.m. at the Wing Lake Developmental Center
6490 Wing Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301

- Election, Board of Directors for 2011 - 2012
- General Meeting

2011-2012 NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE
The Arc of Oakland County
Board of Directors
SLATE OF CANDIDATES

Officers:

<u>Office</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Term ends</u>
President	Ronald Cheli, Esq.	June 2012
1st Vice President	Karen Mellott	June 2012
2nd Vice President	Lisa Kowalski	June 2012
Secretary	Jerry Rubin	June 2012
Treasurer	Suzanne Marquardt	June 2012
Past President	Alex Adah	June 2012

Delegates-at-large:

Gloria Edna C. Brown	June 2012
Susan Fezzey	June 2012
Thomai Gersh	June 2013
Bijaya Hans, M.D.	June 2013
Tom Lias	June 2012
David Loeffler, Dr., PhD.	June 2013
Tom Quakenbush	June 2013
Barbara Scott	June 2012
John Torrone	June 2013

*****Bolded** names must be elected on **June 8, 2011** at Annual Meeting; officers are elected to one-year terms, but may serve no more than two successive one-year terms in that same office.

The Arc of Oakland County is now on



Please visit www.thearcoakland.org
and look for the Facebook Icon

We Need Your E-mail Address

We are collecting our members' e-mail addresses so we can send out electronic flyers, event reminders, action alerts and any other important information regarding The Arc. Please send us the e-mail address you would like us to use either by e-mail (amurow-any@thearcoakland.org) or to the The Arc office.

The Arc of Oakland County is only as strong as its membership. Your membership is the life-blood of The Arc and you add to our strength. Membership will be posted in this spot monthly. Help us build our numbers and our strength through members!



New Members

MARCH

Barbara Brennan, Steven W. Garland, Natalie Luyckx, Arlene Meszaros, Shashikant Nagle, Renee L. Orlewicz, Eva Reynolds, Barbara Rogulski, Dorothy Stoutjesdyk, Debra Townsend

APRIL

Gwen Ahearn, Patricia Biernat, Rudy Cervantes, Misty Dewey, Sharon Harrah, Peter Hellekjaer, Techu Hsing, Lisa Johnson, John Kozma, Ron Letwinski, Thomas Meister, Paul Parent, Tom Quakenbush, Martha Raphelson, Patricia Rock, Fleur Zahner, Mark Zoss

Welcome!

Your Advocacy In Action... Success Stories!

Celeste A. is sixty-four-years-young with a most engaging personality. An only child. A person with many independent abilities and strengths. She is a person with mild intellectual impairment, a seizure disorder, and some physical impairment. Her Mom long ago passed away. No future plans were made, and nobody was prepared or readily available to make decisions, pay the debts of Mom's last illness, tie up loose ends, or assist Celeste with securing a stable and now single life. A "classic" case of parents not properly planning their estate.

Celeste's parents never joined The Arc. A Macomb-Oakland Regional Center, Inc. supports coordinator by chance happened to approach The Arc for direct intervention and on-going assistance. A distant cousin was found who offered support with some of the more personal issues, but could not accept the job of helping Celeste due to her own mother's illness and family commitments. Assessing the situation, it was clear that swift, direct and expert advocacy was necessary in order to keep this suddenly solitary soul from floundering into a mental health abyss.

Very afraid of being alone, Celeste would not readily admit that this was the case. Her matter-of-fact statement to everyone was that her money skills were limited ... her Mom always took care of those things. This, too, frightened her. Immediate help was needed to assure stability and hope in this individual. So, the MORC, Inc. worker was instructed to take care of the arrangements for counseling sessions, schedule the necessary psychological testing for The Arc to become Celeste's financial guardian, and to identify the physical help to moving her into a smaller apartment. The Arc had the daunting task of organizing her financial house.

Mom left no Last Will and Testament, no special needs trust, any guidelines or instructions whatsoever. Mom did not pre-pay her own burial expenses, much less those for Celeste someday. Mom never told anyone how to deal with her daughter's pension annuity through her deceased Father's retirement fund (you have not lived until you have dealt with that portion of the federal bureaucracy!). Changing Celeste's federal pension medical benefits through her Dad's retirement entitlement also required reams of paperwork and patience. Social Security and the pension annuity necessitated a representative payee. Mom's last debts had to be paid. A car had to be sold. Life insurance had to be collected. Fortunately, The Arc discovered a little-known veteran's benefit available through Oakland County to pay for Mom's headstone. The two banks where Mom and Celeste owned various joint accounts had to be contacted to switch ownership and title. Series HH bonds had to be transferred into Celeste's name. Her landlord required rent, and since Celeste lives in a federally subsidized apartment house, further documentation and paperwork had to be completed to move down four floors into a one-bedroom apartment.

I am pleased to announce that "all's well that ends well." Celeste is happy, financially secure and thriving. She has learned how to better cope with the grief of losing her last surviving parent and friend. She has even become adept at using the SMART bus system (a difficult task for anyone!). The Arc continues to collect and pay all of her routine bills, account annually to the probate court, send Celeste a weekly stipend check to live on, prepare tax returns, secure medical assistance, maintain her eligibility for Medicaid, and whatever else might come up. The public mental health provider, MORC, Inc., facilitates her life with a Person-Centered Plan, a Medicaid budget, staffing, transportation mileage, and a supports coordinator.

A word to the wise: put your affairs in order. Do not expect or hope that someone will be available to take care of your loved one with special needs.

Profiles



The Arc
Oakland County

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WEEKLY EVENTS

- SUN** First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Sunday School for children with special needs; 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Contact **Cindy Merten at 248-644-2040.**
- SUN** Temple Beth El Religious School Program for Exceptional Children, 9:30 - 11:45 a.m., **Call Rose Werney, 851-1100.**
- SUN** Zion Christian Church, 3668 Livernois, Troy; Joyful Classes for all ages; 10:00 a.m. to Noon; Call Rachel Taylor at **248-549-1524** or the church at 248-524-2400 for more information.
- SUN** Calvary Baptist Church, Hazel Park, JOY Class for all ages; 9:30 - 12:00. Call Mrs. Ayres at **758-7825.**
- SUN** Agency for Jewish Education, Efshar Special Education Program, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; contact Robyn Glickman at 248-645-7860.
- SUN** Special Needs Sunday School (GEMS) at Auburn Hills Christian Center, 2592 East Walton Blvd., Auburn Hills; 10:00 a.m.; **248-373-7139**
- SUN** Special Education Sunday School, Grace Baptist Church, Birmingham. 10:00 a.m. - noon, **646-2002.**
- SUN** Sunday School for over 18 adults who are mildly mentally impaired. North Metro Free Methodist Church Troy. 9:45. Call **Sue Carlson, 689-3593.**
- SUN** Christ Lutheran Church, 620 General Motors Rd., Milford: Sunday School, September-May; 9:45 a.m.; call **248-684-0895.**
- SUN** "God's Special Gifts" - individualized programs for all ages, child through adult; St. Paul's UMC, Rochester. **Contact Stacie Buckler, 248-651-9361.**
- SUN** Woodside Bible Church, Troy: Adult Sunday School class, 11:30 a.m., family support class and more. **Call Greg McDougall at 586-228-2935 for information.**
- MON** Swing Fit. Enjoy basic exercise and get into shape. \$4 per person, 8-9 p.m. All ages, LD, DD. Sashabaw Jr. High School, **642-8223.**
- MON** Friendship Club for teens & adults, Troy Community Center; 2nd Mon. is Movie & Pizza Nite, 7-8:30 p.m. Cost: \$2. Call Ursula at Adaptive Rec. **524-3484.**
- MON** Religion classes for young adults from all parishes in Southeast Oakland. Our Lady of LaSalette, Berkley, 7:00 - 8:15 p.m., **754-5597.**
- TUES** Weight Watchers Program, Big Beaver United Methodist Church, Weigh-In 5:30 - 6 p.m., Class to follow. Call 816-1900 or 524-3484 for information.
- TUES** Tuesday Nite at the SAL Community Center: Activities for persons with M.R. Call **Denise Beachum, 585-0808.**
- TUES** Coffee House, K. of C. Hall, 5660 Maybee Rd., Clarkston, 7:30 p.m. **Closed July & August.** www.coffeehousedance.org
- WED** Friends AWANA Program, Faith Baptist Church, Waterford; 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Call 248-623-7330 for information.
- WED** Special Education religious classes for children/adult with special needs through March; 6:30-8:15 p.m.; Five Points Community Church; call **733-1381.**
- WED** Special Education religious classes 7-8:15 p.m. at Our Lady of LaSalette, Berkley. **Contact LaVerne Bures at 248-754-5597.**
- THUR** Christ Lutheran Church, 629 General Motors Rd., Milford. "Exceptional Fun Night"
4th Thursday of month, Sept-May, 7-8:30 p.m. Crafts, pizza, chips, pop. Open to all ages/all disabilities. Most attendee's are 18 and up. No Fee. Contact Person: Carol Johnson: **248-685-0200.**
- FRI** Friday Frolic monthly dance, age 16 and older; \$4/person Troy Community Center, 3179 Livernois; 7-9:30 p.m. Call 248-524-3484.
- SAT** Bowling Ages 10+. Troy Lanes (temporarily), Square Lake & John R.; Cost: \$4/3 games. Call Adaptive Rec for info: **524-3484.**
- SAT** The Arc Bowling starts Sept. thru April; 10:00 a.m. at the 300 Bowl, 100 Cass Lake Rd., Waterford Cost: \$6.00/2 games. For additional information call Gertie Lomason at **248-628-7363.**
- SAT** St. Alan Catholic Church Religion Education classes for persons with mental impairments; 10-11:15 a.m. Call **Sr. Mary Choiniere at 822-4261.**
- SAT** Saturday Adult Bible Class, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Birmingham, **9:30 - 11:00 a.m. Sept. - June; Kathy Morris, 248-689-6871.**

Calendar

May

4 – 2011 Michigan Performing Arts Talent Show, 10 a.m. at the Birmingham Community House

8 – Mother's Day

24 – The Arc of Oakland County Board of Director's Meeting, 7 p.m. at The Arc office

30 – Memorial Day

June

8 – The Arc of Oakland County's Annual Meeting & 2011-2012 Board of Directors Elections, Wing Lake School, Bloomfield Hills, 7 p.m.

16-18 – The Arc Michigan's National Conference, Soaring Eagle Resort, Mt. Pleasant

19 – Father's Day

July

4 – Independence Day

26 – The Arc of Oakland County Board of Director's Meeting, 7 p.m. at The Arc office

The Arc of Oakland County Staff

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Cynthia A. Bliskey
Administrative Services

Kathleen J. Chutorash
Fiscal Intermediary

Bernadette Duhoski
E-Plan Monitor

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Allison M. Murowany