

# ARC FAMILY SUPPORT UPDATE

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2009

## THE UNITED ARC OF FRANKLIN AND HAMPSHIRE COUNTIES

111 SUMMER STREET GREENFIELD, MA 01301 413-774-5558 ARC@UNITEDARC.ORG WWW.UNITEDARC.ORG

### Family Support Staff Transitions

**Happy New Year!** Greetings from The United Arc. We are beginning 2009 by initiating some new endeavors including regular Family Support newsletters with updates on program activities and information about resources. We are also convening a resource group for parents whose children use assistive technology and/or adaptive equipment, a support group for parents of adult-aged children and supports for grandparents.



These endeavors reflect recent changes at The United Arc. In October 2008 Leslie Kinney became the new Director of Family Support Services, replacing Chris Peltier. Leslie has held various positions at The United Arc, most recently serving as Associate Director with primary responsibilities for development. In her earlier role as Community Services Director she helped establish the Arc's Family Support, Positive Parenting and JOBS Programs and expanded self-advocacy activities. She has been associated with Arc for more than 25 years and in 2007 was recognized by The Arc of Massachusetts for sustained contributions to the Arc. Leslie leads a talented staff which includes Family Advocates Karen Boduch, Martha Lewin and Donna Walden, Transition Specialist Michelle Lefebvre, Positive Parenting Director Sue Jones, Parent Educators Carol Broga, Barbara Jaillet, Elaine Misch, Linda Porter and Ann Watson, Supported Living Neighbor Keri Scheltema, and Family Friends Coordinator, Drenna Mahaney. The program is pleased to have the contributions of many dedicated family respite workers and Family Friends volunteers.

In September the Arc bid a formal farewell to Chris Peltier and wished him well in his new role as an autism specialist with the Amherst Regional School District. During his twelve years at the Arc, Chris was instrumental in expanding Family Support services to include comprehensive services to parents with cognitive disabilities and transition support for teens involved with the Dept. of Children and Families. We expect that Chris, his wife Laurel and family will continue to be involved with Arc activities.

### Positive Parenting Staff Relocate to New Office Program Services Offered in Hampshire County

The United Arc's Positive Parenting Program has expanded to serve 60-70 or more families each year. Program services are designed to support the learning needs of parents with intellectual limitations or learning challenges. Services include in-home skills training, case management, parent education and support groups, mentoring support from Family Friends volunteers and an intensive structured community living site.

Due to program expansion, office staff are relocating to their own site at 87 5th Street in Turners Falls. The new office will provide expanded working area, space for small group meetings and closer proximity to families living in the structured supported living program. Thanks to a new grant from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the program has also initiated parenting support services in Hampshire County. Ann Watson has been recently hired to facilitate support groups and provide parent education for parents in the Hampshire area. For information about Positive Parenting services contact Susan Jones at 413-774-5558 x 1005.

#### Inside this issue:

DMR to Close Four Institutions	2
Impact of 9C on DD Community	2
The Arc addresses Waiting Lists	2
Family Leadership Series	3
Winter Recreation Opportunities	3
Workshops & Conferences	4
Arc Offers New Support Groups	4

### DMR announces plans to close institutions



Fernald State School

On December 12th Governor Patrick announced that four of Massachusetts' six institutions (Fernald, Glavin, Monson and Templeton) will close by 2013. Closure of state institutions has been a major goal for members of the Arcs across the Commonwealth for many years. With this announcement the administration has recognized that disability is not a reason to separate individuals with disabilities from the larger community. Currently, approximately 900 individuals live in state institutions while more than 32,000 individuals receive community-based services and support. During the next four years 316 individuals will move to community settings.

In western Massachusetts we have had great success with the previous closure of Belchertown State School. The new closure plan will allow for better use of limited state resources which will be directed to community based services. This decision is critically important for the thousands of people currently on waiting lists for family support, employment, residential and other services.

To send a thank you to the Governor or to read more information about this decision, visit The Arc web site at [www.arcmass.org/State House/Policy Pages](http://www.arcmass.org/State House/Policy Pages).

**Potential cuts to the Dept. of Developmental Services in FY2010—as much as \$100 million—would be devastating. Your phone calls and emails will be important to save essential services. →→→**

### State 9C cuts hurt families and individuals with DD

Recent state budget cuts have had a negative impact on individuals and families who receive a wide variety of family support, special education, employment and health services. DMR Community Services were cut \$5 million. The DESE-DDS (formerly DOE-DMR) program which provides intensive support to families to prevent out-of-home special education residential placement was cut by one third across the state. In the Central/West service area of DMR 134 families (including 6 United Arc families) have lost much needed funding that helps them purchase specialized equipment, therapies, and respite care.

The MA Rehabilitation Commission's Extended Employment program which serves 360 individuals with ID/DD was cut by \$1.1 million. Other cuts included a \$1.1 million reduction to Early Intervention and a \$1.5 million cut to the Autism Division despite a rising population of children with autism. For a more detailed list of FY09 cuts and updates on the budget process and advocacy efforts for FY2010 funding please visit The Arc web site at [www.arc.mass](http://www.arc.mass) (see article on overview of mid-year budget cuts).

### Arc National Focuses on Eliminating Waiting Lists

The Arc of the United States has launched a nationwide campaign on behalf of millions of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families who are on waiting lists for vital supports and services. Some individuals and families have been on waiting lists for more than a decade. The Waiting List Campaign will build national awareness of the issue by telling stories of individual and family needs to generate public support. The Campaign aims to educate the public about the inequities of the waiting list system from state to state, unify data collection among states in order to share this with legislative leaders and the new Obama administration, and build a strong movement of people who can influence local, state and federal policy makers. For more information about this campaign or to tell your own story go to [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org). To send your own message to federal officials see <http://www.change.org/ideas/faq>.

## MA Families Hosts Family Leadership Series

MA Families Organizing for Change—Western Region is sponsoring a Family Leadership Series with four 2-day workshops designed to support families to help their family member have a good quality of life. Workshops will be held at the Yankee Inn in Lenox, MA on January 30 & 31, February 27 & 28, April 3 & 4 and May 1 & 2. Participants' hotel accommodations and meals during workshops sessions will be provided and a portion of respite/child care and travel expenses will be reimbursed if needed. Don't miss this opportunity! The workshops will

- share changes that families have made that bettered the lives of people with disabilities,
- discuss ways that families can provide leadership and explore individual leadership styles,
- support families to expand hopes and dreams for their family members,
- provide training in communication and negotiation skills and
- provide an overview of the state and federal legislative process.

*If you want to be inspired, meet others with similar interests and situations, and expand your own network, contact Betsy Krogh at 413-562-4885 x 16 or [mfofcwest@mcsnet.org](mailto:mfofcwest@mcsnet.org).*

***“ Every parent of a child with disabilities should learn about their power—I think we could truly change the world!”***

**~ G.C. Pittsfield**

## Cabin Fever Got You Down? - Recreation Adventures Await!

The MA Dept of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) offers a Universal Access Program with many opportunities for winter fun. For schedule of activities or registration forms for activities contact [www.mass.gov/dcr/universal\\_access](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access) or contact Arc Family Support staff to get a copy of the DCR Access News.

Indoor accessible skating with ice sleds are available in Greenfield at the Collins Moylan Skating Rink and in Holyoke at the Fitzpatrick Rink during public skating hours. DCR is also offering programs in Greenfield on January 23, 1-3 PM and February 11, 1-3 PM.



On Saturday, February 7th, DCR will hold its Winter Festival at Dunn Pond in Gardner with sled hockey, skating, cross-country skiing snowmobile rides and more. 11am—4 pm. Call 617-626-1294 to register.

Mt. Wachusett Adaptive Ski Program offers downhill ski lessons by reservation—call 978-464-2300 or visit [www.wachusett.com](http://www.wachusett.com).

Maple Sugaring will take place at the DAR State Forest in Goshen in March, call 413-268-7098 for specific information. In the spring exploration and “treasure hunting” using GPS units will take place throughout the spring in various locations in western Massachusetts.

## Whole Children Offers Classes in Art, Dance, Cooking & More

Whole Children has a full schedule of classes for children and teens of all abilities. Although many classes start the week of January 12th special one day workshops will be held on dog sledding (January 18), Mind-Body Yoga (February 7), Rock Climbing (February 1 and March 22), Saturdays with Friends (last Saturdays in January, February and March) plus a February Vacation week with games, science experiments, cooking outdoor play, movement and theatre activities. For more information go to [www.wholechildren.org](http://www.wholechildren.org).

*The Arc will lead in forging a society that values, respects, includes, and recognizes the contribution of community members with disabilities.*

## WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

**January 24: 1—4 PM Assistive Communication Technology Center Social Event** at Holyoke Medical Center Auditorium, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, MA Meet augmentative and alternative communication company representatives and ask your questions. For information or to RSVP call ACT Center 413-562-5678.

**January 29: 10-12 AM Searching in the (Special Education) Law—Parent Consultant Network meeting** at First Baptist Church, Amherst. A conversation with Julie Sinclair of the Federation for Children with Special Needs. For more information contact Julie Sinclair at 413-323-0681 or Sinclair@fcsn.org.

**February 12: 6:30-8:30 PM When the School Says “No”...What Can You Do?** with Jeanne Troxell Munson at Holyoke Community College—Kittredge Center 302. To register contact Amy Pinney at 413-529-2428 or pinneya@theassn.org. For information on a full calendar of workshops sponsored by Community Resources for People with Autism see the calendar of events at [www.communityresourcesforautism.org](http://www.communityresourcesforautism.org).

**February 28: 9:30—2 PM IEP Clinic** with Julie Sinclair of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, BCARC Social Development Center, 65 Depot Street, Dalton, MA To register contact Julie Sinclair at 413-323-0681 or Sinclair@fcsn.org.

**March 14 : Visions of Community Conference** at the Seaport World Trade Center, Boston with workshops on early childhood, special education, health care and more. Network and visit the exhibit hall with more than 50 vendors. For information or to register call 1-800-331-0688 or visit the Federation for Children with Special Needs website at [www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org).

## United Arc Sponsors Information & Support Groups

**Support Group for Families interested in Assistive Technology & Adaptive Equipment.** *On Wednesday, January 21 from 7—8:30 PM Victoria Wildman from Adaptive Design in Northampton will speak about the many ways that Adaptive Design can help individuals and families to address accessibility needs by making adaptations in the home.* The meeting will be held at The United Arc, 111 Summer Street, Greenfield, MA. For information contact Donna Walden at The United Arc, 413-774-5558 x 1008 or email [donnawalden@unitedarc.org](mailto:donnawalden@unitedarc.org).

**Support Group forming for Parents/Guardians of Adult Aged Children with Developmental Disabilities.** *This is an emerging group. Interested persons are invited to the initial meeting on Wednesday, January 21 1:30-3:30 AM at The United Arc, 111 Summer Street, Greenfield.* Contact Karen Boduch at The United Arc, 413-774-5558 x 1001 or email [karenboduch@unitedarc.org](mailto:karenboduch@unitedarc.org) for information or to suggest topics for discussion.

**Grandparent Support.** *The United Arc offers several opportunities that support grandparents who are primary caregivers.* A knitting and discussion group meets weekly on Tuesdays from 10-11:30 AM at The Arc Common, 20 Chapman Street, Greenfield. Informal support meetings are being scheduled in family homes in Greenfield, western Franklin County and the North Quabbin area. For more information contact Drenna Mahaney (x 1042) or Elaine Misch (x 1000) at The United Arc 413-774-5558.

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.unitedarc.org](http://www.unitedarc.org)

### WISH LIST - Arc families need the following items:

**Clothes dryer**—gas or electric or someone who can repair a dryer that needs parts.

**Sturdy single bed** or mattress & box spring only or futon that can be placed on the floor for active teen.

### Newsletter Inserts

**911 Disability Indicator Form**—Make sure public safety officials know if you or a family member has special needs during an emergency.

**Carousel Trust Fund Application Forms**—Small grants available for social recreation needs. Applications due January 26, 2009.

**United Arc Year-at-Glance Calendar—2009!**