

Self-Advocate Creates Online Accessibility Tool! **The Arc Tennessee now features the Recite Me toolbar on all websites**

By:Dara Bacon

Over 30 years ago, President George W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, mandating important accessibility standards that continue to improve and protect the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. The ADA set an entirely new standard when it came to employment, transportation and public accommodations. Yet over the last 18 months, as the world goes in and out of quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and spends more time at home, attention is now turned to virtual accessibility.

"The Arc Tennessee is such a leader when it comes to advocacy for the disability community. Yet when we were all sent home to work remotely and connect with the community, it was challenging," explains Heather Henderson, Director of Advocacy for The Arc Tennessee. "We have strong resources, yet when it came to conveying that online and in a way that individuals and families could easily navigate, we recognized significant room for improvement."

Within the last 7 months, The Arc Tennessee team has launched four websites, each now featuring the Recite Me accessibility toolbar! Recite Me is an innovative cloud-based software that lets visitors to a website view and use it in the way that works best for them. We have added the Recite Me web accessibility and language toolbar to all four websites to make it accessible and inclusive for as many people as possible.

The accessibility toolbar helps many people, including individuals with common conditions like sight loss and dyslexia. It also meets the needs of

non-English speakers. The world of services and support in the disability sector is already complex.

"Navigating the disability sector is challenging, especially in a second language," says Heidi Haines, Executive Director of The Arc Tennessee. "We don't want language translation to be a barrier, especially given the diversity represented throughout the state," Haines explains.



Ross Linnett, owner and creator of ReciteMe, created the tool after being diagnosed with dyslexia.

Recite Me was founded by Ross Linnett, a self-advocate in Europe who was diagnosed with dyslexia in college. You can open the Recite Me language and accessibility toolbar by clicking on the Language & Accessibility button, located in the top left-hand corner of each website published by The Arc Tennessee.

After you click on the Language & Accessibility button, the Recite Me toolbar opens and displays a range of different options. See page five for a complete guide to using the toolbar.

**Si tiene un niño o miembro de la familia con una incapacidad intelectual o de desarrollo, puede contactar
Pathfinder a: 615-875-5083 para recibir más información sobre recursos y servicios.**

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level of disability, Limited
English Proficiency or status
as a protected veteran.

The Arc Tennessee Mission Statement

The Arc Tennessee empowers people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to actively participate in the community throughout their lifetime.

Renew your membership online!

The Arc Tennessee has launched a new website, equipped with an online membership renewal option. Simply scan the QR code below or visit our website and click on **Become A Member** in the top right-hand corner.



<https://www.thearctn.org/get-involved/membership/>

Other ways to give!



Link your Kroger Card to benefit The Arc Tennessee.
Visit the Kroger Community Rewards® program at

www.kroger.com/communityrewards

and use **The Arc TN's ID 37451**.



note: you must update your profile every year.

Make The Arc Tennessee your designated charitable organization with Amazon Smiles. When you shop Amazon Smile, 0.5% of the eligible purchases will benefit The Arc TN! Login to Amazon account, click on Accounts & Lists, then Your Amazon Smiles, then select The Arc TN as your charitable organization. <https://smile.amazon.com/>



Donate a Car Today

1-877-ARC-CAR-0
www.thearctn.org/Car-Donation



SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, November 10th, 2021

Employment and Community First CHOICES
Direct Support Professional Recognition Awards (virtual)
More details coming soon!



From

The Arc Tennessee Executive Director

Heidi Haines

Summer is wrapping up, and the Fall season will soon be in full swing. The Arc Tennessee is embracing the new year in many ways! As we continue to report and assess our impact with COVID-19, we look forward to connecting with our members, families, service providers and supporters even more in the 2021/22 year.

Inevitably, every season brings about new victories, challenges and change. One change you'll notice is the rotation of our Executive Committee and board. I want to take a moment and acknowledge the consistent leadership Linda Brown has given to our organization these last two years in her role as Board President. Linda has been President during some of the most challenging transitions The Arc Tennessee has ever faced. The COVID-19 pandemic initiated the need for several new policies and procedures. Yet Linda and the Executive Committee took each turn and challenge in stride. How well we continue to endure the pandemic is a direct reflection of the Executive Committee's leadership.

On behalf of The Arc Tennessee staff, I want to thank Linda and everyone on the Executive team. Thank you for your consistency, availability, responsiveness and dedication. I also want to specifically acknowledge Karen Downer and her two years of service on our Executive Committee. As Karen's service comes to a close, I'm grateful for her time and service. Karen was an advocate for our new database and website, which has made such a positive difference for our staff. Thank you Karen! We wish you much success in your new chapter.

You'll read more about our new Executive Committee members and board members in the next Connection newsletter. We will also share updates on staff changes, community engagement projects, volunteer opportunities for members, and more chapter updates.

Last but not least, be sure to register for the 2021 Tennessee Disability MegaConference. The virtual conference is happening October 28th-29th. You can find out more information on the next page or visit **www.tnmegaconference.org**. Registration is open and only \$15! Self-advocates get to attend for FREE!

Take advantage of all our programs, services and virtual events. Thanks for your support and commitment to the mission of empowering individuals with disabilities to live active lives in the community.



Heidi Haines





Thursday, October 28th & Friday, October 29th
www.tnmegaconference.org

Virtual Event Details

The 2021 Tennessee Disability MegaConference will be a virtual event at the end of October! More than 20 presenters and speakers will take the virtual stage each afternoon, giving attendees the opportunity to learn about services, supports, housing, employment, health and much more.

Registration is only \$15, and free for individuals with disabilities. Scan the QR codes below to view the new MegaConference website, officially register and see all session options.

Website

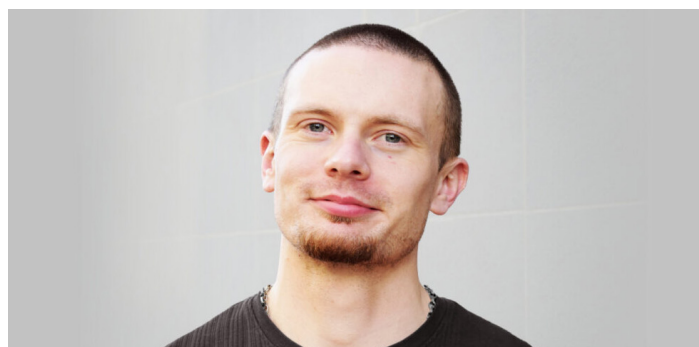


Registration



Keynote Speaker

Russell Lehmann



Russell Lehmann is an award-winning and internationally recognized motivational speaker, poet, author and advocate who happens to have autism. His words have been featured in the USA Today, LA Times, NPR, Yahoo! News, Autism Speaks, Success Magazine and archived in the Library of Congress. He is the author of "Inside Out: Stories and Poems from an Autistic Mind" and "On the Outside Looking In."

Have questions about MegaConference?

**Email us: mega@thearcctn.org
or call 615-248-5878**

*The Tennessee Disability MegaConference is coordinated by The Arc Tennessee and is a collaborative effort among many organizations and agencies across Tennessee.

Facebook **@TennesseeDisabilityMegaConference**

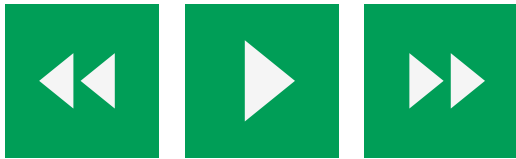
Leading up to the event, all sponsors and exhibitors will be highlighted on social media! For the latest schedule updates, virtual exhibit hall opportunities and information, follow the Tennessee Disability MegaConference on Facebook!

How To Use The Recite Me Toolbar



Screen Reader

The Screen reader helps people who are visually impaired or neuro-divergent to perceive and understand your digital content.



Key features include:

- All content read aloud in a natural voice
 - 35 different language options
 - Voice speed controls
- Word by word highlighting

Reading Support

Reading content online can be a challenge for some people. To simplify and support, Recite Me provides the following tools:



Plain text - All styling is stripped away, leaving only text, much like a document.

Ruler - Read line by line with no without being distracted with other text or images.

Reading Mask - Mask away 90% of the website, leaving only the information you want to concentrate on, at one time.

Magnifier - As if a magnifying glass is in your hand, zoom in to sections of text to read more clearly.

Margins - When in text only mode, you can use the margin feature to position content in the best place for you.

Dictionary - Website visitors have access to a fully integrated dictionary and thesaurus.

Translation

Translate all website content into 100 languages, including 35 text to speech voices.



Styling

Customize website content in a way that works best for you. Recite Me supports people who are dyslexic, visually impaired or have a learning disability to change the way a website looks



Key features include

- Text size, color and font.
Including Open-Dyslexic
- Website background color
- Link, ruler and screen mask colors

Recite me

Discover Ways to Get Involved!

The Arc Tennessee Programs & Resources



People First TN regularly scheduled monthly programming:

The People First State Call: This is a report of upcoming events as well as advocacy trainings and hearing from guest speakers. The state call happens the first Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. CST (11 a.m. EST).

Social Hour: These meetings happen the third Tuesday of each month at 10a.m. CST (11 a.m. EST). Social hour is an opportunity for self-advocates to share whatever is in their heart and mind. We always end these meetings with an impromptu talent show. So, if you can tell a joke, tell a story, sing, play a musical instrument, or have another talent, please join us to share what you have. You do not have to perform to be part of social hour. This is open to the public.



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Stay Connected with Family Engagement:

Website: <https://familyengagementtn.com/>
Instagram: @FESPEDTN
Facebook: @ FESPEDTN
Hotline: 833-596-1553

Need Advocacy Support?

Fill out an Advocacy Referral form online today!

The Arc Tennessee has a team of experienced advocates that work directly with individuals to solve problems, connect them to resources, develop advocacy skills, or assist with a wide array of specific needs. Individual advocacy services are designed to assist individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in understanding their rights and identifying opportunities to pursue and achieve their dreams.

Who can submit a referral form: Anyone can refer themselves or another individual for advocacy support. Visit <https://www.thearctn.org/resources/our-services/individual-advocacy/> to read more information. To submit a advocacy referral request, scan the QR code below:



Advocacy Referral Form Link



Stay Connected with The Arc Tennessee:

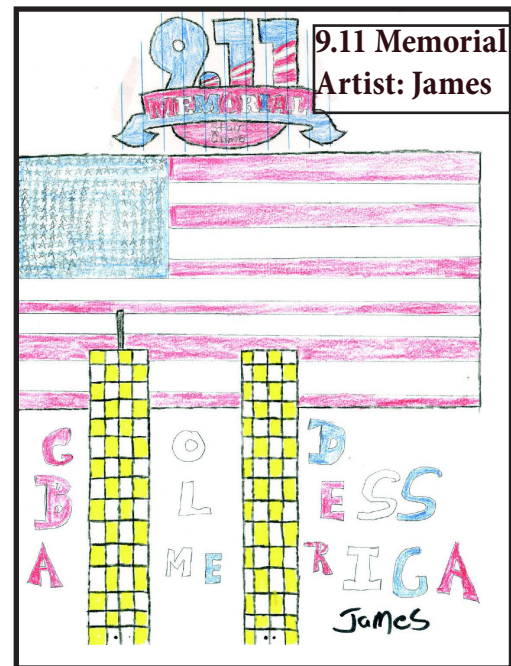
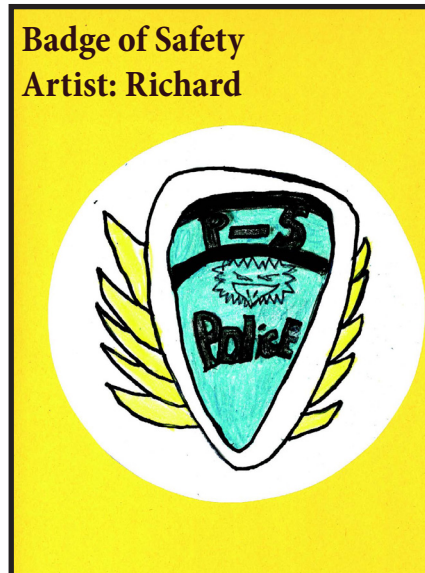
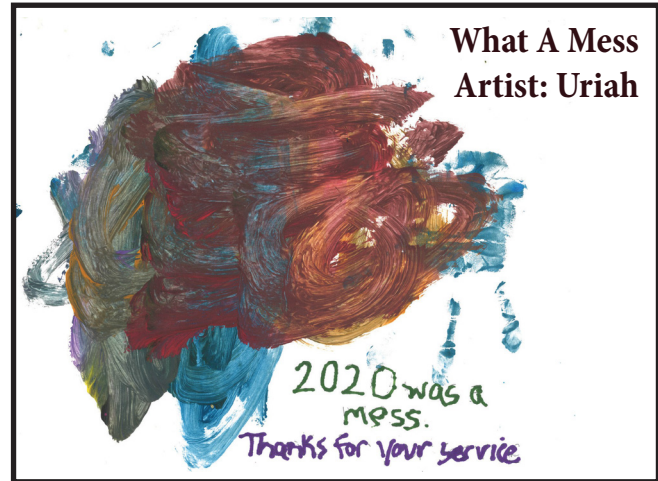
Website: www.thearctn.org
Instagram: @TheArcTennessee
Facebook: @TheArcTennessee
Twitter: @TheArcTennessee



Sept. 11th Remembrance Project Art Contest WINNERS!



Congratulations to the six self-advocates who submitted artwork for our Sept. 11th Remembrance Project! These designs were selected by People First TN's Advisory Council, and featured on the front cover of 3,000 printed cards for Nashville First Responders!



**Be recognized for
your impact!**
Submit Chapter news, pictures
and artwork to Dara Bacon
at dbacon@thearctn.org.

We want to showcase your
talent across Tennessee!



Late Summer 2021



Achieve with us.

**545 Mainstream Drive, Suite 100
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To continue prospering and growing as an organization, we must receive charitable contributions and enroll new members. The form below was designed for your convenience in making a donation, giving a gift, or becoming a member! Please send completed form to:

The Arc Tennessee, 545 Mainstream Drive, Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37228-1213

Scissors icon

YES, I/we want to make a contribution to The Arc Tennessee!

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____ County of Residence _____
Email _____

I am making a gift of \$ _____. (Make check payable to The Arc Tennessee.)

I prefer to pay by credit/debit card: _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Discover
Card number _____ Verif. Code _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____

____ Enroll me as a member (\$20 Individual, \$5 Self-advocate, \$100 Business Associate)

I would like my gift to be: _____ in honor of: _____ in memory of: _____
_____ gift membership for: _____

Name (of person to receive acknowledgment or gift) _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____ County of Residence _____
Email _____

____ Send me information about including The Arc in my will.

Scissors icon