

EARLY WINTER 2022



THE CONNECTION

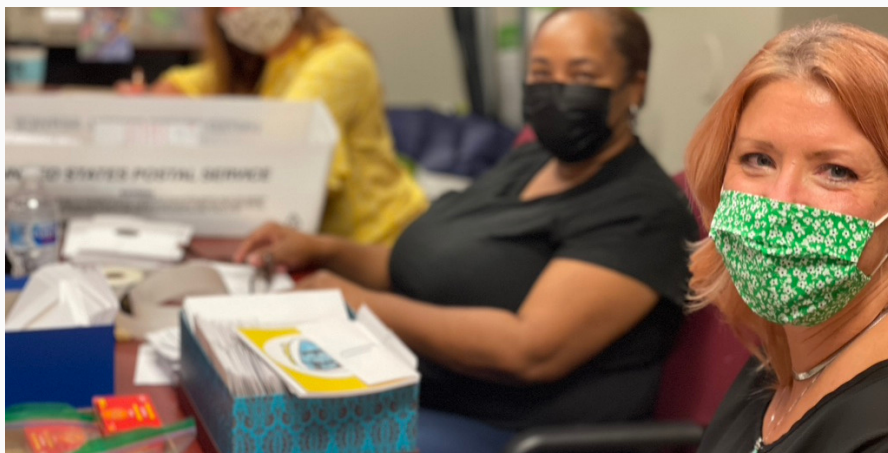
Official Newsletter of The Arc Tennessee

Self-Advocates Lead a 9/11 Day of Service Project to Build Community Resiliency in Nashville

BY DARA BACON

Our nation reflected on the 20th anniversary of September 11th this past fall. The Arc Tennessee honored the milestone by coordinating a 9/11 Day of Service Project to replenish community resiliency in Middle Tennessee. Funded by a federal grant through The Arc of the United States and AmeriCorps, self-advocates throughout Tennessee, along with other community partners, lead a handwritten letter campaign benefiting local first responders.

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Right to Left: Heather Henderson, Ingrid Moody and Ashley Coulter sort 2,977 handwritten cards for Nashville First Responders.

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LEADERSHIP TEAM

Heidi Haines
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Adam L'Herault
**HUMAN RESOURCES &
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Heather Henderson
ADVOCACY

Ashley Coulter
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Frank Meeuwis
**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT &
SYSTEMS CHANGE**

Jen Aprea
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Dara Bacon
**COMMUNICATIONS &
PUBLIC AWARENESS**

A Message From Heidi Haines



As The Arc Tennessee gears up for 2022, here's an update on recent changes and what to expect. First, I'd like to say The Arc Tennessee remains grounded in advocacy work. Though COVID-19 and the Omicron variant continues to change the way our community responds to certain needs, our national federation is committed to advocacy that is

rooted in public policy and being a voice for the disability community. Tennessee's 113th General Assembly reconvened on January 11th, 2022! One event we look forward to each year is Disability Day on The Hill. The 2022 DDH theme is Team Work TN!

The Arc TN will be collaborating with the Tennessee Disability Coalition to support a new DDH structure, providing more opportunities for self-advocates to meet with their legislators over the course of three weeks. See page seven for more details regarding DDH 2022!

I'd also like to acknowledge that John Shouse recently rotated off as Board President after eight years of board involvement. We are extremely grateful for John's service and commitment to this organization. In his own words, John said he is "extraordinarily encouraged about our beloved chapter of The Arc and have every confidence that we will continue on our upward trajectory." His decision to scale back on community involvement and increase personal time is one that we fully respect and admire. Robyn Lampley is filling in as board president.

Like John, I have complete faith that The Arc Tennessee is moving in such a great direction. We have great things in store for 2022 and look forward to connecting with our membership and the Tennessee community even more.

Heidi Haines

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

ROBYN LAMPLEY
PRESIDENT

Rick Guiden
SECRETARY

Niki Klumb
TREASURER

Linda Brown
PAST PRESIDENT



Family Engagement in Special Education

BY KAYLA JEFFERIES

The Family Engagement team has been hard at work making sure the voices of people with disabilities are heard, and their families are supported. We're excited to be working with the various groups from the Tennessee Technical Assistance Network to help serve students with disabilities, a new online tool. The tool is designed to provide school leaders, educators, and families an extensive collection of high-quality, optional resources to support teaching and learning, as well as features for locating specific resources quickly and easily. The resource is called Best for All Central, and can be accessed online at bestforall.tnedu.gov/.

Have you heard about the Governor's Review of Education Funding? We sure have! For the past several weeks, the Tennessee Department of Education has hosted eight regional public town halls to be part of the open dialogue and discussion on Tennessee's review of a student-based public education funding strategy. We know how important it is to be sure the needs of students with disabilities are included in the Basic Education Program (BEP). The Family Engagement team has attended the town halls and made our voices known. More information about the results of the review of Tennessee's BEP should be forthcoming, and you can watch for updates at tn.gov/education/tnedufunding.

Several months ago, our team launched a monthly Family Engagement Networking Night, for families involved in Special Education across the state of Tennessee. These meetings take place on the last Tuesday of every month and cover a variety of topics ranging from early childhood education through transitions to adulthood. November's event featured the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center's TRIAD (Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders) Team! Check out the new resources list on the events section of our website or email us (see website, email and social media handles to the left).



Stay Connected:



www.familyengagementtn.com



www.facebook.com/fespedtn/



www.instagram.com/fespedtn/



SpecialEducation@TheArcTN.org



9.11 Day of Service, continued from page 1

People First TN lead a statewide art contest, inviting self-advocates to design the 2,977 cards that would be delivered to Nashville police precincts, first stations and emergency teams (one card in honor of every life lost on 9/11/01). The People First TN Advisory Council then selected the winning designs. "At the heart of this project was the desire to give individuals with disabilities the chance to not only restore Nashville's resiliency after a hard year, but also honor those we lost on Sept. 11th, 2001," said Heidi Haines.

In addition to the letter campaign, videos were created to educate Tennessee families on emergency preparedness protocols and resources. Our website now features an Emergency Preparedness section (www.thearcn.org/prepare), with steps on signing up for emergency alerts, basic preparation planning, as well as tips for calling 9-1-1. The Arc TN also filmed our first television commercial, which conveyed a message of thanks to first responders. Self-advocate Emmaline Whitson had the lead role, alongside members of Metro Nashville's Police Department.

As the grant project ended, Middle Tennessee endured another natural disaster with the Waverly flooding. The Arc TN pivoted the Sept. 11th keynote event to be a last-minute blood drive to help replenish local blood supplies. Blood Assurance, a nonprofit, full-service blood center serving healthcare facilities throughout Tennessee, expressed an immediate need for donations between the Waverly flooding and Labor Day weekend.

In all, The Arc TN partnered with 39 organizations to complete 2,977 handwritten messages. Over 400 volunteers completed 800+ hours of community service, with online resource videos reaching over 92,000 viewers.



The Arc TN Family Engagement Director, Jen Aprea gives the gift of life during the 9.11 Day of Service Blood Drive on the Assurance Blood mobile.



Lt. Michelle Cooker, Officers Nakia Reid & Angela Booker were all smiles while filming a thank you commercial with self-advocate Emmaline Witson



Chapter News

Activities and information of Tennessee's chapters of The Arc!

SHARON BOTTORFF

Roger Blue Lifetime Achievement Award Winner



On Dec. 1st, 2021, The Arc Williamson County's Executive Director, Sharon Bottorff, received the highest honor as the The Roger Blue Memorial Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. This award is given to a professional or volunteer who has been involved locally and statewide, who has wisdom, and shares former Executive Director Roger Blue's philosophy of respect, dignity and the freedom of choice.

TRUNK OR TREAT

The Arc of The Great Smokies



The Arc of The Great Smokies hosted a drive-thru Trunk or Treat experience for families and self-advocates in October. Maryville College students who participate in the Best Buddies program helped pass out candy, glow sticks & books to make the event a huge success!

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MOTORCADE

The Arc Cumberland County



The Arc Cumberland County hosted their annual Olympic games, Sept. 19, 2021. Modified to be a drive-thru parade, decorated vehicles made a motorcade to Stone Memorial High School. Approximately 65 athletes drove through a line of cheering peers to receive ribbons, medals, and a pizza coupon donated by Papa John's! Not even the rain could dampen the spirit of the athletes and volunteers.

AWARDS & BENEFITS GALA

The Arc Mid-South

The Arc Mid-South held their 26th Annual Awards & Benefits Gala on Nov. 20th, 2021 at The Great Hall and Conference Center in Germantown, TN! Registered guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, a live silent auction and an inspirational awards ceremony.

FESTIVAL OF TREES

The Davidson County & Greater Nashville
The Arc Williamson County

Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021, The Arc Davidson County & Greater Nashville and The Arc Williamson County held their annual Festival of Trees event to raise funds for programing and services. Community partners were invited to sponsor and decorate a tree to be featured in The Holiday Inn at Vanderbilt hotel lobby. Twenty-one organizations participated, including Able Voices TN and We Rock The Spectrum Kids Gym Franklin. All decorated trees represented community impact of donors, as well as a commitment for individuals with disabilities in the area. The festive event attracted over 100 attendees and also included a silent auction!



VALERIA COBB
EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR
The Susan Gray School at Vanderbilt

The Arc Tennessee Award Winners 2021

The Arc Tennessee Awards were held virtually on Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 2021. Fifteen winners were recognized from across the state, including awards for self-determination and employment. For a complete list of award categories and future announcements about the 2022 awards event, visit www.thearctn.org.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Joan Burns
The Arc Anderson County

WORK INITIATIVE

Ben Schwartzman
Vanderbilt University

The Jake Award

Katie Powers
Developmental Services of Dickson County



INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER
ADVANCE AUTO PARTS WAREHOUSE DC 42



SELF-DETERMINATION
DIAMOND GRIGSBY



PUBLIC AWARENESS
ADELICIA COMPANY



RUTH ROBERTS MEMORIAL
ELIZABETH CERVANTES



Award Winners, *continued*

THE ARC TN VALUE AWARD JUSTICE

Jonathan Martinis



PROMISING YOUNG LEADER
KOREY DALTON

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Janice Henderson



THE ARC TN AWARD
RESPECT
K-9 COMPANIONS NASHVILLE

THE ROGER BLUE MEMORIAL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Sharon Bottorff
The Arc Williamson County



AGENCY OF DISTINCTION
TENNESSEE EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

Disability Day on the Hill 2022: TN Team Work!

BY DARA BACON



Several advocacy organizations throughout the state are gearing up for Disability Day on the Hill 2022! All advocacy events and meetings will be VIRTUAL again this year. Register for the Tennessee Disability Coalitions DDH 2022 webinar, which will be Wednesday, Jan. 25th at 2pm and 6pm (CST). This webinar will share important event details, including the expanded timeline for meeting with legislators, as well as the advocacy group for each region of the state! The Tennessee Disability Coalition will work to set up a meeting as well as prep all participants to advocate for DDH and beyond. To register for the event, visit:

<https://www.tndisability.org/disability-day-hill-2022>

The Arc Connection newsletter is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee and is published quarterly for members of The Arc Tennessee. News articles and success stories should be sent to: Dara Bacon, Editor (dbacon@theartcn.org) or The Arc Tennessee, 545 Mainstream Drive, Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37228. Permission to copy and distribute is granted with acknowledgement.

The Arc Tennessee values diversity and does not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographical location, sexual orientation, gender, level of disability or Limited English Proficiency.

Early Winter 2021



545 Mainstream Drive, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37228-1213

Visit www.thearctn.org
to become a member or make a donation today!

You can also complete the form below and mail to:
The Arc Tennessee, 545 Mainstream Drive, Suite 100, Nashville, TN 37228

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

County of Residence _____

Email _____

Check all that apply

☐ **Enroll me as a member** (please circle: \$20 Individual, \$5 Self-Advocate, \$100 Business Associate)

☐ **Please accept this donation** (in honor of _____)

**Make check payable to The Arc Tennessee or call
615-248-5878 ext: 317 to process membership dues or make a donation by phone.**