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.
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
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).
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.thearctn.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.
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.

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 Johns! Not even the rain could dampen the spirit of the athletes and volunteers.

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!

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!
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](http://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

**SELF-DETERMINATION**
Diamond Grigsby

**INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER**
Advance Auto Parts Warehouse DC 42

**PUBLIC AWARENESS**
Adelicia Company

**RUTH ROBERTS MEMORIAL**
Valeria Cobb  
The Susan Gray School at Vanderbilt
Award Winners, continued

THE ARC TN VALUE AWARD
JUSTICE
Jonathan Martinis

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL
OF THE YEAR
Janice Henderson

THE ROGER BLUE MEMORIAL
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
Sharon Bottorff
The Arc Williamson County

PROMISING YOUNG LEADER
KOREY DALTON

THE ARC TN AWARD
RESPECT
K-9 COMPANIONS NASHVILLE

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
Visit [www.thearctn.org](http://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.