

LATE SPRING 2022



# THE CONNECTION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ARC TENNESSEE



## A PROMISE WORTH KEEPING

Promise Park: Nashville's newest inclusive playground

BY DARA BACON

In March, the Nashville Zoo opened Promise Park, a new inclusive outdoor playground. Everything from the softened turf to the long stretch of zip lines made for racing, this park is incredible! Every square foot seems intentionally placed so kids can play side-by-side. Kids of all abilities that is, especially kids with disabilities.

Though the custom designed space took two years to build during the pandemic, the real story of Promise Park began in 2003. Parents Laurian and John Scott were welcoming their daughter, Thisbe into the world. Known for her level of love and curiosity, Thisbe was a light to all those she met.

*continued on page 3*



The Honeycutt family enjoys a preview of Promise Park at the Nashville Zoo on Sunday, March 24th.

## THIS ISSUE:

A PROMISE WORTH KEEPING PROMISE  
PARK INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

PAGE 1, 3 & 9

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

PAGE 2

DORIA PANVINI WINS BOARD  
MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD  
&  
SELF-ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT :  
DIAMOND GRIGSBY

PAGE 4

THE ARC TENNESSEE AWARDS EVENT

PAGE 3

THE BIG PAYBACK & DONORS

PAGE 6 & 7

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN SPECIAL  
EDUCATION UPDATES

PAGE 8 & 9

CHAPTER NEWS

PAGE 10 & 11



## LEADERSHIP TEAM

Heidi Haines  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Heather Henderson  
**ADVOCACY**

Ashley Coulter  
**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

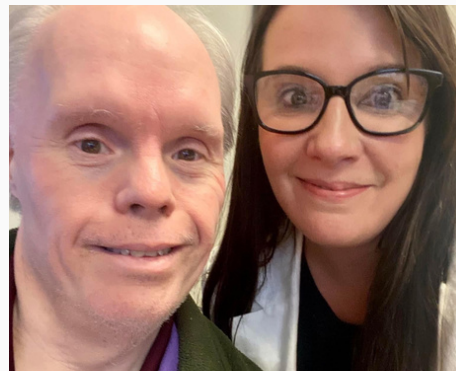
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**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT &  
SYSTEMS CHANGE**

Jen Aprea  
**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Dara Bacon  
**COMMUNICATIONS &  
PUBLIC AWARENESS**

## We're Back In-Person

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEIDI HAINES



Scott Finney & Heidi Haines snap a quick selfie as the office staff returned in March.

The Arc Tennessee is heading into summer with high hopes and lifted spirits. Planning our first in-person event in over two years has put wind in our sails again. People First Tennessee led the charge by hosting Freedom Fest 2022! On May 25th at Montgomery State Park, over 150 self-advocates, service providers, and several of our local chapters

came to enjoy lunch and an afternoon of socializing. Pictures will be published in the Summer Connection. The Arc Tennessee Awards will also be in-person on Monday, July 11th at The Loveless Barn in Nashville, TN. Yes, this means Nashville's famous Loveless Café will be catering the event in the beautiful event space behind the restaurant. More details can be found on page five and on our website at [www.thearctn.org/news/awards](http://www.thearctn.org/news/awards). Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased online.

I want to give a special thanks to the organizations sponsoring The Arc Tennessee Awards Event: Amerigroup, Blue Cross & Blue Shield Tennessee, United HealthCare, and Siskin Children's Institute. With the help of our sponsors, we have an incredible evening planned at a fully-accessible venue. We're planning more events and social opportunities in the second half of 2022. So now, more than ever, we want to stay connected with you. The best way to stay connected is by becoming a member. You'll receive regular emails, our quarterly newsletter, and legislative updates as needed. To become a member please visit [www.thearctn.org/get-involved/membership/](http://www.thearctn.org/get-involved/membership/). To update your membership information, please contact Angela Braach at [abraach@thearctn.org](mailto:abraach@thearctn.org) or call 615-248-5878 ext. 317.

*-Heidi Haines*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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## PROMISE PARK continued from pg. 1

After her first birthday, Thisbe was diagnosed with Brown-Vialetto-Van Laere (BVVL) syndrome, a rare degenerative disease that impacted her development in every way. As Thisbe's disease progressed, the Scott Family found out they were expecting their second child! Noah's arrival brought renewed hope, and for a few precious months, the Scott family was a family of four. In April 2007, Thisbe passed away, just shy of her third birthday. The following month, Noah was diagnosed with BVVL. The Scott's family journey with the rare disease wasn't over.



Thisbe Scott

While Noah achieved several major milestones, the Scott family established the Thisbe & Noah Scott Foundation to search for a cure. The family was told that if they could find the gene, they could find a treatment. "After Thisbe had died, the hope was saving Noah. The Foundation's prime mission was to fundraise and find a cure," explains Lindsay Ballew, Executive Director of The Thisbe and Noah Scott Foundation. Despite a valiant effort from both Noah and his parents, Noah passed away before reaching his second birthday.



Noah Scott

Even though the Scott family wasn't able to fulfill their promise to Thisbe and Noah for finding a cure, the Foundation has continued helping other families remain hopeful and prevent isolation for children living with a rare disease or disability.

**continued on page 9**



pictures courtesy of [promisepark.org](http://promisepark.org)





## Doria Panvini wins Kraft CPAs Board Member of the Year Award 2021

The Center for Nonprofit Management salutes The Arc Tennessee Public Policy Committee Chair

BY DARA BACON

This recognition is long overdue, partially because Doria Panvini isn't one to like the limelight. Yet we couldn't miss an opportunity to recognize Doria as the Kraft CPAs Board Member of the Year Award 2021 recipient. The award recognizes a board member who shows exemplary leadership, commitment, and advocacy in his or her role on a nonprofit board, especially in times of increased stress and crisis.

The Center for Nonprofit Management recognized Panvini for her years of public policy advocacy, especially during COVID-19. Panvini, who has chaired The Arc Tennessee Board of Directors Public Policy Committee for multiple years, advocated for individuals with disabilities to have equal access to rationed medical equipment during the pandemic. From all of us at The Arc Tennessee, congratulations Doria!



Doria Panvini

## SELF-ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT: DIAMOND GRIGSBY

The Arc TN 2021 Self-Determination Award winner encourages others

BY DARA BACON

As Vice Chair of People First Tennessee, and President of the Rutherford Co. People First Chapter, Diamond Grigsby knows how to speak for herself. In fact, one of the most important goals in her life is helping others be successful with using their voice!

Diamond sets a high standard as the first of many self-advocates The Arc Tennessee will be featuring in our Self-Advocate Spotlight. As a graduate of Vanderbilt's Next Steps program and Tennessee's Council on Developmental Disabilities Partners in Policy Making Class, Diamond has met with policy makers for eight years and counting. "I think it's important for people with disabilities to use their voice to make changes in laws and services. If you're a self-advocate trying to find your voice, get involved with People First Tennessee and the Partners in Policy Making Class," encourages Diamond.



Diamond Grigsby after being presented her award from The Arc TN in 2021.





## Join us for the Arc Tennessee Awards 2022

The Arc Tennessee Awards will be held on Monday, July 11th at The Loveless Barn in Nashville, TN. The inspirational event will include 13 awards for our statewide winners, as well as seven awards recognizing distinguished Direct Support Professionals through the ECF CHOICES program.

Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased online at [www.thearctn.org/news/awards](http://www.thearctn.org/news/awards). You can also find full event details, the dinner menu and hotel accommodations by visiting the link, or scanning the following QR codes:



Event Details



Purchase Tickets



Event Menu



## Thank you to our event sponsors!



## Why this year is a stand-alone event?

The Arc Tennessee Awards generally take place the evening before The Tennessee Disability MegaConference begins. The MegaConference will happen in-person in 2023, and take place every other year beginning in 2023. More details will be announced in the Summer Connection. The Arc Tennessee staff and the MegaConference Steering Committee wanted to continue the annual awards tradition, even in the off year when the MegaConference would not be taking place. For this reason, The Arc Tennessee Awards will be a stand-alone event in 2022.



# Thank you ♥

## The Big Payback 2022 Success!

Over 80 donors help The Arc Tennessee raise \$10,981!

Each May, over 800 nonprofits participate in The Big Payback, a 24-hour donation drive that inspires the local community to support Middle Tennessee's nonprofit organizations. This year, The Arc Tennessee received 84 donations and several matched donations by business partners and private donors! Many thanks to those who participated! We always appreciate your support and encouragement!



## Many Thanks to our Business Partners!



## Many Thanks to our Families, Groups & Individual Donors!

Life Changing Word Ministry  
Christine Theofanopoulos  
Kim Adkins  
Susan Jakoblew  
Ernest Brooks  
Mr. & Mrs. Guiden  
Julie Richard  
Ashley Coulter  
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Tiffany Smiley  
Holly Cunningham  
Robyn Lampley  
Bob Brown

Linda Brown  
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Nancy Bennett  
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Lester & Carol Braach  
Glenda & Randy Bond  
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The Best Storyteller in TN  
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Brian Crabtree  
Dave & Amy Wallace  
Robert Chandler  
Kara Kemp & Tony Woodall  
Larry Graves  
Martha Simon  
Pamela T Vasilevskis  
The DePaul Family  
Weichert Realtors-  
The Big Dog Group

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# Thank you ♥

## Many Thanks to our Families, Groups & Individual Donors continued

Betsy & Addie Bean  
Brandon George  
Lynda Newton  
Cheryl Coleman Blake  
Rev. Willie Mea Williams  
Camille Mayle  
Karen Nelson & Terry  
Schneeman  
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Dan & Carol Adams  
Valerie Woods  
Ms. Bishop  
Yolonda McClain  
Dr. Delita Johnson  
Valerie Collins  
Robin Gadsden-Dupree  
Deidra K. Diaz  
Annette Graves  
Candie Ferrell  
Lynda Newton  
Cindy Davis



Many thanks to the  
14 **anonymous** donors  
who contributed \$1,577!

## Special Thanks to The Arc TN Staff for hosting donation pages

Our organization had twelve peer-to-peer fundraising pages hosted by friends and staff members of The Arc Tennessee. Thanks to all those who participated. Here were our top five donor pages!

Donation Page Name	Coordinator(s)	Amount Raised
The Best of the Ferrells	Ashley & Will Ferrell	\$2,109
Scott Finney: The Face of The Arc Tennessee	Scott Finney	\$2,109
Alone We Can Do So Little, Together We Can Do So Much- Helen Keller	Molly Anderson	\$1,142
June & Annette Graves- Raising Money for The Arc TN	June & Annette Graves	\$1,066
Gizzy's Greatest Hits Fundraising Page- The Arc TN	Andrew (& Gizzy) Braach	\$308





# Family Engagement in Special Education

BY KAYLA JEFFERIES



Family Engagement Resource Specialists Katrina VanBuren and Annette Graves assist students and families at the West Transition Tennessee Resource Fair on Tuesday, June 7th at Houston High School in Germantown, TN.

School may be out for the summer, but we aren't! We're busy creating resources for both parents and educators alike to help best prepare for the upcoming school year. Our team is made up of former special education educators and parents, ones who know how best to assist you. The resources we create can be found at [FamilyEngagementTN.com](http://FamilyEngagementTN.com).

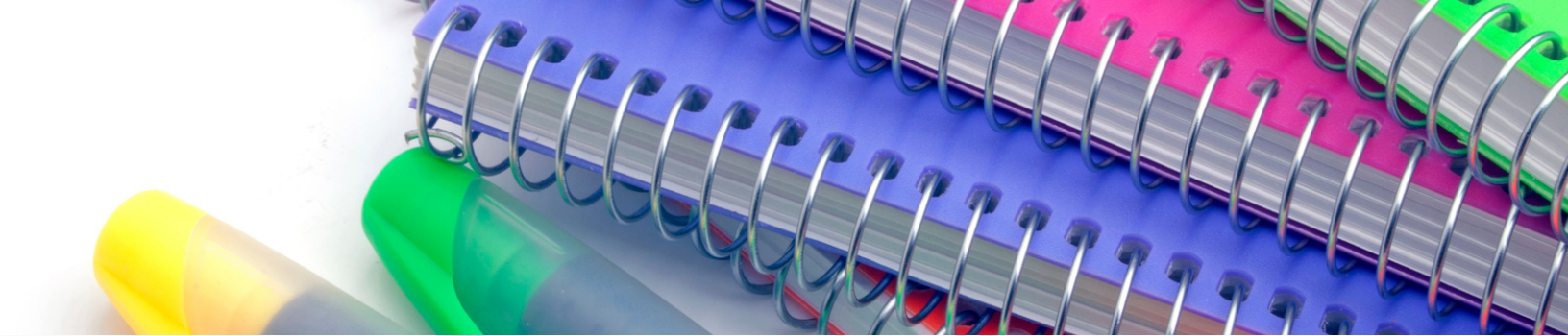
New resources are added regularly! For example, we've recently posted a resource titled Summer Options for Students with Disabilities, to better understand the many summer learning opportunities that help address learning loss during the COVID pandemic. You can find this resource and more by visiting our website or this link: [familyengagementtn.com/1126-2/](http://familyengagementtn.com/1126-2/)



If you are a parent or teacher preparing for the upcoming school year and have questions related to Special Education, we can help! We have Regional Family Engagement Specialists that work in all areas of Tennessee! If you're an educator that would like us to host a training on how we can help both teachers and parents in your district. Simply reach out to us, and we'll make it happen.

In addition to the Facebook Live sessions, our team is working in collaboration with the TN Department of Education to develop a Special Populations Networking Group. This group will participate in open discussions to identify areas of concern and collect feedback on any pertinent issues relevant to special population families. Dr. Jennifer Jordan, Assistant Commissioner of Special Education, and Intervention Programs will also be present to give updates and other input from the TN Department of Education. These events are taking place in each region of the state. Check out [FamilyEngagementTN.com/events](http://FamilyEngagementTN.com/events) to find one in your area.

continued on page 9



## Family Engagement in Special Education, continued

The Family Engagement in Special Education project exists with the goal of helping empower parents and caregivers and increase family engagement in Special Education. In addition to our current resources and projects, we're here to answer any questions you have regarding Special Education. You can contact us via chat on our website, social media, through email ([specialeducation@thearc.org](mailto:specialeducation@thearc.org)), or call our hotline at 833-596-1553. We'd love to hear from you!



Kathleen Basham, Family Engagement Specialist in East Tennessee, participated in the East Transition Tennessee Resource Fair on Tuesday, June 14th at West High School in Knoxville, TN.

## Stay Connected with Family Engagement

[www.familyengagementtn.com](http://www.familyengagementtn.com)

[www.facebook.com/fespedtn](https://www.facebook.com/fespedtn)

[www.instagram.com/fespedtn](https://www.instagram.com/fespedtn)

email: [SpecialEducation@TheArcTN.org](mailto:SpecialEducation@TheArcTN.org)

Pictured Left: Uriah & Ezra Bacon get help mounting a zipline seat at Promise Park from Lindsay Ballew, Executive Director of the Thisbe & Noah Scott Foundation.

## PROMISE PARK continued from pg. 3

Fast forward to present-day, and my own children, Uriah and Ezra, are walking hand-in-hand through the Nashville Zoo entrance, ready to see Promise Park for the first time. Each February, the Thisbe and Noah Scott Foundation invites local families of children with rare diseases or disabilities to apply for a free zoo membership. Uriah was one of the recipients in 2021, and the membership came with a special invite to preview Promise Park!

We instantly see familiar faces, and the custom design of Promise Park is a great blend of new equipment and parts of the zoo's previous playground area. Kids with and without disabilities are laughing, running and exploring every corner.

The sun is setting quickly, and my boys are begging for a few more minutes of play time.

We close the park down. We are literally the last car leaving the desolate parking lot. Within minutes, Uriah & Ezra are sound asleep in the backseat. In the quiet car ride home, two other children are on the forefront of my mind. Though they were only alive for a short time, tonight proved their legacy will benefit other children for years to come.







## Chapter News Activities and information of Tennessee's chapters of The Arc!

### TENNESSEE'S MISS AMAZING

#### The Arc Davidson County & Greater Nashville

Ms. Pacoda Bellamy, a Tennessee Family Support participant, has been selected as a state representative for Tennessee in the national Miss Amazing 2022 contest in Nashville on July 29-31, 2022. Miss Amazing is a nonprofit organization (501c3) on a mission to provide personal development opportunities that build self-esteem in girls and women with disabilities. Miss Amazing programs are in 32 states and have impacted the lives of 2000 girls and women with disabilities. The Arc Davidson County & Greater Nashville wishes Pacoda's much success on her quest to become Miss Amazing 2022!

### ARABIAN NIGHTS PROM & STRUCTURED ATHLETIC BOWLING

#### The Arc Cumberland County

The Arabian Nights Special Needs Prom for ages 14 upward was the spring highlight for the local chapter. Cumberland Fellowship Church in Crossville hosted the event, with The Arc of Cumberland Co. assisting by providing food. More than 200 individuals were in attendance. Prior to the prom, Cumberland Fellowship offered a 'say yes to the dress' event giving out free prom attire. Girls were encouraged to arrive early for makeup, hair and a nail session.

Structured Athletic Kickball was a wash out as rain cancelled all but one game this spring. But rain won't dampen Structured Athletic Bowling which starts in June.



### DOVE AWARDS BANQUET & SUMMER CAMP

#### The Arc Anderson County

The Arc Anderson County hosted their annual Dove Awards Banquet on May 13th at Emory Valley Center (EVC). EVC generously provided the event space and helped set up tables for 120 guests. Participants in The Arc Anderson County Lunch Bunch and Dana Davis (Board Vice-President) and Ruth Brown (Program Coordinator) helped decorate, bringing the theme "under the sea" to life. Participants performed a rendition of The Little Mermaid and sang a few of the film's songs, with Ruth Brown singing a solo.

Board Member Mike Burns & his wife Joan planned (and cooked) a delicious feast that included barbecue, mac & cheese, roasted veggies, cole slaw, and gourmet banana pudding. The event also included a silent auction and six people were given the Dove Award: Haley Jo Davis, Jan & Pat Ryan, Nancy Starr, Ruth Brown, and Miranda Kelley were recognized for their work with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that was above and beyond what was expected. It was a fantastic night for everyone and the best turnout we have ever had at this type of event.

The Arc Anderson County is now planning for our summer camp programs that will run Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10:30-1:30, June 21st to July 28th for individuals ages 16 and up. There will also be activities for school-age children with I/DD once a week. For more information, visit [thearcandersoncounty.org](http://thearcandersoncounty.org).

### Valentines Day Dinner

#### The Arc Cumberland Valley

The Arc Cumberland Valley celebrated Valentine's Day with a dinner and dance and membership drive. The event drew in 118 participants, with 12 volunteers serving food.

The Chapter continues having new families reach out to inquire about The Arc, with new members coming in each month!

Pictured Left: Lisa Davis and Eddie Sewell enjoy a night as royalty at The Arc Cumberland Co. Arabian Nights Prom.



## Chapter News

### MEET WILLIAMSON CO. NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR The Arc Williamson County

Katy Clouse assumed the role of Executive Director of The Arc Williamson County on April 1, 2022. Katy has been with The Arc since October 2002, working primarily as a Support Coordinator. She will continue part-time as a Support Coordinator in addition to taking over the Executive Director duties. Katy is a Middle Tennessee native graduating from Brentwood High School. She's a graduate of Furman University and recently received her Masters in Social Work from MTSU. Katy lives in Spring Hill with her husband, Troy; daughters, Melissa and Lauren; two dogs and a cat.

Sharon Bottorff, who currently serves as Executive Director, will continue as the Family Support Coordinator until June 30 when she will officially retire.

### DICKSON COUNTY, FOR THE WIN Developmental Services of Dickson Co.

Developmental Services of Dickson County has partnered with the local recreational basketball league to create a unified team option for players.



## Ways YOU can Support The Arc Tennessee



Make a donation online at [www.thearcctn.org](http://www.thearcctn.org) or scan the QR Code above. You can sign up for monthly giving or make a donation in honor of someone. Discover all the options on our website.



Each time you shop online with Amazon, shop through <https://smile.amazon.com/>. Under YOUR ACCOUNT, select The Arc Tennessee as your charity organization! The Arc Tennessee receives 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases.



Participate in the Kroger Community Rewards Program by linking your Kroger Card to benefit The Arc Tennessee. Simply visit [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards) and use The Arc Tennessee's ID: 37451. You must update your profile each year.



Late Spring 2022



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

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

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Check all that apply

☐ **Enroll me as a member** (please circle: \$5 Self-Advocate, \$15 Individual, \$25 Family)

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