

SUMMER 2022



# THE CONNECTION

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ARC TENNESSEE

## READY FOR TAKE OFF

### ACCESSIBILITY REMAINS A TOP PRIORITY AT BNA AIRPORT

Nashville continues to make headlines as one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. As the greater Nashville population continues to surge, Nashville's International Airport (BNA) is expanding to meet the needs of every traveler, especially those with disabilities.

"Here at BNA, we are committed to providing an inclusive passenger experience," said Stacey Nickens, Assistant Vice President of Corporate Communications. "We work tirelessly to ensure the journey is seamless from the moment you exit the car until you board the plane." Nickens, formerly the Director of Customer Experience, works closely with Safety Manager Tami Warren, who leads BNA's

*continued on page 5*



CHECK OUT BNA'S DOG PARK LOCATED AT THE TOP OF TERMINAL GARAGE 1, PEDESTRIAN PLAZA LEVEL P5.

## THIS ISSUE:

READY FOR TAKEOFF:  
ACCESSIBILITY AT BNA AIRPORT

PAGE 1 & 5

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR &  
BOARD PRESIDENT MESSAGE

PAGE 2

PEOPLE FIRST TENNESSEE:  
FREEDOM FEST HIGHLIGHTS

PAGE 3 & 4

THANK YOU DONORS &  
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

PAGE 7

CHAPTER NEWS

PAGE 5

SELF-ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT:  
SCOTT FINNEY CELEBRATES 34 YEARS

PAGE 8 & 9

BILLY WORSHAM CHAIRS STATEWIDE  
POLICY & PLANNING COUNCIL

PAGE 6



## LEADERSHIP TEAM

Heidi Haines  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Heather Henderson  
**ADVOCACY**

Ashley Coulter  
**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

Frank Meeuwis  
**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT &  
SYSTEMS CHANGE**

Jen Aprea  
**FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

Dara Bacon  
**COMMUNICATIONS &  
PUBLIC AWARENESS**

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**PRESIDENT**

Jen Vogus  
**SECRETARY**

Niki Klumb  
**TREASURER**

Linda Brown  
**PAST PRESIDENT**

## Ready for Summer!

### MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD PRESIDENT



Heidi Haines, Executive Director

Things are heating up in Tennessee as we launch our 2022 Membership Drive! There's never been a better time to be a member of the nation's largest community-based organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities! The Arc Tennessee wants to grow from 1,931 to 3,000 members statewide by July 1st of 2023!

For more information on how you can play a part in this momentum, check out our membership drive details list on page 7. We want Tennessee's disability community to stay united, informed and connected.

*Heidi Haines*



Robyn Lampley, Board President

Hello! With the decline in pandemic-related issues, we are beginning to gather together again. I'm so thankful! We recently gathered for a People First Freedom Festival at Montgomery Bell State Park. We're gearing up for The Arc TN Awards in July and a family day at the Nashville Zoo in September (more details to come). Plans are

underway for Disability MegaConference 2023 and we hope 2023 will also mark the return of our Big Ideas event for self-advocates. I encourage you to keep your eye out for information for The Arc Tennessee's upcoming events. Make every effort to join us as often as possible. It will be so great to see you!

Happy Summer!

*-Robyn Lampley*





# People First Tennessee Freedom Fest 2022!

BY FRANK MEEUWIS



Lunchtime! A dedicated crew of volunteers and staff members pass out sub-style sandwich, chips, and cookies to hungry Festival goers!

The large space with plenty of windows for ventilation was ideal for our event! Contrary to weather predictions, the sky was only slightly overcast, which helped keep the heat and humidity down while we worked. An adjacent canopy, registration and information tables, outdoor games like Corn-Hole and a disc-golf basket were also set up. Cars and vans pulled up with volunteers and people eager for the festivities! Upon arrival, self-advocates received a raffle-ticket for door prizes! DJ Mark Ximer helped keep the beat alive by playing popular hits, and provided means of addressing the big crowd with speakers and microphone!

Though a few sprinkles brought the crowd inside, the simple storm was gone as quick as it came and confirmed the cosmic blessing on our event! Information about membership, voting, and COVID vaccinations were available. Brothers Bill and Sam Gage (from the Cumberland County People First Chapter) stole the show with talks about self-advocacy, self-determination, endurance, self-respect and safety. This get-together felt overdue after all we had been through the previous 26 months! The last-minute surprise photo-booth was very popular, equipped with costume and accessories that brought out the silliness in everyone.

After weeks of preparation, the time had finally come for People First Tennessee's first in-person event in years! Sub sandwiches were in the refrigerator by the dining hall, while paper plates, napkins, cutlery, hand-sanitizer, and Clorox Wipes were ready. Though the weather forecast switched from clear skies to late morning showers, the event's anticipation was so strong, it would've taken something on the scale of a biblical flood to cancel 2022's summer People First Freedom Festival!

Our staff arrived at Montgomery Bell State Park to the Group Camp One's grand dining hall that we rented for the event. Built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps and considered a historic landmark, the dining hall, kitchen, and bath houses are constructed of hand-hewn stone and local timber.

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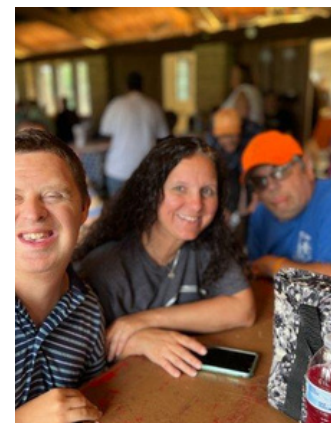
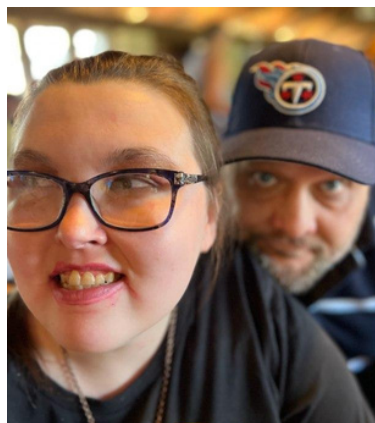


## FREEDOM FEST continued

While folks were finishing lunch, Amanda Brewer from Tennessee's Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) drew our door prize winners! Over five hundred dollars in gift cards—from Amazon and Wal-Mart to Subway and Zaxby's--were just given out to over 50 self-advocates as tokens of People First TN's appreciation!

We are so grateful for the outstanding support professionals across the state, and for all our People First Tennessee members! A special thanks to Developmental Services of Dickson County for their invaluable generosity and crucial planning skills, as well as DIDD! Thanks to our many support providers, Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) and Self Advocacy Resource & Technical Center (SARTAC), and Tennessee's Council on Developmental Disabilities for the financial support that made this event possible.

One of the most important parts of People First's Summer '22 was providing a safe space for connection and interdependence for 160 self-advocates- a celebration of freedom and support for all.



Self-advocates, support professionals, volunteers and staff from Buffalo River, Skills Tullahoma, Shelbyville, Waves Fairview, Developmental Services of Dickson Co., West TN Family Services & Supports and DIDD enjoy Freedom Fest 2022!





## Chapter News

Activities and information  
from our local chapters of The Arc

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### SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The Arc Davidson County & Greater Nashville

The Arc Davidson County & Greater Nashville (DCGN) is happy to continue our scholarship program in supporting those with disabilities who have a desire to continue their education in a post-secondary college program. Please contact Sheila Moore at [smoore@arcdc.org](mailto:smoore@arcdc.org) to receive an application and more information.

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### CO-ED BASKETBALL IN DICKSON

Developmental Services of Dickson County

Developmental Services of Dickson County partnered with The Arc Tennessee to bring Freedom Fest to Montgomery Bell State Park (see more pictures on previous pages). DSDC also partnered with DCHS Lady Cougars for the first annual HOOPS! co-ed basketball camp.



## Ready for Take Off continued

ADA committee. The team at BNA encourages all families to know their options when planning a trip through BNA. Here is a quick list of supports available to everyone:

### Security Checkpoint & Wheelchair Assistance

"If you or your family need additional time through our security checkpoint, visit the [TSA Cares website](#) and complete the form at least 72 hours or more in advance," says Warren. Those who complete the form (or call 855-787-2227) will receive help through the screening checkpoint provided by TSA. Wheelchair assistance for arriving flights (including connections) is available through the airlines and can be requested at the time of booking via their customer service number. When making this request, be sure to have your flight confirmation number handy. Wheelchair assistance for departing flights is not reserved in advance but is available by request after you arrive at the airport either curbside or through your airline at their ticket counter.

### Universal Changing Tables

With the support of BNA leadership, each concourse will include universal changing tables in the family restrooms when construction is completed. Concourse D & C are connected, so families needing a universal table should use one located in D. Concourse A & B are connected, and passengers will have access to the adult changing station in B as soon as it reopens in late July.

### Service Animal Relief Areas (SARAs)

In 2021, BNA became the first Mars Petcare certified airport. This coveted achievement highlighted BNA's role to provide friendly SARAs to those traveling with service animals and pets. SARAs can be found in our plaza Garage One (5th level, curbside), the north and south terminals, and the indoor area in concourse D.

# ADVOCACY

## My journey to Chairing the Statewide Policy & Planning Council (SPPC)

BY BILLY WORSHAM

My career in the field of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (IDD) began in 1987.

Since the beginning of my career, I worked as a DSP in many other roles, including Personal Assistance, Community-Based and Employment Services, Agency Director, Agency Operations Manager, Independent Support Coordinator, Vocational Rehabilitation and Special Education.

In continuation of a life-long career in the IDD field, I have the privilege of serving as a Community Resource Specialist (CRS) at The Arc Tennessee. As a CRS, I wear many hats including advocacy for people who are experiencing rights or service issues, one who helps individuals to locate services and supports they need, and to support the development of programs or services that will address the service gaps in rural areas of Tennessee.

One of the values that I learned along the way is to “find ways to love your community”. This has fostered a strong desire to provide opportunities

and support for people wanting to achieve full potential in their lives. In 2011, I was appointed former Commissioner of Tennessee's Department of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) Jim Henry as the chair of the East TN Policy and Planning Council. This council was able to achieve a number of goals and I discovered my passion for supporting Direct Support Professionals.

Recently, I was appointed by Governor Bill Lee as Chair of the Statewide Policy & Planning Council (SPPC) of DIDD. This appointment is an honor and a commitment that I take very seriously. My priorities for this role are to be a good listener, while increasing understanding and engagement. Once I have a good understanding of someone's view, I'm in a better position to advocate. Engagement is equally important. People engage when they feel supported and encouraged. The SPPC council will achieve better outcomes as we remain attentive to those we serve.

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## Self-Advocate Spotlight: Scott Finney Celebrates 34 Years

Congratulations Scott Finney for 34 years at The Arc TN. Nationally known as The Face of The Arc TN, Scott is now the longest-serving staff member and currently serves as Receptionist & Community Liaison. Way to go Scott!





# Thank You!

## Donor Appreciation!

Donations are greatly appreciated and help The Arc Tennessee continue to deliver advocacy, information and support to people with disabilities and their families. Many thanks to our donors who contributed between January through June 2022.

Angela Braach  
Vanessa Baize  
Gavin Dillinger  
Sharon Bottorff  
Chand Henson  
Sandra Jordan  
John & Cheryl Blake

Stuart Ellison  
Christina Pearce  
Shelia Moore  
William Edwards  
Judith Reed  
Tonya Bowman  
Martha Simerl

Jan Ryan  
Katherine Agard  
Heather Schanou  
Glenn Smith

THANK  
YOU

## Statewide Membership Drive: We're growing to 3,000 Members Strong!

The Arc Tennessee's powerful voice becomes even stronger with each member! Now is a great time to encourage friends, family members and self-advocates to become part of the nation's largest community-based organization that advocates for individuals with disabilities. We're growing our statewide membership from 2,000 to 3,000 by July 2023.

## Understanding how membership works:

Did you know The Arc is a nonprofit, national federation that includes The Arc of the United States, state chapters, and local chapters. While all chapters work in support of the same mission, each plays a different role in accomplishing this mission. When you join The Arc, you get three memberships in one!

To kick off the momentum, our annual membership drive is running July 1st - Sept. 30th! Remember, you can sign up or renew with your local chapter in your area. If there's not a local chapter in your area, you can join as an At-Large members of The Arc Tennessee. Check out the new membership levels and dues for The Arc Tennessee or visit [www.thearctn.org/get-involved/](http://www.thearctn.org/get-involved/).

SELF  
ADVOCATE  
\$5

INDIVIDUAL  
\$15

FAMILY  
\$25



**Membership Form**

Summer 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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

County of Residence \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply

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

☐ **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.**