

Challenger

A NEWSLETTER THAT CONNECTS, ENGAGES AND INFORMS

Arc March

Our 29th Annual Arc March was a joyful celebration of community, connection, and support. It was incredible to see so many participants, families, staff, and friends come together for such a meaningful day.

Thank you to everyone who walked, formed teams, donated, volunteered, and partnered with us as Community Partners. Events like this truly take a village and once again, our Arc village showed up in the best way.

Together, we raised nearly \$40,000 to support The Arc's programs and services. Every dollar stays local, helping us bridge critical funding gaps and continue providing opportunities for the individuals and families we serve.

From all of us at The Arc, thank you for being part of such a special day. We're so grateful for this community.



Board of Directors

Shelly Strellner, President
Cedar Rapids Bank and Trust
SVP Private Banking Manager

Danielle Rodriguez, Vice President
To The Rescue
Director of Housing

Terese Fisher, Secretary
Crystal Group
Office Manager

Nathan Haas, Treasurer
RTX
VP, Finance – CFO Mission Systems

Carol Meade, Past President
UnityPoint
Director of Behavioral Health Services

Katherine “Katie” Beckman-Shaull
K and K Consulting LLC PLC
CEO/Owner

Chandler DeWees
Rinderknecht Associates
Business Development Manager

Kelly Dybvig
United Fire Group
AVP Organizational Development

Jessica Fahey
The Standard
Director Information & Government Reporting

Maria Gaffney
Travero
SR HRBP

Chris Johnson – Self-Advocate
Meth-Wick
Dish Washer

Shawn Knighton
Linn-Mar School District
Family Resource Specialist, Homeless Liaison

Shelby Kobliska
Junior Achievement

Jeff Koffron
Koffron Custom Renovations & Property
Management, LLC
General Contractor

Sarah Kruse
Cedar Rapids Community School District
Executive Director of Special Education

Ali Limbert
UMB Bank
VP Treasury Management & Card Sales

Cherri Lock
Cedar Rapids School District (Harding MS)
Para Educator/Visual Interpreter

Ben Mulholland – Self-Advocate
Cassill Motors
Detailer

Candice Murphy
O’Connell’s Transport
President

Jackie Nau
Elite Fitness
Fitness Instructor

Michael Neuerburg
Simmons Perrine Moyer Bergman PLC
Attorney

Doug Neumann
Self-Employed

Jessica Pleggenkuhle
New Leader Manufacturing
Community Impact Specialist

Nikki Wilcox
TrueNorth Companies
Strategic Development Consultant

From the Director’s Desk

Hello Arc Friends and Family!

Summer is here and The Arc has so many exciting things happening! If you haven’t stopped by lately, we have a brand-new canopy over our Day Habilitation program entrance on 7th Ave and beautiful new landscaping along that side of the building.

Our playground and building are ready for summer, with shade structures in place and equipment cleaned thanks to our friends and neighbors at Baird and TrueNorth during United Way’s Day of Caring, and a new partnership with St. Andrew’s Church as a second location for our summer childcare program – cleaned, organized, and ready to go thanks to volunteers from Mercy and Rinderknecht, also during Day of Caring.

Our space project is in full swing! We have engaged WSG CRE, Tiffany Williams team, to help us find and acquire a space that will better meet our needs today and for the future. We are also working with Solum Lang to bring to life our vision for what a new space could be for the children and adults we serve. Along with space, The Renaissance Group is helping us put together a fundraising strategy that will cover the purchase, renovation, and sustain our programs for years to come. Stay tuned for a big reveal in the next month or so!

It remains as important now as ever to talk with your local, state, and federal legislators about how critical Medicaid and Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) are to YOU and all the children and families we serve. This year we participated in the Arc of The US’s Disability Policy Seminar and met with federal representatives from Iowa. A group of us attended The Arc of Iowa’s Day on the Hill and met with several legislators to talk about why Medicaid and HCBS services are so critical for our communities. We will continue to fight for services, funding, and for the dignity of those we support – and we will not be silenced. Help us by telling your story and having your voice heard!

With appreciation,



Theresa Lewis,
Executive Director



Theresa Lewis

Happenings

Day On The Hill

The Arc of Iowa's Day on the Hill was a success! We were able to talk with many legislators about why Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) under Medicaid is so important to the independence, dignity, and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. A big Thank You to Ben Mulholland, Arc Board member and self-advocate, for telling his story, and to Jenny Bosking and Whitney Alber for their voices and leadership at this event.



Day Of Caring

Thank you to volunteers from Baird, Mercy Medical Center, Rinderknecht, and TrueNorth for giving their time, talent, and sweat equity to help us complete projects here at The Arc and at St. Andrew's Church to get us ready for summer!



Life Insurance

Plant a Seed for the Future

Spring is a season of new beginnings and a chance to reflect on what matters most. It's also a meaningful time to consider the legacy you want to leave for future generations.

At The Arc of East Central Iowa, that legacy can be as simple as a life insurance policy. Many policies purchased years ago to protect a young family or home may no longer be needed. Instead of letting them lapse, you can turn them into a lasting gift that supports individuals with disabilities for years to come.



There are several easy ways to give:

- Name The Arc of East Central Iowa as a full or partial beneficiary in your life insurance policy
- Transfer ownership of a paid-up policy
- Purchase a new policy naming The Arc as beneficiary

No matter the size, your gift helps ensure that children and adults with disabilities continue to have opportunities to learn, grow, and belong in our community.

If you'd like to explore this simple way to make a lasting impact, contact Jenny Bosking at jbosking@arceci.org or 319-893-6935.



Anytime that you shop at a Cedar Rapids or Marion HyVee or HyVee Drugstore save those receipts! Turn them into The Arc and we will turn them into cash for our daycare!

Services

Exciting New Offerings

In alignment with The Arc's One Word for 2026, we are seeing the **POSSIBILITIES** in everything! With the state terminating the Integrated Health Homes (IHH) program, we were offered the possibility of adding a few services that could fill a large support gap for children and adults with co-occurring IDD and a serious mental health diagnosis. As of July 1, The Arc will begin offering Peer Support services to adults with a serious mental health diagnosis and to caregivers raising a child with a behavioral disorder. These services provide emotional, social, and practical support by connecting individuals with similar lived experiences to foster hope, reduce stigma, and improve outcomes. Additionally, The Arc will begin offering Community Support



Services (CSS). This program is designed to provide more intensive support for children and adults with serious mental health or behavioral health conditions. It is a transitional service, meaning that individuals can receive CSS while they wait to be enrolled in Habilitation or while they are on a waiting list for a Waiver. These services are designed to mitigate mental health crises and keep individuals functioning in their homes and in the community. We are excited to begin offering Peer Support and CSS services for the community. If you know of someone who has a diagnosis and would benefit from either service, give us a call!

Two years ago, The Arc was notified that Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) would no longer be funding Project SEARCH, our evidence-based job skills training program for individuals with IDD. This current cohort of interns as well as the cohort which will be selected this spring to begin Project SEARCH in September 2026, have been funded through a Medicaid service called prevocational services, which covers the classroom portion of Project SEARCH, and grant and donations have supported the three internship rotations for 12 interns. To help us pave a path for the future, our Arc chapter applied for, and was awarded, a National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) Technical Assistance grant through The Arc of the US. We will be using the technical assistance to engage a local expert consultant to help us develop a new job skills training program that will replace Project SEARCH. Technical assistance will also include staff training and up-skilling to be more effective and have better outcomes for individuals with a co-occurring IDD and mental health diagnosis. This transformation will allow us to design a program that meets the needs of more individuals, get more individuals trained and in the workforce more quickly, and open additional avenues of funding. Stay tuned for more information on this transformation which will be rolled out in mid-to-late 2027!

Participant Spotlight



Jenna Erceg

About Me.

I am 32 years old and live in Cedar Rapids. I have a brother Josh who lives in Minnesota. Plus lots of cool family members here in Cedar Rapids. I have a golden doodle and his name is Leo.

Favorite Arc Activity?

I love to go to art class and the YMCA. I also enjoy visiting local coffee shops.

Favorite Outdoor Activities?

I enjoy walking with my mom and dog and trying to play pickle ball!

Favorite Hobby?

I taught myself how to crochet. I love making all kinds of different flowers, animals, and baking items.

Favorite Foods?

Ice cream, pizza, chips and queso dip!

I like to try different hair styles and look for new craft ideas on YouTube. I also enjoy listening to music.

Welcome to The Arc



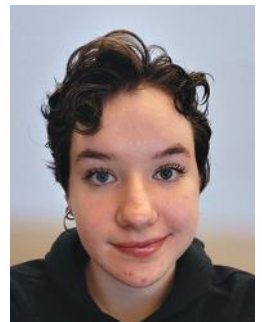
Hi, I'm Amanda Zahn and I am the new Daycare & Group Respite Program Supervisor.

My previous position was at College Community School District as a Behavior Interventionist. I have 4 children – ages 27, 26, 23, and 19.

My 19-year-old has mild intellectual disability and attends the REACH program through the University of Iowa. I am also a grandma of 2 very handsome boys. I am very excited to be in this role to help support our participants, families and staff.

Hi, I'm Gigi Flecksing, the new Group Respite Program Specialist.

Some of you may know me as a DSP, Choice Lead, or Group Respite Lead, but I'm excited to now support families and individuals in a new way. I've loved getting to know everyone through daycare, Choice, and groups, and I'm thrilled to continue serving our Arc community. I love a good joke or prank—laughter truly warms my soul—and you'll often find us pranking one another in Choice. Outside of work, I enjoy a good movie (my favorite is the 2009 stop motion film Coraline) and spending quality time with friends and family—something I'm lucky to do every day at The Arc.



You Make a Difference

Thank you for all of your continued generous contributions to The Arc. This edition of the Challenger recognizes volunteers, donors and members who generously supported The Arc from February through April 2026.

Thank You

General Donations

Tom & Kathleen Aller, Alliant Foundation, Paul Arens, Donelle Baker, Mark Bauermeister, Mindy Bedel, Benchmark, Andrew Bentz, Big Grove Brewery LLC, Jane Bockenstedt, Bouslog Insurance, Cargill, Cassill Motors, Connie Bowler, Alex Bunte, Don & Trudy Claassen, Melissa Clapp (WFLA Cedar Lodge 7), Mary Collins, Tara Cornelius, Crescent-Janko Masonic Foundation, Sue & Joe Cunningham (Cunningham Family Fund), Connie & Dennis Deutmeyer, Madison Dockter, Jane & John Dolter, Kean Drake, Scott & Wendy Draper, Kelly Dybvig, Dorothy & Randy Easton, Marianne Ekland, Michael & Cora Engelken (M & C Engelken Fund), Jessica Fahey, Givingtrax Foundation, Jason Glass, Greatamerica Financing, Paul & Cathy Groth, David Harris, Frances Hatfield, Ruth Hojka, James Holcombe, Thomas & Donnelle Hoover, Kenneth & Connie Hurmence, Ann Jeffries, Mark Kaczmarek, Jeffrey Keslar, Paul Kiecksee, Shelby & Mark Koblizka, Thea Leslie (Roger & Thea Leslie Endowed Fund IV), Clayton Lindwall, Lynette Marling, Cindy McElliott, Modern Woodmen of America, Tyson & Teresa Morio, Iris Muchmore, Rose Noonan, Nicole Ohrt, Theresa Peiffer, Tom & Sonja Penaluna (Tom & Sonja Penaluna Family Fund), Delaine & Pete Petersen (Leslie & Matthew Petersen Memorial Fund), Jessica Pleggenkuhle, Susan Polglaze, James Potts, Randy Ramlo, Timothy Ray, Debra & Dale Rettenmeier, Jess Rockwell, RTX, Tiffany Salz, Kristin Schaefer, Lynda Schimberg, Anthony Schwendinger, James Smothers, Spark For Good Walmart, St. Pius X Parish, Standard In, Patrick Stepanek, Tawnya Stone, Clinton Stone, Gary & Nancy Strandberg, Shelly Strellner, Brenda Taylor, Joseph Terfler, The Arc of East Central Iowa Agency Fund, The Arc of East Central Iowa Friends Fund, The Arc of East Central Iowa Endowment Challenge Grant Fund, Slayton Thompson, Transamerica, Clint Wade, Chris White, Philip White, Barbara Winsor, Richard & Ann Woodward, Keith & Gretchen Wright (Keith & Gretchen Wright Fund), David & Cynthia Zenk (David & Cynthia Zenk Fund)

Memorials

Jayne Dozier

Patty Tom & Bob Lynott

Sharon Kruckenberg

Steve & Mary Agne, Cheryl Britt, Leo & Julie Chase, Rachel Dallmann, Hills Bank & Trust, Randall & Sandra Horman, Scott Kruckenberg, Jodi & Joel Weber

Sara Smith

Ryan Smith

Cody Whittaker

Cheri Whittaker

Volunteers Hours -54

Katie Beckman-Shaull, Jeff Corrigan, Chandler DeWees, Kelly Dybvig, Jessica Fahey, Jeannette Fauchier, Terese Fisher, Maria Gaffney, Nate Haas, Brad Hauge, Dawn Herkelman, Shawn Knighton, Shelby Kobliska, Jeff Koffron, Sara Kruse, Ali Limbert, Cherri Lock, Chris Martin, Carol Meade, Ben Mulholland, Candice Murphy, Jackie Nau, Michael Neuerburg, Doug Neumann, Karla Pisarik, Jessica Pleggenkuhle, Danielle Rodriguez, Kristin Schaefer, Shelly Strellner, Frank Varvaris, Nikki Wilcox

Membership

Arc Angel

Scott & Lisa Griffin

Arc Builder

Tom & Kathleen Aller, Don & Gwen Eells, Sharon Wagner

Arc Friend

Scott & JoAnne Carbaugh, Arie & Peggy DeJong, Dave & Diane Graham, Sara Griffin, Kristen & Don Hatfield, Brad Hauge, Gary & Bev Kotowske, David & Mary Rater, Joel & Sandra Schmidt, Ray & Gloria Short, Adam Todd, Sara & Dale Todd

Arc Advocate

Jared Roach & Amy Belice, Kerri & Terry Benda, Patty & Jim Booth, June Cach, George & Sandy David, Christine & Charles Gaal, Ken & Sue Kleinmeyer, Cherri & Joe Lock, Christopher & Erin Meyer, George & Barbara Neff, Dallas & Twila Nissen, Herb & Marilyn Schaefer, Raakhee & Niranjan Singh, Erica Smothers, James & Cindy Smothers, Tyler Smothers, Joyce & Randy Tietz, Lisa Williams

Wish List

From every day items to special requests. We are always in need of items to keep our office and programs running. Donations can be dropped off at The Arc's main office M-F 9 AM - 3:30 PM or shop our [Amazon Wish List](#).



Kitchen Needs

Cascade Dishwasher Pods
Kitchen Garbage Bags
Paper Plates & Paper Towels
Plastic Disposable Cups
Plastic Spoons & Forks
Ziploc Bags - Reg & Freezer (Gallon, Quart)

Snack & Cooking Activity Items

Applesauce
Canned Fruit & Vegetables
Cotton Candy Machine
Fruit Snacks / Granola Bars
Ice Cream Maker
Juice - 100% Apple or Grape
Snack Crackers & Chips - Variety Packs

General Supplies

Baby Wipes - Unscented/Sensitive
Bandages - Assorted
Deodorant - Travel Size (Men & Women)
Hand Lotion - Travel Size
Hand Sanitizer Refills / Hand Wipes
Kleenex/Tissues (Cube Boxes)
Lint Rollers
Liquid Body Wash
Mouthwash
Reusable Hot/Cold Packs
Shampoo/Conditioner
Tide Pods - Free & Gentle
Toilet Paper - 4 Pk or Ind. Wrapped
Toothbrush & Toothpaste - Travel Size

Office Supplies

#2 Pencils
Ball Point Pens (Blue or Black Ink)
Batteries (AAA, AA, C & D)
Dry Erase Markers & Washable Markers
Highlighters / Sharpies / Post-it Notes

Program Needs

Card Games
Coloring Books - Adult & Children
Craft Felt Fabric Sheets & Pipe Cleaners
Digital Kitchen Timers
Fidget Toys - Pop-its, Stretchy Toys, Noodles, Dimples, Fidget Spinners, etc.
Fine Motor Skills Toys
Gift Cards - Aldi, Walmart, HyVee, Gas, Hair
Gift Cards (Community Activities) - Sky Zone, Potters Obsession, Speedeez, Fun Station, Air Fx, etc.
Googly Eyes - Various Sizes
Kinetic Sand & Sand Toys
Painting Canvases - All Sizes
Play-Doh
Safety Bands
Suncatchers

Clothes/Textile

Pillows
Clothing - Sweatpants, T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Athletic Shorts - All Sizes, Youth & Adult
Compact Laundry Bags



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Cedar Rapids, IA
Permit No. 313

Member of The Arc of Iowa & The Arc of the United States

The Arc of East Central Iowa

680 2nd Street SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: 319-365-0487
Fax: 319-365-9938
www.arceci.org

Address Service Requested

Mission Statement

The Arc of East Central Iowa empowers individuals with disabilities and their families to engage in lifelong opportunities to live, learn, work, play, and advocate with full dignity and inclusion in their communities.

Make a Difference
Donate at www.arceci.org



TOUCH TRUCK -A-



Saturday, August 1st

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Kirkwood Community College

North Parking Lot of Linn Hall

Presented By:



Sponsored By:



FREE Community Event

All are welcome!

Get up close and personal with over 40 large vehicles including agricultural, construction, military, first responder, service and more all in one place!

Free will donations will be collected to support The Arc of East Central Iowa.

There will also be food, music, activities and more.