



Northern Chesapeake Region  
Serving Harford, Cecil & Kent Counties

**Achieve with us.**

*For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 12, 2012

Contact: Elaine Orbino  
410-879-6785  
eorbino@arcncr.org

## The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region Celebrates Disabilities Awareness Month



**Cecil County**— March 1st marks the beginning of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region will be joining with individuals and chapters across the country to raise awareness about issues facing people with disabilities. To celebrate this month, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region will be promoting the news and sharing stories at various activities in the community with the goal to promote and protect the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities...stories like the 11 year old boy with Autism from Cecil County who was

physically attacked at his bus stop. The horrific act of his fellow middle school students was up loaded to You Tube and sparked a frenzy of press and media coverage on the subculture of bullying among school students. An outpouring of community support followed. Hundreds of people came to a local VFW for the benefit concert, "Concert of Caring" to honor the young man. (See picture of Kaleb with the band, "Born Again Outlaws.") The Arc also networks with community supporters in Cecil County including Denny's Restaurant hosting Autism Night for families of children with Autism. Families have a venue in which to share experiences. Cecil County Public Schools has a program for high school youth with disabilities to attend classes designed especially for their needs exposing them to vocational opportunities and a chance to graduate from high school. The Arc strives to connect with similar organizations and to search for quality supports, funding for special needs and achieve a quality of life that all citizens have a right to enjoy.

Over the last 60 years, The Arc of the United States and its network of more than 700 chapters across the country have made tremendous progress in promoting and protecting the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). It is due greatly to the advocacy efforts of The Arc that President Ronald Reagan officially declared March to be Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in 1987. In 2008, only 46% of people with I/DD who were eligible to vote actually did so. Together chapters of The Arc nationwide are working to educate candidates about the issues that matter most to the I/DD community. The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region is working to engage voters and candidates throughout Harford, Cecil, and Kent counties during the crucial months leading up to Election Day. Individuals with disabilities have the right to vote, and the goal of the campaign is to encourage them not only to vote but to speak out about the topics that are important to them.

By supporting The Arc's "We've Got The Power!" campaign, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region is working to engage voters and candidates throughout Harford, Cecil, and Kent counties during the crucial months leading up to Election Day.

Shawn Kros, Executive Director, adds, "*Many individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities live and work in Harford, Cecil, and Kent county communities and are valued members of these communities. In this pivotal election year, The Arc is joining national efforts to raise awareness about disability related policy on the campaign trail.*"

*About The Arc:*

*The Arc offers a wide variety of services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, both children and adults, in Harford, Cecil, and Kent counties, to make informed choices with their lifestyles, vocations, education and recreational pursuits, and to assure stable and nurturing lives among their families and friends.*