



The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region

Advocacy, Resources, Community

Making a difference in the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families



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The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region Acknowledges Arc Maryland Award Recipients

The Arc of Maryland announced the following award recipients at their annual state convention Solomon's Island in May. The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region would like to thank the following award recipients for their work in helping to create rich and vibrant lives for people with developmental disabilities.

Employer of The Year Award was presented to Acadia Windows and Doors in Baltimore who have an exceptional record and ongoing commitment of providing employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Acadia has proven to be an outstanding employer for the past four years- promoting deserving employees with disabilities and making job accommodations to ensure people with disabilities can be successful. The most recent person hired by Acadia is a person who is blind and has a developmental disability. Keeping an open mind about these disabilities and the job requirements to measure and cut wood pile, Acadia instituted multiple accommodations. The company padded all sharp objects on machinery and gave the employee a walkie-talkie so she can communicate with her supervisor without having to leave the workstation. Textured tape was placed on the floor to give her a path to follow to the break room and rest rooms. This woman has been so successful with Acadia that the Harford County Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities named her the Outstanding Employee of the Year. In each case where Acadia hired someone placed by The Arc, the company has transitioned reliance from The Arc's job coaches to providing a productive and successful work environment to their own.

Churchville Elementary School was presented the **School Inclusion Award** for outstanding contributions in advocating for the inclusion of students with developmental disabilities in education settings. Churchville Elementary is all about inclusion. It was the new principal who spoke up at an IEP meeting to say there was no reason why a student with autism could not attend his neighborhood elementary school-it was just a matter of planning for the supports needed. From that point forward, the family, student, teachers and school have been working hand-in-hand to make sure that communication, academic and social needs are met while embracing this student as a full member of the school community. The school's journey together with the student and family progressed from a segregated classroom to the general education classroom on a consistent basis. Churchville has attained the most important value and that is accepting all students for who they are and not for "what disability they carry". Churchville has instilled this value to the students, the faculty and staff, the parents, and to the entire Churchville community.

Michele Stutzer won the **Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award** through her exceptional volunteer efforts at the local and state level. Currently serving as President of The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region, Michele Stutzer has a long history of contributing her many talents. In her volunteer and personal actions, Michele reflects the core of the many principles of The Arc: inclusion, quality of life, protection, rights and self-determination. She has lent her boundless energies to The Arc through public policy, testifying at the legislature, and serving on committees at the state and local levels. Michele has developed personal relationships with many people with disabilities-enjoying dinners, holidays and vacations with them, along with her husband Rick. She's a friend in difficult times as well as fun. When Michele learns of a need, she's determined to find ways to meet it-on a systems change level or on a person-to-person basis. Even with a son currently serving in Iraq, Michel never waives from her commitments.

Light The Fire Meritorious Service Award went to The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region's, Community Partners, due to their significant efforts on inclusive community based activities. Two years ago, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region initiated the Community Partners Program as a means to support people with widely varying wants and need, goals and personalities, conditions and circumstances. The program now supports 28 individuals with disabilities in highly individualized, community-based activities. Activities are based on each person's lifestyle and interests and focus on wellness, citizenship through volunteering, relationship building, individualized work options and exploring new interests. Community members are also recruited to enable people to enjoy specialized interests with a new volunteer/partner. Now, each day or week is developed so that people can pursue activities unique to him or her. Some people enjoy ongoing commitments – such as a volunteer or very part-time job – in combination with mix of day-to-day options that change according to what's happening in the area of interest.

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

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