



Message from our CEO

Once again, we find ourselves at the end of the year with the Holiday Season approaching quickly. We have embraced the new initiatives that ODP rolled out this past year, we continue to make strides in integrating in our community, and work to increase our Community Employment opportunities.

The day program renovations are finally complete! We are excited to showcase the new areas. While we continue to wait for the final pieces of furniture to be delivered and installed, we have moved back into the Prevocational and Adult Training Facility areas. We plan to host an Open House on Saturday, February 1st and



We would like to thank the following donors for their contributions to the Arc Foundation:

DONATIONS RECEIVED:

Angela Palumbo
Angela Wolford
Ann Coleman
Black, Bashor, & Porsch,
LLP

encourage all families and friends to come and see the new areas.

In this upcoming year, we will be engulfed in ODP's Performance Based Contracting for the residential department. These new initiatives will bring enhancements to many areas of the residential services, including staff trainings to family involvement. We plan to take the changes step by step and embrace the opportunity to expand our services. We will make all information available to you as ODP releases it and as always, we are all available to answer any of your questions or concerns.

Our annual meeting is Tuesday, March 26th at 7:30am at The Avalon in Sharon. Please look for an invitation in the upcoming months, and we encourage all to attend.

From all of us at MCAR Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you,

Lyndsey Vogan, CEO

Dan & Matthew Halansky
Dave Gustas
Deborah Vechnack
Ernest and Becky Swanson
Fringe Benefits
Gary Hinkson
James Epstein
Joy Cone
Kathy Paulenich
Keith Godfrey
Marilyn and Richard
Thomson
Marsha Griffiths
Mr. and Mrs. Mac McClure
O'Neill Coffee
Watson's Inc.
William Clair

**IN MEMORY OF GARY
LONGWELL:**

Hermitage Vol. Fire Dept.

DONATE

**Please Join MCAR in Welcoming the
Newest Members to Our Team!**

September 2024

Kamala Black – Residential Program Specialist

Mariah DeGeorge – Residential Program
Worker

Jennifer Deiger – AWC

Glen James – Residential Program Worker

Sharn James – Community Employment

Aubriana Louden – Residential Program
Worker

Sharon Metze - AWC

October 2024

Sonya Allen – Residential Program Worker

Gabriella Blazer – AWC

MCAR In-Service & Shut Down Days

Friday, January 17, 2025

Friday, March 21, 2025

Friday, July 18, 2025

Holiday Closings 2024-25

December 24, 2024 - January 1, 2025

-Christmas Holiday & New Year's Day

Friday, April 18, 2025 - Good Friday

Monday, May 26, 2025 - Memorial Day

Friday, July 4, 2025 - Independence Day

Monday, September 1, 2025 - Labor Day

Thursday & Friday, Nov. 27 & 28, 2025 -

Thanksgiving Day & Day After

December 24, 2025 - January 1, 2026

-Christmas Holiday & New Year's Day

Gloria Danilovics – Hab Aide

Michelle Eicher – Residential Program Worker

Zachary Gramsky- Residential Program Worker

Kayla Guthrie – Hab Aide

Shavon Harden – CPS

Raina Moffett – Residential Program Worker

Ava O’Linchy – AWC

Kelly Robinson – Residential House Manager

Britney Tucker – CPS

November 2024

Jayla Ham – CPS

Dynasti Pearson – Residential Program Worker

Patricia Tovcimak – AWC

Analise Argenas – CPS

Dana Morton – AWC

Matthew Pinkett – Residential Program Worker

William Robinson – Residential Program
Worker

Thank you all for joining the team!

**Brian Engelmores,
Human Resource Director**

Social Group for People with High Functioning Autism and Asperger’s Syndrome

DATES—2024: December 11 - January 6 -

February 12 - March 12

(Group meets the second Wednesday of every month!)

Time: 6:00pm to 7:30pm—Age 15 and older

Location: MCAR—850 N. Hermitage Rd.,
Hermitage

Contact: Allysen Byers, 724-981-2950, Ext. 238

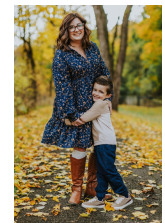
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW HIRES & PROMOTIONS!

Kamala Black- Sham

My name is Kamala Black-Sham, and I am honored to serve as MCAR’s CPS Director. I have a wonderful four-year-old son, Graham Sham, who is my everything, and my husband and I are so grateful for him. I have been immersed in the ID/DD field my entire life, starting from a young age. My passion for this work led me to study at Slippery Rock University and eventually brought me to MCAR.

I began here as an intern and have held many roles, including Direct Support Professional, Family Living Specialist, Residential Program Specialist, CPS Specialist, Training Coordinator, and Human Resource Specialist. Along the way, I’ve been fortunate to learn from amazing supervisors and role models who have helped shape my career.

I am humbled by the opportunity to step into this leadership role and am excited to work alongside both familiar and new colleagues to continue making a difference.



Michelle Eicher

Residential Program Specialist

Celeste Lewis

My name is Celeste Lewis most of you already know who I am, I have been with The Arc of Mercer County just over 35 years. I recently retired from direct care, and I accepted the position as the Agency With Choices Manager. I have enjoyed serving the people with intellectual and developmental disabilities most of my life. I’ve worked in the residential department for many years, I served as an Employment Service Specialist for a few years, I



also worked in the day program I ran the OADC room. I have a strong compassion for the people I serve and will always be an advocate for them. I want to see them live their best life, and to enjoy the simple things that we take for granted. I am the daughter of Ethel Samuels, the wife of Mr. Leon Lewis Sr, I have 3 children OnJanai, Leon Jr. and Christian. I love spending time with my family, my granddaughter Malia and grandson Ophir mean the world to me. In my spare time I love to vacation with my family. I am grateful to GOD for this special gift he gave me, and I look forward to assisting those that need me.

Kelly Robinson

House Manager

Casey Runyan

Residential Program Specialist

Kimberly Thomas

Residential Program Specialist

ADVOCACY

The Arc of Mercer County is a chapter of the largest advocacy organization in the United States for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Working at the local level, we are the leading resource for individual advocacy services. Our advocacy services are free of charge to families and individuals in Mercer County. Since 2004, our advocacy efforts have focused on helping families with children maneuver the special education process to ensure a positive, quality education. We help parents understand their child's rights to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, as guaranteed by law.

Our education advocates guide parents through the special education process, from how to determine eligibility for special services to how to prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to how to file a due process complaint to how to find an attorney for legal representation. Our goal is to ensure that the school adheres to a child's IEP and makes a good faith effort to help the student achieve his defined goals. Parents are the most effective participants in developing and managing their child's education goals. Sometimes, however, they may find issues or instances when other resources are helpful. The Arc of Mercer County's advocacy program serves as their leading resource for information and support.

What our Education Advocate can do for you:

Provide resources and information about your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and applicable state regulations, including Early Intervention, and about how to effectively advocate for your child to resolve issues. Provide resources to school districts and Early Intervention providers to help design and deliver supports and services that guarantee students with disabilities the opportunity to make progress on their educational goals

For more information about our advocacy efforts and how we can help you, contact Atlasia Matthews at 724-981-2950, Ext. 272



In Home and Community



Community Participation



Residential Program

Supports

Donny F. and Dianne M. enjoyed learning to cook a healthy meal with their IHCS staff support. They learned cooking safety and prepared a complete healthy meal while having fun and meeting new people. The hands-on class was held at Thyme in your kitchen and led by a professional chef.

Angela McMath,
Administrator of Hab.
Aide

Individuals in our CPS department are notorious for being out and active in the community. We have a seasoned experienced staff in Mona Novak who take pleasure in finding community volunteer options for our individuals and pursuing those options. We go out 4 days a week in our volunteer efforts and we appreciate the churches who allow us to lend a hand and assist in making a difference.

Kamala Black-Sham,
CPS Director

MCAR Residential and CPS departments came together for a Halloween Bash! Individuals came disguised in their best Halloween costumes and participated in a costume contest. Congratulations again to our winners! 1st place – Scotty H. 2nd place – Lauren P. 3rd place – Brian K. Individuals enjoyed light refreshments, picture backdrop, and music/dancing from the DJ.

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Compliance Connection

MCAR is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents and staff. The organization is committed to adhering to all applicable state regulations pertaining to fire safety. These regulations encompass a wide range of requirements, including unobstructed exit routes, emergency evacuation procedures, restrictions on portable space heaters, and comprehensive smoke detector and fire extinguisher protocols.

MCAR prioritizes fire safety by conducting regular fire drills, both during waking hours and sleeping hours, to ensure timely and effective evacuation procedures. Additionally, the organization provides ongoing

Barriers to Cultural Diversity



Cultural Diversity

The holiday season is a time to celebrate cultural diversity. With the world becoming increasingly interconnected, our communities are more diverse than ever before. This diversity enriches our lives and our holiday celebrations.

From Hanukkah to Christmas, Diwali to Kwanzaa, the holiday season is a tapestry of diverse cultures and beliefs. By learning about and respecting these traditions, we can foster understanding, empathy, and

fire safety training to all individuals and staff, emphasizing the importance of understanding evacuation routes, meeting places, and smoking safety procedures. By maintaining rigorous fire safety standards, MCAR strives to create a secure environment for everyone.

Doug Blazer -
Compliance Specialist

appreciation for one another. Embracing cultural diversity can create a more inclusive and meaningful holiday experience for everyone. Let us celebrate our shared humanity by sharing stories, traditions, and food with one another.

Doug Blazer -
Compliance Specialist

Restrictive Procedures

The term restriction is one you may be familiar with, but do you know what it means when one of your residents have a restrictive program in place? There are many parts to implementing a restriction. This article is an overview of restrictive procedures, how, and why they are implemented.

Allysen Byers, Clinical Specialist

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Steak Fry

We held our Steak Fry on Thursday September 19th at the Mercer County Shrine Club. We would like to thank everyone who donated and attended our event. It was a great success, and our next Steak Fry will be Thursday September 18, 202 at the Mercer Shrine Club.



Christmas Luncheon

We held our annual Christmas Luncheon on Monday, December 2nd at the Avalon. The individuals had a blast eating good food and dancing to music by DJ Larry Freeman. We even had a surprise special visit from Santa!

[More Photos](#)



Contact Us
724-981-2950

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The Arc of Mercer County | 850 N. Hermitage Rd. | Hermitage, PA 16148 US

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