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The Arc of Mercer County/MCAR is affiliated with the United Way of Mercer County, The Arc of the United States, and The Arc of Pennsylvania.

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Mission Statement
"To provide advocacy and comprehensive support to persons with disabilities that empower them in all aspects of life".

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.

Newsletter—SEPTEMBER, 2024—Volume 36

Message from our CEO

As the summer closes, we are finally almost complete with the day program building renovation. We began the renovations in May 2024 and are projected to have them complete by the end of September 2024. The renovations to the main work area, PAES kitchen area, and 1:1 work area rooms were direly needed, to which we are excited to see the finished project. Please stay tuned for the date of the ribbon cutting ceremony that we plan to host. We would love for all to attend that!

On July 11th the state budget was adopted which enacted a rate increase for all fee schedule services through the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). MCAR's mainstream of funding comes from the services we provide to individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A) through these fee schedule rates. It has been years since ODP updated their fee schedule rates; therefore, a rate increase was welcomed.

In June, MCAR hosted their annual golf outing at The Avalon, which was well attended from our vendors. Our managers continue to make this a successful fundraiser each year. On September 19th, 2024, we are having our annual Steak Fry at the Shriners in Hermitage. As always, we have a large basket raffle. If you would like to attend, please reach out to Ashley Reimold to purchase a ticket!

On the horizon for MCAR is the implementation of ODP's Performance Based Contracting initiative. This is an initiative to improve quality within residential programs across the state. MCAR plans to send out a satisfaction survey to all families of residential individuals to gather their feedback on ways we can improve. Please look for that in the upcoming months.

Finally, National Direct Support Professional (DSP) week is September 8 – 14 this year. This week is an opportunity to recognize the thankless work that our DSP's do to ensure that our individuals are safe and living their lives to the fullest. Thank you to all the DSP's at MCAR for their dedication and care they provide to the individuals we support.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you,

Lyndsey Vogan, CEO

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UPCOMING EVENTS



THE ARC OF MERCER COUNTY 7TH ANNUAL RAFFLE & STEAK FRY



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

MERCER CO. SHRINE CLUB

4201 LAMOR ROAD, HERMITAGE

DOORS OPEN AT 5PM

DINNER SERVED UNTIL 7:30PM

COOK YOUR OWN STEAK

\$35 PER TICKET WHICH INCLUDES:

STEAK (COOK YOUR OWN), PARSLEY POTATOES, CORN, SALAD, ROLL, DESSERT, BEER, POP, WATER & BYOB

TICKETS WILL NOT BE SOLD AT THE DOOR

1st Prize \$500—2nd Prize—\$300—3rd Prize \$200

(Only 200 tickets will be sold! You do not need to be present to win)

Other Games Include: Basket Auction, 50/50 Raffle & Assorted Games of Chance

ALL PROCEEDS benefit MCAR & people with Intellectual Disabilities & Autism

**Tickets can be purchased at The Arc of Mercer Co./MCAR
850 N. Hermitage Rd., Hermitage—724-981-2950, Ext. 245**

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

DECEMBER 2, 2024 AT 12PM

AT THE AVALON



CLINICAL DEPARTMENT

My 25

There are many factors that can influence the behaviors and moods of our clients. This can come through not feeling well, experiencing pain, being tired, or simply being hungry. Although we may not have answers to solve some of these issues, there are simple things to address that may alleviate or de-escalate situations. When people talk about feeling irritated or moody because they are hungry, we often joke and say they are “hangry”.

There is an agency that assists agencies such as MCAR with providing menus, recipes, and shopping lists. My 25 is a family of subscription services aimed to help direct care staff provide the specialized dietary needs for the individuals we serve. Currently, our focus is on the Frederick and 76 Edgewood group homes. These two homes have been selected based on the dietary needs and caloric restrictions in place for the individuals in those houses. My 25 uses client preferences and selections when planning the 30-day menus so each meal is client-centered. It can be intimidating to cook for some who are not comfortable in the kitchen, but the recipes are user-friendly. Each lists the ingredients and step by step instructions to prepare delicious, home-cooked meals.

I have included one of the recipes for a tasty fall treat I’m sure would pair well with any dinner selection! Enjoy!



Sauteed apples with cinnamon

Cinnamon, ground, jar 1/4 tsp

Margarine, tub or stick 1 tsp

Lemon Juice, from concentrate, bottle 1/2 tsp

Apple(s), fresh 1 medium apple

Keeping the peel on, cut up an apple. Throw away the core.

Measure oil and pour into sauté pan, Place pan on stove and turn heat to medium.

Place the cut-up apple in a sauté pan when oil starts to bubble.

Stir apples briefly.

Measure cinnamon and put in pan with apples.

Measure and add lemon juice. Stir mixture for about 2-3 minutes.

Turn off stove. Serve

Allysen Byers, Clinical Director

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

The Residential Individuals have been enjoying their summer!

Whether they are soaking up the sun in the community, attending a Mahoning County Scrappers baseball game or catching the Senior Follies show at Hickory High School, we've been pretty active and eager to engage in activities our community has to offer this summer. Many of the residents have taken trips to local fairs, Keystone Safari, a popular favorite – Linesville Spillway to feed the fish or even the local favorite, Buhl Park to just relax and enjoy a picnic.

Thank you to our Residential staff for keeping the individuals engaged and making each day a new adventure!



Elizabeth Palumbo—Residential Program Director

MCAR SHUT DOWN DAYS & HOLIDAY SCHEDULE **2024**

Thursday & Friday, Nov. 28 & 29—Thanksgiving Day & Day After

December 24, - January 1—Christmas Holiday & New Year's Day



41ST ANNUAL GOLF OUTING

Our 41st Annual Golf Outing was held on Friday June 7th, 2024 at the Avalon Buhl Park Country Club at 8:00am. We would like to congratulate Reinhardt's Insurance team for coming in first at the 2024 Annual Arc Golf outing. JFS Wealth Advisors came in second and Hudson Construction came in third. Thank you to all of our donors as well as to all the golfers who participated in our event. We raised about \$12,000, which is an increase from last year. Next year's golf scramble is scheduled for Friday June 6th with an 8am tee time.



Ed Byers & Dave Bodien



Michelle Kerr & Susan Farrand



Jay D, Darin Vadala, John F. & Dave Farrand



ERIE ZOO TRIP

The community Participation Supports Program at MCAR continues to provide our individuals with community outings and facility activities each day. The summer has been very exciting for our individuals. They have participated in bird watching, walking and fitness programs, cooking classes and frequenting our local parks and recreational areas. The highlight of the summer was a group trip to the Erie Zoo. Approximately 68 of our individuals and 30 staff and managers traveled by bus to the zoo. It was wonderfully planned, and everyone had a memorable experience. This was the first group trip taken by the day program in many years.

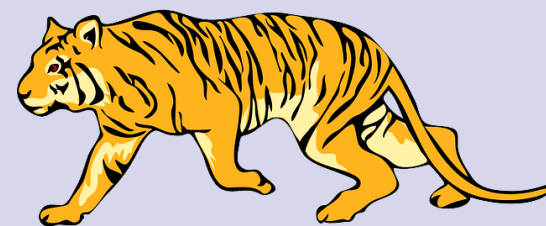
Thank you to all who attended and helped our individuals navigate this trip. Hopefully, this will be an annual event we all look forward to!



Paul A.



Curt M.



Darin Vadala, CPS Director

IN HOME AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS



Travis S. has been volunteering since 2015 with the support of MCAR IHCS staff. Travis volunteers at Pizza's by Marchelloni's with folding boxes and Donofrio's food center with straightening shelves. He enjoys both opportunities and always has a smile on his face. Both establishments said he does a wonderful job and is always in a pleasant mood. Travis looks forward to volunteering weekly with MCAR IHCS staff. Staff said Travis enjoys interacting with his peers while volunteering in the community.



Angela McMath, Administrator of Hab. Aide

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

MCAR would like to congratulate Jessica E. on her recent employment at Goodwill in Hermitage. Jessica has recently started working in July of this year. The Management team at Goodwill has been wonderful towards MCAR and Jessica by giving her the chance to succeed in a competitive work environment. Jessica states this is her "dream job" and she loves that she is able to earn a paycheck to buy things for herself and her loved ones. Jessica is currently working in the donation center of Goodwill where she sorts and prices the items that are donated to the store. MCAR will continue to support Jessica with her new job. Congratulations Jessica!



Ryan Maurice, Administrator of CE/AWC

COMPLIANCE CONNECTION

Compliance Connection Med Administration Training at MCAR, Inc.

Medication administration is important for the health management of our individuals. Medications can help manage symptoms, improve quality of life, and prevent complications. Adhering to a medication schedule also helps prevent serious health crises.

All MCAR staff involved in medication administration are required to complete mandatory training. The training program includes a two-day course, followed by a supervised evaluation period. Employees must successfully complete four medication passes observed by a trained professional, with additional checks scheduled twice yearly. The HR, compliance, and nursing departments will monitor staff adherence to health and safety protocols.

Doug Blazer—Compliance Specialist

CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

One World, Many Cultures The Benefits of MCAR's Diversity

MCAR's Cultural Diversity Committee met in July. At the meeting, demographic stats on diversity from the year 2022 and 2023 were discussed. MCAR shows an increase in diversity when comparing the two years. The committee discussed DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and agree that MCAR is very diverse in all departments. MCAR will continue with DEI Training moving forward because MCAR believes that building a culturally diverse workplace offers many important benefits for MCAR, staff and each individual's experience. Some of the benefits of diversity in the workplace include bringing together varied perspectives, experiences, and ideas; employees get to see different perspectives and viewpoints; and diverse staff backgrounds mean MCAR is better positioned to understand and meet the needs of more individuals.

Brian Engelmores—HR Director

Barriers to Cultural Diversity



GUS MACKER

In July, MCAR was the Volunteer water station at the Gus Macker 3 on 3 Basketball tournament. Managers from MCAR and Individuals from Residential, CPS, and Hab. came out to volunteer at the tournament and pass out water to participants, court managers, referees and other volunteers assisting with the tournament. The Individuals who volunteered had a wonderful time interacting with the participants, and volunteering in the community.



Lamont H.



Catherine L.



Susan & Dave Farrand
and Atlasia Matthews



Lori F. and Ron F.



Allysa S.

Atlasia Matthews, Chief Operations Officer

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

DATES—2024

September 11—October 9—November 13—December 11

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



HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

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

June, 2024
*Blondelle Dilbert - Residential
 Program Worker*
*Brandi Booth - Residential
 Program Worker*
Daric Lennard - AWC
Tracey Griffin - AWC
Charles Green - Hab Aide
Alaina Aring - AWC
Laurie Jeffrey - AWC

*Tshaka Tsolo - Community
 Employment*
*Darnell Beattie - Residential
 Program Worker*
Theresa Hackett - AWC

July, 2024
*Kyajanae Minor - Residential
 Program Worker*
*Hayley Hammons - Residential
 Program Worker*

August, 2024
*Phoenix Collins - Residential
 Program Worker*
Kristin Trowbridge - CPS TAA
*Tomea Brown - Residential
 Program Worker*
*Victasia Hooks - Residential
 Program Worker*
*Lawerance Rand - Residential
 Program Worker*

Thank you all for joining the team!

Brian Engelmores, Human Resource Director

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

**DONATIONS
 RECEIVED:**

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Knapp
 James & Barbara Smith
 Deborah Vechnak
 Gloria Hines
 Mr. & Mrs. David Martin
 Cathy Schrecengost

**In Memory of Gary
 Paulenich**

Kathy Paulenich

Thank you!

We would like to congratulate both Sheila Orelli and Shirley Riffle on their retirements. Sheila was employed at MCAR for 40 years, and Shirley was employed at MCAR for 32 years.

