

# Achieve



## The Arc Hosts Life Long Planning Seminar

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"As a parent of a 42-year-old daughter challenged with intellectual disabilities, I used to lie awake at night worrying about who is going to look after Jennifer when my husband and I die. Parents often worry about unknowns such as where their adult child with life-long disabilities will live; who will advocate for their child; and what kind of vocational, recreation, residential and support services will their child need and receive. Parents will gain great peace of mind if they take the time to plan for their child's future while they still have the health, time and energy to do so," said Theresa Varnet.



Theresa Varnet has been an advocate for persons with disabilities for over 40 years. In addition to being a certified

teacher, licensed social worker and graduate of the DePaul University College of Law, she is the parent of an adult daughter with a disability.

The Arc of hosted a seminar titled "Life Long Planning for Your Relative with Special Needs" presented by Theresa M. Varnet M.S.W., J.D. and Rich Harwood CLU, CAP, Special Needs Planner on January 10 at the Venus de Milo in Swansea, MA. Over 70 people attended the informative seminar covering the topics: Negotiating the Social Security Maze; Preserving Eligibility for Government benefits through Proper Estate Planning; Special Needs Trusts; Guardianship and Less Restrictive Alternatives-The Implications for Consent; Health Care Proxies (Advance Directives); and Selecting a Knowledgeable Attorney.



Rich Harwood has over 28 years of experience in the financial services industry, and specializes in Special Needs Planning Strategies. He

helps provide financial security for the special needs family, both now and in the future. Rich Harwood is the Chairperson of The Arc of Bristol County Board of Directors.

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**  
**LIVE UNITED** 



*Achieve with us.*

# Welcome

Dear Friends,  
Happy New Year!

I hope you enjoy the many updates throughout this winter edition.

As 2014 came to end, we have had significant activities in both the state and federal governments. At the state level, we learned of the key leadership changes in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island and celebrated the passage of key laws providing expanded eligibility, improved safeguards, and Autism services. As the new state budgets take shape, we will need to closely monitor and advocate that services are adequately funded with no reductions.



At the federal level, we celebrated the passage of the ABLÉ Act- a futures planning tax tool that will enable individuals to build supplemental needs accounts for the years to come. The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services released reports concerning compliance with the Community Rule and the Department of Labor enacted the Domestic Service Final Rule to the Fair Labor Standards Act. In addition, we are closely monitoring legislation that would negatively impact those receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. All of these initiatives will have a long standing impact on future services and we are thankful for the public policy efforts of The Arc of Massachusetts and The Arc of the United States.

Once again, we have been fortunate to provide and participate in many holiday activities for the individuals we support. I cannot express

enough thanks to the Holiday Planning Committee members, volunteers and the community organizations that supported our endeavors. We sincerely appreciate the joy that it has brought to so many individuals and families.

As we embark on a new year, I would like to extend my greatest thanks to all of you for your continued support. Thanks to the commitment and support of staff, volunteers, and the community, The Arc had many outstanding accomplishments in 2014. I hope that each of you will join us throughout 2015 to further our mission and expand our network of supports.

Sincerely,



Michael Andrade  
President and CEO

## The Arc Marks Passage of ABLÉ Act

Posted on December 16, 2014 by The Arc

**Washington, DC** – Today, as the U.S. Senate passed the Achieving a Better Life Act (ABLE Act), The Arc, the nation's largest organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), released the following statement:

"We are pleased that the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act has been approved by both the U.S. House of Representatives and now the U.S. Senate. With the clock winding down on this session of Congress, now this important legislation can move to President Obama's desk. We appreciate the untiring work of the chief sponsors of the bill and the support of a large and broad representation in both chambers of Congress.

"While the legislation was narrowed due to the constraints from the

cost analysis, the approved bill will provide a vehicle for some families and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to save for the future, depending on their own circumstances. Our efforts will not be finished if President Obama signs this bill – The Arc will continue to work with the leadership and chief sponsors in Congress to expand this program in the future to ensure that everyone in need can get the maximum benefit from this legislation. We remain disappointed that certain pay-fors remain in the bill," said Peter V. Berns, CEO of The Arc.

The ABLÉ Act aims to change the tax code to allow for tax advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities for certain expenses, like education, housing, and transportation.

Similar to existing "Section 529" education savings accounts, ABLÉ accounts would let families save for disability-related expenses on behalf of qualified beneficiaries with disabilities that will supplement, but not replace, benefits provided through the Medicaid program, the Supplemental Security Income program, the beneficiary's employment, and other sources. If properly managed, funds in the ABLÉ accounts would not jeopardize eligibility for critical federal benefits. With full understanding of its features, individuals and families could use the ABLÉ accounts as another tool in planning for the lifetime needs of an individual with long term disabilities.

*Note: On Friday, December 19, 2014, President Obama signed the ABLÉ Act into law.*

# proAbility Takes a Trip to Remember: Dreams Come True!

The proAbility Recreation Group spent five days at Walt Disney World this fall.

Coach Debbie Wood, who organized the trip, shared this story: "There is a gentleman who donated the money for an individual to go on the Disney trip. He actually went to the dinner auction last year for the first time, and also donated auction items. After the dinner, he approached me and said if I ever needed anything, to get in touch with him. So when we had an individual who wanted to

go but couldn't come up with the money, I contacted him (figured I had nothing to lose). He wrote the check as soon as I asked him. Nicest guy ever. He would prefer to be anonymous."

Thanks to the anonymous donor, the volunteers who helped organize this trip, and the many supporters who helped with our proAbility fundraisers and recreation program. The thirty individuals and family members who went had a wonderful time!



Pictured left to right: Christopher Noelte, Sheryl Noelte, Jason Wood, Debbie Wood, Rhonda Mello, Michael Smith, and Paul Peckham Richard



## Days of Caring

The Arc received three Days of Caring this quarter. Area businesses encourage their employees to volunteer for local non-profits in projects that would otherwise be expensive to conduct. Our thanks to Intellichief, Johnson & Johnson, Sensata Technologies and the United Way of Greater Attleboro/ Taunton for these Days of Caring to help our organization.

On October 3rd, Sensata volunteers set up cabinets and assisted with landscaping at Middleboro Day Habilitation Services. Bob, John and Mike took a tour of the center and met with some of the participants.

On December 19th, a volunteer



from Intellichief in Mansfield painted the human resource director's office.

And on January 7th, six volunteers from Johnson & Johnson painted offices at The Arc's Park Street Attleboro location, and were able to take a tour and learn about The Arc's history and services.



## Joe Earns His Varsity Jacket

On December 1, 2014, Attleboro High School held a ceremony to present their Varsity Jackets. Among the recipients was Joe Scales, a young man with developmental disabilities, who has helped the football team for the past four years. As Coach Strachan said at the presentation ceremony, "He's been the best teammate any of these guys could have...I look forward to seeing him every day at every practice he came to, every game he came to with enthusiasm, just what we here at Attleboro want to emulate. And it is with great pride that I give this jacket to Joey Scales."

His mother Lori added, "Inclusion. Acceptance. These are the two things that raced through my mind as Joe received his jacket tonight. I am so proud of the boys on this team and his coaches."



They've embraced Joe from day one and make him feel included. He is their biggest cheerleader on the sidelines and bleeds blue! Thank you to everyone who made this possible. He was completely surprised!!! And we are forever grateful."

## First Tuesday with



On the first Tuesday of each month, The Arc will be partnering with a local restaurant who will offer their menu while contributing to The Arc. Each month's offering will be posted on our website [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org), through emails and at each office of The Arc. You can help by joining us with your family and friends, share with others, have a meal and help The Arc at no additional cost to you.

Here is the schedule of First Tuesday's so far:

- **February 3**  
99 Restaurant in North Attleboro
- **March 3**  
Bertucci's in North Attleboro
- **April 4**  
Applebee's in Fall River

Please go to our website [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org) to download the coupon for each First Tuesday. You must have the coupon on the day and location indicated for the donation to The Arc to be valid.

*Thank you for your support!*

## Thanksgiving Giving

On the day before Thanksgiving at The Arc, Bishop Feehan students donate baskets of food that we distribute to families we serve. Thank you Feehan and Child &

Family Services for continuing this wonderful tradition. Pictured here are Daniel Jones, Kerrie Walker, Kelly Donovan, Amanda Masi, Patty Ramos and Lindsay Goulet.



# Kids on the Block joined in a Holiday Tradition

Kids on The Block participated in this year's Fall River Holiday Parade. Kids on The Block teaches children about their peers with disabilities using creative puppet programs.



Kids on The Block presented a program on Braille at the Somerset Public Library this winter. For more information about Kids on The Block, please go to our website [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org) or call (508) 679-0001.



The Arc of Bristol County is happy to announce we have received a grant from Mansfield Bank to support Project Kids Connect. Thank you to Mansfield Bank for supporting inclusive activities for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Pictured: Rich Harwood, The Arc Board Chair; Debbie Cote, VP/ Branch Manager from Mansfield Bank; and Michael Andrade, President and CEO, The Arc of Bristol County.

## Jodi Feldman

### Employee of the Quarter



Since coming on board as Team Supervisor and most recently as proAbility's Residential Coordinator, Jodi has

consistently displayed the highest level of professionalism and commitment to the individuals supported by the Residential Program.

One particular individual supported continues to deal with significant and potentially life threatening conditions. Jodi has been

present for all of this individual's appointments and continues to provide emotional and hands on support to him during and after medical appointments and at times; intrusive and uncomfortable procedures. She has also been the direct communicator with individuals' family; who have often praised Jodi's compassion and commitment to their loved ones.

She has worked directly with the Director of Services performing many critical functions that have resulted in the successful implementation of services to three new individuals in our 24hr programs; which required

the establishment of two new residences (one apartment and one condo in local Rhode Island towns). She has worked many direct support shifts; while maintaining her administrative duties.

Jodi Feldman is being selected for Employee of the Quarter for her leadership of this team and the commitment she demonstrates to its members. This is most importantly accomplished via the impact her day to day efforts have on the quality of the lives of the individuals she and her team supports.

## Family Support Center Groups

### Parent Transition Support Group

*Is your child between the ages of 16 - 22 and in the process of transitioning out of school?*

2nd Tuesday of the Month  
10am-11:30am

The Arc of Bristol County  
141 Park Street  
Attleboro, MA

*Please contact Amanda Masi, (508) 226-1445 ext. 3130 or [amasi@arcnbc.org](mailto:amasi@arcnbc.org).*

### Moms Night Out

Childcare provided for children up to age 12.

*Please contact Amanda for date and location of the next meeting, (508)226-1445 ext. 3130 or [amasi@arcnbc.org](mailto:amasi@arcnbc.org).*

### Dad's Night Out

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the Month  
6:00pm to 7:30pm

*Please contact Amanda for date and location of the next meeting, (508)226-1445 ext. 3130 or [amasi@arcnbc.org](mailto:amasi@arcnbc.org).*

### Teen Bowling

Tuesdays 3:30-5pm at North Bowl Lanes

*Pre-Registration required, contact Danielle Martin (508) 226-1445 ext. 3126*

### The Arc's Saturday Program

is accepting applicants to attend.  
*For more information please contact your Family Support Coordinator or David Simione at (508) 226-1445 ext. 3104*

The Arc's Department of Child and Family Services is looking for new members for the Family Advisory Council. The council is made up of a group of families, caregivers, and individuals who receive services from The Arc's Department of Child and Family Services.

The Council advises the department on planning, implementation and evaluation of supports and services. Council members use their experiences, to guide comments on services. If you are interested please contact Beth Bogus for more information about the advisory council and / or for information on the process of joining.

*Beth can be reached at [bbogus@arcnbc.org](mailto:bbogus@arcnbc.org) or 508-226-1445 ext. 3118*



**Take a Walk on the Wild Side!**

Dinner-Auction to benefit **proAbility**

**March 21, 2015**  
**Crystal Lake Golf Club**  
100 Broncos Highway  
Chepachet, RI 02814  
Doors open at 5:30 pm  
Dinner at 6:00 pm

Tickets are \$20 per person  
Please call (401) 233-1634 extension 12 or (401) 527-0414 for more information.  
[www.proability.org](http://www.proability.org)  
Donations of Auction items are welcome.  
*Animal print apparel encouraged.*

proAbility provides life-enhancing services to Rhode Islanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Upcoming Events

### ARICA & Mass Health

Wednesday, February 4th  
6:00 p.m.

The Arc of Bristol County  
141 Park Street

Attleboro, MA 02703

For those who have questions about accessing insurance coverage for your loved one with a diagnosis of Autism. Please contact Beth Bogus to register: 508-226-1445 ext. 3118 or [bbogus@arcnbc.org](mailto:bbogus@arcnbc.org). The seminar is free but please register with Beth.

### Northern Bristol County Legislative Breakfast

Friday, March 6, 2015

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Cardi's Furniture  
Community Room

999 Newport Ave. (Rt. 1A)  
S. Attleboro, MA 02703

### Southern Bristol County Legislative Breakfast

Friday, March 13, 2015

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

White's of Westport  
66 State Road

Westport, MA 02790

### Flap Jack Breakfast

*Fundraiser For The Family  
Advisory Council*

Saturday, April 18, 2015

8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Applebee's

900 S Washington Street  
North Attleboro, MA 02760

### Arc Strong: Achieving Dreams 5K Run, Walk & Roll

*Walk Run Fundraiser To Benefit  
The Arc Of Bristol County*

Saturday, May 9, 2015

Registration 9:00 a.m.

Borderland State Park  
259 Massapoag Avenue  
North Easton, MA 02356

### 32nd Annual Representatives Cup To Benefit The Arc Of Greater New Bedford

Monday, June 8, 2015

Registration 11:00 a.m.

(12:30 Shotgun Start)

Country Club of New Bedford  
585 Slocum Road  
New Bedford, MA 02740

### 56th Anniversary Celebration for The Arc of Bristol County

Wednesday, June 10, 2015

starting at 5:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Taunton  
700 Myles Standish Blvd.,  
Taunton, MA 02780

### Nominate An Outstanding Supporter of The Arc

Do you know someone who strongly supports The Arc's mission and deserves recognition? Nominate them for an Arc Annual Award, to be presented on June 10 at our 56th Anniversary Dinner. Nominations due by May 1.

Go to our website [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org) to submit a nomination, or contact The Arc for a nomination form.

### proAbility Golf Tournament

Monday, June 15, 2015

Starting at 1:00 p.m.

Mauntaup Country Club  
500 Anthony Road  
Portsmouth, RI 02871

*Check out the latest details of these events on our website [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org)*

## Holiday Thanks!

The Arc and proAbility are grateful to the many volunteers, families and individuals who helped to make the season bright for those we serve. Thank you and Happy New Year!"



**Administration Office**  
141 Park Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (508) 226-1476  
Toll Free: (888) 343-3301  
Web: www.arcnbc.org

**Child & Family Services**  
146 Pleasant Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (774) 203-3523

**Day Habilitation Services**  
5 Mill Street  
Middleboro, MA 02346  
Tel: (508) 946-2121 • Fax: (508) 946-2195

**Hillside Adult Day Health Care**  
50 Walton Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-6150

**proAbility**  
333 George Washington Hwy.  
Smithfield, RI 02917  
Tel: (401) 233-1634 • Fax: (401) 233-1674

**Taunton Area Resource Center**  
437 Bay Street  
Taunton, MA 02780  
Tel: (508) 884-2971 • Fax: (508) 884-2964

**The Arc of Greater Fall River**  
182 North Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
Tel: (508) 679-0001 • Fax: (508) 679-9375

**The Arc of Greater New Bedford**  
412 B County Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Tel: (508) 996-8551 • Fax: (508) 996-8553



**The Arc**  
*Bristol County*

*Achieve with us.*



# Arc Strong: Achieving Dreams 5K Run, Walk & Roll

Mark your calendars to join The Arc on  
Saturday, May 9th starting at 9am at  
Borderland State Park in Easton, MA.

**Needed:** Runners, Walkers, Volunteers, Sponsors,  
Cheering Fans and Champions of The Arc

Check our website [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org) for the latest!