Achieve
Spring 2023

Sitting Pretty by Kathy Novotney

“This is one of the most beautiful parts of being human - the drive to connect and understand, heal and blossom” (Taussig, ix).

On Friday, March 24th, The Arc of Bristol County participated in an event with the Attleboro Public Library on The Big Read. The book selected for The Big Read event was Sitting Pretty by Rebekah Taussig. A panel comprised of two self-advocates, Jaki and Ricky, provided thoughts on questions by the moderator, Tania. Tania serves as a direct-support professional in our adult day habilitation program.

The panel of Jaki, Ricky, and Tania discussed themes from the book including ableism, relationships, self-image, and mental health - including anxiety and depression, representation, and body identity. Both Ricky and Jaki provided outstanding insight into living with diverse abilities.

When discussing ableism, Ricky, who uses a wheelchair to ambulate due to living with cerebral palsy, shared his lived experience of planning for a vacation. The planning process takes him close to a year to ensure that he has transportation that can ensure his ease of use and safety. When his family gets to the airport, his wheelchair must be folded up and stored in cargo, and often his father will carry him to his seat on the airplane.

Jaki shared that she enjoyed the whole book, and it inspired her to write a book. Ricky echoed the same sentiment saying he wanted to write a book about accessibility, and how much that entails.

Tania shared an important takeaway regarding this topic. She said since reading Rebekah’s book, she has been paying more attention to stopping at the proper point in traffic to allow people to cross. That morning of the discussion, the car in front of her at a stoplight was partially through the intersection making it impossible for someone to safely cross the road.

One of the questions from the audience asked if either Jaki or Ricky had thought about talking to the Commission on Disabilities in their respective communities about accessibility. Ricky proudly reported...
Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you inspired and excited to head into spring with a renewed sense of wellbeing and motivation.

As we always try, this year we’d like to remind everyone of the benefits of healthier living: eating better, drinking more water and getting a bit more exercise than we’ve done in the past. Spring is the perfect time to start making improvements towards that goal. Studies show that when we take care of ourselves our mood improves, we feel better, we have less pain, we sleep more soundly and we are able to tolerate stress a little bit better.

This is especially important to the caregivers in our lives. If you are a caregiver, thank you! If you know a caregiver, thank them! Providing care to another person is hard work. As we always try, this year we’d like to remind everyone of the benefits of taking care to another person is hard work.

Sitting Pretty

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Foxboro / Mansfield SEPAC

The Arc of Bristol County was fortunate to have had the opportunity to be part of the Foxboro/Mansfield SEPACs first community resource fair. There were over 40 vendors in attendance with a lot of information. It was a great time seeing local organizations coming together to support families. Pictured bottom left: Kristen Nevin and top left: Jessica Schipilliti both Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Children’s Service Coordinators from the Taunton / Attleboro Area Office. Pictured bottom right: Kristen Boisclair and top right: Ida Lindquist who are both Family Support Coordinators from the Taunton / Attleboro Area Office. Pictured bottom right: Kristen Boisclair and top right: Ida Lindquist who are both Family Support Coordinators from The Arc of Bristol County.

Making an Impact

by Anthony Carlo

Kyley, Thomas, and Ryan have been working at a local restaurant in Providence for the past year as part of the janitorial staff. They are successful employees who take great pride in their work and have made a positive impact at RES American Bistro.

Their job duties include ensuring that the dining area and kitchen are properly cleaned and sanitized, and they approach their work with dedication and attention to detail. They have received support from their job coaches, who have provided accommodations such as detailed checklists and special cleaning equipment to help them succeed.

The restaurant has benefitted greatly from the contributions of these three individuals, who bring valuable skills and a unique perspective to the workplace. Their success is a testament to the power of inclusive employment practices and serves as an inspiration to others seeking employment opportunities.

Overall, Kyley, Thomas, and Ryan’s hard work and commitment demonstrate that individuals with IDD can thrive in the workplace. Their contributions have helped to create a more diverse and inclusive environment at RES American Bistro, and their success highlights the potential for all individuals to make a positive impact in their communities through meaningful employment.


Jersey Mike’s Month of Giving

This past March was Jersey Mike’s 13th annual month of giving and since its inception; they have raised over 67 million dollars for local charities! During this past month, their New England stores raised funds for The Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism. They in turn bought lunch for a number of non-profits devoted to helping people with developmental disabilities and we were one of those non-profits benefiting from their kindness.

When you consider supporting businesses that give back to their communities, we all win!
The Future is Here!

Did you ever imagine a world would exist somewhat like the Jetson’s cartoon from the 1960s? Well, we aren’t flying around the globe in personal flying saucers yet but we are embarking on a new way of reaching and communicating with individuals living with IDD who are living independently in their communities... and it will be life changing!

The Department of Developmental Services in Massachusetts, The Arc of Bristol County, as well as many other Arc chapters, are embracing Supportive Technology Services. This will allow individuals the opportunity to use Assistive Technology (AT) exclusively or in combination with Remote Supports & Monitoring (RSM) to maximize their freedom, independence and potential.

The first step to gaining this technology starts with a conversation with your support staff to determine if this service is right for you. A second conversation will be scheduled with a representative at a company that offers Assistive Technology consultations. They will evaluate your wants and needs and match you with a licensed professional to make it happen.

Once it is determined what type of device is best suited for you, an order is placed. After you receive the equipment, you will be trained on how to use it and supported all along the way. DDS may cover the cost if you cannot afford it or if the item is not insurance billable.

Some of the services you can choose from include: electronic motion sensor devices; door alarms, medication alerts and dispensing devices, safety devices to remind you to turn off the oven, telephones with large buttons, picture buttons or flashing lights; sensors attached to wheelchairs and walkers to alert staff if you’ve fallen; devices that enhance images if you have low vision; voice activated lights, appliances, doors etc., and hand held computer devices. Help and safety monitoring is always there, along with in-person back-up when needed. More information will be coming when we are ready to roll out this new and exciting technology. For more information please visit https://www.mass.gov/info-details/assistive-technology

National Employment Opportunities Network (NEON)

The Arc of the United States was the beneficiary of technical assistance from the National Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) a department of the U.S. Department of Labor. Ten Arc chapters across the country competed to receive this technical help towards employment services and The Arc of Bristol County won a coveted spot!

We will be working with a Massachusetts based employment specialist to help us best serve our participants who want to gain employment in their community. As many of you are aware, our R.I. division, proAbility, has been offering employment supports for many years. In addition, we received a grant from the Ballour Foundation last year to initiate employment services in Massachusetts. We are very excited to begin offering this assistance to our Massachusetts day habilitation participants. Our employment team from Attleboro and proAbility will begin meeting with the team member from NEON to discuss how to best serve our participants.

We will be sharing more information as this program launches later this year!
What an amazing honor! Controls Engineering Manager, Sam Lacasse, from Hallam-ICS stopped by to visit with a beautiful plaque and a $5,000 check to recognize The Arc of Bristol County for our community service. Here to collect the award are Direct Support Professional, Cheryl Castelli and President and C.E.O., Michael Andrade.

The Arc of Bristol County & proAbility Satisfaction Survey

Please give us feedback regarding your family’s services, and on any additional help you have received. This survey can be anonymous but if you wish a call back you will need to give us your name and contact information. Thank you for your input!

Jon’s Ride for Autism Awareness
Sunday May 7th.
Sheldon’s Harley-Davidson
914 Southbridge St. Auburn, Ma.
Registration: 9:00 - 10:15 $20.00 per person
KSU: 10:30 from Sheldon’s Harley-Davidson
All proceeds go to The Arc Bristol County
Ride through back roads to
The Valley Pub 40 Plummer Ave. Whitinsville, Ma.
for food and refreshments

Thank you to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation!

We are so very thankful to The John E. Fogarty Foundation for their support of our mission. Their contributions to the Rhode Island IDD community, since 1964, have been truly life changing!

https://fogartyfoundation.org

Mr. Fogarty inspired citizens to come together to change attitudes that would provide the impetus to support significant legislative action in order to achieve his vision of improving the health and well-being of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Thank you to

Mr. Fogarty

John Edward Fogarty

John Edward Fogarty Foundation

Thank you to

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation!

Your support is so appreciated!
save the date

Monday, September 25, 2023
11-12:15pm Registration & Box Lunch
12:30pm Shotgun
Country Club of New Bedford
North Dartmouth, MA

Please call Janice at 1-888-343-3301 x3108 for more information. Sponsorship opportunities available.