



achieve *Empowering People*

Next Chapter Book Club

The Arc, Upper Valley recently joined the Next Chapter Book Club Affiliate Network and is launching a local club. The affiliation was made possible through a generous donation by The Haug Family.

Founded in 2002 by Dr. Thomas Fish, a professor at The Ohio State University, Next Chapter Book Club is a community-based book club program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The objective is to provide meaningful opportunities for life-long learning, social connections and community inclusion.

The Club will meet in public places and is comprised of four to eight members and two volunteer facilitators who are trained to engage readers of all levels - including those who cannot read or are "emerging readers."

Although reading skills of book club members often improve as result of reading more often, the program is more about "reading to learn," rather than "learning to read."

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Disability Rights are Human Rights

This has been the slogan of The Arc for the past nine months as healthcare reform has been a major point of discussion in our country.

Many disability advocates have fought tirelessly to protect the basic human and civil rights of people with disabilities so they have equitable access to

Medicaid, which helps to pay for their medical care, as well as supports and services necessary to live in the community instead of residing in institutions. Repealing the Affordable Health Care Act and making significant changes to Medicaid would have a devastating impact on these individuals.

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Self-advocates, staff and interested citizens, including Grand Forks Mayor Mike Brown and Kylie Oversen, chairwoman of the North Dakota Democratic - NPL Party.



Rachel Hafner Executive Director

Dear Partners:

Today, the conditions at The Life Skills & Transition Center (LSTC) are a stark contrast to that of 1980, when over 850 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were housed in a facility meant to accommodate no more than 300. Without training, education, therapies and activities, people sat with nothing to do all day but sleep or stare blankly at the walls.

As you may know, The Arc of North Dakota initiated the lawsuit that led to the deinstitutionalization of that facility. Today, the LSTC is an accredited state-

operated, comprehensive support agency serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing residential, vocational and outreach services.

With a current population of just 80, individuals served through the residential program at the LSTC can live on or off campus, alone or with a roommate, and participate in community activities. They also receive vocational training with integration into community work sites. A team of specialists provide consultation services and in-home and on-site supports to prevent admissions and readmissions and to assist in transitioning out of LSTC to the community.

Length of stay at the center is determined by the Residential Decision Profile, a tool that bases the continued stay at the LSTC on the decision of the individual (or guardian), LSTC staff and the Developmental Disability Program Manager from the regional human service center that is responsible for the individual's services. The average length of stay between 2005 and 2015 was 1.5 years.

Why do people remain at LSTC? There are many reasons, including the lack of development of community services to meet their needs. Safety net and short-term crisis admissions become long-term placements due to lack of defined and active plans to return to community services.

The Legislative Management will be studying state and federal laws relating to the care and treatment of individuals with developmental disabilities during the 2017-2018 interim session. Part of that study will include an evaluation of the funding, mission and caseload at the LSTC, including the center's transition plan and number of clients eligible for community placement. (HB1012, Section 33).

The Arc, Upper Valley is committed to continuing to advocate for people with disabilities by working with community providers to develop more community services and supports so that everyone has the opportunity to live as independently as possible in the least restrictive, most appropriate setting in the community of their choice. You can partner with The Arc, Upper Valley to promote community inclusion by making a tax-

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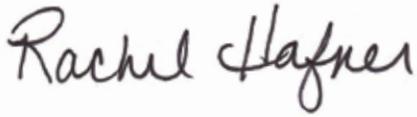
The Arc, Upper Valley promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

The Arc, Upper Valley 701.772.6191

thearcuppervalley.org

deductible donation. You can use the envelope provided with this newsletter, or visit our website at www.thearcupervalley.org and click the "Donate Online" button.

Warmly,



Rachel Hafner
Executive Director

RECOGNIZE
INFLUENCE
RESPECT
COMMUNITY

MENTOR **INCLUDE**

Accepting Nominations for Annual Awards

The Arc recognizes outstanding self-advocates, employers, teachers, professionals and volunteers whose accomplishments exemplify the mission of the The Arc, to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

Anyone can make a nomination! Just download the nomination form at www.thearcupervalley.org.

Complete and return the form to The Arc by September 29, 2017.

The winner in each category will be recognized at The Arc's Annual Dinner Celebration on Thursday, November 2, 2017.

Vincent's Friends Playgroup Honors The Arc's Roots

Two local parents are behind the creation of Vincent's Friends Playgroup.

Originally connecting through The Arc's Parent Support Group, Keziah Benson and Victoria Tejes helped design the program and now facilitate the weekly playgroup for children ages 0-5.

Play is essential for developing social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills in children and is a time when a child is often learning the most.

The goal of Vincent's Friends is to help children with disabilities gain confidence, social skills and to grow developmentally so they will be prepared to enter the school system and learn/interact appropriately with their peers.

According to Victoria Tejes, having a child with a disability of any severity can often be very isolating and the playgroup is a good way to make connections with other parents.

"Before I became involved with my son's programs, I didn't know anyone who had a child with a disability, and my friends with typically developing children didn't know what to say."



Continued on page 4



Helping people with disabilities enjoy books, friends and their community.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities age 16 and older can participate, no matter their reading or ability level. Trained volunteers facilitate each weekly one-hour meeting.

Books • Friends • Community

Call Rachel at 772-6191 for more information or to *sign up.
*Space is limited, wait list may apply.

Book Club

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The primary focus is on having fun with friends in a public place on a regular basis.

The Arc, Upper Valley is now accepting members for the club, which will meet once per week for approximately one hour from September to May (summers off).

For more information or to apply to join the book club, call Rachel Hafner at 772.6191 or visit our website.

Registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, so apply soon. Space is very limited, wait list may apply.

Vincent's Friends

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“For a time, many of them shied away from speaking with me about Gabriel because they were just uncomfortable. I think it also helps for other kids to see there are “kids like them.”

According to Keziah Benson, the name Vincent's Friends was inspired by the story of Vincent Oakley.

Vincent Oakley was born with Down syndrome in 1916 in Seattle, WA. In those days, he was not allowed to attend public school.

“Once he turned 14 he was sent to a custodial school across the mountains from his family,” said Benson.

“Vincent's father, James Oakley, organized the first meeting of what became the Children's Benevolent League (sort of a PTA for the custodial school).”

Alan Sampson, who was the first president of NARC (now The Arc), had previously been involved with the Children's Benevolent League.

Thanks to generous donors, The Arc, Upper Valley's family room is stocked with age and developmentally appropriate toys and books.

Kids and parents come together on common ground every Saturday morning to honor Vincent's legacy by playing, learning and connecting.

Keziah said, “If your child receives pediatric therapies, early intervention services, attends special education preschool or has autism, Down syndrome or any diagnosis that affects their development or social interactions, this play group is for them.”

For more information call Rachel Hafner at 772-6191.



Parents have the opportunity to connect while the children play.



Arc Angel Project Gears Up for Another Season

There are many programs that provide gifts for needy children at Christmas, but disadvantaged adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have no family connection are often forgotten during the holiday season.

Since 2008, The Gus Kvalevog Memorial Arc Angel Project has made the holidays a happy time for those adults with disabilities who are less fortunate by providing gifts and friendship during the holiday season.

The Arc's staff works together with service providers in the community of Grand Forks and at the Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton to obtain referrals and wish lists.

The program is named for Gus Kvalevog, who was just two years old when his parents

left him at the Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton, ND (formerly known as the Developmental Center) in 1937.

The Arc, Upper Valley was able to connect Gus with long lost relatives who welcomed him into their lives. They made the trip from Grand Rapids, MI for his 77th birthday and corresponded regularly with him, until his passing in 2012.

You can donate online at www.thearcuppervalley.org, or you can "adopt" an individual to personally shop for. You can even choose the gender and age range of the person you want to shop for.



Gus J. Kvalevog
July 7, 1935 - October 12, 2012

To obtain a referral for personal shopping, call Pam at 772-3148. You will receive the name, age, gender and a list of suggested or requested items.

Welcome Back to True Colors!

Thank you to all our loyal customers for their support and encouragement during our recovery from the smoke and water damage to our store in early August.

We appreciated your patience while we cleaned up the store and worked out the glitches in our new computer software.

Our dedicated staff have worked out all the glitches and we are now taking fall items for consignment.



Now accepting fall items for consignment at True Colors

True Colors accepts new or gently worn merchandise including clothing in sizes 0-28, boots, jewelry, belts, handbags, wallets, hats, scarves and eyewear.

For more information on sale and consignment terms, visit our website at www.truecolorsgf.com or stop in at 8 S 3rd St in downtown Grand Forks.

TRUE | COLORS

a funky, chic resale boutique

The proceeds from True Colors funds The Arc, Upper Valleys' programs and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Disability Rights

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At the end of July, the Senate narrowly defeated the most recent healthcare bill. At that time, many Americans felt a sense of relief, like the battle had been won.

But it is important for us not to become complacent and think that access to healthcare and health insurance is no longer an issue. Federally elected officials are still seeking to make significant cuts to The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid. It is just a question of how and when this will happen.

Therefore, it is so important for disability advocates to continue to educate their elected officials and the public about the importance of Medicaid and The Affordable Care Act, as well as other benefits that help to pay for medical care.

The Arc, Upper Valley is a member of The Arc of the United States and has been advocating for basic human and civil rights for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1955.

Access to healthcare is a right that should be afforded to every citizen of our great nation. It is our responsibility as an advocacy organization to educate the public about the rights of individuals with disabilities so that they can speak to their elected officials about these very important issues.



Rachel Hafner spoke about the importance of Medicaid for people with disabilities during the Health Care Rally at Lincoln Park on July 13, 2017.

With this in mind, The Arc, Upper Valley invited Mayor Brown and members of the disability advocacy community to True Colors on August 16, 2017.

A photo session was held to launch a social media campaign focused around the concept of disability rights.

It is our hope that this campaign will not only bring to light the importance of Medicaid and other healthcare benefits for people with disabilities, but that people will understand that everyone has basic human and civil rights that should never be devalued.

To follow our social media campaign #DisabilityRightsAreHumanRights, visit our website or follow The Arc, Upper Valley on Facebook or Instagram.

Follow us on Social Media!

The Arc, Upper Valley can all be found on Facebook and Instagram. Follow us to stay up to date on all the happenings!



We Our Members

Members are an important part of The Arc, Upper Valley. Their support enables us to provide quality programs and services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Thank you to everyone who renewed their memberships in April 2017, and to the new members who have joined us! We appreciate your support!

Members

Kathy Anderson
Becky Anderson
Erik Anthony
Kathy Ashe
David & Melissa Bakke
Tim & Meredith Baumann
Erin Baumann
Bev Collings
Virginia Esslinger
Mary Jo Esslinger
Nicholas & Alissa Fugazzi
Tim & Rachel Hafner
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Hannah Watson

Community Partners

Friend

Brady, Martz & Associates, PC
Bremer Bank

Advocate

Development Homes, Inc.

Save the Date

*The Arc, Upper Valley
Annual Dinner Celebration*

*Thursday, November 2, 2017
Muddy Rivers Ballroom
Downtown Grand Forks*

*The Nonprofit
Business Alliance
of Grand Forks
supports the rights
of all individuals to
live in a community
free of hate.*

The Arc, Upper Valley is a proud member of the Nonprofit Business Alliance of Grand Forks.



The Arc.

Upper Valley

2500 DeMers Ave Grand Forks ND 58201



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The Arc Upper Valley is now enrolled in Thrivent Choice and is listed in the Thrivent Choice online catalog!

Thrivent Choice is a charitable grant program that gives eligible Thrivent Financial members the power to recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes some of its charitable funds each year, by choosing from thousands of enrolled 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

With Thrivent Choice, you can recommend where some of Thrivent Financial's charitable outreach funds go. Since 2010, more than \$330 million has been distributed to churches and nonprofits nationwide.

Please consider directing some of your charitable funding to The Arc, Upper Valley.