



The Arc of NJ Supports Bills at the State House



Last month, The Arc of NJ had the privilege of attending a Holiday Reception hosted by Governor Phil Murphy and First Lady Tammy Murphy. The reception took place at Drumthwacket and it gave us the opportunity to thank the Governor for all he does for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the year. In legislative news, The Arc of New Jersey supported legislation in the Senate Education Committee last month that would require, among other things, all students to fully participate in fire or school security drills and staff training for school personnel on the unique needs of students with disabilities during these drills or emergencies. In addition, The Arc of NJ supported legislation in the Senate Health, Human Services, and Senior Citizens Committee which would increase the Medicaid reimbursement rates for private duty nursing services by \$4. To continue reading, [click here](#).

The Arc of NJ's Senior Director of Governmental Affairs, Sharon Levine, is pictured centered with First Lady Tammy Murphy (left) and Governor Phil Murphy (right).

Long-Tenured Self-Advocacy Director Departs

The New Year is bringing some significant changes to the NJ Self-Advocacy Project (NJSAP) team. Director Ashley Ritchey departed her position and Erin Smithers was named as the new Director of the Project effective December 26. Ashley spent more than a decade with NJSAP, starting as a Program Assistant and moving up the ladder to Director. She spearheaded the organization of the annual NJSSAN Spring Luncheons and Fall Conferences, and she ensured The Project's vast resources were spread far and wide. During her tenure, NJSAP held awareness campaigns for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, The Americans with Disabilities Act, Disability Pride, Healthy Relationships, Autism Acceptance, Voting Rights and more. To read a person farewell message from Ashley, [click here](#). The Arc of NJ wishes her all the best in her future endeavors.



The Arc of Monmouth Celebrates at Winter Glow





The Arc of NJ congratulates The Arc of Monmouth who held their Winter Glow event on Friday, December 2, at The Gramercy at Lakeside Manor in Hazlet. The Arc of NJ's Executive Director Tom Baffuto is pictured left with former Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno and above with State Senator Declan O'Scanlon and representatives from The Arc of Monmouth County.

The Arc of NJ and Local Mall Host Sensory Santa Days



In partnership with the Bridgewater Commons Mall, The Arc of NJ Family Institute participated in Sensory Santa Days last month. The Sensory Santa Days provided an opportunity, for both children and adults with special needs, to meet Santa in a quiet setting. The two Sensory Days opened early so that all families could experience the visit and get a photo with Santa. Pictured left is Nicoletta Tomarch, The Arc of NJ Family Institute's Coordinator of Information and Outreach, at an information table set up alongside the event.

Conference Offers Information Sharing, Networking

The Arc of NJ's Executive Director Tom Baffuto had the opportunity to interact with fellow nonprofit leaders and speak with elected officials at the NJ Center for Nonprofits Conference on December 7, in Somerset. Tom is pictured (center) with Assemblywoman Yvonne Lopez and (right) with Senate Republican Leader Steve Oroho.



The Arc of the United States Creates New PSAs

If you haven't seen them yet, please take some

time to check out recent Public Service Announcements (PSAs) created by The Arc of the US. These PSAs focus on inclusion, employment and community. You can view one of the videos, entitled "Say Hi!," by clicking the image to the right, or all of the PSAs are hosted on The Arc of NJ's website which you can [access here](#).



News You Can Use!

1. The federal government has provided a link that makes it very easy to order **free at-home COVID-19 tests**. These COVID tests are available for every U.S. household. <https://www.covid.gov/tests>
2. The Arc of NJ's Mainstreaming Medical Care program recently distributed important information about the Public Health Emergency (PHE). When the PHE ends, "Medicaid unwinding" will begin. The term Medicaid unwinding describes the process that NJ Medicaid will use to determine whether individuals who have been receiving NJ FamilyCare/Medicaid are eligible to continue receiving Medicaid. [Please click here to read more.](#)
3. **What is the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)?** The ACP was created by Congress and implemented by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to help eligible households receive a subsidy of up to \$30 a month, or up to \$75 a month on Tribal Lands, towards internet service. **Who is eligible to participate in the ACP?** You may be qualified for the program if:
 - You, your child or dependent participate in certain government assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, or other programs.
 - You're a member of select Tribal Assistance programs.
 - You, your child or dependent already receive a Lifeline benefit.
 - You received a Federal Pell Grant in the current award year.
 - You're eligible based on your household income.
 - **How do I enroll in the ACP?** Apply to qualify at [ACPBenefit.org](https://www.acpbenefit.org).



It's Time for the Combined Federal Campaign

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is one of the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaigns. Its mission is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all. CFC reaches nearly 10 million potential donors — active and retired federal and military employees and contractors. CFC opened on September 1, 2022, and runs through January 2023.

How to Give and Support The Arc of New Jersey

Federal civilian, postal and military donors can support The Arc of New Jersey by going to the [campaign website](#) and using The Arc of NJ's CFC code 92741. Thank you for your support!



Upcoming Virtual Events!

Click below to register for one of our many upcoming virtual events/webinars. And be sure to check out our [calendar](#) for other future events.

Mondays with Michael:

Every week at 10 am, catch a brief update from Michael Pearson Jr., Assistant Director, Children's Advocacy, on a topic or featured resource related to special education. Click [here](#) to view upcoming dates/topics. Mondays with Michael are Facebook Live events.



Virtual and In-Person Events:

- Tuesday, January 10, at 6 pm: [Person-Centered Planning: Who Will Care for My Loved One When I Am Gone?](#)
- Wednesday, January 11, at 1 pm: [College Funding Secrets](#)
- Thursday, January 12 at 6 pm: [FI Fireside Chat with Jerisa Maseko from Planning for Adult Life](#)
- Wednesday, January 25, at 6 pm: [FI Fireside Chat with Beverly Roberts: What Should Families Know About Medicaid Unwinding and How to Prepare for it](#)
- Thursday, January 26, at 6 pm: [In-Person College Tour: Garden State Pathways Program at Camden County College](#)

Stay Healthy at Home - a webinar series hosted by the NJ Self-Advocacy Project - every Tuesday at 2 PM on GoToWebinar

The webinar series covers a variety of topics related to advocacy, life skills, employment, and civic engagement. Sessions are designed to be accessible to self-advocates, parents, and support staff. Live viewers can share comments, ask questions, and access resources. Live transcription is available.

- January 3: [Trying New Things](#)
- January 10: [REPLAY: Sage Advice: Tips for Self-Advocacy Group Advisors](#)
- January 17: [REPLAY: Sexual Violence & People with Disabilities: What It Is & What We Can Do About It](#)
- January 24: [REPLAY: Creating Safe Spaces: Digital & Personal Boundaries](#)
- January 31: [REPLAY: How to Welcome More Plants into Your Diet](#)

Healthy Lifestyles Project LIVE! - every Wednesday at 11 AM on Zoom

This interactive series of events is hosted by the NJ Self-Advocacy Project and focuses on activities to promote health and wellness education for students and adults with I/DD. Live viewers will be able to share comments, ask questions, and participate in activities led by professionals *in real time*.

- January 4: [Mystic Aquarium: Learn About Sharks](#)
- January 11: [Music Together with Blue Light](#)
- January 18: [Zumba: Dance-based Fitness Class](#)
- January 25: [Art Workshop](#)

We also have Fitness Fridays at 1 PM: [Click here to register.](#)

Use Your Amazon App to Support The Arc of New Jersey

If you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support The Arc of New Jersey, Inc. in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.
2. View Settings and select AmazonSmile.
3. Follow the in-App instructions to complete the process.

If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon shopping App, update your App. Click [here](#) for instructions.



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