



achieve

Empowering People



On September 15th, The Arc, Upper Valley will hold the first-ever Wings for All event in the state of North Dakota at Grand Forks International Airport, in partnership with Allegiant Airlines, Grand Forks Regional Airport Authority and the Transportation Security Administration.

Wings for All, one of The Arc's newest national initiatives, is an airport "rehearsal" specially designed for individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families and aviation professionals.

For parents of children with autism and other disabilities, everyday tasks can sometimes prove to be far more difficult for their child.

Air travel can be particularly challenging between clearing security, the overwhelming noises, harsh lights and crowds.

The program is designed to alleviate some of the stress that families who have a child with autism or other intellectual disabilities experience when traveling by air.

It provides families with the opportunity to practice entering the airport, obtaining boarding passes, going through security and boarding a plane.

Wings for All also gives airport, airline, TSA professionals and other personnel the opportunity to observe, interact and deliver services in a structured learning environment.

The event will be offered free of charge to participants.

Registration material will be available in July. If you would like to receive notification when registration opens, call The Arc at 772-3148 or send an email to psolga@arcuv.com and we will put you on the mailing list.

Self-Advocates! Share Your Life's Stories

Submit your life story to our new blog, The Victory Project!

Everyone who submits their a story to The Victory Project will get a free t-shirt!

Selected stories will be published on the official blog, set to launch in April.

Email your story and photo to rhafner@arcuv.com. Don't have email? Drop off your story in person at The Arc office.





Rachel Hafner
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Have you ever read a truly inspiring story? Usually the stories that I find most moving are about an ordinary person who has overcome obstacles in an extraordinary way. I meet the character I am reading about and really connect with that person on a deep and emotional level as they describe their life, their challenges and their victories. By learning through the experiences of others, I feel empowered to improve my own life, hopefully in a way that can positively impact those around me.

At The Arc, we know that everyone that we advocate for has their own special story. We hear these stories every day from self-advocates and their families. Each account teaches us something new, changes our attitudes about relevant issues, inspires us to be better, and motivates us to change the world.

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a time when we create awareness about developmental disabilities, teach the importance of inclusion, and share stories of individuals who have disabilities that live, work and play successfully in the community. This March we are going to do these things by creating a very special blog called The Victory Project.

The Victory Project will provide a forum for self-advocates and their families to share their inspiring stories with our community. Watch for the blog to launch in April.

Email your story and photo to me at rhafner@arcuv.com. Don't have email? Drop off your story in person at The Arc office.

Your voice is your power. Share it and change the world.

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is published by The Arc, Upper Valley located at 2500 DeMers Ave, Grand Forks, ND.

Officers:

President Erik Anthony	Treasurer Fayme Stringer Henry
Vice President Kathy Anderson	Secretary Alissa Fugazzi
Immediate Past President Joan Karpenko	Executive Director Rachel Hafner

Mission Statement:

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



Holiday Happenings

The Arc Angel Project

Thank you to the wonderful donors, volunteers and shoppers who made The Gus Kvalevog Memorial Arc Angel Project a success in December 2017.

147 wonderful gifts were wrapped and delivered to adults with intellectual disabilities in Grand Forks and at the Life Skills and Transition Center in Grafton. If not for you, they might otherwise not have received a gift during the holiday season.

Special thanks to Emily Wangen of Music Therapy in Motion; Julie McGauvran of The Kidney and Hypertension Center; and Heidi Fugazzi of the Center for Smile Design for organizing donations at their workplaces.



The wrapping crew (L to R): Tammy Bryant, Ali Karpenko and Joan Karpenko.

The Arc & Family Voices of North Dakota Partner for Santa Visit



Families from the Grand Forks area were able to visit with Santa Claus and his elf in a comfortable setting (The Arc's new family room!) with no long lines and no rush. Refreshments and snacks were served and everyone enjoyed the games and holiday craft projects.

Entertainment was also provided by The Magic Waun, who captivated his excited audience with his astounding magic tricks!



The Arc, Upper Valley Annual Dinner Celebration

Anthony Arnold is Guest Speaker

Grand Forks resident Anthony Arnold was the featured speaker at The Arc, Upper Valley's Annual Dinner Celebration & Awards Ceremony on November 2, 2017.

For those who could not attend the event, we have included the transcript of Anthony's speech.

Anthony's Presentation

Greetings, I am Anthony Arnold a resident of Grand Forks. Before I begin saying what I have planned, I would like to thank Rachel Hafner and the members of The Arc, Upper Valley for asking me to be tonight's featured speaker. It is not only an honor getting asked to speak, but this is my first time at this event. I am looking forward to networking with people who have similar ideas. In my speech, I have tried to include ideas for all ages.

First, I must say I have always had the desire to communicate both my wants and needs. Needing an alternative form of communication, this has always involved additional steps, but this has never slowed me down. I believe it has done just the opposite, it has increased my desire to express my wishes and concerns.

One of the earlier examples of me advocating for myself, was sitting home with my parents and noticing that the first snowfall of the season was occurring. As little kids tend to be, I was excited and wanting to go outside to play. Unfortunately, they hadn't yet started communication boards with me, so I needed to rely on resources available to me at the time, such as the refrigerator and the outside window. I have never thought of this before, but this was the first time I had advocated for myself. It worked, because my first communication board was introduced shortly afterwards.



My point with telling this story, is I believe there is nothing wrong with teaching little children how to advocate for themselves within reason. Even if it is just a book or a toy. They want something, and what better way to begin to advocate? The earlier we begin teaching advocacy skills, the better results we will witness in the future.

During my childhood after receiving a means of communication, I would at times advocate for myself, whether I wanted a physical good, like a toy, or to do some activity.

“Back in elementary school, I remember wanting to join the chess club, not only to learn the game of chess but to belong to something.”

Later in high school, I took it upon myself to wheel to job service when I wanted to gain part time employment, where I was placed in a youth training program. Eventually, I was placed at Dakota Systems doing data entry, where I put some of their catalogs online.

I know some of your clientele work, and from living it I must say that is so beneficial towards somebody's self-esteem. We feel like we are finally contributing to society instead of just taking.

My dad remembers the first time I needed to file taxes. I was jumping for joy, and he hadn't seen anybody that happy over paying taxes before. I am still happy to pay my fair share of taxes. If I am going to live here, I may as well contribute.

Once I reached adulthood, I again took it upon myself to email the Prentke Romich Company, the company behind my communication device, saying that I would love to work for them. As you can imagine, I needed to prove myself but eventually I got hired as a remote troubleshooter. I work off hours when the company is typically closed. I have been doing remote troubleshooting for the past 18 years, and I am still happy. Sometimes we should go with what the person wants, rather than what looks good on paper.

Another time that I have taken advocacy upon myself, was when I wanted to move out of my parent's house and into my own townhouse. I wanted to try independent living. I lived out on my own for 17 years, and I did quite well with attendants coming in. After my parent's divorce, I decided to put in an offer to buy their house, the house that was originally built with me in mind. I moved back a couple of years ago, and I'm happy being back in the neighborhood with familiar faces. As neighborhoods tend to do, there were some newer faces as well, and most of us are friends now. This is another thing I believe in, people deserve happiness and to be part of a community.

When Achieve Therapy & Fitness moved to their Columbia Road location, I originally ended up over there because of my curiosity. I am sure some of you know their Columbia Road location was a funeral home, and yours truly was wondering how they converted it to a gym. I was only expecting a tour, but I ended up with one of the owners discussing a personal fitness program I could possibly do. He agreed to work with me on a temporary basis. This was a decade ago, and I am still going three times a week. They have also taken on a couple of other clientele with special needs, now that they know what to do. All you need to do is ask, and sometimes people even deliver more than what you are asking for.

Over the years I have begun talking to my doctor rather than relying on somebody else. I know with some clientele, they cannot entirely explain their symptoms, but they can at least share how they are feeling and where it hurts.

“Other than advocating for myself, I have tried to advocate for other people especially the voiceless. Sure, I can stand up here tonight and give this speech, but what about those who cannot? They are still entitled to have a voice, even if it is not theirs.”

I can name a couple of things I have done, and still would like to do for people with disabilities.

Nearly a decade ago, we restored night time transportation in Grand Forks. When we started it was ending at 6:00 PM, and we extended it to 10:00 PM so people can participate in more things.

While this may be great, they still are not operating on Sunday, leaving people home. Ideally, I would like to see transportation 24/7 just like in bigger cities. I have even thought once my parents are no longer around, I am moving just for this reason.

Another thing with Dial A Ride I did not know before this summer, is they do not go out to the airport to drop off or pick up people. I know they run within a fixed bus route, but I would be willing to pay extra for that service. It is not like I fly somewhere every day, but it would be nice to know that is available.

I would like to focus on accommodations at hotels, as the next step in my self-advocacy. My family and I have stayed at several hotels, where they have provided the bare minimum to what the Americans with Disabilities Act requires. One of the things to look at are the number of rooms available with roll in showers, especially with more people with disabilities traveling.

Speaking of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is a nice piece of legislation and some of us may have gained a lot from its passage. However, it's 28 years old, and it may be time for the Americans with Disabilities Act 2.0. We have learned a lot from the current version, so how about taking what we have learned and improving it?

“Just this summer, I spoke out against the planned changes to the Affordable Care Act. Sure, I told my personal story, and why I need it in my own life, but I felt like I was speaking for millions.”

We may have won that round thanks to John McCain, but I feel we should be always on alert.

I have several friends who are parents to children with special needs, and I keep telling them we will fight whatever together. I know we were concerned last spring when Betsy DeVos became the secretary of education. A lot of us are still worried, thinking what she may do to IDEA, but we need to remember everybody is in this together. If we need to rebuild portions of IDEA, we are going to rebuild them. I feel it is our duty to future generations. Along with rebuilding whatever, we need to educate people so this does not occur again.

I feel self-advocacy is so important, and it is something everybody can do in their own way. It is like the saying “It takes a village”. We are all in this together. Some of us may have a different skill set, but we can still contribute.

In closing, I want to thank you again for having me. See you next year at this dinner, if not sooner.

Award Winners Celebrated

The Annual Awards Ceremony honors individuals, groups, and organizations who exemplify the best in contributions to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Professional of the Year
Nicole Trottier

Teacher of the Year
Lisa Perreault

Volunteer of the Year
Haley Bruhn

Employer of the Year
Wedgewood Manor

Excellence in Self-Advocacy
Darlene Polensky



Community Inclusion Center Visioning Meetings

Calling all stakeholders! Yes, that's you - a person or group of people with the power to change the strategic future of an organization!

Lend your voice as The Arc, Upper Valley envisions and plans a community center that specializes in inclusive opportunities for people with disabilities!
Everyone is welcome!

We want to hear from self-advocates, families, friends, professionals and community partners.

Join us as we enter the next phase of our mission:

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.

Can't join a meeting or want to schedule a special meeting for your business or group?

Call Rachel Hafner at 701.772.6191.

Join us for
upcoming meetings
at The Arc

April 10, 2018
10:00 AM

April 11, 2018
2:00 PM

April 16, 2018
10:00 AM

April 19, 2018
6:30 PM

April 26, 2018
2:00 PM

April 30, 2018
6:30 PM

Meetings will be held
at The Arc, Upper
Valley offices at
2500 DeMers Ave in
Grand Forks





Giving Hearts Day donors play an important role at 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 all the generous businesses and individuals who supported us on Giving Hearts Day!

Individuals

- Kathy Anderson
- Anonymous
- Erik Anthony
- Dave & Kelly Arganbright
- Carenlee Barkdull
- Barbara Beach
- Sheila & Brian Beiswenger
- Tricia Berg
- Beverly Bosh
- Haley Bruhn
- Scott & Ashlee Dagoberg
- Pam Demmers
- Kirsten Dvorak
- Cathy Foy
- Shelley & Brad Fultz
- Amanda Gondick
- Kim Gould
- Cherie Graves
- Rachel Hafner
- Shari Hanson
- John Harrie
- Donna Hastings
- Tammy Howard
- Ruth Jenny
- Eric E. Johnson
- Peggy Johnson
- Alison Karpenko
- Joan Karpenko
- Kate Kjelland
- Rodney & Marlys Kjellberg
- Jay & Miranda Kleven

- Jody Larson
- Ron Lowman
- Elaine Matthew
- Beth Mauch
- Mary McConnell
- Kristen & Joe Miller
- Janell Ness
- Tonia Olson
- Kylie Overson
- Carolyn Ozaki
- Kathy Reiser
- Frank Joseph Shelton
- Marc & Heidi Short
- Pamela Solga
- Dianne Stam
- Alex Reichert & Stephanie Blair
- Rob & Becky Vakoc
- Andrea Volk
- Aida & Richard Wakefield
- Julie Watson



Businesses

- H&R Block
- Hugo's Family Marketplace
- Quotable Kids Speech & Language Clinic
- Valley Petroleum Equipment



The Arc has added a new summer program for children between the ages of 8-13 with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Next Chapter Book Club Juniors is for children ages 8-13 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The group meets twice weekly from June 5 - August 23 in a public setting to read books and participate in fun activities.

All eligible children ages 8-13 can participate, no matter their reading or ability level.

It's a great opportunity to make friends, enjoy books and have fun on a regular basis throughout the summer.



Space is limited, so be sure to register early for this summer session.

For more information on registration, call Rachel Hafner at 772.6191.



The Arc.

Upper Valley

2500 DeMers Ave Grand Forks ND 58201

Funds on Tap
Tuesday, April 3, 2018



Support
The Arc, Upper Valley

Half Brothers will donate \$1 for every food and beer sold between 6 and 9 PM.



The Arc
Upper Valley

Half Brothers Brewing Company
17 North 3rd Street, Downtown Grand Forks

Follow us on Social Media!

The Arc, Upper Valley, The Arc Thrift Store and True Colors can all be found on Facebook and Instagram.



Follow us to stay up-to-date on all the happenings!