

Arc Facilitating Advocating Collaborating Teaching Supporting

THE ARC OF MIDLAND

February/ March 2008

The Arc of Midland is a nonprofit organization which promotes the general welfare of people with developmental disabilities and increases their presence, participation and inclusion in the community.

From Jan's Desk

Nothing About Me Without Me! That has been the battle cry of Self Advocates for many years. For the past 20 years, Midland has been a haven for individuals who have disabilities when it comes to that slogan. People like Tim Bartlett and Mary Wheeler patiently taught those of us who love them and the professionals that provide much needed support that we need to listen to them, follow their lead and remember that they do know what they want and need. Unfortunately, however, this notion does not seem to be *really* imbedded in the greater culture to the extent that we believed.

Just these past few months there have been several incidents that have caused me great concern. Here are a few examples:

Recently a gentleman with a developmental disability, who has successfully managed his health with his primary physician for many years, was at the hospital for a colonoscopy. I received a call from the hospital staff because they had been told that I have medical power of attorney. In fact, I do have power of attorney to be used if the gentleman is ever incapacitated (aka unconscious) and needs someone to make medical decisions for him. I explained this to the hospital staff and stated that the gentleman can sign for himself. The hospital staff person said, "no he can't. He only prints his first name. That is not a signature." If it weren't 5am, I might have found that amusing, given what my signature looks like! I explained that, yes, that is his signature and that yes, they can accept it and that yes, he is *legally* allowed to sign for himself. The hospital staff person refused to accept this and I ended up giving permission for the treatment just to keep things rolling for the gentleman.

A professional recently suggested that a guardian needed to be replaced, not because the guardian was being neglectful or not doing their duty, but because the guardian did not agree with the professional's opinion. The guardian was not withholding treatment, but was following the recommendations of a different professional that the guardian believed had more knowledge and expertise in the specific situation. The professional really just does not believe that the guardian has the credentials to be part of the important treatment decisions.

The underlying thinking in both of these situations reminds me of 20 years ago, when I was starting my career. In those days, a team of professionals would assess a person and/or situation and decide the best course of action. The person served and/or their family were allowed to give input, but were not the final decision makers. So, where does this very old thinking come from in the day of Person Centered Planning as law?

I think that those of us on the front lines of person centered process, made a mistake in not focusing on nurturing a culture of person centeredness that expanded beyond a generation or beyond the field of "developmental disability". We have not spent the time needed to change the way that the next generation are taught to look at a person with a disability. Think about this, why is it ok for me to sign my name illegibly but not ok for someone to print their name? Well, I am seen as someone who has capacity (even if you don't like me - you realize that I have capacity) and the person who is printing his name is seen as someone without capacity.

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Special Points of Interest

- WE HAVE AN EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITY, READ ABOUT THE BIRTH OF THE FUN TIME CREW ON PAGE 2
- DOUG REVIEWS HIS EXPERIENCE AT THE MENU MANAGER ON PAGE 3

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Therefore, I get away with some scribble that may resemble my name and the person who has been labeled developmentally disabled can not. Frankly, it sort of reminds me of stories that I have heard about efforts in past generations to exclude minorities from voting. In both instances important decisions are made on behalf of someone without their input. While we look back in history and say that preventing minorities from voting was wrong, there is not the same outcry when a person with a developmental disability is prevented from fully participating in the decisions that impact them.

This is why it is critical that we have Count Me In! in EVERY school in Midland county. It is why it is important for members to spread this message everywhere they go. This is what makes the faith group so important and Everyone in Education. We must continue to work hard to help all community members see the value and **capacity** of people with developmental disabilities if true inclusion, participation and presence is ever going to be achieved.

- Jan Lampman

The Birth of The Fun Time Crew

About two years ago, while I was volunteering at the Families Together weekend getaway, I had a vision. I imagined a volunteer group where kids with disabilities were able to hang out with their peers without disabilities. An idea was sparked in my imagination that just didn't go away. For weeks, I pondered how this group could exist and what it would entail. I brought my idea to Jan Lampman who was thrilled because this idea was something that she had always hoped would become a part of The Arc of Midland. So the Funtime Crew was born.

The Funtime Crew is simply teenagers, with

and without disabilities, hanging out together. We get together on the weekend, play games, talk, and do group activities. As a group we have participated in events such as The Arc Walk, Stroll and Roll, Elder Beerman Community Day Event, and Arts Included.

The Funtime Crew is still growing and we're always looking for more teenagers to get involved. If you are interested or would like more information, please call me, Brandi, at The Arc, 631-4439, or e-mail me at luv2volunteer612@gmail.com.

- Brandi Christensen

"I IMAGINED A VOLUNTEER GROUP WHERE KIDS WITH DISABILITIES WERE ABLE TO HANG OUT WITH THEIR PEERS WITHOUT DISABILITIES."

The Arc's Estate Planning Seminar

Periodically, The Arc arranges for an attorney who is knowledgeable in the area of wills, trusts and estate planning to share that expertise with its membership. This year that meeting will occur on March 13 from 7-9 pm in Room 110 of the Strosacker Center. Many of you remember Joel Welber who has presented in the past. Joel has retired to Arizona and passed the baton to Josh Fink who has been trained by Joel.

In addition to the evening seminar, Mr. Fink will be in our office that afternoon from 3-5 pm. During that time he has agreed to read any wills or trusts that our members have had

prepared with an eye toward being sure that those documents preserve the eligibility of the beneficiary for all government benefits such as SSI, SSDi, Medicaid and Medicare. If you wish to have your documents evaluated, please call Maryann. So that we may serve the maximum number of members, she will be scheduling 15 minutes appointments for each individual.

We hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to hear this important information.

- Pam Murchison



People First Update

'People Helping People', that is the motto of our organization. People First is a group that is open to everyone. We meet monthly at the Strosacker building on the first Monday night of each month (6:15pm – 7:15pm).

Our group participates in different activities through the year and also organizes dances and other fun events. The mission statement of People First is the following: We are a self-advocacy group run by and for people with developmental disabilities. Our group supports peers to learn to speak up for themselves; learn about their rights and responsibilities; learn how to make decisions and solve problems; and be contributing members of our community.

People First has a lot going on at this time. **The Talent Show/Dance is coming up on Feb.21st. The show & dance will be at the Elks Club on North Saginaw Rd. from 6:30pm to 8:30pm.** The show includes singers, dancers, a play, and poetry reading—entertainment for all!! The cost is just \$1.00. Come enjoy a night of fun with your friends! It's also not too late to audition-call Michelle at the Arc if you are interested.

Judy Seaman, Doug Dean, Rose Rickard, and Ingrid Schwartz are the current board members. They will be interviewed by Kathy Dolan for MCTV to talk about Peo-

ple First. At press time we did not have the schedule of when this taping will air. Check the MCTV schedule or call The Arc for times.

Some future events that are still in the planning stage are a bake sale and spaghetti dinner. Not only are these events fun but also money is raised. This money is used for the activities we organize and also donated back into the community. At the Christmas Dance we had an invited guest. A young lady who had a personal tragedy recently and also gave birth to a beautiful little girl was presented with a gift. People First gave her a gift bag of baby items and a \$80 gift card to Meijers.

People First is an active group of individuals and we would love others to join as well. We'll see you at the Talent Show/Dance on February 21st!

- Michelle Vouaux



The Arc of Midland's 2008 membership drive is in March. By renewing your membership, you help to provide opportunities for people with disabilities. A letter will be mailed to the current members with more information. If you should know of a person, who would like to become a new member, please have them to call our office at 989-631-4439. We would like to add them to our mailing list.

Menu Manager

Recently, several members of The Arc were able to participate in a meal making class for individuals with developmental disabilities. The individuals got together at the Menu Manager and spent the evening putting together delicious homemade meals which they could take home and put in their freezers. This enabled them to serve delicious homemade healthy meals without any additional preparation at home.

I recently spoke with Doug Dean, one of the individuals who participated in this event. He was eager to share his enthusiasm for the Menu Manager and loudly touted the benefits that he enjoyed from his time there.

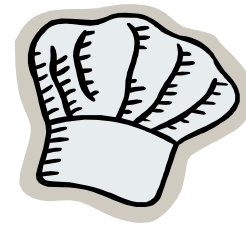
Doug loved the fact that the Menu Manager really taught him some invaluable food preparation skills that he could use at home. He felt that the teachers did a great job at helping him learn how to prepare healthy meals. And the benefits last a long time — because he came home with a freezer full of delicious meals. He even admitted that his brother loves partaking of his feasts with him.

Doug highly recommends the Menu Manager and plans to attend the upcoming event (see page 4 for information on this).

- Ruthanne Kehr

The Arc of Midland

offers an introductory meal making class for individuals with disabilities.



Create your own meals!

When: February 20th

Time: 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

Where: The Menu Manager, 4983 Eastman Ave.
(behind Asian Express on Eastman)

You will learn how to put together meals for yourself, and choose meals that fit your budget and diet!

Choose 12 meals total from the menu choices below:

Pizza

Tater Tot Casserole

Barbeque Ribs

Chicken and Stuffing

Cheddar Meatloaf

Chicken Lasagna

Cost is only **\$59.00**

This averages out to less than \$5.00 each!

Meals will be packaged in individual servings!

Call The Arc office no later than February 15th to order your meals, and make payment arrangements.

631-4439

February 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4 People First Meeting	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Menu Manager	21 People First Talent Show	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Arc Board Meeting	29	

March 2008

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3 People First Meeting	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Arc Board Meeting	28	29
30	31					

Schedule of Events

- Every Monday, 6:00—7:30, Mall Walking, Meet at the Food Court
- Every Tuesday, 7:00—8:00 pm, Safety in the Community Classes, Strosacker Center, Room 110
- Every Wednesday, 3:30—4:30 pm, Women's Healthy Relationships Class, Strosacker Center, Room 110
- Monday, February 4, 2008—6:15 pm, People First Meeting
- Wednesday, February 20, 6:00—7:00, Menu Manager
- Thursday, February 21, 6:30—8:30 People First Talent Show, Elks Club
- Thursday, February 28, 7 p.m., Arc Board Meeting

- Every Monday, 6:00—7:30—Mall Walking, Meet at the Food Court
- Every Tuesday Evening, Adult Education Classes, Strosacker Center
- Monday, March 3, 6:15—7:15—People First Meeting, Strosacker Center
- Thursday, March 27, 7 p.m. Arc Board Meeting