

Save the Date

March 23, 2018

Teen/Tween Respite Event
Texana Center

Coming in April 2018

Wings for All

April 13, 2018

Teen/Tween Respite Event
Texana Center

April 23, 2018

Annual Awards Dinner
Safari Texas

May 11, 2018

Teen/Tween Respite Event
Texana Center

May 21, 2018

Annual Business Meeting
Prosperity Bank

June 18, 2018


Golf Classic
Weston Lakes Country Club

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The Arc Celebrates 50th
Anniversary.....16

Donate your vehicle today!
tax deduction and free towing



(877) ARC-CARO
(877) 272-2270



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

The Arc's Annual Awards Dinner

Monday, April 23, 2018

Do you know someone who has done an outstanding job in supporting the mission of The Arc?

Review the "Nomination Categories" and nominate that person/s for one of our awards.

It's a great way to say, "Thank you" to a hard-working volunteer/business/donor.

Nomination Form Deadline: March 23, 2018

Please see newsletter insert for Nomination Categories and form or visit our website:

www.arcoffortbend.org

OUR MISSION

The Arc of Fort Bend County ensures opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to maximize their quality of life within our community.

**The Arc of Fort Bend County
Board of Directors 2017-2018**

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*Committee Assignments and Job Descriptions are
available on our website*

CORE VALUES

1. Awareness: greater awareness about individuals with disabilities increases understanding about the abilities of individuals with disabilities, and greater understanding increases opportunities for individuals with disabilities, so we work to achieve greater awareness to achieve greater understanding to expand opportunities.
2. Diversity: we must serve all individuals with intellectual and related developmental disabilities and their families in this county.
3. Respect: we must be understanding of and sensitive to the concerns of individuals with disabilities about their identity and how we describe them.
4. Ownership: it is important to have community members serve on our committees and board, and support our association, but our association should remain an "individuals with disabilities and their families" organization.
5. Advocacy: with limited resources, if we become primarily or solely a provider organization, our association will never do more than make only a limited impact on the quality of life of a few individuals with disabilities.
6. Cooperation: advocacy and programs that benefit individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families in many cases will also benefit individuals with other disabilities.

7. Good Stewardship: as an association, we must be fiduciaries of the talent and resources that our volunteers and community supporters entrust to us.

OUR GOALS

The Arc's goals were chosen to be directed toward Mission and Vision and build on our strength and success.

- I. The Arc shall advocate for appropriate individualized educational programs/opportunities for people with I/DD in all stages of life.
- II. The Arc shall advocate for a variety of vocational/employment options for people with I/DD.
- III. The Arc shall advocate for public and private community institutions to become more responsive to the individual needs of people with I/DD, thereby promoting quality of life for all.
- IV. The Arc shall advocate for and promote a variety of appropriate and inclusive social, cultural and fitness/wellness opportunities in the community.
- V. The Arc shall continue to invest in properties that are self-sustaining and provide facilities for our constituents.
- VI. The Arc shall provide effective leadership to insure sustainability of the organization's programs and services through utilizing an annual, Cost/Base/Analysis, assisting with fundraising activities, acquiring grants and maintaining the "corpus" of the Foundation.

To Send a Special Tribute

In Memory of or In Honor of

Pay tribute to a friend or family member while also supporting services and programs that benefit The Arc of Fort Bend County with your donation.

Person's Name _____ Occasion _____

Send acknowledgement to: _____
Name _____

Address _____ City, State, Zip _____

Please make checks payable to:
The Arc of Fort Bend County
123 Brooks Street, Sugar Land, Texas 77478



123 Brooks Street, Sugar Land, TX 77478

Apply Now!

2018 Kathy Moody Memorial Scholarship

The Kathy Moody Memorial Scholarship was established by The Arc of Fort Bend County to assist students with an intellectual and/or developmental disability who need financial assistance to attend a post-secondary educational or vocational program.

- Must be a resident of Fort Bend County
- Must be a member of The Arc of Fort Bend
- Must be already enrolled/accepted at a post-secondary program
- Applicant is eligible to receive one scholarship
-

Pick up an application at The Arc's office or
download at our website: www.arcoffortbend.org

For additional information: Contact Laura LaVigne at:
llavigne@arcoffortbend.org . Deadline to apply 02/28/2018



Scholarship
Opportunity!

Donations to The Arc!

Thank you, Bob Moody, for your \$5000 donation to the Kathy Moody memorial Scholarship Fund!

The Kathy Moody Memorial Scholarship was established by The Arc of Fort Bend County to assist students with an intellectual or developmental disability who need financial assistance to attend a post-secondary educational or vocational program.



Kathy Moody

Thank you Fort Bend ISD Dulles High School Adult Transition Program for your donation to The Arc's TwentySomethings group.



The Arc Family Matters

Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers:

Cynthia Vollenweider, longtime member of The Arc, passed away on December 9, 2017.

Kimberly Butler, Special Olympics athlete and Social Recreation Club member, passed away on December 26, 2017.

Jamie Aguilar, 67 years, member of The Arc, passed away on January 23, 2018.

Moonyeen "Moon" Weis, passed away on January 23, 2018 at the age of 84. Moon was recognized as one of The Arc's "Legion of Leaders" for her work with our chapter.

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow."

~ Mary Anne Radmacher ~

Teen/Tween Respite Event

Teen/Tween Respite is an early evening respite event for families with children with disabilities who are 11-18 years of age.

Program components:

- Five Respite events are planned: March 23, April 13, May 11, August 10 & September 14.
- Each respite session is staffed with an Activities Director, two Behavior Technicians and trained volunteers.
- Each participant is paired one-on-one with a volunteer to assist them with participating in the activities.
- Activities include arts and crafts, games, and outdoor activities.
- This program is not for the medically fragile nor those in need of intensive behavior management.
- \$10 per Teen/Tween

All Teens/Tweens interested in attending a Respite event **must** submit the on-line application at least one week prior to the activity.

1st Date:

Friday, March 23, 2018

Time:

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location:

Texana Center
2715 Cypress Point Dr.
Missouri City, TX 77459

To Apply:

Go to: www.arcoffortbend.org

Questions:

Karri Axtell
kaxtell@arcoffortbend.org
281-494-5924

**COME
TO TEEN/
TWEEN
RESPITE**



- Arts & Crafts
- Games
- Outdoor Activities



Best in the West 2017 - Truly The Best!

Margo Pasko

The 2017 Best in the West came off without a hitch in its giddy-up! On November 18, 2017, there was no ferocious storm, no power failure, and no laryngitis. This year we had no problems hearing the auctioneering skills of Commissioner James Patterson as he called for bids on the many fantastic live auction items at The Best in the West 2017! The Arc of Fort Bend County's 39th annual Best in the West was another resounding success with bidding, barbecue and dancing in support of "Quality of Life For All"!

A perfect team with the perfect combination of talents is what makes the Best in the West, truly the BEST in Fort Bend County! James Patterson, Ann Smith and Jenny Gortney produced an amazing evening. They were assisted by committee chairs Ron and Trudy Ortwerth (Ace in the Hole Auction); Jessica Roberts (cashier), Debbie Peterson (live auction), Julie Fix, Vicki Ikeler and Barbara Magana Robertson (publicity); Theresa Bathe, Melisa Bell and Danielle Garrison (reservations); and Beverly Cushenberry and Sarah Parkinson (silent auction).

Chris Breaux, of the accounting firm Whitley Penn, reprised his performance as presenter of the 20 sensational live auction items. The extraordinary packages ranged from a 4-night stay at a Penthouse Condo in Keystone, Co., dinner party at Rosenberg's Historic Ebell House, Astros tickets and the ever popular, must-have King Ranch hunt! There was something for everyone!

Ron and Trudy Ortwerth's Ace in the Hole Auction was brimming with exciting items including a goose/duck hunt at the Bucksag Hunting club, a hunting trip to Red Bluff Prairie Hunting club, an Exceptional Audi Experience driving class, and World Series Champions Astros opening day tickets for four. The "Buy Now" option was quite popular!

The silent auction was also amazing! There were eight silent auction corrals sponsored by The Arc of Fort Bend County, Big Boys' Woodshed, Mike's Corral, Fort Bend ISD, OakBend Medical Center, Meyer/Paradigm Consultants, Inc., RE/MAX Fine Properties, and Fort Bend Law Enforcement. The variety of items made for fabulous shopping—there was something for everyone, from small to big-ticket items!

New this year, and very popular, was the "Kendra Scott Jewelry Pull" event. For \$100, 75 participants picked a mystery box filled with Kendra Scott Designs. The jewelry was valued from \$50 to \$195. Everyone was a winner!

Also new this year was the Dessert Corral! Many generous bakers donated scrumptious cakes, cookies and pies to bid on or use the BUY NOW option.



Best in the West 2017

- Truly The Best! *(Continued)*

As always, the Triumphs provided outstanding entertainment! The dance floor remained full as the band played on, with hit after hit. The 9-piece band's set list ranged from Elvis to the Eagles, Chuck Berry to Chicago, the Beatles to Bobby Bland.

Many supported our event. Prosperity Bank was again, the World Champion sponsor for the evening. Sprint Fort Bend County Landfill and The Johnson Development Corporation were Gold Buckle sponsors. At the Bronze Boots sponsorship level were Aviles Engineering, Classic Chevrolet Sugar Land, Dannenbaum Engineering Corporation, Fred and Mabel R. Parks Foundation and Sugar Land Rotary Club.

Rhinestone Cowboy sponsors included Aliana Development Company, Consolidated Home Health, EDP Water, Marilyn & Bob Ewing", Foster Creek Veterinary Hospital, Geoscience Engineering, The Hunton Group, Diane & Robert Molina, and PGAL.

Silver Spurs sponsors were AECOM, Bud Light/Silver Eagle Distributors, County Judge Bob and Pat Hebert, Fort Bend County Deputy Sheriff's Association, Geotest Engineering, Inc., Gulf Coast Stabilized Materials, LLC, Huitt-Zollars, Levee Management Services, Linebarger Law Firm, Ninyo and Moore, PCD Management LLC, Raymond James & Associates, Severn Trent, Stantec, TEDSI Infrastructure, Tejas Surveying, Inc., Texas State Technical College/Wharton County Junior College, The Muller Law Group, PLLC, WJ Interests, and Zarinkelk Engineering. In addition, 79 other individuals and companies purchased tables in support of The Arc.

Proceeds from The Best in the West will be used for a wide variety of services and advocacy to provide "Quality of life for all". Funds will continue to be used to maintain group homes and learning centers that The Arc leases to HCS providers; provide social and recreational activities for approximately 130 clients such as the annual holiday formal, monthly dances, attendance to sporting events and the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, weekly bowling league and other awesome outings. The proceeds will also support The Arc's legislative and educational advocacy programs, youth programs, the Special Olympics program covering ten different sports with more than 110 athletes, the employment services program, and the TwentySomethings transitional group.

The "Best in the West" committee expresses their sincere appreciation to every person, corporation, and organization in the greater Fort Bend County area that helped make this event a success. The dramatic and positive changes that have occurred in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are a tribute to a responsive community that has shared our vision of "Quality of Life for All."

We hope you all had as much fun as we did! Please save the date for **Saturday, November 17, 2018!**





1968 50 Years 2018

An Invitation to Attend

Annual Awards Dinner

Monday, April 23, 2018

Safari Texas "The Forum Ballroom"

Dinner & Awards: 6:00 pm

Beef & Chicken Fajita Dinner - \$10 prepaid, \$15 at the door

RSVP by April 16 to Cheryl Olivier at The Arc office
281-494-5920

Pay by cash/check: 123 Brooks Street, Sugar Land, TX 77478
Pay by CC: www.arcoffortbend.org

The Importance of Creating a Parent's IEP Notebook



Karri Axtell, J.D.

One of the most important tools a parent of a child with a disability can have is a “parent Individualized Education Plan (IEP) notebook”. A parent IEP notebook is not only a great organizational tool that allows for easier goal progress tracking and ARD meeting preparation, but it also serves as an academic scrapbook to look back on. Parents and students may reflect on what subjects, goals, strategies, etc. may, or may not work for the child, and track big-picture progress from school year-to-school year.

A parent IEP notebook should contain:

1. Copy of current IEP used during the school year
2. Copy of report cards and IEP progress reports
3. Latest school-based or independent evaluations, tutor or therapist notes, recommendations
4. Correspondence between parents and school
5. Sample school work, quizzes and assignments throughout the school year

The parent IEP notebook puts a child’s important school documentation at a parent’s fingertips. Having and reviewing these documents before a parent-teacher conference or an Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) meeting, will allow a parent to be better prepared to discuss and make requests and recommendations for their child’s educational program.

TIP: *Start a new parent notebook each school year. Move the latest evaluation over to the notebook for the new school, until a new evaluation is completed.*

I have experienced the benefit of having a parent IEP notebook myself. My daughter helps me keep the “sample work” section of her notebook up-to-date by bringing home class worksheets and quizzes. This gives me a chance to talk to her throughout the school year about how she is doing in class, which supports, accommodations, teacher strategies, etc., are working, or not working for her. I then communicate with my daughter’s teachers by email as questions and progress concerns arise.

For students who are not able to communicate this information to their parents directly, parents may request to establish a similar work collection and progress-check communication process with school personnel. Some parents prefer to receive a daily or weekly written communication log, some prefer a scheduled phone call, or even a quarterly meeting with a special education teacher or designated school administrator.

As your child’s annual ARD meeting draws near, look back at their educational, social, behavioral, and functional progress. Make notes not only about the progress concerns you have in the school setting, but in the home and community settings as well. I think you will find that keeping a parent IEP notebook up-to-date throughout the school year, will help you identify issues more quickly and feel better prepared for your child’s annual ARD meeting.

The benefits of keeping a parent IEP notebook are many. Contact Karri Axtell at The Arc of Fort Bend County if you have questions about keeping a parent IEP notebook. kaxtell@thearcoffortbendcounty.org or 281-494-5924.

Social Recreation

Monster Trucks - NRG Stadium



Halloween Dance - Needville



Disney on Ice - NRG Stadium



Social Recreation

Winter Dance - Bay City



Holiday Formal - Safari Texas



Harlem Globetrotters - NRG Arena



Bocce Team Competes in College Station

Margo Pasko

On Thursday, October 12, 2017, twenty of the twenty-four athletes on The Arc's Special Olympics bocce team hit the road to compete at the annual Fall Classic Statewide Games in College Station. A big thank you is extended to all of The Arc's financial supporters who made the trip possible and to the volunteers who did everything from running practices to chaperoning athletes in their rooms, serving dinner, hauling equipment, and supervising athletes everywhere they went.

This trip was the first time our bocce delegation participated in all three days of Fall Classic. Our plan was to be able to attend the opening ceremonies on Friday evening and then dance the night away. Unfortunately, our doubles games lasted so long that we missed opening ceremonies. So, Amy Crane suggested we hold our own ceremony at the hotel. And we did! We marched and carried a "torch". Amy gave an opening speech that was uniquely inspiring!

The athletes, singles, doubles, and unified players all had great fun in the hot, but gorgeous weather at College Station! The athletes were Carrie, Sharon, San Juanita, Tank, Gary, Amy, Christopher, Jennifer, Michael, Matthew, Allan, Stevie, Rudy, Dave, Mainak, Tony, Russell, Larryn, Tyler, and Ronnie. Once again, the bright orange bocce shirts were the hit of the event and several delegations asked where we got them. To add to the "orange crush theme", the women athletes and chaperones were treated to the traditional orange nail polish party the night before the tournament. It was tons of fun! The bocce coaching staff was led by head coach Debbie Patton. The other certified coaches were Janet Wantuch, Jeff Hoffman and Margo Pasko. All of the bocce families contributed to the team effort throughout the season. The coaches thank all the parents for their help throughout the season: filling in for coaches who were out of town, driving the athletes to Fall Classic, supervising in the hotel, at meals and during the competition. The biggest thank you goes to Debbie Patton for her leadership as head coach!



Bump, Set, Spike, Score!

Margo Pasko



They did it all! Congratulations to our four volleyball teams for a successful, November 4, Area Volleyball Tournament in Texas City. The Angels, and Sharks came home with gold medals. The Doves brought home silver and Wolverines teams received bronze medals.

Hurricane Harvey delayed the start of the practice season by three weeks, but our coaches still got their rosters together and had the players ready to compete.

Lots of special thank you's are due to those who made it possible! First, thank you to coaches Don Duyka, Debbie Eddlemon, Beth and Jimmy Jimenez, Carl LaSala, Hal Marshall, Gary Schottle, Janet Wantuch, and our

head of delegation, Larry Lobue. Thank you, to the families for getting the athletes to practices and to the tournament. And, thank you, to Travis High School for welcoming our crowd for practices!

Special Olympics Bowling News

Margo Pasko

On Saturday, December 2, 2017, The Arc's Special Olympics bowlers participated in the Area 22 bowling tournament. Bowling is so popular in the region that the athletes were divided into three shifts, and bowled two games each. Our group fared really well! David Sturhan won a gold medal in his ramp bowling division, Allan Harris, Jr. won a gold medal in bracket and unified partners, Jason and Steve Lungstrum brought home silver medals.

David was coached by his mom, Margueritte Sturhan. Allan Harris, Jr. was coached by his dad, Allan, Sr. Jason was coached by his dad and unified partner, Steve. Congratulations!

Bowling participants are coached by family members or friends. If you would like to coach, or, if you have someone who could coach you as an athlete, contact Margo at The Arc to become part of the Special Olympics bowling group.

What an Incredible NBA Experience!

Margo Pasko

On January 10, 2017, The Arc's Special Olympics basketball players, coaches, and chaperones had a wonderful NBA experience as they watched the Houston Rockets beat the Portland Trailblazers, 121-112. What an awesome experience, the first ever of this magnitude for our basketball program!

How did this great event come about?

Vanessa and Eddie Morris, members of The Arc, celebrated their son, Evan's, December birthday at a Rockets game. Eddie noticed a group event at Toyota Center, sitting near them, so he introduced himself to the facilitator, Ricky Gomez, the Rockets Community Relations Coordinator. When the evening ended, Eddie had Ricky's pledge to invite The Arc's basketball teams to a game!

Rockets Community Relations Coordinator, Ricky Gomez, arranged for the donation of ninety (90) tickets and T-shirts for all, as well as courtside seats to watch the pre-game "Shoot Around" opportunity. After the "Shoot Around", everyone moved to their seats to watch the game.

The Arc coordinated the invitations, RSVPs and provided for the charter buses. Larry Lobue, in his usual role as fearless leader, took attendance, sorted the seats, handed out T-shirts and shepherded the group for the evening's events. He said he was amply assisted by our basketball coaches and parent volunteers. Larry commented that it made the evening go smoothly because the chaperones all pitched in to help.

Larry also noted that Ricky Gomez and his two assistants were great hosts for the whole evening - beginning with meeting our delegation at the door and helping with seating. "It was amazing how accommodating, friendly and helpful they were", Ricky later commented.

These pictures show what a special opportunity Ricky Gomez, the Rockets, and the Morris family made possible for our basketball athletes! Thank you to all!



Youth Programs

Sugar Land Holiday Lights

Karri Axtell

The Arc of Fort Bend County members and friends turned out to enjoy the Sugar Land Holiday Lights at Constellation Field on Sunday, December 17, 2017. Participants enjoyed more than 2.5 million lights, eight themed areas, fun crafts and activities, food trucks, and Santa even made an appearance! 45 tickets to Sugar Land Holiday Lights were generously donated by Skeeters President, Jay Miller! Thank you Skeeters for helping our members and friends have a holly, jolly time!



Community Outreach Parent Training

Karri Axtell



On January 20, 2018, Director of Youth Programs, Karri Axtell, presented a special education parent training “Drafting IEP Goals and Measuring Progress” at the Chinese Community Center in Houston. The event was hosted by the Light and Salt Association, a group of parents providing resources and support for families who have a child with a disability. Thank you to The Arc’s member, Grace Kong, for introducing Karri Axtell to the Light and Salt Association, and inviting her to come speak. This training was provided as part of The Arc’s community outreach program. The community outreach program raises awareness about The Arc of Fort Bend County and its mission while providing quality training and empowerment to people in our community.

Karri will hold another special education parent training on “Advocacy Essentials”, as part of the community outreach program, at the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center at 11111 Brooklet Drive, Houston, TX 77099. The training will take place on February 23, 2018 from 7:15 pm – 8:00 pm.

Contact Karri Axtell if you have questions about the community outreach program, or would like to request group training

The Arc of Fort Bend County at the Family to Family 13th Annual Conference

Karri Axtell

Karri Axtell, Director of Youth Programs, attended the 13th annual Family to Family Conference on Saturday, January 27, 2018, informing attendees about The Arc of Fort Bend County and its programs. The event was well attended with over 200 attendees and nearly 50 vendors. Fellow chapters of The Arc, The Arc of Greater Houston, and The Arc of Katy, were also in attendance. Karri spoke with Fort Bend County residents about the many benefits of membership such as the Kathy Moody Memorial Scholarship, Special Olympics, social recreation and educational advocacy programs. It was great to see many current members of The Arc of Fort Bend County in attendance, and meet potential new members! Pictured below is Karri, Mary Jane Williams, Executive Director of Family to Family Network and her daughter.



TEA's Corrective Action Plan Update

Karri Axtell

During the 2016-2017 school year, the United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs performed a series of onsite monitoring visits to review Texas' compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On January 11, 2018, the Department of Education released a monitoring visit letter detailing four corrective actions. TEA responded with a proposed initial draft corrective action plan, which is open to public comment through February 18, 2018.



Among other things, TEA's corrective action plan must ensure Texas school districts properly implement IDEA child find activities to locate, identify and evaluate children suspected of needing special education; educate parents and school personnel about the right to request an evaluation although a student is receiving Response to Intervention, 504 services and/or dyslexia services, and launch a public information campaign informing the general public about the special education evaluation process and procedures.

TEA is collecting stakeholder feedback from students, parents, advocacy groups and school districts through March 31, 2018.

You can find more information about TEA's corrective action plan, and submit your comments at: <https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED/>

The Arc Celebrates 50 Years – Thanks to our Community Support



Rebecca Deurlein

As The Arc of Fort Bend celebrates 50 years of serving individuals with special needs and their families, it's never been more apparent that the Fort Bend Community is one of a kind. From its inception to its current operations, The Arc was incorporated in 1968 and was developed through community support and effort, a self-sacrificing leadership team, and a passion for providing "quality of life" to every individual.

James Patterson's family was instrumental in getting the organization off the ground, perhaps because his interest was personal. James and his wife, Mary Jo, had given birth to their son, Joe David, born with Down Syndrome, at a time when special education services did not exist within the public school system. After visiting with parents who had lost their own child and who recommended contacting The Arc, James began attending support meetings that alternated between Smith Elementary School in LCISD and Lakeview Elementary School in FBISD. In his third year of attendance, he was asked to serve on The Arc Board of Directors, which partnered with Richmond State School to provide outreach to special needs families.

While the partnership worked well, the parent support group saw the value and promise in The Arc and wanted to support its mission, so they set out to bring together a team to raise money for services and resources for special needs families. They needed a van to transport clients, so they planned an oyster eating contest - based solely on the fact that all of the oysters would be donated. That contest raised \$15,000, twice what was needed to purchase a van and sparked a yearly event that gave The Arc prominence within the Fort Bend community. "On the second year of the Oyster Eating Contest, we added a few items auctioned off by a local TV personality. When that TV personality didn't show in the third year, Patterson was coerced into auctioning off the items, and the rest, as they say, is history," said Patterson.

Houston Oiler participation helped to draw crowds, and the event continued from 1976-1993, doubling profits each year for several years running. Since that time, the Oyster Eating Contest has evolved into the annual Golf Tournament, first held at Quail Valley, then Weston Lakes, and still held every June.

As The Arc began providing services the list of those wanting to participate grew, as did the need for sustainable income. A western dance was planned and implemented where again, everything was donated by Board members and community leaders. The dance was such a hit that it outgrew its initial location at Regal Ranch, moved to the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, then to Fluor and finally, to the George Ranch Arena. The western dance is now known as the "Best in the West", one of the most popular and successful Fort Bend fundraisers held annually on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. It continues to bring in outstanding profits with very few costs, thanks to the generosity of area schools, businesses, and individuals who not only donate to the event, but also serve on committees volunteering their time to make the event happen.

With fundraising resources, programs, and transportation in tact, The Arc saw an increase in Fort Bend County population and in special needs families seeking services. It became obvious that the organization needed a building. One visit to the George Foundation netted the group enough money to begin scouting land and building options. They needed a 15,000 square foot building and a bank loan, which they secured through the generosity of Keith Bowles at Puffer Sweiven. Keith provided his own signature on the bank note that allowed

The Arc to build its first building – thanks to Gene Reed and others who donated supplies and services to construct a building, located at Hwy 6 and Glenn Lakes Dr. in Missouri City.

From there, The Arc formed a partnership with the Richmond State School, now known as Texana to provide day activities for adults with special needs. Eventually in 2006, The Arc moved its administrative office to its current location on Brooks Street in Sugar Land. It was then that Laura LaVigne was hired as Executive Director, bringing with her years of special education teaching experience, along with experience as a school administrator. “I enjoy working with an organization that accomplishes its goals by building community support around helping others. I am amazed and so thankful for the hundreds of volunteers who give their time and talent so that others will enjoy an improved quality of life,” said LaVigne.

And those volunteers are absolutely necessary to the success of the organization. The Arc receives one small governmental grant that funds half of one program that they offer. Texas ranks 50th in the nation for funding community supports, so LaVigne is adamant about giving back to the local community that has made her organization what it is today. “We make our money in Fort Bend and spend our money in Fort Bend. Our budget goes entirely to improving the lives of people with disabilities.”

Today, The Arc provides a variety of services including legislative, educational and client advocacy, recreational activities, Special Olympics, and housing for clients in group homes which are leased at below market value and maintained entirely by the organization. Patterson explained, “We go out and buy houses in neighborhoods where you would want to live and maintain them better than your neighbors. This is because of Laura LaVigne - she insists on those standards. As she says, if you wouldn’t let your son or daughter live there, our clients won’t live there.”

High standards, financial responsibility, and problem-solving are the tenets upon which The Arc formed, grew, and served over all these years. Growth continues as The Arc serves individuals with intellectual and related developmental disabilities(including autism),raises funds for services and homes, and sends the message throughout the Fort Bend community that all individuals are worthy of respect and a good quality of life.



Guardianship Alternatives

Karri Axtell, J.D.

Did you know there are alternatives to a guardianship that may be appropriate for a child with a disability who is turning 18? Depending on the level of supports and services a person needs to remain as independent as possible, some of the following alternatives to guardianship may be appropriate:

- A supported decision making agreement that involves friends and family assistance. (See Texas Estates Code, Section 1357). *Karri Axtell has copies of the Texas statutory supported decision making agreement.* .
- Appointment of a representative payee (See the Social Security Act, Section 807(a)).
- A durable power of attorney (See Texas Estates Code, Section 751.002).
- A joint bank account.
- A special needs trust that allows an individual with disabilities to have funds available for certain expenses while protecting eligibility for public benefits and access to care and services.
- A management trust (See Texas Estates Code, Ch. 867, Subpart N).
- Alternate forms of decision-making based on person centered planning. (This is a process directed by the person who has support needs, to identify the strengths, capacities, preferences, needs and desired outcomes). See Texas Estates Code, Section 1002.0015(9).
- Formal and informal “supports and services” that enable the person to meet their needs for food, clothing, or shelter, care for physical or mental health, manage financial affairs or to make personal decisions regarding residence, voting, operating a motor vehicle and marriage. (See Texas Estates Code, Section 1002.031.)
- A declaration for mental health treatment (See Civil Practices and Remedies Code, Ch. 137).
- Asset building accounts for individuals with disabilities under the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 (ABLE Act).
- An advanced medical directive (See Texas Health and Safety Code, Ch. 166).

What if alternatives to guardianship are not appropriate given my child’s level of need? Contact Kirk Monroe with Brazos Bend Guardianship Services for more information about the guardianship process. www.brazosbendguardianship.org or 281-232-7701.

“Life is unlimited - it expands with the generosity, compassion, inventiveness, and service that you contribute.”

~ Jonathan Lockwood Huie ~



The Arc of Fort Bend County ensures opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to maximize their quality of life within our community.

Membership Form

Date: _____

Please indicate New Member Renewing Member

Member Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: (____) ____ - _____ Cell Phone: (____) ____ - _____

E-mail Address: _____ HCS Provider: _____

I am a:

- Family Member Person with Disability Interested Citizen Professional who works in the Disability Field

Indicate the age of person with a disability: 0-12 13-22 23-54 55+

Membership Levels:

Individual with Disability \$20.00
-reserved for those not living at home and not included in a family membership
-receives one vote at meetings of the membership

Single \$35.00
-receives one vote at meetings of the membership
-reserved for a person without a disability

Single Lifetime \$500.00
-receives one vote at meetings of the membership

Family \$50.00
*Name of person with disability _____

*Names of family members: _____
-includes all immediate members of the family living in the home
-includes a family member with a disability living outside of the home
-receives two votes at meetings of the membership

Corporate \$100.00
-receives one vote at meetings of the membership

Corporate Lifetime \$2000.00
-receives one vote at meetings of the membership

VIP
-given yearly to chairs of Best in the West and Golf Classic
-given yearly to Head Coaches of Special Olympic Sports

Additional Tax Deductible Donation: \$ _____

If you wish, you may donate to a specific program:

- Bowling Education Advocacy Employment Advocacy
 Social Recreation Special Olympics Transportation

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Mail form and payment to: **OR** Join online at www.arcoffortbend.org
The Arc of Fort Bend County
123 Brooks Street
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

The Arc of Fort Bend County is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

The Arc of Fort Bend County
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Fax: 281-494-5960

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The FBJSL awarded The Arc a \$9000 grant to help fund our Special Olympics program



Thank you FBJSL for your continued support of The Arc of FBC!