The Arc
Fort Bend County

The Arc Today

Spring 2018
Volume 17, Issue 2

Save the Date

May 21, 2018
Annual Business Meeting
Prosperity Bank

June 10, 2018
Sports Banquet
Safari Texas

June 18, 2018
Golf Classic
Weston Lakes Country Club

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Donate your vehicle today!
tax deduction and free towing
The Arc (877) ARC-CAR0
(877) 272-2270

The Arc
Fort Bend County
1968 50 Years 2018

In recognition of The Arc's 50th Anniversary, here's a little history of our annual golf tournament.

In 1977, we began with an annual Oyster Eating contest as a spring fundraiser. After 18 years of eating oysters, we decided to make a change. In 1995, we held the 1st golf tournament. In the early years, it was called "Fort Bend's Finest", as it honored those who had given so much to The Arc and community.

This year will mark the 24th year of the golf tournament, now called the "Golf Classic". This annual event is a fun day filled with golfing, great BBQ, and a live auction.

Pictured are the first year's "Finest"!

Some of "Fort Bend's Finest" to be honored at the ARC's June 3 golf tournament, dinner, dance and auction, are, standing from left, Jack McElligott, Tom Hardy, Frank Marsters, and Rick Cushenberry. Seated are Dennis Halford and Bill McCorkle. Guests may take part in the entire tournament or in just the evening activities.

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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Margo Pasko

Director of Youth Programs
Karri Axtrell

Administrative Assistant
Cheryl Olivier

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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 maintainig 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

The Arc
Fort Bend County
Golf Classic

Weston Lakes Country Club
Monday, June 18, 2018

10:30 a.m.— On-Site Registration

11:30 a.m.— Box Lunch & Shot Gun Start

5:00 p.m.— Auction, Awards & Dinner

Single —$300

Foursome — $1200

Sponsorships — $1500—$5000

Register Online:

www.arcoffortbend.org

2018 Title Sponsor

Troy Construction LLC

Golf Classic 2018

The Arc
Fort Bend County

1968 50 Years 2018

Annual Business Meeting

MONDAY, May 21, 2018

Prosperity Bank

14060 Southwest Freeway
Sugar Land, TX 77478

Dinner & Meeting: 6:00 pm

The Arc's 2017 financial report will be presented.
Reservations are available online at www.arcoffortbend.org.
RSVP by May 16, 2018
Email: adminassistant@arcoffortbend.org
For more information call The Arc at 281-494-5959

There is no charge for this event

Congratulations to our 2018 Annual Awards Recipients

Kathy Moody Memorial Scholarship Recipients: Rodrigo Nava & Devon Watson

Special Recognition Award: Debbie Patton

Larry Sharp Service Awards: Thomas Valdez, GolfTEC; James D. Brown, Riverbend Country Club; Gardenia Burton; Kirk White; Classic Chevrolet Sugar Land; Judge Robert & Mrs. Hebert; Mike Svatek, The Phoenix Design Group

Community Awareness Awards: Mary Favre & Liz Furman

Advocacy Award: Grace Kong

Outstanding Educator Awards: Stephanie Burns, FBISD; Mary Blanchard, Colony Meadows Elementary School; Michelle Bratsen, Neill Elementary School; Joshua Miller, Neill Elementary School; Kevin Pruitt, Sugar Mill Elementary School; Megan Wallace, Sartartia Middle School

Outstanding Employer Awards: IL Primo Pizza & Wings; Randalls New Territory

James Patterson Volunteer of the Year Award: Tom Larsen

Chairman's Award: Hal Marshall

Kirk White

James Patterson & Tom Larsen

Mary Favre & Liz Furman

James Patterson & Judge Robert Hebert

Hal Marshall

The Arc Family Matters

Celebrations:

Mike Biasini, member of The Arc, earned an Innovative Teaching Grant from the Alvin ISD Education Foundation. Congratulations Mike!

Larry Lobue, Board member, head coach and head of Special Olympics Delegation, made his professional debut as umpire for the Skeeters on April 17 & April 18. Way to go Larry!

Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers:

Dominique Blunt, Special Olympic athlete, has had several health challenges over the last several months. Get well soon Dominique!

Davis Caruthers, Special Olympics athlete, Social Recreation and Bowling member, is recovering from an illness. Please keep Davis in your prayers.

Marilyn Mary "Sally" LeBlanc, mother of longtime supporter and recipient of the Larry Sharp Service Award, Sherrie Fontenot, passed away on April 19, 2018.

Don Levit, brother-in-law to Elyse Wagner, member of The Arc, passed away recently.

Russell Smith, Special Olympics athlete, Social Recreation and Bowling member, is recovering from an illness. Please keep Russell in your prayers.

Teen/Tween Respite Program

Karri Axtell

A fun time was had by all who attended the Teen/Tween Respite events on March 23rd and April 13th at Texana Learning Center in Missouri City! It didn't take long for the teens to jump into games like Twister, Apples to Apples (drawing pictures of their favorite characters) or play with puzzles and Legos!

Teen/Tween Respite is a collaborative effort between The Arc of Fort Bend County, Texana Center, and Hope For Three. In January, 2018, the three organizations brainstormed ideas about a Fort Bend County respite event, developing the only teen/tween respite program available in Fort Bend County for residents age 11 – 18 who have an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD).

The program is managed by Respite Event Director, Samantha Katchy, Applied Behavior Analysis Therapist, with the assistance of two Behavior Technicians, and community volunteers. Volunteers are key to the success of the respite event, as they provide an opportunity for teens to practice social interaction in an environment designed to meet their unique needs.

The teens certainly have a lot of engaging options to choose from when they come to Teen/Tween Respite! There is a beautiful outdoor space with walking trail and an open activities space where teens can play, watch movies, and eat snacks.

The Teen/Tween Respite is an excellent opportunity for teens with intellectual or developmental disabilities to hang-out and socialize with peers, play board games and activities -all while their parents enjoy an evening to go out to dinner, a movie, run errands, or just take a break!

Future respite events are set for Fridays on August 10, and September 14, 2018, from 6 – 9 pm.

Sound like fun? It is! Want to volunteer, or sign your teen/tween participant up for the next event?

Apply Online Today! Link: https://www.arcoffortbend.org/2018-tween-teen-respite-program/

Cost: $10 Online Application Required 1 Week prior to event

Exploring the "10 Day ARD Recess" and "Stay Put"

Karri Axtell

Parents have many important rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).[1] Included in those rights are meaningful parent participation, and prior written notice of meetings and/or proposed changes to their child's educational program.[2]

If parents disagree with a school Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee's proposed changes to their child's services or educational program in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), they may request an ARD meeting recess of up to 10 days.[3] During the meeting recess, the parents and the school are to consider alternatives, gather additional data, prepare further documentation, and/or obtain additional resource persons to assist the entire ARD Committee to reach a mutual agreement.[4]

DID YOU KNOW? A parent may request an independent facilitator from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to facilitate an ARD meeting that is currently in a disagreement recess. Submit a request form to TEA within 5 days of the ARD meeting which ended in disagreement.

Within ten days, the ARD Committee meets again to further discuss other options and alternatives to the proposed IEP changes. If the parents and school ARD committee members still cannot reach an agreement about the child's IEP, the school district must implement the IEP that it determined to be appropriate.[5] However, parents should know there may remain a brief opportunity to stop the proposed IEP changes from taking effect, if they know their rights and follow the procedures to enact "Stay Put".[6] [7]

Stay Put, also known as a pendency proceeding, describes the status of the child's IEP while a legal dispute is pending between the parents and the school.

DID YOU KNOW? If parents wish to prevent the school's proposed IEP changes from taking effect, they must act quickly by following a process and requesting "stay put".

In Texas, if a **Request for Due Process Hearing**[8] is filed with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), asking for "stay put" before the IEP changes become final (5 days after final disagreement ARD, unless the parent waives the 5 day waiting period), then, the last IEP in effect before the proposed IEP changes, will remain in effect while the dispute is being decided by an Independent Hearing Officer (IHO).

NOTE: Although parents have a right to represent themselves and their children in a due process proceeding, parents should consider seeking advice and counsel of an attorney who practices special education law to assist them with the process. Special education law can be complex, and due process hearings are administrative legal proceedings where the rules of procedure, discovery, and evidence apply.

Once the Request for Due Process Hearing[8] is filed with the TEA, an Administrative Law Judge, known as an "Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO)," is assigned to the case through the State Office of Administrative Hearings. The IHO is a neutral third party with knowledge about special education laws, and has authority to determine what is educationally appropriate for the child.

How does "enacting stay put" work as a practical matter?
If parents disagree with a school's proposed change to their child's program or services, and they wish to preserve their right to keep their child's current IEP, until an IHO determines what is educationally appropriate, they should:

1) Have the ARD committee clearly document the areas of disagreement in the deliberations page of the student's IEP.
2) DO NOT check the box waiving the 5 school days to begin/implement the proposed IEP.[9]
3) Draft a Request for Due Process Hearing detailing the disagreement, and request that your child's last IEP remain in effect while the case is pending.
4) FILE the Request for Due Process Hearing with the TEA, and send a copy to the School District Superintendent within the 5 day period.

The Texas Education Agency designed a model Due Process Hearing Request Form, which is available on their website. Additional information about special education services and resources can be found in the IDEA Manual 2016, a joint project of The Arc of Texas, and Disability Rights Texas

**** This article is for general information purposes only. If you need legal advice, you should seek the assistance of an attorney who practices special education law.***

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[1] 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq.
[2] 20 U.S.C. 1415
[3] 19 T.A.C. 89.1050(g)
[4] Id.
[5] 19 T.A.C. 89.1050(g)
[6] 34 C.F.R., 300.518
[7] 19 T.A.C. 89.1151 (c). Parents may file a Request for Due Process Hearing up to 12 mos. after any disagreement, however, in the mean-time, the school's changes to the IEP will go into effect after the 5th school day.
[8] 19 T.A.C. 89.1165 and 34 C.F.R. 300.508
[9] 19 T.A.C. 89.1050 (h)

Skeeters BASEBALL FOUNDATION

The Arc of Fort Bend extends a huge thank you to the Skeeters Baseball Foundation for our $5000 Grant!

Texas ABLE® Program Open for Enrollment

Start spreading the news – we are excited to announce that the Texas Achieving a Better Life Experience (Texas ABLE®) Program is officially open for enrollment.

Texas ABLE, based on federal and state legislation, provides Texans with disabilities and their families the opportunity to save money for disability-related expenses in a tax-advantaged account without losing their eligibility for certain public benefits such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Medicaid. Texas residents who experience the onset of a disability before the age of 26 and meet program eligibility requirements may open a Texas ABLE account.

Texas ABLE Program Highlights

- Save up to $15,000 per year (or even more if exceptions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 apply). ABLE account funds up to $100,000 are generally disregarded for purposes of determining eligibility to receive government assistance or benefits.
- Withdrawals are tax-free if used to pay for qualified disability expenses, and any earnings on your investments grow tax-free.
- Maintain control of your account, and choose how you want your funds invested.
- Access and monitor your account through our secure online platform.
- Use our online gifting tool and make it easy for others to make contributions to your account, including your friends and family, business entities or even trusts.

Get started today! For program information, visit TexasABLE.org. You can also reach us by email at customerservice@TexasABLE.org or by telephone at 844-489-2253.

Customer service hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., CT, excluding holidays.

Other than FDIC insurance for the Bank Savings Account Option, accounts are not insured or guaranteed and could lose money (including the principal invested). Before investing in the Program, investors should carefully consider the federal and state tax consequences, possible negative effects on eligibility for federal or state benefits, and possible Medicaid recapture, investment objectives, risks, administrative fees, service and other charges and expenses associated with the Program. The Program Disclosure Statement and Participation Agreement contains this and other information about the Program, and is available at www.TexasABLE.org or by calling 844-4TX-ABLE (844-489-2253). Investors should read the Program Disclosure Statement and Participation Agreement carefully before investing.

Comments or complaints may be forwarded to the following address or by calling the following number: Prepaid Higher Education Tuition Program, Office of the Comptroller of Public Accounts, P.O. Box 13407, Austin, Texas 78711-3407, 512-936-2064.

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

TEA's Corrective Action Plan Submitted to USDOE

Karri Axtell

On April 23, 2018, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) submitted for approval to the U.S. Department of Education, a final combined corrective action and strategic plan for special education. Parents, teachers, and other interested stakeholders, such as The Arc of Fort Bend County, provided numerous comments and valuable input to the TEA throughout the planning process.

TEA's April plan is the third in a series of draft corrective action plans in response to the January 11, 2018 federal monitoring report. After a nearly year-long investigation, the U.S. Department of Education found TEA had failed to ensure that school districts appropriately locate, identify, and evaluate students with a disability, or provide appropriate access to special education services. The April 23rd corrective action and strategic plan still has to be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education before receiving the agency's final approval.

Plan Hi-Lights:

- TEA will develop a state-wide special education professional development system, including multiple methods of support for general and special education teachers, staff, and administrators.
- TEA will create a host of resources for Texas parents regarding their rights to a free and appropriate public education, and advertise such resources on a large scale.
- For students who are found to have needed services, but did not receive them, the school district will be responsible for providing compensatory education services. TEA will provide $65 million to assist school districts as they provide Full and Individual Evaluations (FIE) and compensatory education services.
- TEA will further strengthen its staffing and resources devoted to special education, allowing for greater oversight and additional on-site support to local school districts.

The April 23, 2018 corrective action and strategic plan may be found at: https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSPED.

U.S. Department of Education Releases Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Karri Axtell

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) released its Strategic Plan for FY 2018-22. The plan describes the Department of Education's policies, priorities, and strategic goals and objectives.

One of the strategic goals is to "Support state and local efforts to improve learning outcomes for all P-12 students in every community." Topics such as school choice, Charter Schools Programs, transition to college and obtaining a meaningful career were also discussed. The Department of Education emphasized it will "Ensure students with disabilities have access to special education and related services and supplementary aids and services that meet their unique educational needs, including appropriately ambitious individualized education program goals and the chance to meet challenging objectives."

Read the ED strategic plan here:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/strat/plan2018-22/strategic-plan.pdf

The Arc Presented at the LCISD SEPAC Meeting

Margo Pasko

Gold coins for everyone, in honor of The Arc's golden anniversary! Well, gold, foil-covered chocolates were given out to parents at the Lamar CISD **Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)** meeting on March 5, 2018.

The Arc of Fort Bend County staff members, Karri Axtell and Margo Pasko, presented a program to the families regarding The Arc's history, programs, services and transition. Dana Sheridan, Lamar CISD Assistant Director of Special Programs, and Kim Hahn, SEPAC President, organized the program as part of the parent education series. The SEPAC also honored educators of the year at this meeting.

Transition, within school settings, refers to the coordinated set of activities which are designed to be results-oriented and to help the student move from school to post-school activities. Once a student graduates, there is no agency or organization in Texas that is responsible for taking over the many roles that school districts have played in students' lives. This is a sobering reality that all families face.

Margo and Karri discussed available options for post-secondary education, community involvement, income and/or employment and living arrangements - while stressing the importance of "person centered planning" in some form. They also presented a list of helpful resources.

FBISD 2018 Summer Resource Fair

Karri Axtell

On Saturday, March 3, 2018, Fort Bend ISD hosted a Summer Resource Fair in collaboration with The Arc of Fort Bend County, Gigi's Playhouse, and Hope for Three. The resource fair was well attended by residents from around Fort Bend County, including Fort Bend ISD, Lamar CISD and Stafford MSD. The resource fair included a wide variety of information on summer camps, activities, therapies, and academic enrichment programs. Vendors including Reining Strength Therapeutic Horsemanship, We Rock the Spectrum Gym, Children's Museum of Houston, Camp Blessing, Rosenberg Railroad Museum, Out Loud Dance, Smartie Pants Academy, Learning RX, and many more were in attendance.

Childcare for children with disabilities was available for those who signed up for one of the 40 slots available throughout the day. Avni Vora, a senior at Clements High School, coordinated an "Undersea Carnival" as part of her senior Capstone Project. Avni spent her fall semester researching Autism Spectrum Disorders and created several interactive games and activities for the children. She then recruited student volunteers to play games and activities with the children, which provided parents an opportunity to attend the summer resource fair and mingle with other parents.

Fort Bend ISD anticipates the Summer Resource Fair will be an annual event that will continue to grow. And we look forward to participating again next year!

Sensory Friendly Program Now at George Ranch Historical Park

Margo Pasko

"Welcome to the George Ranch", they said, in the most sensory friendly ways possible!

On Sunday, April 15, the George Ranch Historical Park hosted its first sensory friendly day, and it was excellent! Krystal Willeby, Director of Programs for the George Ranch Historical Park, and her staff, worked hard for over seven months to create an infrastructure that offers a customized and welcoming environment for families with children and adults with autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Although they debuted the project on April 15, that is not the end of the story. All elements that were showcased that day remain in effect and available throughout the year for Park visitors.

So, what makes for a sensory friendly experience at the George Ranch Historical Park? First of all, the Park has created a sensory friendly guide that is available in the visitor center. The guide rates the sensory intensity of the seven different park sites, considering sound, light, touch, smell, movement and complexity. The ratings are low, medium and high. In addition, sensory kits are available at each site, filled with items such as weighted lap pads, stress balls, coloring pages, etc. They also offer noise cancelling headphones and color therapy glasses at the visitor center, available for check-out on first come, first served basis. At each site, there is a quiet corner with seating, in case of overstimulation. For people with mobility impairments, there is also a tram with a wheelchair lift that goes through the park.

To prepare for the Park visit, the staff created a welcome video that explains what will be seen, so the visitors with sensory needs can be prepared. Ray Miller, the father of a child with autism, said that while others might think the video is too basic, he said it was exactly what was needed to explain the rules and expectations to a person with an autism spectrum disorder. He also commented that his family's experience was terrific—a beautiful day, no crowds, and lots of accommodations available.

The historical interpreters were trained on the use of the sensory friendly materials, and were excited to be able to use this training on April 15. In keeping with their historical accuracy, they made sure the sensory friendly kits were covered by an era-appropriate covering when not in use. Even the quiet corners matched the era of the sites in which they were placed. Well done!

Another visitor to the Park's Sensory Friendly Day was Maria Romo, who was with her son Abel who has autism. Maria commented on the beautiful day to be outdoors, and suggested that school districts could use this opportunity for sensory friendly experiences for students receiving special education services.

The Arc contributed to this project, too. Staff member Margo Pasko provided staff training on how to differentiate instruction to different members of a group. In addition, she wrote sensory stories to explain what to expect when visiting the ranch. Margo said it was a good collaboration and was grateful that The Arc was invited to be part of the project! Check out this link, and scroll to the bottom of the page for the sensory stories: https://www.georgeranch.org/plan-a-visit/accessibility/

"Wings for All" Soars to New Heights!

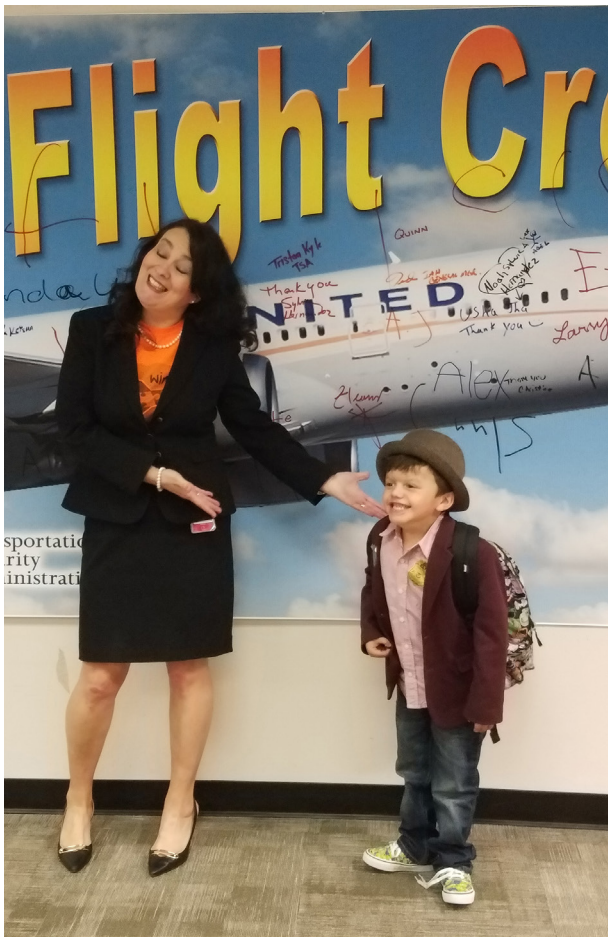
Karri Axtell

It was the 7th Wings for All event hosted by The Arc of Texas, The Arc of Fort Bend County, and The Arc of Greater Houston. Over 100 children and adults came from all corners of the greater Houston area to check their bags and earn their "wings" at George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

Wings for All is an airport and flight simulation program designed to alleviate some of the stress and uncertainty that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities may experience when traveling. The program provides families with the opportunity to participate in the entire airport experience.

On April 24, 2018, families were welcomed by the many friendly faces of The Arc chapters, the Houston Airport System, Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and United Airlines. The eager travelers checked their bags and received their boarding passes at the ticket counter, before making their way through the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) check-point. Helpful Security Officers and volunteers were on hand to guide the voyagers as they passed the many airport shops and eateries. The travelers were greeted by therapy dogs as they joined their fellow passengers at the boarding gate. After a short wait, they made their way down the loading passageway, and boarded the airplane. Passengers enjoyed a beverage and snack during the 30 minute simulated flight, before "touching down" back in Houston, Texas. Another successful flight! The joyful travelers then joined the crew and their hosts to celebrate another remarkable Wings for All event!

Another Wings for All event is being planned for the Fall of 2018. More details coming soon!



Don Miller Memorial Scholarship

The Arc of Texas

The Arc of Texas promotes, protects, and advocates for the human rights and self-determination of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Who was Don Miller?

From 1967-74 Don Miller was an active youth volunteer leader in the San Angelo and Texas Teens Aid for people with intellectual & developmental disabilities program sponsored by The Arc of Texas. He was instrumental in the planning and implementation of local and state-level recreational, athletic and social services and supports for people with intellectual disabilities. Although confined to a wheelchair by Muscular Dystrophy, Don became a great example of volunteerism in action. Following his death in 1974, the Don Miller Memorial Scholarship Fund was established to honor his memory.

The Arc of Texas is pleased to announce the availability of the ***Don Miller Memorial Scholarship*** for eligible students who will be enrolling in a college or university in Texas for the 2018-2019 fall and spring semesters. Specific details about the scholarship are as follows:

- *Offered to full-time students in need of financial assistance who have chosen a degree plan that will result in a professional career in the field of intellectual and developmental disability services.*
- *Limited to $2,000 annually and is paid in two equal semester installments of $1,000.*
- *Available only to junior and senior students.*
- *The deadline for application submission is* ***September 1, 2018****.*
- *The Arc of Texas awards only one (1) scholarship per year.*

The recipient is chosen by a Scholarship Selection Team comprised of senior staff from The Arc of Texas. All decisions of the Scholarship Selection Team are final.

Copies of all materials relating to the scholarship, including the application form, are also available at The Arc of Texas website at ***www.thearcoftexas.org***.

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Social Recreation

Dance - Needville

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo - NRG

SaberCats Rugby - Constellation Field

Social Recreation

Houston Astros - Minute Maid Park

Houston Rockets - Toyota Center

Kyle Eddlemon has made it to The World Series!

Margo Pasko

At the ripe young age of almost 35, long-time Special Olympics athlete, Kyle Eddlemon, is living his dream: working for a world series winning baseball team. And, he not only has the ring to prove it, he has a baseball nickname , too: "K dawg"!

Kyle has worked for the Astros since June, 2005. With his enthusiasm and work ethic, he worked his way up from the guest services department (promotions and giveaways) to the grounds crew, where he has worked since August 2010. At any given home game, you may see Kyle working on the field. He is one of the 14 grounds crew staffers, each of whom has a specific duty. Kyle's responsibility is to clean the bases and the on-deck circles, also known as fungo circles.

When asked about his experience working at Minute Maid Field throughout the World Series, Kyle said "It was intense, almost insane!" The noise in the stadium was so loud he couldn't even describe it. The most exciting part was the memorable, historical, maybe- the-best-world-series game ever! "One for the ages" said Kyle! "Altuve even said it was one of the craziest games he has ever played!" He said the ball players were always friendly and had so much energy. The players were approachable and friendly, giving fist bumps and chatting before the games. Kyle was so happy he got to talk and fist bump with Dallas Keuchel, Carlos Correa, and Chris Devenski. He said the feeling was that they were all having fun! He also noted that they stayed loose.

Baseball is a sport with a long list and history of superstitions. Players and teams have their own rituals and routines. Well, Kyle and the bull pen coach Craig Bjornson had a three-year special superstition/tradition of Kyle giving motivational messages that "CB" always shared in the clubhouse before the games. On November 1, the last World Series game, Kyle texted CB with these words: "Get to Darvish early! The bats need to wake up! Lance needs to go 8 innings! No pressing and no clock on this game! Win every inning! Have fun, stay relaxed, strike first! Breathe! Pitchers need to throw strikes. No giving in! Light the torch. Time to bulldoze through them!" CB then replied: "K dawg Lets go man. U got it. Great message. Let's do this! And they did!

All members of the organization received rings in appreciation for their parts of the Astro's "Winningest Season". Kyle's group received their rings at a special gathering. They celebrated with cake, ice cream, drinks, video highlights, and the rings, of course! Each ring is personalized with the staff member's name. Each design elements hold special meaning. It takes eleven games to win a world series, so the H on the ring is made up of eleven sections. Inside the ring is the Astros' W-L record for each of the three parts of the playoffs and Series.

Kyle says it's so important to enjoy what you do for a living. He advises everyone to find a job that you love to do—don't just do a job because you have to. Kyle says he owes it all to his parents, Debbie and Steve Eddlemon, who drive him to and from each game, and encouraged him throughout his quest to be in major league baseball. Although his two older brothers, Kelly and Kevin, are in the Elkins HS baseball hall of fame, Kyle has made it to the World Series!

Sharon Schreiber
2018 Female "Athlete of the Year"

Margo Pasko

Each year, at Spring Games, Special Olympics Texas Area 22 Annual Awards are presented. We are proud to announce that our very own Sharon Schreiber was chosen as the "2018 Female Athlete of the Year" for Area 22. There are over 2000 athletes in Area 22, so this is a big deal! Area 22 covers the counties of Brazoria, Fort Bend, Jackson, Matagorda, Wharton, and part of Harris County.

Sharon Schreiber shows that Special Olympics Texas is not just for kids-- it's lifelong! She's our oldest athlete at 66 years of age, still runs track, even with her ankle-foot orthotics, and is a leader of our bocce program. She guides athletes through warmups each week and mentors the new, young players. In pursuit of a better life, she adjusted her lifestyle, lost a substantial amount of weight, and now no longer needs her blood pressure medicine, NOR her insulin. She is a model of good sportsmanship because she never gives up. She's a wealth of life lessons and positive attitude for all who know her.

At a recent medical checkup, in response to the question about what medications she takes, Sharon said, "I used to take insulin shots, 2 diabetic medications, blood pressure medication, 2 cholesterol medications, 3 eye drop medications and thyroid medication. I only take my thyroid medication now because I eat healthy, exercise, and ***do Special Olympics!*** I do not have to take the other medications." She is so proud, she just tells her doctors about it all.

And we are proud of her, too! Congratulations, Sharon!

Stormy Day at LCISD Invitational Track Meet

Margo Pasko

Thunderbolt and lightning, very, very frightening, to our track team's 35 members! That's what happened at the 37th annual Lamar Consolidated Invitational Track Meet on Saturday, April 14. For the first time since 2009, the track meet was cancelled due to weather. Shortly after the athletes lined up for opening ceremonies on the football field, Dr. Thomas Randle, the superintendent of LCISD, ordered the evacuation of the stadium to the high school gym due to lightening and the approach of a line of storms. While in the gym, the athletes were entertained by a pep rally, mascot included! An abbreviated opening ceremony was held in the gym, but the competition was not to be. Every time it seemed that the storms had passed, another crack of thunder and flash of lightening arrived. Two hours after the original start time, the track meet was called off. Head track coach, Cathy Zepeda, was glad everyone was safe! Assistant coach Debbie Patton suggested an Oprah-style awarding of medals in lieu of competition: "You get a medal! And YOU get a medal! And YOU get a medal! EVERYONE gets a medal!" Regardless of the cancellation, it should be noted that Adapted PE teacher, Jamie Dorsey, and the rest of her LCISD committee deserve a huge THANK YOU for doing this event each year!

Special Olympics 2017 Winter Games News

Margo Pasko

Brrrr! It's time to report on Special Olympics Texas Winter Games! On Thursday, February 1, 28 athletes from all four of The Arc's volleyball teams and one bowler made their annual winter road trip to compete in the 25th Annual Special Olympics Texas Winter Games in Round Rock and Austin, February 1-4, 2018. According to Special Olympics Texas, nearly 2600 athletes from across Texas joined in the fun, competing in volleyball, bowling and powerlifting. They were accompanied by 250 coaches, 500 family members and more than 2000 other volunteers, not to mention all the spectators!

We had one lone bowler this year, Allan Harris, Jr. He came home with a ribbon from his division. The Lungstrums and the Harrises look forward to the Winter Games trip every year, but Steve and Jason were unable to attend due to scheduling issues.

Our volleyball season ended on a somber note, as the athletes learned of the passing of the Shark's team member, Kim Butler, in December. To honor her memory, the players and coaches wore bright pink tape on their uniforms, Kim's favorite color. Kim's brother and sister-in-law expressed their appreciation for the support and sentiment. Throughout the Winter Games, other teams voiced their condolences.

The four volleyball teams were the Angels, coached by Debbie Eddlemon; the Wolverines, coached by Hal Marshall; the Doves coached by Beth and Jimmy Jimenez, and the Sharks, coached by Carl LaSala.

The Angels came home with silver medals. The Doves came home with gold medals. The Wolverines came home with ribbons. And, the Sharks won the bronze medal for their division. Congratulations to all! The teams played, lived and ate well on the trip! They stayed at The Hampton Inn, Round Rock. They dined at the usual crowd favorite, The Salt Lick, and added Joe's Crab Shack for a new option this year.

Our hotel, The Hampton Inn Round Rock, surpassed its usual warm hospitality to welcome us! They hosted a pizza party for our group—including drinks, papergoods and decorations!

Our athletes played their volleyball games, went to the athlete celebration and victory dance, and hung out at athlete village where they made new friends, including J. R. Martinez, an Iraq war veteran, actor and the winner of Dancing with the Stars, season 13. He was amazing! He addressed the crowd and spoke about taking the DIS out of Disability. What an inspirational man! In the tradition of Winter Games, each participant was given the Winter Games gift from Special Olympics volunteers: handmade knitted scarves!

But wait, there's more! Our very own Mike Marshall was given the honor of carrying the torch during the Athlete Ceremony and Victory Dance.

All four teams had great accomplishments! Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who made this trip possible! Congratulations to the athletes!

Missouri City Parks and Recreation Department Create an Adaptive Tennis Program

Margo Pasko

The inaugural season of the Missouri City Parks and Recreation Department Adaptive Tennis Program came to a close on Monday, April 30 with an amazing celebration! Council member Jerry Wyatt, from the city council of Missouri City, honored the participants by bestowing medals in a special ceremony for them. Missouri City Parks and Recreation Director Jason Mangum and Recreation Superintendent Shane Mize also attended the celebration. In addition to medals, the participants received tee shirts, caps, notepads, tennis towels, and key chains. Cristina Escamos, the tennis program administrator, made all the celebration arrangements, including providing a dinner of burgers and hot dogs for the players and their parents.

How did this wonderful, adaptive tennis program come about?

Several months ago, Cristina Escamos reached out to Margo Pasko at The Arc with the idea of launching an adult, adaptive tennis program. Cristina proposed providing the staff and volunteers at the new Missouri City tennis courts! Margo agreed to advertise the program and find the participants! Twelve people responded to Margo's invitation and had a ball (tennis, of course) learning and refining their tennis skills over the course of 9 weeks. Councilman Wyatt awarded medals to Aniecia Mouton, Carrie Wantuch, Jacob Moronko, J.J. Jimenez, Jason Lungstrum, Todd Hoover, Ty Williams, Tim Caldwell, Michael Cushenberry, and Michael Medina. Unfortunately, Courtney and Mainak were unable to attend. Tony filled in for the last few sessions.

Cristina and her staff and volunteers provided awesome coaching throughout the season. Every player made progress and had lots of fun. As J.J. said, after smashing a great one: "Like Serena!"

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 o New Member o Renewing Member

Member Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

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

E-mail Address: _____ HCS Provider: _____

I am a:
o Family Member o Person with Disability o Interested Citizen o 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:

o Bowling o Education Advocacy o Employment Advocacy

o Social Recreation o Special Olympics o Transportation

Total Amount Enclosed: $_____

Mail form and payment to:
The Arc of Fort Bend County
123 Brooks Street
Sugar Land, Texas 77478

OR **Join online at www.arcoffortbend.org**

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