

Save the Date

October 2, 2018
Wings for All
George Bush
Intercontinental
Airport

November 17, 2018
Best in the West
George Ranch Arena

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"WINGS FOR ALL" Coming to George Bush Intercontinental Airport



"Wings for All" is an airport rehearsal program - specially designed for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and aviation professionals. The program was designed to alleviate some of the stress that families who have a child with a disability experience when traveling by air. The program provides families the opportunity to practice entering the airport, obtaining boarding passes, passing through security and boarding a plane.

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

The "Wings for All" event is Tuesday, October 2, 2018. Go to arcoffortbend.org to register.



Donate your vehicle today!
tax deduction and free towing



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

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
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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

A Sad, Yet Sweet “Goodbye”



After 10 years of advocating and directing wonderful programs for The Arc, Margo Pasko is saying, “Goodbye”, and retiring on September 29, 2018. As a Program Director, Margo was responsible for Special Olympics, Employment, Transition and general “systems advocacy”.

When she began her career at The Arc on September 15, 2008, there were six sports offered in our Special Olympics delegation. Through her hard work and passion to serve, Margo added four additional sports – bocce, golf, soccer and most recently, a tennis skills class. She and her husband, Jeff Hoffman, are both volunteer coaches for bocce.

Margo became The Arc’s first “Employment Specialist” and through direct job search, training and coaching, she assisted dozens of clients achieve gainful employment or regular,

meaningful volunteer work. For many, it was their first experience of true, competitive employment.

Margo saw an immediate need to reach out to those families who had sons and daughters graduating and leaving the public school systems. So, she started our “TwentySomethings” program. She brought parents from around Ft. Bend County together so they could meet, network and together negotiate the transitional path their children were taking from school to adult life.

As a result of her adult transition teaching experience, Margo worked with local special education departments and taught teachers how to develop and implement “Transition IEPs” for their students. She also worked closely with Park West Staffing and trained many “Ambassadors” to work on Fort Bend Transit buses. Additionally, she assisted the teachers at the George Historical Ranch adapt their lesson plans for children with disabilities. And, Margo developed “Social Stories” for the teachers to use with the incoming students to prepare them for what they were going to see.

Margo gave her heart and energy to The Arc and our mission. Her passion for helping others emanated from her every day. Her work definitely improved the quality of life for ALL! Thank you, Margo. You will be missed – but we are happy for you!

Say Hello to our new Program Director, Rachel Lenzsch



Howdy! My name is Rachel Lenzsch and I am honored to be the new Program Director for The Arc of Fort Bend County.

I am a Texas A&M graduate with a deep passion for creating an inclusive environment for individuals of all abilities, so that they feel empowered and celebrated for who they are.

After graduation I went to Peru and lived there for six months volunteering for the nonprofit, Live Simply for Peru. My days were dedicated to serving a local orphanage for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I came back to Texas with a vision of implementing programs that create an inclusive community for those transitioning from the educational system into society.

While at Texas A&M, I was a part of the nonprofit, Young Life Capernaum, where I served two years as a volunteer leader.

I was given the opportunity to pursue real and meaningful friendships with high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For the past six summers, I have worked at Camp Blessing Texas—a Christian camp for children and adults with disabilities giving them an all-inclusive, typical, camp experience. I served on the leadership team at Camp Blessing where I developed and implemented camp programs.

I look forward to serving and becoming part of the Fort Bend County community as I facilitate Special Olympics, TwentySomething, and all the other wonderful programs available through The Arc. I consider it a privilege to be part of The Arc's team that shares the same passion to have young adults of all abilities fully immersed in our community.

Random facts about me:

- Graduated Summa Cum Laude from Texas A&M in 2017 with a degree in Health and minor in Psychology
- I hiked to the top of Machu Picchu
- I love to paint, craft, be outside/going on walks
- I love a good cup of tea
- I love my cat Annie

Strategies for a Successful Back-to-School

Karri Axtell

Going Back-to-School can be an exciting, or anxious time for children with a disability and their parents. Here are a few tips to help transition into a new school year:

- **Update, or START your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) Notebook¹ for the new school year.**
- **Review your child’s IEP plan and goals.**
Are they still appropriate for your child? Has your child had any significant changes in health, behavior, or learning? If so, contact your child’s school 2 – 3 weeks before the first day of instruction, and ask to schedule an Admission Review & Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting to discuss your concerns.
- **Create a personal information folder about your child for the teacher(s).**
 1. Write a ONE page personal description about your child. List your child’s personal strengths & weaknesses, likes & dislikes, strategies that work, or do not work for them. Include his/her extra-curricular activities and accomplishments, and describe the person they are at home, and in the community. It can be helpful for teachers to see the whole child, beyond academics alone. Include a photo or two, if it helps to tell your child’s story. Include your name, phone number & email address.
 2. Include a copy of your child’s latest IEP & goals in the information folder.
 3. Make a copy of these documents and keep in your child’s IEP Notebook.

Let teachers know you are there to support your child's learning through open communication and collaboration.

- **Attend the Teacher Meet & Greet with your child BEFORE² school starts**
 1. Introduce you & your child to the teacher(s).
 2. Give the teacher(s) a copy of your child’s personal information folder.
 3. Tell the teacher(s) you are happy to talk more about your child and answer any questions, once they have read over the information folder.
 4. Let the teacher(s) know you are there to support your child’s learning through open communication and collaboration. Ask teachers if they have a preferred communication method (phone, email, paper communication log.)
- **Give your child a tour of the school**
Introduce your child to a typical day’s schedule as you show him/her where they will be dropped off for school, which entrance they will come through, and where to find classrooms, the cafeteria, bathrooms, “sensory cool down space”, etc. If giving a tour during the Teacher meet & greet is too overwhelming for your child, ask the school if you can give the tour during a quieter time, before school starts.
- **Keep home-school communication open throughout the school year.**
A few weeks into the school year, touch base with the teacher(s). See if teachers have any questions about your child. Ask if there is anything you can do at home to help support your child’s learning. Ask for an update on how your child is doing on their IEP goals progress so far.

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

¹ See The Arc of Fort Bend County article “The Importance of Keeping an IEP Notebook”

² If the School District does not offer a meet & greet prior to school starting, call the school the week before instruction begins, and ask if you may schedule a time to meet your child’s teacher.

Back-to-School Bash was a BLAST!

Karri Axtell

We came...We explored...We ate Pizza!!

It was fun for parents and kids alike at the Back-to-School Bash at the Fort Bend Children's Discovery Center on August 14th! Minds came out to play for the museum's sensory friendly hour featuring less stimulating lighting, sound, a cool-down space and other sensory-friendly items. The Fort Bend Children's Discovery Center opened one hour early to allow children with sensory sensitivities to engage with the exhibits before opening to the general public at 10 am. Fewer people allowed the kids to easily explore simple machines in the "How Does It Work" exhibit, engage in fun physics experiments at "Newton's Know-How", then shop 'til they dropped in "Kidtropolis".

After a couple hours of fun, the enthusiastic explorers made their way to The Arc's office for some food, music and comradery. What's a party without pizza & balloons, right? Parents chatted about the upcoming school year, as the kids played balloon volleyball, worked puzzles, and discovered slime! I shared information about some of the upcoming conferences and School District special education meetings I will be presenting at this fall.

Remember, I am just a phone call away for any questions you have about your child's public school education! 281-494-5924

With Back-to-School 2018-2019 in full-swing, everyone here at The Arc of Fort Bend wishes you a fabulous school year!



Do you want to know more about Karri Axtell, Program Director?



Co-Worker. Friend. Child. Sibling. Parent. We all wear many different “Hats” don’t we? There is joy and sometimes struggle as we wear the many Hats throughout our lives. But, no matter what Hats we wear, we all will enrich and touch the lives of others in a meaningful way.

My name is Karri Axtell and I am a Daughter, Sister, Mother, Friend. While writing this article I thought about which of my “Hats” to share with you. Surely, I should talk about what I do at The Arc of Fort Bend County, but I also want you to know how I relate to some of the different Hats you may wear. I am a sibling. I have a younger brother with an Intellectual Disability and Autism. My brother passed away when he was 14 years old, but he is one of my primary inspirations for serving children with disabilities and their parents. I am a parent. I am a mom to three children, two of whom have a disability. One of our children is my biological niece who we foster-adopted through DFPS when she was 2 years old. Currently, my husband and I are wrapped up in the joy and challenge of raising a teenage boy and two pre-teen girls!

In my professional life, I am a Student, Veteran, Attorney, Advocate. . . I earned my Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of California, Riverside. (Yes, I am originally from southern California, but don’t hold that against me! As they say, “I got to Texas as soon as I could.”) I served in the United States Navy, on board three ships, from 2000 – 2004. My family and I moved to Texas in 2005. I earned my Juris Doctorate from South Texas College of Law in 2012. I practiced law for 5 years representing parents and students in special education matters, as well as estate planning, probate and guardianship. I have a passion for educating and empowering students and parents about their educational civil rights. This passion led me to pursue a more pro-active role of informing students and parents about their rights, before resorting to the adversarial legal process which can take months or years to get justice for a child. I now use my diverse background and experience at The Arc of Fort Bend County to teach students and parents about their legal rights, as well as coach or mentor parents as they brave the challenges of raising a special needs child.

The Arc of Fort Bend is 50 years strong and has many remarkable programs that enrich the lives of people with I/DD. You may have heard about our Adult Special Olympics program, which offers nine different sports and is one of the largest Special Olympics delegation of athletes in the area. The Arc of Fort Bend also has a Saturday bowling league, and social recreation club for adults with I/DD. They go to concerts, dances, theater shows, movies, and more fun activities, 2 – 4 times each month. The Arc of Fort Bend also owns residential properties it leases to group home providers at below market rates, to make it more affordable for people with I/DD to live inclusively in our community.

The Arc of Fort Bend also has several programs for youth with I/DD, and their parents. That’s where I come in; I am one of three Program Directors at The Arc of Fort Bend. I manage the youth programs that serve the needs of people with I/DD from birth through age 22. We have a monthly parent support group (Aug – May) and we host a couple of fun youth activities for kids with I/DD throughout the year. I manage a Teen/Tween Respite program for 11 – 18-year-old Fort Bend County residents with I/DD. I also speak at conferences and give presentations to train students and parents about their educational civil rights. As an educational advocate, I review special education plans and attend school ARD meetings with parents, if necessary. And, I connect people with information and community resources they may need.

So how does all of this relate to you? Whether your Hat is one of Parent, Home Host, Case Worker, Ad Litem, Social Worker, etc., you fulfill an essential role in the life of a child. I want to empower you. You have a significant impact on a child’s life, and influence how they see the Hats they will wear throughout their life. I also want you to know that you are not alone on this journey. There are many people and resources available to inform and help you along the way. If I can ever be one of those helpful people, please let me know. I will be here with my Hat as a Sibling, Parent, Advocate, etc., to listen, and share what information I have. You may reach me at: 281-494-5924 or kaxtell@arcoffortbend.org.

Very Truly, Karri Axtell

Texas Voter Rights

Karri Axtell

Voting is an important civil right. If you are a U.S. Citizen, at least 18 years old on election day, not convicted of a felony (or if punishment was completed) and have not been declared mentally incompetent by a court, then you may register, and vote.

REGISTERING:

You may register by mail, or in person. Voter registration cards can be found at:

- Department of Public Safety offices
- County Tax, Clerk, Justice of the Peace, or Voter Registrar offices
- Public Libraries, Public Workforce Commission and local Workforce Centers
- State agencies providing public assistance: (State Health Services, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Aging and Disability Services)
- Most Post Offices, and Public High Schools
- Online: <https://www.votetexas.gov/register-to-vote/>

First-time voters must either send a copy of their identification (ID) along with their registration form, or, present a form of identification at the polls when you go to vote.

Acceptable ID*:

Driver or State ID; Passport; Texas Election ID Certificate; Texas Handgun License; Military ID Card; US Citizenship Certificate.

**Please note, additional forms of ID may be acceptable if no photo ID is available:*

- 1) Sign a "Reasonable Impediment Declaration" form
- 2) Present one of the following: a copy or original government document with voter's name and address; paycheck; birth certificate; bank statement; or utility bill.

You may receive assistance completing the voter registration card. If you are unable to complete the application, or sign your name, a "witness" may be designated to complete the task, while they are in your presence.

PROOF OF REGISTRATION SHOULD BE MAILED TO YOU WITHIN 30 DAYS

ACCESSIBILITY:

Texas law requires polling locations meet accessibility standards for equal access. Polling location must be on the ground floor or elevator accessible, have 36-inch-wide doors, curb-cuts, non-slip ramps, and handrails on stairs. There cannot be any barriers which impede the path of voters with disabilities. Polling locations must offer an accessible Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting device to help voters mark and cast their vote privately and independently.

If you need assistance reading or marking your ballot, you may ask an election official for help, or, bring someone with you to help.

ASSISTANCE:

You may receive assistance with casting your vote if you cannot read, write, hear, or have a physical disability that prevents from reading or marking your ballot. No proof of disability is required. If you choose to have a polling official help you, a poll watcher or election inspector may observe the voting process to make sure the ballot is marked as you request. If you bring your own assistant to help you, no one else may watch you vote. Interpreters may also be requested if you do not speak English, or if you communicate by sign language.

ALTERNATIVE VOTING METHODS:

There are other voting methods available, if you cannot, or do not want to vote in person:

- 1) Curbside Voting: During early voting, or election day, you may request for an election officer to bring a ballot or voting machine to you at the entrance of the polling place or to a car at curbside. (You can call your County Election Official and let them know you would like to vote Curbside. Find your County Election Official: 1-800-252-8683).
- 2) Early Voting: Anyone may vote at any early voting site in their county. Early voting begins 17 days before election day and ends 4 days before election day. Find your early voting location by calling your County Election Official, or the Secretary of State at: 1-800-252-8683.
- 3) Vote by Mail: The following registered voters may elect to vote by mail: away from the county on election day, sick or has a disability, is 65+, or in jail but still eligible to vote. Requests must be made BEFORE early voting begins. Request an early voting application from the Early Voting Clerk in your county, or from the Secretary of State at: 1-800-252-8683.

For more information about voting and voter rights, contact:

Texas Secretary of State at 1-800-252-VOTE (8683) www.sos.state.tx.us OR
Disability Rights Texas at 1-888-796-VOTE (8683) www.disabilityrightstx.org

** Please note, this article is for general information purposes only. Those needing legal advice should seek the assistance of an attorney.*

Parent Support Group Goes High-Tech!

Karri Axtell

Notebooks, backpacks, pencils and lunch boxes. . . it must be time for back-to-school!

While kids and parents were getting ready for school, The Arc of Fort Bend County Parent Support Group (PSG) was back in full-swing on August 2nd with “Strategies for a Successful Back-to-School”. Tips for being prepared for the new school year and establishing effective home-school communication were discussed with parents attending in-person, and online using Zoom meeting. Zoom is an online meeting platform which allows anyone to listen in on the presentation and participate from the comfort of their home, office, or cell phone.

The PSG still meets on the first Thursday of the month, but, the time has moved to the lunch hour for those who can “lunch and learn” in-person, or online. Parents gather at The Arc of Fort Bend office at 11:30 am, and the presentation portion of the meeting is broadcast live on Zoom meeting from 12 – 12:30 pm. The recorded meeting is later posted on The Arc’s Facebook page for parents to listen-in at their convenience if they were unable to attend the live event.

Parents of young children tend to be so busy with work, after school activities, homework, sports practice, etc., that many find it hard to attend a parent support group. By broadcasting the meeting live on Zoom, and posting for later viewing, parents get access to important information, in a format and time that is convenient for them.

The Arc of Fort Bend Parent Support Group (PSG) meets the first Thursday of the month throughout the school year (August – May). Meetings are held at The Arc’s office, 123 Brooks Street, Sugar Land, from 11:30 am – 1 pm. The presentation portion of the PSG is broadcast live from 12 – 12:30 pm, and recorded for later posting on The Arc’s Facebook page. All are welcome to join the parent support group and share information and resources! Contact Program Director, Karri Axtell, at 281-494-5924 or kaxtell@arcoffortbend.org for more information.

COMING THIS FALL! Look for The Arc of Fort Bend County’s new website with parent training video library and archive of recorded parent support group meetings.



Qualified Charitable Distribution

Did you know that annually, individuals 70.5 and older can transfer up to \$100,000 as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from their traditional IRA* to a qualified charity such as The Arc of Fort Bend County?

For information about how to include The Arc of Fort Bend County in your charitable giving plans, visit our website at: <https://www.arcoffortbend.org/donate/> or contact Laura LaVigne, llavigne@arcoffortbend.org 281-494-5923.

* Please note, the requirements are different with a Roth IRA.

The Arc Celebrates 50 Years Social Recreation Program – How It Started

Nancy Dobert

The Arc's Social Recreation program has always been very popular with our clients. In the early 1980's it was started by volunteers. In the early 1990's, staff assumed the management of the activities.

From 1994 to 2002, Texana Center contracted with The Arc to provide the Social Recreation program. However, due to reductions in the reimbursement rates they received from the State, they were unable to renew the contract.

In order to supplement program costs and keep this vital program going, The Arc applied for funding from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) from both the City of Sugar Land and Fort Bend County. The Arc continues to receive funds every year from the Fort Bend County CDBG!

Nancy Dobert, Program Director at The Arc, plans two to three activities every month. She scours the greater Houston area for events that our clients will enjoy attending. She schedules the events, purchases tickets, plans transportation and arranges supervision for each event. A sampling of activities the clients enjoy include regularly scheduled dances at St. Theresa's Catholic Church and other dances including Valentine's Day, Summer Celebration, Halloween, Mardi Gras Ball, and a Winter Formal. Sports events include attending games for the Astros, Rockets, Sugar Land Skeeters, Harlem Globetrotters and Houston Sabercats. Events include attending Monster Trucks, Supercross, Disney on Ice, the Houston Rodeo, Shrine Circus, Fort Bend County Fair and Marvel Live Universe. If there are not enough events to attend, Nancy will plan lunch and a movie at a local theater.

There are currently 110 registered members that choose the activities they would like to attend each month. You can see how much everyone enjoys themselves at our Social Recreation events!



Social Recreation

Arabia Shrine Circus - Fort Bend County Fairgrounds



Dance - Knights of Columbus Hall



Social Recreation

Skeeters Baseball Game - Constellation Field



Dinner and a Movie - Star Cinema & Grill



The Arc Family Matters

Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers:

Ivan Butterfield, friend of The Arc, passed away on January 1, 2018.

Linda Casey, wife of Mike Casey, longtime member and volunteer, passed away on August 22, 2018. Please keep Mike and his family in your prayers.

Marci Shaw, sister of Special Olympics Volleyball coach, Debbie Eddlemon and aunt of Special Olympics Athlete, Kyle, passed away on June 25, 2018.

John Johnson, long time member of The Arc, passed away on July 16, 2018.

Betty Jean Turner Hobbs Bell, grandmother of Special Olympics athlete, Ashley Hobbs, passed away on July 18, 2018.

Donations to The Arc!

Chef Ara & Harlem Rd. Texas B.B.Q. \$250

PCD Management – Giving Spirits Concert..... \$500

Sip & Shop – Boutique Crawl..... \$1124

(Backwater Boutique, Brown Eyed Girl Designs, Dapple Grey Co., Rustic Closet Boutique, The Studio of Richmond, Treasure Hunters Gallery & Unwine'D Wine & Cheese Lounge)

Exchange Club of Sugar Land \$3000

Thank you

Finish Line Sports Makes Shoe Donation to SOTX

Margo Pasko

FINISH LINE If the shoe fits, wear it! Special Olympics Texas athletes will be well-shod thanks to Finish Line Sports! The company donated one thousand pairs of athletic shoes to Special Olympics Texas. No, there were no “diamonds on the soles of their shoes”, but they were sharp looking, nonetheless. From there, the shoes were sent out to the various Areas of SOTX. Area 22 Director Pam Hollaway gave seventy-six pairs to The Arc of Fort Bend County to distribute in our part of Area 22. All told, our athletes claimed thirty-six pairs. We then gave twenty pairs to the Fort Bend Falcons delegation, and twenty pairs to Lamar Consolidated ISD Special Olympics program. Now, they will be able to put their best feet forward. Enough shoe sayings for one article. Hooray for Finish Line Sports!

Giving Spirits Concert Held for The Arc of Fort Bend

Margo Pasko

WOW! "TC and The Cannonballs" owned Sugar Land Town Center on Friday, August 3! To make the evening even better, The Arc was the beneficiary of this Giving Spirits Concert. Karri Axtell and Margo Pasko hosted an information table to share the news about what The Arc does in the community.

The music was phenomenal, with the band playing blues and rock favorites that had scores of people on their feet. The Arc's TwentySomethings and Special Olympics families were "in the house", showing off their shirts with The Arc's logo. During one of the line dances, the dance area of Town Center was jammed with the most diverse crowd one could imagine - all ages, abilities, and ethnicities, all dancing together, enjoying quality of life for all.

Thank you, PCD Management, Sugar Land Town Plaza merchants, and the City of Sugar Land for allowing us to showcase The Arc!



Access Health's Community Operation Back-To-School Health Fair

Karri Axtell

Access Health's annual Community Operation Back-to-School Health Fairs were held on Aug. 4 from 9 am – 12 pm at its clinic in Richmond and on Aug. 11 from 9 am – 12 pm, at the Fort Bend County Annex in Missouri City. These annual events were well attended as hundreds of students and parents received free health screenings, immunizations, sports physicals, vision and dental screenings, speech/language screenings, and haircuts. Outside the clinic was a DJ, over 20 vendor booths, tons of fun activities, a rock wall, bouncy houses, and face painting. Every child was also treated to popcorn, ice cream, and a backpack filled with school supplies!

The Arc's Program Director, Karri Axtell, was at the August 4 health fair sharing information about The Arc of Fort Bend County and some of our awesome programs like Teen/Tween Respite, Educational Advocacy, Adult Special Olympics & Bowling, along with our Social/Recreation program. Karri also helped raise awareness about FASD and the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant. There was a great turn-out, allowing The Arc to share information about its mission and programs.

The Arc thanks Access Health for inviting us to attend the health fair and for partnering in our mission to prevent FASD by educating pregnant women not to drink while pregnant.



TwentySomethings Enjoyed a Day at The Main Event

Margo Pasko

Eat. Bowl. Play. That's what The Main Event in Stafford says one should do. The Arc's TwentySomethings group did just that on Sunday, August 5! It was a bittersweet day for staff member Margo Pasko—it was her last event with her TwentySomethings families before she retires in September. When the fun and games ended they waved goodbye. You'll also see many of the members sporting their new TwentySomethings t-shirts!



SOTX Town Hall Meeting Comes to Fort Bend County

Margo Pasko



Tim Martin, the new CEO of Special Olympics Texas, recently went on a road trip to every single Special Olympics "Area" in Texas. He wanted to meet athletes, families, volunteers and coaches, and listen to their concerns, hopes, and dreams for SOTX. To this end, The Arc of Fort Bend County and Area 22 co-hosted a Town Hall style meeting to welcome Tim to our Area and to hear his message. The gathering was held on June 20 at the Auditorium of Missouri City Parks and Recreation Department. Over 40 people braved the flooded region to attend the event. It was well worth the effort!

Tim previously served as CEO of Special Olympics Arizona. At our event he showed that he has passion and energy. He shared that he is committed to creating a more inclusive world through sports via the expansion of Special Olympics' Unified Sports program, which brings people with and without intellectual disabilities together as teammates. In his remarks, he referred to the Special Olympics "movement", a concept that is more than just practices and competitions. He is committed to inclusion in the community at all levels.

In addition to supporting more "unified" or inclusive programming, he also shared that he would like to move Summer Games away from Memorial Day weekend. He was met with applause for this!

He hopes to increase awareness and support of Special Olympics Texas and to advance the mission of providing year-round sports training, athletic competition and support programs for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Texas offers sports competition and training in 22 Olympic-style sports for 58,333 athletes across the Lone Star State. The nonprofit organization also offers a Young Athletes Program, Motor Activities Training Program, Unified Champion Schools and Healthy Athletes. The Arc of Fort Bend County has supported a Special Olympics program since Special Olympics' beginnings in Texas as the "recreational arm" of The Arc of Texas.

BIGGEST Sports Banquet Ever!

Margo Pasko

We had a feeling that Sunday, June 10, was going to be special!
We took a bit of liberty with lyrics from The Black Eyed Peas:
I gotta feeling that tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good, good night
AND IT WAS!

We had the biggest sports banquet EVER on Sunday, June 10, 2018. Over 235 bowlers, Special Olympics athletes, family members, friends, and volunteers attended the event in the Safari Lodge at Safari Texas Ranch. The ten sports we recognize at this event are aquatics, bocce, softball, volleyball, bowling, basketball, athletics (track and field), golf, soccer and tennis.

The attendees enjoyed a delicious barbecue dinner cooked up by Safari Texas and served by Team Citgo -volunteers led by Jennifer Murillo. We sincerely appreciate the Citgo volunteers for taking care of all the guests! We could not have done it without them!

Nancy Dobert handled the reservations and check-in process for the crowd. Margo Pasko emceed to kick off the party, and then turned the microphone over to Larry Lobue. He first recognized our dedicated head coaches. He presented each head coach with a "Care Package" filled with necessities such as Lysol Wipes, Ibuprofen, Tums, gloves, etc. Then he called the rest of the Special Olympics volunteers to the front of the room where they received stainless steel logo water bottles. Then came the athletes! They were recognized for their sports and given trophies. The joy and excitement on the athletes' faces was very moving. We appreciate the audience for their patience as we sorted out the group for the pictures! Larry gave special recognition to Sharon Schreiber who was named "Area 22 Female Athlete of the Year", and to Kyle Eddlemon for the World Series Championship ring he earned as an employee of the Houston Astros.

Allan Harris took the microphone to introduce the "bowling ladies, Avis Goldy and Gardenia Burton". They lead the extremely popular Saturday afternoon bowling league. Allan presented bowling trophies to the members of the red, white, green and blue teams. They also thanked the volunteers who help them week in and week out, from Labor Day to Memorial Day. The bowling volunteers also received stainless steel water bottles. We truly appreciate the dedication of Avis, Gardenia, and their volunteers!

Ed Madonio returned as the DJ. He did a great job getting everyone out of their seats and on to the dance floor. The athletes were not ready to stop dancing when it was time to "shut it down"! What a wonderful afternoon, and "good, good night" it was! The Arc family matters!

Contact Margo at The Arc if you were not there to receive your trophy or your volunteer gift!
mapasko@arcoffortbend.org.



Special Olympics Athletes Attend 49th Annual Summer Games

Margo Pasko

The Arc of Fort Bend County Special Olympics program had a sterling experience at the 49th annual Special Olympics Texas Summer Games! By sterling, we mean that all of our athletes got silver medals!

The Games took place over Memorial Day weekend at UT Arlington. Nearly 3,000 athletes came from all across the Lone Star State for four days of competition!

This year, our basketball program was The Arc's sponsored sport to go to Summer Games. Because there are so many team entries, SOTX uses a lottery system to choose teams to participate. There were 102 basketball teams that ended up competing at Summer Games! We entered all six of our basketball teams into the lottery for Area 22's slots. The Doves and Wolverines were chosen to attend. Our Unified team almost went to Arlington, but had to scratch due to a late drop by an athlete. Maybe next time?

Coaches Hal and Matt Marshall led the Wolverines players. The athletes were Mike Marshall, Michael Pelz, Jason Lungstrum, Chance Geary, Desney Cheeks, Chris De La Paz, Sammy Gregus-Turner, Michael Medina, Stevie Meyer and Jimmy Griffin. Unfortunately, Laryn Lobue was recovering from being in the hospital and was unable to join the rest of her team. The Wolverines took home silver medals. Congratulations!

Coaches Rhonda Pierce and Chris Prewitt led the Doves, with help from Unified player, Traci Duez and Liz Martinez. This team also received silver! The players included Matt Biasini, Ronnie Bourgeois, Mike Garcia, Andrew Kase, Anthony Matacio, Stephen Plascencia, Tony Presson and Isaac Watson.

Evan Morris went to Summer Games as an individual athletics participant. He was coached by his parents Vanessa and Eddie Morris. He competed in the Pentathlon and came in second in his division! Way to go, Evan, with a silver!

Larry Lobue was sorely missed this year! He was home taking care of Laryn. It took a village of volunteers to manage the tasks he usually takes care of. Margo Pasko and Jeff Hoffman pitched in, as did many others. As Margo said, it made everyone appreciate Larry even more!

In addition to the sports competitions, there were "Healthy Athlete" screenings. The athletes received free hearing and eye exams and free, prescription sports goggles and glasses were prescribed. At Athlete Village and at the Victory Dance, participants enjoyed karaoke and more pictures of athletes with beauty queens than could be counted! JR Martinez, the War Hero and Dancing with the Stars winner, attended Athlete Village events, rubbing shoulders and posing for selfies with everyone.

The Arc and the athletes appreciate the volunteer and financial support that makes participation in Summer Games possible! Next trip up: Softball teams hit the road to Fall Classic in College Station in October. Thank you for your support!

Area 22 Aquatics Swim Meet

Rachel Lenzsch

This was my first Special Olympics event to ever witness and I was completely “blown away” by the dedication and hard work of all the athletes who participated in the Area 22 Special Olympics swim tournament on September 8, 2018! Somehow I found myself being the emcee of the opening ceremony, which quickly turned into my favorite part of the whole day. What an honor it was to cheer on four athletes, one of whom was Danny Ries, as they all carried the Special Olympics “Flame of Hope” that represents the courage and sportsmanship of Special Olympics.

Every single athlete went home with an individual or relay medal. Athlete, Tan Tran, experienced his first swim meet and won a silver medal with his relay team in 100m Freestyle and a gold medal for individual 25m Freestyle!

Coach Becky said “I want to thank all of the coaches and parents who came to practice and helped out during the meet. We have a group of great people.”

We are so thankful for all the volunteers, coaches, and of course the athletes who made this event possible. The athletes who participated were Steve Bily, Chance Geary, Dave Gonzalez, Sammy Gregus, Tommy Hajek, JJ Jimenez, Danny Ries, Tyler Sims, and Tan Tran.



JJ Jimenez receiving a 1st place medal in his 100m backstroke after already receiving 1st place in his Individual Medley, way to go JJ!



Athletes Tan, Dave, Danny, Steve receiving silver medals from their 100m Freestyle relay!

Grizzly Bears Soccer Teams Scores at Spring Games

Margo Pasko

For the third season, our soccer program, coached by Vanessa Luna, Joseph Reed, Carl LaSala and Susie Sims, participated in the Area 4 (Greater Houston) Spring Games. We play with Area 4 for soccer because there aren't enough teams in the Gulf Coast Area 22 for a competition. Coach Susie reported that their hard work at practices paid off! The Grizzly Bears Team A won silver medals and Grizzly Bears Team B won bronze medals. Susie added that all the athletes had fun and played great.

Grizzly Team A players included Matthew Biasini, Cesar Castro, Yi-No Cheng, Michael Cushenberry, Nicole LaSala, Stephen Plascencia, Tyler Sims, San Juanita Soto, and Isaac Watson.

Grizzly Team B players included Rafael Fajardo, Jason Lungstrum, Michael Marshall, Alexander Mebane, Kristi Oujesky, Mainak Pandya, Michael Pelz, and Victoria Smith.



Golf Classic 2018



We appreciate all those who supported and participated in the 2018 Golf Classic at Weston Lakes.

A special thank you to Troy Construction, LLC for sponsoring our event and to Weston Lakes for hosting the Golf Classic.





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.