

Save the Date

Telfair

“Charity of Choice Walk”

October 13th

Natural History Museum
in Sugar Land

“Including You” Conference

October 26th and 27th
University of Houston,
Sugar Land Campus

“Best in the West”

November 17th
George Ranch
Historical Park

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2012 Texas Advocates Conference

Jody White

The Self Advocates took a trip to Grapevine for the 2012 Texas Advocates Conference. Thank you to Minnie and Allan Harris for getting the group checked in to the hotel before the bus arrived. We put our bags in our rooms and then headed next door to Austin Ranch for Friday Fun Night. We had dinner, dancing, a photo booth and games. Everyone enjoyed fun night.

Saturday began with breakfast and opening session with Nancy Ward, from Oklahoma City, as the speaker. Nancy was a founding member of the national organization, “Self Advocates Becoming Empowered.” The rest of the day we had many workshops to choose from. Some of the different workshop choices were Voting, Legislative Advocacy, Relationships, My Medicaid Matters, Bridge to Career, Money Management and Consumer Directed Services. After the workshops, there were games and a movie.

cont’d on page 4



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 2011-2012**

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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 and fundraising efforts to accomplish our mission.

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

Chair's Corner

Karen Daly



Every year that my daughters were in school, I took a picture of them before we left the house on the first day of school. These pictures provide a chronology of our homes, their endlessly changing clothes styles and the look of eagerness on their faces. Aaaahhhh, back to school! There's nothing like the newly sharpened pencils, fresh notebooks and a student eager to get back to the routine of school. And happy to see summer end, parents usually appreciate getting back into a routine as well! It's a beautiful thing when everything is going well at school – ARDs are clean, simple and serve the needs of the student; communication with the teacher is clear, timely and consistent; and, your student is enjoying the learning experience and being around others. Sometimes, there are glitches in the learning environment, content and/or communication. When things are out of sync and more support is needed, your membership in The Arc enables you to access services to help in dealing with the school system. Don't hesitate to ask for help and support. It can come in many ways through The Arc and you and your student will be better off for the rest of this year!

I wish the best for all this school year!

TwentySomethings

Take me out to the ball game! That's what engineering firm Aguirre & Fields did for members of The Arc's TwentySomethings group. They donated 39 tickets for lawn seating for the August 25th Sugar Land Skeeters game against the Bridgeport (Connecticut) Bluefish. Thank you, Aguirre & Fields!



2012 Texas Advocates Conference

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Darrell Richard as chairman, Tyrone Frederick and Scott Johnson, met to come up with a slate of officers. The group voted to accept the nominations. The 2012 – 2013 Self Advocates Board of Directors are President- Valerie Collier, Vice President- Russell Smith, Secretary-Jody White, Treasurer – Monica Wright, Parliamentarian – Allan Harris and Members-at-Large– Eartha Duncan, Karen Penrod and Bridget Stephney. After the meeting we had dinner and danced until midnight.

Thank you to all of the chaperones that helped us this year!



2012 Texas Advocates Conference



Brazos Bend Guardianship Services

Kirk Monroe

Our next Guardianship Information Session is scheduled for Monday, September 17, 2012, from 6:30pm-8:30pm, at the Sugar Land Library Meeting Room, located at 550 Eldridge Rd., Sugar Land, Tx. If you or someone you know is considering obtaining legal guardianship of an incapacitated adult or a child that will soon be an adult, plan to attend this session. The session will cover what guardianship is, why it might be necessary to attain, what a guardian's responsibilities are and alternatives to guardianship. An attorney will be present to answer any legal questions you might have. You are encouraged to make a reservation for this session and this can be done via our website www.brazosbendguardianship.org or by contacting Brazos Bend Guardianship Services at 281-207-2320.

Kristi Fu – a “Golden” Girl Scout

Cheryl Sewell

Kristi Fu is an amazing young woman! She called in June to ask if we had a project that would not only benefit The Arc of Fort Bend but would be worthy of earning a Girl Scout “Gold Award”. The “Gold Award” is the Girl Scout equivalent to the Boy Scout’s “Eagle Scout”. Kristi wanted to complete the project before she left on vacation in August and before school started. She will be a senior at Clements High School this fall and stays very busy as a member of Student Council, Interact, National Honor Society, and Science National Honor Society.

I immediately proposed that Kristi consider constructing a lemonade stand, because The Arc is planning to participate in the nationwide, “Lemonade Day” program, but we need a stand! Kristi and I discussed the requirements for the lemonade stand: lightweight, portable, collapsible and easily stored. We discussed various designs and materials, drew some sketches and she went to work.

Several weeks later, she called to let me know that she was working on the project, but needed more clarification. Several weeks after that, she called to ask me to take a look at her work. I was delighted! She purchased a table and built a stand out of PVC pipe around the table.

She enlisted 19 volunteers help her cut the pipes to varying lengths, glue connecting pipes together, drill holes, paint it bright yellow, color-code and grease the connections. It assembles with little plastic bolts.

Thank you, Kristi, and good luck in your senior year!



Kristi Fu – a “Golden” Girl Scout



Lemonade Day Project

Cheryl Sewell

Still in the planning stages, but we have ourselves a great looking lemonade stand!

The Arc of Fort Bend plans to participate in “Lemonade Day” next year! We invite school-aged students with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their families living in Fort Bend County to participate in the project.

The “Lemonade Day” project may be especially good for students with developmental disabilities who are being home-schooled because classes will be conducted by retired, certified teachers. We anticipate offering two classes a month starting this fall and practicing “trial runs” at Farmer’s Markets, our Celebrating Abilities event in March and the scheduled “Lemonade Day” in May 2013.

We are in the process of developing the class and schedule and welcome your thoughts and suggestions about our project. This should be a great way to develop money management, budgeting, social and entrepreneurial skills.

If you are interested in participating in our “Lemonade Day” project, contact Cheryl Sewell at 281-494-5924 or cbsewell@arcoffortbend.org.

For additional information on Lemonade Day, visit: www.lemonadeday.org or <http://lemonadeday.org/category/houston-2>

Avondale House, Specializing in Autism Services & Resources

Cheryl Sewell

The Arc does not endorse, promote or recommend any particular person, therapy, institution, professional system or service. Our desire is to bring together families and those interested in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Please call to discuss your issues, concerns, wants and needs and perform "due diligence" when seeking a service provider.



Avondale House, a 501(c)(3) entity, is neither a house, nor is it located on Avondale Street. They specialize in serving individuals with autism. In 1976, five parents with children with autism founded Avondale House. Carole Keeney Harrington and her husband, Bob, were the most prominent. They provided respite and limited after school services at first, but soon expanded to provide educational programs and a group home at a house on Avondale Street in Montrose. When Avondale House outgrew the original location, they moved to Central Presbyterian Church. In 2003, growth and success dictated that they launch a capital campaign, which netted \$4 million, to build a brand new, specially designed, facility that would meet the needs of their clients and allow for continued expansion. Their new facility is located at 3737 O'Meara Drive, Houston, and is truly impressive! The 2-story building has 33,000 square ft of space and houses a K-12 school and a day habilitation program.

Barbara Boyett, CEO, has been with Avondale House for 25 years. She kindly took me on a tour and explained their operation.

Avondale House operates their school year around, serving 55 students during the regular school year and 65 students during the summer. Their maximum capacity is 72 students. They contract with more than 12 school districts and have a good partnership with HISD. Boyett indicated that Avondale House works with the students' ISDs to support the IEPs approved by each ARD committee. They maintain a teaching ratio of 1:3 (one teacher and two paraprofessionals for six to eight students in each classroom). Boyett explained that public schools primarily focus on academics; behavior is secondary. Avondale House focuses on behavioral training during academic time, as well as during community based instruction. "The students need to know how to behave in all environments; school, home, and in the community, and so, we take our students to movies, plays, libraries, theaters, ice skating, bowling, and stores", stated Boyett. Avondale House also offers a Special Olympics program. The school's vice-principal is BCBA certified and several behavior therapists are assigned to students and classrooms. Staff members are required to document much data because the learning objectives are all data-driven. Boyett stated that she is always looking for good substitute teachers and paraprofessionals, in case anyone is interested.

The downstairs, used for the school, has three hallways corresponding to elementary, middle and high school classrooms. Each of the nine classrooms is equipped with a bathroom, sink, closet and microwave, and all have video monitoring. Parents may observe and learn. There is a fully equipped playground, a large recreational room/gym with a full shower, a sensory integration room and a motor lab on the ground floor. Avondale House provides integrated speech therapy and Boyett indicated that their Technology Committee is always looking for new innovations which will improve the students' learning experiences, understanding that everyone will not benefit from the same technology.

The upstairs houses offices and the adult day habilitation program. Boyett explained that they wanted to make sure students graduating from their school remained engaged in meaningful work, so they started their own day habilitation program. The pre-vocational program offers training in recycling as well as volunteer experiences. The adults volunteer at the Salvation Army/Harbor Lights Center kitchen and work on an assembly line with the Interfaith Ministries' meals-on-wheels program. Some individuals also attend the H.E.A.R.T. program for vocational training. There is a Life Skills program where individuals learn to vacuum, make beds, do laundry, care for clothing, and practice activities related to daily living skills. Due to high cost, there is no ABA therapist assigned to the adult day habilitation program. Avondale House currently has 20 individuals utilizing day habilitation services, with five staff supervising.

Avondale House, Specializing in Autism Services & Resources, cont'd

Avondale House operates three ICF-ID residential group homes in southwest Houston. Boyett stated that the staff provides a structured home environment. They own five vehicles, used for over 1000 outings a year. We discussed that Avondale House was ready to provide "Supported Living"- two or three individuals living in a home with supervision. The plan was to provide a highly structured schedule with support and then fade the support. Unfortunately, the parents were uncomfortable with their children taking this momentous step towards independence and nixed the plan. However, Boyett has the framework and is ready to try again.

Avondale House has a budget of \$3.8 million a year. They have received grant funding from the Hamill Foundation, G.E. and United Way. United Way funds support the adaptive service program, therapeutic horseback riding and recreational outings. They supplement the income with fundraising events, Medicaid payments and private-pay fees. The day school costs \$3100 per month.

Boyett stated that Avondale House serves students with the most significant challenges. She explained that while no program was error free, "we do a great job"! They pass their TEA surveys every 3 years and their annual ICF-ID surveys annually. They are now working with ISDs to approve Avondale House as a PPCD provider. They want the three and four year olds so that they can intervene early and transition them properly into public school. "We make a difference every day. That is our goal. We know that small progress, early on, makes a huge difference later in life", stated Boyett.

For additional information about Avondale House, visit www.avondalehouse.org or call 713-993-9544

Thank You to Our Donors!

In Memory
The Leighton Family

General
Water-Sue Hardikar
Aguirre & Fields

What you do today can improve all your tomorrows.
- Ralph Marston

Good decisions are always rewarded.
- Unknown

September 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5 SO - Aquatics Practice	6 SO - Softball Practice	7	8 SO - Aquatics Area Swim Meet Bowling
9 SR - Burgers and Karaoke	10 SO - Softball Practice	11 SO - Bocce Practice	12	13 SO - Softball Practice	14	15 SO - Softball Area Tournament Bowling
16	17 SO - Volleyball - Mandatory Meeting	18	19	20	21 SR - Dance at St. Theresa's	22 SO - Area Bocce Tournament Bowling
23 30	24 SO - Volleyball Practice The Arc Board of Directors Meeting	25	26	27		29 Bowling

5	SO- Aquatics practice	6:50-8:30 p.m.	LCISD natatorium
6	SO- Softball practice	6:15- 7:30 p.m.	Mo. City Community Park
8	SO-Aquatics Area Swim Meet Bowling	TBA	Don Cook Natatorium
9	SR – Burgers and Karaoke	2:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Stafford Lanes
10	SO-Softball practice	12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Safari Texas
11	SO-Bocce practice	6:15- 7:30 p.m.	Mo. City Community Park
13	SO-Softball practice	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	FCCA
15	SO-Softball Area Tournament Bowling	6:15- 7:30 p.m.	Mo. City Community Park
17	SO – Volleyball MANDATORY TEAM MEETING	TBA	Clute
22	SO – Bocce Area Tournament Bowling	2:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Stafford Lanes
21	SR – Dance at St. Theresa's	6:30 P.M.	New Hope Lutheran Church
24	The Arc Board of Directors Meeting SO – Volleyball practice	TBA	The Kinkaid School
29	Bowling	2:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Stafford Lanes
		7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	St. Theresa's
		6:00 p.m.	The Arc Office
		7-8:30 p.m.	New Hope Lutheran Church
		2:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Stafford Lanes



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: _____

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+

Optional:

* Solely to help us know if we are serving our entire community, please check below:

American Indian/ Alaskan Native Asian/ Pacific Islander Black/ African American

Caucasian Hispanic Other _____

Preference for Volunteer Opportunities:

- Committee Member Fund Raising Office Support Special Olympics & Bowling

Membership Levels:

Individual with Disability Membership	\$10.00
Individual Membership	\$25.00
Family Membership 2 nd Member Name _____	\$40.00
Corporate Membership	\$100.00
Additional Tax Deductible Donation	\$ _____

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

- Bowling
- Education/Employment
- Self-Advocacy
- Social Recreation
- Special Olympics
- 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.

The Arc of Fort Bend County
123 Brooks Street
Sugar Land, Texas 77478
Phone: 281-494-5959
Fax: 281-494-5960

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More Parents of Special-Needs Children Opt out of Public Schools

*From Shaun Heasley, "disabilityscoop"
August 28, 2012*

A growing number of parents frustrated by school district bureaucracy are opting to forgo public education altogether for their children with disabilities.

In Texas, there was a 75 percent increase between 2003 and 2010 in the number of special education students in middle school and high school who left public classrooms for private ones, statistics show. Meanwhile, other families are saying goodbye to districts in favor of home schooling their kids with special needs.

Though the reasons families are fleeing the traditional special education system vary, most say they are sick of fighting to secure services they believe their kids need. For Leslie Phillips, choosing a \$30,000-per-year private school for her son with autism came down to assessing where her resources could be best allocated. Phillips said she preferred to pay tuition rather than employ lawyers to fight her Katy, Texas school district, especially after her son came home with unexplained bruises, reports the Houston Chronicle. To read more: <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/More-parents-of-special-needs-kids-fleeing-public-3815655.php>

Please visit our website www.arcoffortbend.org to view a COLOR COPY of the newsletter.