**Overcoming Obstacles & Becoming Independent**

*An Essay by Hannah Brown*

My name is Hannah Brown. I am 27 years old. This is a story about overcoming obstacles and becoming independent.

When I was in high school in Lansing, NY students would sometimes say I was retarded or dumb. It made me sad and sometimes made the school day difficult.

In the beginning of 2008, my parents asked me if I wanted to continue career exploration at BOCES after my senior year. I told them “NO,” I wanted to go to college. I was sad and cried while we were talking.

In March of 2008, my parents asked me again if I wanted to continue career exploration at BOCES. I said “I already told you NO, I want to go to college.”

Telling my parents that I wanted to go to college was very scary for me. I was not comfortable spending the night at places without my family. For example, I never went to overnight camp in middle school or high school.

In April of 2008, my sister Katie, who was currently attending SUNY Geneseo, sent me an email stating that she had heard that SUNY Geneseo and The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming were beginning a four-year college like experience for individuals with disabilities. She asked me if I wanted to apply and I said “YES!”

My father and I filled out the paperwork and sent in the application. I was selected for an interview and found out at the end of June that I was one of eight students in the first year of the program. I was very excited and happy!

At the same time, we were told that the program did not provide housing. My parents told me that I may not be able to go, because I needed a place to live that would support me during the four years of the program. We only had SIX weeks to find a place as the first week of orientation was in the middle of August.

My father and I started to look for supportive housing. We went to Geneseo and met with the Geneseo Rotary to see if any families would be willing to host me in a way similar to how they host exchange students. We were disappointed to find out that the Rotary club in Geneseo stopped hosting exchange students because they couldn’t find host families.

We applied to The Arc for a place in one of their group homes that was near the Geneseo campus, but were told that the average wait time was five years. We put ads in church bulletins asking people to contact us if they were interested in supporting me.

The clock was ticking. We still did not have housing and it was already approaching the end of July! Then a miracle happened: a person living in a group home of The Arc that was very close to the Geneseo campus moved out and they called me to see if I wanted to live in that group home. I said “YES!”

As we got close to the beginning of orientation, I became nervous and scared because I would have to leave my parents and move two hours away from them.

The day before orientation started we traveled to Geneseo and set up my “dorm” room and I met for the very first time the people I would be living with and the staff that supported them. We made several trips to Walmart to purchase things that we needed for the room. In the early evening my parents left and said they would be back in the morning to take me to the first day of orientation. I was crying and sad.

The next morning my parents took me to meet my new classmates and the staff that were running the program. I was really scared. What I wanted was happening, but I didn’t know if I could do it! During that first day I got more comfortable as I got to know the people.
**Message from the President**

As I retire from teaching, many people have asked what I will do with all my free time. My answer: “I am going to become a full time advocate for The Arc.”

The people we serve, the programs we provide, the staff we employ, and the future we face needs and deserves a President who will fight for them locally, state wide and nationally.

I see my “job” as a means to encourage our members to work with me to let local, state and national representatives know who we are, what we do, what we need, what they can do for us, and why it is important to continue to provide and grow the best services in our area. We need to make sure that the people who develop budgets, laws and policies hear our message and understand our needs such as commensurate wages and choices at Hilltop, funding for appropriate pay for all staff and new opportunities for Residential.

I am stepping up my NYSARC involvement and have joined the Governmental Affairs Committee. I want to be part of the movement to bring our state views to the national Arc. We do things differently here and different is not wrong. We provide services and programs that are outstanding and I want to be someone who does a better job of standing up for them and changing laws and policies that don’t support us.

So let’s go forth together using the power of our many voices and mighty pens to ensure the successful future of “our” Arc.

**Check It Out!**

On July 7, The KeyBank Foundation presented a rather large check to The Arc’s Pathways to Employment program in the amount of $4,000.

Pathways to Employment combines an individualized career/vocational planning process that identifies an individual’s support needs, with the provision of services that will strengthen the skills needed to obtain, maintain, or advance in competitive employment.

Pictured, left-to-right, are: Marianne Miller, Arc Coordinator of Development and Planned Giving; Eileen Stack, Arc Finance Director; Jonathan Ogden, KeyBank; and Martin Miskell, Arc Executive Director.

**From the Executive Director**

Legendary college football coach Paul “Bear” Bryant said, “It’s not the will to win that matters. Everyone has that. It’s the will to prepare to win that matters.”

We have our own team at The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming, consisting of our Board, members, employees, and the people we serve. And while our stakes are much higher than any football game, Coach Bryant’s words clearly apply. As we look to the future, our agency will continue to thrive if, and only if, we do all that is in our power to thoughtfully plan, adapt, and move forward with a vision of success.

Yes, preparation is the key. But solid preparation is not always easy, especially in times of uncertainty and change. For example, a shift toward managed care is on the horizon for agencies like ours that provide services for people with developmental disabilities. But much of the detail is out of our hands at the local level.

Thankfully, preparation in any form begins by building a solid foundation – and that is our primary focus right now. Every member of our great team is 100 percent committed to creating an infrastructure in which we are ready for the future, whatever it may hold.

Essential components include:
- Our recent accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership, which acknowledges excellence in our person-centered services and supports;
- Our implementation of the MediSked Direct software platform across the organization to centralize service and billing documentation; and
- Our adoption of Personal Outcome Measures (POMs) as a means to measure our success in helping individuals to achieve their goals and dreams.

These examples, in addition to enhancements to our fleet of vehicles, facilities, training platform, information technology infrastructure, increased advocacy efforts, and more will have a profoundly positive effect on quality of care as we move forward.

Enjoy this issue of The Parchment, and please contact me with your feedback and ideas. As we diligently prepare for the future, we are proud and thankful to have you as part of our winning team!
The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s 22nd Annual Friends Fore Life golf tournament raised more than $38,000, making it our largest fundraiser of the year. This year’s tournament was June 24 at Livingston Country Club in Geneseo. The first-place men’s team, with a score of 58, was Tom Burgess of Phelps, Larry Kennedy of Geneseo, Chris Peterson of Wayland and Paul Metcalf, of Baldswinville. The first-place women’s team, with a score of 75, included Leslie Carney of Batavia, Sally Barie of Batavia, Mary Lou Blodgett of Churchville and Nancy Platt of Batavia. The first-place mixed team, with a score of 63, featured Marc Strain of Wadsworth, Stacy Wilson of Wadsworth, Les Rose of Filmore and Carol Sweeting of West Sparta.

Volunteers recognized

Friends of The Arc from the US Army Corps of Engineers recently recognized the Seniors and Day Hab groups for their volunteer contributions in support of the 2016 Winter Discovery Series at the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area.

The Arc provides volunteer services at the Mount Morris Dam, which has increased its ability to provide high quality recreational opportunities to visitors. The dam provides volunteer opportunities to The Arc, which helps build job and life skills.

The Corps of Engineers built the Mount Morris Dam in the late 1940s to reduce flooding on the lower Genesee River. Today, the dam continues to provide flood protection along 67 miles of the Genesee River Valley from the village of Mount Morris to downtown Rochester where the river enters Lake Ontario.

The Arc provided an amazing 2,400 hours of volunteer services to the dam (both on and off-site) in 2016!

I need to brag a bit about our mechanics. I received our annual report from the Department of Transportation (DOT) that details our inspection performance. Once again, we had a 100% inspection pass rate. However, they have actually reached new heights.

When a vehicle is inspected, there are three types of defects – A, B, and C. The pass/fail rate is based on “A” defects. The other two types are defects that must be fixed, but do not take a vehicle out of service. “B” defects must be corrected before the vehicle carries passengers and “C” defects must be corrected within 15 days or at the next service (whichever comes first).

This past year (April 2015 - March 2016) we had 195 total vehicle inspections and had ZERO defects of any kind. This means that for one year our vehicle maintenance team was PERFECT – in all aspects. This is really an incredible accomplishment!

John Prospero
Director of Transportation

“an incredible accomplishment”

Congratulations to Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Board President Cheryl Englert on her retirement from Genesee Valley Educational Partnership. Sherry has been a Special Education Teacher there since 1985, in a teaching career that began in 1971. These pictures are from a little celebration at the June Board meeting. Thanks for all that you do, Sherry!

The hot weather this July 11 made it the perfect weather for a Slurpee at the Avon IRA!

Joseph Fridley has Buffalo Bills Fever! How about you?
annual dinner award winners

the following people were honored at the 2016 arc of livingston-wyoming annual dinner

community services achievement award: cooper graff

cooper graff is embracing life to the fullest, with the support and love of his family and friends. some of cooper's favorite activities include spending time with friends at the grammas ira in geneseo, where he has lived for about 6 years, exercising at fit club 24/7, dancing, eating at restaurants, watching movies, and working on projects at day hab. family time with his dad, mom, and brother is especially important to cooper. he enjoys weekends spent at home, and such father/son activities as bowling and visiting custom brew crafters for a root beer tasting.

Drew Moran Community Involvement Award: Mark Saunders

Mark Saunders was born and raised in the town of perry, ny. Many of you may know him as your old “paperboy” as he delivered newspapers to perry residents for about 55 years. Mark moved into the hope ira in retsof in 2010 after retiring from his paper route, where he has adjusted very well. Although Mark moved away from perry, he still participates in many events and involves himself in many groups. Mark has been a member of the Baptist church in perry for a number of years, and very rarely misses a Sunday attending. He also participates in “small group” and “awana” associated with the church. Mark has 3 brothers who live a distance away, but consistently chats with them on the phone and stays updated with their lives. Mark enjoys going out with them while they’re in town and visiting old family friends. Although Mark retired from his old paper route, he manages to keep busy with the jobs he has at hilltop industries, and activities at the seniors program.

eric byrd award of inspiration: Ted Hall

the eric byrd award of inspiration was awarded to dear friend of the arc ted hall, who passed away at the age of 79 on june 16, less than 2 weeks after the annual dinner. Ted was originally from the albany, ny area. Later in life, he moved to geneseo, where he always kept part of his heart. Ted lived at the algier ira on second street for a number of years, where he gained many friends and experiences. He became a very dedicated member of the community there, and kept very active. Ted worked at the SUNY Geneseo College for quite a while. Recently, he attended the seniors program. Ted had also been a part of the Self Advocacy group in which at one time he served as the president. Ted is survived by a daughter, Becky, whom he bragged about quite frequently, including her husband Adam, and Ted’s young granddaughter, BetaLee, who he also loved dearly. Later in his life, Ted lived in Retsof, NY at the Hope IRA which was quite a change from the busy town of Geneseo, but Ted adjusted well, and was very happy.

Hilltop Achievement Award: Jen Pfenninger

Jen Pfenninger first started receiving services from Hilltop in 2013 and has shown tremendous growth in her maturity since we first met her.

Jen joined the community connections program in May 2014 with the goal of developing work skills and exploring her career interests. She is actively engaged in the work exploration and volunteer activities of the program and while she still does not know what job she wants, she is gaining invaluable knowledge about herself and her interests.

When we first started working with Jen, she often let frustrations upset her day. Now, she is able to work through upsets (disagreements with peers, difference in opinions with staff and peers, unexpected happenings during her day) by talking to staff and/or peers, voicing her feelings/concerns, and asking for help if needed. Jen is interested in attending the LIVES program, and has made sincere efforts to improve her health/wellness, learn/maintain life skills, and express interest in receiving services that would benefit her future (speech therapy) - all things that would help her succeed in the college based program.

Hilltop Placement Award: Mike Filarecki

Mike Filarecki has worked continuously at the convenience store on the corner of Main Street and Route 20A in Geneseo -originally Sugar Creek, then Wilson Farms, now 7-Eleven - for 19 years this September. At each change in management, the “qualification” rules for continued employment changed. Through each of these organizational changes, and through six changes in on-site store managers, Mike's job was “on-the-line” every single time!
He had to learn new tasks and adjust to new staff over and over again. Over all these years, Mike has seen other associates at the store let go or move on, but he has retained in his continuous service for some very simple reasons:

- He has had steady continuous improvement in both the amount of work he can accomplish and the quality of his work outcomes.
- He has maintained a steady positive, sometimes almost possessive, attitude toward his work, learning to overcome his natural severe aversion to change.
- He has become an expert at eventually putting a smile on the faces of everyone he works with, even during trying stressful times!

Randy Lakin Sportsmanship Award: Joe Santini

The Randy Lakin Award is given in memory of the Arc’s long-time friend and bowler Randy Lakin. Randy worked at Hilltop Industries for many years and was an active participant in the recreation bowling league.

This year The Arc recognized Joe Santini for his outstanding sportsmanship during Arc league bowling. Bowling is in Joe’s blood. He grew up at his family’s bowling alley, and currently bowls in four leagues. Joe bowls on Thursday nights in the Arc League at Mount Morris Lanes, and not surprisingly he is a darn good bowler.

More importantly, Joe is a great sportsman who cheers for his friends and has many words of encouragement for others. Joe is very helpful to the other bowlers, and sets a great example for how to have fun and be respectful.

Ginny lives on her own in Warsaw, where she pursues interests such as on-line role playing, reading, watching TV, nature photography, baking, texting and talking to her friends and family. She is an avid animal lover, enjoys helping other people, and can be a very loyal friend. Ginny’s lifelong dream is to become a photographer or work in the restaurant business. She recently completed her freshman year in the LIVES Program at SUNY Geneseo.

Ryan Helmer Bowling Scholarship Award:
Virginia Eley

Virginia “Ginny” Eley received the Ryan Helmer Bowling Scholarship Award because she loves bowling, having fun, and enjoying the company of friends – all traits that were shared by Ryan.

Jonathon Templeton Award for Special Olympics:
Adam Arnone

This award is given in memory of our good friend Jonathon Templeton who passed away in 1998 at the age of 24. Jonathon was an enthusiastic participant in Special Olympics, and this award honors his memory.

Adam Arnone truly embodies the mission of Special Olympics. He participates in many Special Olympics sports: bowling, track and field, basketball, floor hockey, and softball, to name a few. Adam enjoys being an active person and Special Olympics is a big part of his life. Adam’s father Kevin is also an active volunteer, and organizes the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. Both Adam and his dad participate in the Special Olympics Polar Plunge fundraiser.

Adam is known for being a happy, friendly and giving person, and Special Olympics has been a great way for Adam to make friends and share his talents with others. Adam is known for giving his all to his teams and for being a great sportsman.

Ryan Helmer Bowling Scholarship Award:
Virginia Eley

Virginia “Ginny” Eley received the Ryan Helmer Bowling Scholarship Award because she loves bowling, having fun, and enjoying the company of friends – all traits that were shared by Ryan.

Ginny lives on her own in Warsaw, where she pursues interests such as on-line role playing, reading, watching TV, nature photography, baking, texting and talking to her friends and family. She is an avid animal lover, enjoys helping other people, and can be a very loyal friend. Ginny’s lifelong dream is to become a photographer or work in the restaurant business. She recently completed her freshman year in the LIVES Program at SUNY Geneseo.

Community Members Recognized

The following businesses and community members were honored for their commitment to individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities at the 2016 Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Annual Dinner:

Community Partnership Awards:

Livingston County: Pi Kappa Phi - SUNY Geneseo

Wyoming County: Warsaw Town Supervisor Rebecca Ryan

Charles Elam Volunteer of the Year Award: Martha Pachuta

Arc Foundation Scholarship Winners:
Continuing Education: Marissa Zinone
Wyoming County: Lilia Briggs - McEwen,
Livingston County: Jill Pero,
Dansville High School

Learn More at www.lwarc.org
**“AN INCREDIBLE ACCOMPLISHMENT”**

I need to brag a bit about our mechanics. I received our annual report from the Department of Transportation (DOT) that details our inspection performance. Once again, we had a 100% inspection pass rate. However, they have actually reached new heights.

When a vehicle is inspected, there are three types of defects – A, B, and C. The pass/fail rate is based on “A” defects. The other two types are defects that must be fixed, but do not take a vehicle out of service. “B” defects must be corrected before the vehicle carries passengers and “C” defects must be corrected within 15 days or at the next service (whichever comes first).

This past year (April 2015 - March 2016) we had 195 total vehicle inspections and had ZERO defects of any kind. This means that for one year our vehicle maintenance team was PERFECT – in all aspects. This is really an incredible accomplishment!

John Prospero  
Director of Transportation

**VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED**

Friends of The Arc from the US Army Corps of Engineers recently recognized the Seniors and Day Hab groups for their volunteer contributions in support of the 2016 Winter Discovery Series at the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area.

The Arc provides volunteer services at the Mount Morris Dam, which has increased its ability to provide high quality recreational opportunities to visitors. The dam provides volunteer opportunities to The Arc, which helps build job and life skills.

The Corps of Engineers built the Mount Morris Dam in the late 1940s to reduce flooding on the lower Genesee River. Today, the dam continues to provide flood protection along 67 miles of the Genesee River Valley from the village of Mount Morris to downtown Rochester where the river enters Lake Ontario.

The Arc provided an amazing 2,400 hours of volunteer services to the dam (both on and off-site) in 2016!

**22ND GOLF TOURNEY A HUGE SUCCESS**

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s 22nd Annual Friends Fore Life golf tournament raised more than $38,000, making it our largest fundraiser of the year.

This year’s tournament was June 24 at Livingston Country Club in Geneseo.

The first-place men’s team, with a score of 58, was Tom Burgess of Phelps, Larry Kennedy of Geneseo, Chris Peterson of Wayland and Paul Metcalf, of Baldswinville.

The first-place women’s team, with a score of 75, included Leslie Carney of Batavia, Sally Barie of Batavia, Mary Lou Blodgett of Churchville and Nancy Platt of Batavia.

The first-place mixed team, with a score of 63, featured Marc Strain of Wadsworth, Stacy Wilson of Wadsworth, Les Rose of Fillmore and Carol Sweeting of West Sparta.

**Congratulations to Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Board President Cheryl Englert on her retirement from Genesee Valley Educational Partnership. Sherry has been a Special Education Teacher there since 1985, in a teaching career that began in 1971. These pictures are from a little celebration at the June Board meeting. Thanks for all that you do, Sherry!**

Joseph Fridley has Buffalo Bills Fever! How about you?

The Board of Directors of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Foundation, which is the fundraising arm of our agency. The Foundation meets quarterly to distribute funds that support services to maintain and enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families. They are (L-R), seated: Eileen Stack, Marcy VanZandt, Sherry Englert; standing: Mary Conradt, Tim McCallum, Lyle Lehman, Chris Peterson, Marianne Miller, Gerald Koehler, and Dan Fitzpatrick.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s Senior Management Team (L-R), seated: Christa Hartigan (Human Resources), Chris Lynch (KidStart), Jeff Thomas (Public Relations), Lori Peraino (Corporate Compliance); standing: Deborah Tuckerman (Residential), Eileen Stack (Finance), Mike Fitch (Strategic Marketing and Development), John Prospero (Transportation), Martin Miskell (Executive Director), Jim Mullin (Information Technology), and Jen Warner (Service Coordination). Not pictured: Kellie Kennedy (Day/Vocational).
A Different Point of View

Professional photographer Larry Tetamore joined a group of program participants from The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming June 16-17 to explore “A Different Point of View.”

The group spent one day each at SUNY Geneseo and Letchworth State Park capturing photos of the world as they see it. The photographs will be the basis of an upcoming exhibit at Livingston Arts in Mount Morris, spotlighting the artistic talents and unique perspectives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“A Different Point of View” was made possible through a Livingston Arts grant, and the talents of Geneseo Central Art Department students, who provided advice and moral support to the group of budding photographers.

Overcoming Obstacles & Becoming Independent

Cont. from pg. 1

My parents picked me up at the end of that day and took me back to my group home. We did some final things to get the room set up. My parents took me for ice cream, which I love but I couldn’t eat it as my stomach was in knots because I knew my parents would be leaving to drive home.

We got back to the group home and were saying goodbye, we were all crying. My mom knew that she and my father just had to leave because the crying wasn’t going to stop. I was sad and continued to cry throughout the night. The next morning my father sent me a text that said: “How are you doing?” I texted back, “Still crying!”

That was August 2008. Four years later, I was in the first graduating class! I was a very different person: independent and confident, I had lots of friends, I had a part-time job, I was taking GED classes and I was working on the skills I needed to be able to live in my own apartment.

So, how did all these great things happen? The development of my independence started with my desire to finish high school and take that same step as anybody else. The program helped me develop my independence by providing opportunities for growth.

Special Olympics played a huge role in developing my confidence. I began participating in swimming in 2011. I didn’t compete in athletics since I was seven years old, so this was a big step. I had a very supportive swim coach, Martha Pachuta. With her encouragement I eventually competed in the 2014 USA Games held in Princeton, NJ, where I got a 7th place in my 50 breast stroke, a 6th in my 50 freestyle, a 4th for the 4 x 50 relay and a 1st in my 50 backstroke. It was so exciting as I had lots of family and friends there from all across the US.

Where am I today? Today I am proud to say that I now live in my own one-bedroom apartment with my Guinea pig, Mr. Nibbles!

The lesson of my story: Talent is Universal, Opportunity is Not!
An Essay by Hannah Brown

I am 27 years old. This is a story about overcoming obstacles and becoming independent.

When I was in high school in Lansing, NY students would sometimes say I was retarded or dumb. It made me sad and sometimes made the school day difficult. My parents told me that I may not be able to provide housing. My parents told me that I may not be able to go to college. I told them "NO, " I want to go to college. "

I went to overnight camp in middle school or high school. It was very scary for me. I was not comfortable spending the first time the people I would be living with and the staff. My parents and move two hours away from them. It was already approaching the end of July! Then a miracle similar to how they host exchange students. We were first year of the program. I was very excited and happy!

When I moved to SUNY Geneseo and set up my " dorm" room and I met for the very first time the people I would be living with and the staff. I was very excited and happy!

As we got close to the beginning of orientation, I was really scared. What I wanted was happening, but I was not comfortable spending the first time the people I would be living with and the staff.

At the same time, we were told that the program did not said "YES!" called me to see if I wanted to live in that group home. I stopped hosting exchange students because they couldn’t become nervous and scared because I would have to leave the middle of August.

My father and I started to look for supportive housing. My father and I filled out the paperwork and sent in the weeks to find a place as the first week of orientation was in. It’s not too early to begin training for the 2016 Ramon Rocha 5K Run/ Walk! Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 22, 2016. This healthy event features a 3.1 mile walk or run, along with prizes, food, and t-shirts. Get the latest updates on our Facebook page.

The fifth annual Harvest Fest food tasting event promises to be our biggest and best! Save the date to celebrate Wyoming County “from field to table” Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at the American Legion Hall in Warsaw Village Park. To learn more, contact Tina Sick at tsick@lwarc.org or (585) 658-2828 ext. 133.