THE ARC TO CUOMO:
#bFair2DirectCare

Under Gov. Andrew Cuomo's leadership, fast food jobs in parts of New York now pay better than what many direct care workers make, in a disparity that has fueled a rallying cry to “Be Fair to Direct Care.”

“Be Fair to Direct Care,” stylized as #bFair2DirectCare, is the voice of 128,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is part of the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition, with our state organization (NYSARC, Inc.) and other major advocacy and support agencies throughout the state.

“It's our Direct Support Professionals that are there at midnight making sure that somebody's comfortable, that somebody's doing okay as they go through the worst of times,” Residential Services Director Deborah Tuckerman says. “To compare that to the fast food industry, it's on a different level. So while I'm happy for them that they will be making $15 an hour eventually, our direct support professionals are making far below that, and doing incredibly valuable meaningful work for in some cases very vulnerable individuals that completely rely on us for their daily needs. It's just a different conversation.”

In 2015, Cuomo pushed forward a plan that increases the wages of fast food workers each year until all workers in the industry are earning a minimum of $15 an hour by 2018 (for New York City) or 2021 (for the rest of the state). Already, minimum wages for fast food workers have climbed to $10.75 locally, and $12 an hour in New York City.

...continued on page 7
Caring daily for my son Matt is hard work. I know that it can be difficult to manage his behaviors, health concerns, emotional and physical needs, in addition to keeping him happy and safe.

But Matt’s life is great, thanks to many Direct Support Professionals who deal with him daily with compassion, humor, strength, patience, ingenuity, and fortitude.

Our family is grateful every day as members of Matt’s “extended family” protect and care for him. The DSPs that work with Matt don’t do a job and go home – they are career people and should be compensated as such. They should be able to support their own families.

A career in Direct Support requires training, good decision making, dedication, and professional skills – skills that should be compensated by a living wage, not a minimum wage.

We as a community must push the governor to put the money in our state budget to enable us to pay fair wages to Direct Support staff. We have a responsibility to provide programs that allow folks such as Matt to live and work as independently as possible in his home community. That responsibility includes retaining talented, compassionate staff by treating them – and paying them – as professionals.

It’s time for New York State to step up and provide funds that protect direct care workers and the people they care for!

Looking at each decade from 1980 to 2020, the minimum wage has grown 23 percent in the 80s, 36 percent in the 90s, 41 percent from 2000 until 2010, and will grow 72 percent between 2010 and 2020. We have been able to absorb the costs and program wage compression without program rate increases, but this is not sustainable.

Furthermore, the governor made the decision to increase the minimum wage without increasing the rates that are paid to service providers. Previous increases to the minimum wage were accompanied by a trend allowing for cost increases to agencies like ours, but there is no such trend in our governor’s plan for this much larger minimum wage increase.

Please advocate for us by contacting the governor’s office by phone or mail. Call (518) 474-1041, and press 2 to speak to an assistant. If you get no response, you can then press 1 to leave a voice mail.

Send letters to the Governor at:
The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Camp Scholarships Available

Are you ready for the summer?

Individuals with developmental disabilities can apply now for a scholarship to attend the summer camp of their choice through The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Foundation.

Each year, the Foundation grants camperships to individuals with a dream of converging in the Great Outdoors for skill building, socialization, and good old fashioned fun.

Camp scholarships are awarded to Livingston and Wyoming County residents based on the following criteria:

* A justification as to why it is important for an individual to attend camp.

* An explanation as to how the camp meets the special needs of the individual.

* Recommendation(s) from a Case Manager, Service Coordinator, Site Supervisor, or family member.

Deadline for consideration is Monday, April 17, 2017. Complete details and applications are available at www.lwarc.org, or by contacting Arc Public relations Director Jeff Thomas at (585) 658-2828 ext. 128.

The Arc Foundation is the fundraising arm of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming. The Foundation raises money through special events and other ventures, then distributes funds to support services that maintain and enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families.
the choice I made to enroll my son, Matthew, is that fair? Instead of families who clearly know best. How stranger determining our children’s futures, government determine where an individual will be stripped away, what will be the future? Will the workforce are also under fire. Utilize to be productive citizens to the best of with disabilities – programs that individuals habilitation and seniors programs for people programs are shut down, next in line will be day away with it. Just proceeds to cut another one if they can get program, and the state or federal government. We have seen it happen too often: a human been made, there is still more to be done. Years, and even though some compromises have been fighting this issue for more than three disabilities will cease by the year 2019.

With the choice of workshops or day habs I am convinced that once workshop just proceeds to cut another one if they can get program, and the state or federal government. People must to continue to fight and speak up, with disabilities – programs that individuals habilitation and seniors programs for people programs are shut down, next in line will be day away with it. Just proceeds to cut another one if they can get program, and the state or federal government. We have seen it happen too often: a human been made, there is still more to be done. Years, and even though some compromises have been fighting this issue for more than three disabilities will cease by the year 2019.

The Deiter IRA in Dansville celebrates Thanksgiving with friends and family!
KiDStArt Scores Big for Families in Need

Super Bowl LI featured an unprecedented 25-point comeback and a record 466-yards passing for New England quarterback Tom Brady. But the Patriots’ 34-28 victory over the Atlanta Falcons wasn’t the only game in town when it came to nail-biting tension and big stakes.

While the pros were prepping for the Big Game, their littler local counterparts were hitting their parents’ pantries and sacking supermarkets for donations to a program that provides 21 area families with back packs filled with healthy food each weekend throughout the year.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s “Souper Bowl” pitted two teams from its KidStart children’s services program in a competition to bring in the most food donations for the KidStart back pack program. Kids age 4-years and younger joined staff in a rousing competition that collected more than 2,500 items in the week leading up to Super Bowl Sunday, February 5.

The teams, each representing a wing of the KidStart early childhood care and education center in Mount Morris, competed for a golden soup bowl statue created by KidStart Administrative Assistant Lisa Faulds as a cross between the Vince Lombardi Trophy and standard kitchen utensils. Choruses of tiny voices singing “We Are the Champions” and chanting “Na Na Na Na, Hey Hey Hey (Goodbye)” roared through the halls as its presentation drew closer.

It came down to the wire. After multiple overtimes spent counting cans of veggies and boxes of cereal, and much deliberation by officials, the game was decided by a margin of just two food items. The virtual scoreboard read 943 to 941, in favor of the “100 wing” of the building, which is home to KidStart’s day care, kitchen, nursing, and other services.

In what could be called “Souper Bowl Fever,” more than 500 additional food items donated from other Arc locations, including KidStart’s Dansville site, contributed to the grand total.

“The Souper Bowl was a fun and friendly competition, and it was exciting to have the kids involved along with the staff,” says KidStart Director Chris Lynch. “We had one team very slightly edge out the other in terms of donations. But, really, everyone was a winner – especially the kids and families who will receive nutritious food for many weeks to come.”

On the Road Again

These days, it’s not just professional drivers who are hitting the road for The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Transportation program.

Transportation Director John Prospero is racking up miles as he splits his time between Livingston-Wyoming and a sister chapter about an hour to the southeast, The Arc of Steuben.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming recently entered into a Shared Services Agreement with The Arc of Steuben to assist with their transportation department. As such, we are providing management, training and maintenance support in all areas, including a shared Director of Transportation and shared 19A Examiner/Trainer.

“This agreement builds on an already existing partnership for services that our two agencies entered into five years ago for some contract transportation business,” John says. “The Shared Services relationship is only a few months old but the work is already starting to show benefits.”

The agreement is in line with a trend our state organization, NYSARC, to reduce costs by consolidating services.

Both The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming and The Arc of Steuben are members of the Collaborative of the Finger Lakes, a regional association of NYSARC agencies serving 9,000 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Smart Cookies

KidStart graduate Zachary Mogavero, who was profiled in the last issue of The Parchment for his sign-creation skills for Finders Keepers thrift shop, branched off on a sweet new venture this winter, by bringing his design skills to Geneseo’s Finger Lakes Cookie Company.

“A special thank you to my dear friend Jani Lewis and her son, Zach Mogavero, for designing this amazing sign for my shop and capturing the essence of FLCC,” owner Lori Bush posted to the shop’s Facebook page on January 28.

Lori is part of The Arc’s extended family, and one of our agency’s biggest supporters in the community. A portion of the proceeds from her shop are donated each month to The Arc.

“The Arc is fortunate to have a lot of generous donors, and we love every one of them, but the checks from Finger Lakes Cookie Company are especially sweet because they always come with an assortment of big, chewy, delicious, fresh cookies,” says Arc Public Relations Director Jeff Thomas. “I suddenly gain a lot of friends on Finger Lakes Cookie Company donation day.”

Lori bakes old-fashioned cookies —like your grandma used to make – thick, soft, chewy, and incredibly large. All cookies are made with the finest ingredients: Real butter, pure vanilla, local butter and eggs, and Ghirardelli chocolate. Day old cookies are donated to a local food pantry or Arc homes.

To get a taste, visit Finger Lakes Cookie Company at 94 Main Street Suite 101 in Geneseo, call (585) 748-1886, or visit fingerlakescookieco.com.
Moms for Membership

“My husband, Fred, and I have raised two sons in a very rural corner of the town of Springwater in Livingston County.

Shortly after the birth of our youngest son, Matt, in 1976, it was apparent that he had disabilities. I knew early on that he was not reaching usual childhood developmental milestones, like holding his head up and sitting independently.

In those earliest moments, my life changed. In Matt’s youngest years, I began a quest to find lifelong programs that would meet all of our needs, starting with The Arc’s preschool program, and then transitioning into public school, work, and residential independence.”

— Cheryl Englert, "Matt’s Mom"

“It has been 10 years since my daughter, Casey, then 25 years old, left our family home in Castile, NY for a place of her own 25 miles away in Dansville. In some ways, it was a typical transition for a woman in her mid-20s. But it was also somewhat extraordinary.

Like one in roughly 50 Americans, Casey was born with a developmental disability, which in Casey’s case affects her cognitive and language skills. My husband, Ed, and I had already watched two sons go off to college, so the tears and proud feelings associated with children ‘leaving the nest’ were familiar. But Casey had overcome so many extra hurdles on this journey to residential independence.

We couldn’t have done it without The Arc.”

— Marcy VanZandt, "Casey’s Mom"

Dear Friend,

Talk to most any parent whose child is served by The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming, and you’re likely to hear a personal account about how the agency has changed their life for the better. No two stories are the same, but they share a common thread. Behind-the-scenes is a team of dedicated, compassionate people who make the magic happen. We call them members, although you could just as easily call them angels. And you can be one for as little as a dollar.

Through guidance and support from members, The Arc has become the largest and most comprehensive agency of its kind in Livingston and Wyoming Counties. It operates 14 homes in our various communities. It serves more than 350 people through work and day habilitation programs, and 350 children enrolled in early childhood programs at KidStart. Its service coordinators help more than 400 individuals. And Hilltop Industries buses help our children get around the community by traveling more than 2 million miles annually.

Membership also means advocacy and support for issues facing people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. It means education about services available for families and their sons and daughters. It means a louder and knowledgeable voice.

In 2016, Arc membership count reached more than 1,300. This huge number helped give our Family Advocacy Group some clout when speaking with local legislators about preserving work centers, the need for residential development, the problems with transitioning from high school to day programs and — most important of all — preserving choice. People listened. Your overwhelming support in 2016 was inspirational!

Annual membership starts at just $1.00. Simply return the enclosed envelope for you and your family. You’ll receive preferred pricing on vehicle repairs and maintenance at our Transportation Center, four issues of The Parchment newsletter, a membership card with exclusive discounts at participating local businesses, and the latest updates regarding progress in the field of developmental disabilities.

Please support The Arc in 2017 and beyond by renewing your membership or signing up as a new member. Return your membership envelope today, or visit www.lwarc.org to sign up right now.

Thank you to our angels, on behalf of all of our fellow Arc moms!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Englert

Sincerely,

Marcy VanZandt

LEARN MORE AT WWW.LWARC.ORG
“STAND UP AND SPEAK NOW. TIME IS RUNNING OUT.”

By Karen Duboy, Family Advocacy Chairperson

Funding to workshops for individuals with disabilities will cease by the year 2019. Families have been fighting this issue for more than three years, and even though some compromises have been made, there is still more to be done.

People must to continue to fight and speak up, or funding cuts will not stop at just workshops. We have seen it happen too often: a human service agency agrees to make cutbacks in one program, and the state or federal government just proceeds to cut another one if they can get away with it.

I am convinced that once workshop programs are shut down, next in line will be day habilitation and seniors programs for people with disabilities – programs that individuals utilize to be productive citizens to the best of their abilities. Programs for young adults getting ready to transition from public education to the workforce are also under fire.

With the choice of workshops or day habs stripped away, what will be the future? Will the government determine where an individual will work based on a test score? Imagine a faceless stranger determining our children's futures, instead of families who clearly know best. How is that fair?

Even now, bureaucrats are telling me that the choice I made to enroll my son, Matthew, in an accredited day services program after he graduated from high school four years ago was not a meaningful and integrated work program. Unbelievable!

What The Powers That Be do not understand is programs cannot be “one size fits all,” not all workshops are inadequate and underperforming, and some individuals with disabilities are not able to work in a setting other than a workshop.

My son, like many of his peers, needs too many other supports that he simply would not receive in an integrated employment program. When he ultimately fails in such a program, he will end up sitting idle at home, waiting for someone to find something else. How is that productive for anyone just to sit home?

We need people to take a strong approach against funding cuts now, or there will be devastating consequences. We will have unhappy individuals, at home with nowhere to work, isolated from the community. Our individuals will fall through the cracks.

It is an infuriating misrepresentation to see the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Olmstead Act used as a crutch to say our sons and daughters with developmental disabilities are being stripped of their rights as a human being to live a meaningful integrated employment life. They are missing the whole concept that our individuals are working hard, enjoy their work and are not being forced to work somewhere they don't wish to work.

We need to make the government understand the reality, versus what is just a wonderful idea in a perfect world.

Stand up and speak now. Time is running out, and if changes go through, the final outcome will not be what we or our individuals want. Put the choice in our hands, not the government.

Please join me at 7:00pm Monday, March 27 for The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Family Advocacy Group meeting at the Peterson Work Center, 3 East State Street in Mount Morris. If you have questions, contact The Arc at 658-2828, and ask for Kellie Kennedy or Jeff Thomas.

ABOUT ADVOCACY

Sometimes it is hard for family members now to realize that a great number of services that they are using are the result of the advocacy of families of the past.

For inspiration, watch the video of Mary Derby at www.bit.ly/MaryDerby. You’ll see how this mom has given us so many things we now take for granted: KidStart, Hilltop, Residential Services included. Amazing! We may not all be able to do what Mary did, but we can do something.

Then think about what you can do to help. Whatever it is, if you know someone with a developmental disability, you know a family who needs your help.

RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

We will be opening three more supportive apartments to provide opportunity to individuals with the ability and desire to live on their own with support from The Arc. The Arc secured funding from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to address housing needs for people outside of the “Urgent Emergency” priority. The Arc presently operates four supportive apartments that meld into the general community virtually unrecognizable to the general public. The individuals residing in the current apartments frequent local stores and restaurants both with and without staff.
By contrast, it has been 8 years since developmental disability organizations have been given a real raise, and the field is facing wage mandates and new labor rules without the adequate funds to sustain them.

So far, Cuomo has refused to meet with direct care representatives so they can ask for the funds to pay a living wage. The #bFair2DirectCare Coalition is calling on Albany to address this issue before the next state budget is adopted on April 1. There is bipartisan support in Albany for the #bFair2DirectCare campaign, putting the governor alone in the position to fix what is becoming a major crisis in the field.

“At the end of the day, everyone here is like a big family, and we all love each other, and we’re all going to be there for each other as long as we can,” says Deiter IRA Site Supervisor Ashley Lusk. “But we’ve had people who have left to go to jobs that pay more, and it’s sad because the ladies who live here, they do see us as family. We have to explain to them that those people may not be coming back, and there’s a chance they may never see them again.”

To help preserve high quality care by skilled Direct Support Professionals who are paid accordingly, find and follow the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition at facebook.com/BFair2DirectCare, @Fair2DirectCare on Twitter, and use the hashtag #bFair2DirectCare.

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**ARC Recreation Rocks C-Town**

Thirty three year old Holly Hilyard is a lifelong sports fan who was able to cross off a major goal from her bucket list thanks to The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Recreation program and a grant that it received from NYSARC Trust Services.

“There are two things that I’ve always wanted to do: go to a Yankees game and go to Disneyland,” Holly says. “Now it’s just Disney that’s left, because I got to see my favorite baseball team play in Cleveland.”

Specifically, Holly and about 30 other individuals with developmental disabilities attended a 5-4 New York Yankees win over the Cleveland Indians at Progressive Field, as just one highlight of a whirlwind 2-day bus trip from Upstate New York to Cleveland, OH.

The July 7-8 trip was funded almost entirely through a $12,500 NYSARC Trust Services Recreation Grant, and also included a river cruise, comprehensive city tour, visits to the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, hotel accommodations, and food. Each attendee pitched in just $100 of his or her own money.

“We did so much,” raves Julia Panipinto, who had never visited Cleveland before. “I liked the bus ride, being on the boat, and the zoo. I took a close up picture of a lion. I also liked spending my money at the thrift stores.”

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is a chapter of NYSARC, Inc., New York State’s largest organization serving people with developmental disabilities. NYSARC Trust Services typically provides an annual grant to NYSARC chapters that is earmarked for recreational purposes.

According to trip organizer Brenda Taber, the goal this year was to pack the agenda with something for everyone – and the result was a one-of-a-kind experience for adventurous attendees.

“We did have a lot of fun,” says Brenda, Recreation Assistant for The Arc. “For a lot of the attendees this was their first trip staying overnight away from a family member, and they had a ball. Now, they’re all saying, ‘when’s the next trip?’”

Brenda planned the event from the ground up, with fellow Recreation Assistant Gary Buchanan, a Recreation Committee that consists mainly of individuals served by The Arc, and travel consultants at Covered Wagon Tours.

The team is already excited about travel possibilities for 2017. And while Disneyland isn't in the cards, another very sweet flavor of amusement just might be in order.

“We’re already thinking about the possibility of a trip to Hershey Park in Pennsylvania,” Brenda says.

**About NYSARC Trust Services**

The Trustees of the NYSARC, Inc. Trust approved a remainder fund grant of $12,500 per chapter to provide recreational opportunities for people they support. Last year The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming received a similar grant from NYSARC Trust Services to hold a year-long series of dances, picnic, and an American Idol-style stage performance.

In addition, remainder fund grants totaling $1,466,000 were awarded to support NYSARC guardianship programs statewide. A total of $1,874,000 in remainder grants was awarded in 2016 to support recreation and guardianship statewide. NYSARC Trust Services administers supplemental needs trusts that enable people with disabilities to remain in their home and community while retaining Medicaid services and other government benefits.

Information is available on how NYSARC Trust Services may benefit you at www.nysarctrustservices.org, phone 1-518-439-8323, toll free phone 1-800-735-8924, or e-mail info@nysarctrustservices.org.
Winter 2017

fast food jobs in parts of New York now pay better than what Arc representatives en route to a #Fair2DirectCare rally in Rochester

The Arc to Cuomo:

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Tuckerman says. “To compare that to the fast food industry, it’s on a different level. So while I’m happy that somebody’s doing okay as they go through the worst of times, Residential Services Director Deborah

Disabilities Awareness Month, which is recognized nationally since 1987, when it was established for people who have them. The observance has been marked nationwide as a time to build understanding and acceptance of people with developmental disabilities, and provide new opportunities and resources for people with disabilities to live full and productive lives of inclusion in our communities,” the Livingston County Board of Supervisors meeting in Warsaw.

under then-President Ronald Reagan. County proclamation says.

in recent years by Genesee Valley Health Partnership, but with a twist of its own. Stay tuned to facebook.com/TheArcLivWyo for details!

THE ARC OF LIVINGSTON WYOMING