**Eight Honored by The Arc**

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming recognized eight Wyoming and Livingston County residents with disabilities for their contributions to the community at the agency's annual dinner and awards ceremony, held Friday, June 2 at the Wadsworth Homestead in Geneseo.

Danielle Rafferty of Gainesville was the recipient of the Randy Lakin Sportsmanship Award, named in memory of a peer who shared her passion for the sport – and more.

"Like Ryan, Danielle grew up in a small rural community in Wyoming County and, well … everyone knows them," says Cathy Sullivan, Coordinator of Intake Services for The Arc. "Both Ryan and Danielle could have that mischievous look when they are probably doing something that they shouldn't be, but when they bat that smile, you kind of forget about what they shouldn't be doing."

When she's not bowling, Danielle works at The Arc's Peterson Work Center in Mount Morris, and attends the Uptown Day Habilitation program.

Eliza Cox of Perry earned the Jonathon Templeton Award for Special Olympics for her contributions on and off the field, where Eliza often competes in track and field games.

"Eliza is popular with her teammates, and others look up to her," Arc Recreation staff member Gary Buchanan says. "She epitomizes what a Special Olympics athlete should be, and upholds the mission of Special Olympics."

In addition to her passion for sports, Eliza pursues academic and work skills. This fall, she'll start her sophomore year in the LIVES Program, The Arc's four-year college experience program with SUNY Geneseo. This summer and on school breaks, she assists the Public Relations Department at The Arc.

Jim Komonczi of Geneseo received the Hilltop Achievement Award.

Jim started attending The Arc's Open Roads Day Habilitation Program for Seniors in February of 2016. He has made many friends that he would not have met if he decided not to join the group.

Staff members say that Jim was quiet when he began the program, and benefited from much encouragement to join into conversations and activities. Now, he is independent in initiating conversations and will start activities of interest to him.

"Jim has a great sense of humor, and has really come out of his shell," says Elyse Strom, Coordinator for Open Roads. "All of the staff at Seniors would like to congratulate James on his achievements and to say that he is a pleasure to work with."

Kim Deiter of Geneseo was the recipient of the Randy Lakin Sportsmanship Award.

Kim has had many personal accomplishments this year, including moving out of an Arc operated group

..........continued on page 7
At the recent Annual Dinner, the cheering and hugs for our award winners as their triumphs as well as personal growth were celebrated by all with great enthusiasm reflect the heart and spirit of this agency. We expressed our guest Peter Burns, the Executive Director of The Arc of the United States, with our birth to end-of-life array of services for people with disabilities, and with our different service areas including Employment and Day Services, Residential, and KidStart since we are the first and best agency serving our counties.

When I recently traveled to Albany for the New York State Summer Special Olympics, I experienced firsthand the cooperation and collaboration of our community at its best. Coaches who are friends and family support, encourage, and challenge athletes (many of whom work and live in our programs) to always do their best, work together, and enjoy what they do as well as who they do it with.

At the Friends Fore Life Golf Tournament, I was really made aware of our community friends and family demonstrating support in so many ways. Volunteers worked so hard to make sure the day ran smoothly and was enjoyable to all. Then there are those who donate money, lunch, and everything in between. Our golfers never let us down, whether they are.

From being a chapter of NYSARC, which requires that 50% or more of our Board is made up of family members of individuals we support, to providing services from birth to end of life by our great staff who emulate this family atmosphere, we are all about family. I realize that we take this family atmosphere for granted, but that it also makes us special. I reflected on the day spent touring Peter around to some of our sites including Uptown Day Hab, Finders Keepers, Hilltop, Redemption Center, Transportation, KidStart, Grammas IRA, and Center Street IRA, all of which impressed him.

The Annual Dinner topped off Peter’s day with a performance from Arc Idol winner Rebecca Streams, a poem read by Jordon McKinsey, and photos displayed from participants of our Different Point of View project. Many awards were handed out to individuals receiving supports, people who support our mission, and scholarship winners who are continuing their education to hopefully help us in the future. You can read about them throughout this issue.

All these events in a nine hour period gave the CEO of our national organization an amazing impression of our agency. We should all be proud, and I thank you all for continuing the expectation of a family environment.

Speaking of family, we lost an important member of our family, Margaret Harrington. Margaret was our Director of KidStart from 1993 to 2011, and she passed away last month. Margaret left agency in 2012 after a successful transition to current KidStart Director Chris Lynch.

She loved all the children and was an early advocate for integrated programs and the use of play in learning. Margaret’s mischievous, fun side, combined with her “tough love” approach with staff, were part of an incredible passion for children.

CARMAN RECEIVES ARC HERO AWARD

The Arc Foundation honored Carman Electric owner William Carman with the Foundation Community Hero Award for his significant role in facility improvements to The Arc’s KidStart program for area preschool children. He received his award at a surprise ceremony Thursday, April 27 at the Lehman Building, surrounded by a group of cheering preschoolers.

“When we created the Hero Award, The Arc Foundation Board wanted to recognize individuals in the community who go above and beyond to enhance the lives and programs of the people we serve,” says Arc Foundation Vice President Marcy VanZandt.
Board President Cheryl Englert presented outgoing recognition. Dr. Lehman is a pioneer in the field of special education and a life-long advocate for people with disabilities. The recognition honors his leadership, volunteerism, and service to The Arc of livingStonyPoint.

Board Member Lyle Lehman with a special rendition of "How Far I’ll Go," and received the Arc Idol winner Rebecca Streams absolutely knocked it out of the park with her performance.

The guys from Warren IRA came to party – and the evening did not disappoint! The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Do-Gooders held their annual picnic on Wednesday, June 20. About 20 people were in attendance to celebrate the good deeds of the service organization.

Great job to all the contestants who competed in The 2017 Arc Idol competition this April! While everyone was so talented, we did have three winners: 3rd Place was Kim Deiter, 2nd Place was Katrina Finch, and 1st Place was Rebecca Streams.

The 23rd Annual Friends Fore Life Golf Tournament took place Friday, June 23 on the spectacular greens of Livingston Country Club in Geneseo. Our winning team, with a score of 61 was (L-R): Paul Metcalf, Tom Burgess, Chris Peterson, and Lary Kennedy.

Juliana Smith (left), of the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area, recently visited The Arc to recognize the extensive volunteer work for the dam by participants of the Uptown Day Habilitation and Open Roads Seniors program.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Do-Gooders held their annual picnic on Wednesday, June 20. About 20 people were in attendance to celebrate the good deeds of the service organization.

Tuesday, May 23 was United Way’s Day of Caring. Awesome volunteers from United Way of Livingston County worked alongside residents and staff in our Recreation program to make beautiful homes even more attractive.

We were in Washington, DC this June, advocating for employment choice for people with disabilities. L-R: Hilltop Director Kellie Kennedy, David France, Representative Chris Collins, and Robert Douglass.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Do-Gooders held their annual picnic on Wednesday, June 20. About 20 people were in attendance to celebrate the good deeds of the service organization.

Thanks to all who took part in an outstanding Taste of Livingston event on Tuesday, May 23 at Camp Stella Maris. With 25 Livingston County restaurants, breweries, wineries, cideries and eateries, we hosted a sold-out crowd of 400 people who were there to taste many of the signature dishes and beverages that make our community so incredible.

Joseph Fridley and wrestling legend Jerry "The King" Lawler lay the smack down at Flower City Comic Con Sunday, May 21st!
JUST SAYIN’: A SELF ADVOCATE’S JOURNEY

My name is Heather Bump, and I am a Self Advocate at The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming. That’s me on the right, with my friends Cheryl Engler and Kara Wietz.

Kara is a Self Advocate like me, and Cheryl – or Sherry, as we call her – is the Board President of our agency. We were part of a group from Wyoming and Livingston counties that attended the national Arc’s Disability Policy Seminar, March 20-22 in Washington, DC, where this photo was taken.

The Arc is a large agency that helps people with developmental disabilities, both locally and nationally. As a Self Advocate, my role is to speak up for myself, and for others who may have a hard time doing so themselves.

We were in DC to visit congressional offices on Capitol Hill to urge our US Representatives to vote against the American Health Care Act (AHCA), which could have resulted in serious cuts to programs and services for people with developmental disabilities.

The bill didn’t get the House Republican support that it needed to pass, so it was withdrawn on March 24. That was just two days after our trip to DC.

Not that Kara, Sherry, and our fellow advocates from across New York and the nation deserve all the credit for this victory, but our tires were barely cool from the drive home when someone in DC decided to come to their senses. Just sayin’.

For me, this big win was part of a fast-paced Spring season that included a couple of other victories. One was huge, and the other smaller but very personal to me. And the more that I think about them, the more I feel that they both tie back to my Self Advocacy in one way or another.

The first (and more obvious) one regarded the New York State budget and funding needed to pay Direct Support Professionals a living wage.

Like other Self Advocacy organizations across the state, our group has been active in the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition. DSPs are here for so many Self Advocates every day of our lives, and we want to be there for them too. So we wrote letters, signed petitions, marched, made phone calls, and held many meetings with elected officials. We pleaded our case in person to every elected official in our service area, other than Governor Andrew Cuomo himself. He was tough to nail down, and his silence on the topic was frustrating.

Then, at the March 28 #bFair2DirectCare rally in Albany, the Governor appeared, raised his right hand, and said “this bill will not sign a budget unless there is $55 million in it!” I’m not sure exactly why he picked that very moment to show his support, but I bet that the hundreds of advocates who overflowed the Capitol’s War Room that day had quite a bit to do with it. Again, I’m just sayin’.

My other victory was more personal, but something that I really wanted to share when they approached me about writing this editorial:

On Sunday, April 9, I got to be on TV for the first time in my life.

I had just finished a 4-week internship at Finger Lakes Cookie Company, a bakery in my home town of Geneseo that makes the best cookies in the world. The owner, Lori Bush, has a sister named Linda who gets services from The Arc. Lori donates 10 percent of what she makes to The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming, and is trying to provide work opportunities to people with disabilities.

When Rochester television heard about it, they couldn’t resist. Before I knew it, I was being interviewed by Rebecca Leclair, a big time reporter from our local NBC station. For almost 10 minutes, Rebecca, Lori and I chatted over cookies while the cameras rolled and the world watched. I wasn’t a bit nervous.

So what do cookies and TV have to do with Self Advocacy? For me, a lot. The confidence that we gain speaking up for each other shines through in everyday life. I’ve never been shy, but I’m not sure how well I would have done on TV without the Self-Advocacy experience under my belt.

When I look at Kara, Sherry, and myself standing outside of the Supreme Court, I’m proud of what we did for our peers while we were in Washington, and also of the ways that the experience has helped us grow in our own lives. For me, that’s the full picture of Self Advocacy.

Just sayin’.

FINGER LAKES COOKIE COMPANY HONORED AS COMMUNITY PARTNER

Lori Bush, of Finger Lakes Cookie Company and Creamery, was presented with The Arc’s 2017 Community Partnership Award at the agency’s June 2 Annual Dinner. Public Relations Director Jeff Thomas offered the following comments:

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming provides services for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in all aspects of their life, from birth until end of life. We serve 1,100 people, from age 6 weeks in KidStart to 90 years old in our adult programs.

We succeed because of each of those people, and because of our staff, Board of Directors, Foundation, and volunteers.

But as any great chef (or cookie-maker) will tell you, to set yourself apart from the competition, you need a secret ingredient.

For The Arc, Lori Bush is that secret ingredient.

Lori is the owner and operator of Finger Lakes Cookie Company and Creamery on Main Street in Geneseo. It is people like Lori who help to make us part of the fabric of the community. She has been generous and selfless when it comes to The Arc, and we are incredibly grateful for it.

Financially, she donates a portion of her proceeds to our agency. She’s helped us with special fundraising events. She helps us with membership. And she provides internships through our Pathway to Employment program, with the goal of providing people who are served by The Arc to be employed in the community in this store.

Lori does all of this with the passion of a family member. And that’s really important. Every step of the way, she is honoring her mom and dad and she is also honoring her sister Linda, who receives agency services. Family is a very important theme for Lori. And we are honored to have Lori as part of The Arc family.

And she does it while also making the very best cookies that you will ever eat.

Thank you from The Arc for making life sweet while promoting hope.

Lori Bush (left), with her sister Linda, Heather Bump, and Miranda Snyder.
The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Foundation awarded six scholarships at The Arc’s Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony, Friday, June 2 in Geneseo. Graduating high school students Courtney Lowe, Elizabeth Redman, and Morgan Sanchez received up to $2,000 each to pursue careers working with individuals with disabilities. Working teachers Nick Faulds, Julie Fitzpatrick, and Kelli Panara received up to $2,000 each for professional development.

**Courtney Lowe** attended Dansville High School, where she had a 96.56 grade point average. She will attend Ithaca College in the fall of 2017 for a 5 year Master’s program. She plans to pursue a career in Pediatric Occupational Therapy. Courtney’s first observation of an Occupational Therapist working was at KidStart during a career exploration program her sophomore year. Observing the difference an OT can make with a child led her to pursue her career choice. She will be following in the footsteps of her mom, Charlene Bennett. Charlene has spent 16 years at KidStart, working first as an aide and then as a special education teacher.

**Nick Faulds**’ plan is to become an Adapted Physical Education Specialist, and then pursue a career as a service professor at a university in Adapted Physical Education. He begins his Master’s program this summer at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse, where he has been offered a position as a graduate assistant.

“During my experience working with people who have disabilities, the thing that touches me the most is the intrinsic reward of knowing I made a difference in the life of someone,” Nick says. “Seeing individuals with disabilities reach their full potential is my purpose here, and I know that my journey will continue to open more doors for my students and myself.”

**Elizabeth “Lily” Redman** graduated from Livonia High School with a grade point average of 93. She has been accepted to Nazareth College.

“I would like to become specialized as an early intervention speech pathologist,” Lily says. “I would like to work at a place like KidStart that aims to support families of children with disabilities.”

At age 16, Lily shadowed a Speech Pathologist at KidStart’s Dansville location. She loved it so much that she did it four more times. Lily’s significant volunteer work includes helping with The Arc Foundation’s Breakfast with Santa at KidStart.

**Kelli Panara** most recently worked as the teacher for the LIVES Program, The Arc’s four-year college experience program on the SUNY Geneseo campus. In the job, she supervised two teaching assistants and several volunteers.

“From working with the LIVES students this year. I have gained a new passion for working with older students,” she says. Kelli is using the scholarship to pursue various certifications that will allow her to broaden and expand the populations of students she is able to serve.

Some of the things that LIVES Students say about Kelli include: “I wish she would stay for 3 more years until I graduate,” “She is amazing,” “I absolutely love Miss Panera to death,” “She has taught me to speak up for myself,” “She’s astounding,” “She has shown incredible patience with me,” and “She can understand what I’m going through.”

**Morgan Sanchez** attended Geneseo High School, where she was active in swimming, softball, band, Odyssey of the Mind. She plans to attend SUNY Geneseo, and become a special education teacher for young children.

Morgan cites a handful of her best teachers as inspirations. They helped her to work through her own obstacles and put her on her chosen career path.

“They didn’t become teachers because they could put a lesson plan together and speak publicly,” she says. “They became teachers because they knew how to find a student’s full potential and how to enable them to live up to it. They know everyone deserves someone in their corner, and they want to be that one.”

**Julie Fitzpatrick** is currently in her second year as Head Start Teacher with KidStart. She recently completed her second semester of graduate school at Nazareth College, where she studies Inclusive Education.

Julie already has a dual certification in general education for early childhood and childhood. Adding a certification and degree for teaching students with disabilities will give her a well-rounded education in early childhood education.

“I strongly believe that Julie will have a very successful career as a teacher,” says Sara Longhini, Julie’s supervisor. “She will be an amazing asset to any school, and will impact thousands of children throughout her career. Families will be excited to learn that Ms. Fitzpatrick will be their child’s teacher year after year.”

**Morgan Sanchez** attended Geneseo High School, where she was active in swimming, softball, band, Odyssey of the Mind. She plans to attend SUNY Geneseo, and become a special education teacher for young children.

Morgan cites a handful of her best teachers as inspirations. They helped her to work through her own obstacles and put her on her chosen career path.

“They didn’t become teachers because they could put a lesson plan together and speak publicly,” she says. “They became teachers because they knew how to find a student’s full potential and how to enable them to live up to it. They know everyone deserves someone in their corner, and they want to be that one.”

**Kelli Panara** most recently worked as the teacher for the LIVES Program, The Arc’s four-year college experience program on the SUNY Geneseo campus. In the job, she supervised two teaching assistants and several volunteers.

“From working with the LIVES students this year. I have gained a new passion for working with older students,” she says. Kelli is using the scholarship to pursue various certifications that will allow her to broaden and expand the populations of students she is able to serve.

Some of the things that LIVES Students say about Kelli include: “I wish she would stay for 3 more years until I graduate,” “She is amazing,” “I absolutely love Miss Panera to death,” “She has taught me to speak up for myself,” “She’s astounding,” “She has shown incredible patience with me,” and “She can understand what I’m going through.”
Nancy Bishop Recognized for Backpack Program

Community member Nancy Bishop received The Arc’s 2017 Charles Elam Volunteer of the Year Award at the agency’s June 2 Annual Dinner. KidStart Director Chris Lynch offered the following comments, which were prepared by KidStart Therapy Coordinator Assistant Joan Banach. Joan works with Nancy on the Backpack Program, which provides a backpack of healthy food to families in need on an ongoing basis:

Nancy Bishop has been a volunteer for the Backpack Program at KidStart for over a year. When she started in May, 2016 she was packing about 7 packs a week. As the program grew, Nancy willingly took on more responsibility and now fills 20 backpacks a week for KidStart families.

Nancy packs each pack with care, making sure there is the right amount of nutritious food for the size of the family.

And a very busy lady she is! Nancy helps with York’s Senior Adult nutrition program, is active member of her church and enjoys special outings with her Senior group.

But most importantly Nancy is doting grandma of Mya Albanese, a former student here at KidStart who is now an active teenager and a Special Olympian.
“For all the years I have known Kim through The Arc and Special Olympics, I have never heard anything negative from Kim,” Gary Buchanan says. “Kim is cheerful, considerate, and encouraging towards others. Kim wants to see others do well, and cheers them on.”

Matt Barber of Geneseo was honored with the Drew Moran Community Involvement Award.

An avid sports fan, Matt enjoys spending time with his friends at Livingston Lanes, where he participates in several adult night leagues. He also enjoys playing pickup basketball at SUNY Geneseo or an outside park.

Anyone who has seen Matt at work in the prepared foods area of Wegmans is well aware of his friendly manner, charisma, and infectious smile.

“Peers are drawn to Matt because of his kind and fun-loving demeanor,” says David Hilts, a staff member at Matt’s house. “He’s a natural role model, and can often be found guiding a visually impaired housemate throughout the community.”

Raphael Campos of Retsof received the Eric Byrd Award of Inspiration.

Raphael was selected for the award for his exceptionally strong spirit of determination. He pushed through decades of hard work every day, maintaining his regular work routine until he recently retired from The Arc’s Hilltop work program at age 88.

“Raph has persisted through different health matters to the point that the rest of us can hope we are in half as good shape as Raph when we reach his age,” says Eric Carson, site supervisor at Raphael’s group home.

Robert Maplesden of Varysburg earned the Hilltop Placement Award.

Robert has worked continuously for Peterson Employment Center, and now at Letchworth Central School. Over the years, he has been through the LIVES Program, received pre-vocational services, and moved on to receive Supported Employment services through The Arc.

“Through all of these changes, Robert has retained the skills necessary to maintain a competitive integrated employment setting,” says Karen Almeter, of Letchworth Central School. “He has become an expert at eventually putting a smile on the faces of everyone he works with even during trying, stressful times.”

Sabrina Leschander of Perry received the Community Services Achievement Award.

Sabrina has accomplished all of her goals since moving into an Arc-operated home one year ago, and is now working toward additional independence, including greater financial responsibility.

“Sabrina is absolutely extraordinary,” says Special Olympics Program Director William H. Ratigan. “Sabrina requires very minimal job coaching.”

As with all of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming awards winners, Sabrina continues to gain self-confidence and social skills, which have helped her to strengthen relationships with family, make new friends, and contribute positively to the fabric of our communities.

“Kim has done an exceptional job over at this site and has performed her duties when asked,” he says. “She has also showed her co-workers and supervisor that she is dependable when showing up on time with no issues. She also has proven to her supervisor that she is a team player and will do anything asked of her by her co-workers when help is needed.”

Kim grew up in Cincinnati, OH before moving to Upstate New York, and spent many years searching for the right job to provide financial sustainability for her family. She worked as a bagger and a cashier while in Ohio, and then on assembly lines at The Arc’s Hilltop work center after relocating about 10 years ago. She credits her move to New York as a career turning point.

“When I moved here I went to VESID (Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities) to help me find work,” she explains. “I found The Arc, which has been a great help. I remember being in the workshop. I met a lot of interesting people in the workshop. I remember thinking: Wow, there a lot of good people here!”

A short stint doing assembly work was followed by employment at The Arc’s Finders Keepers thrift shop. Then, Kim joined the janitorial team in 2009. The steady work and paycheck has provided this dedicated mom with stability, even in the face of a mother’s worst fear.

“My older daughter was hit by a truck,” Kim reveals. “She was walking across the street to get to Dollar General. She had a migraine that day, and didn’t see the truck coming. Thankfully, she’s a fast healer. She recovered in four weeks, but when it happened it was the scariest thing in the world.”

Arc Vocational Specialist Kim Lemmon credits Kim for demonstrating personal and professional grace, even under extraordinary circumstances.

“She persevered when her child was injured and in the hospital, missing very little work time,” she says. “She works 5 days a week and has excellent attendance rarely missing a day. Kim performs her job duties as assigned and gets along well with her co-workers/peers.”

LEARN MORE AT WWW.LWARC.ORG
Eight honored by The Arc Spotlight:
The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming recognized eight Wyoming and Livingston County residents with disabilities for their contributions to the community at the agency’s annual dinner and awards ceremony, held Friday, June 2 at the Wadsworth Homestead in Geneseo.

Danielle Rafferty of Gainesville received the Ryan Helmer Bowling Scholarship Award, named in memory of a peer who shared her passion for the sport – and more.

“Like Ryan, Danielle grew up in a small rural community in Wyoming County and, well … everyone knows that mischievous look when they are probably doing something that they shouldn’t be, but when they bat that smile, you kind of forget about what they shouldn’t be doing. ”

When she’s not bowling, Danielle works at The Arc’s Peterson Work Center in Mount Morris, and attends the Uptown Day Habilitation program.

Jim Komonczi of Geneseo received the Hilltop Achievement Award.

Staff members say that Jim was quiet when he began the program, and benefited from much encouragement to join into conversations and activities of interest to him.

“Jim has a great sense of humor, and has really come out of his shell, ” says Elyse Strom, Coordinator for Open Roads Day Habilitation Program for Seniors.

Kim Dieter of Geneseo was the recipient of the Randy Lakin Sportsmanship Award.

Kim has had many personal accomplishments this year, including moving out of an Arc operated group home. Today, Kim and her husband Rick raise two teenage girls. Rick is unable to work due to a disability, but transports Kim 5-days a week near by SUNY Geneseo campus. There, Kim is a mom, “ Kim Says.  “I had kids young.  I take pride in whatever I am doing.  If I’m working for people, I want it to be detailed, and her gentle, motherly demeanor.

Patrick gives Kim high marks for her attention to detail, and her gentle, motherly demeanor.

Eliza Cox of Perry earned the Jonathon Templeton Award for Special Olympics for her contributions on and off the field, where Eliza often competes in track and field games.

“Eliza is popular with her teammates, and others look up to her, ” Arc Recreation staff member Gary Doty says.

In addition to her passion for sports, Eliza pursues academic and work skills. This fall, she’ll start her sophomore year in the LIVES Program, The Arc’s four-year college experience program with SUNY Geneseo. Jim started attending The Arc’s Open Roads Day Habilitation Program for Seniors in February of 2016. He has made many friends that he would not have met if he decided not to join the group.

Kim Deming is a 35-year-old mother of two is able to earn a living wage and care for her children through Hilltop Business Services, this summer and on school breaks, she assists the Public Relations Department at The Arc.

Has your address changed or is your name spelled incorrectly? If so, please e-mail Suzanne Johnson at sjohnsen@lwarc.org.