With strong determination and an infectious smile, local golfer Heather Bump personifies the spirit of the Special Olympics motto, “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” This summer, she'll take her brand of positivity to the national stage, as one of 53 athletes representing New York at the Special Olympics USA Games.

“Heather is a joy to play golf with,” says Linda Rainer, of Piffard, who has worked with Special Olympics athletes for more than 20 years. “She is always happy. If you’re having a bad day, you can always count on Heather to make you laugh.”

Heather and Linda will compete as a team at the USA Games, July 1-6 in Seattle. Their sport: Unified Alternate Shot Team Play, in which a Special Olympian and their non-disabled partner alternate turns hitting the ball until it is holed.

Two-person unified teams consisting of golfers with and without intellectual disabilities are intended to further the spirit of inclusion through sports, according to the Special Olympics USA Games Web site.

…..continued on page 7

Massive Tree Planting Effort Has Strong Roots in Community

If you think that tending to a single tree over the holiday season is challenging, try maintaining up to 12,000 saplings per year in an ongoing forestry project that benefits local business, landowners, the environment, and individuals with developmental disabilities.

Every year since 2010, crews from The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s Hilltop Business Services program have planted between 10,000 and 12,000 trees locally through a partnership with S.E. Schiano Logging of Swain, NY. You’ve probably seen their output: groups of hundreds of young trees planted 10 feet apart, grid style, in waist-high blue plastic tubes at about 36 locations, many of them along the Genesee River.

The tubes protect the small trees from deer that would otherwise rub their antlers against their fragile bark, which can destroy them. Each tree begins its life within this simple blue plastic tube – and it is also with these tubes that the story of logger Steve Schiano’s partnership with The Arc begins.

“Honestly, we couldn’t have accomplished what we’ve accomplished without The Arc,” he says.

Steve first approached The Arc more than a decade ago, aware that our not-for-profit agency provides contract labor for assembly jobs through our Hilltop program. He was looking for a partner strictly for the purposes of cleaning and rolling the plastic sleeves. A contract was signed, and those jobs have been performed at Hilltop’s work center in Mount Morris ever since.

It was a win-win partnership from the start. Hilltop workers were paid by the piece for their output, and Steve was spared the need to add employees to his payroll.

Soon, Steve felt the need for another type of help. As his business expanded, he needed workers to dig holes, plant trees, and take care of them as they grow. Again, Hilltop rose to the challenge.

“A lot of what we try to do with people is provide job exposure,” says Coordinator of Vocational Services Judy Welch. “The person who assembles the sleeves in our work center isn’t necessarily the
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: PLEASE JOIN US FOR AN IMPORTANT TOWN HALL MEETING

Services for families and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are about to change in ways that we have not seen in more than 40 years, when large institutions began to close in favor of community supports provided by agencies like The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming.

In the coming months, New Yorkers with IDD supports will begin to see significant changes in the ways that their services are coordinated and funded. Throughout this transformation, The Arc will continue to provide the supports that empower our loved ones to navigate the challenges and experience the joys at all stages of life. To do so, we need to work closely with community members like you, who are an absolutely vital part of The Arc family.

I’d like to invite you to spend an evening with Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Board President Cheryl Englert, senior program representatives, and myself at either of two very special Town Hall Meetings near you. We want to field your questions, and let you know about key initiatives at The Arc, why we’re doing them, and why they are important.

Town Hall Meeting Schedule
• Wednesday, March 21 @ 6:30 PM: Geneseo Central School Auditorium, 4050 Avon Rd
• Thursday, March 22 @ 6:30 PM: Perry Elementary School Auditorium, 50 Olin Ave

We will discuss the potential impact of the state’s new Managed Care model, which begins this July when all Medicaid Service Coordinators will become Care Coordinators. We will also explore the importance of advocacy efforts such as the state-wide #bFair2DirectCare initiative. Our Town Hall Meetings will be held in conjunction with Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, recognized nationally and locally each March since 1987.

We did not choose the many changes that are being imposed on us, but it’s also an opportunity to raise the bar. We are confident that The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming, our families, and the individuals we support will be even stronger down the road. With your help, The Arc will be a better run organization, with better quality, that is more person-centered.

Arc Town Hall Meetings are open to the public. Pre-registration is not necessary, but we recommend that you arrive early as seating is limited. Doors will open at 6:00 PM. Should you have any questions or special needs, please contact Arc Events Coordinator Suzanne Johnsen at 585-658-2828 ext. 133.

ARC EMPLOYEE, LIVES GRADUATE PUBLISH E-BOOK

Kaleb King, a 2012 graduate of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s LIVES Program, is taking aim at the bestsellers list.

Kaleb, who honed his artistic abilities in the college experience program at SUNY Geneseo, illustrated the e-book “Exercise with Marvin the Mover,” which was written by Jeanne Smith, a per-diem employee in The Arc’s Hilltop program.

Their book is available now in Kindle format at Amazon.com. Simply search for “Marvin the Mover” in books.

Jeanne is a retired physical education teacher, and “Marvin” draws from her expertise. It is a fitness book that includes 27 exercises for children that targets four areas of the body: upper, middle, lower—and mind!

But “Marvin” isn’t just for kids. Kaleb’s illustrations and Jeanne’s words combine to form an easy-to-follow guide that can be applied by anyone to become more physically active and strengthen the mind-body connection!
**KidStart Photo Gallery**

Dreams came true for “kids” of all ages at The Arc Foundation’s Breakfast with Santa event, held Saturday, December 2 at KidStart.

In December, our KidStart children’s services program hosted Senator Patrick Gallivan for a tour of the facility and to learn more about the great work being done at KidStart. Pictured, L-R: Arc Executive Director Martin Miskell; Board President Cheryl Englert; Senator Gallivan; and KidStart’s Chris Lynch, Sara Longhini, and Stephanie Metz.

KidStart held their Annual SOUPerbowl competition in late-January and early-February, in which teams of kids and staff collect donations for KidStart’s Backpack Program pantry. The 300 wing of the Lehman building won. Great job everyone; check out that trophy!

---

**Fore!**

Plans are underway for the 24th Annual “Friends Fore Life” Golf Tournament on Friday, June 29th at Livingston Country Club in Geneseo.

This tournament is the biggest fundraiser of the year for The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming. To learn how to participate as a golfer or a sponsor, please visit [www lwarc org](http://www.lwarc.org) or contact Arc Events Coordinator Suzanne Johnsen at 585.658.2828 ext. 133 or sjohnsen@lwarc.org.

You can help us to achieve our fundraising goal of $40,000. We are confident that we can reach it with your assistance. Your generous contribution will be highlighted in our promotional materials via print and social media, up to and during the event, where it will be seen by hundreds of people.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We eagerly look forward to partnering with you on behalf of our community and the exceptional individuals we support.

---

**LEARN MORE AT WWW.LWARC.ORG**
**Message from The President**

Recently having attended a state-wide advocacy event, budget hearing, and Direct Support Professional (DSP) rally with Director of Day Services Kellie Kennedy, I find myself invigorated, with an intense enthusiasm for our unified mission.

We must be vigilant in our efforts to make sure all our Legislators support us in the fight for adequate funding for living wages for all our DSPs, Teachers, Teacher Aides as well as all the other well trained professionals that work in our programs each and every day.

This is an election year, and we need to tell all those running for office that we vote for those who support us. All of our Arc family members, staff, friends, families we serve and companies we do business with need to step up and speak out on behalf of our cause. Your vote has power.

Our employees deserve a fair living wage, because they don’t do a “minimum wage” job. They are highly trained, expected to make solid judgment calls daily that hugely impact the quality of life for the folks we serve such as my son Matt.

Matt and his peers deserve the best care money can buy, and I want the professionals who care for him day and night to be compensated appropriately for their career choice.

From his earlier days at KidStart to today, Matt has received great support and care. I love that, but the staff members need to be paid well to stay. We need to be able to recruit and retain competent staff to provide the consistency as well as stability to enable Matt and his peers to live full productive safe lives.

So my challenge to all of those in my Arc family is to go to all your State and National Legislators and demand that more should be put into our funding sources – and don’t even think about cutting!

Remind them they have a responsibility to adequately support programs that serve our most vulnerable people in their communities, and that your vote will depend on their support. In order to encourage others to be champions for our cause, we must set the example as champions ourselves!

**Foundation Scholarship Applications Due March 23**

For the 25th year, The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Foundation will grant two student scholarships, valued at up to $2,000 each, to graduating high school seniors from the Livingston-Wyoming County area. In addition to those scholarships, the Foundation will award a $2,000 Continuing Education Scholarship to a working teacher to assist with his or her certification, licensure, or specialization in the field of special education.

Scholarship applications are available at lwarc.org or via Arc Public Relations at 585.658.2828 x133.

Student scholarships are for high school seniors specifically pursuing careers serving persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Examples include teacher of special education, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech pathology, art therapy, music therapy, and training in the direct care field. The Continuing Education Scholarship is for a currently employed teacher who is furthering their career in the field of special education.

Student scholarships are payable in annual installments of $500; the Continuing Education Scholarship is awarded in a single lump sum.

Completed and signed applications should be submitted to Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Public Relations Director Jeff Thomas, 18 Main St, Mt Morris, NY 14510 by Friday, March 23rd. Scholarship winners will be notified by Monday, April 2nd.

The Arc Foundation is the fundraising arm of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming, the two-county region’s largest private, not-for-profit agency providing programs and services to individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. The Foundation raises money through special events and other ventures, and then distributes funds to support services that maintain and enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families.
HILLTOP SHIFTS TO AN INTEGRATED BUSINESS

Hilltop Industries is a sheltered workshop that is able to provide work opportunities for people with developmental disabilities in an environment that offers additional support. Some of their needs may not fit well in a typical factory setting.

"Most of the people that work here would not be able to get a job outside the workshop because they can't produce as much as their counterpart or they have disabilities that prevent them from getting a typical job," said Kellie Kennedy, director of day services at The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming. "It's not economical for businesses. Additionally, most of the jobs available in our area are entry-level positions — days, evenings, weekends — we pick up and drop off our workers at their home."

This door-to-door service, as well as job opportunity, provides an important piece of the puzzle for families who care for those who are developmentally disabled.

However, after 2018, the sheltered workshop will no longer exist. In the case of Hilltop in Mount Morris, a change in terminology and the hiring of non-disabled persons may stave off its closure.

"We have been given a pathway to change our terminology and we also hire non-disabled workers who work side-by-side with those who are disabled," Kennedy said. "We are going to continue that model and embrace it even more."

Hilltop will be called an "integrated business." The advantage will allow the business to continue to offer work to people who would not be able to work otherwise.

"It's always been our way of doing business," Kennedy said. "Integration is a great thing. It’s really no different from what is done in the classroom. Our workers benefit by having role models, and it's a big push in the community that everyone should offer integrated employment."

In a rural area it's difficult for a person with disabilities to be able to find a job in any industry, Kennedy said. A specific task or job, such as emptying trash cans, may be the only skill a person with developmental disabilities may have.

"How many companies can carve out a job like that for them to be productive," Kennedy said. "It's unrealistic for us to expect that. We believe in work and everyone should have the opportunity to work. And there are people who are passionate about working and being productive."

Hilltop currently has a 77-year-old that simply does not want to stop working. He enjoys the routine and camaraderie with coworkers.

"We have to stand on our own two feet business-wise when we are no longer considered a sheltered workshop," Kennedy said. "Today we have a pathway and we aren't going to close, but who knows what's going to happen after that."

In 2013, sheltered workshops were in danger of closing; however, due to an executive order by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the New York Employment First Initiative to Increase Employment of New Yorkers with Disabilities was established.

At Hilltop, 147 people with disabilities of varying degrees are served through the workshop. Additionally, there are 60 non-disabled workers who work alongside the disabled.

The Peterson Employment Center provides vocational rehabilitation to the people that work in Hilltop's work center on a daily basis.

"Our goal is to build skills and move people from the work center to community employment," said Ellen Friedler, habilitation coordinator at Hilltop. "Until then, we believe there is great dignity in working and earning a paycheck."

The people who work at the work center make over a million dollars in wages annually that goes directly into the local economies, Friedler said. It also generates about $3 million dollars that helps support The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming and the people it serves.

"We are a subcontractor for assembly, packaging and printing for many local businesses in Rochester and the North East," Friedler said. "We are used because we deliver high-quality products on time and at a competitive price, not because we work with people with disabilities."

Three types of jobs that crews currently do at Hilltop include work for Crossman, the largest, long-served customer. Hilltop employees package and do printing jobs for the company's various air rifle assemblies.

Employees also assemble part of the locking assembly for replacement windows for Caldwell.

"Caldwell moved from Rochester to Maryland, but kept its business here in Western New York because of the quality work we do," Friedler said.

Hilltop also has a print shop, which is an integrated business.

"We are a typical print shop that can meet printing needs of our local community," Friedler said. "We have graphic designers and a variety of printing presses to meet diverse needs."

These are just a few of the contracts Hilltop has. It also actively pursues trends and opportunities in the manufacturing field to continue to ensure quality services and more employment opportunities.

"Many people really rely on the income they earn from Hilltop for basic necessities," Kennedy said. "Without the work, they would fall through the cracks."

"Our goal is to always move people to a job to increase their skills and help them be as independent as they can be."

Something Kennedy says people often forget about is that a workplace often gives people a feeling of belonging. While the goal is to always move people to a "traditional" job, without an industry like Hilltop, they may not have that sense of belonging.

"We want to make sure that the community knows we are here and we support the community," Kennedy said. "But we also want to make sure that the community knows we also need the support to keep our doors open."

© 2018 Neighbor-to-Neighbor News, Inc. All rights reserved. This article originally appeared in Warsaw’s Country Courier. Visit them online at www.mywnynews.com/arcade_warso.
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 as well as the ability to plan ahead, Alan says.

“You’re going to get dirty in this job, there’s no two ways about it,” he explains, with a laugh. “You have hot days, you have rainy days. If you’re doing trees, you better bring a change of clothes.”

Since 2010, Alan has overseen the planting of well over 70,000 trees, some of which are now close to 20 feet tall. Each tree takes about one minute to plant, and the team generally plants 200-250 of them per day, four days a week. Tree planting season runs from April to July, and then resumes in the fall.

Most of the trees are of the black walnut, oak, and cherry varieties. They won’t reach maturity for another 35-45 years, but their benefits will be apparent well before then.

“With the recent arrival of the emerald ash borer – an invasive insect which is expected to destroy the native ash population – we have had to cut some tracts of ash that otherwise would have been allowed to mature,” says land owner William Lloyd, of Seven Nations farms. “The Arc has made it possible to actively replant these larger areas to different species. We have been delighted with the work that The Arc tree crew has done over the years. Their work has allowed us to accelerate our timber stand improvements, ensuring quality forest products for generations to come.”

“These tree plantings have tremendous long term value for the region: stabilizing the land so soil doesn’t run off into creeks and the river, filtering nutrients from water runoff so the water entering our lakes and streams is clean, and providing a habitat for a variety of animals all year long,” adds Benjamin Gajewski, Executive Director of the Genesee Valley Conservancy. “It only takes a few minutes to plant one of these trees, yet it will grow for decades and provide environmental benefits for that entire time.”

Andy Hint and Tiffany Dunn, two of the members of the tree team, consider planting and maintaining trees as a healthy way to convene with nature. They call the work “a good way to get outside” and “cold right now, but a nice change from working indoors,” respectively.

For Alan, there’s a special symbolism that can be drawn from each tree planted as part of this unique community partnership.

“The most rewarding part is seeing your work down the road, as the tree sites grow. A lot of times, it is actually connected with seeing the guys on the crew grow,” Alan says. “Doing the job can actually change them a little bit. It matures them. They can go back to any tree site, take anyone they want with them, point to something, and say, ‘Here’s what I did.’”

In 2017, 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 2017 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 2018 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!
Throughout the golfing season, Special Olympians and their partners in our area compete in regional and state events. Those who earn gold medals at these levels may be entered into a drawing to compete at the USA Games. When Heather received an acceptance letter, it was a dream come true.

“I was so excited when I found out I would be going to the Special Olympics USA Games,” Heather says. “I am very proud to represent my state, my family, my house, and my church. Special Olympics has given me something to be proud of that I can say that I have done compared to my friends with and without disabilities.”

Heather and Linda will be accompanied by long-time coach Martha Pachuta, of Perry. Martha and Heather became acquainted in the mid-1980s, when Heather was discovering herself as a young athlete.

“At that point, Heather was in many sports,” Martha explains. “As the years progressed, she became more focused.”

About a dozen years ago, Martha began to coach Heather in golf, helping to nurture Heather’s interests and develop her play.

Special Olympics has three levels of golf. Heather spent about 5 years at the initial “Skills Development” level, where she honed her skills with putting and various shots before moving to the “Unified Sports” level at which she and Linda play today. The third level is “Individual Stroke Play,” where athletes play independently.

“We have been able to see Heather really progress,” Martha says. “She has positivity, focus and determination. She takes it very seriously, which is a true advantage.”

Off the greens, Heather is well known throughout Livingston and Wyoming Counties. She grew up in Perry, and attends Perry Methodist Church. The 46-year-old athlete lives in an Arc of Livingston-Wyoming operated group home in Geneseo, and holds down an assembly job at our Hilltop work center in East Avon.

Visitors to Main Street Geneseo may recognize Heather as a smiling face behind the counter at Finger Lakes Cookie Company, where she completed an internship and a stint as a part time employee.

Heather is also a passionate supporter of disability related causes. She presently serves as President of The Arc’s Self Advocacy group, Advocates Coming Together. As part of a network of peer-driven organizations, the group has sparked change state-wide and nationally.

In March, she attended The Arc of the United States’ Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC. While there, Heather and other Self Advocates visited congressional offices on Capitol Hill to urge US Representatives to vote against the American Health Care Act (AHCA), arguing that it could have resulted in serious cuts to programs and services for people with developmental disabilities.

At the state level, she was active in the #fair2directcare Coalition’s efforts that ultimately resulted in Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s decision to support a 2018 rate increase for salaries of direct care workers.

As a self-described “people person,” the social aspect of Special Olympics is just as important as the athletics for Heather. While in Seattle, she will attend a gala opening ceremony, and will get the chance to meet fellow athletes from all 50 states.

“I’m most looking forward to meeting the people from different parts of the country,” Heather says. “I want to introduce myself, talk to them, and make a lot of friends.”

But there is a lot of preparation still ahead for Heather, Linda, and Martha before their journey to the USA Games. Their plan is to utilize St. John Fisher College’s indoor facilities first. When the weather warms, they’ll return to a weekly training regimen that consists of one day at the driving range and another day of course play at Sonyea Golf Course in Mount Morris.

Heather also hits the gym three times a week, as a regular at Fit Club 24/7 in Geneseo.

In a Special Olympics career that has spanned more than 35 years, Martha has traveled to elite level competitions with some of Heather’s peers, including World Games. In 2011, Martha earned gold in golf as a partner to Mistee Best when the duo competed in Athens, Greece.

“Everybody has a chance,” Martha surmises. So it would be no surprise for Heather and Linda to return from Seattle with medals.

For Heather, it would be a treat. But just being a part of the event is a big win.

“Heather is very supportive of everyone around her,” Martha says. “With Heather, every shot is a ‘good shot.’ That just makes it so much easier for everyone to play.”

NEW YORK STATE OPENING CEREMONIES

Athletes from The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming were well represented when Rochester hosted the New York State Special Olympics Winter Games, February 23-25. Among them, Hannah Brown was selected for the honor of introducing the nine Special Olympics delegations as they entered during the parade of athletes during the opening ceremonies. Hannah was joined in this duty by fellow athlete Amanda Vito and WHAM13 Anchor/Reporter Alexis Arnold.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.LWARC.ORG
TASTE OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY IS MAY 22

The historic 20th edition of The Taste of Livingston County comes to Camp Stella Maris on Tuesday, May 22, featuring a delicious variety of local food and drink – and tickets are on sale now at tolc2018.eventbrite.com!

Once again, the event is co-organized by the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce and The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming. The Chamber is Livingston County’s leader in promoting visibility, positive perception, and growth for area businesses. The Arc is the area’s largest not-for-profit assisting individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Tickets are $25.00 each, with all proceeds split evenly between our two organizations.

Originally a project of the Livingston County Health Department, and later run by Genesee Valley Health Partnership, The Taste of Livingston County made its name as a heart-healthy food tasting event. The Chamber and The Arc were given ownership of the event in 2017. We introduced a new venue in the form of Camp Stella Maris, and relaxed the nutritional guidelines in favor of a more general food tasting event that aligns with the shared values and aspirations of our organizations. The buzz was spectacular, and our inaugural event was a sold-out success!

Our goals for 2018 are to promote community inclusion and to highlight signature dishes of our local restaurants, caterers, bakeries, wineries, cideries, and breweries that encourage repeat dining opportunities throughout Livingston County.

We call it a “signature event to promote signature dishes,” and we are excited to make this year’s version the biggest and best ever. Something special is cooking this Spring, and we hope that you will be part of it. Tickets are limited, so reserve yours today.