No Small Accomplishment

Christine Brede has been facing life’s obstacles head-on, and overcoming those challenges since the day that she entered this world. Born 3 months before her due date, Christine weighed just 1 pound, 1 ounce, and spent her first 4 months in the hospital before gaining the size and strength to go home. Today, she’s 21 years old, and measures 4 foot, 8 inches.

But as a quiet force of sheer positivity, she’s a giant.

“Christine is one of a few people in my career that I would like to clone,” says Avon Nursing and Rehabilitation Director of Food Services Wanda Cobb, Christine’s supervisor. “Christine has figured out what is important. Find a job close to where you live, learn the job well, enjoy what you do and who you do it with, and smile while doing it. Our nursing home is very fortunate to have her as an employee.”

Christine works as a Dietary Aide at the nursing facility on Clinton Street, which is not far from the Avon home that she shares with her mom. It’s a position that she landed in 2018, with support from the Hilltop Business Services work program at The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming. Hilltop connected Christine to Avon Nursing and Rehabilitation as a volunteer; she was hired into her current position after just 3 months, and was most recently named Avon Nursing and Rehabilitation Employee of the Month for October.

"Being picked as Employee of the Month made me feel good because I like my job," Christine says. "The best part is being with the residents and seeing them smile."

The job wasn't all smiles from the get-go for Christine. The height of the counters, tables, and the dish machine were obstacles; it takes Christine more steps to clean the tables because she has to actually walk all around them to reach all parts; and the mats on the floor are heavy for her. But Christine has beaten the odds before – and she wasn’t going to let them stop her from succeeding this time, either.

"Where many people would have given up and decided this was too difficult of a job, Christine worked to overcome these obstacles and excels in her position," says Avon Nursing and Rehabilitation Administrator James Donofrio. "Today, her challenges are the same as everyone else who works here, and she does it with a smile."

Prior to entering the workforce, Christine attended Avon Central School. She graduated in 2017, and was referred by Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) to participate in Hilltop’s Supported Employment program.

At Hilltop, Christine attended a comprehensive week-long Work Readiness training that focused on the nuts and bolts of finding and keeping a job, such as resume building, applying for work, interviewing skills, and worksite expectations. From there, she was assigned to Vocational Specialist Patrick Campbell, who helped to nurture a volunteer opportunity at the nursing facility into a full-fledged job.

"On first impression, Christine was very quiet, very soft spoken, very shy," Patrick says. "She was pretty quiet right through the Work Readiness training. But she has really flourished. There came a point where she became even more independent than she thought she could be."

......Christine continued on Page 7
Message from the President

Happy fall! There are a lot of “cool” things going on at the Arc as you will see as you “leaf” through this issue of The Parchment.

First, MEMBERSHIP! Did you hear? We did reach our goal of 2,000. As a matter of fact, our membership number for this year is 2,061. Thanks to all who renewed their membership, and thanks to all the new individuals who signed up.

I can’t stress enough how important our membership numbers are to the agency and the people we support and employ. When an issue arises at the state or national level, votes are weighted based on chapters’ membership numbers. As we review memberships from other chapters in the Finger Lakes region, The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming boasts one of the highest numbers. This makes politicians take notice and helps when advocating in Albany for services, supports, and wages.

Our Membership Drive begins in March. Your membership needs to be renewed yearly! In 2020, be on the lookout for our membership letter!

I hope you were able to walk with us at The Arc 5K in memory of Ramon Rocha in September. Mark Hathaway participated with his family. Think about walking with your family next year. If you weren’t able to attend that event, maybe you were able to catch Harvest Fest in Warsaw. There was some pretty amazing food. We hope you will think about dining with us next year. There have been photo displays, art exhibits, and more – so many activities to keep you busy this fall, and beyond!

There is nothing like a beautiful fall day! And there is nothing like reading stories of accomplishments achieved by the individuals supported by The Arc. I get the same great feeling from both. I hope you do, too. Read on and enjoy!

Comments from the Executive Director

“Better together” is an important theme of this edition of The Parchment, and of our agency as a whole.

Certainly, we are a better service provider because of our community partnerships. Working with The Hillcrest Estate, Finger Lakes Cookie Company, and other partners, we were able to realize a gala prom-themed celebration for dozens of individuals, many of whom had never before experienced such an event. Partnerships like the one between Hilltop’s Supported Employment program and a progressive institution such as Avon Nursing and Rehabilitation give the individuals we support the opportunity to stand out for their accomplishments rather than their disabilities. And when our KidStart program works alongside other experts in their given field, as they recently did with the New York State Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, the results can literally transform the way that critical services are delivered to families.

Equally important to fulfilling our mission are internal partnerships between individual Arc programs. Look closely at the aforementioned prom: it was organized by Arc Recreation, Arc Transportation drove individuals to and from the event, Finders Keepers offered formalwear, and the Hilltop Printshop designed and printed the invitations. Elsewhere in these pages, you’ll read about Ken Tolle; Ken thrives in his new apartment with support from our Residential program, is a standout employee through Hilltop Business Services, and keeps connected with his peers and community via Arc Recreation. When we operate on all cylinders, as these examples show that we can, no other provider comes close to us in terms of quality. That’s a boon for the individuals we support, and a testament to the teamwork among an outstanding staff that brings it all together for them.

As the leaves change and we inch closer to the holidays, fall becomes a season that is defined by two things: giving thanks and togetherness. Today as always, I am thankful to the core Arc family, and to our community partners, for binding us together as a more capable, compassionate, and complete agency.

Business of the Year

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is proud to have been selected by the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce as the 2019 Large Business of the Year! We are certainly thankful for the recognition, and proud to be an employer of almost 700 staff employees who represent our values and mission throughout Livingston and Wyoming Counties. IT Director Jim Mullin accepted the award on behalf of The Arc at an October 1 celebration in Geneseo.
Qualifying individuals live in their own apartments, live with a friend of their choosing, or sustain community based living, in non-certified settings. Supports in place we help to ensure a person’s wellbeing, quality of life, and right to live in an environment of their own choosing. People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities deserve the supports necessary to ensure sustainability. Independence have worked diligently to attain and maintain a place of their own, and inclusion and self-determination of community based living. Many who achieve this level of virtual and Developmental Disabilities maintain safe and healthy living outside of certified environments.

The Mission of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is to empower and support people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be independent, productive and thriving in an environment of their own choosing.

Our partners at Mount Morris Dam & Recreation Area highlighted the artistic talents of members of The Arc’s Enrichment Group throughout the Fall season by hosting a display of their work. Theresa Barth (pictured) was among the artists featured. Also participating were Miranda Copeland, Jason Hise, Hannah Finch, Robert Maplesden, Randy Deiter, Morgan Snyder, Kayla O’Brien, and Miranda Snyder. wheelchairs.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s SAFE at Home was created to help people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities maintain safe and healthy living outside of certified environments. With these direct clinical therapies in their home environments, at no cost to themselves. Each participant receives routine nursing visits (providing oversight and training), on-call nursing support, and access to virtual clinical care to manage their health, safety and ongoing success.

To request a referral packet, or to submit a referral, contact Dan at 658-2828 ext. 367 or dgallagher@lwarc.org. For more information on the SAFE at Home program, please contact Rebekah Diegelman at rdiegelman@lwarc.org. Office Manager Rebekah Diegelman at 658-2828 ext. 129 or their service will begin January 2020. Great job everyone!

At their October 8 meeting, Advocates Coming Together (The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s Self Advocacy group) held elections for their 2020 officers and committee representatives. Officers (L-R): Vice President: Miranda Snyder; President: Justine Deluca; Treasurer: Randy Deiter; Secretary: Julia Panipinto (not pictured); Robert Maplesden; Randy Deiter; Morgan Snyder; Kayla O’Brien; and Miranda Snyder.

Collaborative: Mary Ann Torpey and Julia Panipinto (not pictured), Public Relations: Julie Johnston, Safety: Julie J. rdiegelman@lwarc.org.

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The Arc marked the occasion by recognizing our amazing DSPs. Here, our Residential crew celebrates at Highland Park in Geneseo!

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week was September 8-14, and programs throughout The Arc marked the occasion by recognizing our amazing DSPs. Here, our Residential crew celebrates at Highland Park in Geneseo!

Joshua Matthews and Alison Briggs, both of Geneseo, were the fastest male and female at The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming 5K Run/Walk in Memory of Ramon Rocha, held September 7. Josh’s time was 18:41; Alison’s was 21:39. Congratulations!

Stephanie Egleston and Marci Peraino embrace the theme of friendship at the annual Hilltop Picnic, held August 16 at JW Jones Hall in Caledonia.

Wally Gee shows off the Blue Ribbon Award of Excellence awarded to The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming booth at the highlight event of the Summer: the Wyoming County Fair in Pike.

Leah Rhoads was among the photographers who shared their unique perspectives as part of the Different Point of View project, which culminated in an opening night exhibition September 18 at Genesee Valley Council on the Arts. Also participating were Justine Deluca, Randy Deiter, Julie Johnston, Alex Daly, Tyler Heiman, Mary Armeli, and Haley Evans.

Learn More at www.LWARC.org
Local Agencies Serve Up Simplicity in Nutrition Program

For local children between the ages of 2 and 4, getting the nutrition that they need just got a lot easier, thanks to a groundbreaking new partnership between a federal health program and a leading provider of children's services in our area.

As they embark on a new school year, kids who attend the Head Start program at KidStart Children’s Services in Mount Morris are receiving their monthly WIC package of healthy food without leaving school, saving families the effort of separate trips to the WIC offices – for the first time in the program’s history.

“We want to meet the participant where they are at, rather than make them travel out of their way or leave school to get those benefits,” explains Margaret Betette, Program Coordinator for Livingston-Wyoming WIC, the local agency of the New York State Department of Health, and Mississippi. It is made possible by a shift at WIC to an electronic benefit system; the monthly food package can now be provided via an EBT card instead of paper checks. In New York, WIC Programs are administered by the state Department of Health.

“It’s hard for families with limited transportation and time off of work to take their kids out of school to go to an appointment,” adds Head Start Coordinator Sara Longhini. “So that leads to school absences, and chances are the kids aren’t getting their three balanced meals on those days. With this new joint effort, the kids are here, getting education. That is an enormous plus for families.”

The partnership is the first of its kind in New York State, and only the third in the nation, behind pioneering programs in Kentucky and Mississippi. It is made possible by a shift at WIC to an electronic benefit system; the monthly food package can now be provided via an EBT card instead of paper checks. In New York, WIC Programs are administered by the state Department of Health.

“The goal of the New York State Department of Health was to remove barriers preventing families from being able to participate in the WIC Program and provide them with healthy and nutritious foods,” says Head Start Family Advocate Holly Green, who sits on the State WIC Association Board. “Head Start has always been a program that seeks out the best way to support families and help to provide them with high quality services that focus on the health and well-being of the entire family. This partnership was a perfect match.”

While food packages are probably the most tangible aspect of the partnership, they certainly aren’t the only benefit. The WIC Program also provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and information on where to apply for free or low-cost health care and other needed services in the community, which become more readily accessible via the enhanced affiliation with Head Start.

Participation itself is also up. Based on current guidelines, any family that is income eligible for Head Start is also entitled to WIC benefits, yet locally about half did not make use of the WIC Program last year. This year, 33 of the first 50 families that enrolled in Head Start also elected to receive WIC benefits.

Credit another new convenience for that increase in participation: a “screening extravaganza” held at KidStart this July allowed families to complete all Head Start paperwork, enroll with WIC, and receive hearing, vision, and other required screenings in a single 1½ - 2 hour block.

“It’s about building relationships with families from the get-go,” Holly says. “Just being able to sit down and talk with the families as they’re finishing with WIC while children are getting their vision and hearing screenings is so important. So many factors go into providing the best possible individual support for every child.”

Love Our Staff? Let Us Know!

Have you ever wanted to congratulate an Arc staff member on a job well done, in a way that would be seen by their peers, supervisors, and the public at large?

Enter "Arc Accolades," a recognition program that’s available right now at www.lwarc.org/contact-us/arch-accolades/ or by visiting our Contact Us Web page and clicking the "Arc Accolades" link.

How we behave, individually and as an organization, is of the utmost importance as we empower and support people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be independent, productive and dignified members of our community. Through Arc Accolades, the people we support, their families, and the general public are able to recognize outstanding members of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Team who demonstrate our Brand Personality Traits: Competent, Dedicated, Professional, Caring, and Innovative.

“This will be a great opportunity for staff to be recognized for the great things they do day in and day out,” says Director of Intake and Innovative Supports Jen Warner, who is spearheading the program along with The Arc’s Human Resources and Public Relations Teams. All submissions are directed to Arc Public Relations for review and subsequent sharing via social media with proper permission(s).

Please take a moment to let us know what you think!
Unlike so many people with autism or other developmental disabilities, 30-year-old Ben Wilcox was able to experience the joy of attending prom as a young person when attending Mary Cariola Children's Center. It was an inclusive and fun event for Ben – and an experience that his twin sister Kate set out to replicate this September, with a spectacular prom for Ben and about 60 of his peers with disabilities at The Hillcrest Estate in Pavilion.

"One of our main goals for renovating and opening up The Hillcrest Estate to the public is to give back to the community and donate to causes my family feels passionate about," says Kate Wilcox Rodwell, who grew up on the elegant estate, and has spent the past two years overseeing a major renovation to it with her husband, Matthew. "One of the first ideas we had for a community event was a prom for adults with disabilities. My family loved watching the joy attending proms brought Ben when he was a teenager. We are excited to offer him, and adults with disabilities of any age, a similar opportunity full of joy, fun, and inclusion."

While Mary Cariola is a center for youth with disabilities, The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is the area’s largest not-for-profit agency that supports individuals of all ages. Kate turned to The Arc as a co-organizer, and invited every participant of the organization’s adult Recreation program to attend the special event, christened “Fall Prom at The Hillcrest Estate.” It was held the afternoon and evening of Saturday, September 28.

In a fortunate stroke of serendipity, a pool of about $1,000 that The Arc had raised in partnership with Finger Lakes Cookie Company of Geneseo was already earmarked for a gala that had not yet been planned. Like Kate, Finger Lakes Cookie Company owner Lori Bush has a sibling with a disability; her sister, Linda, attends Recreation programs at The Arc.

“I have long envisioned working with The Arc on an event that would make every individual feel safe, included, and loved, and to help their star shine for the evening," Lori says. "That we are able to work together with The Hillcrest Estate makes it even more meaningful. Through the work of many, we can achieve much."

Along for the journey was a list of supporting organizations, each intent on making the prom successful in its particular specialty.

The event was catered by D&R Depot of Leroy; DJ services were provided by Creative Rhythms Entertainment of Mount Morris; and Bush Hill Florist of Perry and Genese Valley Florist of Geneseo supplied flowers.

The Arc itself provided transportation services via its fleet of buses and vans. The agency’s Finders Keepers thrift store in Mount Morris assisted individuals in need of formal wear by opening its inventory of suits and dresses to prom goers. Its Hilltop Printshop in Mount Morris designed stylish invitations in the prom’s color theme, which were mailed to guests in August.

On the day of the prom, the grand ballroom was awash in a sea of navy blue and gold. Parts of the historic 32-room “mansion in the woods” and the lush 120 acre property that surrounds were open for photographs by prom guests and their family members.

As attendees approached the estate through the picturesque wooded setting via its winding driveway, they literally followed in the footsteps of historical figures such as Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and Ethel Barrymore, all of whom have stayed there. The Hillcrest Estate welcomed its prom guests with newly enhanced handicap accessibility, completed as part of an extensive renovation project that began in 2018 to preserve, protect, and restore the estate’s historic charm and unique character.

For all of the glorious pomp, it was also a homecoming for Ben; a return to a childhood home where he would often ride a tractor with his dad or playfully roam the estate with his twin sister Kate.

To the other guests, the event was an opportunity to create all-new memories. And for many of them, the joy of taking part in a formal prom was long overdue, according to Cathy Sullivan, who oversees The Arc’s Recreation team.

"Not everyone with a disability gets the chance to participate in an event like this when they're in school," she says. "You'd be surprised at how many people miss out on things that the rest of us might take for granted. This prom was something special."
New Offering: SAFE at Home
Making Community Based Living Safe and Sustainable

People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities benefit from the social inclusion and self-determination of community based living. Many who achieve this level of independence have worked diligently to attain and maintain a place of their own, and deserve the supports necessary to ensure sustainability.

The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s SAFE at Home was created to help people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities maintain safe and healthy living outside of certified residential settings. The program provides the clinical supports, which some individuals may find necessary, to maintain health and safety in their home environment. With these supports in place we help to ensure a person’s wellbeing, quality of life, and right to live in an environment of their own choosing.

"The Mission of The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is to empower and support people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be independent, productive and dignified members of our community," says Coordinator of Clinical Services Dan Gallagher. "SAFE at Home upholds this mission by affording individuals the supports they need to sustain community based living, in non-certified settings."

Qualifying individuals live in their own apartments, live with a friend of their choosing, or reside at home with caregivers. Within these environments, program participants demonstrate need for increased clinical care to manage their health, safety and ongoing success.

Each participant receives routine nursing visits (providing oversight and training), on-call nursing support, and access to direct clinical therapies in their home environments, at no cost to themselves.

For more information on the SAFE at Home program, please contact Dan at 658-2828 ext. 367 or dgallagher@lwarc.org. To request a referral packet, or to submit a referral, contact Office Manager Rebekah Diegelman at 658-2828 ext. 129 or rdiegelman@lwarc.org.

Officers Elected

At their October 8 meeting, Advocates Coming Together (The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s Self Advocacy group) held elections for their 2020 officers and committee representatives. Their service will begin January 2020. Great job everyone!

Committee Members (L-R): Vocational: Gary Hayes, Collaborative: Mary Ann Torpey and Julia Panipinto (not pictured), Public Relations: Julie Johnston, Safety: Julie J. (not pictured), Residential: Randy Babcock (not pictured)

Officers (L-R): Vice President: Miranda Snyder, President: Lisa Irwin, Treasurer: Julia Panipinto (not pictured), Secretary: Julie J. (not pictured)

Someone to Know: Ken Tolle

"It's Morphin Time!" for new Geneseo resident Ken Tolle.

Ken recently moved into an apartment of his own, located in the Village of Geneseo, after years of planning, skill building, and anticipating a more independent lifestyle. Before venturing out on his own, Ken had lived with three other men in a state-operated home in Dansville.

"I like it on my own," Ken says. "I like cooking for myself; I can make the kind of meals that I want, when I want them." Mac and cheese and chicken are among his favorite dishes to prepare. But he's also happy to be within walking distance of Pizza Hut when work or social engagements have him running late.

Backing Ken in his independence is The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming Residential program, specifically its Supportive Apartment option. Staff from that program are available for periodic visits, and for Ken to lean on for expertise and advice.

Ken is also a long-time employee in The Arc’s Hilltop Business Services program, where he provides janitorial support to contracted clients throughout the agency’s service area. For fun, he takes part in Arc Recreation. And Arc Transportation helps Ken get to the important places in his life.

In his spare time, Ken enjoys traveling, movies, bowling, spending time on his computer, and watching his favorite television show: “Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.”

Which Ranger is Ken’s favorite? As an enthusiastic, first-time apartment tenant, his choice reflects his take-charge attitude.

"I like the Red one," Ken says. "Because he's the leader."
I Will Not Bow
By Virginia (Ginny) Eley

Among her many accomplishments, Virginia Eley is a poet, photographer, LIVES Program graduate, and member of the Community Connections program. She wrote the following poem on February 13, 2019.

"I believe it will touch many hearts," she says. "It has a story behind it that I could share, but more than likely you'll be able to figure it out just by reading it."

My whole life you tore me down
You hated me
Berated me
Tried to change me
Told me not to cry
Told me you wished I would die
But I will not bow down
Like a dog
On my hands and my knees

My will is stronger
And I will stand taller
Sticks and stones
They may break my bones
And yea your words
They might hurt me
But they will not define me

I will not give in
I will not give up
I am who I am
And you will never change me

Hot News!

The Groveland Fire Department visited KidStart on October 9, to help kids learn about being safe, what firefighters wear, and the equipment that they use. They even let us sit in a fire truck!

........Christine continued from Page 1

As a nursing facility volunteer, Christine would have conversations with residents, play games such as UNO and Bingo during down time, and she help serve drinks. Today, her responsibilities have expanded greatly to include: making coffee, preparing serving trays, passing food and drinks, clearing and cleaning tables, dishes, mopping, sweeping, taking out the trash, kitchen cleanup, and more.

Because she and her mom often work opposite shifts, Christine is also responsible for her own transportation to work. On nice days, she'll walk; when the weather is cold or rainy, she makes use of the Uber ride share service.

"She has grown and excelled so much in the last year," Wanda says. "Being elected Employee of the Month shows that people are really taking notice."

In fact, Christine has become so much a part of the Avon Nursing and Rehabilitation culture that she has her own nickname: Minion.

But while she may be small in stature, her character stands tall. Reacting to her special recognition as Employee of the Month, Christine smiles and says, "I wondered if it was for real."

"She's very humble," Patrick says. "She has the right to brag, but she won't. She's not like that."

As the leaves change and we inch closer to the holidays, fall is a time to give thanks and reflect on the past year. The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming is grateful for the support of our community partners, for binding us together as a more cohesive, better functioning organization.

As we review membership numbers, we note that the membership number for this year is 2,061. Thanks to all who hear? We did reach our goal of giving the individuals we support the opportunity to stand out for services, supports, and wages.

Marcy VanZandt, Executive Director

The Arc's Parchment Fall 2019 Issue

A Thousand Beautiful Memories

When The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming was awarded a $15,000 grant from the Trustee Management Board of NYSARC Trust Services to support our Recreation Program, we were able to fund a two-day dream trip for program participants to the Thousand Islands Seaway, a freshwater paradise for sightseeing that straddles the border of the U.S. and Canada.

Highlights of the August 25-26 trip included a glass bottomed boat tour, narrated 22-mile cruise, shopping, deluxe motorcoach transportation, meals, overnight hotel accommodations, and a stop at Old McDonald's Farm (pictured here) to visit hundreds of friendly farm animals and play miniature golf.

Learn More at www.LWARC.org
Santa Claus is Coming to Breakfast
Register Now for December 7 Event

Register today for The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s Breakfast with Santa, 9:00am Saturday, December 7 at KidStart, 5871 Groveland Station Road in Mt. Morris.

The festive family event will include food and drink, crafts, games, music, and individual visits with Santa Claus.

Breakfast with Santa is a free, inclusive event for any child age 12 or younger. Children must be accompanied by a parent or other adult guardian.

Families are encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item, as a donation to the KidStart Backpack Program. KidStart is The Arc of Livingston-Wyoming’s children’s services program. Its Backpack Program benefits local families in need with healthy food delivered home with their children throughout the year.

Reserve your spot online at lwarc.org, or contact Public Relations Assistant Hannah Brown at (585) 658-2828 or hbrown@lwarc.org by Wednesday, November 27.