



The Arc Erie County New York

Annual Report

2023



The Arc Erie County New York Annual Report For the Fiscal Year of 2022



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ACHIEVE VALUES

Attitude, Collaboration, Heart, Integrity, Empathy, Vision, Excellence

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A Message from the CEO

It always amazes me how quickly a year goes by and more amazing is all the progress that has been made during that time. As we complete our 72nd year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on several of our accomplishments as well as discuss what our plans are for 2024 and beyond.

Since 1951 to today, our mission continues to be advocacy for those individuals with intellectual and developmental differences as well as advocacy for our employees to receive a fair wage for the valuable work they perform through the rate setting process. As the saying goes, anything worth having takes time, hard work, and determination. This past year we received a 6% Cost of Living Adjustment for our Education Program tuition, which went a long way to allow us to remain competitive with public education wages as well as much needed increases for our Teacher Aides and Assistants. Further, we also received a 4% Cost of Living Adjustment for our OPWDD programs which include Day Habilitation, Residential Services, Vocational/Employment services, and Community Support Services. This allowed us to provide wage increases to those employees who were not previously eligible for increases due to certain bonus restrictions. In addition, these funds also allow us to continue to provide much needed program enhancements. Our advocacy work as providers, as parents, as family members cannot be overstated. These COLA's were a result of numerous meetings with NY State Legislators, attending committee hearings and providing testimony, rallies at the State Capitol, email blasts, social media campaigns and the like. While our state legislators are well intentioned, they need reminders that our programs require appropriate funding to continue to do the valuable work in giving people a voice. I can only hope that when called upon, you will assist us in being successful in our advocacy efforts.

This was also a year of exciting new events organized by our Development Team. The first was Over The Edge, an urban rappelling event held at Seneca One Tower. The rappelling distance was 529 feet down this iconic building in downtown Buffalo and it gained a tremendous amount of media coverage. We also held our 3rd Annual Ale Trail event with many new additions including more vendors and new music. Together, these events raised over \$125,000 which will assist us in the continued development of our new Black Water Acres project in Alden, NY. Black Water Acres, in conjunction with the Walter R. Musty Homes for Autism, is the development of a 130-acre

property, to provide a unique programming and vocational training opportunity for children and adults with intellectual and developmental differences. More to come on this exciting project!

Our Workforce Training Center continues to exceed expectations with the addition of high school students participating in summer vocational training programs as well as the expansion of our culinary and hospitality training programs for those in our adult programs. We have also initiated a new Transition program for those individuals who are on the Autism Spectrum and are interested in continuing their education at the collegiate level. This program is designed to support the student throughout their educational career and to then support them while they seek employment opportunities. We are very excited about this program and see this as fulfilling a large unmet need in our community.

We are continuing with the NYS Department of Labor Apprenticeship program, which provides tuition, books, and fees at no cost to our Direct Support Professionals who desire to return to college and further their education. Enrollments in this program have increased over the last several semesters.

We continue to realize growth in our Day and Community Habilitation programs to pre-COVID levels which is an encouraging sign and the demand for student enrollment in our Preschool and School Age programs continues to be strong.

All in all, 2023 has been a year of new developments for The Arc Erie County and we are excited and optimistic that 2024 will be promising as well. I encourage you to become involved with our organization and join us in our pursuit of excellence.

Douglas DiGesare
Chief Executive Officer

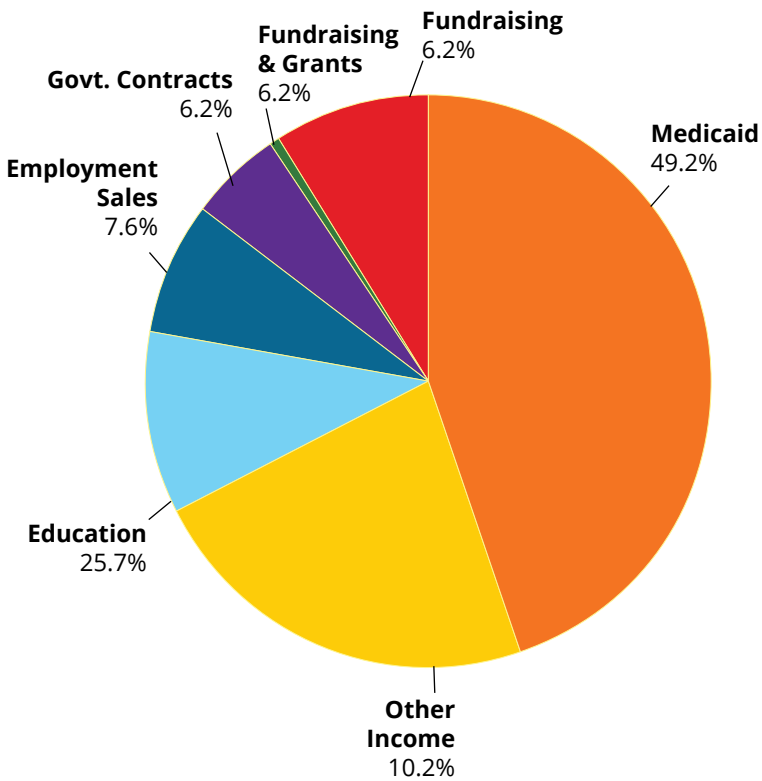


Agency Fiscal Synopsis 2022

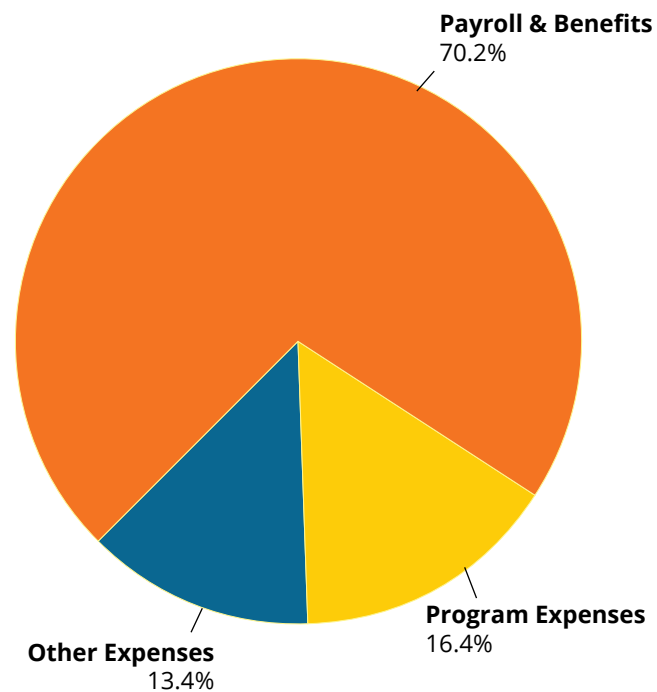
Revenue Streams	Amount
Medicaid	\$ 24,009,490
Education	12,538,605
Other Income	4,991,565
Employment Sales	3,730,607
Govt. Contracts	3,012,525
Fundraising and Grants	563,021
Total Revenue	\$ 48,845,813

Expense Category	Amount
Payroll & Benefits	\$ 33,439,564
Program Expenses	7,815,520
Other Expenses	6,407,945
Total Expenses	\$ 47,663,029

Revenue



Expenses



Major Grants 2022-2023

- The Jolly Boys \$5,000
- NYSID Matching Grant \$25,000
- Department of Labor Apprenticeship Expansion Grant \$154,217
- Walmart Community Grant \$2,500
- NYSARC Recreation \$12,529
- NYSARC Guardianship \$37,750
- Department of Criminal Justice Services Security Grant \$150,000
- Department of Labor Underemployed/Unemployed Worker Training Grant \$220,000

Total Amount

\$606,996



Over The Edge

Great ideas often come with great risk and rappelling 529 feet down Buffalo's tallest building certainly felt risky... at least initially. In lieu of the traditional golf tournament, casino night or 5k, The Arc Erie County New York decided to "go big, or go home" with our first special event fundraiser of 2023 called Over The Edge, sponsored by Tops Markets.

Appealing to thrill seekers and adventurers, interested participants were tasked with crowd funding \$2,000, all of which supports the various programs and services available to people with developmental disabilities through The Arc Erie County. This no-experience-needed opportunity gained the attention of over 74 fearless individuals, 44 of which reached their fundraising goal and rappelled down Seneca One Tower on June 14.

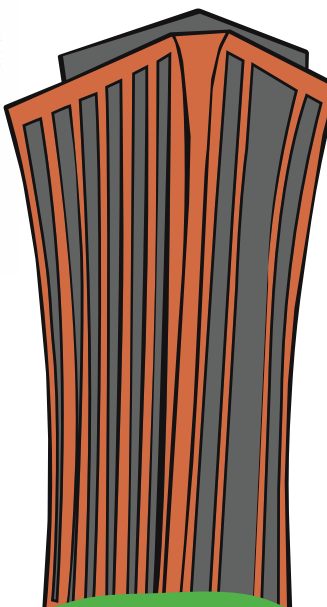
The day kicked off with Arc Special Education Teacher, Vicky Lehmann, singing the National Anthem in the Seneca One Plaza and by 9 am the first rappellers began stepping over the edge of Seneca One Tower. Throughout the day, the Plaza was filled with Arc supporters, family members, friends and onlookers; all who were intrigued by the sight of two ropes dangling down the side of the building holding their loved ones. The adrenaline was pumping as each rappellers toes touched down to the ground and they were met with outbursts of cheering and applause. Rappellers quoted the experience as being, "Exhilarating, scary but fun." and some even questioned "When can I go again?" after having the experience of a lifetime.

Special guests throughout the day included music by Buffalo DJ Shy Guy Shawn and an appearance by the Buffalo Bandettes. Buffalo Bandit/NLL Champion Tehoka Nanticoke rappelled for the cause alongside Bandette Captain Cori Bugenhagen. The event has raised over \$136,000 to support the programs and services offered by The Arc Erie County New York.

If you are feeling a little bummed that you didn't get to go over the edge in 2023, mark your calendar for June 28, 2024! We will be back on top of Seneca One Tower with Over The Edge to raise awareness for The Arc Erie County New York!



Scan the QR to learn more





The 3rd Annual Ale Trail

Back for its third year, the Ale Trail, sponsored by Parkview Health Services, was bigger and better than ever! With 21 tasting stations, 3 live musicians, food trucks and beautiful weather it was certainly one of the best Fall evenings of the season. With over 530 tickets sold, the event featured The Arc Erie County New York's very own beer, Arc Lager, brewed for the event by Community Beer Works.

New to the Ale Trail this year included tarot card readings by Divination Station, homemade snacks by Arc Culinary Creations as well as the Buffalo Braid Babes! Stay tuned for Fall 2024 as we continue to invite the community to our space on Wilson Road in Williamsville for a casual evening of fun with friends!

Thank You NYSARC!

Some of The Arc Erie County's favorite pastimes are our NYSARC Recreation events. Thanks to the Trustee Management Board of NYSARC Trust Services, The Arc Erie County is able to fund two annual events; the Summer Picnic and Holiday Dance. In 2022, the Summer Picnic was held on September 16 at the agencies Wilson Road location.

The weather was perfect, as was the company! Over 300 people enjoyed dancing to a DJ, a lunchtime BBQ, horse & carriage rides, face painting, arts & crafts, llama walking on our wooded walking trail and more!

Fast forward to December 16, 2022, the Holiday Dance was held at Grapevine Banquets where 275 people enjoyed a fantastic dinner, dancing and raffles. Thank you to NYSARC Trust Services for continually giving us the opportunity to spend quality time together doing some of our favorite things!





A Visit from the NYS Department of Labor Commissioner

Education is something that can never be taken away from you. That's why The Arc Erie County New York partnered with Erie Community College and the Department of Labor in the creation of The Arc Erie's new Apprenticeship Program.

With this program, Arc employees have the opportunity to enroll through Erie Community College in the Direct Support Professional or Direct Support Supervisor tracks to earn credit hours and further their career stability.

Through a NYS Department of Labor funded grant, all tuition and expenses are covered with job oversight and training available through The Arc Erie County. This is the only partnership of its kind in Western New York which gained the attention of the NYS Commissioner of Labor, Roberta Reardon.

Commissioner Reardon visited The Arc Erie County in November 2022 to learn more about the Direct Support Professional field and congratulate The Arc Erie County on its launch of the Apprenticeship Program.

Holidays in the Kitchen

In December 2022, the culinary suite at the Workforce Training Center was bustling trying to spread a little extra joy to the people we support! Holidays in the Kitchen started as an opportunity for Arc program participants to gain new experiences creating a variety of dishes in the newly created certified kitchen with The Arc Erie's very own Chef Chris.

During the week of Thanksgiving, Holidays in the Kitchen prepared 90 single serve meals that were delivered by Arc staff to individuals enrolled in Arc community-based programs. Meals consisted of turkey, stuffing, potatoes, vegetables and dessert all created by Arc program participants alongside Chef Chris and packaged by the program participants training in the Hospitality Suite alongside Hospitality & Customer Service Specialist, Doneshia Renfro.

For the winter festivities, Holidays in the Kitchen also prepared cookie decorating kits for individuals living at Arc residential sites. These kits included cutout cookies, icing and cookie decorations to provide Arc residents with a fun and creative activity to celebrate the season! Cold pies such as chocolate cream, pecan and more were also available during the month of December.

In 2022, Holidays in the Kitchen was blessed to receive a \$1,500 grant from Wal-Mart to cover the cost of supplies. Holidays in the Kitchen may have begun as an educational opportunity for people we support, but it has turned into so much more; a new opportunity to support The Arc Family during this special time of year.

Polar Punge

Picture this... It's early December in Buffalo. The air is 43°, the water is 40°, there are 50 MPH wind gusts and your goal is to jump into Lake Erie amid huge waves with several hundred other soon-to-be human ice cubes.

Thanks to our friends at Special Olympics New York, that's exactly what a team of nearly 20 daring Arc souls did on December 3, 2022 all while raising over \$3,500 to support Special Olympics athletes!



The Giving Tree

What better way to wrap up the year than with a full heart! In December 2022, The Giving Tree located at the 30 Wilson Road site presented an opportunity to spread a little extra joy to the people we support. By way of purchasing gifts and collecting monetary donations,

The Arc Erie County was able to brighten the season for nearly 40 individuals supported in a variety of Arc programs. The generosity of Arc staff and the Board of Directors did not go unnoticed, and we are excited for what the 2023 Holiday Season will bring!

Enjoying a Night Out

Several of the programs offered by The Arc Erie County focus on recreational activities for people living independently in an effort to support inclusion and provide unique opportunities that this group may not otherwise have the ability to experience.

On July 10, 2023, this group was given the opportunity to attend the WWE Monday Night Raw event at KeyBank Center. Many participants follow the various athletes including sporting their merchandise on a regular basis. Thank you to Pegula Sports & Entertainment for providing donated tickets to this event. This evening out created lasting memories while sitting up close and personal to our favorite stars!





Visual Arts @ The Arc

The NY Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation held their Annual Conference in April 2023, the first time it has been held in person since prior to the pandemic. Included in this three-day event is an art exhibit showcasing the creative abilities of people with disabilities and the staff who support them.

The Arc Erie County is thrilled to share that Arc Day Habilitation participant, Robert Wylie, won 5th place in this exhibition with his watercolor and ink self-portrait. Jenn Barton, The Arc's Creative Arts Facilitator, stated,

"At first, Rob didn't care much for art. He would come to the art room to just hang out with his friends and listen to music. One day he asked to try some painting and he hasn't looked back. Rob has taken to exploring his emotions through his art and finds it to be a great release."



Scan the QR to buy!

Showing Support for The Arc With an Orange Buffalo

How much more could we celebrate the city we call home than with an ORANGE buffalo? Made in the USA (primarily in WNY!) this lawn ornament is an adorable addition to your home! Why is this cute little creature orange? Because that's The Arc's favorite color! This buffalo gives back by donating a portion of the proceeds to support the various programs at The Arc Erie County New York.

Available for purchase at www.GoPinkBuffalo.com



Special Edition T-Shirt Fundraiser

Having supported people in the WNY area for 70+ years, The Arc Erie County New York loves celebrating the diversity of the City of Good Neighbors. We have partnered with our friends at Positive Approach Press, to spread the word about our mission through our Buffalo themed annual t-shirt fundraiser.

These special edition designs are only available once a year with a portion of the proceeds supporting The Arc Erie County New York. Keep an eye out each Fall for our latest design!

Above: Designed by The Arc Erie County New York Intern and University of Buffalo Studio Art Student, Ainsley Grant along with collaboration from Positive Approach Press', Joe Piehler

Below: Designed by The Arc Erie County New York Graphic Designer, Jimmy Scamacca



From the ARChive

Prior to becoming active in the Erie County Chapter of the National Association for Retarded Children (aka: NARC, now known as The Arc Erie County New York), Dr. Robert Guthrie worked as a research microbiologist at the National Institutes of Health, at Sloan Kettering Institute where he researched chemotherapy as well as at Roswell Park researching treatment of childhood leukemia. When one of his children was born with developmental delays and became enrolled in Erie County NARC services, Dr. Guthrie became personally involved with the organization.

In 1957, during his time as Vice President of Erie County NARC, Dr. Guthrie met Dr. Robert Warner, founding medical director of the Children's Hospital Rehabilitation Center in Buffalo. Dr. Warner proposed that Dr. Guthrie develop a simpler test for Phenylketonuria (PKU) a genetic mutation that leads to a build-up of the amino acid phenylalanine, which is toxic to the nervous system and without treatment can cause intellectual disabilities. Within 3 days, Dr. Guthrie developed an overnight test that would use only 3 to 5 drops of blood to diagnose PKU. By 1961, the medical use of this test grew dramatically, and Dr. Guthrie was featured in the January 1962 issue of LIFE Magazine for his groundbreaking work. When a national trial of the test was funded in 1962, workers with disabilities at Erie County NARC collated and packaged the test kits at the sheltered workshop.

By 1966, PKU screening at birth was mandatory in most States and though technology has improved, the same system developed by Dr. Guthrie is still used today in hospitals around the country. Due to his involvement with people with disabilities, Dr. Guthrie went on to develop tests for more than 30 different treatable conditions that cause intellectual disability or death.

Credit: www.robertguthriepku.org



Muddy Buffalo

The Arc Erie County New York is proud to develop and share opportunities for people of all abilities and the Muddy Buffalo Obstacle Course was no exception. On August 26, 2023, the All Abilities course provided a new experience for the whole family to feel empowered and take on a new challenge.

The 1.5 mile course consisted of 10 obstacles and looped around Buffalo Ski Center in the heart of Colden, NY. Participants were invited to climb the ski hills, go for a walk in the creek, take a dip in the massive mud pits and finish the course by going down larger than life slip and slide. Didn't get a chance to enjoy the fun this year? Stay tuned for the 2024 course!



Employee Directed Fund

The Employee Directed Fund is an integral part of our community-wide fundraising initiative and it provides employees with a unique opportunity to give back and support the programs/services they work hard to provide. After a brief hiatus, this fund is back in action and every other week interested Arc employees donate a portion of their paycheck to support it.

Funds are then requested by agency programs/departments to fulfill unexpected areas of need including program supplies, community engagement opportunities, guest speakers and community based memberships. Thank you to those who pledged during the 2023 campaign!

2023 Disbursements:

- Day Habilitation & Community Prevocational art supplies \$357
- Buffalo Day Habilitation DD Day admission \$460

Planned Giving

The Arc Erie County New York is an agency that was started by families for families and like any other family, our goal is to support those we care about most. Planned Giving provides a variety of opportunities to establish your philanthropic legacy in support of your interests and values at The Arc Erie County.

Bequest One significant benefit of making a gift by bequest is that it allows you to continue to use the assets/property you may leave to charity during your life. With the help of an advisor, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift be made to family, friends and The Arc Erie County New York as part of your estate plan.

Charitable IRA Rollover With the help of your IRA Plan Administrator, you can lower the income and taxes from your IRA withdrawals by making a charitable gift to The Arc Erie County New York.

Gift of Stock Just as with cash gifts, you will receive a federal income tax deduction for the full market value of any securities you donate, as long as you have owned them for at least one year. You may also avoid the capital gains taxes you would owe if you sold these securities



Scan the QR to learn more

www.ArcErieCounty.org/Planned-Giving

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting is a time for reflection, change and celebration. On May 24, 2023 we came together to share the recent accomplishments of the Agency, recognize the members of our Board of Directors and most importantly, share the achievements of the people supported by The Arc Erie County New York. Each person being honored has a unique experience that should be celebrated, and these stories are a testament to the work that Arc employees do daily. Congratulations to the awardees listed below and to our newest Board Members, Eric Galdys, Veronica Koller and Amy Thew!

Community Partner of the Year
Valley Community Center

Education Program Graduate of the Year
Oliver Glanowski

Employment Services Honoree of the Year
Renea Pierro

Self-Advocacy Honoree of the Year
Maria Baez

Day Services Honoree of the Year
Philip Byars

Community Supports Honoree of the Year
Adelbert Andrews

Residential Program Honoree of the Year
Joshua Rowell

Clinic Services Honoree of the Year
Rachel Fuentes

2023 Courage Award
Brandon Beiter



Executive Director Association Awards

The Executive Directors Association of The Arc New York recognizes the best talent and highest performers across Arc Chapters. The Future of Excellence Award winners are recognized at the EDA Annual Meeting each June. Please join us in congratulating The Arc Erie County's nominees!

Clinical Champion Award Nominee:
Valerie Parker, *Speech Language Pathologist*

Program Services Excellence Award Nominee:
Sandra Smith, *Employment Specialist*

Excellence in Support Services Award Nominee:
Ashley Pace, *Employee Relations Coordinator*

Medical/Nursing Excellence Award Nominee:
Denise Nardolillo, *Registered Nurse*

Emerging Leader Award Nominee:
Mary Beth Dempsey, *Vice Principal*



EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION
of The Arc New York

Thank you to our donors!

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Pam Hogan
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At The Arc Erie County New York,

we support children and adults with disabilities and their families in achieving their desired quality of life by creating opportunities through comprehensive quality services.

Our Vision

The Arc Erie County New York offers a person-centered focus that connects the people we serve and their families with opportunities for education, employment, socialization and residential options through quality programming. We pledge to provide leadership at all levels of the agency and to provide a gratifying work experience for all staff. Our altruistic focus will be communicated internally and externally so that all members of our community can Achieve with us.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

At The Arc Erie County, we promote a space where each person is celebrated and respected for being who they are. Our goal is to create a healthier, kinder, and more empathetic environment to work and serve in.