



## The Arc's AWC & Self-Direction

*Supporting One Person, One Family at a Time through Self-Direction since 1998*

The Arc's **Agency with Choice (AWC)** program is funded by DDS and based on the philosophies of self-determination and self-direction. This empowering program allows individuals and families to customize their own home and day services while receiving support and consultation from our Support Supervisors.

At The Arc we assist you in finding the right staff and creating the team that can take the risks and the important step from innovative ideas and dreams into everyday action and reality!

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### Our History & Background

Parents who said NO to institutions founded The Arc! They said **No** to the limited and low quality of life options they were offered. They were told that their children with disabilities "**will never be able to...**" and they said: "**We can do it!**" and my child "**will be able to...**"

Today, The Arc of GHN continues their legacy. We also believe that they can do it, and they will be able to pursue their dreams and potential. We are dream builders and we dare you to dream and to achieve the impossible!

*Continued on pg. 6*



*"If you don't like something, change it.  
If you can't change it, change your attitude" – Maya Angelou*



# Letter from the CEO

## *Our CFO With a Heart of Gold; Our New COO!!!*

It is with great honor, I here announce the promotion of Lisa Aiello, our CFO, as our new COO. 🌟💛🍷🍷

Over the past years, we have invested a lot of energy and worked very hard with Kathryn Earle, our consultant who helped us with the past two strategic plans, as well as coached those of in leadership positions both individually and in group.

Our newest strategic plan was created with a spirit intended to unleash the gifts and talents of our Office Staff before we extend it to the Field Staff and finally to the people we support and their families. This new re-organization and structure we created includes higher levels of communication and cooperation bringing greater enthusiasm, trust, and respect.

At The Arc office, we’ve all had the experience and pleasure of working with a unique CFO who always goes out of her way to listen and respond to the needs of our office staff, as well as to meet the faces of those we support in our contracts. Yes, our CFO with a heart of gold always has her door open and willing to drop everything to help you with a serene face and tranquil heart.

The Arc’s new Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Team includes a greater number of people influencing our direction and future. Our directors are more involved and influential; they are on fire! Our managers are now at the table as well. Ooh la la! There are many new voices and strategic thinkers forming and influencing our leadership and overall agency. Beware!!!

Here at The Arc we believe that working together we can accomplish more and exceed our own expectations! The dynamic energy and synergy we’ve created is greater than the parts!

At The Arc we believe and promote that it is “Better Together”!

With much excitement and gratitude,

**Luis Bachman, Chief Executive Officer** 🐼👉

### MISSION

*“To Advocate, Educate, and Explore Opportunities for Personal Growth and Fulfillment”*

### EXECUTIVE TEAM

*Luis Bachman CEO*

*Lisa Aiello CFOO/COO*

### PROGRAM DIRECTORS

*Heather Hess  
Director of AFC*

*Grimaldy Rios  
Director of DDS Programs*

*Andrea Morris  
Director of Family Supports*

*Bridget Crowley  
Director of Peer Support & Self Advocacy*

### EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

*Bianca Gill  
Manager of Marketing & Administration*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Steve Kapp President*

*Peter Carbone Vice President*

*Dana Marks Treasurer*

*Mary Ann Dunlavey Secretary*

*Eileen Duff*

*Diane Hanley*

*Sandra Jones*

*Therese LaPorte*

*Milva Santarelli*

*Joe Romatelli Director Emeritus*

**Achieve with us.**



**Lisa and her daughter at this year’s Arc Golf Tournament.**



**Throwback to Lisa’s first year at The Arc in 2012!**



# Family Support Connects

## Family Support Center Updates

### Canobie Lake Family Event - 9/1/23

In early September, over 130 individuals and their families joined The Arc of GHN staff at Canobie Lake Park to celebrate the end of the summer and each other! To see the smiles on everyone's faces, and watching families and individuals connect was priceless. We are so grateful to have such an amazing community and look forward to another fun event sometime in 2024! Stay tuned!

#### Large turnout for the Canobie Lake Family Event!



Thanks to the Flutie Foundation we have been able to support over 20 individuals and their families aid in one-time costs to purchase safety/medical equipment, recreational opportunities, and professional services to name a few. We are so honored to have been selected to work with such an amazing organization such as the Flutie Foundation! Learn more about the Doug Flutie Foundation and their local community impact at: <https://www.flutiefoundation.org/>

**"Surround yourself with supportive people."**

### Polar Express Family Movie Event - 12/9

We will be collaborating with Autism Support Center at The Northeast Arc to offer a family movie showing of the Polar Express! Movie ticket, popcorn & drink will be provided for all participants.

**Saturday, December 9th at 11:30 a.m.**

Vision Max Cinema

201 Elm Street, Salisbury MA.

Pajamas encouraged! Register here:

<https://form.jotform.com/223325158696160>



For more information on the Family Support Center visit us at [www.thearcofghn.org](http://www.thearcofghn.org)

*Andrea Morris, Director of Family Supports*  
[amorris@thearcofghn.org](mailto:amorris@thearcofghn.org) or 978-373-0552 x211

*Rowan DeAza, Bilingual Family Support Navigator*  
[rdeaza@thearcofghn.org](mailto:rdeaza@thearcofghn.org) or 978-373-0552 x216

Locations:

57 Wingate St, Suite 301, Haverhill MA 01832

4D Winter St, Newburyport MA 01950

# Peer Support & Self Advocacy Connects

## How I Speak Up for Myself

Hi, my name is Therese LaPorte and I am a member of the Peer Support Committee where we learn how to advocate for ourselves. I really wanted to take art classes and I was having trouble getting funding. So, when the Peer Support group went to the Massachusetts State House in March for The Arc Mass Legislative Reception, I saw the Commissioner of DDS. I asked if I could talk to her, and she took the time to sit down with me. I told her I wanted to take one art class a week. She really listened to what I had to say. The next day I got a call from DDS and I was all set to take the class! So, if you want something in life, you should speak up for what YOU want.

**-Therese LaPorte, Peer Support Mentor**



**Therese LaPorte advocating to DDS Commissioner Jane Ryder at The Arc Mass Legislative Reception**

## Going Places in the Merrimack Valley

There are so many transportation options in the Merrimack Valley you could take the buses, EZ Trans (now Mini MEVA) or Lyft and Uber. I have been using Lyft for a few years now and it wasn't easy at first. I started taking it because I wanted to be more independent and go more places on my own. My grandma and my brother were worried, but I told them there are so many great opportunities. My grandma was especially worried. On the Lyft app I was able to set up so that my grandma and my brother where able to track my rides going to and from places. I use Lyft to go to certain activities that are out of the area or after the buses and the Mini MEVA finished their services for the day. If you want to be independent and go places on your own without having to depend on other people, don't be afraid. You could do it too! *Check out these ways to get around:*

- Ride the MEVA Public Busses for FREE. The busiest routes are now running until 9PM!  
<https://www.mvrta.com/>
- Apply for FREE Door to Door Service on Mini MEVA:  
<https://www.mvrta.com/special-services/ez-trans/>
- Ring and Ride for residents of Georgetown, Boxford, Groveland, Newbury/Byfield, Rowley and West Newbury: <https://www.mvrta.com/special-services/ring-ride/>

If you need more help figuring out how to get around, call us, and we can help! Call us at 978-373-0552 x210.

**-Nichelle Delgado, Peer Support Mentor**

## Upcoming Meetings & Events

- **Internet Safety Training**  
December 7<sup>th</sup>, 4-5PM – ZOOM
- **Peer Support Holiday Food Drive!**  
Send your food donations in by December 15<sup>th</sup>!
- **Peer Support Coffee Hour**  
December date tbd – Nbpt Arc Office
- **Peer Support Advisory Committee**  
January 4<sup>th</sup>, 4PM – HC Media

To join a meeting or for more info please contact Bridget Crowley, Director of Peer Support & Self Advocacy at: [bcrowley@thearcofghn.org](mailto:bcrowley@thearcofghn.org) or 978-373-0552, x210.



**The Peer Support Committee at a recent Peer Support Retreat at Camp Denison outing**



# AFC Connects

## *Emily Gonzalez' Health Journey*

Emily Gonzalez joined the AFC program in October 2014. She lives at home with her parents and guardians, Maria and Luis, caregiver and brother, Eliezer, and their dog Sebastian. She enjoys spending time with her nephew, Raziel and all things related to Disney! When getting ready for the day, Emily always makes sure to bring her purse filled with goodies.

Due to the pandemic, Emily stopped going to her day program and spent most of her time home. In July 2022, Emily was found to be pre-diabetic, and was at her highest weight of 298 lbs. This was extremely worrisome to her family. By August of 2022, Emily's family and provider had devised a plan to help Emily get started on her weight loss journey. Her family started providing her with fewer carbs and no processed sugars while still allowing her to enjoy the foods she loves. One of Emily's favorite foods is pizza! So, her father started making her pizza using keto wraps and she loves them! Within a month she had lost 14lbs and it became apparent everyone's hard work was starting to pay off.



***Emily Gonzalez and brother, Eliezer***

As a family we adapted to her dietary changes and supported Emily's nutritional needs. Emily also began to take regular walks and was encouraged to move around more frequently and engage in home chores. Emily enjoys preferred treats and meals in moderation and has done an amazing job committing to the changes in her lifestyle. She enjoys sharing her weight loss results with The Arc team during monthly visits.

The Arc team's encouragement and support has been a key motivating factor in Emily's weight loss and her decision to pursue a healthier and more active lifestyle. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with everyone at the Arc and appreciate the support Emily and our family has received."

***As of September 2023, Emily has lost a total of 73lbs!***

As result of the weight loss, Emily is now able to move more freely. With this newfound energy, Emily and her family are looking to rejoin a day program. Emily continues to work hard and maintain her weight loss.

***-Eliezer Gonzalez, Emily's Brother***



***Our amazing Team Leader, Heather!***

As a follow up to our last newsletter, The AFC "Dream Team" would not be complete without the strong leadership of our Director, Heather Hess! Heather has recently celebrated 10 years at The Arc of Greater Haverhill-Newburyport and her dedication to the families and community she serves has only grown! Heather's years of experience leaves no stone unturned to find creative solutions to support all the individuals and families in the AFC program. She brings to the team a bright and compassionate voice! Her positivity fuels the team to achieve what is possible and creates an environment where learning and experiences are fostered. Her fierce leadership reminds us every day that "The sky is the limit!" Thank you, Heather!

***-The AFC Team aka "AFC Dream Team"***

# DDS Programs Connects

## *The Arc AWC & Self Direction continued*

This Arc was established as an advocacy movement in 1962 and since its inception it has always remained **a one person, one family at a time agency**. In 1998 we and a small group of students turning 22 and their parents created our first contract and pilot project with DDS and the first self-directed program in Massachusetts, **Flexible Day Supports Innovations**. This project inspired DDS to create the AWC model which became the first AWC program in our state.

Here our approach is to explore and provide a wide array of options in an individualized customized style. Our AWC program provides information, support, and advice while remaining in the back seat. We remind the people we support that they are in the driver's seat. Specifically, we believe this type of approach maximizes their involvement in their own lives as they slowly become greater contributors in their lives, homes, and communities. They are in the best position to know what will help them obtain quality of life. Our support is based on the respect and recognition of their own expertise, uniqueness, and diversity, including cultural and spiritual values.

## SELF-DIRECTION PROGRAMS



The AWC program and self-direction offers the opportunity to exercise control and direction over the service options that are available to them while providing the needed balance between flexibility and structure.

At The Arc, we are committed to increasing and maximizing the services that they are receiving from the government by including their own networks, funding, supports, and other revenues and resources that might be available. We assist and empower while striving to create a world of dignity, respect, mutual appreciation, meaningful contributions, opportunities, and community inclusion for all.

*Our work is shifting from the paradigm from “doing for” to “partnering with” the individuals and families we support.*

At The Arc, we believe that the people we support, and their families can enrich the lives of others in many ways. We search for and recognize the gifts and skills they possess and encourage them to develop them into talents for themselves and the community. We are team players learning from and with the people we support.

We also work hard in reminding each other to recognize and honor the mystery that is part of everyone's unique identity. We are about building up the person and the community through mutual exploration. Our work is shifting the paradigm from “doing for” to “partnering with” those we support. We acknowledge our own limitations in our work and are committed to engage in mutually transforming relationships. Together we can all accomplish so much more. It is “Better Together”!

*-Luis Bachman, Chief Executive Officer*





# AFTER Program Connects



## *“Let’s Talk About..” New Recreation activity!*

We’re excited to announce a new monthly recreation activity in partnership with the Peer Support Committee, “Let’s Talk About..” with rotating topics every meeting. Hosted by Elizabeth Fulks this class is about getting together with our peers and having an open discussion about life’s challenging subjects. This is a great time to brush up on important reminders on being healthy, physical activity, decision making, relationships, bullying etc. Bring any questions or subjects you would like us to build a class around. We have only had two classes but the feedback we have received so far is awesome! Join our next meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>, register at [after@thearcofghn.org](mailto:after@thearcofghn.org).111

### **Quote from a parent of a “Let’s Talk About” participant:**

*“Liz has been a bright addition to Julie’s life. She radiates kindness, caring, understanding and competence. She has been able to encourage participation and explain sensitive personal issues in a positive way. She is a great teacher and an inspiration for all who listen”. – Mary Ellen Morris*



**October’s table setting for the “Let’s Talk About” Meeting**

The AFTER Program offers other monthly activities listed below:

- **Arts & Crafts**
- **Bowling, Walking Trails**
- **Seasonal Activities**
- **Cooking Classes & Dinner Club**
- **Live Music & Dances**
- **Gametime, Storytelling**
- **Morning & Evening Chats**

For more info or to join contact Neala Mercier, AFTER Coordinator, at [after@thearcofghn.org](mailto:after@thearcofghn.org).

## Great Success for our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual “Tee Off for The Arc” Golf Tourney!

Thank you to all of our loyal Sponsors and Golfers for your support and for joining us for another great year! 🏌️

Special shout out to our Main Event Sponsor Haverhill Bank! We look forward to our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on August 19, 2024!



## We Appreciate You and All that you do!!



As many of you know, we were unable to hold our annual Appreciation Celebration this year at Surfside due to the weather, but we would like to extend our thankfulness to each and every one of you!

We appreciate everything that you do and everyone that is part of The Arc Family and Community! We are looking forward to being with all of you next year in celebration! And we are grateful for all the part that makes the body of The Arc. And we believe that we truly are **“Better Together”!!!**

**We would also like to send a special thank you to our AFC Members and Caregivers for filling out our satisfaction surveys. We will be sharing the results with you very soon!**

**Thank You & Happy Thanksgiving!!!**

# Legislative Action Needed!

*Drive change and act today on the following pressing concerns:*

1. MA21: Self Direction
2. Workforce and Family Caregivers Priorities
3. Cover ABA and AAC for Adults with MassHealth
4. H212, An Act requiring Universal Changing tables in public buildings.

## *How to Take ACTION!*

*Call your Representative or go to [thearcofmass.org](http://thearcofmass.org).*

1. *Click on Advocacy,*
2. *Click "Take Action"*
3. *Click on green "Take Action".*

## *The Arc National Convention - New Orleans!*

This our fifth year participating in The Arc National Convention where Arc chapters across the country come together to connect, share information & resources, and stories that reflect the work we do and its impact. It was such an inspiring experience and our directors who went are excited to share and practice what they have learned on their trip. It was also a nice opportunity for them to explore the beautiful city of New Orleans!



## *The Arc of Massachusetts' 70 Years of History!*

We were thankful to join The Arc Mass 70th Anniversary Celebration on November 9<sup>th</sup> to honor and recognize the many triumphs they have helped accomplish for us and those we serve. As Executive Director of The Arc Mass, Leo Sarkissian put it, "No other organization in our Commonwealth has had a comparable, positive impact on those with IDD." Cheers to 70 Years!



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