

Families and Legislators Discuss Important Issues at The Arc's Legislative Coffee

Thanks to all of our community members and representatives who participated in The Arc's Annual Legislative Coffee on December 10, 2015. Families shared many issues of concern, including lack of services for adults with developmental disabilities, lack of available providers, importance of early intervention, the need to create more inclusive schools, and money spent on institutional facilities - the Residential Habilitation Centers (RHC's) - while thousands wait for services in our communities.

Much of the discussion focused on funding and services in Washington State compared to other states. Washington State ranks 41st out of the 50 states in terms of spending on DD services. We have over 14,000 individuals waiting for DD services - only five states have a longer waiting list. Data from a State DDA audit shows that our state serves fewer people on average than other states. Additionally, a gap in crisis care and in available respite providers has led to a reliance on RHC's for those services. Families shared concerns that local supports could be improved and increased to offer more respite, positive behavioral support, and other additional community-based resources. Based on budget findings from 2010, Washington spends \$7,378 less than the national average for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS), amounting to a difference of 16.6% less than the national average. Home and community-based services have been shown to be better for clients and more cost effective than institutional facilities. Roads to Community Living, a program that helps clients in institutions move into homes in the community, provides a 75% federal Medicaid match, versus the 50% received for other Medicaid services. Right now, there are many clients that are in institutions and want to move into the community but cannot because there are not enough community residential providers available. Families discussed the need to make sure community providers are paid adequately for their services so enough community-based resources can be available.

Terri Hansen spoke about transportation, a topic she also addressed at the 2004 Legislative Coffee. Terri shared several issues, including wait times, increasing training for drivers, and slippery ramps on new paratransit buses. Currently, riders can request call-ahead notification every time they make a reservation. In response to these concerns, also raised in a series of community meetings, WTA is initiating an automated call ahead for all paratransit rides, scheduled to begin in Fall of 2016.



Many thanks to Representative Vincent Buys, Representative Kristine Lytton, Senator Kevin Ranker, Thomas Boucher (Community Liaison for U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen), Karlee Deatherage (Congressional Outreach Coordinator for U.S. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene), Joe Downs (Northwest Washington Director for U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell), and Bryan Yon (Legislative Assistant for Representative Luanne Van Werven) who attended the event.

Meet Your Elected Officials

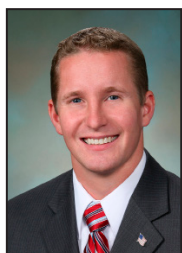
LOCAL & STATE

42nd Legislative District

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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luanne.vanwerven@leg.wa.gov



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Governor

Governor

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To reach the Legislative Hotline in Olympia, call 1-800-562-6000.

FEDERAL

1st Congressional District

**U.S. Representative
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www.delbene.house.gov



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(425) 485-0085
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2nd Congressional District

**U.S. Representative
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United States Senate

**U.S. Senator
Patty Murray (D)**
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Phone: (425) 259-6515



2930 Wetmore Avenue,
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Phone: (425) 259-6515
Email: senator_murray@murray.senate.gov

**U.S. Senator
Maria Cantwell (D)**
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2930 Wetmore Avenue,
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Everett, WA 98201
Phone: (425) 303-0114
<http://www.cantwell.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-maria>

NOTE: Due to screening procedures, mail to DC offices is often delayed. Send mail to state offices or use email/fax/phone.

Technology that helps people with disabilities often helps the rest of society at the same time.

If you've ever watched TV in a noisy bar and appreciated the closed captioning, you were benefiting from a technology developed to help people with disabilities.

That is exactly what will happen if more technology to aid people with disabilities appears in the classroom, argued Dan Habib, a filmmaker for the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability and a member of the President's Committee on People with Intellectual Disabilities.

"The type of technology we're talking about would benefit all students and all teachers. It might be driven by accessibility, but it benefits all people, just like curb cuts (for wheelchairs) now benefit moms and dads walking with their strollers," said Dan Habib.

As an example, he pointed to software that automatically translates some websites into simpler language. Although it is targeted to students with learning disabilities, text-simplifying software can be useful for many people. This includes those for whom English is a second language, as well as newcomers to a topic who might be turned off by such complex language.

Similarly, the standard use of hyperlinks, embedded videos, text-to-speech, and other nontraditional instruction tools can be helpful to many people, especially if it's designed into a curriculum from the start, rather than being something teachers have to tack on at the end.

"The textbook is a very old technology that is not available to a wide variety of learners. It needs to be updated," said Habib. Done properly, "it's easier to use for all students and teachers than technology and curriculum not designed to be accessible."

Habib, a Concord, New Hampshire, resident who was the Monitor's photo editor for many years, made his arguments Tuesday during a quarterly meeting of the National Council on Disability, held in Washington, D.C.

Habib was one of 18 citizen members of the committee that submitted a report last week to President Obama outlining a host of recommendations on how technology can help the intellectually disabled throughout their lives. He chaired the education subcommittee and Tuesday's discussion concerned the report, titled "Leveling the Playing Field: Improving Technology Access and Design for People with Intellectual Disabilities." It can be read online at acl.gov/Programs/AIDD/Programs/PCPID/docs/PCPID-2015-Report-to-President.pdf.

"The focus is to make the everyday world more accessible," Habib said.

Habib was nominated to the panel because of his work with his youngest son Samuel, 15, a Concord High School sophomore who has cerebral palsy. "He's been the inspiration for everything I've done," said Habib, who created a documentary titled *Including Samuel** about efforts by his family and four others to overcome cultural and physical barriers.

Some of those barriers are legal, as Concord resident Penny



Duffy told the council Tuesday. Her daughter Abigail, a sixth-grader at Rundlett Middle School, is visually impaired, and Duffy praised the many technologies that help her in class, such as the ability to type in braille into a tablet and print out assignments for the teacher.

But then she talked about a reading program from two years ago, in which students had new iPads to access the material.

"Everybody was excited with new iPads, but she couldn't access it – read it with Braille – because (the publisher) had decided we want to keep copyright so we won't make it readable by screen readers," she noted.

"Leveling the Playing Field" points to a number of non-technical changes that could help technology in the classroom, from tax credits for companies that develop cognitively-accessible technologies, to changes in copyright law that would allow those with cognitive disabilities to have free access to electronic books, which is currently the case for people who are visually impaired.

Other technologies discussed by the National Council on Disability in Concord include autonomous cars, which hold great promise for giving mobility to the visually impaired but faces a host of questions, including how someone can get a driver's licenses that would allow them to operate such vehicles.

Reference was also made to the Inclusive Design Research Centre, which establishes standards for software and computer products for the disabled that are open source, so that anybody can use them or improve them without concern about licensing and fees.

As for Habib, he has seen what technology does for his son. "My dream is to see Samuel wear a baseball cap that was reading his thoughts and typing them out on a computer screen," he said.

Source: <http://granitegeek.concordmonitor.com/2015/11/04/technology-that-helps-people-with-disabilities-often-helps-the-rest-of-society-at-the-same-time/>

*The Arc of Whatcom County owns a copy of *Including Samuel* which is available for checkout.

Community Events

ASK THE ADVOCATE WORKSHOP

Behavior:

A Neurodevelopmental Perspective

A video presentation from the Duncan Seminar on Down syndrome by David S. Stein, PsyD

Tuesday, January 26th, 6:00-8:00pm
The Arc of Whatcom County
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham



Dr Stein's presentation is a brain-based perspective on behavior and how it can inform behavioral interventions. 30% of children with Down syndrome have a diagnosable behavior condition. Join us for an evening of information and discussion. We will screen the 70-minute seminar and have a guided discussion on behavioral interventions. As Dr Stein states in his presentation: This is hard work & nobody has 100% success. Our goal is not perfection, it is improvement.

Please RSVP by January 21st: 360-715-0170, ext. 303, monicab@arcwhatcom.org. Limited supervised care for family members is available on a first-come, first-served basis with RSVP by January 21st.

Family Camp Weekends

CAMP KOREY

celebrating 10 years!

a seriousfun camp

At Camp Korey, campers, parents or caregivers, and siblings bond as they conquer the climbing wall, discover their inner artist, enjoy exciting games and make lasting friendships with other families. Their innovative and universally accessible activities, along with their caring program and medical teams, create the magic all weekend long, so families can sit back and relax.

2016 Spring Family Weekends:

- March 4-6: Bleeding Disorders. Application deadline: Feb 17
- March 11-13: Craniofacial Community. Application deadline: Feb 24
- March 18-20: Skeletal Dysplasia. Application deadline: March 2
- April 8-10: Solid Organ Transplant. Application deadline: March 23
- April 29-May 1: Autism. Application deadline: April 13

For more information, contact Shivani Gogna, Camper & Family Liaison at (425) 844 3226 or camperrecruiter@campkorey.org. To apply, visit <http://campkorey.org/camper-programs/family-weekends/>

Young Adult Self-Advocacy (YASA) Meeting

10am-12pm, Saturday, February 6
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham

For more information, contact Jessika: jessikah@arcwhatcom.org, call 360-715-0170, ext 304.

Helping Parent Annual Training

Wednesday, January 20th, 6-8pm
Whatcom Center for Early Learning
2001 H Street, Bellingham

Intended for previously trained Helping Parents who are interested in extended training opportunities. This training will focus on:

- At risk family support
- Providing support through social media



Please RSVP by January 15th. Limited childcare is available to those who RSVP by January 15th. To RSVP or for more info, call (360) 255-2056 or email info@p2pwhatcom.org.

Spin Dance

6-8pm, Monday, January 18
Bellingham Senior Center
315 Halleck Street, Bellingham

Bellingham Parks and Recreation, The Max Higbee Center, and Whatcom County Parks sponsor monthly dances for individuals with disabilities. All persons age 14 and over are invited for music, dancing, and fun! For information, call Amanda: 778-7000.



P2P Support Meeting

7-8:30pm, Monday, January 11
Cordata Elementary Library
4420 Aldrich Road, Bellingham

Join other parents of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and ongoing health care needs in a comfortable, confidential setting for mutual support. On-site child care available for those who RSVP by January 8th: (360) 255-2056.



Advocacy Days 2016

Advocacy Day offers a way for you to learn about the legislative process in person. It's a hands-on tool kit for learning how to make a difference!

Advocacy Day begins at 10am on Wednesdays during the legislative session. The day begins with an hour briefing on current issues and ends with an afternoon of advocacy. There are highlighted topics each week, as well as late breaking news on budget items and bills of interest relating to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Limited reimbursements for travel to Olympia and interpreter services are available on a one time, first-come first-served basis. For information and/or to register, call: 1-888-754-8798, ext. 105, email: bean@arcwa.org, or visit http://arcwa.org/takeaction/washingtonstate/advocacy_day.



Members of The Arc traveled to Olympia for Family Support Advocacy Day in March 2015.

Advocacy Day Schedule

Dates & Highlighted Topics

January 11	First Day of Session
January 20	Legislative Briefing
January 27	Supported Living Services
February 3	Budget Overview
February 10	Disability Pride
February 17	Power Up Families
February 24	Disability Protections
March 2	Employment for All

All Advocacy Days are held at The United Churches of Olympia (110 - 11th Avenue SE, Olympia, WA) unless otherwise noted.

Contacting your elected officials

Even if you aren't able to attend an Advocacy Day in Olympia, you can easily make your voice heard from the comfort of your home. It's important that we all make time to communicate with our elected officials. But before you write, email or call, think about the message you want to send. If this is your first time contacting your representative, consider these four basic suggestions:

- IDENTIFY yourself by name and the town from which you are calling or writing.
- EXPLAIN why you are contacting your representative: "I am calling/writing to support/oppose House Bill: HB_____, Senate Bill: SB_____." Be polite and concise in your explanation. Narrowing your message to one or two talking points can help to focus your argument; too much information may confuse the issues. Ask your legislator what their opinion is on the issue and do not assume that they have prior knowledge of your issue. Be calm, respectful and prepared to educate.
- REQUEST a written response to your contact.
- THANK the person who took your call or your legislator for their time and consideration.

*Want to learn more about current bills on issues of interest to you and your family?
Visit The Arc of Washington State website: <http://capwiz.com/arcwa/issues/bills>*

How to Stay Informed (It's easier than you think...we promise!)

Just imagine if each of us reading this newsletter took ten minutes a week to advocate on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities. We could influence our local leaders, state legislators, and federal representatives on early intervention, education, employment, housing, family supports, health care, insurance, and more. Together, we truly can make a difference...but it takes each of us to step forward and speak up!



GET UPDATES FROM PARENT COALITION AND THE ARC OF WHATCOM COUNTY.

- Go to The Arc's website (<http://arcwhatcom.org/>) to sign up for e-alerts, see past newsletters, find informative handouts, and access our events calendar.
- "Like" us on Facebook for updates on current news and events: <http://www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom>

CHECK OUT THE RESOURCES OFFERED BY THE ARC OF WASHINGTON.

- The Legislative Action Center (<http://capwiz.com/arcwa/home/>) has information on your elected officials, issues and legislation, elections and candidates. It also offers easy tools for contacting your elected officials or local media outlets and sample letters and phone scripts.
- Sign up for Action E-List to stay informed on the latest news: <http://capwiz.com/arcwa/mlm/signup/>
- Issue Papers (http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/issue_papers) has informative documents on various issues and includes the 2016 Legislative Notebook.



- The Olympia Insider is an informative video series on current events in Olympia relevant to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The Olympia Reporter also provides informative articles. http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/the_olympia_insider
- Hot Tips for Advocates is an easy to use guide for successful advocacy: http://arcwa.org/index.php/library/2016_hot_tips/
- Get connected with Facebook and Twitter and find even more resources at The Arc of Washington's Take Action website: <http://arcwa.org/takeaction>

KEEP UP TO DATE ON FEDERAL ISSUES THROUGH THE ARC OF THE UNITED STATES.

- Visit The Arc's Action Center (<http://capwiz.com/thearc/home/>) to get information on elected officials, issues, legislation, candidates and elections.
- Sign up for the Capitol Insider to stay informed on the latest federal news: <http://cqrcengage.com/thearc/app/register?1&m=9899>
- The Public Policy page has summary and background information on various issues: <http://www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=2400>



2016 Calendar Models Celebrated at Red Carpet Release Party

The Arc of Whatcom County hosted a calendar release party at the beautiful Bellingham Cruise Terminal on November 30th. Each of the 2016 calendar models walked the red carpet, had the opportunity to sign autographs, and enjoyed the spotlight.

The calendar features beautiful photos and inspiring profiles of individuals with developmental disabilities. Models are nominated by friends, families, and community members. If you or someone you know is interested in being in our next calendar, please contact us at: (360) 715-0170.



The Arc.

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

The Parent Coalition

The Arc of Whatcom County provides leadership support for individuals with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians. The goal of the Parent Coalition is to enable persons with developmental disabilities and their parents/guardians to become effective and involved in accessing services.

The Parent Coalition newsletter is published monthly by:

The Arc of Whatcom County
 Dan Godwin Community Center
 2602 McLeod Road
 Bellingham, WA 98225
 (360) 715-0170
www.arcwhatcom.org
 OFFICE HOURS: 9am-12pm M-F

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 Katie Edson; Bobbie Wiley;
 & Susan Larson

Stay Connected

Online Community Calendar:
 Visit The Arc's website at www.arcwhatcom.org and click on Events.

Facebook: Visit our FB page: www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom for the latest information and events.

E-alerts: The Parent Coalition emails updates on legislation, workshops and upcoming activities. To sign up, visit www.arcwhatcom.org or email monicab@arcwhatcom.org.



The Parent Coalition is funded by grants from the Developmental Disabilities Program of Whatcom County, the United Way and your generous donations.

To purchase calendars, visit www.arcwhatcom.org or call (360)715-0170.

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DID YOU KNOW?

There has been a delay in the new Individual ProviderOne payment system. Providers will not be required to use the new system until April 1, 2016. Until then, continue to mail or call in your invoice hours. For more information, visit www.IPOne.org, call (844) 240-1526, or email pplwaipone-cs@pcgus.com.



The Arc of Whatcom County
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Event Calendar

January 2016

11 Monday, 10am-3pm
Advocacy Days: First Day of Session
See page 5 for details.

11 Monday, 7-8:30pm
Parent to Parent Support Meeting
Cordata Elementary School
4420 Aldrich Road
Contact Karlene: (360) 255-2056

16 Saturday, 6-7pm
People First Meeting
114 W Magnolia, Suite 104
Contact Susan: 738-2060

18 Monday, 6-8pm
Spin Dance
Senior Center, 315 Halleck Street
Contact Amanda: 778-7000

20 Wednesday, 6:30-7:30pm
The Arc's Board of Directors Meeting
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road
Contact Beverly: 715-0170, ext 306

20 Wednesday, 6-8pm
P2P Helping Parent Training
WCEL, 2001 H Street
Contact Karlene: (360) 255-2056

26 Tuesday, 6-8pm
PC Workshop: Behavior & Down syndrome
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road
Contact Monica: 715-0170, ext 303



2016 Smiles of Life Calendars are now available! Order yours today at www.arcwhatcom.org.

Transportation: President Signs Highway and Transit Reauthorization

On Friday, December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). The FAST Act will increase transit funding by over 10% the first year and over 17% in 2020. The law also includes funding increases for the 5310 program which provides transportation services to individuals with disabilities and the elderly. A new pilot program is also included to increase mobility services to people with disabilities.

FAST ACT

NOTE: All events listed are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted. To find more events, visit www.arcwhatcom.org/wp/events/.