

Autism Acceptance Month

Acceptance is an Action

April is Autism Acceptance Month. During Autism Acceptance Month, we focus on sharing positive, respectful, and accurate information about autism and autistic people.

Autism Acceptance Month promotes acceptance and celebration of autistic people as family members, friends, classmates, co-workers, and community members making valuable contributions to our world. Autism is a neurological variation that occurs in about one to two percent of the population and is classified as a developmental disability. Although it may be more common than previously thought, it is not a new condition and exists in all parts of the world, in both children and adults of all ages. The terms "Autistic" and "autism spectrum" often are used to refer inclusively to people who have an official diagnosis on the autism spectrum or who self-identify with the Autistic community.



Why should I accept autistic people?

The Americans with Disabilities Act says "disability is a natural part of the human experience." Autism is a natural part of the human experience, and autistic people are members of our community, citizens, friends, family members, and fellow humans. Accepting autistic people is about honoring human diversity and making sure that everyone is included, valued, and contributing in our society.

Why Acceptance?

Acceptance does not seek to highlight how "other" we are or emphasize the differences and distance between our ways of being. Instead, acceptance looks at commonalities we share and at the strength inherent in diversity.

Acceptance means doing everything you can so that your autistic child will grow up into the best autistic adult they can be, supporting your autistic friends in a world that is not designed for us, and working to make our world a better, more inclusive, safer place for autistic people of all ages and abilities.

Acceptance might look like:

- Inclusive education.
- Helping your child or your friend learn to use their AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) device.
- Fighting stigma and stereotypes about autism and autistic people.
- Snapping your fingers instead of clapping for applause so your autistic coworker isn't hurt by the noise.
- Making sure autistic people are included and respected in your community and that your community is accessible.

Acceptance is not passive tolerance. Acceptance is an action.

Source: <http://www.autismacceptancemonth.com/>



2016 Whatcom County Transition Fair

This year's Transition Fair, an annual event to help students with disabilities prepare for life after high school, was a great success! Whatcom County Schools participated as part of promoting movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation. This year 143 students, staff and families attended to connect with 27 different community agencies. Participants learned about opportunities to pursue their employment goals and to connect with community resources.

As young adults prepare for transition, it can be confusing to understand what roles the Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation play in getting and obtaining employment in high school and beyond. Here is a brief description of how each agency provides services:

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) helps adults with disabilities find and secure stable employment. DVR services are not long-term. Their purpose is to provide the necessary tools and assistance for initial job placement and (if needed) to aid transition to long-term supports outside DVR (such as DDA).

Services may include: counseling and guidance; trial work experience; community-based assessments; benefits planning; assistive technology; job-related services such as completing applications, developing a resume, practicing interview skills, conducting a job search, and gaining job skills; and transition to DDA long-term supports.

DVR partners with school districts to help students receiving high school transition services to prepare for and find employment. This typically happens during the final year of school (age 20-21).

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) provides long-term employment/day services to eligible individuals age 21 and over. It's important to find out, prior to exiting the school system, how to apply for these services (and if funding will be available). Although DDA does not provide employment services until age 21, other home & community-based services may be available. Visit the DDA website for a full list of services: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/developmental-disabilities-administration-services-programs>



IRS, Taxes, and Personal Care

Information on the income tax exclusion for personal care payments made through the Community First Choice and Medicaid Personal Care Programs

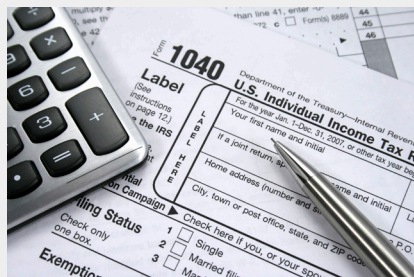
The IRS has determined that payments made through the Community First Choice and the State Medicaid Personal Care programs for the provision of in-home supportive care to eligible recipients will be treated as "difficulty of care payments." The payments are excludable from the gross income of the provider under section 131 of the tax Code. In general, DSHS clients who reside in their providers' home are eligible recipients.

This ruling applies to payments under these two programs, regardless of the year in which they were made. If you think you qualify for the exclusion in the 2015 tax year, you may want to consult with your tax advisor or the IRS about how to claim the exclusion on your 1040 form or how to file an amended form, if you have already filed your tax return.

DSHS is working on a broader communication to all those affected by this ruling. That communication will include information about the process for applying the exclusion during the 2016 tax year.

For more information, please visit

<https://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Certain-Medicaid-Waiver-Payments-May-Be-Excludable-From-Income>



Personal Care Hours: How to Manage Your Hours

Effective January 1st of this year, the state began requiring a weekly Plan of Care for clients receiving personal care or skills acquisition services. The plan sets a maximum number of hours that a client can assign to a provider in a week, based on the individual's monthly hours.

The weekly plans are intended to limit the amount of overtime paid to an Individual Provider when a Plan of Care is less than 40 hours per week. An exception can be requested when the client's health and safety and/or community placement are at risk.

How It Works

The client receives notice of a weekly maximum of hours of care based on his/her total monthly hours. He/she chooses the times of day and hours for each day that a provider will work within that weekly maximum, unless an exception is approved.

The weekly maximum is based on a short month (29 days). This means that the individual may need to schedule below the weekly limit to make sure every day is covered during the longer months.

January-March: Making a Good Faith Effort

Because the weekly Plan of Care will take some time for providers and individuals to adapt to, the state is asking clients to make a good faith effort for January, February, and March. Beginning in April, when the overtime law goes into effect, the weekly Plan of Care must comply with the weekly maximum.

Exceptions

You can request an exception to the weekly Plan of Care when a client's health and safety and/or community placement may be at risk. An exception can allow for the flexibility of hours between weeks, but may not exceed the individual's monthly assessed hours. If a request would exceed the monthly assessed hours, then an Exception to Rule (ETR) would need to be submitted.

Why is this Happening?

The change to a weekly Plan of Care is in response to the overtime payment requirement and is not related to the payment system, Individual Provider One. If you are a client of DDA and are having trouble creating your weekly Plan of Care, talk to your DDA case manager.

SAMPLE WEEKLY PLAN for MARCH 2016						
Total Monthly Hours: 115			Total Weekly Limit: 28			
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 February 4 hrs	29 4 hrs	1 4 hrs	2 2 hrs	3 4 hrs	4 4 hrs	5 4 hrs
6 4 hrs	7 4 hrs	8 4 hrs	9 2 hrs	10 4 hrs	11 4 hrs	12 4 hrs
13 4 hrs	14 4 hrs	15 4 hrs	16 2 hrs	17 4 hrs	18 4 hrs	19 4 hrs
20 4 hrs	21 4 hrs	22 4 hrs	23 2 hrs	24 4 hrs	25 4 hrs	26 4 hrs
27 4 hrs	28 4 hrs	29 4 hrs	30 3 hrs	31 4 hrs	1 April 4 hrs	2 4 hrs
Monthly = 115 hrs						

Week 1
26 hrs

Week 2
26 hrs

Week 3
26 hrs

Week 4
26 hrs

Week 5
27 hrs

Community Events

ASK THE ADVOCATE WORKSHOP DDA Applications

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



Do you have a child with developmental delays or disabilities, but aren't sure what services are out there to help your child? Have you heard about DDA services, but are not sure what they are or how to apply? Have you wanted to apply for DDA services, but just haven't gotten around to it yet?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this is the workshop for you! Leslie Kivett, Eligibility Case Resource Manager for the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) will join us to tell us about DDA services. She will discuss the eligibility requirements for these services and the steps for filling out the application. Then we will have time to work on completing your child's application and answer specific questions you have. Now is the time that new clients are being added to DDA services, so don't delay! Join us for this important workshop and check one big thing off your to-do list!

Please RSVP by April 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 April 21st.

Young Adult Self-Advocacy (YASA) Meeting

4:30-6:30pm, Thursday, April 7
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham



Please note the date change for this meeting. YASA meetings will now be on the first Thursday of the month. If this prevents you from attending future meetings, please contact Jessika to see how you can still be a part of YASA. You can continue to be involved and work on self-advocacy skills, and be your best self-advocate!

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

Buddy Walk Planning Committee Meeting

5-6pm, Thursday, April 21
The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham

We would love your input and support as we work to make this year's Buddy Walk better than ever! Can't make this meeting? The planning committee will meet on the third Thursday of every month until the Buddy Walk in October.

To RSVP or for more info, contact Jessika at (360) 715-0170, ext. 304, or jessikah@arcwhatcom.org.



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

Autism 200 Series

Autism 200 is a series of free classes for parents and caregivers of children with autism sponsored by Seattle Children's Autism Center. **You must RSVP in advance.** Contact Jessika: burchij@students.wvu.edu.

Autism 204: Helping Children with Autism who Struggle with Restrictive Eating: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Improving Mealtimes

7:00pm-8:30pm, Thursday, April 21
Western Washington University Speech-Language Clinic
AIC Building, Room #360, 516 High Street, Bellingham
Instructor: Danielle Dolezal, PhD, BCBA-D

Many children with autism and developmental disabilities struggle with restrictive eating and food refusal. The usual feeding strategies are not always effective, leaving parents frustrated and unsure of how to proceed. The Pediatric Feeding Program at Seattle Children's Autism Center will review best practices in addressing feeding goals in this population of children.

www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/autism-center/resources



Spin Dance

6-8pm, Monday, April 18
Bellingham Senior Center
315 Halleck Street, Bellingham
Theme: Crazy Hat Night!

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, April 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 Friday, April 8th: (360) 255-2056.



Down syndrome Outreach Spring Fling

**12-3pm • Sunday, May 1st
Fairhaven Park Pavilion**



Down syndrome Outreach's annual Spring Fling is just around the corner! This family support event is for families who are a part of Down syndrome Outreach and provides an opportunity to meet new families and reconnect with others. It is a fun and relaxing chance to connect with your local Down syndrome community, learn what our community members have already accomplished in 2016, and enjoy a wonderful afternoon, rain or shine!

The Fairhaven Park Pavilion is a lovely area where we have the chance to gather for a potluck and have a variety of activities offered inside and out, including the playground. There is a toy and book exchange, and if families would like to bring a gently used toy or book, they can exchange with something new to them.

Volunteers help make this event successful by helping with childcare so that parents can relax and be with one another as well. Volunteer Kyla Yorkoski stated, "As a volunteer, I got to interact with children while families had the chance to socialize with one another and relax. All of the kids and families were so fun to be around and everyone had a great time." This reflection is a great example of how volunteers and families feel supported at the Spring Fling.

Please bring a potluck dish to share, if possible (last names A-M bring something sweet, N-Z bring something savory), a gently used toy or book to exchange with your friends, and yourselves! Hot dogs and beverages will be provided. We look forward to spending a spring afternoon in the park with you!

If you are interested in helping with the event, or have any questions or concerns, please contact Jessika: jessikah@arcwhatcom.org or (360) 715-0170, ext. 304.

Thank you to Bellingham Parks and Recreation for sponsoring this event!

**This event is in an accessible location. For sign language interpreter service, assistive listening devices, or a communication material in any alternative format, please call 10 days in advance: (360) 715-0170.*



CAMP TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More)

PROGRAM DATES: Thursday, May 5, 12:30pm - Friday, May 6, 4pm

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 15th; **COST:** \$35

Don't miss out on the 14th annual overnight event at Camp TEAM! This camp is an excellent way to meet new people and build ties between community members of Skagit and Whatcom counties. Participants, ages 16 and older, will have the chance to play games, do arts and crafts, go on nature walks, sit around a bonfire, eat s'mores, build relationships, and have a blast! Western Washington University Recreation Program students will be your energetic co-campers and counselors. The cost of the overnight includes transportation to and from camp, food, and lodging. The event is held at Warm Beach Camp and Conference Center near Stanwood. If you require individual assistance, your personal care assistant can attend for free.

For more information, call Amanda at (360) 778-7000 or email agrove@cob.org.
To register, visit www.cob.org/ezreg.



Programs & People

Lending Library Update

The Arc's Lending Library is designed to promote understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The materials we offer reflect the wide and diverse spectrum of Down syndrome, autism, and developmental disabilities in general. We are working toward building an inclusive community and providing relevant resources and information for people with disabilities, our families, friends, and allies.

You'll find a variety of topics represented in our library, such as newborn and infant care, early intervention, schools and special education, puberty and adolescence, siblings, positive behavior support, advocacy, planning for adulthood, and legal and financial planning.

To check out a book, just visit our office at 2602 McLeod Road during our office hours (M-F, 9am-12pm) or call us to arrange a time that works for you: (360) 715-0170. Books can be checked out for one month.

We welcome donations of books. If you have a book that has been helpful for your family, with a publication date after year 2000 that you would like to share with others, we would LOVE to take it off your shelf or out of that dusty box, and offer it to families in our community.

For Lending Library inquiries, please email Jessika at jessikah@arcwhatcom.org, call (360) 715-0170, or stop by to drop off your books or check out a new title! Come on by and utilize these amazing books; they are here for YOU!



We are so thankful for our new and accessible DsO Lending Library bookshelf, custom made for us by Duffy McNall! Thank you, Duffy!



2016 Top Soccer Season Kicks Off Soon!

Wednesdays: April 20th - May 25th
5:30-6:30pm or 6:45-7:45pm
Bellingham Sportsplex, Small Field

This spring, children in Whatcom County with physical and/or intellectual disabilities ages 4-19 will again have an opportunity to participate in this adaptive soccer program developed by the US Youth Soccer Association. The goal of the TOPSoccer Program is to allow children to develop social skills, better motor coordination, improve communication skills, provide an opportunity for exercise, and foster an enjoyment of the game of soccer. TOPSoccer is excited to continue its partnership with both Whatcom Community College Women's Soccer & Western Washington University Men's & Women's Soccer teams serving as TOPSoccer Buddies working with the TOPSoccer players. With support from the Chuckanut Health Foundation, the Whatcom County Youth Soccer Association is able to provide this program at NO COST to participants!

For more information, please visit www.whatcomsoccer.com or contact John Ayre at johna@whatcomsoccer.com or (360) 676-1919, ext 104.



8th Annual Autism Awareness Auction Benefitting FACES Northwest

Saturday, April 9th, Doors open at 5:30pm
Bellingham Golf and Country Club

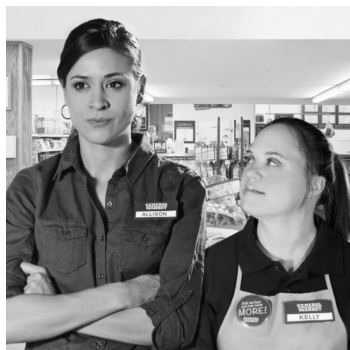
Please join FACES to celebrate and support our children with autism at the annual FACES Autism Auction, Dinner, and Dance. This year's theme is Havana Nights and will include a gourmet Cuban dinner, complimentary champagne, wine, and beer. There will be a delightful selection of items to bid on, featuring fabulous items such as overnight spa packages, fine wines, and adventures in travel. The evening will conclude with dancing.

Tickets are \$75 each. Order your tickets today:
www.facesnorthwest.com.

FACES Northwest is a nonprofit organization founded by parents of individuals with autism.

*A collection of inspiring &
enlightening films about people
with developmental disabilities*

Tuesday, April 19th, 6:30pm
Pickford Film Center
1318 Bay St, Bellingham



*This is a truly unique opportunity to increase respect, inclusion, and understanding in
our community. Please invite your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join you for this
inspirational and exciting event!*

Your \$40 admission includes
popcorn and soda during the
show and a dessert reception
immediately following the
film festival. All proceeds help
bring the film festival to local
schools, promoting inclusion,
compassion, and diversity.
Tickets are available at the
box office or online at www.pickfordfilmcenter.org.

Learn more at
www.arcwhatcom.org or call
360-715-0170.

**The Arc of Whatcom County
Presents the Nationally Acclaimed**

SPROUT FILM FESTIVAL

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

Newsletter Production Staff:

Christine Stone, Monica Burke,
Sonja Hellinga, Olivia Murguia,
Mt. Baker High School students and volunteers

Executive Director: Beverly Porter

Office Manager: Christine Stone

Program Director: Monica Burke

Care & Resource Coordinator:

Mary Jo Durborow

DsO & YASA: Jessika Houston

Latino Family Support: Marcela Jiménez

Board of Directors

Missy Bartel, President;

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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.



PARTNER AGENCY

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

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DID YOU KNOW?



Seattle Children's Hospital offers a searchable list of summer camps for children with special needs in Washington State. Visit www.cshcn.org or call 206-987-3736. To find a summer camp, scroll down and select the type, special needs considerations, location, desired month, and then review your search results. The inclusion or exclusion of any camp in this directory does not imply endorsement or disapproval. There are also many resources and articles to help the camp attendee and family make the most of this experience. ENJOY!



The Arc of Whatcom County
Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road
Bellingham, WA 98225

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Event Calendar

April 2016

2 Saturday

Autism Acceptance Day

See page 1 for details.

7 Thursday, 4:30-6:30pm

Young Adult Self-Advocacy

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road

Contact Jessika: 715-0170, ext 304

9 Saturday, 5:30pm

FACES Auction

See page 6 for details.

11 Monday, 7-8:30pm

Parent to Parent Support Meeting

Cordata Elementary School
4420 Aldrich Road

Contact Karlene: (360) 255-2056

15 Friday

Camp TEAM Application Deadline

See page 5 for details.

15 Friday, 12-1:30pm

Autism Support Group

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road

Contact Monica: 715-0170, ext 303

16 Saturday, 6-7pm

People First Meeting

114 W Magnolia, Suite 104

Contact Susan: 738-2060

19 Tuesday, 6:30pm

Sprout Film Festival

See page 7 for details.

20 Wednesday, 5:30-6:30pm

The Arc's Board of Directors Meeting

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road

Contact Beverly: 715-0170, ext 306

21 Thursday, 5-6pm

Buddy Walk Planning Meeting

See page 4 for details.

26 Tuesday, 6-8pm

PC Workshop: Applying for DDA

The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road

Contact Monica: 715-0170, ext 303

Special thanks to this month's sponsor:



PeaceHealth

SAVE THE DATE!

The Arc of Whatcom County's Annual Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 18, 5-7pm
Bloedel Donovan Park Multipurpose
Building

Come learn about the latest happenings at The Arc, renew your membership and vote on new board members. Everyone is welcome!

*For more information, contact Christine at
christines@arcwhatcom.org or
(360) 715-0170, ext. 305.*



NOTE: All events listed are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted. Find more events at www.arcwhatcom.org/wp/events/.