

## 2018 Smiles of Life Calendar

Our calendar is dedicated to people with developmental disabilities and their friends and families. It is our true honor to celebrate the accomplishments and joys brought to us by our models. Despite any medical, developmental, or behavioral challenges, they continue to persevere with great spirit, courage, and determination to live life to the fullest. Our goal is for the community to be inspired by their stories and encouraged by their smiles.



Featuring beautiful photos, inspiring profiles and motivating quotes, the calendar is dedicated to people with developmental disabilities and their friends and family. Calendars are available now! Your generous support (suggested donation is \$15 per calendar) will help fund valuable programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. Calendars can be ordered online and be mailed to you at [www.arcwhatcom.org](http://www.arcwhatcom.org) or you can come into our office at 2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham on Monday through Friday between the hours of 10am - 1pm.

# Parent Coalition

## 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 14, 2017. Our thanks to Representative Luanne Van Werven, Kaylee Galloway (Community Liaison for U.S. Congresswoman Suzan DelBene), and Anne Seabott (Northwest Regional Director for U.S. Senator Patty Murray), who attended the event.

Families shared many issues of concern including Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), school funding, transportation, ableism, and the need for more access to services including behavior supports, care coordination, supports for immigrant families with developmental disabilities, and supported living. Most of the services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families depend on a combination of funds from Federal, State, and Local Government. There are a variety of ways you can keep up with what is happening so you can make your voice heard on issues that are important to you and your family.

### Get updates from Parent Coalition and The Arc of Whatcom County

- Go to our website at <http://www.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 has informative documents, and includes DD 101 [http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/issue\\_papers](http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/issue_papers)
- Get connected with Facebook and Twitter and find even more resources at The Arc of WA's Take Action website: <http://arcwa.org/takeaction>

### Keep up to date on Federal Issues through The Arc US

- Visit The Arc's Action Center <http://cqrcengage.com/thearc/> 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?2&m=10985>

### Legislative Notebook Now Available

Interested in more information about the 2018 Legislative Session when it comes to people with Developmental Disabilities? The 2018 Legislative Notebook for Advocates Developmental Disabilities Services and Supports is now available on The Arc of Washington State's web site at [http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/issue\\_papers/2018\\_legislative\\_notebook/](http://arcwa.org/index.php/takeaction/washingtonstate/issue_papers/2018_legislative_notebook/)



## Join us in Olympia on February 7th for Family Services and Multicultural Families Advocacy Day

Families provide the majority of care for people with DD, saving our state lots of money and helping individuals be participating members of their local communities. Whether your child is very young, a teen, or an adult, there are services that can benefit them. Respite care is critical service, but its often difficult to find a provider. Multicultural families often have a more difficult time accessing services and supports due to language barriers and cultural customs. Join Open Doors for Multicultural Families, Parent to Parent, local chapters of The Arc and Parent Coalitions who will share information. We encourage parents to come to this meeting and bring your children with you. Would you like to join us on our bus to Olympia? See page 5 for more information.





# Parent to Parent

## Parent Support Meeting

Topic: Self Care for Caregivers



Join us as we meet and talk about the importance of Self Care and share tips on how to achieve it.

Guest speaker Jenna Jorgensen, ND

Monday, January 8

7 - 8:30pm

The Arc of Whatcom County

2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

Are you a parent of a child with special needs? Would you like to connect with other parents on a similar journey to share resources, ideas, and support? Join us for our confidential support meetings. Free on site childcare is available to those who RSVP by Friday, January 5.

For more information or to RSVP for childcare, contact us at [p2p@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:p2p@arcwhatcom.org) or (360) 715-0170 ext 302



## Parent to Parent Holiday Party

On December 2nd, Parent to Parent held our annual Holiday Party for families in our community. We welcomed nearly 200 guests throughout the course of the day. Families were able to enjoy a meal and meet with others. We had a wonderful visit from Santa Claus, and each child had their picture taken. Our Super Sitters worked at multiple craft tables with children and had a sensory area available. We sincerely appreciate Inner Child Studio for donating their time and bringing Legos and crafts for the kids. The party was a success largely due to the assistance of our wonderful volunteers and Helping Parents. We appreciate the time and effort put in to make our Holiday Party a safe and inclusive event. Big thanks to Bellingham Parks and Rec for co-sponsoring the event, and to Santa Jim and his family for being a part of the fun. We would also like to thank the Bellingham Food Co-op, Bakerview Fred Meyer, Starbucks, Boundary Bay, Ciao Thyme, McKay's Pizzeria, Costco, and for their generous donations. We'd also like to thank Johnson Team Real Estate for donating their moving truck to us to haul supplies.

Thank you so much!

- Karlene, Melissa, and Marta



# Community Events

## Parent Coalition Workshop Telling Your Story with a Purpose

6-8pm, Tuesday, January 16  
The Arc of Whatcom County  
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham



### Do you want to make your voice heard?

Join us for this free workshop on advocacy and leadership and learn to:

Identify a policy or issue related to child health or other needs where you would like to make a difference.

Get your point across effectively using your family's experiences as an example.

Present your message and personal story to advocate for change.

Meet other parents and caregivers!

**Presented by Parent Coalition  
and Parent to Parent**

Questions? Call (360) 715-0170, ext. 303 or [monicab@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:monicab@arcwhatcom.org).



Beginning December 15, 2017 WTA is replacing their monthly and quarterly passes with 31-Day Passes and 92-Day Passes. The Passes start when YOU want them to, instead of the first day of the month or quarter. Passes cost the same as monthly and quarterly passes. You can buy Passes at all of the places you're used to. (Sorry, no longer available from pass machines.)

**For Riders of Paratransit**, unfortunately, the new 31-Day Passes and 92-Day Passes won't work on paratransit buses. Paratransit riders can purchase a Monthly or Quarterly Paratransit Pass. Paratransit passes will not be valid for use on fixed route buses. As always, anyone eligible to ride WTA paratransit can get a Free on Fixed Route Card. With it, you can ride WTA's fixed route buses for free. You can also ride all WTA buses for free with WTA's Gold Card (for riders 75 years old or older)

For information on how to get a Free on Fixed Route Card or a Gold Card, call (360) 676-7433



## My Way Matinee: Sensory-Friendly Films

10:30am, Saturday, January 13  
Movie: Paddington 2

Regal Barkley Village Stadium 16 IMAX & RPX presents sensory-friendly family movies. These shows will be presented with the lights turned up and the sound turned down to accommodate those guests who may need a less intense viewing experience and are specifically for those guests who may need more freedom of movement or expression when enjoying a film. These movies are held once a month at Barkley Village Stadium.

Visit <https://www.regmovies.com/promotions/my-way-matinee> for more information



**S.P.I.N. Dance**  
Serving People in Need  
6-8pm, Monday  
January 15  
Bellingham Senior Center  
315 Halleck St.

### Theme: Masquerade Ball

Bellingham Parks and Recreation, The Max Higbee Center, and Whatcom County Parks sponsor monthly dances for individuals with disabilities. At the SPIN Dances you can always count on lively music provided by local bands or DJ's, a healthy snack at intermission, and FANTASTIC company! All persons age 14 and over are invited for music, dancing, and fun!

Call Amanda: (360) 778-7000 or visit <http://www.maxhigbee.org/spin-dances.html>



AbiliTrek is a hotel booking website for travelers with disabilities. We empower the disability community with the Ability to Trek without boundaries. Anyone can book hotels on our site to support our work.

For more information visit <http://acesstravel.co/>

# Advocacy Days 2018

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! For information and/or to register, call: 1-888-754-8798, ext. 105, email: [bean@arcwa.org](mailto:bean@arcwa.org), or visit [http://arcwa.org/takeaction/washingtonstate/advocacy\\_day](http://arcwa.org/takeaction/washingtonstate/advocacy_day).



## Climb on Board!

Opportunity to visit Olympia and meet with your legislators!

The Arc of Whatcom County will be chartering a bus from Bellingham to Olympia to participate in the Family Services Advocacy Day on **Wednesday, February 7th**. The bus will leave at approximately 7am for a full day in Olympia. Parents, self-advocates and care providers are welcome to come at no cost to you. We will provide information and materials to help you understand the issues and share your story. Please email [parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org) or call (360) 715-0170, ext. 303, to reserve your seat today!

## Advocacy Day Schedule Dates & Highlighted Topics

January 17th	Legislative Reception
January 24th	Supported Living
January 31st	Disability Pride
<b>February 7th</b>	<b>Family Services (see left)</b>
February 14th	Disability Protections
February 21st	Employment Day & Rally
February 28th	Budget Overview
March 7th	Take Notes!

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

## Autism 200 Series

Miss any of the 2017 Autism 200 lectures from Seattle Children's? Past lectures are available at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) by searching "Autism 200 Series" 2016 Lectures are available as well! Autism 200 is a series of 90-minute classes for parents and caregivers of children with autism as well as teachers and community providers who wish to better understand autism spectrum disorder. Faculty from Seattle Children's, the University of Washington and community providers teach the classes.



### Did You Miss It?

- 201: The State of Autism in 2017
- 202: Autism Genetics: What Parents Should Know
- 203: Making Friends on the Playground: Social Skills Support in School
- 204: Parent Training to Address Problem Behaviors of Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 205: Autism and Police: Staying Safe Together
- 206: Transition to Adulthood: Finding a Job
- 207: Transition to Adulthood: Keeping a Job
- 208: Screening for ASD: A Preventative Intervention Approach (*video not yet available*)
- 209: Early Intervention in Autism: An Overview of the Seattle Children's Autism Center Model
- 210: Autism From a Sibling's Perspective: A Panel Discussion

Stayed tuned for the 2018 Lecture Series by visiting <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/classes-community/current-class-offerings/autism-200-series/>

For additional resources, visit:

- Autism Center Resources page <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/autism-center/resources/>
- The Autism Blog <http://theautismblog.seattlechildrens.org/> (authored by Seattle Children's Autism Center)
- Autism Guild Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/SeattleChildrensAutismGuild>

The world of autism spectrum disorders is constantly changing and Seattle Children's Autism Center is eager to share with parents and caregivers what we continue to learn. The Autism Blog is designed to be a resource on autism as well as to give you an opportunity to comment on our posts and engage with our experts.



## Be Strong, Be Proud, Be Heard.

An area of involvement for Self-Advocacy members is legislative topics and concerns. This allows for self-advocates to help build relationships, practice skills in communication and advocacy, and increase awareness, respect and rights of individuals with disabilities. Through gaining skills in the meetings to be strong advocates, several members identified their concerns and presented at the Legislative Coffee. Members are also preparing for Advocacy Days, where they will have another chance to speak with our local representatives. (See page 5 for more info.) Self-advocates discuss topics that focus around areas which would improve quality of life as well as areas they have experienced challenges and concerns.

Amy Ryan wants her legislators to know she has the right to, "Be heard, be proud and be strong." Terri Hansen advocates for better medical access and for necessary equipment, including mobility devices, are integrated in all medical settings. Over the last several meetings, one of the activities decided by was a group poem project that could serve as an awareness tool. This year the group was proud to present a group poem project to the representatives at the Legislative Coffee. The group would like to share this with our community to create a deeper understanding about supporting all individuals, no matter our differences.

The poem created, *Ableism*, was read at the Legislative Coffee by Terri Hansen and Jessika Houston. Ableism is the discrimination against people with disabilities. This can occur in a number of ways. Members of the group opened up to share challenging, intense, adverse experiences and the effects from these experiences. Through this, they hope to be able to create awareness and promote change for the future. Here is an excerpt of *Ableism*, A collaboration by Laura Rawlins, Terri Hansen, Jaime Kloss, Amy Ryan, Matthew Best, Susie Evatt, Jayson Branson, Elmer Carampot, Tylor Alphenaar, James Mahoney & Ian Fields.

*I can help you to open your mind to a new perspective. I can teach you so many things if you let me. You don't know what is inside my heart.*

*All this internalized ableism I have within me -- shame, self-loathing, blame and inferiority.*

*Ableism locks me in chains, with no one to hear my piercing screams.*

*Like an icy cold wind, ableism swirls around me. It confuses me, plagues my heart, and leaves me frozen.*

*Kids say what they want; adults have more knowledge about how to act. Would you know how to defend yourself? When people are looking, staring, mocking and impersonating you? It's incredibly uncomfortable to be watched.*

*Ableism triggers my anger. Why are you so cold? People don't understand why I can't turn my emotions off. Feelings are painful, even the good ones.*

*How can we educate abelists to see the pain they cause?*

*Diversity shouldn't be seen as shame, but as uniqueness, as greatness, as potential, as something beautiful, as something exquisite.*

*I am not disability. I am ability.*

*We all have different ways we work to achieve our dreams.*

*Being different doesn't equal less important.*



Terri Hansen and Jessika Houston sharing the poem titled *Ableism*, written by members of Self-Advocacy, at our 2017 Legislative Coffee.

The full version of *Ableism* is available at <http://arcwhatcom.org/wp/programs/self-advocacy/>

## YASA Has A New Name

Self-Advocacy, a program of The Arc of Whatcom County, focuses on various aspects of self-advocacy. Through group meetings, individual skill building, involvement in legislative advocacy, and providing outreach and awareness in our community self-advocates are able to practice their skills and abilities to speak up for themselves and others who may need support. Workshop and meeting topics can also include (but are not limited to) healthy relationships and boundaries, safety, language, and identity. Jessika is available for workshops with schools and agencies that serve individuals with disabilities age 16 and older. Self-Advocacy meets 10 months out of the year, typically on the first Thursday of the month from 4:30p-6:30p. The next meeting is February 1 from 4:30-6:30pm (No meeting in January) at The Arc's Dan Godwin Community Center at 2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham. If you are 16 or older, and an eligible client of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), you are welcome to come and join. If you are not a client of DDA, contact Jessika to see how you can get involved. Visit <http://arcwhatcom.org/wp/programs/self-advocacy/>, or contact The Arc's Self-Advocacy Coordinator, Jessika Houston: [jessikah@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:jessikah@arcwhatcom.org) or (360) 715-0170, ext. 304.

**SELF-ADVOCACY**  
A program of The Arc of Whatcom County

# Choice and Self Determination

## Meet Kyann Flint - Ms. Wheelchair Washington

Kyann Flint is the reigning Ms. Wheelchair Washington 2017. In August, she competed for the title of Ms. Wheelchair America (MWA) and placed 2nd runner-up. At the MWA Pageant, she was presented with the Emerging Leader Award. Her platform at MWA was Defying the Defined Disability. The Ms. Wheelchair America program is an advocacy platform that promotes achievement, awareness and opportunity for people with disabilities. As Ms. Wheelchair Washington 2017, Kyann has had amazing experiences ranging from speaking with children at multiple grade schools to conversing with political advisors at the state capitol. She also met many amazing women at the national competition as well as making numerous connections throughout her reign.



*Kyann (center) with her cousin Daniel and her friend Stephanie.*

Kyann is a native of Bellingham, Washington, studied Political Science and graduated from Western Washington University with a degree in Humanities and Social Sciences. She now works for AbiliTrek, a company dedicated to the needs of travelers with disabilities. She is the author of the blog "Life from a Lame Perspective". She not only likes to write, but loves spending time with her fabulous friends and family. She also enjoys traveling, exploring the outdoors, and of course, drinking excellent tea and coffee! Kyann has two neuromuscular disorders and uses a wheelchair for mobility. She looks at her wheelchair like a pair of glasses that enables her rather than inhibits her and she feels that it is society's social barriers that truly disable her.

She has been an advocate the majority of her life; having a disability and using a wheelchair for mobility, along with her gifts of writing and speaking, have made advocating innate to her character. Kyann shares about the importance of being a self-advocate.

"People with disabilities make up the largest minority group in the United States as well as in the entire world. Anyone, at any time, can become a part of the disability community. However, people with disabilities are underrepresented and often unheard. Even though the way people with disabilities are perceived and treated has greatly improved throughout the past forty years, ableism still has a strong presence here in the United States. The best way to abolish this poor treatment of people with disabilities is to eliminate ignorance through education; education is the key to an equal opportunity.

Educating the populous includes practicing self-advocacy. Others are not going to know what you need unless you educate them. Speak up about what you can do and speak out against all the misconceptions about the things society believes you cannot do. You are your best advocate; you know who you are and what you need. Do not allow the world to define who you are, educate the world on who you truly are.

If you are not able or do not feel comfortable being your primary advocate, designate someone you trust that will relay your wants and needs by being an advocate on your behalf. This action, in itself, is being a good self-advocate as you are expressing that you need help in the area of advocating.

Practicing self-advocacy is not only beneficial to one's self, but can grow into advocating for others; with becoming confident in being an advocate for one's self, comes the realization that being a self-advocate can translate into advocating for others. And as one with a disability advocates for others with similar needs, allies will realize the importance of education and access, and come along side in the advocating journey.

Advocacy is a way to educate society on the importance of access that will provide an equal opportunity for all."



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](http://www.arcwhatcom.org)

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## Stay Connected

### Online Community Calendar:

Visit The Arc's website at [www.arcwhatcom.org](http://www.arcwhatcom.org) and click on Events.

**Facebook:** Visit our FB page: [www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom](http://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](http://www.arcwhatcom.org) or email [monicab@arcwhatcom.org](mailto: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?

Washington's ABLE program will not be available until 2018. Once it launches, it can be found at [www.washingtonstateable.com](http://www.washingtonstateable.com). If interested in signing up for an account immediately, it is recommended you go through Oregon's ABLE for ALL program [www.ableforall.com](http://www.ableforall.com). The ABLE for All website has frequently asked questions plus a list of the required information needed to open an account via the online or paper route.

The investment options and enrollment processes at ABLE for ALL are identical to the WA ABLE program for in-state residents. The toll-free number is available to help with the site or answer ABLE questions at 1-844-394-ABLE from 9am-8pm ET or 1-844-888-ABLE (TTY) from 9am-8pm ET. Once WA ABLE opens, beneficiaries can transfer their ABLE for All accounts to the WA ABLE for free. We will be waiving the first year's \$35 account maintenance fee for WA ABLE enrollees.



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

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# Event Calendar

## January 2018

**8 Monday, 7-8:30pm**  
**Parent Support Meeting**  
**Topic: Self Care for Caregivers**  
*see page 3 for more details*

**13 Saturday, 10:30am**  
**My Way Matinee**  
**Movie: Paddington 2**  
*see page 4 for more details*

**15 Monday, 6-8pm**  
**Spin Dance**  
**Theme: Masquerade Ball**  
*see page 4 for more details*

**16 Monday, 6-8pm**  
**Parent Coalition Workshop**  
**Topic: Telling Your Story with a Purpose**  
*see page 4 for more details*

**24 Wednesday, 10am – 3pm**  
**Advocacy Days - Supported Living**  
*United Churches 110 11th Avenue SE  
Olympia  
1-888-754-8798, ext. 105  
bean@arcwa.org*

**24 Wednesday, 5:30-6:30pm**  
**The Arc Board of Directors Meeting**  
*Contact Beverly at 360-715-0170 ext 306  
beverlyp@arcwhatcom.org*

## February 2018

**7 Wednesday, 7am (bus to Olympia)**  
**Advocacy Days - Family Services**  
*see page 5 for more details*

**8 Thursday, 4:30-6:30pm**  
**Self Advocacy Meeting**  
*Contact Jessika (360) 715-0170  
ext 304 jessikah@arcwhatcom.org*

**12 Monday, 7-8:30pm**  
**Parent Support Meeting**  
*Contact Karlene at 360-715-0170 ext 302  
karleneu@arcwhatcom.org*



**We are going electronic!** Due to the financial and environmental cost, we have phased out printed newsletters for those who do not opt-in to the printed copy. We continue to provide a monthly newsletter in electronic form, on our website and in e-alerts. If you do not have easy access to the internet, please call us at 360-715-0170 (or email [ParentCoalition@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:ParentCoalition@arcwhatcom.org)) and let us know you would like to continue receiving the printed version. Visit <http://arcwhatcom.org/wp/category/newsletter/> to read our latest newsletter and sign up for the electronic version.

**NOTE: All events listed are in Bellingham unless otherwise noted.**  
**Find more events at [www.arcwhatcom.org/wp/events/](http://www.arcwhatcom.org/wp/events/).**