

Your story can make a difference!

In December, The Arc of Whatcom County held a Legislative Coffee. We brought together Self Advocates, Parents, Caregivers, and Representatives from Federal and State Governments to share what is important to people in Whatcom County. We are so grateful for each person who attended. One parent shared her story about what was important to her family. A regional Representative from Senator Patty Murray's office was in attendance and shared the family's story with Senator Murray. Here is a photo of the family's story being shared on the Senate floor in Washington DC. This is what the Parent had to share about the experience:



"I first spoke at the Legislative Coffee about CHIP (Childrens Health Insurance Program) in December. Senator Murray's representative was at that meeting and took notes while people spoke. She then contacted me about a month later and said she was very moved by my story and that the Senator was looking for a family story about CHIP and mine was the first one that came to mind.

Washington State Senator Patty Murray shared the story of a Whatcom County family on the Senate Floor on Thursday, January 11, 2018

My first phone call after the Legislative Coffee was the Senator's rep asking for more clarification about our family and our experience on CHIP. The next day a staffer in DC called to clarify details once again and that is when we spoke about what I felt comfortable sharing. Those 2 phone calls went great and I was able to speak clearly and hit all the bullet points from the Legislative Coffee.

I had previously been trained in "Telling Your Story with a Purpose", put on by the Center for Children with Special Needs, Seattle Children's Hospital, and Washington State Department of Health. This training helped me shape my story and I learned so much about how to effectively share with a purpose for legislative advocacy."



Terri Hansen, Inclusion Advocate at The Arc, is also Co-Chair of the Whatcom Citizen's Transportation Advisory Group (CTAG). CTAG is composed of individuals from throughout Whatcom County with an interest in regional transportation planning. Its purpose is to facilitate ongoing citizen participation in support of the Whatcom Metropolitan Planning Area Transportation Planning Process and to serve as the Community Advisory Panel for the [Whatcom Transportation Authority](#). Meetings of CTAG are normally held the day before Whatcom Transportation Policy Board meetings, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG). For more information about CTAG, please contact WCOG Director of Planning, Hugh Conroy, at hugh@wcog.org or (360) 685-8384.

Route 65 is Connecting Communities in Northern Whatcom County!

Starting back in September, WTA's new Route 65 provides bus service between Everson, Nooksack, Lynden, Birch Bay Square and Ferndale. Route 65 is a flex route. It is a two-year pilot project funded by a grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation. WTA pursued grant funding in response to requests for service from Northern Whatcom County residents and service providers. This also creates a new 3/4-mile paratransit corridor along the Birch Bay-Lynden Road, between Lynden and Birch Bay Square. At the conclusion of the pilot project (September 2019), WTA will evaluate whether to continue the service. For details, call (360) 733-1144.



Parent Coalition

Telling Your Story with a Purpose

On January 16th The Arc's Parent Coalition teamed together with Parent to Parent to host a "Telling Your Story with a Purpose" Workshop. This workshop was focused on tips and tools for sharing your story at a hearing, forum, meeting with committees or decision makers (mayors, legislators), or sharing as a parent representative.

Questions to ask when you are invited to tell your story

Gather information to help prepare and know what to expect:

- What's the purpose of the meeting or event?
- What part of my story do they want to hear?
- Is there a message you want me to leave the audience with?
- When, where, how long do you want me to speak?
- What's the format of the meeting?
- Who is the audience? How many people will be there?
- Will there be other parents there?
- What's important for me to know about this group?
- What kinds of things should I prepare or think about beforehand?
- Is there a stipend or payment to cover my costs?



Questions to ask yourself

- What am I willing to share?
- What do I feel is too private to share?
- What does my family (or child) not want me to talk about?
- What will my story teach those listening?
- Do I have the time for this?
- Does my story match the topic?
- Have I had a negative experience that will be difficult to share in a constructive way?
- Do I want to do this?

After the meeting or activity: Connect with the person who invited you to the event or meeting. Check in with them and let them know how it went and any issues that came up or questions you had.

Telling Your Story with a Purpose Training Material, Seattle Childrens Hospital Center for Children with Special Needs

Legislative Update

Things are moving fast and furiously during the supplemental legislative session in Olympia. Legislation is being considered that impacts individuals with developmental disabilities and their families including bills about:

- Residential options including affordable housing, supported living, adult family homes, and institutions
- Employment, transition, and community-based services
- Language access in schools, social-emotional learning, psychotropic medications, behavior & discipline in schools, and special education
- Early learning and early intervention
- Insurance billing, Medicaid, hearing aids, durable medical equipment, telemedicine, and dental access
- Increasing the personal needs allowance
- Transportation
- Guardianship & alternatives to guardianship
- Accessibility and service dogs

To stay up to date on legislative happenings that impact individuals with developmental disabilities and their families visit: <http://arcwa.org/takeaction>



Parent to Parent



Upcoming Parent Support Meetings

Are you a parent, grandparent or caretaker of a child with special needs? Would you like to connect with others on a similar journey to share resources, ideas, and support? Join us for our confidential support meetings.

February Parent Support Meeting

Monday, February 12, 7 - 8:30pm

The Arc of Whatcom County 2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

*Free on-site childcare is available to those who RSVP by Friday, February 9.

Down syndrome Outreach Parent Support Meeting

Thursday, February 22, 5 - 6:30pm

The Arc of Whatcom County, 2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

*Free on-site childcare is available to those who RSVP by Monday February 19.

March Parent Support Meeting

Monday, March 12, 7 - 8:30pm

The Arc of Whatcom County 2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

*Free on-site childcare is available to those who RSVP by Friday, March 9.

For Sign Language and Spanish Interpretation, please contact us 1 week prior to meeting. To request interpreting services or to RSVP for childcare, contact us at p2p@arcwhatcom.org or (360) 715-0170 ext 302

The Ten Commandments For Parents of Children with Special Needs

1. Take one day at a time, and take that day positively. You don't have control over the future, but you do have some control over today.
2. Never underestimate your child's potential. Allow him/her, encourage him/her, expect him/her to develop to the best of his/her abilities.
3. Find and allow positive mentors: parents and professionals who can share with you their experience, advice and support.
4. Provide and be involved with the most appropriate educational and learning environments for your child from infancy on.
5. Keep in mind the feelings and needs of your spouse and your other children. Remind them that this child does not get more of your love just because he/she gets more of your time.
6. Answer only to your conscience: then you'll be able to answer to your child. You need not justify your actions to your friends or the public.
7. Be honest with your feelings. You can't be a super-parent 24 hours a day. Allow yourself jealousy, anger, pity, frustration, and depression in small amounts whenever necessary.
8. Be kind to yourself. Don't focus continually on what needs to be done. Remember to look at what you have accomplished.
9. Stop and smell the roses. Take advantage of the fact that you have gained a special appreciation for the little miracles in life that others take for granted.
10. Keep and use a sense of humor. Cracking up with laughter can keep you from cracking up from stress.

Excerpt from DownRight Active Newsletter

Padres a Padres Newsletter & Events

Our Padres a Padres Program brings together families who speak Spanish for a variety of events and activities. Meet other parents who share the unique experience of raising a son or daughter who experiences special needs. Would you like support or to make a connection with another parent? Contact Marta at (360) 715-0170 ext 308 for more information and to get on the mailing list for the Padres a Padres newsletter. Join Padres a Padres del Condado de Whatcom on Facebook.

Boletín informativo y eventos de Padres a Padres

Nuestro programa Padres a Padres reúne a familias que hablan español para diferentes eventos y actividades. Conozca a otros padres que comparten la experiencia única de criar a un hijo o hija que tiene necesidades especiales. ¿Le gustaría recibir ayuda o establecer una conexión con otro padre? Comuníquese con Marta al (360) 715-0170 ext 308 o martam@arcwhatcom.org para obtener más información y para inscribirse y recibir por correo el boletín de Padres a Padres. Únete al facebook Padres a Padres del Condado de Whatcom.



Community Events



39th Annual Duncan Seminar: Spina Bifida: Promoting Wellness and Preventing Pitfalls

8am - 4:30pm, Friday, April 20

Wright Auditorium

Seattle Children's Hospital

4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

At this one-day conference, participants will gain an understanding on important aspects of optimizing child development and family health outcomes for children with spina bifida. Physicians, nurses, SLPs, OTs, PTs, nutritionists, educators, parents, social workers and other healthcare professionals caring for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families will benefit from this event. A limited number of scholarships for parents and family members are available on a firstcome first-serve basis. Please contact Lynna Song at 206-987-5318 or Outreach Education at 206-987-3200 to apply. (Application deadline is April 6)

For more information, visit <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/healthcare-professionals/education/continuing-medical-nursing-education/outreach-conferences-courses/>

Ferndale Toddler Time

Wednesdays, 10am – 11:30am*

5534 2nd Avenue, Ferndale

*Closed the 2nd Wednesday of the month

This drop in program is open to anyone with their child who is a baby up to 5 years old. We offer many play activities for children like pretend cooking and baby play, playdough, mini trikes and ball pit, books and story time, trains and cars and coloring. This is a drop in class and we ask for a \$2 donation per child if it is not a hardship for the family.

Sponsored by Whatcom Center for Early Learning



Whatcom Center
for Early Learning

My Way Matinee: Sensory-Friendly Films

10:30am, Saturday, February 10

Movie: Peter Rabbit

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

February 19

Bellingham Senior Center
315 Halleck St.

Theme: Valetine's Day

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://accesstravel.co/>



Saturday, February 10

Max Higbee Center
1210 Bay Street #102, Bellingham
Registration/Package Pick-Up: 9am-10:30am
Race begins at 10am

Roses are red, violets are blue, we're running a 5k and you should come too! This Valentine's Day weekend, grab a pal, furry friend, or special someone and run your heart out at Max Higbee Center's "Hearty Party" 5k! This community event benefits Max Higbee Center, a non-profit organization providing recreational services to teens and adults living with developmental disabilities. For info, email sadie.maxhigbee@gmail.com or call (360) 922-2450.

Communication in Children With Down syndrome and Hearing Loss

6pm- 8pm, Thursday, February 22

4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

Wright Auditorium, Seattle Children's Hospital

Topics include types of hearing loss and treatment; hearing aids and FM systems; speech production; AAC and PECS/signing; and community resources.

For more information or to RSVP, email lisa.herber@seattlechildrens.org



Community Valentine Dance!

6:30pm – 8:30pm

Friday, February 16

**Mount Vernon Senior Center
1401 Cleveland Ave, Mt Vernon**

Come Solo or Bring a Friend! Food and Drinks provided There is a suggested donation of \$2.00 per person. For more information and to RSVP please contact Arlene Brown at 360-393-3890 or by email at arleneb@cfnorth.org



Autism 200 Series

7-8:30pm, Thursday, February 15

Autism 202: But I Don't Wanna Go to School!: Strategies for Addressing School Avoidance

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.

Sign up for the livestream at <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/classes-community/current-class-offerings/autism-200-series/>



Save the date for the 10th Annual Autism Awareness Auction

benefiting FACES Northwest

Saturday, April 14

Hotel Bellwether Ballroom

Doors open at 5:30pm. Tickets are \$80 each. Includes gourmet dinner and complimentary beer and wine. Reserve your tickets by March 30 at www.facesnorthwest.com.

FACES Northwest is a non-profit organization founded by parents of individuals with autism. Since 1997, FACES has operated the ONLY local summer program providing education, recreation and one-on-one support for children and young adults with autism.

For more info, call (360) 389-2151 or visit www.facesnorthwest.com.

Medicaid Transportation Services

Who is eligible for transportation?

Washington State Medicaid clients who have no other way to get a ride to their medical appointment may be eligible. Your medical service must be covered by your Medicaid coverage under your benefit services package. Contact the Broker for your service area and they will help to determine if you are eligible for transportation. All rides must be for a medical reason such as a doctor appointment or dialysis



What type of transportation is available for me?

Brokers utilize the lowest cost available that is both appropriate and accessible to the client's medical condition and personal capabilities. These may include:

- Transit (public bus, including "ADA/Paratransit")
- Ferry tickets and toll fees
- Volunteer drivers
- Group vans or sedans
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles

It is recommended that you contact the broker at least 7-14 days in advance of your health care appointment. If you contact the broker with less than 2 business days' notice and it is not urgent, you will be asked to reschedule your medical appointment if transportation cannot be scheduled.

What do I need before I contact a Broker?

- Your Medicaid Services Card
- Your complete pickup address
- Time and date of your appointment
- Address and phone number of the medical facility
- Reason for your appointment
- Special circumstances, if necessary for transportation
- Return time, if known

What if I need ongoing appointments? Will I have to call every time I want a ride?

If you have re-occurring appointments, such as dialysis or other appointments that are ongoing, you can have your healthcare provider submit a letter requesting continued service.

Gas Vouchers for Medicaid-Covered Medical Appointments

If you have to travel at least 20 miles round trip for your child's Medicaid-covered medical appointments, you can ask for vouchers to help pay for gas so you can use your own car. Call Medicaid Transportation at NWRC to find out what you need to do to get gas vouchers for Medicaid-covered medical appointment



Medicaid Transportation Local Broker:

(360) 738-4554 or 1-800-860-6812

Fax: (360) 734-5476

Monday – Friday, between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM

Northwest Regional Council (NWRC) Medicaid Access Programs

600 Lakeway Drive, Bellingham, WA 98225

For more information visit <http://www.nwrcwa.org/medicaid-transportation/>

Smiles of Life Calendar Spotlight: Josiah



This energetic 1-year-old is Josiah, who loves to laugh and can light up the room. He is sensitive, curious, and very sociable, loving to give and receive lots of hugs and kisses every day. He loves time with his parents, sisters, and brother. His name means "God has healed" and he teaches us to endure and be strong through the many hardships, obstacles, and challenges in life with a great attitude. Josiah was born with Down syndrome and has overcome intestinal surgery, removal of his appendix, and heart surgery. He participates in weekly therapy and early intervention group playtime to help him have a more enriched life, hoping to make a full recovery from his surgeries and catch up on his developmental milestones.

This calendar is dedicated to people with developmental disabilities. Your generous support will help fund valuable programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. Calendars can be ordered online and mailed to you at 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.

Choice and Self Determination

What is a Road Show?

The Road Show is about providing information on the Adult Service System for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and educators. The adult service system can be a challenge to navigate, and we would like to give parents and families a chance to ask questions about services and the road ahead. Our plan is that families will have an increased understanding and access to the developmental disability service system and improvements in transition to adulthood.

Some topics we touch on:

Important dates and tips for transition into adult services, navigating the service system, eligibility and services provided through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), short and long term employment supports through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program, and "building a life" for your son or daughter after they leave school.

For more information or to request a Road Show, contact Amber Wolpers Developmental Disabilities Specialist at 360-778-6012 or AWolpers@co.whatcom.wa.us



SAVE THE DATE

Whatcom County Transition Fair

9am-12:30pm, Thursday, March 27



The Transition Fair is for students with developmental and other disabilities, families, educators, and interested community members. Both middle and high school age students and their families are encouraged to attend. All are welcome who are interested in thinking about the future! Come and learn about: Housing options, recreation, advocacy, employment and vocational supports, guardianship, community/tech colleges, Social Security, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), and more.

For more information, call the Whatcom County DD Program at (360) 778-6047 or email jlee@co.whatcom.wa.us.



Help improve health care access for people with disabilities! The Northwest ADA Center at the University of Washington is conducting a new research study on Health Care Access.

You may qualify if you are: A person

with a disability, at least 18 years old, have needed health care within the last 12 month, and have lived in Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, or Washington. Participants will be asked to complete a short eligibility screening questionnaire. The full survey asks about participant's demographics and their experiences in accessing health care. This is a one-time survey that can be completed online, over the phone, or on a paper survey. The ADA is over 25 years old but barriers still remain. The goal of this research is to find out where those barriers exist and ways of improving access.

Participate online by going directly to: <http://nwadacenter.org/study>, or over the phone or via paper survey: (866)495-7015 or adastudy@uw.edu.



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: 10am-1pm M-F

Newsletter Production Staff:

Melissa Abraham, Karlene Umbaugh,
Monica Burke, Mt. Baker High School students
and volunteers

Executive Director: Beverly Porter

Program Director: Monica Burke

Care & Resource Coordinator:

Mary Jo Durborow

DsO & Self Advocacy: Jessika Houston

P2P Coordinator: Karlene Umbaugh

P2P Parent Assistant: Melissa Abraham

Padres a Padres: Marta Mejia

Board of Directors

Susan Radke, President;

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Karaffa, Barbara Roxas, Emily Shiels

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
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the United Way and your generous donations.*

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DID YOU KNOW?

Tax information for Parent Providers:
Individual care providers who receive Medicaid waiver payments for the care of eligible individuals in their homes: The Internal Revenue Service will treat these Medicaid waiver payments as difficulty of care payments excludable from gross income. For the specific language used by the IRS on Difficulty of Care and the exemption: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Certain-Medicaid-Waiver-Payments-May-Be-Excludable-From-Income>

For further information, contact the WA state DSHS Tax Unit at 360-664-5830 or email: Taxinfo@dshs.wa.gov.

Tax Filing Assistance 2018

AARP Tax-Aide Services 2018 has moved to a larger space at First Congregational Church of Bellingham, 2401 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham. January 27 – April 17, 2018, Monday – Thursday: 3:30-6:30 p.m. (doors open at 2:45 p.m.) Saturdays: 12:30-4 pm (doors open at 11:45 a.m.) <https://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/tax-filing-assistance>



The Arc of Whatcom County

Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road
Bellingham, WA 98225

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Event Calendar

February 2018

7 Wednesday, 7am (bus to Olympia)
Advocacy Days - Family Services

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

10 Saturday, 9am
Max Higbee Fun Run
Race for Inclusion
see page 5 for more details

10 Saturday, 10:30am
Sensory Friendly Films
Movie: Peter Rabbit
see page 4 for more details

12 Monday, 7-8:30pm
Parent Support Meeting
see page 3 for more details

15 Thursday, 7-8:30pm
Autism 200 Series
see page 5 for more details

16 Friday, 6:30-8:30pm
Community Valentine Dance
Mt. Vernon Senior Center
see page 5 for more details

19 Monday, 6-8pm
Spin Dance
Theme: Valentine's Day
see page 4 for more details

22 Thursday, 5-6:30pm
Down syndrome Outreach
Parent Support Meeting
see page 5 for more details

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