

NOOKSACK VALLEY— As a baby in Yuma, Arizona, Haley Noblitt didn't react like other babies.

"She only slept a few hours, night or day, if not bundled or held, she would scream and keep screaming," her mother Amanda said. That was one of the many ways Haley showed herself to be unique.

Eighteen years later, Haley and the rest of Nooksack Valley High School's class of 2023 received their diplomas. For Haley, this was after many physical and mental health visits and diagnoses. The family didn't know if graduation day would come for Haley. For graduation, Haley was also joined by her service dog Coup, short for Cooper, who also received a diploma.

Through it all, Amanda said she was proud of her daughter's accomplishment but also was thankful for everyone in the Nooksack Valley School District who had helped her daughter. Haley served as a pioneer to the long-time educators of the NVSD Pioneers. Every so often, Haley would listen to the questions and volunteer a few answers or laugh. Over the following years, the family both visited different doctors to see what was happening with their oldest daughter, they also moved from Arizona to Washington state.

Some of the challenges Haley faced as a child were associated with Autism, as well as epilepsy. Amanda explained that Haley will get overstimulated by things many other people may take for granted and then have seizures such as grand mal, petit mal or pseudo seizures. The seizures may present as appearing to look vacant and stare while not being aware of what is happening. Haley can also speak without a filter. Sometimes she will burst out with information not always appreciated but the family refers to this as Haley-isms and "her classmates show lots of love and acceptance," Amanda said.

As Haley and Coup waited to leave the stage after graduation, they hadn't considered the unexpected noise and effect on Haley from the other grads yelling, throwing hats in the air, and spraying silly string. The



noise caused Haley to run off. Her father Lars followed her and calmed her down. Coup is Haley's second black Labrador service dog. Haley received her first service dog, Amigo, when she was in the third grade. The family started the process when Haley was in kindergarten. Amigo went with Haley to school, church, and on errands through her seventh grade year and retired due to arthritis. After Amigo died last year, Haley initially struggled with transferring her focus from Amigo to Coup.

What's next? According to the school's Individualized Education Program, Haley has been prepared for life after high school. For Haley that is to continue in learning culinary arts through the DISH Foundation, which partners with Our Kitchen. Her first class is July 10. DISH offers vocational training, employment opportunities, respite, and awareness for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In preparation for this goal, Haley has been baking for two years for her church, Grace Baptist Fellowship, when they need cookies for funerals.

"She loves to cook all types of treats and desserts," Amanda said. "Give her a recipe and she can make it."

Story published with permission of the Lynden Tribune. Photo published courtesy of the Noblitt family.

Parent Coalition

The Arc of Whatcom County's Parent Coalition "Ask the Advocate"

Special Education 2 Part Series Online Zoom Workshop

Part 1: Special Education 101
6 – 8pm, Tuesday, September 19

Families are encouraged to attend this parent focused workshop navigating the IEP process. Participants will gain an overall understanding of special education, its purpose, and the process. Learn more about the 'nuts and bolts' of an IEP.

Pre-registration required at:
<https://tinyurl.com/436xdbbp>



Part 2: Building a Foundation for Advocacy:
Parent Action, Accountability, & Resolving Differences
6 – 8pm, Tuesday, October 17

Families are encouraged to attend this parent focused workshop empowering participants to advocate for their child's Special Education services. Parents will learn the importance of their role, how to voice disagreements or concerns at any time within the process, and how to resolve differences or disagreements. We will share skills needed for a successful IEP team meeting.

Pre-registration required at:
<https://tinyurl.com/yz2u6xc5>



After the presentation, there will be a Q & A with Arc of Whatcom County staff. Questions can be submitted prior by sending an email to parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org or can be asked during the workshops.

Questions about registration or in need of accommodations? Contact us at 360-715-0170 or parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org



www.arcwhatcom.org



Monthly Parent Connect

7- 8pm, Monday, August 14
7 - 8pm, Monday, September 11
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

This is a meeting for parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and ongoing health care needs.

REGISTER your spot today!
Register: p2p@arcwhatcom.org

You will receive an email containing the link for you to join the Parent Support Meeting via Zoom. Please register early so you can get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet or computer.

Swim Social!

6:15 - 7:15 pm, Saturday, August 26
Arne Hanna Aquatic Center
1114 Potter Street

Free! All Ages Welcome!

For families of children with developmental delays, disabilities and on-going health care needs. Come join us for some family fun splashing around! We rent out the whole facility for this event. Children under the age of 7 must be in the pool with an adult. If you need an extra pair of helping hands to assist you in the pool, contact our office. RSVP for your family prior to Monday, August 21, by calling (360) 715-0170 ext 302 or emailing p2p@arcwhatcom.org.



Parent to Parent of Whatcom County

DADS SOCIAL



Thursday, September 28
6pm
Coconut Kenny's
1740 La Bounty Dr, Ferndale

Join Parent to Parent's Dads Social. For fathers raising loved ones with developmental disabilities and chronic healthcare needs. A chance to be able to meet and talk with other dads that are dealing with similar issues and enjoy free wonderful pizza.

Please RSVP so we can get a heads up on how many people will be there. For questions or to register contact P2P at (360) 715-0170 ext 302 or p2p@arcwhatcom.org

SCAN ME



Learn more about Parent to Parent



VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Every Thursday, 11am – 12:00pm

Staff will be available on zoom to help with resources, support, information, and connection. No RSVP needed. We will not have a password to join, but participants will be in a waiting room until we admit you. We can utilize breakout rooms to enhance privacy if multiple participants have joined.

Join Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86909304702>

Meeting ID: 869 0930 4702



Save the Date!

Down syndrome Outreach's Buddy Fest

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023 | NOON TO 3 PM
NORTHWEST WASHINGTON FAIRGROUNDS
LYNDEN, WA**

Join us for a celebration of our loved ones with Down syndrome! We will have lunch, an awareness walk, activities for all ages and loads of fun!

Learn more at
arcwhatcom.org/wp/programs/down-syndrome-outreach/dso-buddy-fest/



Build your Self-Advocacy & Leadership Skills. These meetings empower individuals to develop advocacy and leadership skills and set lifetime goals for employment, independence and community involvement.

Self-Advocacy Group Meetings



Thursday, July 6, 4:30-6:30pm

Summer Social Meet-Up

This in a hybrid social meet-up, you can join us in-person at the Arc of Whatcom County, 2606 McLeod Road or virtually on zoom.

Thursday, August 3, 4:30-6:30pm

Building Self Determination Skills

We will provide an activity to get you talking about making choices and managing your life. This in a hybrid social meet-up, you can join us in-person at the Arc of Whatcom County, 2606 McLeod Road or virtually on zoom.



The virtual meetings are on zoom. After registering you will receive an e-mail containing the link for you to join the Self-Advocacy Meeting. For more questions or information call (360) 715-0170. Pre-registration is REQUIRED to get the link. Must be able to connect through a cell phone, tablet or computer.

Register at: SelfAdvocacy@arcwhatcom.org



SELF-ADVOCACY

A program of The Arc of Whatcom County

"Be Strong. Be Proud. Be Heard."



Sponsored by The Arc of Whatcom County with funding from the Whatcom County Developmental Disabilities Program

Staff & Board of Directors

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 Arc of Whatcom County
Dan Godwin Community Center
2602 McLeod Road, Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 715-0170
www.arcwhatcom.org

Arc of Whatcom County Staff:

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Asst Inclusion Advocate: Terri Hansen
Family Advocate: Laura Kaptinski
Parent to Parent & Self Advocate Coordinator:
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P2P Parent Assistant & Parent Coalition
Co-Coordinator: Melissa Abraham
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Office Manager: Hilary Scheibner
:Alina Zollfrank

Board of Directors:

Melissa Mitchell & Leslie Weilbacher, Co-Vice Presidents
Missy Bartel, Secretary
Susan Jewell, Treasurer
Ellie Posel, Margaret Jahn, Melanie Hartley, Sarah Godwin Dale Whipple; Directors

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



2024 Smiles of Life Calendar

Every year we work to create a calendar showcasing local people with disabilities and their stories, dreams, and interests. The calendar is popular throughout Whatcom County, with many displayed in local businesses, schools, doctor and dentist offices, and homes.

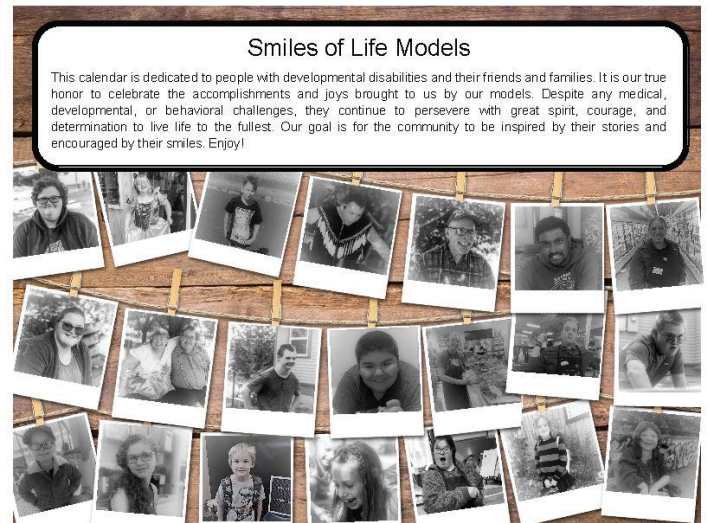
Would you or someone you know like to be nominated for the 2024 calendar? Once we have a list of nominations the Arc will notify you if you have been selected for the 2024 calendar.

Please also include the following information about your nominee:

- Name and age
- Their disability or health history that has impacted them
- A few words you would use to describe them

We look forward to highlighting the many individuals with disabilities in Whatcom County living life to the fullest!

Please email: smilesoflife@arcwhatcom.org or call 360-715-0170 ext. 203, if you'd like a loved one to participate!





2023 FASD 5K Your Way
1pm, Sunday, September 17
Zuanich Point Park playground
2600 North Harbor Loop Drive,
Bellingham

Anyone interested can join us at Zuanich Point Park playground at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 17th. We will walk, run, or roll to DISH Foundation's Our Kitchen, in the Container Food Stalls next to the Pump Track downtown.

For more information, folks can contact Laura Kaptinski or LauraJane Randall at 360-201-1719.

The event is free but folks can show their support by registering at:
<https://runfasd.org/>

Run FASD is a project of FASD United

FASD United (formerly NOFAS) is the National Voice on FASD. Proceeds from Run FASD go to benefit FASD United a 501(c)3 registered non-profit.

**Join a Virtual Run from
September 9th - 17th!**

Run FASD embodies Strength, Tenacity, Empowerment, Hope, and Vision. A virtual 5k event that can happen at your own pace wherever you are. From September 9th-17th, 2023, we want you to Run FASD to bring awareness to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

Contact Us: info@runFASD.org

2023 Rascal Rodeo

Rascal Rodeo is an adaptive rodeo for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities of all ages.

Events are safe, modified and free of charge.

TUESDAY, August 15th 10:00 - 11:00am

NW Washington Fair and Event Center - Lynden, WA

Volunteers and horses needed 9:00 - 11:30am

Registration: rascalrodeo.org

Questions: 509.528.5947



SPONSORED BY:



**Out of the Ashes
Boundary Bay Brewery
1107 Railroad Ave
Bellingham**

Join us in the outdoor garden on Tuesdays (3-5 pm) throughout the summer! Welcome to Out of the Ashes, where the beauty of music connects those from all backgrounds! Out of the Ashes is a live, interactive music experience for people of all abilities. It is the mission to connect hearts and souls to the eternal magic of music and to increase the awareness of positive possibilities in everyday life experiences.



Washington Parks Disability Pass

Offered to Washington State residents who are legally blind, profoundly deaf, developmentally disabled or who meet the disability definition used by the Social Security Administration. Call us at (360) 902 8844 to see if you qualify.

This pass is free to apply for and must be renewed every 1 or 5 years.

Learn more about the pass and how to apply:
<https://www.parks.wa.gov/1207/Disability-Pass>



**Parent to Parent's
Summer Park Gathering
Wednesday, August 9th
11am
Cordata Park, 4510 Cordata
Parkway**

Looking for a park play dates with other families raising children with developmental disabilities?

NOTE: Rain cancels park play date!

Bring swimsuit and towel if your child would like to play in the Spray Park! Water turns on at 11. Bottled water and small snacks provided.

Questions? Contact p2p@arcwhatcom.org
or 360-715-0170 ext 302



Sensory-Friendly Movies

Regal's My Way Matinee gives everyone the opportunity to experience a movie with the lights turned up and the volume turned down. This becomes safe space where our guests are free to express themselves by singing, crying, dancing, walking around, talking or shouting while enjoying Hollywood's latest films!

These showings will be the first show of the day on select Saturdays each month.

<https://www.regmovies.com/static/en/us/promotions/my-way-matinee>

Understood Podcasts

Real talk and personal stories for and from people who learn and think differently. Our podcasts bring new voices and perspectives you won't hear anywhere else. Dive into candid conversations on the topics that interest you.

Understood.org is the resource that helps the 70 million people with learning and thinking differences anticipate the challenges, barriers, or opportunities in life and confidently reach their potential.

<https://www.understood.org/en/podcasts>



Get Involved!



Looking for a way to give back to your community?

Volunteer at The Arc!



The Arc of Whatcom County has exciting opportunities for volunteering, college internships, or high school culminating projects. Help others in your community and gain valuable skills at the same time!

Contact the Arc today today for details. We greatly appreciate your interest and look forward to working with you soon!

Volunteer & Internship Opportunities

- **DsO Spring Fling, annually in May** – Join the fun at this annual event for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.
- **Self-Advocacy (SA)** – Help support adults with developmental disabilities work on skills to advocate for themselves and others in the community. Meets one Thursday afternoon per month.
- **DsO Buddy Fest, annually in September***–Join the fun and promote the inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome!
- **Board Members** – We are looking for passionate and committed individuals to join our Board of Directors, providing oversight of The Arc’s programs and representing The Arc in the community.
- **Spanish Speaking Intern** – Help support our Padres a Padres program in supporting our Spanish speaking community in Whatcom County.
- **Outdoor Landscaping and maintenance** – Help keep the Dan Godwin facility in great shape by helping with yard work and small projects around the facility.
- **Smiles of Life Calendar*** – Help with the development of our annual Smiles of Life Calendar featuring photos and profiles of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- **Parent to Parent Holiday Party, annually in December** - Help with setting up event, food, games, and making the event memorable for children and their families.
- **Resource updates and distribution*** – Help update and distribute resources for individuals, families and youth with special needs.
- **Parent to Parent Summer BBQ, annually in July** – Volunteers are needed to help with set up and food during this event which supports families in our community.
- **Social Media Intern** – Help us spread the word about all the great things the Arc is doing to support individuals with disabilities in Whatcom County!

2023

Some information listed is time-sensitive and subject to change. Please contact us for current details.

2023 Event Calendar

AUGUST

3 Thursday, 4:30 - 6:30pm
Self-Advocacy Meeting
more info on page 5

9 Wednesday, 11am
Parent to Parent's
Summer Park Gathering
more info on page 1

10 Thursday, 11am-12pm
Open Office Hours

14 Monday, 7 - 8pm
Parent Connect Meeting
more info on page 3

15 Tuesday, 10am - 11am
Rascal Rodeo!
Northwest Wa Fairgrounds,
Lynden
more info on page 7

17 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

24 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

26 Saturday, 6:15 - 7:15pm
Swim Social! Free & All Ages!

31 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

SEPTEMBER

7 Thursday, 4:30 - 6:30pm
Self-Advocacy Meeting
more info on page 5

11 Monday, 7 - 8pm
Parent Connect Meeting
more info on page 3

14 Thursday, 11am-12pm
Open Office Hours

19 Wednesday, 6 - 8pm
Parent Coalition's Virtual
Workshop Part 1:
Special Education 101
more info on page 2

21 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

23 Saturday, 12noon - 3pm
Down syndrome Outreach's
Buddy Fest!
more info on page 4
Registration Opens:

28 Thursday, 11am - 12pm
Open Office Hours

28 Thursday, 6pm
Dad's Social
more info on page 3

OCTOBER

5 Thursday, 4:30 - 6:30pm
Self-Advocacy Meeting

9 Monday, 7 - 8pm
Parent Connect Meeting



STAY CONNECTED

Follow our Facebook Pages:
www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom
www.facebook.com/ParenttoParentWhatcom
www.facebook.com/WhatcomCountySelfAdvocacy
www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeOutreach

Follow our Instagram @arc_whatcom

Find resources, information, and more at:
www.arcwhatcom.org