



## Need Paperwork & Application Support from Arc Staff Members?

2nd Wednesday of every month  
March 13, April 10, May 8  
11am - 1pm

Dan Godwin Community Center  
2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham

Join Arc Staff in-person at the Dan Godwin Community Center. We will be supporting families with filling out paperwork for their loved ones. Bring a laptop or tablet if you have one, some laptops will be available for use at the Arc.

- Partners4Housing Residential Assessment
- Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Eligibility
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Guardianship

Questions?

Email [parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org) or call (360) 715-0170

6 - 8pm, Thursday,  
March 21

Parent Coalition  
Virtual  
Workshop



## Guardianship and Future Planning: Preserving Rights and Respecting Choices

*Thinking about Guardianship? Wondering about alternatives?*

Join us for information about important considerations to make as you plan for a safe and happy future for the whole family. Topics will include guardianship and alternatives to guardianship as well as special needs trusts and ABLE accounts. Navigating the legal system on your own can be intimidating. We're not attorneys or facilitators, we are families who have navigated the court system and want to be a resource to others.

If you are pursuing Guardianship and would like to follow along and take notes, the Guardianship packet is available to purchase. You can purchase the guardianship packet (\$40.00 cash) in person between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. at the Clerk's office, or may pay by phone and have the packet mailed to them. Whatcom Superior Court, 311 Grand Avenue, 3rd Floor, Suite 301, Bellingham, WA 98225 Phone: 360- 778-5560

Register: <http://tinyurl.com/4ca3jurd>

Questions? Email [parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:parentcoalition@arcwhatcom.org) or call (360) 715-0170

## “How should I prepare for my Benefits and Housing Review consult with Partners4housing?”

We know that everyone’s needs and situations are unique. Some are just beginning to explore housing options, while others are well along the path. We always aim to meet you where you are on your journey, so we keep our consultation flexible enough to be sure we cover your concerns and questions. Your Zoom consultation will generally cover information in these six buckets:

**Housing options** – We’ll talk about the three primary types of living situations: Adult Family Homes, Supported Living, and Shared Living.

**Social Security benefits** – You’ll learn what they include, how to apply, how to maximize SSI.

**DSHS Services** – Your state’s Department of Social and Health Services offers a range of additional benefits.

**Section 8** – We’ll help you understand what Section 8 is, how it’s administered, and how it can (and can’t) be used.

**Food benefits / SNAP** – You’ll learn who is eligible for food benefits, how the program works, and how to apply.

**The Roommate Matching Pool** – We’ll discuss our roommate pool and how it works, what makes a family or individual eligible, and how to use it to find compatible roommates and partnering families to create a successful Shared Living Solution.

The primary purpose of this meeting is to help you explore what’s available and articulate your vision for your own, or your Loved One’s, future. From there, we help break it down into achievable steps and provide a list of what to do next to move forward. To prepare, all you have to do is complete the Benefits and Housing Review online. We’ll make sure we address your questions during the meeting. Sign up for your free Benefits and Housing Review (\$500 value), available for a limited time to Washington State residents, thanks to a generous Dan Thompson Memorial Fund Account grant.

### **SIGN UP HERE:**

<https://signup.partners4housing.com/promo/WAWAT>



## Whatcom County Transition Fair

Wednesday, March 27

9am - 12pm noon

Fox Hall at Best Western

1661 W. Bakerview Rd, Bellingham



The transition fair is for students with disabilities, families, educators, and interested community members. Everyone (especially middle and high school aged students) who is interested in planning for the future is welcome to attend!

Come and learn about:

- Housing options
  - Recreation
  - Advocacy
- Employment & vocational supports
  - Guardianship
- Community/tech colleges
  - Social Security
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)

This event is in an accessible location. Please make requests for accommodations by March 13th by contacting [DDInfo@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:DDInfo@co.whatcom.wa.us) or (360)778-6012. The event is sponsored by The Whatcom County Division of Developmental Disabilities Program, DVR, DDA, and The Arc of Whatcom County.

# Parent to Parent



## Monthly Parent Connect

7-8pm, Monday, March 11  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

This is a meeting for parents and caregivers of children with developmental delays, disabilities, and ongoing health care needs. After registering 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. For questions, contact Parent to Parent at 360-715-0170 ext 302 or [p2p@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:p2p@arcwhatcom.org)

Register: [p2p@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:p2p@arcwhatcom.org)

## Coffee & Conversation

1st Monday of each month  
March 4, April 8\*, May 6, June 3  
10am - 11am  
The Arc of Whatcom County  
2602 McLeod Rd., Bellingham



Parents and Caregivers of loved ones with developmental delays, disabilities, and on-going healthcare needs are welcome to join us for coffee (or tea) and a relaxed and friendly chat. Meet other caregivers in our community, find out new resources, and share your thoughts, insights, triumphs and experience. Adults only please! Light refreshments provided.

*\*date changed due to Spring Break*

RSVP is welcome but not required.  
Email [p2p@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:p2p@arcwhatcom.org) or call  
360-715-0710 ext 302

## We now offer Open Virtual Office Hours

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

Thursdays, 11am - 12 noon  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86909304702>  
Meeting ID: 869 0930 4702

## SPIN Dance

Every 3rd Monday of the Month  
6 - 8pm, March 18  
Bloedel Donovan Gym  
2114 Electric Ave, Bellingham

Everyone 14 and older is invited to dance with us to music provided by Glitt3r Lyfe's Aireekah! Though we are returning to in-person, registration is still suggested. Learn more at:  
<https://maxhigbeecenter.org/special-events/>



Designed for children aged 12 and under with autism spectrum and/or sensory-processing needs, our Low Sensory Sundays provide a special, quieter experience at our museum's Family Interactive Gallery (FIG).

**WHEN:** Mar 24, May 26, and Jul 28.

**TIME:** 10 - 11:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Family Interactive Gallery (FIG) inside the Lightcatcher building, 250 Flora Street.

**COST:** Absolutely FREE!

What to expect:

- Wheelchair accessibility
- A quiet room for downtime
- Supportive tools including gloves, cue cards, sunglasses, timers, and sensory maps

Brought to you by Hoagland Pharmacy, our mission is to break down barriers and foster a welcoming museum community. Our vision is to provide consistent access and support for families with children who benefit from a low-sensory environment. RSVP is appreciated but not required.

Let's make art inclusive!

Details:

<https://ow.ly/b6LB50PLo24>

*Is your child “consistently inconsistent”, or do they struggle with many, or all, of the following:*

- understanding consequences
- emotional regulation and/or behavior challenges
- ADD/ADHD
- fine or gross motor delays
- sensory processing sensitivities
- language delay or related challenges
- memory and/or processing speed difficulties
- math comprehension – i.e. money, time, large quantities



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are the number one cause of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDDs) nationwide and worldwide, and are more common than Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and Tourette's combined.

Community is important, as are people who “get it,” and who understand. FASD Focus NW support groups are a chance to build community, make connections and share ideas. To know that you are not alone. Each group meeting is spent sharing joys as well as tears, asking questions, and offering and receiving support from others. This is a volunteer ran and peer-led support group that is open to families or caregivers to individuals who have been diagnosed with or are suspected of being impacted by Prenatal Substance Exposure (PSE) and/or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASDs) as well as to adults impacted by PSE/FASDs. Our groups are respectful of and open to birth mothers. In 2008, the CDC reported that more than half of all pregnancies (51%) were unplanned. At FASD Focus NW, we seek to educate and reduce stigma related to unintentional alcohol consumption and pregnancy.

**\*FASt Friends Virtual Support Group will be held on Wednesday, the 27th in March from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

Our support group is always the 4th Wednesday of each month from 8-9pm. There is no fee to attend and you do not need to sign up each month.



**Sign up to receive meeting invites at:**  
<https://www.nofaswa.org/support>

# 9th International Research Conference on ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS WITH FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Review, Respond, and Relate  
Integrating Research, Policy, and Practice  
Around the World



**April 11 - 14, 2024**  
**Hyatt Regency, Seattle, WA**

<https://fasdunited.org/the-vancouver-conference-2024-an-international-research-event/>

This Conference will connect the identified needs of community workers, healthcare providers, professionals in the FASD field, families, and individuals with FASD with the research community. Gain insight into emerging research findings and how they might better assist ethical policy and decisionmaking and the development of integrated and collaborative approaches across systems. Examine practice-based evidence, projects, and programs to understand the potential connections to research and potential longitudinal studies. Engage in knowledge exchange and dialogue through multidisciplinary sessions. Listen to individuals with FASD and their families share their direct experience. This multidisciplinary conference will be of interest to the audiences listed below, as well as anyone working towards an advanced understanding in the field of FASD.

Addiction Specialists  
Child Welfare  
Community Members  
FASD Specialists  
Individuals with FASD  
Physical and Mental Health  
Policy Makers  
Researchers

Administrators/Managers  
Professionals Clinicians  
Educators  
Family Members/Caregivers  
Justice/Legal  
Physicians/Nurse Practitioners  
Program/Support Services  
Scientists

# Down syndrome Outreach

## What's Happening in the Down syndrome Community?

We have lots of exciting things happening through Down syndrome Outreach!  
Join us for any or all of them!

Our next **Down syndrome Outreach Advisory Meeting** is **Tuesday, March 19th at 6pm**. Meeting at Asian 1 (4285 Meridian St Ste 101, Bellingham)

**Tuesday, March 21st** is World Down syndrome Day! Do something special with your loved one to celebrate this special day!

- Wear Buddy Walk/Fest shirts and invite all your friends, family, and colleagues to do the same.
- Support local organizations like Down syndrome Outreach.



- Do three random acts of kindness!
- Write someone a positive note or give someone a helping hand.
- Read a book about Down syndrome at your child's school! If you have a younger child with Down syndrome, ask your child's teacher or principal if you can read a book to the class during story time. It may be a great way to celebrate and educate children about Down syndrome. Consider these: "47 Strings: Tessa's Special Code" by Becky Carey or "My Friend Isabell" by Eliza Woloson
- See how the Coast Salish People and Lummi Nation are celebrating and supporting individuals with Down syndrome. <https://youtu.be/XVRnipt4eHY?si=p3BCfv-cVpS6JmBv>
- Throw a party! For your family or your friends! Celebrate like you would celebrate a birthday. It's another chance to give thanks for all that our loved ones with Down syndrome bring to our lives!
- More ideas can be found at [www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/randomacts-kindness](http://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/randomacts-kindness)
- The World Down syndrome Day theme for 2024 is 'End The Stereotypes'. Learn more at <https://www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/end-the-stereotypes>

**Spring Fling** is coming **Sunday, April 28th from 1 - 4pm!** This annual event will be at Fairhaven Park Pavilion. Enjoy a potluck lunch, time to connect with other families and enjoy a beautiful northwest Washington spring day! Contact [rhondar@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:rhondar@arcwhatcom.org) if you'd like to get involved.

**SAVE THE DATE for Buddy Fest 2024! Saturday, September 28th 2024** at the NORTHWEST WASHINGTON FAIRGROUNDS from **Noon - 3pm** for a celebration of our loved ones with Down syndrome! We will have lunch, an awareness walk, and loads of fun activities for all ages!

If you'd like to volunteer or are interested in becoming a sponsor, email [rhondar@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:rhondar@arcwhatcom.org)

# Self Advocacy

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, March 7, 4:30-6:30pm**

### What Are Our Rights and How Do We Advocate?

We will have an opportunity to learn and ask questions about legislative advocacy and self-advocacy skills. Join us virtually for this meeting on zoom.

**Thursday, April 4, 4:30-6:30pm**

### Advocating for our Community Goals

Setting goals for our Self-Advocacy group meetings, ourselves, and community. Join us virtually for this meeting on zoom.



**Thursday, May 2, 4:30-6:30pm**

### Self-Advocacy 101

Build your self-advocacy and self-awareness skills with our interactive game of Jeopardy. Join us virtually for this meeting 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](mailto:SelfAdvocacy@arcwhatcom.org)



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.

## Arc of Whatcom County Staff:

Executive Director: Beverly Porter

Assistant Director: Rhonda Rische

GIDES Family Advocate: Barbara Roxas

Asst Inclusion Advocate: Terri Hansen

Family Advocate: Laura Kaptinski

Parent to Parent & Self Advocate Coordinator:  
Karlene Umbaugh

P2P Parent Assistant & Parent Coalition  
Co-Coordinator: Melissa Abraham

Padres a Padres: Marta Mejia, Alina Zollfrank  
Office Manager: Hilary Scheibner

## Board of Directors:

Missy Bartell – President

Jason McGill – Vice President

Susan Jewell – Treasurer

Dale Whipple – Director

Ellie Posel – Director

Margaret Jahn – Director

Melanie Hartley – Director

Frances Chalmers – Director

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



Our office is Monday through Thursday, 10am - 1pm if you would like to browse our Lending Library or are in need of resources. Staff are available outside those time also by appointment. Call 360-715-0170 if you are needing any assistance and would like to connect with a staff member.

## We now offer Open Virtual Office Hours

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.

Thursdays, 11am - 12 noon

Join Meeting:

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

Meeting ID: 869 0930 4702

The Arc of Whatcom County  
Dan Godwin Community Center  
2602 McLeod Rd  
Bellingham, WA 98225-1368

Phone: (360) 715-0170

Fax: (360) 715-8522

Email: [admin@arcwhatcom.org](mailto:admin@arcwhatcom.org)



# 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 April** – 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 Halloween Fall Festival, annually in October** – Volunteers are needed to help with set up, activities, and snacks 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.

# 2024 Event Calendar

## MARCH

4 Monday 10 am – 11am  
Coffee & Conversations

7 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

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

11 Monday, 7 - 8pm  
Parent Connect Meeting

13 Wednesday, 11am  
Paperwork Support with Arc Staff  
more info on page 1

14 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

21 Thursday, All Day  
World Down Syndrome Day!

21 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

21 Thursday, 6 - 8pm  
Guardianship and Future  
Planning: Preserving Rights and  
Respecting Choices

27 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm  
Board of Directors Meeting  
All Community Members  
Welcome! Learn more at:  
<http://arcwhatcom.org/about-the-arc/board-of-directors/>

28 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

## APRIL

4 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

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

8 Monday 10 am – 11 am  
Coffee & Conversations

8 Monday, 7 - 8pm  
Parent Connect Meeting

10 Wednesday, 11am  
Paperwork Support with Arc Staff

11 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

18 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

24 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm  
Board of Directors Meeting  
All Community Members  
Welcome! Learn more at:  
<http://arcwhatcom.org/about-the-arc/board-of-directors/>

25 Thursday, 11am - 12pm  
Open Office Hours

28, Sunday, 1 - 4pm  
Down syndrome Outreach's  
Spring Fling  
more info on page 4



## STAY CONNECTED

Follow our Facebook Pages:  
[www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom](http://www.facebook.com/ArcWhatcom)  
[www.facebook.com/ParenttoParentWhatcom](http://www.facebook.com/ParenttoParentWhatcom)  
[www.facebook.com/WhatcomCountySelfAdvocacy](http://www.facebook.com/WhatcomCountySelfAdvocacy)  
[www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeOutreach](http://www.facebook.com/DownsyndromeOutreach)

Follow our Instagram @arc\_whatcom

Find resources, information, and more at:  
[www.arcwhatcom.org](http://www.arcwhatcom.org)