Empower : November 2026

Building a More Inclusive Future Together

The Arc of Whatcom County provides advocacy resources and support for people with IDD and their families. Our programs are designed to support, educate, and empower individuals and families as they navigate early services, medical, educational , and adult service systems.



Smiles of Life Calendar: Rylie

Rylie is 2 years old. My daughter is the most resilient and brave little girl I know, she faces everyday with a smile and just loves to laugh at anything, including fart noises! She absolutely loves Octonauts and snuggles and is just such a princess!

Rylie has Smith-Lemli-Opitz-Syndrome which is a rare genetic disorder in which her body produces no cholesterol. She takes a supplement called Cholextra that replicates cholesterol which she takes everyday. Rylie is so strong and has had 4 surgeries already and plans to have a 5th soon! ~Mom





Photos by Christine Griffin

We all had a great time at the annual Parent To Parent of Whatcom County/The Arc of Whatcom County Halloween Fall Festival. A huge thank you to all our friends & families that joined us, the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department, and all the amazing volunteers that help make this event possible.









Please join us for our Annual Parent to Parent Holiday Party
Join us for crafts, fun activities, photos with Santa and much more!

Sunday, December 13
Bloedel Donovan ParkLarge Multipurpose Gym
2214 Electric Avenue, Bellingham
There are 2 time slots families are welcome to join:
*Families of a child with special needs ages birth to 13 are invited from: 12 noon to 1:30 pm
*Families of a child with special needs ages 14 and up from: 1:30 pm - 3 pm
Beverages will be provided. Please bring your favorite healthy potluck dish to share.

Co-sponsored by Parent to Parent and City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department

The Arc of Whatcom County Presents:

Navigating In-Home Care with Carina

Finding care providers on your own can feel intimidating. You don't have to do it alone. Join The Arc of Whatcom County and Carina to:

- Learn about respite care and individual providers
- Get tips for writing a job post that attracts the right fit
- Connect with other families going through the same process

About Carina: Carina is secure, private, and easy-to-use platform where families and care providers can find each other.

DATE: Tuesday, November 24th

TIME: 6 p.m.-8 p.m.

WHERE: Live on Zoom (link provided upon registration)

SERVING: Whatcom county families and home care providers

Register with link or scan QR code:

https://qrco.de/bh3dAg

To help maintain a confidential and supportive space for authentic conversations, The Arc of Whatcom County does not record the discussion and Q & A portion of our online sessions. This allows participants to engage freely, ask questions, and share experiences in a setting grounded in trust, respect, and community. Our workshops are free and open to all community members. Zoom workshops have Closed Captions on. We are committed to accessibility. If you require any accommodations to attend our workshops, please contact The Arc of Whatcom County:

admin@arcwhatcom.org 360-715-0170 www.arcwhatcom.org

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, November 5, 4:30-6:30pm

Building Relationships

Explore simple steps to develop relationships with people in your community. Join us virtually on zoom.

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

Holiday Connections

Please join us for a fun and friendly discussion on zoom.



Self-Advocacy Group Connecting to our Community



Sunday, December 13, 1:30-3pm

Holiday Party

Join self-advocates and families for a fun festival, co-sponsered by the City of Bellingham Parks and Rec. At Bloedel Donovan Park, Community Building, 2214 Electric Ave, Bellingham

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

The Arc Whatcom County

SELF-ADVOCACY
A program of The Arc of Whatcom County
"Be Strong. Be Proud. Be Heard."

Whatcom County Washington

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

***From The Port of Bellingham*:**

Whatcom County has some of the best kayaking and human powered boating in the world. The Port developed a Water Trails Map highlighting 22 fresh and saltwater trails. The Community Boating Center in Fairhaven rents kayaks, sailboats, rowboats and paddle boards; and offers programs and experiences for boaters of all skill levels. Just down the shoreline in Marine Park, KayakShare has a kiosk with short-term kayak rentals. The Bellingham Yacht Club is another great resource for youth sailing programs

The Port is currently developing the first hand-launch dock in Whatcom County. This community asset will provide the only ADA kayak access north of Everett. The new dock is anticipated to be complete by 2027 and a conceptual rendering is shown below.

https://www.portofbellingham.com/1133/Kayaking



DOWNTOWN BELLINGHAM PARTNERSHIP

max higbee CENTER

First Friday DOWNTOWN



SILENT DISCO PARTY!

EVERY FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH | 6-8PM

FREE * ALL AGES * ALL ABILITIES

MAX HIGBEE CENTER | CORNER OF STATE & MAGNOLIA

SPIN DANCE

EVERY 3RD MONDAY OF THE MONTH | 6-8PM

MORE INFO



FREE

14 AND OLDER

ALL ABILITIES

WITH LIVE DJ AIREEKAH

Glitt3r Lyfe EVENTS, FUN & ART

City of Bellingham PARKS & RECREATION

max higbee CENTER

VIRTUAL PARENT CONNECTS

We may not be therapy, but we sure are therapeutic.

Our meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month from 7 - 8pm. Each month has a topic. Bring your questions and learn more!

- **November 9**: Support, recreation, and connection
- **December 14:** Caring for the Caregiver
- **January 11** - Adult Caregiver (caregivers with loved ones 16+)
- **February 8** - Special Education
- **March 8** - DDA (Developmental Disabilities Administration)
- **April 12** - Autism

We understand how isolating it can be, so we are hold our Parent Connects virtually through Zoom. Grab your favorite beverage, a cozy blanket, and connect with other families - to chat, ask questions, and share resources. Pop in for a few minutes or stay a while. Those who attend will be entered into a drawing for a gift card. To register contact P2P at (360) 715-0170 ext 302 or p2p@arcwhatcom.org Please register for the private ZOOM Meeting Link.

Coffee and Conversation

1st Monday of the month, 10am - 11am
November 2, December 7, January 4
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. Light refreshments will be provided

We do not have childcare but please reach out if that is a barrier to you attending. We do have a meeting space that may work for your loved one.

Email p2p@arcwhatcom.org or call 360-715-0710.

PARENT TO PARENT

Parent to Parent of Whatcom County

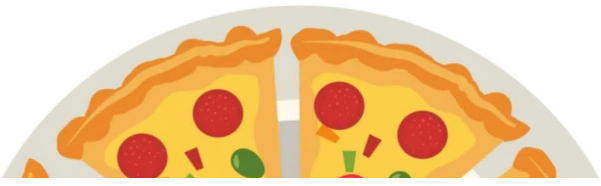
DADS SOCIAL



Thursday, November 19, 2026
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



LEARN, THRIVE, CONNECT:

A SUPPORT GROUP FOR FAMILIES WITH AUTISTIC CHILDREN

The Autism Clinic at Catalyst is hosting a monthly support group for families with Autistic children. The group is catered toward families with "newly" diagnosed children, however, it is open to anyone who is looking for community and support. It will be facilitated by a mental health counselor and a speech language pathologist.

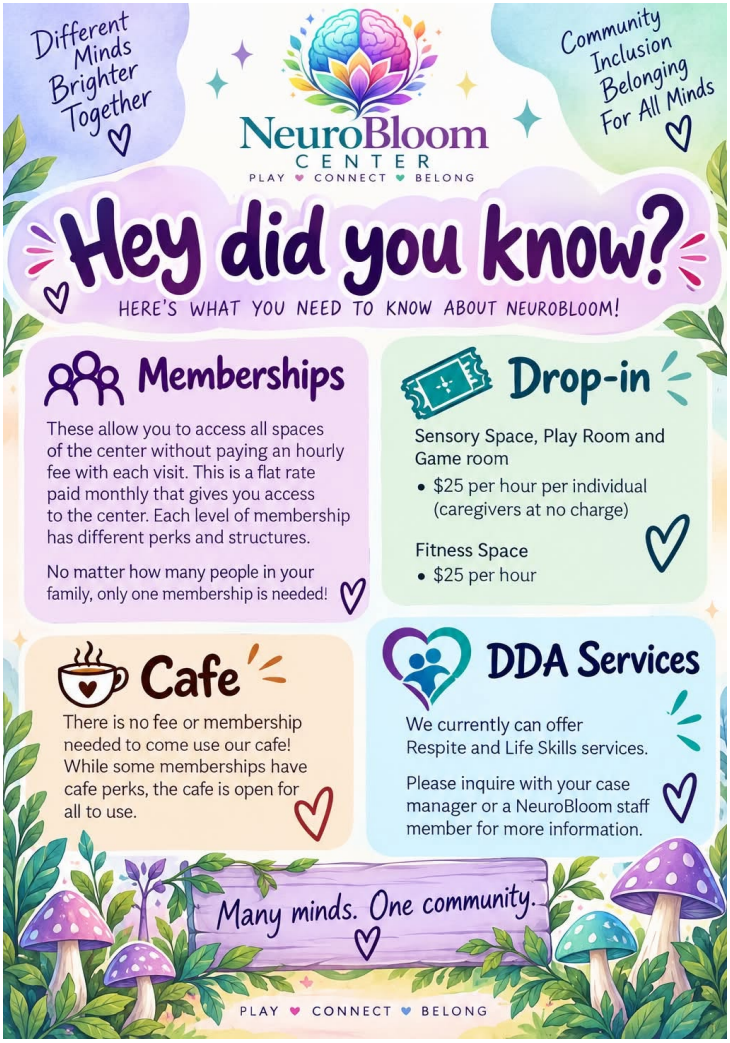
Purpose:
To hold space for processing what it means to have a neurodivergent child, meet others on the same journey, learn self-care skills, and connect with resources.

When:
Every Third Wednesday of the month

Where:
Catalyst Therapies - 1900 D Street (Across from the WMS)

Details:
This event is free of charge, one hour long, and child supervision is provided. **Please RSVP** through the link on our website, social media, or QR code.

For more information on this event or others happening at Catalyst Therapies, call us at
360-389-3468
–or–
visit our website at
catalysttherapies.org



Check out *www.neurobloomcenter.com* for more details

AUTISM FAMILY ROLLER SKATE SOCIAL



Sunday, November 15, 2026
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

FACES Northwest for a FREE fun filled couple hours of roller skating for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. FACES has rented the whole skating rink.

No registration required.

Roller skates included. Skate mates available. Parent/caregiver permitted to walk with shoes on rink to provide skating assistance.

Parents/caregivers must supervise your children.

For more info, email info@facesnorthwest.com

FREE

Skagit Skate, 390 Cedar St., Burlington

ALL-STARS

WE RISE BY LIFTING OTHERS

FUN FOR ALL-STARS, RESPITE FOR CAREGIVERS, BELONGING FOR EVERYONE!

Free events that celebrate friends with special needs

ALL-STARS ENJOY THESE ACTIVITES - ALL WITH A 1-ON-1 VOLUNTEER BUDDY!

- Adaptive Sports
- Awesome Karaoke
- Projects & Crafts
- Games & Activities
- Delicious Snacks
- Story & Music Time

LEARN MORE:
ALLSTARSCLUB.ORG/NCCTK

*Safety & medical volunteers are on hand to ensure a fun & safe experience.

ALL-STARS EXPERIENCE:

1. **FUN!** First class events designed to provide pure joy to each participant.
2. **FRIENDS!** Focused on building strong friendships amongst All-Stars & volunteers.
3. **FAMILY!** Parents/caregivers will enjoy a time of rest knowing their kids are having the time of their lives.



The All-Stars Club is a non-profit program that provides free monthly celebrations for people with developmental disabilities while parents enjoy a time of respite. Each All-Star is matched with a 1on1 volunteer buddy to facilitate a fun & safe experience. We welcome anyone with special needs, ages 8 and over, to attend our events.

North County Christ The King All-Stars Club • ncctk@allstarsclub.org • 1816 18th Street Lynden, WA 98264

REGAL

my way matinee

A place where I can be ME!

Enjoy a **sensory friendly** experience

Free to move & talk

Lower sound

Brighter lights

80% of Disabilities are Non-Visible

Make it visible with a SUNFLOWER for Special Assistance



Making the Invisible. Visible

HIDDEN disabilities

TSA Cares

Travel assistance for persons with disabilities or medical conditions

Transportation Security Administration

Toll-free: 1-855-787-2227
tsa.gov

Hosted by Ferndale Community Transitions

ROAD SHOW

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN THE BUS STOPS?

Wednesday, November 4th

5:30-7pm

Ferndale Community Transitions: 5610 2nd Ave.

For individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and educators. Join us to learn about navigating the adult service system. This is a chance to ask questions and gain clarity as you plan for the road ahead. We aim to help families better understand the service system and ease the transition to adulthood.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Employment supports
- Key transition dates & tips
- DDA eligibility & services
- Building a meaningful life post-school



FERNDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHO WE ARE:

*Beverly Porter: Parent Advocate, The Arc of Whatcom County
*Naomi Siegel: Whatcom County Health & Community Services: DD Programs
*Staff from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) & Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
*Employment Specialist from a local Supported Employment Agency

The Arc Whatcom County

Whatcom County Health and Community Services

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

Transition Services

Support and guidance for students with disabilities as they prepare for life after high school

What are Transition Services?

Transition services provide support and guidance to students with disabilities as they prepare to transition from high school to the workplace. Each student's transition team includes the student and the individuals that know the student best. These can be parents, school staff, School Transition Counselors, and, in some cases, Regional Transition Consultants. Transition teams help students identify their career interests and learn what skills and training may be needed for those careers they are interested in.

My student is about to turn 18, what is next?

When a student turns 18, they will have the option to exit school, walk the stage with their peers, or continue to a transition program through their 21st year. Staying in the school system until the age of 21 can offer the benefits of a guided transition to adult life, a bridge to adult services, and the opportunity to develop independent living skills that will assist them in the next stages of life.

My student has already turned 21, what are the next steps?

DDA's Annual Operating Budget allocates funds for clients transitioning from high school who are seeking employment and not currently receiving employment services through a waiver. Under the Basic Plus waiver, a client is eligible to receive High School Transition Funding if the client:

- Is age 21 or older
- Wants employment support
- Is financially and functionally eligible for Community First Choice
- Consents to accept Home and Community-Based Waiver Services



When can we begin transition planning?

Transition planning should begin as early as possible, but at least by age 16. Parents should ask to have employment goals integrated into their child's individual educational program. This is a good time to become actively involved with your student's IEP transition plan.

High school transition planning officially begins at age 16. It is important to include employment-related goals in the student's IEP such as identifying career interests and abilities, learning self-advocacy and social skills, riding the bus, improving communication, and using technology.

How does the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation play a part in transition services?

DVR transition liaisons partner with school districts to help students enrolled in high school transition programs prepare for and find employment.

DVR provides job exploration and work readiness for competitive, integrated employment after high school for students with an IEP or a 504 plan.

Resources and Links:

- https://waddc.webflow.io/transition-collaborative
- https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/high-school-transition
- https://informingfamilies.org/topic/high-school-transition/
- https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/county-best-practices
- https://informingfamilies.org/schooltransitionphases/

If you are interested in transition services, reach out to your school or your Case Resource Manager. if you do not have a DDA Case Manager, request information at https://www.dshs.wa.gov/dda/service-and-information-request .

Duties of Guardianship:

Tips for Guardianship Record Keeping

Guardianship is in relation to personal decisions and Conservatorship is in relation to financial decisions. Both require court oversight. It takes a lot of organization to ensure you have all the necessary information to fill out the required forms for lay (non-professional) guardianship/conservatorship. The following tips offer some helpful ideas for saving time and reducing frustration when preparing these records for the court.

Tips for Guardianship Record Keeping

1. **Does your Superior Court have a Guardianship Monitoring Program?** Get information and assistance from that clerk. Check the court website for court-approved forms.
2. **Never combine your money with that of the individual.** Set up the individual's own bank account, separate from your own funds.
3. **Consider purchasing a simple record and accounting software program,** such as Excel or Quicken. At the very least, record all expenses paid and reimbursements made in a record-keeping book. Remember to keep all your receipts.
4. **Organize proposed budget and expenditures by category,** such as medical expenses, food, transportation, entertainment, rent, utilities, and miscellaneous purchases (e.g., furniture or credit card payments). Be sure to find out the specific requirements of your county.
5. **Make a copy of everything to submit to the court.** When it is time to renew the guardianship/conservatorship, you'll have a record of which forms you need to download and what additional information you must submit.
6. **Report significant changes in income or expenses to the court when they occur.** You will need the court's approval to update or revise a budget.
7. **Prepare your court reports.** Initial and annual reports must be filed within 90 days after the date you were appointed guardian/conservator. Retain an attorney to assist you if needed.
8. **Check with your county court for the due date of your report.**
9. **Never ignore a court notice to appear for a hearing before the judge.** Ensure you bring all your paperwork and arrive on time. If you feel unsure about explaining yourself, consider seeking legal counsel for assistance.

Required Forms

Note: Check your county court website for county-specific requirements.

Within 90 days of being appointed as guardian

Initial Personal Care Plan (Guardianship): The individual's needs, available resources, and what your plan will be to meet the identified needs.

Inventory (Conservatorship): Assets such as real estate, personal property, bank account balance, monthly income, liabilities/debts, special needs trust accounts, pooled trust accounts, and ABLE accounts.

Proposed Budget (Conservatorship)

Designation of a Standby Guardian/Conservator.

Periodic (annually or up to every three years, as directed by the court)

Conservator's Report Accounting and Proposed Budget

Periodic Personal Care Plan (Guardianship)

CONSUMER DIRECT CARE NETWORK WASHINGTON

8 STEPS to Becoming an Individual Provider (IP)

1. Apply

Visit ConsumerDirectCare.com/Careers to apply. You will need a valid email address.

2. Complete the Form I-9 using DocuSign

You will complete Section 1. Another individual will complete Section 2. There will be delays in hiring if you complete and sign Section 2 yourself, use expired documents, or use someone else's documents. Once your I-9 is approved, you will receive your last set of hiring tasks in Workday.

3. Complete Hiring Tasks in Workday

Learn more about CDWA policies and procedures, including how to enter time and where to find employee resources. You will also select your preferred method for receiving your paycheck.

4. Background Checks

You must pass state and FBI fingerprint background and exclusion checks to be hired. When you complete the Background Check Authorization Form, you will receive a 10 character code confirmation number to email to CDWA. After CDWA receives your Interim Result Letter, CDWA will email you a fingerprint appointment form and instructions on how to make a fingerprint appointment.

5. Required Orientation and Safety (O&S) Training

Complete five hours of mandatory O&S training.

6. Client/IP Match

Client/Managing Employer or Case Manager must confirm that the Client wants you to provide care to them.

7. Okay to Provide Care

Once CDWA confirms that you satisfy all the hiring requirements, CDWA will issue you an Okay to Provide Care date. This is when you can start providing paid care. Do not start working until you receive this notice. You will not be paid for any care you provide prior to this date.

8. Client Relationship Attestation

Complete the Client relationship attestations in the DirectMyCare web portal. Your answers will determine which Training Category you are placed in. You will not be able to submit time until you complete this step.

Find helpful resources at: **ConsumerDirectWA.com/IP-Resources**

Contact us today for more information about becoming an IP.

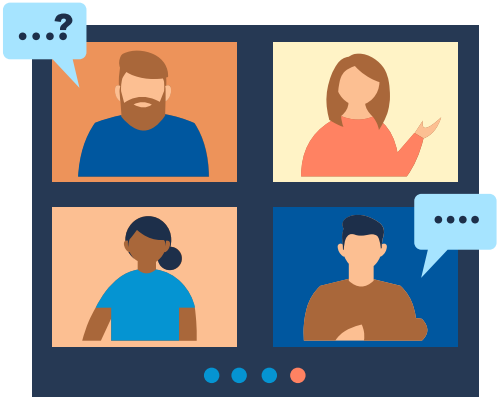
866.214.9899

InfoCDWA@ConsumerDirectCare.com

www.ConsumerDirectWA.com

Virtual Office Hours

Information and resources for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families



Staff are available every Thursday (unless it is a holiday)
11am - 12pm, No RSVP needed
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86909304702
Meeting ID: 869 0930 4702

Do you have questions about:

- Special Education
- Disability Systems & Resource Navigation
- Future Planning & Transition to Adulthood
- Disability Family Support

There is no 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.

Scan here to enter Zoom

MORE INFO

admin@arcwhatcom.org
360-715-0170
www.arcwhatcom.org

Staff

Beverly Porter
Executive Director & Parent Coalition Co-Coordinator

Rhonda Rische
Inclusion Coordinator

Hilary Scheibner
Bookkeeper and Executive Assistant

Karlene Umbaugh
Parent to Parent Program Coordinator & Self Advocacy Coordinator

Barbara Roxas
GIDES Family Advocate

Renee Williams
Family Advocate

Melissa Abraham
Parent to Parent - Parent Assistant & Parent Coalition Co-Coordinator

Marta Mejia & Alina Zollfrank
Padres a Padres

Terri Hansen
Inclusion Advocate



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

United Way PARTNER AGENCY

Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors

Missy Bartel – President

Ken Larson -Vice President

Frances Chalmers – Treasurer

Dale Whipple – Director

Ellie Posel – Director

Margaret Jahn – Director

Melanie Hartley – Director

Sarah Godwin – Director

The Arc of Whatcom County Board of Directors meet the 4th Wednesday of every month from 6 – 7:30. Meetings are hybrid – join in person at The Arc or virtually via zoom! No RSVP is needed. If you join virtually, meetings do not password to join, but participants will be in a waiting room until staff admit you. Meeting ID: 854 0124 4924

Next Meeting: December 2

Learn more about The Board at: *https://arcwhatcom.org/about-the-arc/board-of-directors/* To contact any director: boardofdirectors@arcwhatcom.org or (360) 715-0170. If calling, please leave at message with your phone number and a board member will get back to you shortly.



November

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

6 Friday, 6 - 8pm: Silent Disco with Max Higbee

7 Sat, 9am - 4pm: Lions Camp Horizon Day Camp

3 Saturday, 9am - 4pm: Lions Camp Horizon Day Camp

9 Monday, 7 - 8pm: Virtual Parent Connect

12 Thursday, 11:00am - 12pm: Virtual Office Hours

15 Sunday, 5:30 - 7:30pm, Autism Family Skate Social

16 Monday, 6 - 8pm: SPIN Dance with Max Higbee

19 Thursday, 11am - 12pm: Virtual Office Hours

19 Thursday, 6 - 7pm: Dad's Social

21 Sat, 9am - 4pm: Lions Camp Horizon Day Camp

24 Tuesday, 10am - 12pm: Finding Caregivers Workshop

Our office is closed starting Thursday, November 26 and will reopen Monday, November 30.

The Arc Whatcom County

Celebrating 90 years of service in Whatcom County

PARENT TO PARENT

PARENT COALITION

A program of The Arc of Whatcom County

SELF-ADVOCACY

A program of The Arc of Whatcom County

"Be Strong. Be Proud. Be Heard"

December

2 Wednesday, 6 - 7:30pm: Board of Directors Meeting

7 Monday, 10 - 11am: Coffee and Conversation

13 Sunday, 12 - 3pm: Parent to Parent Holiday Party

14 Monday, 7 - 8pm: Virtual Parent Connect

DOWN SYNDROME IS AWESOME

DsO OF WHATCOM COUNTY

All events are subject to change. Please visit https://arcwhatcom.org/events/to confirm dates and times.