



The ADVOCATE

Bi-Yearly

Newsletter From

The Arc of Indiana

County

In this first issue of The Advocate, the Arc of Indiana County would like to welcome our readers, parents, teachers, administrators, students, ARIN IU, and other service providers of Indiana County and beyond. We are very excited to be offering a newsletter again to the Indiana Community, and listing events, resources, current Special Education issues, advocacy information, programs and support.

The Arc of Indiana County's Mission strives to include individuals of all ages with intellectual, developmental delays and other disabilities into every aspect of our community and beyond. Achieving this by identifying barriers, building partnerships and realizing positive solutions.

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A SMILE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: 😊



Hello parents, students, administrators, colleagues, service providers, teachers and educators. I am very excited to introduce myself. My name is Michelle Jordan and I am the new Executive Director of the Arc of Indiana County. I am honored to be a strong voice of advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families for the Indiana area and beyond. I am also honored to be following in Barbara Telthorster's footsteps.

What a year to be a new leader of a very important organization, launching new programs, trainings, advocacy support, community outreach, transitional support and special education assistance, all during a pandemic! You know what they say, when life gives you lemons, lemonade it is or should I say pumpkin rolls! Since March the Arc and I have been busy thinking outside of the box to meet the needs of our individuals and their families and outreach to the Indiana community.

Educational Advocacy:

A letter was sent out to the school districts for parents last May describing the advocacy support the Arc provides to parents. Our advocacy services are free of charge to families and individuals of Indiana and Armstrong Counties. We assist with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, supporting parents through the Special Education system, assuring that their students receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, as guaranteed by law. Our goal is to assist with the IEP process and to ensure that the school adheres to a student's IEP and makes a good faith effort to help the student achieve his or her defined goals. Contact our office for more information and to schedule the Arc to attend and IEP meeting as an education advocate and/or provide support within the school system. (724-349-8230 or email mjordan@arcindiana.org)



In the beginning of August, the Arc partnered with ICCAP to provide a small- scale **produce distribution** to individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We are currently serving 31 individuals and their families. (See page 5 for more details)

Community and Support Workgroups/Trainings and Up Coming Events:

The Arc of Indiana County offers several Parent Centered/Community Centered Workgroups.

The Community Disability Awareness Workgroup (CDAW) Meets every first Monday of the month at 8:30 am. This group is comprised of Community Leaders, Service Providers/Organizations/Agencies, Individuals with Disabilities and their families, Law Enforcement, County Legislators working together to identify barriers that directly affect individuals with a disability in our community. The group strives to develop positive solutions, provide information, networking, as well as a place to learn about the needs and the challenges of individuals with a disability to improve our community and beyond. Currently via ZOOM. Email mjordan@arcindiana.org for more information.

Parents with Purpose: (PWP) The Arc of Indiana County is launching a new parent-centered workgroup. This workgroup replaces our longtime Parents Transitions Group and addresses Advocacy, Special Education and Transition. This group will be meeting the third Thursday of the month starting Nov. 19, 2020 at 10:00 am and will alternate every other month from morning to evening at 6:30 pm, to offer more parental participation opportunities. (See page 5 for more details)

Indiana Voices for Equality: (IVE) The Arc of Indiana County is partnering with several service providers, Melinda McCoy of PA LINK, Marty Dombrowski of Center for Independent Living of South-Central PA, and Katie Mullins of PeerStar INC, to launch this coalition with the mission of advancing equal treatment of Black and Brown individuals through ethnicity awareness, education, and advocacy, using an open, and safe community discussion platform. To build bridges by listening, connecting, educating, and understanding inequality and to bring about positive change to every aspect of the Indiana community and beyond. (IVE) will serve as a safe place to engage in difficult conversations, where community members can share their voice on topics like, discrimination, public policy, bias, inequality, and community issues. (IVE) will collaborate on equal rights initiatives, participate in community growth and inequality awareness. This coalition meets the first Thursday of the month at 10:00 am via Zoom. Our next meeting is this Thursday Nov. 5, 2020 at 10:00 am. For more information call 724-8230 or email mjordan@arcindiana.org , mdombrowski@cilscca.org, palinkcoordinator5@gmail.com

Events and Trainings:

Youth Expo: The Arc is partnering with IUP Special Education Department and the ARIN IU 28 to bring back the Youth Expo! The pandemic has put a little hiccup in the planning stages but we are excited to provide to our student the opportunity to meet with employers, service providers to assist with their transition to life after high school. We hope to be able to hold our first Expo in the Fall of 2021 as spring does not seem likely at this stage. For more information reach out to astiteler@iu28.org or mjordan@arcindiana.org

Emergency Preparedness Training: The Arc of Indiana County is collaborating with Marty Dombrowski from the Center for Independent Living of South-Central PA. Part of this training for students and parents will be offered during the Parents with Purpose meeting in January. A flyer will be sent out the beginning of January with more information. For more information email mdombrowski@cilscca.org

The Arc is also looking to collaborate with Indiana County Community Action Program (ICCAP) to offer a **cooking and food preparation class** for individuals with disabilities when it is safe to do so. More information to come. We are looking to offer this class at area fire stations and also in rural areas of Indiana County.

The Arc is hoping to hold our **Annual Garage Sale Fundraiser** this June and are currently working on a location and date. Follow our Facebook page or log on to our website for updates. Volunteers will be needed to sort and assist on the day of our sales. Contact 724-349-8230 for volunteer opportunities.

Bark for the Arc is a new fundraiser that the Arc of Indiana County is planning for this Spring that will involve canine pets and the Hoodlebug Trail. Also follow our Facebook page and website for updates on this fundraiser. We hope to involve pet service providers, the SPCA and look for it to be a great event! For more information contact mjordan@arcindiana.org

Last but not least the Arc of Indiana County and the Arc of Armstrong County are looking to hold a **social dance** in the future bringing our individuals together from both Counties for a fun night of dancing and socializing when it is safe to do so.

My prayer is that you and your family stay safe and well this fall/winter and look to the new year with a positive anticipation of all that is to come. Stay the course and continue to follow the State and Federal Guidelines to protect the at-risk individuals with disabilities.

With best regards;

Michelle Jordan mjordan@arcindiana.org

Follow us on Facebook at www.Facebook/TheArcofIndianaCounty.com . Our Facebook page will have event and training updates as well as relevant information to support our individuals and their families.

Visit our website at www.arcindiana.org Our website offers resources and information on how to contact us, legislative updates, how to become a member information, where to make a donation, and our event calendar that is weekly updated.

We are located at 120 North 5th Street Suite #2, Indiana PA. Right across the street from Holiday Beverage and cattycorner from the Laundry Mat. Our office number is 724-349-8230. Our office email is www.info@arcindiana.org





Have you ever had questions about your child's education but were afraid to ask? Are you worried about your child's future and how you can support them? Do you want to know more about the opportunities and supports for your child within our community? "Parents with Purpose" is an upcoming workgroup for parents of school-age students with disabilities. Directed by The Arc of Indiana County and Local Task Force 28, the workgroup's purpose is to provide parents with support, education, and advocacy.

We are planning our topics for this year and would like to hear from you! Please complete this survey ([Parents with Purpose Planning Survey](#)) to provide us your input; the survey can be completed anonymously. At this time, we are planning to provide information on advocacy, the IEP process, preparing your child for life after school, and agency supports. If you do not have internet access, please contact us for a paper survey or you can voice your input.

Our meetings will be held on the third Thursday of each month. To provide opportunities for participation, the workgroup will offer morning and evening sessions. These times will alternate each month. Our first meeting will be on November 19, 2020, at 10:00 AM. Our second meeting will be on December 17, 2020, at 6:30 PM. Below is the information you will need to participate via Zoom or using your phone. If you have any questions regarding Zoom or participating by phone, please reach out to us.

Meeting Schedule:

Nov 19, 2020 10:00 AM
Dec 17, 2020 6:30 PM
Jan 21, 2021 10:00 AM

Feb 18, 2021 6:30 PM
Mar 18, 2021 10:00 AM
Apr 15, 2021 6:30 PM

Meeting ID: 867 3019 0846

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86730190846>

Join by Phone:

+1 646 558 8656

We look forward to supporting you and your child through the educational process.

Michelle Jordan
Executive Director
The Arc of Indiana County

Kim Rode
Director of Special
Education, IU 28

Adrienne Stiteler
Secondary Transition
Educational Consultant IU 28





LOCAL TASK FORCE

We need you to help us...

*advocate for students with disabilities and their families,

*make recommendations to improve and strengthen services for students with disabilities in the public schools in Armstrong and Indiana Counties

NEXT MEETING IS NOVEMBER 18th, 2020 at 10 AM

Join The Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95936787171?pwd=dzNwdi9jVnhCNkppUkp5S0EySithUT09>

Meeting ID: 959 3678 7171

Passcode: 159793

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT KIM RODE - KRODE@IU28.ORG

MICHELLE JORDAN - MJORDAN@ARCINDIANA.ORG



The Arc of Indiana County
Produce Distribution Pick Up Location
for Individuals with Disabilities

120 North 5th Street

Parking Lot across from Holiday
Beverage in Downtown Indiana

Wednesday's **EXCEPT THE THIRD
WEDNESDAY!!!!** from 10:45-5pm

For more information on ordering boxes
contact Michelle Jordan Cell 814-441-
7981 Office 724-349-8230
mjordan@arcindiana.org

The Arc of Indiana County is partnering
with the USDA Program of Farm to
Families and ICCAP

Student Spotlight Interview

Interview by Tara Maruca Indiana Area School District K-5 IDEAL Coordinator, Special Education Teacher.

Student from the Indiana Area School District receiving Special Educational Services. The student and parent wished to remain anonymous.

Student:

Q: What is something you can share that has been good about remote learning this year?

A: I have done better learning this way then in past years.

Q: What are some downsides to remote learning?

A: Not being able to make friends.

Q: How are you feeling about COVID-19 and the new school environment?

A: I am worried about COVID-19 outside of school but not during school.

Q: What do you miss most about a regular school year?

A: I miss being Hands-On. A good example of when I miss this type of learning is in science class.

Parent:

Q: What is something you can share that has been good about remote learning this year?

A: My child is the healthiest he has ever been since starting school.

Q: What are some of the downsides to remote learning?

A: As a mom that works over-night, I miss my sleep while the kids are at school or the simple task of running to a doctor's appointment while the kids are in school.

Q: How do you feel about experience and the Special

A: I have been very the help he has received. I support he receives in the accessible than it was in prove to me that he is

Thank you, Tara, for the student and parent taking questions. Please reach parent would like to be newsletter in April 2020.



your son's virtual learning Education support he is receiving? impressed with all his teachers and feel like the special education school is a lot more easily his first school district. His grades doing well in this environment.

interview and thank you to the time out to answer these relevant out if you as a teacher, student or interviewed for our next Email mjordan@arcindiana.org

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

TRAININGS/WEBINARS

COFFEE BREAKS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONS LEADERS DEC. 16, 2020 1-2 PM
CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADERS: EFFECTIVE USE OF PARAPROFESSIONALS, FEBRUARY 24, 2021 1-2 PM
DEVELOPING AND ISSUING THE NOTICE OF RECOMMENDED EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT/PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE, APRIL 20, 2021 1-2PM
THE MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION REVIEW PROCESS. TO REGISTER VISIT THE PATTAN WEBSITE www.pattan.net



TRANSITION TUESDAYS: A WEBINAR SERIES, STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SECONDARY TRANSITION PLANNING, 4TH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH. THROUGHOUT THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR. NEXT WEBINAR NOVEMBER 24, TRANSITION ASSESSMENT. TO REGISTER GO TO www.pealcenter.org AND LOOK FOR THE TRANSITION TUESDAY WEBINAR INFORMATION.

PERSON DRIVEN PLANNING FOR LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL-MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL: TOOLS FOR PERSON DRIVEN PLANNING DECEMBER 15, 2020 2-3 PM, **BENEFITS COUNSELING** FEBRUARY 16, 2021 2-3 PM, **EMPOWERING YOUTH IN PA**, APRIL 20, 2021 2-3 PM. REGISTER BY VISITING www.pattan.net

SUPPORTS COORDINATION INFORMATION NIGHT: LEARNING HOW TO APPLY FOR SUPPORTS COORDINATION SERVICES, WHAT SERVICES ARE INVOLVED AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK QUESTIONS. NOVEMBER 10, 2020 6-7:30 PM. TO REGISTER VISIT www.thearcalliance.org

The Bureau of Early Intervention Services and Family Supports is happy to announce that registration is open for our next **Family Information Session: Taking Care of Ourselves and Our Children During the Pandemic**. This session is designed by families for families of children receiving EI services and/or Home Visiting and Family Supports. Two virtual sessions will be offered on Nov. 10, 2020 1-2:30 pm and 6:30-8:00 pm. Registration Here: www.surveymonkey.com/r/N25TBB8

Webinar on Nov. 10 or Dec. 2 to learn more about **PA ABLE accounts for individuals with disabilities** <https://paable.gov/webinar/>. The accounts allow individuals with disabilities to save funds without jeopardizing government benefits and they provide great tax benefits. www.paable.gov

Website Resources:

www.autisticadvocacy.org AUTISTIC SELF ADVOCACY NETWORK

www.pde.state.pa.us PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

www.pattan.net PA TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK

www.ncset.org NATIONAL CENTER ON SECONDARY EDUCATION & TRANSITION

www.wrightslaw.com WRIGHTSLAW SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY

www.pacarepartnership.org PENNSYLVANIA CARE PARTNERSHIP

www.iu28.org ARIN IU 28 SPECIAL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL TRAINING, PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR THE INDIANA AND ARMSTRONG COUNTIES

www.arcindiana.org THE ARC OF INDIANA COUNTY WEBSITE

www.aibdhp.org ARMSTRONG-INDIANA BEHAVIORAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

www.cilcp.org THE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING SOUTH-CENTRAL PA

www.dli.pa.gov OCCUPATIONAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION OVR

www.ahedd.org SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS COUNSELING

www.padlet.com FAMILY RESOURCES FOR LITERACY SUCCESS

Family resources available through the PA Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)

<https://www.pattan.net/Parent-Information>

Family resources available through the Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA)

website <http://www.eita-pa.org/families/>

A Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/transition/products/postsecondary-transition-guide-may-2017.pdf>

