

Message from our CEO

Once again, we find ourselves at the end of the year and the Holiday Season quickly approaching. This past year we have embraced the occasion to build community relationships through volunteering and employment within the community. Our staff are always looking for new opportunities to explore that and will continue to offer new experiences to the people we support.

In the next few years, we will be learning and exploring additional system changes as Performance Based Contracting makes its way into the Intellectual Developmental support system. We will learn and navigate these changes together again, but the overall goal is to maintain quality services. As an Arc we have a voice in how these new initiatives will be developed. I encourage all of you to take an active role in expressing your needs and concerns. Your input is always welcomed and is an important part in continuing to build a strong support service system.

We are also very excited to announce that we will be making some much needed improvements to our main building that houses our facility-based services this upcoming spring. We will be making improvements to our work areas. Our plans include a modernized face lift to match the aesthetic of the cafeteria, lobby, and restrooms.

I would like to thank all of MCAR's Direct Support Professionals. Without your dedication to the individuals, we service we would not continue to provide the quality services!

From all of us at MCAR Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

*Thank you for this opportunity to serve
you,
Lyndsey Vogan, CEO*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Past Events	2-4
Basketball Court	5
HR Department	6
Compliance Connection	6
Cultural Diversity Committee	6
Donations Received	7
Community Employment	7
Clinical Department	8
Social Group Schedule	8
CPS Program	9
MCAR Shut Down Days & Holiday Schedule	9
Residential Department	10
New Staff Spotlight	11
Advocacy	12



WE WISH YOU A
**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**



HAPPY NEW YEAR



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PAST EVENTS

STEAK FRY—SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

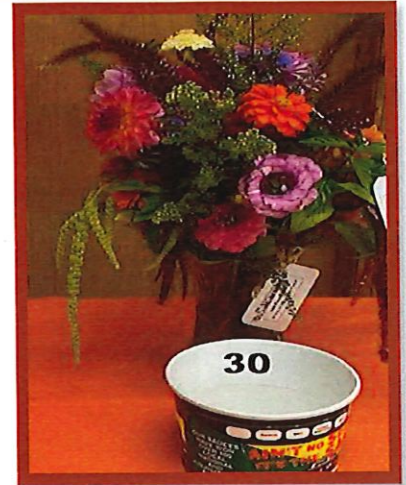
We would like to thank everyone who donated to our event as well as the people who attended our Steak Fry fundraiser that was held on Thursday, September 14, 2023 at the Mercer County Shrine Club.



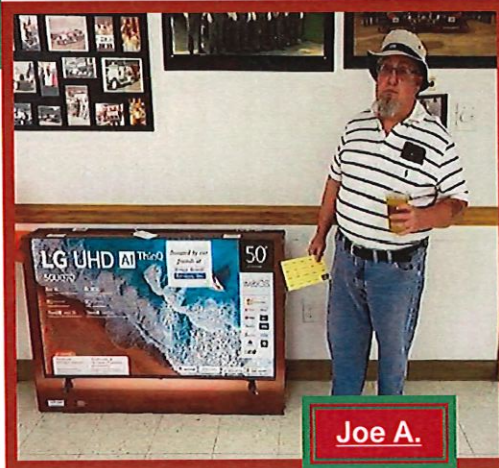
Jim & Diane O'Rourke (former CEO) Standing Tom Burich, Arc Board President and also seated is Mr. and Mrs. Robert Beach (former CEO)



From Left to Right;
Ryan Maurice &
Lyndsey Vogan, CEO



From Left to Right;
Michelle Kerr, Kim Watson,
Jolene Williams



Joe A.



Donated Homemade Wreath
Made by Jolene Williams



From Left to Right;
Katie Bodien & Kelley Dorus



Troy Harrison

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON—DECEMBER 4, 2023

Our Annual Christmas Luncheon was held on Monday, December 4 at the Avalon at Buhl. There were a total of 220 people in attendance. Sharon High School Tiger Kittens Men of Note performed during lunch and then the individuals enjoyed dancing to the DJ's tunes.



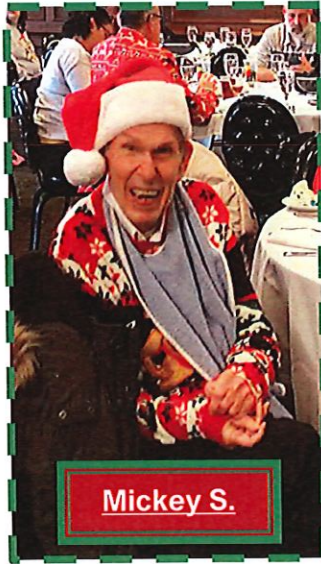
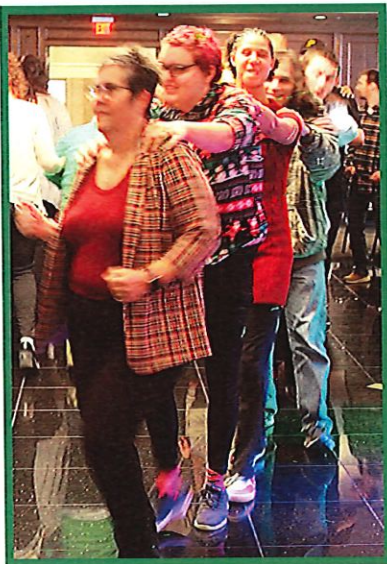
Mona Novak,
Ethan S.
Lyndsey Vogan



John D.



Colleen G &



Mickey S.



Sharon High School Tiger Kittens
Men of Note

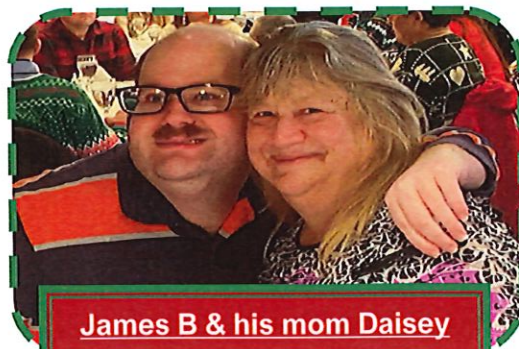


Sharon High School Tiger Kittens
Men of Note

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON—DECEMBER 4, 2023



Cathryn Shafer, Lavelle G., Hunter B



James B & his mom Daisey



Dreyland S., Pauline F., John Godlewski



Mike P.



Jenny King, Amy Z.



Patton G.



Brieanna K, Shana Kirby



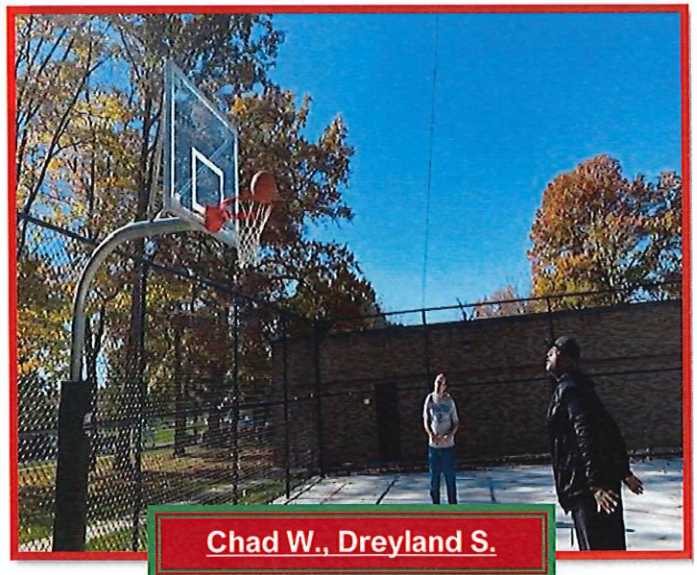
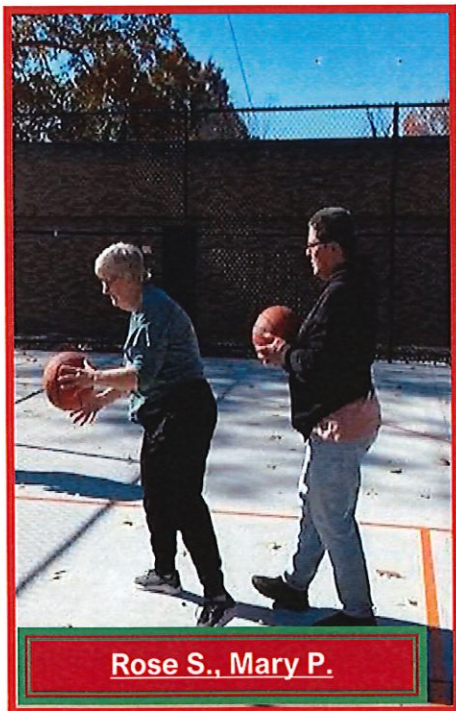
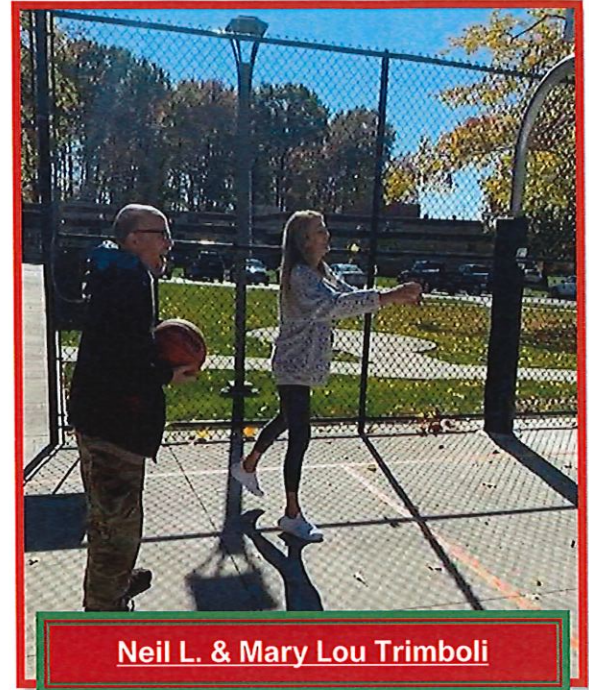
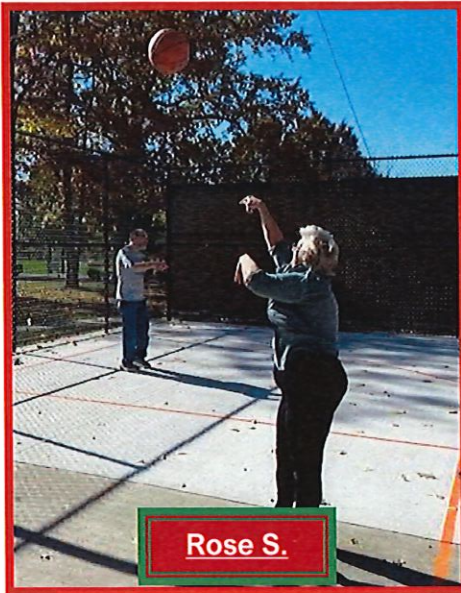
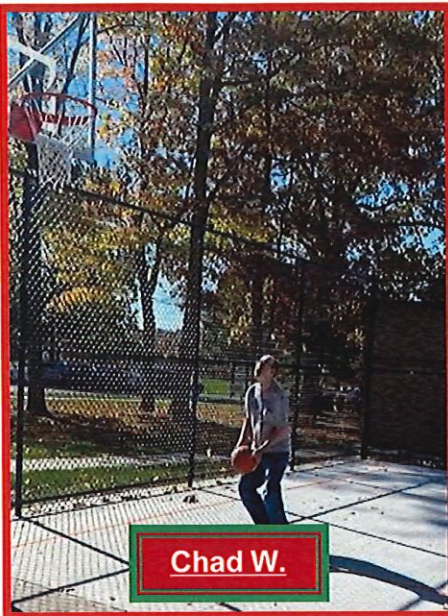
Jimmy W., Patty K.



Carolyn M., Trudy H.

BASKETBALL COURT—GRANT RECEIVED FROM THE TREES FOUNDATION

We applied for a grant through the Trees Foundation to have a basketball court constructed for our individuals to utilize.



HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Please Join MCAR in Welcoming the Newest Members to Our Team!

SEPTEMBER, 2023

**Pamela Cain—Hab. Aide
Jacqueline Kliem—CPS;
Tianona Lowe—CPS
William Wiley—CPS**

OCTOBER, 2023

Hunter Rupert—RPW

NOVEMBER, 2023

**Lelia Bridges—RPW
Deirdre Burkes—RPW
Caleb Davis—RPW
Tennille Johnson—RPW**

**Julia Middendorf—House Manager
Samya Moore—Hab. Aide
Joyce Seckinger—CPS
Donovan Wallace—Hab. Aide**

DECEMBER, 2023

**Lahtifa Barrett—RPW
Falona Gavins—RPW**

Thank you for joining the team! - HR Department

COMPLIANCE CONNECTION

Incident Management Guide for Families

MCAR would like to support ODP in sharing information about incident management. ODP has created the Incident Management Reviewer Guide for Families to provide guidance in areas of question when it comes to reporting incidents. This Guide helps families recognize what to do when something bad happens to someone they care about. This guide outlines what the Incident Management Bulletin is and how it is used. Furthermore, it discusses what is an incident and how to report it. If reporting an incident, the guide shares what information needs to be shared as well as the steps following an incident allegation. This document is intended to be a technical assistance guide. If you would like to receive a copy of this guide, please contact the Chief Compliance Officer Brian Engelmores at MCAR's Main Office.

Brian Engelmores—Chief Compliance Officer

CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Celebrating the Diversity in December

December is a month of multicultural holiday celebrations like no other. Please join MCAR in discovering important holidays and traditions from around the globe.

- 11/28-12/6 – Hanukkah (Jewish): celebrates the Jews triumphing over the Syrian Greeks for their independence
- 12/1 – World AIDS Day – increase education and awareness of AIDS
- 12/3 – United Nations: International Day of Persons with Disabilities – promotes the dignity, rights, and well-being of people with disabilities
- 12/8 – Bodhi Day (Buddhist) Buddhist holiday that commemorates the day that Gautama Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment
- 12/10 – United Nations – International Human Rights Day
- 12/13 – St. Lucia Day - festival of lights celebrated in Sweden, Norway, and the Swedish-speaking areas of Finland on this day in honor of St. Lucia
- 12/16-12/24 – Mexico: Las Posadas – commemorates events associated with the birth of Jesus
- 12/21 – Winter Solstice/Yule – the Pagan and Wiccan winter sabbath
- 12/25 – Christian: Christmas – celebrates the birth of Jesus, the Christian messiah
- 12/26 – African American: Kwanzaa (12/26-1/1) – inspired by African harvest celebrations
- 12/31 – Omisoka (Japanese) Japanese traditional celebration on the last day of the year



We would like to thank the following donors for their contributions to the Arc Foundation:



MEMORY OF JERRY ENGSTROM

Diane Adameck
Dan Beahan
Sally Beggs
Arthur & Cheryl Drew
Robert & Christine Foust
Gail Frydrych
Tina & Evan Hoobler
Rich & Wendy Kellogg
Mercer County Hall of Fame
Keith & Rosalyn Miller
Larry & Sue Pears
Gary & Shelly Rose
Richard & Donna Rose
Will & Carrie Rose
Janet & David Surrena

MEMORY OF CAROL THOMPSON

Donna Bandzak
Nick & Victoria Bartolin
Maggie Burns
Anne Burns Johnson
Wayne Mezei
Douglas & Marlene Mort
Jerry Thompson

MEMORY OF GARY PAULENICH

Kathleen Paulenich

MEMORY OF RUTH HORSMAN

Julie & Dennis Racketa

**MEMORY OF RUTH & SUE
HORSMAN**

Paula Priester & Michael Herwig

MEMORY OF ROBERT GOODRICK

Sarah Bidula
Adam Bohan
John & Anne McMahon
John Quinn
Steven Schwartz
Paula & Ronald Uber

MEMORY OF ROBERT BADGER

Angela Wolford

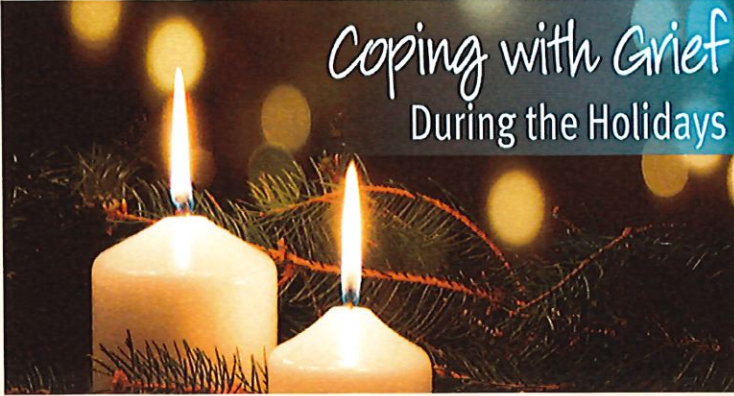
OTHER DONATIONS RECEIVED:

Black, Bashor & Porsch, LLP
Tom & Melissa Burich
William Clair
Fringe Benefit Services
Keith Godfrey
Dave Gustas
Matthew Halansky
Mr. & Mrs. Mac McClure
O'Neill Coffee
Joseph Pacchioni
Angela Palumbo
Robert Seibold
Ernest & Rebecca Swanson
Valley Baptist Church
Deborah Vechnak
Watson's, Inc.

Thank
you 

CLINICAL DEPARTMENT

Coping with Grief During the Holidays



All of us have experienced losses. It is an unfortunate part of life and even though we all know it is inevitable, it never gets any easier. It can be overwhelming to think about how the holidays may be affected; especially if the loss is recent. However, there are healthy ways to cope with grief and loss during the holiday season. The following tips are provided by an article by Dr. Tali Berliner.

Set boundaries with holiday events. Do not feel obligated to go everywhere and do everything. If it feels right, do it; if not, be honest with yourself and others. **Allow yourself to celebrate at your own pace.** If that means leaving early or not attending that

party, be honest with yourself and the host. Be mindful of your needs and wants because these will directly affect how ready you are to get out and participate. **Tune in to your emotions.** Our emotions can get the best of us at anytime and it is important to let them. It is also necessary to remember feelings can coexist. There is nothing abnormal about missing a loved one and still enjoying the company of those you still have. **Plan ahead to fill empty holiday roles.** Whatever role may have been vacated, fill it or plan to have it filled. This helps with consistency and continues to flow of special events. **Create new traditions.** It is possible to create new memories without forgetting the way the old memories make us feel. This is where guilt may play a role, but understand this, too, is normal. **Identify grief coping skills.** Prepare yourself for how you will respond to unexpected and often overwhelming feelings. Healthy coping skills like listening to music, deep breathing, or taking a walk will be easier to utilize with some preparation.

Whether the loss is that of a beloved client, a close friend, or a member of your family; celebrate them. Celebrate the times had and memories made, but most of all, remember you are not alone. There are people and agencies who are there to help you through what may feel like it is too much to deal with. Reach out.

Information for this article was taken from *How to Cope with Grief During the Holidays*

Berliner, Tali; 2021, *How to Cope with Grief During the Holidays*, The Psychology Group, retrieved November, 24, 2021, <https://thepsychologygroup.com/how-to-cope-with-grief-during-the-holidays/>

Allysen Byers, Clinical Director

Social Group for People with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome



DATES—2022-2023

December 14—January 11—February 14—March 8—April 12—May 10—June 14

Group meets the second Wednesday of every month!!

Time: 6:30pm to 7:00pm—Age 15 and older

Location: MCAR—850 N. Hermitage Rd., Hermitage

Contact: Allysen Byers, 724-981-2950, Ext. 238

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SUPPORTS

The CPS department at MCAR had a very busy and active autumn season. Mums were grown once again in our greenhouse and distributed to our group homes for fall decoration. Staff and individuals did a great job planting and maintaining our plants. They were pruned to perfection this year. The plan is to add an additional twenty-five Mums for next year.



This year our individuals were given the opportunity to pick our pumpkins and participate in a corn maze at Gibson's produce and pumpkin patch. Thank You! From everyone at the day program.



Javier T, Jose A, Robert G, Paul A, Jay D, Justin D



Mary, Robert, Darlene



Staff: John, MaryLou, Tiffany, Brandy, Mona, Bill, Jackie

Autum passed us all very quickly and the holiday season is now here. Everyone at the day program is excited to decorate for Santa's Arrival and assist our community with volunteer opportunities.

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!!

Darín Vadala—CPS Program Director

MCAR SHUT DOWN DAYS & HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2023-2024

STAFF IN-SERVICE AND SHUT DOWN DAYS

Friday—January 19, March 22 and July 19

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

Monday, January 1—New Year's Day Holiday

Friday, March 29, 2023—Good Friday

Monday, May 27—Memorial Day

Thursday, July 4—Independence Day

Monday, September 2—Labor Day

Thursday & Friday, Nov. 28 & 29—

Thanksgiving Day & Day After

***December 24, - January 1—Christmas
Holiday & New Year's Day***

RESIDENTIAL DEPARTMENT

HALLOWEEN ACTION

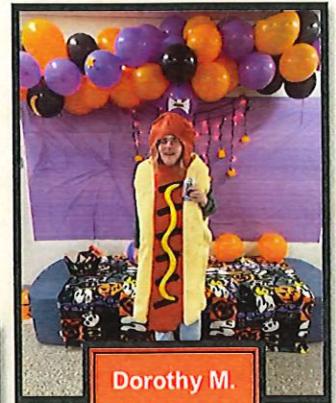
The Residential Department held a Halloween party at MCAR on October 26. Individuals came dressed and ready to party! Everyone enjoyed the different costumes, snacks, music and dancing amongst each other. Thank you to our RPWs for getting the individuals together for a successful event!



John Blazer, RPS
Handyman



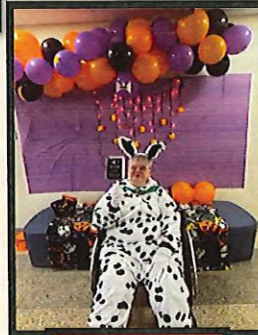
Bill B. & Luigi



Dorothy M.



Larry A. , aka Big
Bird



Bertha B.

Casey K Creations hosted a painting class at MCAR on 11/9/23. Casey K Creations offers in studio and online acrylic painting classes that teach you how to break down a beautiful painting into simple steps. Ten residential individuals participated in this event and were able to paint Turkey canvas for our upcoming Thanksgiving Holiday. Thank you to the wonderful ladies at Casey K Creations! Check out these masterpieces!



Kathy S.



Trudy H.



Catherine L.



Bode I.



Mike S.

Elizabeth Palumbo, Administrator of Residential Services

NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Colleen Engelmores, Nursing Supervisor, RN. I am so excited to join the MCAR team! My husband, Brian, has worked here for many years and I have been able to see firsthand what a great organization this is to be a part of. I graduated from nursing school in 2012 and spent almost 3 years working in the ICU at Sharon Regional. I then spent 8 years working as a cardiology nurse at Steward Cardiology Associates. I have been very fortunate in my career to have great mentors and work alongside some highly regarded specialists, who loved to share their knowledge and were wonderful teachers. I am blessed to bring that knowledge with me to MCAR. When I'm "off the clock", I am a mother to two great kids, ages 18 and 16. And yes, I'm old enough to have kids that age... LOL. I have lived in the Shenango Valley my entire life and am very devoted to serving the people in my community. I would like to thank ALL of you at MCAR for making my transition here smooth and very welcoming.



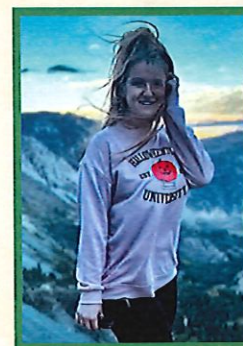
Malisha Motley, LPN

I've been a nurse for....years! It has always been a passion of mine to help others. I have gained opportunities to expand my knowledge and learn new things as time has passed. I love what I do.



Diamonique "Diamond" Groom

Greetings, my name is Diamond like a girls best friend. I strive everyday to be the best version of myself, to thrive and prosper in all areas of my life. I'm super artsy and kinda lame but I'm a huge advocate for choosing your own path and loving yourself while choosing it. Being your best self is essential for all directions of your life but it starts with you



Julia Middendorf—Evening House Manager

Hey! My name is Julia. I have been working in this field for about ten years now and I truly do believe I am on this planet to do so. I love to travel and spend time with my kids and husband. I am very outgoing and have been told that I have a big personality which I use to ensure everyone around me is treated well at whatever cost. It's been SO nice seeing all the familiar faces since I've been back and have been enjoying meeting the new ones!



Hessica Taylor, House Manager

In my spare time I'm a mom to 2 kids. I been at MCAR almost 2 years and recently switched over to House Manager position within the Residential Department. I love my job and the people I work for and with.



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The Arc of Mercer County/MCAR is affiliated with the United Way of Mercer County, The Arc of the United States, and The Arc of Pennsylvania.

Mission Statement

"To provide advocacy and comprehensive support to persons with disabilities that empower them in all aspects of life".

Advocacy

The Arc of Mercer County is a chapter of the largest advocacy organization in the United States for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Working at the local level, we are the leading resource for individual advocacy services. Our advocacy services are free of charge to families and individuals in Mercer County. Since 2004, our advocacy efforts have focused on helping families with children maneuver the special education process to ensure a positive, quality education. We help parents understand their child's rights to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, as guaranteed by law.

Our education advocates guide parents through the special education process, from how to determine eligibility for special services to how to prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to how to file a due process complaint to how to find an attorney for legal representation. Our goal is to ensure that the school adheres to a child's IEP and makes a good faith effort to help the student achieve his defined goals. Parents are the most effective participants in developing and managing their child's education goals. Sometimes, however, they may find issues or instances when other resources are helpful. The Arc of Mercer County's advocacy program serves as their leading resource for information and support.

What our Education Advocate can do for you:

- Provide resources and information about your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and applicable state regulations, including Early Intervention, and about how to effectively advocate for your child to resolve issues
- Provide resources to school districts and Early Intervention providers to help design and deliver supports and services that guarantee students with disabilities the opportunity to make progress on their educational goals

For more information about our advocacy efforts and how we can help you, contact Brian Engelmores at 724-981-2950, Ext. 219.