



Timelines



MARCH 2008

We Are Growing!

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On the Move - Paula Vratton, Executive Assistant (left) and Pat Simons, Volunteer Coordinator (right), get a hand from Laura Morabito, Assistant Director of the Arc's Recreation Program (center), during their move from 20 Gould Street to the building next door at 34 Gould Street in Reading.

The Arc's Life Choices program, which opened in June 2007, has been so well received that it is already expanding.

"We listened to what families wanted and shaped the program based on their needs. Life Choices is not a traditional Day Hab. It's a community based program with participants grouped by age and interest. They have rich days, working on service learning projects; shopping for, cooking, eating and cleaning up after healthy meals; working out at the YMCA and participating in community events," said Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director of the Arc of East Middlesex.

In order to accommodate the expansion of the Life Choices program, we moved our administrative offices literally next door to 34 Gould Street, where the Family Resource Center has been located for the past few years. Additionally, are opening Life Choices North at the Cummings Center in Beverly for North Shore families. "This is a great compliment to our Life Choices team. We are very proud of the program they have developed," said Simons.

Here is a breakdown on where the departments are now located:

34 Gould Street, Reading

First Floor: Family Resource Center, Recreation, Journey to Independence and Supported Living.

Second Floor: Development; Executive Assistant; Volunteer Office/Marketing; Business Office and Residential Managers.

20 Gould Street, Reading

Executive Director; Receptionists; Human Resources; Chief Operating Officer and Day Services, including Life Choices, EMI, the Center for Emerging Artists and Transportation.

950 Cummings Center, Suite 105X, Beverly

Life Choices North, to open this month.

10 Spruce Street, Wakefield

School to Work transition services.

There are now directories inside the front doors at both 20 and 34 Gould Street which list the locations of the various departments. Phone numbers for the departments have not changed.

In other space news, the Family Resource Center is



planning new Information Friday hours when staff will be available to assist families without appointments in a new, comfortable area. The area already features a KidSmart computer especially designed for children, which was provided to us by IBM as part of a generous grant package.

For more information about the Life Choices Program, please call Director Kathy Kelly at 781-942-4888, ext. 5017.



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Vacation Reflections

Vacations are good. Even the ones where you don't go anywhere. They give you an opportunity to sleep, replenish or even catch-up with laundry and other household tasks. The ones where you get to travel are even more special. You get away from your daily routines. In January, I had the opportunity for some wonderful travel, but as I am about to share with you, the issues around disability were never very far away.

We spent a few days in Acapulco, Mexico before boarding a cruise ship for a trip through the Panama Canal. While we were in Mexico, we walked a lot and I often noticed people looking at Jonathan. Maybe I am sensitive, but it seemed like he was a curiosity. Maybe he was since I didn't notice anybody else with a disability on the crowded boardwalks around the city. On the mobbed beaches, it was a different situation. I expect the stares. Jonathan has had open heart surgery three times and has a defibrillator implanted. His chest looks like someone did a poor job of laying railroad tracks down. The other thing in Mexico was that we were constantly barraged by people selling time shares. We learned to look away and say "no gracias." So, when we went to see the famed cliff divers, I avoided an aggressive woman with an identification badge which named her as a time share salesperson. As I walked away, she said, "No timeshare" and she pointed to Jonathan and said, "I have a daughter. She has the same face." She was no longer a pushy timeshare salesperson, she was us. She was the parent of a child with a cognitive disability. She was the devoted mother of an 18 year old daughter with Down syndrome. She shared with me that she had raised her daughter by herself and that her daughter went to school. She shared with me her love and pride. I gave her my business card and she gave me a life lesson when I least expected it.

As we boarded our cruise ship, I noticed a couple in their 70's because they were pushing a man in a large wheelchair, who I presumed was their son. He had significant disabilities and it reminded me of the life-long commitments that our brave and wonderful families make everyday. It also reminded me of my lifelong and never ending commitment to Jonathan. There will not be many vacations without him in my future.

We stopped in Corinta, Nicaragua and came face to face with a level of poverty that we had only imagined. As we walked the broken streets, Jonathan turned to me and said, "This is disturbing. We have to send them things. Maybe air-conditioners." Their needs were more basic than that, and I was reminded of all the opportunities that Jonathan and the rest of us have had. As we were heading back to the ship, I tried to avoid an old woman selling lollypops, but she reached out for Jonathan and in one of the most generous acts I have ever witnessed, she handed him a lollypop and made sure that we understood that it was a gift. I often now wish I had given her some money, but maybe we gave her something more important-that chance to give.

Her seemingly minor act-the gift of a lollypop, was actually an act of enormous generosity for her and made me wonder if I have ever carried out an equally generous act?

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Kathleen Stuart, *Life Choices* Manager



Employee - Kathleen Stuart

Kathleen Stuart has a passion for making community connections.

“I love my job and that’s my favorite part of the job,” said Kathleen, who joined the Arc of East Middlesex as *Life Choices* Program Manager last summer.

Life Choices is an innovative Day Habilitation program which supports participants in three tracks: Personal Growth, Creative Expressions and Health & Wellness. Kathleen and Program Director Kathy Kelly have cultivated relationships with local organizations to ensure that participants have a rich experience in each area. One of the newest partnerships formed is with the Bradford School of Music in North Andover.

“Participants in our Creative Expressions track will be attending the Bradford School twice a month for a two hour music class featuring topics such as hand percussion, guitar and listening,” said Kathleen. “We are so thankful to Andrew Clark, the School’s owner, for his generosity.”

Kathleen is also arranging to have Music Therapy interns from a local college come in to offer Dance and other classes in the Creative Expressions track in Reading.

The Health & Wellness track is supported by relationships with our local YMCAs. Kathleen is developing additional partnerships to offer participants a Flex and Stretch class, among other activities, at a local organization.

Service Learning is a key component of the Personal Growth and all tracks. Participants have really embraced the importance of giving back to the community. Projects they have taken on include cleaning up parks in Boston with Outdoor Explorations; starting a recycling program; funding the recycling program with stipends earned as speakers for Reading’s Understanding Disabilities program; funding a bed at Lazarus House, a homeless shelter in Lawrence; running a clothing

drive for people in need; and sending care grams to soldiers in Iraq.

“They baked cookies for my brother who is in Iraq, which was really sweet,” said Kathleen.

More Service Learning projects are in the works, including a cell phone drive for a battered women’s shelter, and a disaster relief fund for local families.

“Christa Connelly and Andressa Heringer have really taken the Service Learning initiative and run with it,” said Kathleen.

Kathleen’s passion is matched by strong experience. She earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Mental Health/Psychology from Southern Connecticut State University. Her work experience includes behavioral services at a health care center, managing a cluster of four group homes and most recently serving as program manager for another day habilitation program.

What attracted her to *Life Choices*?

“This program is state of the art,” Kathleen responded with characteristic enthusiasm. She has been a great asset to the *Life Choices* team.

“She’s my right hand person. We compliment each other well,” said Kathy Kelly, Director of the *Life Choices* program.

Identity Theft follow Up

Last month, I shared with you my personal story regarding identity theft and how one of our public servants, Special Agent Jack Leveskar of the United States Secret Service, investigated and solved the case. I hope that many of you have taken some steps to prevent this kind of crime from happening to you and those you care about. I want to share with you the next chapter of the story.

As you may recall, I was conned by a man posing as a BBC reporter. As it turns out, he actually called the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) and while posing as the BBC reporter, asked to interview a parent of a young adult. Perhaps because of my experience in speaking to reporters and my position here at The Arc of East Middlesex, Inc., I was asked to meet with the reporter. Neither the MDSC, a wonderful and reputable organization, nor myself, asked to see his credentials. Neither did we call the BBC to see if this man was in fact, who he claimed to be. We didn’t follow up when no story emerged from the interview. So anxious are we all to get our story out, that we compromised the identity of my son. Not intentionally of course, but nevertheless, that was the result.

The story does seem to have a positive ending, although the final chapter is still months in the future. Richard Outhier (the criminal’s real name-go ahead and “google” him) was indicted in the U.S. District Court in Madison, WI on seven federal counts by the US Attorney. He is being held without bail as he is also wanted in Texas and Wyoming.

The Arc of East Middlesex is Pleased to Acknowledge Gifts from the Following Donors...

Supporter Gifts \$101 - \$249
Wolpert Insurance

Sustainer - Gift \$250 - \$499
Lucie Cripps, Successful Parenting Program

Benefactors Circle - Gifts \$1000 - \$2499
Green Street Pharmacy

Memorials
In Memory of the "father of Kevin Nugent"
Mitchel Akel

In Memory of Yvonne Keamy
Mitchel Akel
Dolores and Milton Parks

In Memory of Fred Shulkin
Jo Ann Simons Derr and Chet Derr

Honorarium
In Honor of Saul Cohen's Bar Mitzvah
Elaine and Shep Simons

Grants
En Ka Society, Inc., Tennis Program

Inkind Gifts
Runner's Edge, Melrose
Dr. Christopher Cordima

Krishna Boutaney
Susan Ring Brown
Paul Liberty, DJ Services
Ed McGrath
Fran and Art Stuart
Paula Thompson
Constance Vratos

Gifts received through January 23, 2008

Making a Memorial or Tribute Gift
Use the pledge form on the fundraising page of our website (www.theemarc.org) to remember a loved one or honor a friend or relative for a special occasion. If you do not have internet access, please call 781-942-4888, ext. 4010 to request that we mail Memorial/Tribute envelopes to you.

Wish List
The Arc of East Middlesex is looking for donations of **furniture and household goods in good condition**. If you have items to donate, please email a description of the item(s) and your name, location and phone number to mberardo@theemarc.org. We're sorry; we are unable to accept clothing. Thank you!

New Members
Welcome to:
Karen Breen
Jennifer Elliott
Lisa Gallant
Stephanie Govoni
Toni Kim
Caroline McCourt
Julie Moriarty
Elaine Sateriale



Holiday Drive Thank You

Thanks to all our employees and friends that contributed to the Family Support Holiday Drive! We were extremely successful thanks to everyone's generosity and were able to provide a happy holiday for all of our neediest families.

Arc of East Middlesex employees:

- Beth Celona
- Deb Crane
- Michelle Faugno
- Cara Gradzewicz
- Mike Green
- Kathy Kelly
- Kerry Mahoney
- Judy Santa Maria
- Paula, Diane & Constance Vratos
- Kathy Zaploski

Friends:

- Maureen O'Brien
- Karen Andrews

Corporate Sponsors:

- Ceridian employees
- Harvard Pilgrim employees

Susan Sewell

Holiday Drive Coordinator
The Arc of East Middlesex

Thank you Susan for another great effort!



Distinguished Citizen – Arnold Rubin, President and CEO of Atlantic Food Mart in Reading was honored by the Arc of Massachusetts with a Distinguished Citizen Award at a State House ceremony January 30th. Arnold was nominated by the Arc of East Middlesex for his outstanding leadership as an employer of people with disabilities. JoAnn Simons, Executive Director of the Arc of East Middlesex, Liam Mansfield of the Awards Committee (2nd from right) and Representative Thomas Conroy (far right) are shown here congratulating Arnold (2nd from left).

The Arc of East Middlesex had a second reason to celebrate at the State House ceremony – the program book cover for the event featured a painting created by Kiely Holden of our Center for Emerging Artists. Congratulations and thank you Arnold & Kiely!

Melrose Dance Lights Up the Night for Families of Kids with Disabilities

On a cold winter's night in January there were lots of smiles coming from Memorial Hall! Mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers from Melrose and surrounding towns danced the night away at the first community dance offered to families who have children and adults with developmental disabilities. Nancy the DJ kept the dance floor hopping for three and a half hours complete with prizes and an interactive video screen. Special thanks go to Melrose Recreation Director Chuck Person and Heather Rizzo for providing the accommodations that over 80 families enjoyed.

The dance was sponsored by area agencies that provide support services for families raising children and adults with developmental disabilities- The Arc of East Middlesex, Riverside Community Care, Project Cope, Autism Support Center and Mass Families Organizing for Change.

For more information about recreation programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities call 781-942-4888, ext. 4036 or visit www.theemarc.org.



All in the Family - (l to r) Kaylee, Lindsay, Brady, Brenda and Bill Maher of Everett participated in the Family Dance at Memorial Hall this winter.

Upcoming Events

From The Family Resource Center

TRANSITION TO 22 THREE PART WORKSHOP SERIES

Tuesdays (7-9 pm), March 25- April 8, 2008. Malden Area, location to be announced.

The skills our children learn in school now are critical for a good life as they (all too soon) become part of the "adult world". How can you make sure your child gets the services they need to make this transition? What services and supports can you expect for your child when they graduate or age out of the school system? Don't wait until it is too late to begin planning for your child's transition. This series is a must for parents whose kids are between 14 and 21 years old!

SERIES AGENDA

March 25th – "From a Cruise Ship to a Dingy" – an intro to services after graduation, Government benefits, employment/day program options, housing, etc

JoAnn Simons, The Arc of East Middlesex

April 1st – Adult Services – DMR vs. Mass Rehab, Chapter 688, the Eligibility Process,

Availability of Services, the Transition Plan and procedures

Dorrie Freedman, DMR

April 8th – Working with your school system to get the most out of transition planning,

Your rights and responsibilities, the school's responsibilities, the IEP, ITP, and goal setting

Pat Pakos, Arc of Massachusetts

\$15 fee for the series, scholarships are available.

THE DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE TO CREATING HOUSING OPTIONS

This five part workshop series focuses on helping parents explore ways to create individualized Supported Living arrangements for their sons and daughters. Armed with information

from our guest speakers, we will work together to brainstorm creative ideas, learn about the contributions families need to make, and take practical steps to make housing dreams a reality.

Meets Wednesdays, **March 19, March 26, April 2, April 9, and April 16, 2008.** 7 - 9 p.m. at The Arc of East Middlesex. Fee- \$25 for the series. Pre-registration is required. This workshop fills quickly, so please register early!

For detailed information on either of these two workshop series, or to register, contact Michelle Faugno at 781-942-4888 x 4018 or email fam2fam@theemarc.org

Spring Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, **April 2, 2008** at the Arc of East Middlesex, 20 Gould Street, Reading. Light refreshments and program tours from 5 to 6 p.m.; Board of Directors Installation at 6 p.m., with Awards Ceremony immediately following. Please RSVP by no later than Wednesday, March 26 to info@theemarc.org or call Paula Vratos at 781-942-4888, ext. 4010. No ticket charge. Donations always welcomed.

From The Center for Emerging Artists

January 9 - March 2, Kiely Holden Solo Show at My Low Carb Life, 136 Andover St. (Rte. 114), Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 646-9566.

January 11 - March 14, Group Show at DMR, 27 Water Street, Wakefield, MA.

March 7 - May 2, Todd Dehart Solo Show at My Low Carb Life, 136 Andover St. (Rte. 114), Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 646-9566.

March 15 - May 7, Spring Group Show at DMR, 27 Water Street, Wakefield, MA.

April 3, Natural Elegance Spring Trunk Show, hosted by General Goods, 93 Main Street, Andover MA. Please join us from 5-8PM. Wine and cheese reception. In store promotions and giveaways.

April 12-13, Melrose Arts Festival, Memorial Hall, Melrose, MA. It will feature over 38 Artists displaying their own works, live music, catered food and a live preview on Friday evening.

The Arc of East Middlesex
20 Gould Street
Reading, MA 01867-2927

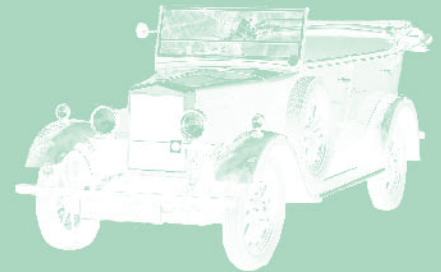
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On-line Car Donation Program

To donate a car online, visit our web site at www.themarc.org, click on vehicle donation at the bottom of the left hand column of our home page and follow the instructions that pop up. Be sure to designate The Arc of Massachusetts, Waltham as your charity and email us at info@themarc.org so that The Arc of East Middlesex is credited for the donation.



The Arc of East Middlesex Membership Application

Membership includes 10 issues of our *Timelines* newsletter; the Arc US newsletter; the Arc MA newsletter, *The Advocate*; access to our Recreation and Advocacy programs; invitations to Arc of East Middlesex events and an opportunity to nominate honorees for our Annual Spring Awards Ceremony.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please check all that apply:

Family Member Professional Interested Friend

Family Member Served (used to send mailings for age-appropriate events)

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Dues: \$40 per year. Please make check payable to **The Arc of East Middlesex.**

