



Timelines



MAY 2008

Celebrating Over 50 Years of Community Partnerships

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The Arc of East Middlesex's 15th Annual Awards Ceremony and Open House was a great success. Held April 2nd in Reading, guests toured the Life Choices program, and the Family Resource Center, and enjoyed refreshments, the installation of the Arc's Board of Directors and the Awards Ceremony.

The new Board, sworn in by Leo Sarkissian, Executive Director of the Arc of Massachusetts, includes: Maureen O'Brien, President; Christine Flaherty, Vice President; Ralph D'Amico, Treasurer;

Lisa Gibbs, Clerk; Sharon Borggaard, Immediate Past President; and Directors: Lucie Cripps, Barbara Crystal, Charles Gordon, John Mason, Jr., Brian McCoubrey, Judy Osborn and Elena Previte.

Awards presenters included DMR Commissioner Elin M. Howe; Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director; Maureen O'Brien, Board President; Cheryl Howland, Norma Howland's daughter; and Lucie Cripps, Arc Legend. Our honorees included:

Lucie Cripps Award – *The Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association*

Norma Howland Human Rights Award – Phyllis Sneideron, *Federation for Children with Special Needs*

Employer of the Year – *REI, Reading*

President's Award – Tony Pallotta, *Runner's Edge*

Staff Honorees - Christine Burke, Sylvia Calangi, Sarah Carpenter, Kathy Custer,



Employer of the Year - Jo Ann Simons (l), Jeff Caturano (2nd from right) and Maureen O'Brien (far right), congratulate Kirk Peterson of REI, Reading, on being selected as Employer of the Year. Jeff has worked at REI for three years.

Jane-Frances Faniel, Orlease Flemmings, Elizabeth Habtegabriel, Tracy Hanson, Liz Jenkins, Chenine Johnson, Kathy Kelly, Teresa Kimani, Stephanie Kitze, Grace Lingunya, Nick Mangini, Shawn Nault, Amy Ruiter, Paula Thompson, Beth Timperi, and Kathy Zapolski.

Achievement Awards – Janice Howland, Leigh Ann Regan & Carol Toomey

Distinguished Service Awards – Carolyn Callahan and Susan Keskula, *The Corner Closet*; Michael Connelly and Meaghan Shaw, *Reading Memorial High School*; Shirley Crum, *PL Management, Inc.*; Elisabeth D'Antona, *DSS Malden*; Ellen Galligan and Ann Williams, *Catholic Charities North*; Eric Hough, *Credit Suisse*; Chuck Kendrick, *Kendrick Photography*; Jim Lee, *Atlantic Food Mart*; *Melrose Family YMCA*; *North Suburban YMCA*; Herb Perry, *Reading Masons*; Jeff Robinson, *Robinson Funeral Home*; and Albert Spadafora, *Anthony's of Malden*.

Staff Anniversary Recognition – Five Years: Christine Burke and Susan Sewell; Ten Years: Nancy (Desmond) Nastasi; Fifteen Years: Jo Ann Simons; Twenty Years: Zi-pora Feiner; and Twenty Five Years: Neville Pottinger.

The Arc of East Middlesex Board of Directors

President

Maureen O'Brien
Reading, MA

Vice President

Christine Flaherty
Reading, MA

Treasurer

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Acton, MA

Brian McCoubrey
Wakefield

Judy Osborn
Reading, MA

Elena Previte
Melrose, MA

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Mother's Day Musings

I have often read about the "sandwich generation," as I am sure you have. Those are parents who in addition to having the responsibilities of raising their own children find themselves taking care of aging parents. To be truthful, I read the articles and moved on. I felt very lucky. My parents, now 81 and 85, were vibrant and relatively healthy and living a stress-free life that included many friends, golf and bridge. They divided their year between Florida and Massachusetts.

I spoke to them daily and visited often. My father has survived open heart surgery and he still found time to work a few hours a day. I barely took note of his forgetfulness and I was not convinced when he began taking Aricept last summer for the beginning of Alzheimer's disease.

In December, my mother had a TIA or "mini-stroke." Two months later, she fell and broke her shoulder. While at the Special Olympic Winter Games, my father called me from her hospital room and told me they were confused and didn't know what to do. I flew to Florida to arrange home care and therapies and speak to her doctors. I left confident that they were being well cared for. A week later, some additional medical concerns developed and I arranged for them to come home and see local doctors. I had home care and nursing services started and made home modifications for them. Hospitalization, surgery and a transfer to a nursing home for my mother to receive rehab followed.

At each hospital and doctor visit, I was asked if I had siblings who could share some of the growing challenges. While I have a brother out of town, this has become my singular responsibility.

I did not feel like the inside of a sandwich. I was beginning to feel like a passenger on a runaway train. I also felt honored. I have been able to witness the devotion of my father to my mother and it is more beautiful than any "young love." His genuine acts of affection have left me speechless, like when he went, one more time, after ten one evening, to kiss her good night at the hospital. It is a gift to have your parents with you for as long as I have had them in my life and these new responsibilities are a reminder that nothing good comes without great effort.

So, as I look ahead to Mother's Day this year, I have begun to realize that we are more than the "sandwich generation." We are "super-sized." As we begin to care for our aging parents, we will never have the opportunity to end our constant caring for our children with disabilities, no matter how old they become. We are forever mothers, not in the poetic sense but, in the active sense.

Enjoy this Mother's Day.



About the Author - Tom Brooks is a 22 year old man with Asperger's Syndrome. He graduated from Reading Memorial High School in 2004, receiving a diploma and the PTO Exemplary Character Award. In the fall he can be seen on a local soccer team that competes in Special Olympics. Tom participated in the Arc's School to Work Transition program as a student and was hired in 2004 as an Arc Employment Specialist. He finds inspiration in the words of Thomas Jefferson, his role model "I'm a great believer in luck and I find the harder I work the more of it I have."

Adapting with change: Advice to teens with special needs

By Tom Brooks

"What is important is to keep learning, to enjoy challenge, and to tolerate ambiguity. In the end there are no certain answers."
-Martina Horner

Introduction: Have you ever felt out of place? Many people have this problem many times. I myself have dealt with it before and I always find a solution to help me in my time of need. Knowing you have special needs isn't a thought you should think is bad. For many having a disability can be a challenge, but if you can turn a negative into a positive then you will be good. Having my own disability I know it isn't easy always turning a negative into a positive, but I know that I feel a great sense of achievement from my success.

Growing Up: During my younger years I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome. Asperger's is a form of Autism. I knew I was different from other kids in my classes. Deep down inside me I knew I was still the same person I had always been but different. Over the years I have learned much about both my Asperger's and myself. From my Asperger's I've learned I am not alone. The first of every month, my mother has a support group for families with family members with Asperger's. Through this support group I have made new friends. Also from this support group I have met my girlfriend. I have been told I don't look very Autistic,

however I believe on the outside I don't look it but on the inside. As a kid I didn't tell many people I knew I had Asperger's unless I felt confident. In middle school I did a presentation about my Asperger's and it felt good to tell people I knew I had it. Today I am 22 years old and I have grown into an adult who copes with his Asperger's and isn't afraid to help out anyone understand it or help out those in the special needs community. Through my job I work with people with special needs and it makes me feel good helping them.

Advice: Don't be afraid about who you are. You are you and that's what makes you unique.

Groups/New Environment: As with any new environment, it can be hard to adapt. School can be one of those places. I remember going to school being nervous that word would get out I have Asperger's. I also thought cause of my Asperger's I missed out on a lot of fun events such as field trips if I didn't have the confidence to go and many other fun school related events. School can also be tough finding a good crowd of people to hang out with. As I observed in high school, each student is in their own social group. By the time two of my long time friends and I arrived in high school, we had all changed from the kids we were to the high school students we had become. Belonging to any group of kids can be hard because you never know what will happen. I didn't belong to any after school activities such as sports, drama club, etc. I did however get good at being my own individual self. By staying away from bad crowds I was able to continue my success. A sports team can be hard to adapt to because you don't know everyone. When I started playing soccer for the local team that plays in the Special Olympics, I felt nervous about playing soccer again because it was the first time I had played soccer in years and I didn't really know anyone. Luck was on my side because one of my best friends I had known since preschool was also on the team so he introduced me to everyone and I felt welcome to the team.

Advice: Choose who you hang out with carefully, you don't want to fall into the wrong crowd of people. On another note: never be afraid to try anything new.

Controlling your fear: When I was younger I use to be afraid of lots of things because of my Autism. As a kid I use to think whenever a fire drill would happen that would mean the school was on fire. Field Trips also were the hardest on me as a kid because I never did like traveling to far places without my mother. As I got older I grew out of the fears and was less scared about the things that once scared me. Knowing I had my friends and family's support, I was able to overcome my fear and achieve great success where I am today. If I can overcome my former fears you can get rid of yours.

Advice: Always remember your family, peers and those around you are there to help you with every step along your journey.

Arc of East Middlesex: Since my high school years I have been associated with the Arc. Coming from my first job as a camp counselor in training working with kids with special needs from

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the summer of 2002, I needed a new job. From the Arc I gained a job coach who helped me understand what it's like having a job and learned the tricks of the trade. Signing my official contract at age seventeen in 2003, I have remained with the Arc and have now entered my fifth year of being with the company. During these five years I have changed and grown with my title of jobs with the Arc. From where I started shredding old documents of the company to becoming a job coach myself I definitely would say I've grown both as a member of a company and as a person.

Advice: The Arc has lots to offer to families in need of help. You can visit them on their web site at www.thearc.org

Conclusion: From this article I hope I have given good advice and helped you on your journey. May your journey bring lots of new and exciting adventures and doors to open on your way through life. Thank you for your time reading and I wish you the best in all your future endeavors.

Advice: Though you may be new to an area you're not familiar with, you will never know what you can achieve unless you give it a chance. If you don't give anything a chance how will you know if you'd like it?

"Always remember: your focus determines your reality"
-Qui-Gon Jinn, Star Wars, Episode I:
The Phantom Menace



Norma Howland Human Rights Award - Cheryl Howland, Janice Howland and Deborah Howland-Tolla presented Phyllis Sneirson with the Arc's 2008 Norma Howland Human Rights Award at an April 2nd Ceremony.

Got Books?

We now have a **Got Books** receptacle to the left of the EMI entrance at 20 Gould Street, Reading. Got Books, a North Reading company, will pay us for donated Books, Cds, DVDs and Videos. This has been a good fund raising venue for another disability provider and we're hoping it will raise some important new dollars for the Arc of East Middlesex. If you have any Books, Cds, DVDs or videos you would like to donate, please stop by and put them in the receptacle. No other types of items please. Thank you!

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

Friend Gifts Up to \$100

Claude and Eleanor Cimini
Mike Connelly
Lucie and Leonard Cripps
Valerie Hall
Clifton Hatch
Suzanne Hosier
Donna and Harry Leigh
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Raymond and Donna Whipple, Jr.

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In Honor of Norma Shribman
Shepard and Elaine Simons

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CIBC World Markets Corp
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Sharon Borggaard
Dacre and Suzanne Hancock
John J. Mealey
James and Diane Pappas
Jo Ann Simons
Diane Vratto

Round's Hardware, Stoneham

Gifts received through April 3, 2008

Making a Memorial or Tribute Gift
Use the pledge form on the fundraising page of our website (www.thearc.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

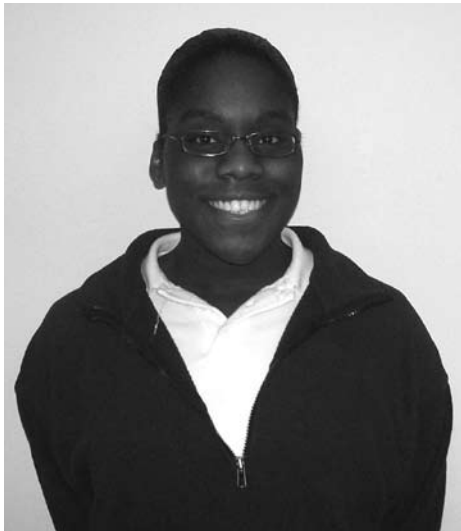
The Arc of East Middlesex is looking for donations of **furniture and household goods in good condition**. If you have items to donate, please email a description of the item(s) and your name, location and phone number to mberardo@thearc.org. We're sorry; we are unable to accept clothing. Thank you!

New Members

Welcome to:
Leila Alonso
Stephanie DeGeorge
Pamela Dunn
Heather Flynn
Fang Liu
Michelle Murray
Annette Parsons
Kelly Spina
Robert Sweezey
Laura Wilson

Elizabeth Apraku Receives Outstanding Community Youth Leader Award

*Honored by North Shore
Black Women's Association*



Outstanding Teen Leader – Elizabeth Apraku

What a pleasure to open up the program book for the North Shore Black Women's Association's Martin Luther King Jr. luncheon to find that Elizabeth Apraku had been honored with their Outstanding Community Youth

Leader Award! Elizabeth is the sister of Michael and George Apraku Jr., who participate in the Arc's recreation and family support programs. She has participated in our Teen Sibshops and her many volunteer contributions include having served as a pool buddy for our swim program.

Elizabeth is a senior and an honor student at Mystic Valley Regional High School in Malden. In addition to achieving academic success, she has developed an impressive resume of extracurricular activities and community contributions. Elizabeth is a member of the Mystic Valley Swim Club, the Varsity Coed Swimming and Diving Team, the Key Club, the Literary Magazine, the Math Club, the Student Action Service Club and the National Honor Society. She has volunteered her time to the NSBWA, the Perkins School for the Blind, the Early Learning Center, Camp Sunshine and the Bread of Life. She stopped by the Arc recently to bring us up to date on her latest endeavors.

How do you find time for all of your activities?

"I explored different opportunities during the first few years of high school and what I discovered is that I like swimming and working with kids," said Elizabeth, who works as a life guard and

swim instructor at the Malden YMCA. Has having two brothers with disabilities shaped the person you are?

"Because there are two of them, I stepped out of the sister role and have almost been like a third parent. That just made me a lot more mature and more sensitive to people who are different," Elizabeth said.

Elizabeth's academic achievements and community contributions have attracted the attention of a number of prestigious colleges and universities.

Have you decided on a school?

"I'm leaning toward the University of New York at Albany because of their top notch pre-med program. There are also a lot of attractions in the area because it's the state capitol, yet at the same time it's suburban," said Elizabeth.

So you're interested in studying medicine?

"I'd like to be a Pediatric Neurologist. I like working with kids and obviously I know what it's like to have a sibling with a disability. I want to learn more about neurological disorders," said Elizabeth.

Congratulations and best wishes Elizabeth. We look forward to addressing you as Dr. Apraku!

Upcoming Events

BENEFITS CLINIC

Have questions about SSI, Mass Health applications or other government benefits? Susan Sewell from the Family Resource Center will be holding a Benefits Clinic on **Friday, May 2nd** from 9:30-12:00. Bring your questions on how your family may benefit from these resources. The Benefits Clinic is just one of the special programs that is being offered in our new Family Resource Room. Make sure you are on the FRIENDS (Family resource Information Exchange for Disability Solutions) email list to receive monthly updates. Contact km@thearc.org or call Kerry @781 942-4888 x 4015

SIBSHOPS

Saturday, May 3rd at our very own Sibshop location at the Williams School, Danvers. For school age kids 7-12. Contact Kerry for more information.

INFORMATIONAL FRIDAYS

Join us at The Family Resource Center on **Friday mornings from 9:00-Noon** in our newly designed resource room. Staff will be at hand to assist you in locating resources and offering information and guidance on how to access benefits that are available. Bring the kids and let them play on the new IBM KidSmart computer especially designed for children or watch their favorite videos on the TV. Meet other parents, exchange

ideas and learn about new resources. Special programs will be scheduled monthly on a variety of topics. Can't attend on Fridays? Evening hours are also available by appointment. Contact Kerry Mahoney 781-942-4888 x 4015 or km@thearc.org.

RUN FOR THE ARC

Sunday, September 14, 2008. Runners & Walkers, start training now! The 5K is held the morning of the Melrose Chamber of Commerce Victorian Fair and starts at the Melrose Family YMCA.

RICHARD TUCKER MEMORIAL DINNER & AUCTION

Please save the date: our Annual Dinner & Auction will be held **Monday, November 10**, 5:30 p.m. at the Peabody Marriott, 8A Centennial Drive. We will honor Joseph Valenzano, Jr., President & CEO of EP Global Communications, parent company of Exceptional Parent magazine as our Man of the Year.

From The Center for Emerging Artists

May 3 - July 10, Sean Cusack Solo Show at My Low Carb Life, 136 Andover St. (Rte. 114), Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 646-9566.

May 8 - July 18, Summer Group Show at DMR, 27 Water Street, Wakefield, MA.

May 17-18, from 11:00AM to 6:00PM. SoWa Art Walk, South of Washington Street, South Boston, MA. Please check our website for complete details.

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

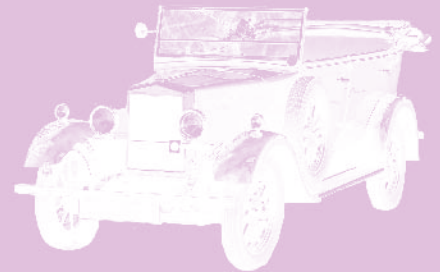
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On-line Car Donation Program

To donate a car online, visit our web site at www.theemarc.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@theemarc.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.**



Celebration a Success – Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director of The Arc of East Middlesex (r), thanks DMR Commissioner Elin Howe (l) for serving as a presenter at the Arc's 15th Annual Spring Awards Ceremony