



"working to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in every community"



The ARC of Greater Beaumont

Fall 2011

Arc Holiday Cards for a Cause



The 4th Annual Holiday Cards for a Cause is underway. This project is a partnership between the Arc and local businesses that sponsor the production of holiday and all-occasion greeting cards. These cards are created by Arc members with intellectual developmental disabilities and sold throughout Southeast Texas. The cards will go on sale October 29th at the Holiday Cards for a Cause Kickoff. The kickoff event will be held at Westgate Memorial Baptist Church where local high school organizations will leave to sell

the cards throughout pre-selected neighborhoods. A thank you Chicken Spaghetti dinner, sponsored by Cooks 2 Dozen, will be held that night for all sponsors and card artists. The vital fundraising project gives our members a sense of pride and supports Arc programs including adult social club, Southeast Texas Self Advocates, family fun days, dances, day trips, summer day camps, and parent networking and support.

***Sponsorship opportunities are still available for both Arc Holiday Cards and the Card Kickoff Event. Cards will be sold for \$10.00 per pack. For more information please contact the Arc of Greater Beaumont office at (409)784-5556 or amanda.ferugson@arcobmt.org.**



Self Advocate Spotlight

A showcase of the outstanding men and women whose leadership, community service and positive attitudes exemplify Self Advocates in Southeast Texas



Rebecca Alford is an active member of the Arc and the Southeast Texas Self Advocates. Rebecca has been a model in the 2010 and 2011 Arc Celebrity Style Show and Dinner. She recently represented the Southeast Texas

Self Advocates at the Annual Texas Advocates Convention in San Antonio. Rebecca and her fellow self advocates learned how to advocate for themselves, as well as how to make a difference in the community. Rebecca's favorite part of being in the Arc is meeting new friends.



Criss Roberts is an active member of the Arc and the Southeast Texas Self Advocates. He often shares his experiences with the group. Criss was a model in the 2011 Arc Celebrity Style Show and Dinner. Criss is an avid sports fan. His favorite team

is the Houston Astros. Criss also enjoys going to Arc Dances and Social Club activities. His favorite part of participating in these events is getting to spend time with his friends and learning new dance moves.

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A New Call to Action

The Arc invites all people with I/DD, their parents, siblings, other family members and friends, their employers, government, business and community leaders and all people of good conscience to join together in a new movement to promote and protect the rights of people with I/DD to live, to learn, to work, and to participate, alongside people without disabilities, in all aspects of community life.

Out of the shadows... into the light

1. The Arc is calling on 1 million Americans with I/DD, their parents, their siblings and other family member, their colleagues at work, their neighbors and friends, and other people of good conscience, to join our movement by signing up at www.thearc.org/joinwithus.
2. As part of this movement, The Arc is establishing:
 - a. **National Self-Advocates Council** to enlist people with I/DD to speak out for themselves and support them in doing so.
 - b. **National Siblings Leadership Council** to enlist the involvement and leadership of their brothers and sisters.
3. The Arc is calling on people with I/DD and their families to tell your stories. Tell your neighbor, tell your friend, tell your congressman. Tell your story on our website at www.thearc.org/sharewithus.
4. Participate in The Arc's social media contest, by submitting a brief story and photo or video on the Arc's Facebook fan page (facebook.com/thearcus) now through August 14, 2011 that chronicles the success, as well as the challenges faced, by people with I/DD.

Out of the shadows... into the voting booth.

In preparation for the November 6, 2012 election, there's a lot of work to do to put the issues and concerns of people with I/DD on the agenda of all candidates for public office. The Arc is calling on people with I/DD and their families to:

1. Visit and deliver a message to their Member of Congress at their district offices and in Washington, DC that Congress shouldn't try to balance the budget on the backs of people with I/DD.
2. Show up at every town hall meeting, candidate forum and debate and ask incumbents, as well as candidates for public office, what they are going to do to support the right of people with I/DD to live in the community.
3. Ask candidates to promise to actively support the right of people with I/DD to live in the community.
4. Register to vote.
5. Volunteer for and donate to candidates who are committed to upholding, protecting and supporting the rights of people with I/DD to live in the community.
6. Vote on Election Day.

Out of the shadows... into the workplace

The Arc is calling on people with I/DD and their families to reach out to individual employers, as well as chambers of commerce and other business and professional organizations, and seek their commitment to dramatically expand employment opportunities for people with I/DD.

1. Ask every employer who is not currently employing anyone with I/DD to hire at least one worker with I/DD in the coming year
2. Ask employers who currently are employing people with I/DD to tell their stories about how employing people with I/DD has enhanced their workforce and improved their business performance by visiting www.thearc.org/workwithus. We will share success stories and promote businesses hiring individuals with I/DD through our publications and social media.

The Arc invites businesses to work with our 700+ state and local chapters throughout the U.S. to increase employment for people with I/DD until the rate of employment is comparable to that for the adult population as a whole.

Out of the shadows... into the halls of government

The Arc is also calling on Congress, the Administration, and the States for immediate

action on several fronts. There are a number of legislative and regulatory actions that can have a significant positive impact on the lives of people with I/DD. The following are the highest priorities:

1. **Congress and the States should not balance their budgets on the backs of people with I/DD and their families. Funding for programs, services and supports for people with I/DD must be sustained and expanded.** People with I/DD and their families have much to lose if the social safety net is dismantled. Federal safety net programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), food stamps and others must be protected from deep cuts. Medicaid, in particular, entitlement to the program must be maintained. Nationwide it provides 78% of the long term services and supports for people with I/DD. It provides access to health care for the majority of Americans with I/DD.
2. **In any reform of Medicaid, Congress should reverse the institutional bias in Medicaid and make home and community-based services mandatory, and institutional care the exception.**
3. **Congress should reject any attempt to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and states should move forward to implement the law.** Maintaining the critical health insurance reforms, expansion of eligibility for Medicaid to 133% of poverty, health improvements contained in the Act is of paramount importance to people with the I/DD. In fact, the Affordable Care Act is the single most important piece of legislation for people with I/DD since passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act more than 20 years ago.

The Administration and Congress should support full implementation of the Community First Choice Option and other provisions of the Affordable Care Act that will expand home and community based services under Medicaid. The States should take advantage of these new options. The Community Living Assistance services and Supports (CLASS) long term insurance plan must be fully developed and put into place so that workers can pay premiums and be fully covered (without impoverishing themselves for Medicaid eligibility) in the event they need long term services and supports.

4. **Congress should reintroduce and enact into law the "Achieving a Better Life Experience" (ABLE) Act.** Families of people with I/DD should be allowed to save for the long term support needs of their loved one with disabilities with the same tax advantages that are available for families to save for their children's college education.
5. **Congress should fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind) and the Higher Education Act.** This means increasing the funding for early intervention services, special education services, teacher training, parental support, transitions and other education services. **Congress should also amend IDEA to make it easier for parents to challenge schools** when they are not living up to their obligations to provide appropriate education to all students with disabilities. **And Congress should expand federal support for programs helping students with I/DD attend colleges and universities.**
6. **Congress should dramatically expand the availability of employment support strategies such as supported employment and customized employment** to achieve more community employment, including fully funding employment and vocational rehabilitation programs. Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, the state workforce programs and the state Developmental Disabilities programs must **develop the infrastructure to support transition from school to work** and community life. Congress and the Social Security Administration should improve and **simplify work incentives** for people with disabilities so that it is easier for more people to try to work while maintaining health care and some income support if needed.
7. **Congress should expand the availability of housing supports** by adequately funding and implementing the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010 and increasing funding for Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and other federal housing programs.
8. **Congress should help people with I/DD and their families to address their unmet needs by establishing separate federal funding for family supports and for self-advocacy under the Developmental Disabilities Act.**

Over the longer term, there are a number of other federal laws and programs that support education, employment and community living for people with I/DD that need to be strengthened. The Arc's detailed Legislative Agenda for the 112th Congress is at www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid=3084

Information about states laws and programs is available on the websites of state chapters of The Arc. To find a state chapter visit www.thearc.org/page.aspx?pid2214

Arc Program Activities



Dress & Tie Drive

The Arc is hosting a dress and tie drive in preparation for our Winter formal. Please contact the office if you would like to make a donation or are in need of formal attire. We can be reached at the Arc office at 409-784-5556 or arcofbmt@arcofbmt.org.



September Country Hoe Down Dance

What: Grab Yer' partner and join us for a stomping good time.
When: Thurs. Sept. 29th
Time: 7:00 to 9:00pm
Where: Nutty Jerry's Winnie, TX
Cost: \$2.00 for pictures



Arc Family Fun Day: Fall

Festival *16 & Under with Family
When: Saturday, Oct. 8th
Where: The Wilson Family Home
Time: 3:00 to 5:00 pm
Cost: 2 Canned Goods per person, \$4.00 per pumpkin to paint

Self Advocate Trip: NASA

When: Saturday, Oct. 15th
Where: NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston, TX
Time: 8:00am-6:00pm
Cost: \$20 per person/ SETXSA & volunteers only.
 RSVP; Limited Availability

November

Try on Day at the Holiday Inn
When: Saturday, Nov. 5th
Where: Holiday Beaumont Plaza
Time: 3:00 to 5:00pm
RSVP required to obtain formal attire and attend the try-on day.

Social Club: Thanksgiving Feast

When: Thursday, November 17th
Where: Spindletop Center
Time: 6:00 to 8:00pm
Cost: \$3.00 for Arc & SETXSA Members, \$6.00 for nonmembers.

Social Club and dances are for adults with disabilities age 18 and older. Reservations are required. Please RSVP with Amanda Ferguson by the deadline date noted for each activity. Call (409)784-5556 or email at amanda.ferguson@arcofbmt.org.

Upcoming: Southeast Texas Self Advocates Trip to NASA Johnson Space Center

Join us as we explore the Johnson Space Center, Mission Control, and have lunch!!

What: Self Advocate day trip

When: Saturday, October 15, 2011

Time: 8:00am to 6:00pm

Cost: \$20.00 per person attending/ SETXSA & Volunteers only.

For more information contact: Teri Hawthorne 409-784-5544 or teri.hawthorne@arcofbmt.org



Southeast Texas Self Advocate Meetings

Affiliated with Texas Advocates, the Southeast Texas Self Advocates' mission is to empower its members through leadership, self-advocacy, and continuing education. Members who have disabilities, age 18 and older, meet once a month, on the first Thursday of every month.

Contact Teri Hawthorne at (409)784-5544 for more information

Meeting Dates:

Thursday, October 6th - in the Spindletop Center Training Room 7:00 to 8:00 pm

Thursday, November 3- in the Spindletop Center Training Room 7:00 to 8:00 pm

Thursday, December 2nd - at the Winter Formal at the Holiday in Beaumont Plaza 6:00- 9:00pm

Letter from the Southeast Texas Self Advocate President : Brandi Herron

Hi, my name is Brandi Herron. I am the president of the Southeast Texas Self Advocate. We are a group of people ages 18 and older. We go out into the community and speak for ourselves, for our rights.



We have a trip coming up in October, we are going to NASA.

Every year we take a day trip to somewhere fun and every year it is a different place that we go. We have guest speakers and a lot of different things. Sometimes we actually just sit and draw pictures of how we feel about things that people in the world say to us because we have difficult in this world.

We also do canned food drives during October and November. Last year I went and dropped off food, sorted it, and unloaded it at some other place. I even had the opportunity to put labels on the envelopes for the lady that was mailing things out. I like being the Southeast Texas Self Advocates president. We really have a great time in the group. I am looking forward to more fun things with the group.

The Arc of Greater Beaumont Presents

FALL FESTIVAL

Fun for the whole family!!

Pumpkin Painting, Carnival Games, Hay Rides, Fishing, Costume Contest, Food and Fun!

When: Saturday October 8th

Time: 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Costume Contest at 4:00 pm

Where: 4366 Sea Hawk Lane
Sour Lake, TX 77659

Cost: Admission: 2 canned goods
to be donated to Some Other Place

*This event is open to families with children 16 and under.

To ensure we have enough materials and volunteers for all to enjoy the event, please RSVP by October 3rd with the number attending and number of pumpkins you would like to paint.

RSVP by calling (409)784-5556 or email teri.hawthorne@arcobmt.org



Directions to the Festival:

*Address: 4366 Sea Hawk Lane
Sour Lake, TX 77659*

- 1) Take Hwy 105 to Sour Lake
- 2) Turn Right on Hwy 326
- 3) About 3 miles down you will see a Big Thicket Feed Store, the very next street to the left is Sea Hawk (*look for Orange & Yellow balloons*)
- 4) Turn left on Sea Hawk and go down to the end of the street (*1/4 to 1/2 miles down*)
- 5) At the end of the street take a right and follow the road to a brick gated entrance, follow signs to the event.

Southeast Texas Self Advocates Visit San Antonio



On August 26th the Southeast Texas Self Advocates traveled to San Antonio for the Annual Texas Advocates Conference. After registration, they spent Friday night at Morgan's Wonderland, the world's first ultra accessible family fun park. It includes a sensory village, train rides, off-road adventures, fishing, wheelchair accessible rides and much more. There they were able to tour the park, enjoy some of the activities, and were treated to fajitas and ice cream. Saturday, they attended several educational sessions. Here they learned how to get what they need, to advo-

cate for themselves, about employment, and how to help others use more respectful language, among other things. During the afternoon they enjoyed supervised free time in the indoor and outdoor pools at the hotel. The evening event included an awards banquet where outstanding advocates and leaders were recognized. Later, they danced the night away in the Grand Ballroom to reward themselves for a weekend of learning.



Arc Annual Dinner & Celebrity Style Show



On April 29, 2011, The Annual Style Show and Dinner was held at the Holliday Inn Suites in Beaumont. The audience was once again, treated to a magical evening, by our "Stars" of the night. Over 60 Models outfitted in sponsored by Dillard's and Macy's department stores took to the stage to showcase their unique styles. Kelli and Bob Phillips graciously served as Emcee's for the event. Honorees of the night included Dr. J. Coffy Pieternelle and Mayor Becky Ames. The Arc extends our many thanks to the hard work and dedication of the board members and volunteers who made this event a success. Because of you our "Stars" were able to let their lights shine bright on that magical evening.

Outstanding Model



Hamshire-Fannett Middle School staff and students really know how to support one of their own! Matthew Files was selected to participate in the Arc of Greater Beaumont's Annual Celebrity Style Show. Matthew needed a sponsor and HFMS was happy to do it! With the generous donations from staff and students, Matthew was able to strut his stuff down the runway. In total Matthew collected over \$300! He not only had enough for his sponsorship, Matthew collected enough to cover his fees for summer camp at the Arc! Way to go, HFMS!!

A Word from the Arc Board of Directors President... Jada Kelley



I was honored to have been selected as the Arc's president for the next two years. I have been a board member of the ARC since the first meeting in 2004. My two autistic children, Rachel and Jared were at the ages of 20 and 17, so I was concerned about what would happen to them after high school. The ARC has been a great resource for me to help find them group homes where they are happy and thriving. The many ARC

events keep their adult lives filled with fun activities and provide them a sense of social well-being.

It is hard to imagine our community without the ARC of Greater Beaumont. Southeast Texas has individuals who are intellectually disabled. Recognizing and filling this need with love and support from family members, friends, and businesses in the

community is what we are all about. We have watched our community embrace the members of our organization and as a result we are able to provide a growing number of services. Without our programs and events, many in this population would sit home and not have a way to meet others and take part in social events. I

want to thank the board of directors, committees and our office staff for their hard work and commitment to the ARC. We have had a transition in our Office Manager position this year. We said both a heartfelt goodbye to Caitlin Kruger and welcome to Amanda Ferguson, our new Office Manager. Our Program Manager, Terri Hawthorne continues to run our many programs for the ARC.

I am looking forward to another active year and encourage you to be a part of our growing organization by volunteering and serving. Please email me at jadakelley@sbcglobal.net with any suggestions or questions you may have. Thanks for the opportunity to serve as President.

The Arc of Greater Beaumont Board of Directors

Officers	Cindy Barnes
Jada Kelley	Joy Barten
President	Joey Catalano
Paula Pratt	Alice Day
Immediate Past President	Sandy Drake
	Marissa Gerik
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Secretary	Shawn Sparrow
Dave Mulcahy	Janice Watkins
Treasurer	Southeast Texas Self Advocate President
Board Members	
Toye Babb	Brandi Herron
Amanda Baldwin	

**Board Meetings: 1st Monday of Every Other Month
6:00 p.m. at Arc Administrative Office
Arc Administrative Office Hours
Monday Thru Friday- 8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Amanda Ferguson- Office Manager
Teri Hawthorne- Program Manager/ Self Advocate Advisor
Phone Number-(409)784-5556
Website: www.arcofbmt.org**

Welcome New Arc Members

Become a Member today and receive the following benefits...
Reduced fees for events, first pick on limited admission events, up-to-date information on Arc of Texas and Arc of U.S. information, and much much more!

Brittnie Francis	Lee & Anna Sheek
Karen Jensen	Nathan Cross
Rosalind Lawson	Judge Donald Floy & Marie
Sherri Owens	Wanda Porter
Dora Reed	Jandera Cooper
Amy Moss	Cindy Baker
Kindle Higganbotham	Mayor Becky & Rodney Ames
Vicki Wilcox	Leslie Dean
Victoria St. John	Pheobe Dishman
Cindy Barnes	Marilyn Uptmore
David & Hailee Willis	

Everyone's a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life feeling stupid ~ Albert Einstein



**The Arc
of Greater Beaumont**

655 S. 8th St.
Beaumont, TX 77701
(409)784-5556

www.arcofbmt.org

Creating endless possibilities...