

# Challenger

A NEWSLETTER THAT CONNECTS, ENGAGES AND INFORMS

## Happy Birthday Arc Park!

We are so excited for the warm weather and for opening our gates to the community. We want everyone to enjoy the inclusive playground and festive mural located on our campus. Now that our Arc Park is one year old, we have been making some additions to enhance your experience and to be even more inclusive.

Thanks to a grant by the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), we have a new retractable shade structure on our pergola. This will allow those with sun sensitivities to be outdoors on very sunny days without worry. Gratitude to Hall & Hall Engineers for installing this as part of their United Way Day of Caring project. This DHHS grant also allowed us to purchase and once delivered, to install two (2) additional free standing shade structures for seating areas, so there are cool spaces to sit and enjoy. Another Day of Caring group from Aegon donned our fences with some fun designs to add personality. Finally, our wheelchair swing is getting a face-lift, and we have a few outstanding grants which we hope to receive so we can purchase additional communication, sensory, and adaptive equipment.

*We invite you to stop by this summer to  
enjoy The Arc Park and to celebrate  
the abilities in each of us!*





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# From the Director's Desk

Hello Arc Friends and Family!

Summer is almost here! This means many fun things happening at The Arc. Kicking off summer, we will be hosting “Party at The Arc Park” by opening our new play area to the public during the second farmer’s market of the summer! Come downtown on Saturday, June 1 from 10-1 pm and stop by our campus for some fun, doughnuts, and a beverage while your loved ones play in our inclusive and safe park. This event is made possible through the generosity of Corda, formerly Linn Area Credit Union. Also, save the date for our first ever “Touch-a-Truck” which will be held at the Cedar Rapids Kirkwood Campus on Saturday, August 10th from 11-2 pm, with a sensory hour from 11-12 pm. This event is FREE!

Summer programming will begin in June for both Day Habilitation and Daycare. This year, programming will be at The Arc’s campus and we are excited to have our adults and children in the same space with access to The Arc Park outside. To serve all of the children who are on our waiting list, we will host one group of teens at Veritas Church. They have offered a few classrooms to us for the summer and the great thing is, they are right on the other side of our Arc Park!

In July, The Arc will be rolling out our new Strategic Plan. We are excited for the direction we are taking, which is to continue to invest in our people, enhance training and development of staff, and improve access and quality of programming. One of the biggest impacts of our current Strategic Plan was the development of our updated mission and values, as well as our first vision statement. This change has helped us refine our scope of possibilities, including starting a new program that focuses on those children and adults who have an intellectual or developmental disability and a mental or behavioral health disorder. It has also allowed us to expand our advocacy, impacting more people across the state with our initiatives and Let’s Chat series.

More great things are to come! But we do need your help. It is important that people hear your stories and the impact The Arc has on your family and loved ones. We also want to hear from you about what we can do better. And, we would love it if you would refer people to work here so we can address the unmet needs of so many who are waiting for staffing. Thanks for being our partners and part of our Arc Family!

With gratitude,



Theresa Lewis  
Executive Director



Theresa Lewis

# Advocacy Corner

## Alert Iowa

The Arc of East Central Iowa is proud to partner with Linn County Emergency Management to support residents signing up for Alert Iowa. State and local officials can utilize this single, statewide notification system to share emergency and public safety messages with residents. All resident's information is protected, will never be sold, and is only accessible to officials for emergency purposes. 92 counties are currently participating in the Alert Iowa program.



By registering, residents can:

- Receive geo-targeted alerts
- Choose the types of alerts they receive (i.e., weather, emergency, matters of public safety and more)
- Decide how to be notified (i.e., phone call, email, text, or all the above)

The Arc is committed to increasing awareness and ensuring our individuals, families and staff remain safe in emergency situations. **Alert Iowa is a replacement to Linn County's previous Special Needs Registry.** When registering, residents can enter information specific to their disability needs, mobility devices and power dependence to alert local emergency management of needed support during an emergency event.

Residents can sign up independently by visiting <https://homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/alert-iowa/> and selecting county of residence or downloading the Alert Iowa app from the Apple Store or Google Play Store. The Arc of East Central Iowa participants, families, and staff living in Linn County can receive assistance in registering by contacting Kristen Krambeer, Advocacy Program Coordinator at [kkrambeer@arceci.org](mailto:kkrambeer@arceci.org).

To watch the Alert Iowa information video visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHL55Inv8eI&t=16s>  
To review the Alert Iowa FAQs visit <https://homelandsecurity.iowa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/English-Digital-Alert-Iowa-One-Sheet.pdf>.

## Let's Chat

Have you seen our new series "**Let's Chat**"? A 10-minute series connecting individuals diagnosed with a disability, their caregivers, and community members with professionals on topics impacting the disability community.

**Let's Chat!**

Visit our [YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/@thearcofcentraliowa6376) (<https://www.youtube.com/@thearcofcentraliowa6376>) to watch past trainings and subscribe for future content.

Here are our recent Let's Chat conversations:

- [Let's Chat: Integrated Health Home \(IHH\)](#)
- [Let's Chat: Iowa Businesses Against Trafficking \(IBAT\)](#)
- [Let's Chat: Project SEARCH](#)
- [Let's Chat: TSA Cares \(Transportation Security Administration\)](#)
- [Let's Chat: Customized Employment](#)
- [Let's Chat: Journey of Hope The Ability Experience](#)

Also, be sure to **LIKE** our [Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/arceci/) (<https://www.facebook.com/arceci/>) and [Subscribe to our Email List](#). (Go to [arceci.org](http://arceci.org) and at the bottom you will find "Email Subscription") to stay up to date with The Arc and see new content as it is released.

# Services Spotlight

## Project SEARCH

St. Luke's Hospital, Iowa Vocational Rehab, and The Arc of East Central Iowa have been in partnership for the last 10 years with Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is an international employment training program for young adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, ages 18-30, and who have graduated from high school (or the equivalent). Project SEARCH combines classroom instruction with workplace internships that better prepare individuals for competitive employment. The training program is nine months in length.

In addition to classroom instruction, the interns spend the bulk of their day in internships. Each intern will complete 3 internships within the hospital setting; each internship is 10 weeks long and the interns work 20 hours per week. The hospital offers a wide variety of internship opportunities for the interns to gain work experience. The interns can gain work experience in departments such as: Dietary, Linen Services, Environmental Services, Human Resources, Infusion Center, Therapy Gym, Radiology/Imaging and a variety of patient floors.



“

*I love learning about new things and meeting new people.*

“



*When going into Project SEARCH, I was nervous I wouldn't do so well, but when I started that all changed and I learned a lot about my job interests and skills.*



“

*Project SEARCH is the best; I have a better understanding about the workforce.*





# Welcome To The Arc



Hi, I'm Darona Perry and I'm the new IHH Care Coordinator.

I am "the Helper," we are people in the social category who prefer to work with others. I tend to be highly verbal, expressive, and get along well in groups. I prefer the team approach to problem solving. I am often describe as personable, cooperative and understanding.

I also enjoy coaching basketball, volunteering, graphic designing, and photography.

## Retirement

This summer, we will celebrate the retirement of our Director of Finance, Philip Schramp! Philip started officially working at The Arc in October 2018, but prior, he volunteered in the finance department, helping to improve processes and documentation. Not only does Philip have great accounting skills, he also is a master chef, a thespian who can be found in multiple theaters across Cedar Rapids, and a proud grandfather. We are sad to see Philip go, but know he is going to enjoy his free time and deserves to have fun after all his hard work and dedication to The Arc. Here is a little more about Philip:

### *What did you love most about working at The Arc?*

I am continually amazed by our staff and their passion to support our participants.

### *Prior to working at The Arc you spent time in for-profits.*

### *What was different about working here?*

The first thing that comes to mind is that being part of providing essential services to the population we serve is significantly more rewarding than providing a product to the general public that you never see.

### *What is one (or two) food you prepared that was LOVED at Arc potlucks?*

Theresa (our Executive Director) loved my fried plantains!

### *What was one thing you always looked forward to (event or meeting)?*

I have always enjoyed our Arc March event. I don't know how anyone could feel anything but pure joy at that gathering! I know I always do.

### *What fun things are you planning to do in retirement?*

Spending more time with our three grandchildren, and with the 4th that arrives in July, is top of the list! I also look forward to traveling and being able to have time to be more involved with theater.

***All the best to you, Philip! We have been fortunate to work with you and appreciate your service to our agency and people with disabilities!***





# Participant Spotlight



## Megan Drogell

### About Me.

I am 28 years old and live in Cedar Rapids.  
I have two older sisters and three cats; Patches, Max, and Lily.

### Favorite Arc Activities?

Movie overnights!

### Favorite Arc Memory?

I really enjoyed watching the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

### Favorite Hobby?

I love to color. I also enjoy making holiday cookies with my mom.

### Favorite Outdoor Activities?

I enjoy blowing bubbles and walking the nature trails.

### Favorite Foods?

Hotdogs and brownies!

## 2024 Arc March

Thank you for supporting our 27th annual Arc March! We had such a wonderful day filled with food, fun and friends. People danced, played games, interacted with our mascots and, of course, we marched. We have so much to celebrate. Our Arc family is so fantastic!

It takes many people to pull off an event of this size. Many, many thanks to everyone who donated, attended and volunteered! The Arc March is our premiere fundraiser each year and its success is so important. All funds raised stay right here and help fill funding gaps in our programs and services. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for making this year's march such a happy and fun success!



# You Make a Difference

Thank you for all of your continued generous contributions to The Arc. This edition of the Challenger recognizes volunteers, donors and members who generously supported The Arc from February through April 2024.

## Thank You

### General Donations

Andrew Bellagamba, Aktion Club, Terry Bergen, BladeWorks, Jane Bockenstedt, Cargill, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, Tyler Clark, Sue & Joe Cunningham, Michael & Cora Engelken, Jessica Fahey, Katherine Hance, David Harris, Ruth Hojka, International Paper, John Jayne, Ann Jeffries, J.M. O'Malley's, John Deere, Justice Electric, Jeffrey Keslar, Paul Kiecksee (Modern Woodman), Mary Koohy, Joan Ledesma, Diana Ledford, Clayton Lindwall, Lucky's on 16th, Lynette Marling, MidAmerican Aerospace, Moco Bar LLC, Iris Muchmore, Nicole Ohrt, Mary Parrish, Susan Polglaze, James Potts, Raygun, Raytheon Technologies, Tonya Reece, Raining Rose, Randall Rings, Jess Rockwell, Lynda Schimberg, Joel Schmidt, Anthony Schwendinger, Amy Shoemaker, Debbie Smith, James & Cindy Smothers, Patrick Stepanek, Shelly Strellner, Subway 16713 LLC, Joseph Terfler, The Standard, Thrivent, Connie & Kenneth Wagner

### Memorials

#### Bill Conway

Linda Chesmore, James & Lori Conway, Philip & Gretchen Gionet, Hills Bank, Pamela Kauffman, Anna Kregel, Kathleen Kregel, John Kregel, Tim Kregel, Matthew & Kaleen Mikulski, Sheryl & Patrick O'Connell, Steve Pavich, Jean & James Rogers, Kathryn & Kathy Schmidt, Betsy Jo Schmuck, Kathy & Joe Stohlmeyer

#### Vic Daman

Mark & Denise Mitchell

#### Tony Haugh

Susan & Philip Hershner

#### Bill Quinby

John & Mary Campbell, Randall Krejci, Linn Area Credit Union, Pat, Kris & Karl Owara, John & Linda Ryal

#### Sara Smith

Ryan Smith

#### Cody Whittaker

Cheri Whittaker

## Volunteers Hours - 191

Kristen Aller, Nancy Barkowski, Steve Bosking, Adam Brown, Mary Brownfield, Chick-fil-A, Melissa Christy, Teri Cooper, Jeff Corrigan, Bob Davis, Dave Dostal, Melissa Dostal, Jessica Fahay, Terese Fisher, Michele Foreman, Maria Gaffney, Teri Gibson, Nate Haas, Tammy Hartgrave, Brad Hauge, Christopher Johnson, Kennedy Best Buddies, Alea Kious, Shelby Kobliska, Mark Kobliska, Jeff Koffron, Linn Mar Best Buddies, Cherri Lock, Valerie Mazzone, Carol Meade, Margaret Meier, Jim Messina, Mary Miller, Shannon Morhfeld, Mr. Shucks, Ben Muholland, Jackie Nau, Michael Neuerburg, Melia Ortherg, Rex Phelps, Tora Phelps, Playtime Poppy, Danielle Rodriguez, Shelby Roth, Walt Roth, Kristin Schaefer, Karen Schumacher, Linn County Sherrieff, Erica Smothers, Emma Sorg, Carlie Sorg, Mindy Sorg, Amy Stevens, Jake Stigers, Shelly Strellner, Texas Roadhouse, Tara Toyne, Toni Whiteside, Tina Wiggins, Blake Wilkinson

## Membership

### Arc Angel

Scott & Lisa Griffin, Phil & Laura White

### Arc Builder

Tom & Kathleen Aller, Don & Gwen Eells, Carol Meade, Pete & Delaine Petersen, Sharon Wagner

### Arc Friend

Scott & JoAnne Carbaugh, Arie & Peggy DeJong, Kathleen Good, Kristen & Don Hatfield, Brad Hauge, Eric & Ann Hearn, Verne & Joyce Hosek (Bill & Judy King Memorial Fund), Gary & Bev Kotowske, Randy Krejci, David & Mary Rater, Joel & Sandra Schmidt, Sara & Dale Todd, Keith Wright

### Arc Advocate

Jared Roach & Amy Belice, Patty & Jim Booth, Jenny & Steve Bosking, Jim Branam, June Cach, Anne Davis, Harvey & Ellie Denlinger, Christine & Charles Gaal, Ron & Pat Gonder, Troy Burckhart & Sara Griffin, Ken & Sue Kleinmeyer, Cherri & Joe Lock, Christopher & Erin Meyer, George & Barbara Neff, Dallas & Twila Nissen, Herb & Marilyn Schaefer, Kathy Shelton, Ray & Gloria Short, Raakhee & Niranjana Singh, Marilyn Sippy, James & Cindy Smothers, Tyler Smothers, Bob & Kay Spading, Curtis & Mary Updegraff, Lisa Williams, Tim & Sue Winegarden

## Business Shoutouts

We wanted to take a moment to highlight some of the businesses doing great things with The Arc and working with us through our Supported Employment Program. **We THANK YOU!**

### Vinyl Emporium - Located at 1120 2nd St. SE

KUDOS to Dennis Hite, owner of Vinyl Emporium, who has allowed The Arc to complete some activities at the record shop. Activities are important steps in the Discovery process of Customized Employment Services when looking to confirm a theme a job seeker might have.

### Guitar Center - Located at 4651 1st Ave SE

A BIG THANK YOU to the Guitar Center for working hand in hand with us in completing numerous activities and job shadows. It has been an ongoing request that The Arc has called upon The Guitar Center to stop by with job candidates to check out the music, guitars, and recording areas and continually be amazed by the inventory and staff. Thank you in assisting job seekers to see what is out there in the world of music.

### The DaaBIN Store - Located in Collins Road Square

The DaaBIN Store has partnered with The Arc to allow some of our individuals to complete Workplace Readiness Assessments and Work Adjustment Trainings. The assessments and trainings are important tools that allow The Arc to help individuals reach their goal of employment.





For people with intellectual  
and developmental disabilities

Member of The Arc of Iowa & The Arc of the United States

### The Arc of East Central Iowa

680 2nd Street SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401  
Phone: 319-365-0487  
Fax: 319-365-9938  
[www.arceci.org](http://www.arceci.org)

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### Mission Statement

The Arc of East Central Iowa empowers individuals with disabilities and their families to engage in lifelong opportunities to live, learn, work, play, and advocate with full dignity and inclusion in their communities.

**Make a Difference**  
Donate at [www.arceci.org](http://www.arceci.org)



# TOUCH TRUCK -A-



**Saturday, August 10th**

**11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

**Kirkwood Community College**

North Parking Lot of Linn Hall

**Presented By:**



**Sponsored By:**



**FREE**  
**Community Event**  
*All are welcome!*

Get up close and personal with over 40 large vehicles including agricultural, construction, military, first responder, service and more all in one place!

Free will donations will be collected to support The Arc of East Central Iowa.

There will also be food trucks, music, activities and more.