

Challenger

A NEWSLETTER THAT CONNECTS, ENGAGES AND INFORMS

Arc March Went GROOVY

Our 28th annual Arc March was a wonderful day filled with friends, employees, families and so many Arc participants. Many thanks to all who came, created teams, donated, volunteered and/or served as a Community Partner. It takes a village to make big events successful and the Arc village showed up with great groovy enthusiasm! We raised just under \$40,000 and we are so grateful for everyone who helped to make that happen. All Arc March dollars stay right here at The Arc and help us bridge important funding gaps in our programs and services.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you all for helping to make this special day such a wonderful success!



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A partner agency of the
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From the Director's Desk

Hello Arc Friends and Family!

Now is the time to Advocate! The Arc and your loved ones need you now more than ever. Contact your legislators, the Governor, and everyone in a position of influence to assure they understand that Medicaid is a critical and life-saving program for children and adults with disabilities. Did you know that Medicaid is jointly financed by the federal government and states? The state administers the program, with flexibility to decide what populations and services to cover, how to deliver care, and how much to reimburse providers. This joint funding is called a 'match' – think of it like cost-sharing. Iowa receives a 64.13% federal match, which means the state (taxpayers) pays the remaining 35.87%. Iowa has a larger match than other states because it is based on per capita income. The lower the state's per capita income, the higher the match. While Iowa's Governor has said there will be no changes to Medicaid, a significant reduction in the federal match could very well impact funding and services. Now is the time to make sure your voice is heard so the proposed federal funding cuts to Medicaid do not happen! Find your legislators here: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>. Share your story. Make them understand the impact Medicaid has on the lives of real people and their families. **WE WON'T GO BACK!**

Though the future of Medicaid is uncertain, The Arc is moving forward to maintain our current level of services and grow some of our programs. We are very excited to be partnering with Veritas Church for their space that will host our Summer Daycare Program this year. We are anticipating close to 90 children in the program. Day Habilitation continues to grow, as well as our Integrated Health Homes (IHH) program. If you know a parent struggling with a child who has behaviors or an adult struggling with their own mental health, refer them to our IHH program. We are adding a new Care Coordinator and are grateful we can serve more individuals with case management services and supports.

We hope you will join us on May 31st for Arc Night at the Kernel's! It's our time to come together and celebrate. Bring your family, friends, and loved ones for a great time and connect with staff and other Arc families.

With gratitude,

Theresa Lewis,
Executive Director



Theresa Lewis

Now is the time to advocate!



Make a Big Impact with Small Steps

The Power of Payroll Deduction

There are many ways to support The Arc of East Central Iowa. Have you ever considered being a regular donor to The Arc through your employer's payroll deduction program? By choosing to donate through payroll deduction, you can make a meaningful, ongoing contribution to The Arc without having to think twice each month.

Why Payroll Deduction?

Payroll deduction allows you to give automatically from your paycheck, spreading your support across the year. Here's why it's a smart and impactful way to give:

- **Effortless Generosity**

Once you sign up, your donation is automatic. No checks to write, no forms to fill out monthly—just steady, reliable support for our mission.

- **Budget-Friendly Giving**

Even a small amount each pay period adds up over time. For example, just \$10 per paycheck turns into \$260 a year—enough to help pay for field trips, fill our gas tanks or restock our snack closet.

- **Reliable Funding for Our Work**

Monthly support allows us to plan ahead, invest in long-term projects, and respond more effectively to emerging needs in the community.

- **Tax Benefits Made Simple**

Your contributions are typically taken pre-tax, and you'll receive a year-end summary for easy tax reporting.

- **Your Gift Might be Matched!**

Many companies match payroll deduction gifts. Make your gift even more impactful by doing payroll deduction giving.



Join Us in Making a Difference

When you give through payroll deduction, you're not just making a donation—you're joining dozens of other Arc supporters who use payroll deduction to help keep our programs running and our mission alive.

To get started, contact your employer's human resources department or call/email Jenny Bosking at 319-893-6935 or jbosking@arceci.org.



Anytime that you shop at a Cedar Rapids or Marion HyVee or HyVee Drugstore save those receipts! Turn them into The Arc and we will turn them into cash for our daycare!

Day of Caring 2025

The Arc is very thankful for the help of UnityPoint and Collins Aerospace volunteers during United Way's Day of Caring! These groups helped to pull weeds, put down new mulch, fill sidewalk cracks, clean playground equipment, and put up our shade structures in anticipation of the summer weather.



All-Terrain Motorized Wheelchairs Available At Indian Creek

Indian Creek Nature Center has three all-terrain, motorized wheelchairs available for use free of charge on its seven miles of trails. Experience nature and the outdoors with a short trek through the grassland trails or take a more adventurous route through the hills of the woodlands. All-terrain wheelchairs have treaded tires that allow users to cross a greater variety of terrain, including hills, mud, snow, grass, and sand, with more ease and mobility than a traditional motorized wheelchair. These chairs are available for people of all ages and can accommodate most mobility impairments. For more information and to reserve a chair, visit: <https://indiancreeknaturecenter.org/reserve-an-all-terrain-wheelchair/>



Mental Health Matters

It's hard to believe The Arc began supporting individuals with Mental Health three years ago! We began our Integrated Health Home journey with 11 participants and have since grown to 75+. Our IHH Program works with both children and adults who have been diagnosed with a serious emotional disturbance, mental health, and behavioral diagnoses. Our amazing IHH care coordination team connects participants with resources to improve and stabilize their mental health. We are thrilled our program is growing and we can support the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of our members. Bailey Freese, our IHH Supervisor comments, ***"I'm thrilled with the growth and development of our IHH Program. I'm proud of the dedication my team has shown to support and stabilize our members!"***

Supporting mental health is critical as it strengthens communities, organizations and ensures that no one has to face their struggles alone.

For more information about The Arc's IHH visit our website: <https://arceci.org/programs-services/integrated-health-homes-ihh/>



Easter Egg Hunt

The Kennedy High School gym buzzed with excitement as it transformed into an oasis of springtime delight for Arc children and their families. The highlight for many was a gentle encounter with the Easter Bunny himself, bringing smiles to faces. Laughter echoed through the room during the book walk, the face painting station where bunnies were multiplying, and the cookie decorating station where frosting and sprinkles created cookie masterpieces. The morning concluded with the much-anticipated Easter egg hunt. With cheering from afar the children filled their baskets with brightly colored eggs and two lucky ones found a golden egg and won an easter basket of goodies.

A big shoutout to Kennedy High School for hosting the event and a special thank you to the Kennedy Student Gov't volunteers.



Participant Spotlight



Calvin Harris

About Me.

I am 54 years old and live in Cedar Rapids. I have one cat and her name is Oreo. She is the sweetest cat as can be. She likes to bother me when I don't pay attention to her.

What Do You Love About The Arc?

Oh everything, it's just happy. It makes me feel happy. It makes me feel calm. No arguing, no fighting, no nothing like that. I just love The Arc. It puts me in a mind to concentrate on what I'm doing, and it just makes me feel happy and joy.

What Do You Like About Your Friends at The Arc?

Oh, they are lovable. They ask me what I want to do, what I'd like to eat, what kind of team I like. I like the Kernels and the Hawkeyes. I don't feel ashamed with my friends. We are nice and polite.

Favorite Arc Activity or Event?

It's Arc March, because people, we just get in a happy mood and just dance and have a good time.

Favorite Hobbies?

I play guitar and my friend plays the violin, and we play music. I hope to start a band someday.

Favorite Outdoor Activities?

Riding bikes, going fishing, and other fun stuff like everyone else does.

Favorite Foods?

I can say chicken, chicken's my favorite, barbecue chicken. Yeah, barbecued chicken and grilled chicken!

Welcome to The Arc



Hi, I'm Lauren Brandt and I am the new Service & Support Manager.

I first joined The Arc as a college intern back in 2018, and this work has been my passion ever since. After a short five-month break, I'm so happy to be back! Especially working in the programs where I originally got my start. I'm excited to support our teams and bring positive energy into the work we do every day.

Outside of work, I love playing my ukulele and hanging out with my dog, Tarzan.

Hi, I'm Marissa Knoot and I am the new Groups Program Coordinator.

Some of you may already know me—I've been with The Arc since October working as a DSP in daycare and groups. Last summer I worked at Camp Courageous as a counselor and made a lot of connections with families. I also worked in the Cedar Rapids Community School District for 4 years, working with a variety of students.

I am very excited to start this new role and meet even more families in this community.



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 2025.

Thank You

General Donations

Donnelle Baker, Mark Bauernmeister, Andrew Bellagamba, Andrew Bentz, Jane Bockenstedt, Adam Brewer, Jody Bridgewater, Cargill, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, Charities Aid Foundation America, Christopher Reeve Foundaion, Tara Cornelius, Connie & Dennis Deutmeyer Foundation, Michael & Cora Engelken, Jessica Fahey, General Mills, Braden Goyke, David Harris, Todd Henry, Ruth Hojka, Iowa Women's Foundation, John Deere, Ann Jeffries, Gwen Johnson, Kari Klien StateFarm Insurance (Kari Klien), Jeffrey Keslar, Clayton Lindwall, Lynette Marling, MidAmerican Aerospace, Modern Woodmen (Paul Kieksee), Nicole Ohrt, Jessica Pleggenkuhle, Susan Polglaze, James Potts, Prairie Key Club, Randy Ramlo, Randall Rings, Raygun, Raytheon Technologies, Jess Rockwell, Tiffany Salz, Kristin Schaefer, Lynda Schimberg, Anthony Schwendinger, Shop Hop, Standard Insurance Company, Tawnya Stone, Shelly Strellner, Joseph Terfler, Thrivent, Wednesday Morning Bowlers, Johnathan & Sharen Weeks, Philip & Laura White, Patricia Wiebel

Memorials

Kendra Marie Blietz

Kent & Kay Ackerson, Eva Henderson, Michelle Hurlbut, Jorden Hurlbut, Joanne Seeberger, Barry & Linda Spreen

Sara Smith

Ryan Smith

Cody Whittaker

Cheri Whittaker

Volunteers Hours - 173

Whitney Alber, Amy Allen, Dylan Anderson, Katie Beckman-Shaull, Steve Bosking, Adam Brown,

Tara Cornelius, Jeff Corrigan, Bob Davis, Kirkwood Eagle, Jessica Fahey, Terese Fisher, Michele Foreman, Fareway Frank, Maria Gaffney, Brian Globokar, Nathan Haas, Larkin Hamilton, Tammy Hartgrave, Devin Hartl, Brad Hauge, Penny Hills Bank, Chris Johnson, Shawn Knighton, Mark Kobliska, Shelby Kobliska, Jeff Koffron, Sarah Kruse, Mia Leumoto, Cherri Lock, Doriene Loomis, McGruff, Carol Meade, Ben Mulholland, Candice Murphy, Jackie Nau, Michael Neuerburg, Kate Passmore, Tora Phelps, Rex Phelps, Jessica Pleggenkuhle, Playtime Poppy, Avery Reisen, Anna Reisen, Danielle Rodriguez, Shelby Roth, Walter Roth, Kristin Schaefer, Shucks, Carlie Sorg, Mindy Sorg, Jake Stigers, Shelly Strellner, Texas Roadhouse Armadillo, Paul Toczykowski, Deydou Traore, Nikki Wilcox, Blake Wilkinson

Membership

Arc Angel

Scott & Lisa Griffin, Mark & Denise Mitchell

Arc Builder

Tom & Kathleen Aller, Don & Gwen Eells, Sharon Wagner

Arc Friend

Dianne & John Austad, Charles & Patricia Becker, Kathleen Good, Kristen & Don Hatfield, Wendy Marner, Adam Todd, Sara & Dale Todd

Arc Advocate

Jared Roach & Amy Belice, June Cach, Christine & Charles Gaal, Ron & Pat Gonder, Ken & Sue Kleinmeyer, Cherri & Joe Lock, Dallas & Twila Nissen, Raakhee & Niranjana Singh, James & Cindy Smothers, Tyler Smothers, Frank & Mary Swiderski, Joyce & Randy Tietz, Curtis & Mary Updegraff, Keith & LaNae Weber, Lisa Williams

Wish List

From every day items to special requests. We are always in need of items to keep our office and programs running. Donations can be dropped off at The Arc's main office M-F 9 AM - 3:30 PM or shop our [Amazon Wish List](#).



Kitchen Needs

Cascade Dishwasher Pods
Kitchen Garbage Bags
Paper Plates & Paper Towels
Plastic Disposable Cups
Plastic Spoons & Forks
Ziploc Bags - Reg & Freezer (Gallon, Quart)

Snack & Cooking Activity Items

Applesauce
Canned Fruit & Vegetables
Cotton Candy Machine
Fruit Snacks / Granola Bars
Ice Cream Maker
Juice - 100% Apple or Grape
Snack Crackers & Chips - Variety Packs

General Supplies

Baby Wipes - Unscented/Sensitive
Bandages - Assorted
Deodorant - Travel Size (Men & Women)
Hand Lotion - Travel Size
Hand Sanitizer Refills / Hand Wipes
Kleenex/Tissues (Cube Boxes)
Lint Rollers
Reusable Hot/Cold Packs
Shampoo/Conditioner
Tide Pods - Free & Gentle
Toilet Paper
Toothbrush & Toothpaste - Travel Size

Office Supplies

#2 Pencils
Ball Point Pens (Blue or Black Ink)
Batteries (AAA, AA, C & D)
Construction Paper (Black) 9" x 12"
Dry Erase Markers & Washable Markers
Highlighters / Sharpies / Post-it Notes

Program Needs

Card Games
Coloring Books - Adult & Children
Crafts / Perler / Fuse Beads
Craft Felt Fabric Sheets & Pipe Cleaners
Digital Kitchen Timers
Fidget Toys - Pop-its, Stretchy Toys, Noodles, Dimples, Fidget Spinners, etc.
Fine Motor Skills Toys
Gift Cards - Aldi, Walmart, HyVee, Gas
Gift Cards (Community Activities) - Sky Zone, Potters Obsession, Speedeez, Fun Station, Air Fx, etc.
Googly Eyes - Various Sizes
Kinetic Sand & Sand Toys
Painting Canvases - All Sizes
Play-Doh
Safety Bands
Suncatchers

Clothes/Textile

Blankets / Pillows
Clothing - Sweatpants, T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Athletic Shorts - All Sizes, Youth & Adult
Compact Laundry Bags
Hats & Gloves - Adult
Socks - Ladies & Mens, Size 8-11
Towels - Kitchen & Bath



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

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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



TOUCH TRUCK -A-



Saturday, August 9th

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, music, activities and more.