St. Louis Arc Community Connections
Meetup Helps Bring People Together!

Meetup.com is an online social networking website/mobile app that facilitates offline group meetings in various locations around the world. Meetup.com allows members to find and join groups unified by a common interest, such as hobbies, careers, books, games, movies, health, pets, or politics. Meetup brings people together in thousands of cities to do more of what they want to do in life. It is organized around one simple idea: when we get together and do the things that matter to us, we’re at our best.

For people with disabilities and their families, isolation can be a common barrier to achieving an active social life. People with and without disabilities are looking for safe, in-person ways to come together, to meet new friends, and share common experiences. The St. Louis Arc has begun to offer Meetups throughout the St. Louis area! The St. Louis Arc Community Connections Meetup group helps to actively engage Arc participants and members of the community in various activities that provide a safe space for this to happen.

Our Transition Time Meetup group encourages young adults to come and meet new people. St. Louis Arc staff members attend the Transition Time events and are available to answer any questions people may have about transitioning to living on their own, college opportunities, and employment in the community.

The CONNECT Meetup group has helped 100 people meet new friends through the monthly Meetups during the past year. Whether you are a teen or adult with a disability, a parent, or a friend and ally, you are welcome to attend! For information about upcoming Meetups, visit our site at https://www.meetup.com/St-Louis-Arc-Community-Connections/.

On September 22, more than 75 people came to the STL Sandbar for the final Transition Time Summer Meetup. The young adults enjoyed an evening of sand volleyball, washers, BBQ and making new friends!
Mark's Message

I always find that fall is a good time for reflection. I like to look back on the previous fiscal year and celebrate the successes we have had as an agency. During the past year, we have had many wonderful successes:

- We achieved our Person-Centered Excellence with Distinction accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership – making us the 8th agency worldwide to achieve this highest accreditation!
- Our HR team revised their pre-screening and interviewing practices to attract more employees – they successfully screened and hired 326 new staff!
- Our Outreach ABA behavioral team expanded their supports to reach more than 125 children last year.
- 901 individuals were able to participate in the many wonderful opportunities offered by our Leisure team.

These are just some of the many highlights from last fiscal year. We also have much to look forward to in the coming year including: growing our array of services for children and adults on the autism spectrum; offering more supports to individuals transitioning from school into adult services; expanding our abilities to serve seniors with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and much more.

We are grateful for your help and support. We could not do all that we do without you.

Sincerely,
Mark A. Keeley,
President and CEO

The St. Louis Arc Is Pleased To Welcome The Newest Member Of The Executive Leadership Team, Michael Quinn, Ph.D., Vice President Of Autism And Clinical Services

In the newly created role, Dr. Quinn will oversee Belle Children’s Services, along with all autism and behavioral intervention services across the St. Louis Arc. Dr. Quinn will also actively lead the strategic planning for autism and behavioral intervention services and programs for the St. Louis Arc.

Dr. Quinn has a strong background in autism and related disorders, policy and legislation, and program development and implementation. He brings extensive experience as a special education teacher, college lecturer, and published professional on the subjects of Dyspraxia, ADHD, and Childhood and Developmental Disorders. He most recently held the position of Vice President of Children’s Programs at the Milwaukee Center for Independence in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A native of Dublin, Ireland, Dr. Quinn has his Doctor of Philosophy in Education from the University College, Dublin.

Volunteer Spotlight

Ken Lynch - Vice President of Human Resources for Performance Foodservice

Ken originally began volunteering for the Arc in 1974 while he was a student at Chaminade High School, mostly at the Arc's 1240 Dautel Circle location. He became a camp counselor at Camp Lions Den, an overnight camp for people with disabilities, and at East Wind, a day camp where Special School District is now located.

What made you stay involved over the years with the Arc? I was at a charity event and ran into Vicki Amsinger, a former HR Director for the Arc. I explained that I had been a camp counselor with the Arc and asked her about getting one of the Arc shirts she had with her. She gave me the shirt and ended up recruiting me for the HR committee. It’s been more than 15 years since I joined the committee, including serving as Chair, all because of a shirt. I’ve also been a member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee.

What is your favorite memory from your time at camp? My favorite memory was getting to take the kids to Camp Lions Den to teach them how to camp. Since we didn’t have cabins, we taught the kids how to set up their tents, build fires, and all the great camp things you do when you don’t stay in a cabin.

What’s one interesting fun fact that most people don’t know about you?
I am an Associate Producer on a dramatic short film – The Little Drummer Girl that is scheduled for release in 2017. The movie was previewed in 2016 during the St. Louis Film Makers Showcase at the Tivoli Theatre.
Accommodation For Success Awards – St. Louis City And St. Louis County

Congratulations to Bhavik Patel, managing partner at Sandberg Phoenix & von Gontard P.C. and MOD Pizza! The Accommodation for Success awards committee awarded Mr. Patel the Exceptional Supporter of Inclusive Practices award in St. Louis City, and MOD Pizza as Outstanding Inclusive Employer in St. Louis County. Mr. Patel, Sandberg Phoenix, and MOD Pizza were nominated by the St. Louis Arc for their work with the Arc’s Employment Services team to employ people with disabilities.

Sandberg Phoenix’s relationship with the St. Louis Arc began in 2007. Mr. Patel began donating his time and services to conduct Family Workshops on benefit and estate planning and creating special needs trusts. Over time, Mr. Patel’s interest in the St. Louis Arc grew and Sandberg Phoenix began to seek out new opportunities for hiring people with disabilities for the firm. Recognizing the value of hiring people with disabilities, they began hiring candidates supported by the Arc.

Walk into any MOD Pizza, and you’ll be warmly and loudly welcomed by the staff behind the counter and in the dining room. You will see employees finding meaning in their work, and MOD Pizza takes being a welcoming place to a higher level. It’s part of their mission — their people-first mission. They appreciate individuality and encourage their employees to be themselves. Since the start of our partnership, MOD Pizza has hired three Arc participants.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT NEWS

- During FY 2017, the Arc supported over 450 individuals in all phases of employment.
- In FY 2017, our Employment team successfully placed an unprecedented 100 individuals in jobs, moving them closer to greater independence.
- We provided job retention support to over 200 individuals, an all-time high!
- We launched a new Employer Resource page on the website at: https://www.slarc.org/resource-library/employer-resources/
- The Missouri Rehabilitation Association recently recognized Geoffrey Butz as Consumer of the Year and Delmar Gardens on the Green as Employer of the Year. Both award winners were nominated by the St. Louis Arc.
20th Anniversary Of Neighborhood Experiences

This year the Arc is celebrating the 20th anniversary of Neighborhood Experiences, a summer program designed to help teens with intellectual and developmental disabilities engage in volunteer and work experiences. In 1996, a diligent parent, Judy Presberg, worked with many people in St. Louis County to ensure her daughter Elizabeth was actively involved in the day camp near her home with friends. Elizabeth participated in community day camps for several summers with the support of staff from the St. Louis Arc. Judy didn’t want this experience to end when Elizabeth aged out of day camp, so she contacted Kim Kopff, the Arc’s former Director of Leisure Services, to discuss the need for inclusive programs for teens ages 13-20 with disabilities. The Productive Living Board for St. Louis County Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and the United Way of Greater St. Louis provided funding for the project.

In the summer of 1997, 10 young adults participated in the program. Twenty years later, Neighborhood Experiences is still going strong; 32 teens participated in the program this summer and an additional 25 took part in Teens In Motion, a similar program the Arc launched for younger teens ages 13 – 15. The future envisioned by Judy, Kim, and the Arc Leisure team has become a reality for hundreds of former participants who are leading independent lives as adults due to the vocational and social skills gained through the program.

Neighborhood Experiences has received numerous local awards and has even been recognized nationally by the Arc of the United States and the ANCOR Foundation. We want to express our sincere thanks to all of our funders, community partners and, most importantly, each and every one of the teens who have allowed us to play a role in shaping their future over the past 20 years. Thanks for the memories...and here’s to 20 more years!

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Neighborhood Experiences
Numbers & Facts

- 285 young adults have participated over the years
- 400 community organizations have benefited from our young adult volunteers
- 57 teens and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities participated this year
- Each participant engages in at least 4-5 volunteer and/or work experiences throughout the summer
- All participants create a professional portfolio and résumé showcasing their accomplishments
Family Supports & Leisure

The Arc’s Family Support department has expanded its services in the St. Louis region.

As of July 1, in-home respite care (ARCH) is now available to families in the City of St. Louis. In addition to the expanded service area, the Arc launched the Family Community website where users can submit their utilization reports and update their information in real time on our secured, encrypted site.

Family Supports is pleased to have added Jackie Cox, pictured on left, who will be assisting families in St. Louis City with in-home respite care. Jackie previously worked for the Department of Social Services Child Support Enforcement, where she was a child support/financial specialist who participated in administrative hearings. For information on respite services in St. Louis City, please contact Jackie at jhcox@slarc.org.

Advocacy At The Arc

This past legislative session was among the most challenging in recent history. Ann Mangelsdorf, Assistant Director of Family Support and Advocacy, led the charge with many Advocacy Alerts to help defeat the American Health Care Act, which would have caused millions of people to lose health care coverage and threatened access to home and community based services. The disability community rallied and made their collective voice heard, so Congress had to listen! But the threat to the healthcare of people with disabilities is not over. We need advocates like you to remain vigilant to protect all that has been built to ensure the inclusion and equality of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our society. For more information, please contact Ann Mangelsdorf at 314-817-2275.

My Experience In Creative Music Making
by Grace Mehan,
Creative Music Making Musician and Fan

For the past six years, the St. Louis Arc has partnered with the St. Louis Symphony and Maryville University Music Therapy program for Creative Music Making. Grace Mehan, a long time Arc participant shared her experience as a musician in this year’s program.

"I was one of the many musicians in the Creative Music Making program at Powell Hall. Lots of great people came together to plan and perform the program — 20 Maryville University Music Therapy Program students, 40 St. Louis Arc participants, and six St. Louis Symphony musicians. We made beautiful music together and we had so much FUN!

Three groups — green, yellow, and red — worked on their own music. I was in the yellow group. Our program was called "Movements," and we sang and played What Makes You Beautiful by One Direction and All Star by Smash Mouth (that name makes me laugh). We were all stars! When all the groups sang, played instruments, and danced together, we performed Shake It Off by Taylor Swift.”
The Impact Of An Inclusive Environment

Many people choose to send their children to the St. Louis Arc’s Childcare Early Childhood Center because they value the inclusive education that is provided. However, some people may be unclear of the real impact that inclusive schools have on all children. We would like to share a touching story with you from the Bluebirds classroom that highlights the natural benefits of inclusive education for all children.

This summer, the Bluebirds class studied butterflies. The children brought in several caterpillars and watched as they formed their chrysalises and eventually became butterflies. One little butterfly had difficulty flying, as one of his wings was smaller than the other. The teachers used this time as a teachable moment and initiated a discussion about the butterfly. Ryan, who is 5 years old, summed it up nicely, “This butterfly is just like our classroom. She will be OK. She’s just going to learn how to fly slower and may need a little help with eating, drinking and playing with the other butterflies.” The children also decided that the butterfly may need a therapist to help it learn how to fly! This particular butterfly never flew away. It currently lives in the classroom and will fly from child to child or hang out in its house. The children interact with it daily. There are so many things that we can learn from our children!

Wells Fargo Advisors - Back To School Drive

Each year, the St. Louis Arc partners with local businesses to provide school supplies, backpacks, and clothing needed by children to start their school year ready for success. This year Wells Fargo Advisors led the school supply drive that raised more than $5,000 in cash and supplies. Thanks to Wells Fargo and other generous community members, 150 children from our Parents Learning Together and Capable Kids & Families programs received backpacks and supplies in time for the beginning of the school year.

Representatives from Wells Fargo Advisors came to make a check presentation and were joined by several of the families receiving backpacks and school supplies to start the new school year.
Parents Learning Together
Family Picnic

Parenting and heading a household is a challenge for anyone, but when you’re a parent with an intellectual or developmental disability, the need for parenting support and education is critical. Parents Learning Together (PLT) helps parents who have intellectual or developmental disabilities to safely and successfully raise their children and to support the children’s health, education and development.

We are grateful to the Central Reform Congregation in the Central West End, who graciously host our PLT group and open their space to our Family Picnic each year. This year PLT held its annual Family Picnic on June 30. This fun event provided an opportunity for families to come together and have a day of fun, games, and networking.

Go The Whole 9 Prevention Program
Partners With Webster University

Go the Whole Nine is a St. Louis Arc awareness program that provides vital information about the effects of alcohol on pregnancy. While most developmental and intellectual disabilities are caused by genetics or unknown factors, alcohol use during pregnancy remains a leading preventable cause of problems related to brain development, including developmental and intellectual disabilities, and birth defects.

This past spring, the St. Louis Arc partnered with students from Webster University’s School of Communication Production House course. This class gives students the opportunity to work on real film projects in the community, simulating work they will do in a production house after graduation. This year they created and produced a public service announcement for the Go the Whole 9 campaign. We are grateful for their amazing work and creativity! You can find more information on the Whole Nine program at http://thewhole9.org/.
Trivia Night Was Spent In The Great Outdoors!

This year’s Trivia Night paid homage to the Great Outdoors. More than 600 people attended and helped to raise $27,000 for the Arc’s programs and services! Mark your calendars now so you don’t miss the next Trivia Night on January 19, 2018!

Right: Emcees Stephanie Scott, Director of Quality, and Sharon Spurlock, Director of Family Supports.

Londoff Love!

Andrea Bringardner, Special Events Manager, John Taylor, Vice President of Advancement, John Londoff, Jr. and Mark Keeley, President and CEO for the St. Louis Arc.

Thank you to Londoff Chevrolet for raising $10,000 for the Arc during their annual “Londoff Love” promotion!

Superheroes For Kids

Over 350 guests joined the St. Louis Arc for the annual Superheroes for Kids event on April 20. This year over $275,000 was raised for children’s programs, and was made possible through the leadership and creativity of honorary co-chairs, Mary and David Steward II, and event chairs, John and Mimi Londoff. Additionally, the 2017 Superhero for Kids Award was presented to Dr. John Mantovani for his leadership in the field of pediatric neurology and autism. Dr. Mantovani, Chair of Pediatrics at Mercy Children’s Hospital and the Founding Medical Director of the Mercy Kids Autism Center, has committed his life and career to helping children with disabilities and their families.

Stan McCurdy with superheroes Walk, Talk, Write and Read.

2017 Superhero Award Winner, Dr. John Mantovani.

Brent Butler, Alex Ott, Mimi Butler.
Autism Invitational

Ninety-two golfers enjoyed 18 holes, and a solar eclipse, on August 21 at Boone Valley Golf Club during the 8th Annual Autism Invitational. This year’s tournament raised more than $210,000 to support St. Louis Arc programs that touch the lives of 1,000 children and adults with autism in the St. Louis community. Thanks to our tournament chairwoman, Jo Ann Kindle, and tournament co-chairs, Tom Caruso and Dan Kelley, for their continued leadership and support. We would also like to thank our major sponsors, Don Ross, Centene Corporation, The Steward Family Foundation, and Crawford Taylor Foundation, as well as our generous in-kind donors.

27th Annual St. Louis Arc Golf Tournament

One hundred sixty-two golfers enjoyed a beautiful day of golf at the Country Club of St. Albans on Monday, May 22. This year’s tournament raised $250,000 to support the programs and services of the St. Louis Arc. The St. Louis Arc thanks this year’s co-chairs, Michael Neidorff, Ron Kruszewski, and Larry Otto, along with our corporate and in-kind sponsors. We are grateful to the many volunteers who helped make this year’s tournament a fun and successful event.

Young Friends Of The St. Louis Arc

The Young Friends group has stayed busy this year! They hosted several happy hours and fundraising nights including Give Back Night at Kendra Scott at Plaza Frontenac, and the 5th Annual Summerfest at Milo’s on the Hill.

30th Annual St. Louis European Auto Show

The St. Louis Arc once again had the privilege of being the benefiting charity of the St. Louis European Auto Show. The 30th Annual St. Louis European Auto Show, held on June 4, raised $20,000 for the St. Louis Arc. Thank you to STL Motorcars, Taubman Prestige Outlets, Auto Urge, and the St. Louis European Auto Show!
Announcements And Gifts

Missouri’s Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) Tax Credits

The St. Louis Arc has tax credits available to donors who make a gift of $1,000 or more. Any individual or entity with Missouri income tax liability may qualify. Donors will receive a 50% tax credit for their gift amount, in addition to the standard federal and state charitable deductions. The net cost to you could be as low as 26 cents on the dollar!

For more information contact (314) 817-2240.

As with any charitable giving, please consult with your tax advisor to determine individual tax savings.

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Rachel Morgan from the Adam Morgan Foundation donated two iPads to our residential community. Ms. Morgan came to our Fain residence on September 11 and presented residents Debbie S. and Linda E. with the new iPads.

Kathy Meath (left), pictured with Mary McKay, Neidoff Family and Centene Corporation Dean of the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University.

Congratulations to Kathy Meath, MSW '80, former President and CEO of the St. Louis Arc, who was recognized as a 2017 Distinguished Alumni of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University.

Kathy has been a lifelong advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At the awards dinner Kathy told attendees, “You must have tenacity, you must have passion and you must have an educational framework that allows you to develop answers and solutions to problems,” which she says she received at the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University.

Thank you to the Knobloch family for raising $5,000 for the Arc through their inaugural “Bowling with Bailey and Music with Mac” event, held on July 8 at West County Lanes.

Left to right: Tracy Thomas, Residential Coordinator, Debbie S., Rachel Morgan, Linda E.

Thank you to Sub Zero Vodka Bar for choosing the St. Louis Arc for Give Back Day on August 29! Sub Zero donated $1,226 back to the Arc after a successful day of eating and drinking.
Over 65 St. Louis Arc participants joined staff members and volunteers for a spring carnival at Dautel Circle. The event was a creative way to introduce the new Aging with Empowerment program. Those in attendance received a passport to participate in activities throughout the space, which they redeemed for prizes when completed. Activities included traditional carnival games as well as a photo booth, carnival snacks, and music.

Community Integration - New Name And New Locations!

The Arc’s Community Integration (CI) program sites began moving in mid-October! In addition, Community Integration is being renamed Community Engagement (CE). This name change comes as our current Crestwood and Creve Coeur locations move to larger sites. These new site locations will offer more square footage, which will allow the Arc to design better spaces around the needs of the program participants. The new locations will include specialized sensory areas and private changing spaces.

The Crestwood location, currently known as South County CI, will be moving to nearby Affton at 96 Grasso Plaza. While the Creve Coeur location, referred to as Sunnen CI, will be moving to 1311 Lindbergh Plaza. This Creve Coeur site is just two miles from its current location and less than one mile from the Arc’s Centene Family Center. Both locations will be renamed and tagged as Community Engagement (CE) once the move to the new location sites is complete.

Aging With Empowerment At Dautel Circle

Aging with Empowerment (AWE) is a new initiative at the Arc’s campus residential program at Dautel Circle. The AWE program allows participants a choice of daily activities, common community space, and options for socialization, while still providing structure to an individual’s day. The transition to the new AWE program is happening gradually through the fall, with renovation of the space to provide several updated areas for events. While AWE will pilot as a program for residents at Dautel Circle and former Sunnen CI participants, the goal is to open the program up to any aging individual looking to stay active in their community.