

Message from our CEO

Summer is upon us once again and things are starting to feel “normal” again at MCAR. Hopefully, we are well over the worst of the Pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your patience, creativity, flexibility, and support. I am very proud of the resilience of all of our families and employees. Together we are building an even stronger support system. Today, we have fully vaccinated, approximately 33% of our staff and 93% of our residents. If you want to receive the vaccine and are having difficulty finding one, please contact our office and we will assist you. Although mask wearing requirements have been easing, the Office of Developmental Programs still requires all staff and individuals to wear masks when receiving services. MCAR will continue to update our requirements as recommend by ODP.

As always, the Governor’s budget is on our radar. Two of the 2021/22 Governor’s budget themes that directly affect MCAR’s programs are Advancing Pennsylvania’s Economic Recovery, by increasing the minimum wage to \$12, and Protecting the Most Vulnerable, by addressing waiting lists, and developing a comprehensive direct care worker training program. There is no proposed decrease in funding for ID/Autism programs for 2021/22.

MCAR’s Summer Picnics are back! We celebrated Memorial Day on May 27th and very well attended. We were finally able to use our new patio. Picnic celebrations for the 4th of July will be June 30 and Labor Day will be September 7. Socialization is such an important part in all of our lives, and we are taking these opportunities to safely socialize and finally utilize our new Pavilion and patio.

This year The Arc of Mercer County Board has initiated a Lifetime Achievement Award Program. Our first recipients are Mr. Robert Beach, CEO for over 38 years and Shirl Meyers, who served MCAR for over 40 years in many different leadership roles. Congratulations to Mr. Beach and the family of Shirl Meyers. These two individuals are credited with building MCAR into the strong quality support program it is today, and we are all very thankful. Please join us on July 28, 2021 @ 3:00 pm to celebrate their achievements.

I encourage all individuals and families to take the time to know and understand the choices that are available to you. We at The Arc of Mercer County can provide you with information that will enable you to have fully inclusive experiences. Please feel free to call our office and speak with us if you have any questions.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you,
Diane M. O’Rourke, CEO

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STAFF YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS 2021

We would like to congratulate the following staff on their years of service at The Arc of Mercer County/MCAR, Inc. Staff are normally presented their awards at our Annual Dinner, but due to the Annual Dinner being canceled this year, we wanted to acknowledge them in our Newsletter.

Thirty-Five Years

- **Mona Jenkins**—“I have worked at MCAR for 35 years. I have grown up here and have raised my family working here. I have seen many changes over the years. I’ve had many happy days and some sad times that have made me a stronger person. I pray that I have made a difference in the lives of other people we work with and that I have had a little bit in making a better life for them. Treat others with love and respect and you will come away with so much more. People have come and gone and have left their mark in my heart to last a lifetime.”



Twenty-Five Years

- **Mary Klingensmith**—Mary has been an employee at MCAR for 25 years working as a Residential Program Worker. She currently works at 768 Crowder Avenue. Thank you Mary for all your hard work!

Twenty Years

- **Missy Stieb**—Missy has worked at MCAR for 20 years. She began working as a Residential Program Worker and then bid into the Day Program as a TAA and is currently working in the CPS Program. Thank you Missy for all your hard work!
- **David Bodien**—David has worked at MCAR for 20 years. He has held various positions starting out working as a Residential Program Worker. His current position is House Manager Supervisor. Thank you for all your hard work Dave!
- **Christian Bataille**—“I have been working for MCAR for twenty years. I answered an ad in the news-paper looking for people who wanted a rewarding challenge and I feel that I have received this. I used to work for Reyers and Pearle Vision . I applied to MCAR so I could help the clients achieve their goals. I like taking the clients shopping, to the park, and to dances when I work day turn. I enjoy being a part of their lives. I grew up in Sharon and went to Kennedy. I play golf and the guitar and follow the Penguins and the Steelers. It’s fun to watch the games with the clients and occasionally I go to a live game.”



Fifteen Years

- **Melissa Beveridge**—“I began my career in the Hab. Aide Department in 2005. When my kids went to school, I went back to school. I obtained a degree in Psychology from La Roche University. I have worked in the fiscal department and currently as a CPS supervisor at the day program. When I am not at work, I am taking care of my family. I enjoy exercise and yard work when I get the opportunity.”
- **Debbie Reeher**—“I’ve been an employee since October of 2005. I love my job. I feel this job has made me more of a better person and I’m proud to be an employee of MCAR. I love to make my clients laugh and be in a better mood. I occasionally break out into a dance move just to watch my clients laugh and tell me I’m silly. This job has definitely taught me to be more of a leader and thankful.”
- **Nika Wareham**—“I have worked at MCAR for 15 years, when I started I was completely new to the field and wasn’t sure what to expect or if it was right for me. I quickly realized that the ID population brought some joy to my day and made my job feel less like work and more like having a family.”



STAFF YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS 2021

Ten Years

- **Kathy Green**—“I was hired by MCAR on 06/01/2010. I have been a nurse for 47 years. I can honestly say that working with our clients has given back the joy to my nursing career. Some days can be hard and frustrating, but the majority of my days are fulfilling and make me smile. I enjoy hearing my name being called and all the hello's I hear. I like to think that I have helped keep our clients healthier and happier on a daily basis. I'm glad it was God's plan to have the end of my nursing career working with the clients I have helped take care of.”
- **Zach Kepple**—Zach graduated from Sharon High school in 2008. He then attended Youngstown State University where he graduated with a Major in Human services/sociology and a Minor in psychology in 2013. In his free time Zach enjoys competing in a wide range of sports. Zach is a very talented golfer. Zach started working at MCAR while attending YSU. He has worked in many different departments including HAB AID, Residential, and CPS. “ I owe a lot of my accomplishments at MCAR to Shirley Riffle. She has guided me along the way by providing me with advice, training, and leadership. I have enjoyed all the friendships I have made over the years, and I am very proud to say that I have worked at such an influential company.” Thank you for your years of service Zach!



Five Years

- **Shannon Reiter**—Shannon has been working HAB AID for the past 5 years. She studied at the University of Edinboro. She has been a great asset to this company. Shannon brings a positive attitude and is very compassionate about her job. Shannon has developed very close relationships with the individuals she serves, and they always have wonderful things to say about her. Shannon is also a licensed cosmetologist and does great work. In Shannon's free time she enjoys attending live music, baking, and going to Buhl Park. We would like to thank Shannon for all the hard work and years of service. Thank you, Shannon!
- **Carl Robinson**—“I have worked at MCAR for five years. I am grateful for my time in the Hab. Aide and CPS programs at MCAR and the many wonderful folks I've met. Despite the dubious nature of the pandemic, I'm proud how my clients and I have held up. The current bunch of gents I work with are especially a blessing to me. And throughout this journey, I've learned a little humility, patience, and good humor can go a long way in sustaining successful relationships between yourself and those you have entrusted to your care.”
- **Billie Jo Mears**—Billie Jo has been working at MCAR as a HAB AID for 5 years. Billie has a positive attitude and has developed close relationships with all she serves. She is a very caring person and always has the individuals we serve best interest in mind. All individuals that Billie provides service for have nothing but great things to say about her. We are glad to have Billie on MCAR's team. Thank you, Billie!
- **Olivia Beveridge**—“I started at MCAR in 2015, while I was attending Penn-State University. MCAR has worked with me throughout my college career. I have been employed at MCAR for five years and have worked in many of their programs, CPS, HAB AIDE & CE. When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my friends & family. Currently, I work in the Community Employment department as an Employment Manager, where I have successfully found many individuals jobs and help them maintain their employment.”
- **Maya Dabney**—“I Thank you for constantly challenging me and pushing me out of my comfort zone. Every day is a surprise, a brand new challenge, and it never gets boring with MCAR! Over the last 5 years I have learned so much about myself. The list is endless on why I love my job. Through my residents I have experienced some of the greatest joys. Thank you for allowing me to care, love and support the individuals we serve. There are many reasons why I love what I do. The fact I can make a difference in someone's life gives me a sense of fulfillment and purpose. “
- **Troy Harrison**—“I've been at the Arc of Mercer County for 5 years. I have been working at Clarksville for almost the entire time. The clients and I have a good relationship. We go fishing, riding and all enjoy the same type of music. I have realized after working in other fields that deal with ID people, that MCAR is one of the top pillars in this area.”



STAFF YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS 2021

Five Years

- **Coffi Jackson**—Coffi “Cookie” has been employed as a Residential Program Worker at MCAR for 5 years. She currently works at the Pierce Avenue group home. Thank you for all your hard work Cookie!

COMPLIANCE CONNECTION

Incident Management Changes

The Chapter 6100 Regulations and Licensing Regulations outline safeguards for health, safety, and rights for the individuals that MCAR serves. When the 6100s were published, it called for some changes in categories and investigations that are effective starting July 1, 2021. MCAR’s staff will be trained and ready for these changes because it is our responsibility to recognize incidents and events so that we can better help the people we support to be healthy and safe.

The primary and secondary categories for incidents as well as incidents to investigate make up the changes that are becoming effective in July. New primary categories are Behavioral Health Crisis Event, Exploitation, Serious Illness, Serious Injury and Sexual Abuse. Most of these were included previously; however, were listed with a different title or listed as a secondary category. There are also two more new primary categories in which the Supports Coordinator are responsible for reporting. They are Passive Neglect and Self-Neglect.

Incidents that are categorized as critical incidents must be investigated by a certified investigator that has taken and passed the Departments CI Course. MCAR currently has 8 certified investigators with two more in the process of being certified. Critical incidents that MCAR will investigate fall under the primary categories of abuse, death, exploitation, neglect, rights violation, serious injury, sexual abuse, and suicide attempt.

By heightening MCAR’s staffs’ awareness and being diligent with our recognition skills, we can ensure swift action to address issues and prevent reoccurrence to protect each individual’s health and safety.

Brian Engelmores—Chief Compliance Officer

CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

One World, Many Cultures Celebrating Juneteenth



What is Juneteenth?

June 19, 2021, marks the 156th anniversary of Juneteenth — a mashup of June and nineteenth — the oldest-known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. It was on this day in 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with his troops to “remind” and enforce Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that all slaves shall be free. In effect since 1863, the Proclamation had not actually been enforceable until after the Civil War ended (April 1865).

Although the observance of Emancipation Day began in Texas, it has since spread to other states and even to other countries, under various names, including Juneteenth, Emancipation Day, and Freedom Day. Here are some suggested ways to celebrate:

- Educate yourself – Juneteenth is one of America’s oldest holidays
- Support African American businesses
- Watch movies/ documentaries – suggestions are Fruitvale Station; The Hate U Give; Just Mercy; and 13th
- Plan a meal and discuss Juneteenth with friends and family
- Read a book – suggestions are Stony the Road by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.; Juneteenth by Ralph Ellison; and The Water Dance by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Teach your children about Juneteenth
- Reflect

UPCOMING EVENTS



**THE ARC OF MERCER COUNTY 1ST LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD CELEBRATION
WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021—3PM TO ?**
This year's Recipients—Robert R. Beach, CEO—Shirl Meyers
RSVP by July 19th by calling Sheila @ 724-981-2950, Ext. 245 or
By email sreiber@mercerarc.org

HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Please Join MCAR in Welcoming the Newest Members to Our Team!

March, 2021

Maureen Cory—RPW
Nichole Dess—RPW
Alexandra Gregg—CPS
Hannah Gregory—CPS
Justine Rodgers—CPS

April, 2021

Candy Collins—Personnel Assist./
Scheduler
John Godlewski—CPS
LaKeisha Kitt—RPW
Elizabeth Manning—CPS

May, 2021

Corinne Clark—RPW
Felicia Cunningham—Hab. Aide
Danaya Jones—RPW
Lemuel Koroma—RPW
James Pitts—CPS
Artrashia Tensley—RPW

Thank you all for joining the team!

Angela Wakeman, Human Resource Director

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Sun—Holiday—Picnics

As the world opens up, and regulations are loosening, we are letting loose as well with some summertime fun. We have reinstated our holiday picnics here at MCAR and opened the Sunny Holiday season up with a bang celebrating Memorial Day. We fired up the grills, cooked up some sides, turned up the music so we could eat and socialize in a large group together for the first time in a long time and it felt great. The individuals who attended got to socialize with friends they had not seen or spoken to in quite sometime in addition to singing and dancing to music. We had outside seating and games set up and some individuals got to sit outside and enjoy their lunch in the sun. We are super excited to have opportunity to have two more picnics before the sun retreats for the season. One at the end of June to celebrate the Fourth of July and one to end the Summer for Labor Day. We hope to have more individuals attend each time and are hopeful that the socialization and activities increase as we get better at the planning. Thank you to all the MCAR Managers for the planning and execution and all the staff for helping once the individuals arrived having positive attitudes and for encouraging the positive shenanigans of the day. Thank you as well to Shenango Valley Meats for donating the hot dogs, and Jessie Taylor for cooking the sides and they were delicious! Let the Games and fun continue!

Atlasia Matthews, Operations Manager

We would like to thank the following donors for their contributions to the Arc Foundation:



In Memory of Agnes Gilliland

Stephanie & Tom Alter

Elaine Bitchko

Fishel Downey Albrecht & Riepenhoff LLP

Monica & Bernie Sigler

In Memory of Sherry Schrecengost

Catherine Schrecengost

OTHER DONATIONS RECEIVED

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Barr
Gloria Hines
Commissioner Tim McGonigle



COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Hermitage Little League Concession Stand

MCAR has been staffing the Hermitage Little league concession for the past 3 years. Individuals and their job coach have the opportunity to learn skills such as preparing food items, cash transactions, and are able to interact with members of our community. The HLL has been very welcoming, and the individuals enjoy working there. We hope to continue this partnership as it has a positive impact on all involved.



From left to right—Tiesha T., Dina McAfoose, Job Coach Alec Collins, Job Coach; Richard M.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

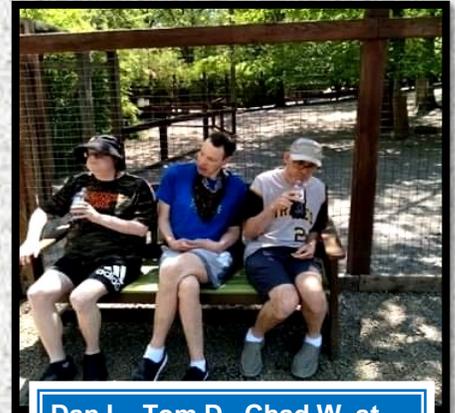
With the return of warmer temperatures, Residential has been on the go. Staff have been busy planning outings to local parks, restaurants, Keystone Safari and Pittsburgh Zoo just to name a few. Staff are still following masking mandates and keeping everyone's health and safety in mind. Getting out and about is one step closer to returning to normal for us and we could not be happier to share some smiling faces with you. Personally, I want to thank the staff for taking the time to plan these activities as it truly makes a difference for our residents. I am looking forward to seeing upcoming adventures.



74 Edgewood, Crowder, Pierce & Woodland individuals Memorial Day Picnic at Shenango Lake



Jean B. @ Shenango Lake



Dan L., Tom D., Chad W. at Keystone Safari



Mike P. at Keystone Safari



Chad W. at Keystone Safari



Carolyn M, Audrey H., Sue H. at Pittsburgh Zoo



Sue H., Carolyn M, Audrey H. at Pittsburgh Zoo



Audrey H. at Pittsburgh Zoo

Jennifer Flaherty, Administrator of Residential Services

Social Group for People with
High Functioning Autism
and Asperger's Syndrome



DATES—2021

July 14—August 11—September 8—October 6—November 10—December 8

Group meets the second Wednesday of every month!!

Time: 6:30pm to 7:00pm—Age 15 and older

Location: MCAR—850 N. Hermitage Rd., Hermitage

Contact: Allysen Byers, 724-981-2950, Ext. 238

CLINICAL DEPARTMENT

Here comes the sun! Now that the summer season has officially begun with the passing of the Memorial Day weekend, people will be spending more time outside. COVID put a damper on all activities last year including those that would have normally taken place outdoors. This year it may be more important than ever to get some much-needed time in the sun. Of course, there are risks related to too much exposure to UV rays, there are also a myriad of benefits. The following are examples of what sunlight can do for our clients and you!

Vitamin D- This essential vitamin is referred to as “the sunshine vitamin” because it is produced when natural sunlight reaches the skin. Vitamin D protects our body from inflammation, can reduce blood pressure, and can also improve brain function (<https://www.theactivetimes.com/healthy-living/15-health-benefits-sunshine>). Just 5 to 15 minutes of sun exposure can assist the production of Vitamin D. More than 15 minutes and sunscreen becomes a must!

Mood- Sunlight increases the natural production of serotonin. Serotonin is a chemical produced by nerve cells. Lack of serotonin can lead to mood disorders such as anxiety and depression.

Sleep- Just as serotonin can increase moods, it can also be associated with more restful sleep. Serotonin works with another naturally occurring chemical in the body: Melatonin. Most often found on the shelves of a pharmacy, melatonin aids with sleep. Importantly, it also works with traditional day and night cycles to be most effective.

Healthy bodies- Vitamin D builds stronger bones, healthy teeth, and promotes the healing of wounds. While calcium is critical for our bones and teeth, we rely on the foods we consume to give us what we need. Although sunlight does not help to create calcium, it does help our bodies absorb it making the best use of what we get. Vitamin D is important with the production of insulin and a positive correlation between insulin resistance and vitamin D. Sunlight exposure reacts with nitric oxide stored in the top layer of the skin, as this causes blood vessels to open wider as oxide is added to the blood stream resulting in reduced blood pressure. Weight loss can also occur when increased levels of serotonin are present. Hunger is controlled by the hypothalamus and serotonin helps relieve the sensation of hunger. Physical activity associated with weight loss can be attributed to more time outside. As the days get warmer, we naturally want to spend time enjoying them.

Remember, there are many risks from too much sun and some medications interact negatively with sun exposure. Make sure to check for these medications when planning outing and anticipated long periods of time outside. Wear sunscreen as well. Products with SPF 30 to SPF 50 can effectively block up to 98% of UVB rays.

Here's to a healthy, happy summer!

Allysen Byers, Clinical Director

Congratulations and Good Luck to Gail Martin who recently retired as Clinical Director! We will miss you!!

CPS PROGRAM

The MCAR Community Participation Supports Department continues to make progress restarting our volunteer partnerships with local businesses, non-profits and local churches. Volunteering is very important to our individuals. They will provide assistance weekly to the Salvation Army, Prince of Peace, Goodwill and Sharon Regional Health Systems and local churches.

Our recycling program, which has increased to 7 local businesses along with Hermitage and Sharpville School Districts, is beginning to rejuvenate. Our team of Staff and Managers will continue to seek out new volunteer opportunities for our individuals.

The COVID19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on everyone causing us to revisit the importance of the way things used to be. The MCAR day program has many new staff with great new ideas. Beginning July 1, 2021, the structure of the day program will include community outings along with structured projects our individuals wish to participate in. We will be utilizing the PAES LAB and Kitchen for all projects that the Program Specialists have designed based on the interests of our individuals.

This is going to be a challenging year; however, a great team will make it a very successful year.

Darín Vadala—CPS Program Director

MCAR SHUT DOWN DAYS & HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 2021

SHUT DOWN DAYS:

Friday, July 16, 2021

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

Monday, July 5, 2021—Independence Day Holiday

Monday, September 6, 2021—Labor Day

Thursday and Friday, November 25 & 26, 2021—Thanksgiving Day & day after

Friday, December 24, 2021 thru Monday, January 3, 2022—Christmas Holiday & New Year's Day

AUTISM BENEFIT CRAFT & VENDOR SHOW

Ms. Stephanie Browning held her Annual Autism Benefit Craft and Vendor Show on Saturday, June 5 at the Firemen's Club in Jamestown. A Chance and Basket Raffle was held and the proceeds raised from the event Ms. Browning donates to The Arc of Mercer County. Kayla H. (whom MCAR provides supports to) of Hamm's Creative Creations participated in the Vendor Show where she sold her creative creations. **A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO STEPHANIE!!**

Lyndsey Vogan
Chief Officer of
Operations



Kayla H.

Ashley
Reimold,
Staff



Kayla H.

NURSING DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL
SAFETY
MONTH

June is National Safety Month. As the RN Supervisor at MCAR I feel it is our nursing responsibility to remind others of the dangers involved in Dehydration in these upcoming summer months.

Dehydration is the absence of a sufficient amount of water in your body. The best way to beat dehydration is to drink before you get thirsty. If you are thirsty, you're already mildly dehydrated, and that can cause symptoms like headache, fatigue, dizziness and more. Dehydration can contribute to life-threatening illnesses like heatstroke.

Dehydration happens when your body loses or uses more fluids than it takes in. When it happens, your body is not able to do all the things it's supposed to. It's especially dangerous in older people and young children.

Prevention tips for dehydration

- Do not wait until you feel thirsty to drink.
- Make sure water is within easy reach day and night.
- Have between 6 and 8 cups of fluids a day.
- Do not skip meals when out and about.
- Drink fruit juices, sports drinks, milk, and broth, but avoid high-protein drinks and alcoholic beverages.
- Increase water intake when the weather is hot.
- Be sure to up your intake when exercising or doing strenuous activity.
- Know if you're in a High-Risk Group for dehydration.
- Eat hydrating foods throughout the day.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

NURSING DEPARTMENT (continued)

When to contact your healthcare provider

If you have symptoms of dehydration, do not hesitate to seek help! Dehydration can contribute to life-threatening illnesses. Call 911 or go to the emergency room right away if you have symptoms of severe dehydration such as listed below.

- A temperature of 103 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Muscle twitching.
- Red, hot, dry skin.
- Nausea.
- Rapid pulse.
- Seizures.
- Lack of sweating.
- Confusion, altered mental state, slurred speech.
- Dizziness.
- Fainting, loss of consciousness.
- Hallucinations.

Erin Palazzo—RN Nursing Supervisor

RECIPE CORNER

Blueberry Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS:

Blueberry Puree:

- 2 Cups Blueberries
- 2 Tbsp. White Sugar
- 2 tsp. Lemon Juice

Crust:

- 9 Graham Crackers, finely crushed (1 1/4 Cups)
- 6 TBSP. Melted Butter
- 1/4 Cup White Sugar

Cheesecake:

- 4 (8 oz.) blocks Cream Cheese—softened
- 1 Cup White Sugar
- 2 Large Eggs
- 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 1/4 Cup Sour Cream
- 2 Tbsp. Flour
- 1/4 tsp. Kosher Salt
- 1 Cup Blueberry Puree

Topping:

- Whipped Cream
- Blueberries



DIRECTIONS:

- 1) Preheat oven to 325°. In a small food processor, blend blueberries until no large chunks remain.
- 2) In a small saucepan over medium heat, add blueberry puree, sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and let simmer until slightly reduced, stirring occasionally—10 minutes. Let cool to room temperature.
- 3) Make crust: In a large bowl, mix together graham cracker crumbs, melted butter and sugar until mixture resembles wet sand. Press into bottom and up sides of an 8" or 9" springform pan.
- 4) Make Cheesecake: In a large bowl using a hand mixer (or in the bowl of a stand mixer), beat cream cheese and sugar until no lumps remain. Add eggs, one at a time, then stir in vanilla and sour cream. Add flour and salt and beat until just combined. Fold in blueberry puree.
- 5) Pour mixture over crust. Wrap bottom of pan in aluminum foil and place in a large roasting pan. Pour in enough boiling water to come halfway up the baking pan.
- 6) Bake until center of cheesecake only slightly jiggles—about 1 hour 30 minutes. Turn off heat, prop oven door, and let cheesecake cool in oven 1 hour.
- 7) Remove foil and refrigerate cheesecake until completely chilled—at least 5 hours and up to overnight.

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The Arc of Mercer County/MCAR is affiliated with the United Way of Mercer County, The Arc of the United States, and The Arc of Pennsylvania.

Mission Statement

"To provide advocacy and comprehensive support to persons with disabilities that empower them in all aspects of life".

Advocacy

The Arc of Mercer County is a chapter of the largest advocacy organization in the United States for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Working at the local level, we are the leading resource for individual advocacy services. Our advocacy services are free of charge to families and individuals in Mercer County. Since 2004, our advocacy efforts have focused on helping families with children maneuver the special education process to ensure a positive, quality education. We help parents understand their child's rights to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, as guaranteed by law.

Our education advocates guide parents through the special education process, from how to determine eligibility for special services to how to prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to how to file a due process complaint to how to find an attorney for legal representation. Our goal is to ensure that the school adheres to a child's IEP and makes a good faith effort to help the student achieve his defined goals. Parents are the most effective participants in developing and managing their child's education goals. Sometimes, however, they may find issues or instances when other resources are helpful. The Arc of Mercer County's advocacy program serves as their leading resource for information and support.

What our Education Advocate can do for you:

- Provide resources and information about your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and applicable state regulations, including Early Intervention, and about how to effectively advocate for your child to resolve issues
- Provide resources to school districts and Early Intervention providers to help design and deliver supports and services that guarantee students with disabilities the opportunity to make progress on their educational goals

For more information about our advocacy efforts and how we can help you, contact Brian Engelmores at 724-981-2950, Ext. 219.