



EMPOWER



Quarterly News for Self-Advocacy Groups in Maryland

EDITION 10

MAY-JULY 2026



Email me!

DPalmer@thearcmd.org

FROM THE DESK OF DOMINIQUE!

Advocacy Specialist
The Arc Maryland

Our community came together this May for our Annual Convention and Second Annual Self-Advocacy Summit... Here's My Perspective!

I wasn't alone in noticing the remarkable turnout—more than a hundred self-advocates gathered for this year's Self-Advocacy Summit! The day opened with a powerful panel discussion with Secretary Carol Beatty and Tracy Wright, grounding the room in the decades of work that brought us to this moment.

After that, we caught up on the marriage panel! It was inspiring to hear the stories of married couples with disabilities. We tackled the honest topic of the barriers to marriage, but I walked away inspired by the love they shared.

Next, New Hope For All, led by Tavon, added to the day by providing insight on creating connections and establishing partnerships within the community. Their presentation was thoughtful, collaborative, and deeply committed to strengthening our community partnerships.

Toward the end, Tracy Wright and Ande Kolp took the stage to focus on the big question: Where do we go from here? We split into groups, and each group talked through their ideas for the future. There were plenty of twists and turns because everyone had different priorities, but in the end, we were able to put together a collective roadmap for what comes next.



Quarterly Happenings

May-July 2026

We Came Together For The...

Annual Convention

This year's Statewide Convention welcomed advocates from every corner of Maryland to celebrate the theme *Limitless*. We celebrated the endless possibilities that exist when people with disabilities are given opportunities and the chance to thrive. Together, we celebrated the voices, experiences, and talents that make our community stronger.



Self-Advocacy Summit

From all across Maryland, self-advocates, family members, and supporters came together at the 2026 Self-Advocacy Summit for a day full of celebration and joy! It gave our community the chance to connect, learn, and discuss what our future looks like. Together, we celebrated what is possible when barriers are removed and opportunities are available to all.



July 2026 Meetings

EMPOWERING PARTNERS

Join the statewide initiative to strengthen and grow local self-advocacy groups!



Upcoming Self-Advocacy Group Meetings:

Carroll County

Inspiration Advocates

7/2, 7/9, 7/16, 7/23 from 11 AM to 12 PM

at The Arc Carroll County

180 Kriders Church Rd, Westminster, MD 21158

Frederick County

Voices of Ability

7/8 from 4 to 6 PM

at Spinners Pinball Arcade*

1301 West Patrick St, Frederick, MD 21702

Montgomery County

STAND Together

7/8 from 6 to 7 PM

Hybrid at The Arc Montgomery County

7362 Calhoun Pl, Rockville, MD 20855

Harford and Cecil County

People First

7/9 from 5 to 6:30 PM

at The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region

4513 Philadelphia Rd, Belcamp, MD 21017

Howard County

People Power

7/20 from 12 to 1:30 PM

at The Arc of Howard County

11735 Homewood Rd, Ellicott City, MD 21042

Baltimore City and Baltimore County

New Hope for All

7/15 from 6 to 7:30 PM

at The Arc Baltimore Headquarters

7215 York Rd, Baltimore, MD 21212

Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's County

People On the Go of

Southern Maryland

7/29 from 11 AM to 12 PM

Virtual

Contact Jackson DeCarlo at

JDeCarlo@TheArcMD.org

to connect with a local group!

www.TheArcMD.org/Empowering-Partners/

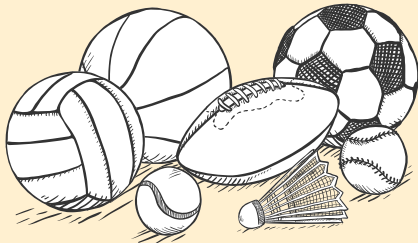
This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,262,422 with 100% funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

Resources to Elevate Your Summer

Looking to get active, play sports, and connect with your community?

Check out Special Olympics MD:

[Click Here](#)



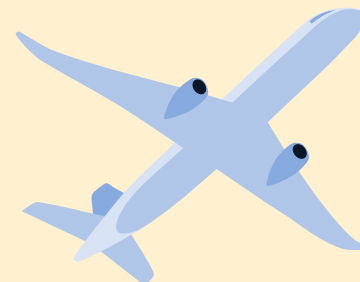
Curious about tips/tricks and guidance on how to navigate accessible friendly traveling?

Here are some resources for accessible traveling options via train and advice from a self-advocate:

[Click Here](#)

Want to connect with nature but unsure about price or accessibility? National Parks offer lifetime access passes to those with a permanent disability!

[Click Here](#)



July is Disability Pride Month!

History Of Disability Pride Month:

Disability Pride Month is celebrated each July to recognize the disability community and the unique experiences, perspectives, and talents people with disabilities bring to our world. July marks the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the landmark civil rights law signed on July 26, 1990 that helped redefine disabilities. It was the first major step to break down barriers and create equal opportunities for all individuals with disabilities. Disability Pride Month reminds us how far we've come while continuing to advocate for a more inclusive and accessible future!



Some Ways to Celebrate:

Disability Pride Arts Festival

Date: July 18th

Time: 10 AM - 2 PM

Location: Enoch Pratt Central Library,
400 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD

[Click Here](#)



Disability Pride Outside

Date: July 26th

Time: 9:30 AM - 1 PM

Location: Black Hill Discovery Center
20926 Lake Ridge Drive Boyds, MD

[Click Here](#)

Movie Night in the Park

Date: July 24th

Time: 8:15 PM - 10 PM

Location: Utica District Park

10200-B Old Frederick Rd Frederick, MD

[Click Here](#)



Sailing at the Downtown Sailing Center

Date: August 29th

Time: 10 AM - 12 PM

Location: Downtown Sailing Center
1425 Key Hwy, Baltimore, MD 21230

[Click Here](#)



Summer Is Here!

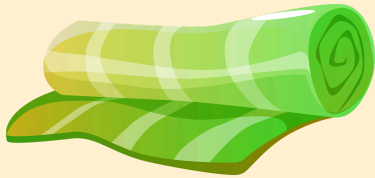


Stay Hydrated!

Pay Attention:

Seek Assistance If You Feel:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Neasea
- Heavy Sweating



Safety Tips



Wear Sunscreen!

Plan Ahead:

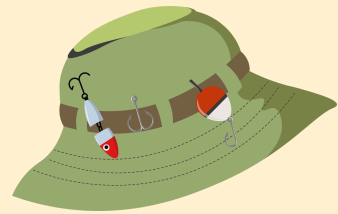
Dress Appropriately
Grab the Proper Supplies:

- Sunscreen
- Water
- Medication
- Hat/Umbrella for Shade



Plan activities in the morning or evening when temperatures are cooler!

Make The Most of Summer!



Beach

Picnic

River Tubing

Adapted Sports

Hiking

Cloud Watching/
Stargazing



Concerts

Fair/Carnival



Farmer's Markets

Boating

Sporting Event

Pool

Workout

Water Park/
Amusement Park

HELLO SUMMER

Kayaking

Gardening

Water Activites

Zoo

Fishing



Upcoming Events!

Maryland Disabilities Forum – Free Voter Education Workshop

Date: Thursday, July 16th

Time: 10AM – 12PM

Location: The Image Center, 100 West Road, Towson, MD 21204 (1st Floor Conference Room)

Date: Thursday, August 27th

Time: 10AM – 12PM

Location: The Arc Washington County, 840 Florida Avenue, Hagerstown, MD 21740

Date: Thursday, September 17th

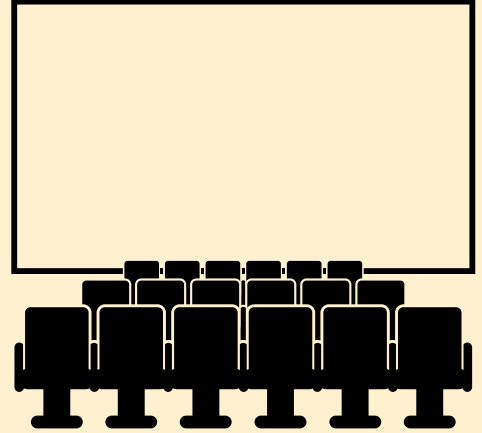
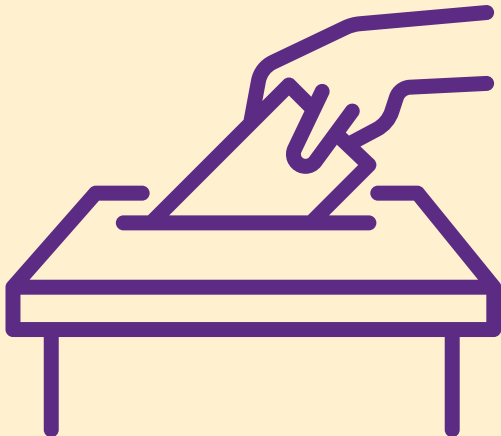
Time: 10AM – 12PM

Location: Archway Station, 45 Queen St, Cumberland, MD 21502

Join the Maryland Disability Forum for an in-person Voter Education Workshop designed for individuals with disabilities. Learn about accessible voting options, your rights as a voter, and how to make sure your voice is heard at the polls.

This free workshop is an opportunity to learn, connect, and make a difference in your community.

More info and registration: <https://lnkd.in/gjHYgKxQ>



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council Meeting

Date: Thursday, September 17, 2026

Time: 3:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Location: Columbia, MD

Members of the public can join Council meetings as a guest. That means you can join the Council meeting and listen. If you want to share something with the Council, you will have two minutes during the public comment portion at the beginning of the meeting.

Please contact Chris Rogers at crogers@md-council.org to attend.

[Click Here](#) for more information!





Round of Applause!



Jeremy Markovic – Convention Awardee

Jeremy Markovic was honored for his dedication to volunteerism and community engagement. As a dedicated member of The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region's volunteer group, Jeremy consistently demonstrates a positive attitude and passion for giving back. His enthusiasm, leadership, and willingness to share his voice leaves a meaningful impact on those around him and exemplify the spirit of community service.



Lizzy Graham – Convention Awardee

Lizzy Graham was honored for her outstanding advocacy and leadership on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As an advocate with autism, she has used her powerful voice to advance policies that protect the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities. This year, Lizzy also represented Maryland on The Arc of the United States National Council of Self-Advocates, helping elevate disability issues at the federal level and advocating for fully funded disability services and education programs.



New Hope for All – Summit Presenter

New Hope For All was a proud presenter during our second annual Self-Advocacy Summit! On a day dedicated to community and connection, self-advocates from The Arc Baltimore's New Hope For All shared their efforts in forming partnerships within the community. Through personal stories and examples of their partnership with Loyola University Maryland, New Hope For All demonstrated how meaningful it is to build connections and achieve new milestones.



Have someone to celebrate?

Contact Natalie Brooks to be featured in the next newsletter!
Email Jackson at JDeCarlo@thearcmd.org.



Partner Corner

From the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council:

The Maryland Department of Disabilities has set officially set an application window for the Accessible Boating Fund!

The program funds eligible 501(c)(3) nonprofits that offer accessible boating, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, paddleboarding, and other on-the-water recreational experiences for people with disabilities, service-disabled veterans, and eligible companions (such as family members or direct support professionals)

Applications for this year's funding cycle will be accepted from July 8 through August 7. Organizations interested in applying are encouraged to attend a Live Q&A Webinar on July 13 at 11:00 a.m. to learn more about the funding opportunity. [Read more and get webinar information here.](#)



Join People On the Go Maryland!

Connect with other self-advocates living across the state!

- Biweekly meetings
- Policy meetings
- Monthly member meetings

<https://www.pogmd.org/become-a-member>

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