

Happy New Year!

-Submitted by Darla Stuart, Executive Director-

It was a busy 2018, and I am proud of our board and staff for their dedication and commitment to our mission. I wanted to take a moment to reflect on The Arc of Aurora's 2018 successes and to advise you of an important 2019 program addition.

2018 in Review

Advocacy Program

Our Advocacy Program went through a major internal processing reboot with the goal to better serve our community. Hanni Raley, Jeff Fernengel and Petri Brill spent time reorganizing our screen, intake and advocacy support paperwork and strategies. This reorganization resulted in focusing our individual advocacy support via specific time-limited client driven goals. Additionally, we helped educate policymakers at the State Capitol about how proposed policy changes might impact people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, and we met with Congressman Jason Crow to help educate him about matters important to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

THINK+change TALKS, TRAININGS, TOOLS

THINK+change, our 2017-launched training and education social enterprise, led by Jean Solis, was in full operation. Our TRAININGS included a conference on disability and medical cannabis as well as one on autism and behavior. Our TALKS included *Living with Disability, Autism and Behavior*, and *Students with Autism in Higher Education*. We launched our community TOOL poster, *Every Customer Matters* that provides ADA-recognized ways to support customers with various types of disabilities. We also received a grant to work in the North Aurora community and public schools to help address the Special Education Pipeline to Prison via trainings with law enforcement, educators, and parents.

Individual, Family and Community Support Program

Our Individual, Family and Community Support Program led by Erica Dennison found us producing three different quarterly newsletters on general membership and community information, special education, and training and education. We also sponsored a variety of membership activities, including an online auction, summer picnic, membership dance, and membership drive. Additionally, our food bank, Member Help scholarships, and holiday supports aided many members.

2019 Program Additions

Disability Justice Program

2019 finds us launching our second social enterprise program of The Arc of Aurora: Disability Justice Program (DJP). DJP will provide consulting and/or expert witness supports to legal teams supporting criminal cases involving victims and defendants with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). DJP will work with and for legal teams only and is not able to provide services directly to people with IDD and their families. Nancy Bowden is our DJP expert, and her areas of expertise include standards of care, best practices, policies and procedures, rules and regulations, and mandatory reporting requirements at a minimum in the areas of public and privately funded adult and children residential, day program and employment programs. DJP services will include reliable and honest initial case assessment, disability technical jargon and service delivery translations, review of provided documents and research, formulation of an oral and written opinion - as requested, expert witness testimony including deposition, and consultation, case management and referrals. DJP will charge an hourly rate for its services based upon Colorado's district attorney and public defender expert consulting and/or expert rates.

THINK+change

THINK+change is partnering with our Advocacy team to offer quarterly TRAININGS via Video\Podcasts that we are calling Vodcasts. The Vodcasts will replace our SchoolHouse News e-newsletter.

Thank you, all, for your membership, support and interest. Cheers to another great year!

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