

## National Disability Employment Awareness Month

In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), celebrated each October, this issue of *The Arc News in Indiana* focuses on employment. NDEAM honors the contributions of America's workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices that benefit employers and employees.

This year's theme, "Advancing Access and Equity: Then, Now and Next" celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the first civil rights legislation protecting people with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability. Indiana's own Representative John Brademas was the principle sponsor of the bill.

The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

At the national, state, and local level The Arc works throughout the year to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) reach their full potential and become as independent as possible through community employment. Our work includes:

- ❑ Championing improving school to work transition outcomes
- ❑ Promoting "Employment First" policies as a pathway to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment
- ❑ Supporting programs that assist providers in transitioning from the use of subminimum wages and nonintegrated work settings
- ❑ Offering career counseling and information on community employment options to people working at a subminimum wage in nonintegrated work settings
- ❑ Advocating for national and state public policies to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities and remove barriers to employment

At the national,  
state and local level  
The Arc works  
throughout the  
year to help people  
with IDD reach  
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possible through  
community  
employment



While progress has been made, the disability community remains one of the most overlooked talent pools in the labor force, causing job seekers with disabilities to remain unemployed or under employed and costing employers the opportunity to connect with much needed employees.

Through The Arc of Indiana Foundation's innovative and successful Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI) we are working to be an active part of the solution by offering postsecondary training to people with disabilities that leads to meaningful employment.

We encourage you to join our efforts by keeping up-to-date and involved in The Arc's public policy initiatives by signing up to receive updates from The Arc of Indiana and The Arc of the United States at [arcind.org/get-involved](https://arcind.org/get-involved).

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## Message from Self-Advocates of Indiana

*Nicki Hinkle, President*

Over 500 people attended Self-Advocates of Indiana's annual picnic on September 15<sup>th</sup> at Hummel Park in Plainfield, Indiana. It was wonderful to have so many people come together to celebrate SAI's important work. The picnic is a fun time to network and talk about what we want to see happen in our state for people with disabilities.

We were honored that Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch attended and spoke with us about the importance of self-advocacy. We are thankful for all that she does to support SAI and her work to improve the lives of Hoosiers with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We also thank our incredible sponsors and volunteers. Without your support and help the picnic would not be a success!



Claire Van Wassenhove, SAI board member; Lt. Governor Crouch, Melody Cooper, SAI treasurer; and Nicki Hinkle, SAI president at the SAI picnic.



Lt. Governor Crouch and a member of Awesome Westside Advocates at the SAI picnic.



A participant from The Arc of Wabash County loved his caricature, created by Rolando DeCastro. Rolando created hundreds of caricatures at the SAI picnic.

## Self-Advocates of Indiana 2023 Annual Picnic Sponsors

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## Pilot Project Grant Presentations

Earlier this year, Indiana's Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services created the Innovation Pilot Project Grants program to provide opportunities for various entities to explore new and innovative ways to improve services and supports for individuals with disabilities and their families.

In August, a panel of three self-advocates, Courtney Clark, Melody Cooper and Noah Upchurch, met with grantees to share their lived experience and provide feedback on their projects. SAI has been contacted by multiple grantees who want to have individual focus groups with SAI members. We are excited to continue providing feedback and support for these wonderful projects.

## SAI Elections

Elections for SAI's 2024 board of directors will take place the first week of December. There are 13 openings for new board members. All board members must have an intellectual or development disability. Applications will open on October 2nd and will be available on SAI's website, [saind.org](https://saind.org).

To learn more about this opportunity, please contact Becky Shields at [bshields@arcind.org](mailto:bshields@arcind.org).

# Message from The Arc of Indiana CEO

Kim Dodson

Last month I celebrated 25 years with The Arc of Indiana. What an amazing opportunity I was given back in 1998. I feel truly blessed to work for this great organization.

I began at a time that Indiana was just starting to close its state-run institutions and beginning to grow home and community-based services. I felt drawn toward our mission of helping people realize their dreams of living, working, and playing in the community. In 2006, my five-year-old daughter was diagnosed with some learning disabilities, and I was pushed into the world of special education. This personal experience led me to fully appreciate the mission and power of The Arc.

Over the past 25 years, Indiana has transformed services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We have moved thousands of people from institutions into homes in the community of their choice - sometimes even homes that they own. We have found ways to utilize home and community-based services through the Medicaid waiver program to help people with IDD envision a brighter future and work toward greater independence. Indiana will soon be rolling out a new Medicaid waiver plan designed to increase services and their investment in community-based supports. What a difference from the place we were decades ago.

As we talk to people with IDD, work and employment are high on the list of things they dream about. They want an opportunity to earn a good paycheck and hold a job that provides a sense of purpose and pride. Indiana is working to end the use of sheltered workshops, where people earn a sub-minimum wage, by 2028, while also planning for those who cannot work in the community or want to retire. And just this past month our own Lieutenant Governor traveled our state to learn firsthand from employers who value hiring people with

disabilities so she can share that information with employers who are seeking ways to fill their workforce.

These huge advancements in services over the last 25 years would not have happened without The Arc of Indiana and its board of directors working alongside the state, advocating for more and better services and putting the voice of people with IDD and their families in the forefront.

We have come so far but still have so far to go. Earlier this summer we reached out to past board presidents to ask them to once again band together to grow our advocacy efforts. With their support, we have created a new Empowerment Circle in our Circles of Support initiative. Funds raised through the Empowerment Circle will specifically be used to put information and resources into the hands of people with IDD and their families to help them become engaged advocates in their own lives and part of the next wave of advocates working to improve services for all people with IDD.

We are well on our way to building a statewide advocacy leadership network. The next step will be to develop a peer mentoring network that will provide opportunities for people to learn from one another.

Please consider joining us in our quest of empowering people to dream about their best life and guiding the state to create the supports to turn those dreams into a reality. Follow our social media platforms at [arcind.org](https://arcind.org) to see what wonderful things we are accomplishing and how you can get involved.



## Chapters of The Arc Leading the Way in Community Employment

In addition to assisting participants in securing community employment, chapters of The Arc across the state are creating community employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Arc of Wabash County opened Travel Bee Coffee House in October in North Manchester. "More than a cup of coffee, Travel Bee Coffee House offers a community experience like no other, with a delicious cup of coffee."

ADEC, The Arc in Elkhart County, opened Gaining Grounds Coffee Shop in 2019 as a way to establish common ground between the people they serve and their community. The goal, to entice people in with delicious

coffee and keep them coming back for the friendships they form with the individuals with IDD served by ADEC, has worked!

Stone Belt Arc, The Arc in Monroe County, and several other chapters of The Arc offer robust arts programs where participants create and sell their works of art. Angie Deel recently presented her artwork, commissioned by Bloomington Mayor John Hamilton, to the mayor at his offices.

Find chapters of The Arc of Indiana at [arcind.org/about-the-arc/local-chapters](https://arcind.org/about-the-arc/local-chapters).



# Steps to Community Employment



Going to work, having a job, earning money, and using talents and skills is something we all want to achieve. Dreams and goals should not be limited due to a person's

disability. Employment can be many things, including:

**Community Jobs:** Working in the community full-time or part-time.

**Self-Employment:** Finding something you love to do and getting paid for it! In Indiana, there are people with developmental disabilities working as photographers, deejays, artists, and more.

**Internships:** Getting real-world work experience through an internship at a local business. This might be a short-term job training experience. Sometimes, internships lead to full-time jobs in the future. This could be paid or unpaid.

**Volunteering:** Donating your time and skills at a job that interests you. Maybe it is volunteering at a local food pantry. Maybe it is helping in an office. As a company gets to know you as a volunteer, it could turn into an internship or job.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) helps individuals with disabilities achieve employment. Services are offered locally in 25 Area Offices. Counselors provide services in each county. Individuals can be self-referred for VR services, or the referral can be made by family members or a support team member by calling, writing, or visiting a VRS office. Eligibility is not based on income or financial resources.

VRS can assist with:

- Exploring employment interests and skills
- Helping you find a job
- Providing assistive technology and other services to help you keep your job
- Re-entering employment after a period of not working
- Training for a new career due to factors related to your disability
- Providing services for career advancement
- Connecting with a Benefits Information Network counselor to discuss how to balance working and maintaining government benefits

When an individual is determined eligible for VR services, they are given a list of employment services providers. Once a provider is selected, VRS will forward a referral packet to the provider.

Visit [vrs.in.gov](https://vrs.in.gov).

## Employment Services Providers

- Many chapters of The Arc provide employment services through VR referrals. Services provided may include:
- Job readiness assessments
- Interview coaching and resume assistance
- Help with transportation during the interview process
- Job placement coordination
- On-the-job support
- Job development specialists who help individuals obtain and keep a job
- Job coaches who work with the specialists to prepare the employee

## MED Works

People with disabilities and their families are often wary of seeking employment out of fear that they will lose Medicaid for their health coverage. MED Works, Medicaid for Employees with Disabilities, can help individuals with disabilities who are employed, including those receiving Medicaid Waiver services, maintain their Medicaid coverage.

Most eligible individuals will be enrolled with the Hoosier Care Connect program and pay a monthly premium on a sliding fee scale based on their monthly gross income.

Eligible individuals who are also Medicare recipients will be covered by "traditional" Medicaid. Visit [in.gov/fssa/ompp/med-works](https://in.gov/fssa/ompp/med-works)



## The Arc of Indiana Academy Advocacy Training Program

The Arc of Indiana Advocacy Training Program offers a wide array of videos on topics impacting people with disabilities and their families. Individuals seeking a deeper understanding of these topics can complete comprehensive training modules, including a module on employment, and earn a certificate in that area of learning. Visit [advocacy.thearcacademy.org](https://advocacy.thearcacademy.org).



## Growing Employment Opportunities

*Andy Kirby, The Arc of Indiana Foundation Executive Director*

in conversations with employers and community leaders about the value of working, it is clear that there is excitement

and an openness to formal collaborations that allow us to meet our broad employment goals.

There is no doubt that some of the excitement and openness is due to the ongoing workforce crisis that employers across the state are still trying to overcome. But, it is undeniable that much of the interest is due to The Arc's advocacy work around employment and our foundation's intentional efforts to train and prepare people around

the state for success in their employment journeys. We are gathering more stories of people with disabilities finding long-term success with corporations like Toyota, Cummins, and IU Health. With those stories comes a significant increase in the number of champions working with employers who see, first-hand, the value of a more diverse workforce. More success stories multiplied by more champions equals a very good formula for continued growth in this area of advocacy.

We have an opportunity to take this very good formula and make it a great formula. To do that, we need to address and include a third variable that is currently difficult for us to master. People with disabilities should be identifying employment as a goal at much higher rates than we are

currently seeing. Because of system-imposed barriers and barriers that are self-imposed, the percentage of people with disabilities actively seeking employment remains low. We must continue to work on removing barriers and convincing people with disabilities that one of the most direct paths to a good life is through community integrated employment. This message has to be communicated clearly and people with disabilities (along with family, friends, and support networks) must do more than hear it; they have to listen, feel called to action, and be empowered to take full advantage of opportunities as they are presented.

We all have a role to play – let's work hard now to continue building the foundation that will benefit our stakeholders for a lifetime.

## Lt. Governor Crouch Champions Hiring People with Disabilities



State officials, including Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, consistently hear about workforce shortages from employers. To learn firsthand how hiring people with disabilities can be part of the workforce crisis solution, the Lt. Governor conducted a tour across the state in September to meet and talk with employers who have made a commitment to include people with disabilities in their work force through partnerships with chapters of The Arc. The Arc of Indiana CEO Kim Dodson was honored to accompany Lt. Governor Crouch on visits to Toyota Manufacturing in Princeton, Cook in Bloomington, Derby Industries in South Bend, SMC in Noblesville and Cummins in Columbus.



Noble/The Arc of Greater Indianapolis and SMC are working together to make people with disabilities valuable employees.

Derby Industries has connected with LOGAN Community Resources, The Arc of St. Joseph County, to bring people with disabilities into their workforce.



Stone Belt Arc clients provide production support at Cook and through their Project Search program, clients have secured internships at Cook that have led to becoming full-time Cook employees.



The Arc Southwest Indiana and Toyota Manufacturing have formed a strong partnership to train and make people with developmental disabilities part of the Toyota team.

# EGTI Postsecondary Vocational Training Program

**ERSKINE  
GREEN**  
Training Institute

The Arc of Indiana Foundation is walking the walk to move people with disabilities into employment through our Erskine Green Training Institute (EGTI), a postsecondary vocational training program. Opened in 2016, EGTI provides training in hospitality, food service, healthcare, and inventory distribution. We are excited that a new manufacturing training program, based at Allison Transmission in Indianapolis, will open in early 2024.

EGTI's current programs are housed within the Courtyard by Marriott in Muncie, Indiana. **During the 10 – 13 week training sessions, students attend class, master key job skills, and gain valuable work experience through an internship.**

In addition, **the curriculum addresses critical soft skills** like appropriate workplace etiquette, teamwork, taking direction, and effective communication skills.

Most applicants would have received special education services and exited with a diploma, GED, or certificate of completion. Students must be 18 years or older at the start of the training session.

Upon completion of the program, **students leave with a certificate, resume, practiced interview skills and a list of open positions in their community.** More importantly, they leave connected to the EGTI team and other resources, including an alumni group, for ongoing support and information.

EGTI is enjoying tremendous success. Every aspect of the program is designed to promote not only employment skills but also increased self-esteem and confidence. **Over 80% of EGTI graduates have secured employment in communities throughout Indiana.**

Prospective students and their families are encouraged to visit EGTI by registering for one of the **monthly general tours**. Individual tours can be scheduled by contacting [info@egti.org](mailto:info@egti.org).

In addition, **Career Sampling Sessions** are offered several times throughout the year and provide a two-day opportunity for potential students to observe and try the various jobs.

**Tuition costs are often covered by Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services.**

Deadlines to enroll for 2024 training sessions are October 9, 2023; and January 15, April 15 and July 15 2024.

## Camp EGTI

Camp EGTI is a summer program for young adults, ages 18–22. **The focus of Camp EGTI is TRANSITION – improving skills to assist with the transition from school to adulthood.** Instruction and activities during the weekdays are designed with the goal of increasing skills related to community access, independent living, social communication, self-advocacy, and employment.



It's thumbs up for this EGTI kitchen cook student.

The Indiana Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program may help cover program costs for eligible students. Visit [in.gov/tos/inesa](https://www.in.gov/tos/inesa).

**Learn More**  
765.381.8071 | 877.216.2479  
[info@egti.org](mailto:info@egti.org)  
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EGTI patient transport students and their instructor participated in the IU Health Day of Service in September.



A recent EGTI Heart of the House student.

## The Arc Master Trust I Celebrating 35 Years of Service

The Arc Master Trust I is proudly celebrating 35 years of service to people of all disabilities as Indiana's leading pooled special needs trust program. The trust has grown from its small beginnings as a one-person operation within The Arc of Indiana, to a dedicated team of 11 serving over 5,000 Hoosiers across the state. It serves as a model for pooled special needs trusts throughout the country.

The Arc Master Trust I, founded on October 24, 1988, was designed as a way for families, friends, or other loved ones to provide financial support to an individual receiving government benefits, allowing them to plan for the future of their loved one and be reassured that they will have a better quality of life. Trust II was founded in 1995 as a way for people receiving government benefits to fund a trust with their own financial assets.

As of June 30, 2023 there are over 5,400 Trust I and Trust II accounts and over \$120,300,000 total funds on deposit with The National Bank of Indianapolis. Currently, Trust I represents almost 1,000 of our total accounts.

**We want to share some messages with you from current trust beneficiaries and their loved ones as we celebrate 35 years:**

**Tom Ewbank**, co-founder of The Arc Master Trust and parent of a trust beneficiary: I enrolled my son, Curt, as the first beneficiary of The Arc Master Trust. It is not yet funded; but he is enrolled, and I continue to have the peace of mind that when I am no longer here, the trust will be there to provide for Curt.

**Zita Moore**, sister and key person to Chris Buiting: The Arc doesn't just manage your loved one's trust, they have your back. Working with the account managers has been a breeze. The trust has helped pay for my brother's rent when he lost his social security and for furniture he was in desperate need of. I refer people I meet and let them know how much of a blessing they have been for my sibling's aging process.

**Shawn Rector**, trust beneficiary: I talked to my mom about setting up an Arc Trust I for me before she passed because there were funds she wanted to leave to me. My trust pays my mortgage every month so I don't have to worry about making sure the bill is paid. The Arc Trust staff are great people to work with and can be trusted.

**David Horvath**, trust beneficiary: My dad let me know that he set up a trust for me for after he passed. The trust pays for my phone and internet bills, car insurance, and small appliances I've needed around my apartment. It helps out quite a bit.

### The Arc Master Trust Team

Melissa Justice, Chief Trust Officer

Sarah Geis, Senior Director of Engagement

Karina Napier, Director of Beneficiary Services

Alyson Settimi, Director of Operations & Administration

Trent Barnes, Director of Social Services

Audrey Davis, Trust Assistant

### Trust Account Managers

Tate Chaney

Kala Duhamell

Crystal Harrold

Maribeth McKinzie

Kaitlin Waltz

**To all who have made the success  
of The Arc Master Trust  
possible, thank you!  
We look forward to the next  
35 years of service**

Visit The Arc Master Trust at [thearctrust.org](https://thearctrust.org) or call 317-977-2375 or 800-382-9100.



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317-977-2375 [thearctrust@arcind.org](mailto:thearctrust@arcind.org) [thearctrust.org](https://thearctrust.org)



# Circles of Support

*Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.*

In 2021, The Arc of Indiana created the Circles of Support initiative to recognize organizations dedicated to supporting our advocacy efforts for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. However, as an organization founded by individuals and their families that believed in empowering their children with disabilities, The Arc of Indiana is excited to extend membership in Circles of Support to individuals and families through the newly created **Empowerment Circle**.

The Empowerment Circle consists of individuals and families that believe in the importance of The Arc of Indiana's critical advocacy efforts and make a financial gift at the Bronze (\$1,000 - \$4,999), Silver (\$5,000 - \$9,999), or Gold (\$10,000+) levels annually. To join as an inaugural Empowerment Circle member in 2023, please visit [arcind.org/circles-of-support](https://arcind.org/circles-of-support) for information and to access a commitment form. Please remember that your gift of any size ensures that our efforts to support and advocate for individuals with IDD only grow stronger. We know that **individually, we are one drop, but together, we are an ocean.**

## Mission Circle Members



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cicoa.org



gotoipmg.com



newstarservices.org



knoxcountyarcs.com



myquillo.com/connect

To learn more, including joining our Circles of Support initiative, contact Alex Parker, director of development, [aparker@arcind.org](mailto:aparker@arcind.org), or 317-977-2375

## Advocacy Leadership Network Growing Across State

This past summer, The Arc of Indiana launched a new program, the Advocacy Leadership Network, which will work to build a network of people with disabilities and family members across the state to advocate on issues important to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Twelve advocacy fellows were hired and completed over 115 hours of instructional time to build their leadership and advocacy skills. They celebrated their achievement at a special recognition ceremony (pictured) in late August.

Advocacy fellows helped recruit over 175 new participants across the state who will complete a similar curriculum, with an intentional focus on leadership, advocacy and mentorship. The goal is for participants to become leaders and self-advocates in their own lives, lead and advocate alongside others with disabilities, and be involved in ongoing systems change.

This fall, participants will have



opportunities to become a peer mentor to a person with a disability and be part of a demonstration project for a new app using LifeCourse Connect, developed by Quillo Connect.



arcind.org

## Share Your Story

The Arc is collecting stories to learn how Medicaid is working (or not!) for people with disabilities, so we can educate and advocate for change. Visit [arcind.org/news/share-your-medicaid-story](https://arcind.org/news/share-your-medicaid-story) for information or scan the QR code and share your story!





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Make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families across Indiana through your gift. Simply scan the QR code or visit [arcind.org/get-involved/donate](https://arcind.org/get-involved/donate) to give a gift online.

