



**Inside this issue:**

<i>Upcoming Changes</i>	1
<i>Colorado Autism Commission</i>	2
<i>People First Members &amp; Gifts</i>	3
<i>Guardianship</i>	4
<i>Employment Opportunity Step Up Into Your Life</i>	5
<i>Public Policy &amp; Legislative</i>	6
<i>Community Events</i>	7
<i>Membership Application</i>	8

## *Changes in the Coming Year*

With the change from summer to fall and into winter, The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas will be making some changes to our newsletter in January 2010.

The biggest change you may (or may not) notice is that we will be going as paperless as we can for our newsletter. For anyone who can, we are asking that you change from a mailed copy of the newsletter to receiving it by email. To make this change, please contact Pam at 303-220-9228 or [pam@arc-ad.org](mailto:pam@arc-ad.org).

If you are an active Arc member without email, you will still receive a mailed copy, by first class mail along with our “Weekly Updates”.

Several months ago we began a “Weekly Update” that is emailed out at the end of each week. This is a consolidated version of the many resources that our office receives. We have received very positive feedback regarding this publication. Members are happy to receive one email a week vs. several, as in the past, so this will continue into the new year.

Because of the “Weekly Updates”, we will be changing our newsletter to a quarterly publication. The new newsletter format will include more in-depth articles of interest or concern to our members and the community we serve. Our focus will be on ad

vocacy strategies, public policy and frequently asked questions that staff members address on a regular basis.

If you have an area of interest that you would like to learn more about, your

### Our Mission

The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas uses advocacy and education to include all children and adults with disabilities and their family members in their community

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## *Colorado Autism Commission Publishes Strategic Plan*

If you read the newspaper or watch television, you know that the identification of children with autism is on the rise. Latest estimates are that 8 year old children on the autism spectrum number 1-150 and this number may go up even higher in the coming months. In 2008, the Colorado Legislature recognized that our state didn't have a plan for how to address this growing need for supports and services, so they created the Colorado Autism Commission.

The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas has maintained a strong collaborative relationship with the Autism Society of Colorado and other groups and task forces working to support people with autism, as we have seen the need for advocacy services for children and adults with autism explode in our community. Our chapter agreed to be the fiscal agent for the Commission and assist with coordination and facilitation of the strategic plan. This was a huge undertaking.

The Commission consisted of 24 members, and was tasked with identifying existing services and the gaps in these services as experienced by the ASD community, and to determine appropriate actions to remedy these shortcomings within a Ten-Year Strategic Plan for the State of Colorado. Representatives from 12 Departments of State, 3 federally-funded programs and members of the community representing providers, educators, parents, and self-advocates dedicated more than 4,000 hours on this report. They were joined by 21 volunteers. We hosted live testimony opportunities in 21 different statewide sites and collected testimony to inform our report from more than 275 citizens.

Although the commission worked long and hard on this diagnosis, it became very clear to everyone involved that implementing this strategic plan will assist all children and adults with neuro-developmental disabilities. The commission has a very strong "Common Cause" statement with other developmental disabilities. The problems that individuals with autism and their families encounter when trying to access and coordinate services are not unique to autism. By implementing the strategic plan, the commission believes that all disability labels will see improvement in supports and services.

The Report is complete and has three sections: Executive Summary, Full Report, and Appendix.

Links to the report can be found at the top of the Autism Society of Colorado home page at:  
[www.autismcolorado.org](http://www.autismcolorado.org)

Executive Summary - [http://www.autismcolorado.org/applications/DocumentLibraryManager/upload/Colorado%20Autism%20Commission%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.autismcolorado.org/applications/DocumentLibraryManager/upload/Colorado%20Autism%20Commission%20-%20Executive%20Summary%20(2).pdf)

Autism Commission - Full Report - [http://www.autismcolorado.org/applications/DocumentLibraryManager/upload/ColoradoAutismCommissionReport\\_final.pdf](http://www.autismcolorado.org/applications/DocumentLibraryManager/upload/ColoradoAutismCommissionReport_final.pdf)

Appendix for Autism Commission Report - <http://www.autismcolorado.org/applications/DocumentLibraryManager/upload/Colorado%20Autism%20Commission%20Appendix.pdf>

If you are unable to access these reports by the internet, and need a hard copy to read, please call our office at 303-220-9228 and we will get a copy to you.

Our chapter is very proud of the contributions we made to this report, but we know that even though we have a plan, it doesn't mean it will be implemented without a LOT of work! One of the recommendations of the Commission was to develop a Legislative Task Force to implement the strategic plan. The creation of this task force will be a high priority for us this legislative session.

## *People First and Friends*

**Saturday, November 7**—2 to 5 pm People First “Count Your Blessings” talent show and Thanksgiving Dinner at Bethany Church on Broadway and Caley. Please RSVP for this event and bring your own drink

The dinner is being provided by the Marble family and their church.

**Saturday, December 5**—2 to 5 pm People First “Christmas Party” at Bethany Church. Please bring a gift to exchange and your own drink. Please RSVP.

Enter the church from the back, where the parking lot is located.

Go to the lower level and enter through the patio entrance.

\*\* People First is for all teenagers and adults with developmental disabilities who want to make new friends, participate in social activities and help to influence systems. For more information, call People First at 303-797-0893. Everyone is welcome.

**People First  
Phone Number  
303-797-0893**

## *New and Renewing Members and Contributing Partners—Thank You!*

### **Contributing Partners**

Jenny O'Donovan  
John Roeske

### **Members**

Tanya Schmitt  
Ed Reinhardt  
Anita Winter  
Lewis & Betsy Choate  
Tamara Stoffel  
John Roeske  
Tim O'Donovan  
Jenny O'Donovan  
Ralph & Frances Wedgewood  
Dennis & Tracie Clyde  
Christopher & Mary Macleod  
Mark Scherer & Cynthia Carr  
Moya Smith

DeAnn Szyfer  
Carrie VanBruwaene  
Brad & Laura Ayres  
Edward & Sandra Curran  
Jerry & Ruth Plybon  
James & Georgann Hall  
Rebecca Carr  
Richard & Hope Dangremond

### **Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)**

Thank you for designating The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas as a recipient of your donations.

### **United Way**

Thank you for your continued contributions to our organization.

**Your Membership in  
The Arc of Arapahoe &  
Douglas means you are  
joining others in your  
community that want to  
make a difference!**

## *Guardianship—Court Appointed Visitor*

For several years The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas has provided a court appointed visitor for members who have petitioned the court for guardianship for their adult son or daughter. In mid-October we made a change to this practice due to some office restructuring.



Effective immediately, we will no longer be providing a court appointed visitor for guardianship for families in Arapahoe (excluding the City of Aurora) and Douglas counties. The primary change that parents or guardians will see is that you will no longer be able to request The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas county for a visitor.

1. When you file your guardianship paperwork, the court randomly assigns a visitor to your case. That individual will contact you to schedule an appointment and complete and file the paperwork on your behalf. There is typically a fee charged for this service, but you can complete the form to have the fee waived.
2. For more information and the required paperwork for guardianship, go to [www.courts.state.co.us](http://www.courts.state.co.us) and click on “Download a court form” ~ “Probate” ~ New case: Guardianship Adult.
3. Free classes will continue to be offered in collaboration by our organization, The Arc of Jefferson County and the Developmental Disabilities Resource Center (DDRC). These classes are a two-part series with the first class answering questions and explaining options. The second class walks you step-by-step through the guardianship paperwork, as required by law.
4. The next scheduled classes are November 17 and December 1 from 4 to 6 pm at the DDRC office. Please call Megan Martin at 303-462-6590 to RSVP as space is limited.

If you have any questions regarding this change, please contact Carol Meredith, Executive Director, at 303-220-9228 or [carol@arc-ad.org](mailto:carol@arc-ad.org).



ARC Thrift stores provide the majority of funding for your chapter. For donation pickup call **303-238-5263**. To find a store near you go to [www.arcthrift.com](http://www.arcthrift.com).

## *Employment Opportunity*

The board of directors and staff of The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas are pleased to announce that through a re-organization and extra funding from the ARC Thrift stores, we are able to hire another individual advocate to support individuals with disabilities and their family members in our area. We know that some of you have not been able to receive the assistance that you needed as quickly as we would have liked over the past couple of years. We also know that individual advocacy is important to you, because we are always really really busy! So we are asking for your support to help us find a wonderful addition to our crew.

Your chapter is looking for someone who is able to work full-time on a flexible schedule, as some meetings are scheduled very early in the morning and/or during the evening hours. This person must be passionate about ensuring that children and adults with disabilities have access to the services and supports that they need to be successful in their school and their community. We need a self-starter who is able to work independently, and we are willing to train the right person. The position requires an individual with excellent communication and negotiation skills, both verbal and written, and the ability to work in a high-stress environment.

Please don't expect a high salary, but the right person can expect to go home every day knowing that they have made a difference in the lives of children and adults with disabilities in our community.

For more information, see our website at [www.arc-ad.org](http://www.arc-ad.org).

## *Step Up into Your Life—Planning for after High School*



Through a generous grant from the Douglas County Commissioners, The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas is happy to provide this workshop explaining the world of services and supports for adults with disabilities in Colorado.

When:

Six Monday Sessions: March 1, 8, 15, 29 and April 12 & 26, 2010

6:00 PM—8:00 PM

Where:

Southbridge Recreation Center

Senior Lounge

4800 McArthur Ranch Road

Highlands Ranch, CO 80130

What: Where will I live?, Who will pay for it?, What will I do all day?, How can I make a plan?, Who will make decisions?, How about healthcare?

For more information or to RSVP, please see our website at [www.arc-ad.org](http://www.arc-ad.org) or call us @ 303-220-9228.

## Public Policy & Legislative Updates

Need to know who your legislators are and how to contact them?

Go to [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org) and put in your 10 digit zip code.

### Colorado Budget

As you know, Colorado is still in a severe budget crisis and more cuts will need to be taken from this year's budget and next year is looking grim. We want to thank Governor Ritter for taking back the cuts from the Aid to the Needy Disabled. The Colorado Cross Disability Coalition did a fabulous job communicating why these cuts were so awful, and the Governor listed and restored the funding. However, it will have to come from somewhere, and we are hearing that our schools are reeling with cuts to their budgets. Staff has been re-organized and downsized, transportation has been cut for typical students, and given that Colorado was 51st in the nation for spending on Special Education before the current recession, we know that students with disabilities and their teachers are doing more with less. So far, the developmental disability system has been spared from deep cuts. There have been small reductions in provider rates, which weren't great to begin with, but whole programs have been saved so far. We will continue working with other community groups and businesses to address the revenue shortage in Colorado's general fund.

### Supported Living Services

We have heard from many of you about challenges you are facing with the changes to the SLS Waiver. The good news is that everyone will now have an individualized budget that they can plan on based on their Authorization Tier. The bad news is that the tiers are lower than many people expected. Individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members will not have to worry about provider rates increasing unless the state changes the rate for that service; everyone will have the same rates. However, many people have lost or will lose their one-on-one providers for Community Access services, because the rates are so low. We want you to know that we are working hard at public policy tables to fix these issues. We have heard from many of you that access to recreation and fitness is a big issue, we will continue to work on that, but if you have other concerns please let us know. (most of the above is unchanged from our last newsletter)

### Children's Extensive Support Waiver

We have not heard about a lot of problems from our members regarding the changes to this waiver, except that the rates are too low. We are working on that. If you are having problems making the CES

Waiver work for you, please contact us, we are happy to help and we need to understand the problems that families are facing.

### Appeals

If we had a mantra at The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas it would be one word: APPEAL! We know of many many situations in various service systems where an appeal has changed an adverse outcome for a person with a disability. If you have any questions, please contact us—we are happy to help with appeals.

### Interim Legislative Committee on Children's Medicaid Waivers

Our chapter has been participating and monitoring the work of this committee. Be looking for legislation next session to address Catastrophic Needs for Children (respite, equipment, prescriptions), and a bill that will allow Medicaid to go after private health insurance companies that should have paid a claim for a child with disabilities, but allowed Medicaid to pay instead.

To get immediate public policy updates by email, send your email to: [carol@arc-ad.org](mailto:carol@arc-ad.org).

## Community Events

**Parent to Parent of Colorado**—on-line support and discussion group. Go to [www.P2P-CO.org](http://www.P2P-CO.org) to sign up. For parents with adult sons or daughters try [www.pad-co@yahoo.com](http://www.pad-co@yahoo.com).

**Support group geared for parents, family members and providers of children on the autism spectrum.** Second Thursdays from 6-8pm at The Autism Society of CO office. 550 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, #1000 – 720-214-0794 or [office@autismcolorado.org](mailto:office@autismcolorado.org). Childcare provided, but must RSVP.

**Mile High Down Syndrome Assoc. South Area School Age Support Group**—for parents/caregivers who have school aged children with Down syndrome. Call 303-797-1699 for more information or to RSVP. Group meets the 4th Saturday of every month from 4-6 pm at various locations.

**The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas Board Meetings** are the third Wednesday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the office. Please RSVP at 303-220-9228.

**St. Joseph Kaffee House** - For persons with special needs and their parents or guardians. Meets one Saturday a month at Ave Maria Catholic Church, 9056 E. Parker Road, Parker. Free dinner from 6 to 7 pm and a fun activity following. To RSVP or for more information, please call Jim or Susie Record at 303-840-9195 or Judy Freund at 303-840-1850.

**Kids Mobility Network** - Enabling Safety, Mobility and Independence. Check out their website at [www.kidsmobility.org](http://www.kidsmobility.org) or call 303-242-8281 for more information.

**Thank you Volunteers! We couldn't do it without you...**

Stephanie French  
Lisa Scheffel  
Mary Valenti  
Tressa Riggert  
Mary Gumm  
Geri Surfes  
Renee Goldstein

**Families First** operates a support line every day from 10 am to 10 pm for parents who want information on parenting and child development, community referrals or someone to listen. The number is

303-695-7996. Also, offers parenting classes for parents with a developmental disability or parents who have children with a developmental disability.



**Donate your unwanted vehicle to Arc Thrift by calling 303-308-2435.**

### OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ed Casteel- President

Anne Thomas- Vice President

Al Valenti- Treasurer

Holly Ancell- Secretary

Kelly Stahlman– Current Past President

Shawneen Cooney - Janis DeBaca

Laura Guthals - Karen Huber -

Scott Forlenza - Laura Leighton -

Pam Valvano (Arc of Colorado Rep.)

# We Invite You to Become a Member of The Arc

I/we want to be a member of **The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas** to support people with cognitive developmental disabilities, their families and friends.

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive e-mails related to: children issues \_\_\_\_\_ / adult issues \_\_\_\_\_ / public policy \_\_\_\_\_

Email my newsletter (save paper & postage) \_\_\_\_\_

**Self Advocate—\$5.00    Individual—\$35.00    Family—\$50.00    Business—\$100.00**

Please mail this coupon and your check to: **The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas, 8100 E Arapahoe Road, Suite 208  
Centennial CO 80112**

**\*\*To pay by credit card, please go to our website, [www.arc-ad.org](http://www.arc-ad.org) and click on membership\*\***

Thank you!



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8100 E Arapahoe Road, #208  
Centennial CO 80112

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