



ARI Celebrates 65th Anniversary

In July we will be celebrating our 65th Anniversary. Aid for Retarded Children, Inc. was founded in 1952 and opened a nursery school with five children in 1958. Since then, ARI of CT, Inc., has grown into an agency serving nearly 150 adults living, working, having fun and learning to be as independent as possible in our community. Our founding families, led by the Martin and the Lotstein families, set out to develop educational options for their children. As the children grew, so did ARI! Of course, these two families needed some help, and they received a great deal of community support. Others who were very instrumental in the early days included Frank White, the Marks and Kaminsky families and Christel and Anthony Truglia. We are grateful for their vision and their legacy. We remember them for the leadership they provided to begin and to grow ARI.

ARI would not be where it is today if it wasn't for the incredible dedication of the many ladies who served on the Women's Auxiliary. The Auxiliary was comprised of mothers of ARI consumers and other women in the community. The group succeeded as strong advocates for legislation to improve the lives of people with disabilities and as effective fundraisers. They opened the ARI Thrift Shop in 1966 and held countless fundraising events including the annual fashion show. This group of trailblazers worked together for over 40 years, was instrumental in the opening of the Vocational Training Center, and raised several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Many of their members are still active at ARI and their children continue to benefit from our services. We are indebted to them for their support.

We invite you to join us in celebrating our 65 years in the community as we host some special events to celebrate this milestone. Join us to recognize our consumers, their families and the community members who have supported us and enabled us to continue our mission of enriching the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.



Enriching the lives of people with disabilities and their families by enabling them to achieve their fullest potential at home, at work and in the community.

From the President & CEO

Photo by Bernie Weiss



Spring, my favorite season, has finally arrived! There is nothing like the warmth of the sun inviting you to spend more time outside, the birds waking you up with their songs, and watching happy animals out and about.

This was a very long, busy winter at ARI. As always, the challenges continue as we try to stay on top of the ever-changing state and federal agendas that impact our funding. Despite the concerns that lie ahead, and the budgetary constraints we face, we continue to seek ways to improve the quality of our programs and the quality of life for the people we serve.

There have been many positive initiatives that have taken place over the last several months. We have restructured our day program and introduced new activities, replaced a third of our vehicles thanks to generous donors, completed countless repairs in our homes, and raised awareness and funds to ensure that we can continue to enrich the lives of the people we support.

Our FY 2016 audit is complete and the report shows that we increased our revenue and decreased our expenses throughout the year resulting in a \$150,000 positive change in our operations. Unfortunately, we still ended the year with a deficit, but it is significantly lower than the last several years. The first eight months of the current fiscal year show even better results and I am pleased to report that we continue to make significant progress toward stabilizing the financial health of our organization. These results are only made possible by the continued diligence of our staff to reduce expenses, the generosity of individual donors, and the thoughtful planning of a dear friend of ARI who left a significant bequest to our organization.

While we have made great improvements, we have much work to do to stabilize our organization and ensure we have a solid foundation for growth. I look forward to sharing more details with you at our annual State of the Agency meeting on May 11. See inside for further details. PLEASE make time in your schedule to attend this very important meeting. All are welcome!

We could never do all that we do without our team of dedicated volunteers. There are many opportunities to get involved, with a wide range of time commitments. Please include ARI in your schedule. Whether you can volunteer at an event once or twice a year, or make a weekly time commitment to lead an activity, we need you! Please contact Gerard Gasparino to find a way you can get involved. I promise you will enrich your own life even more than you enrich the lives of the people we support. I continue to believe that it takes a village to raise a family. With your help, our village of friends, donors and supporters will ensure that our family lives on for years to come. Thank you for being an essential part of our village!

With sincere appreciation,
Susanne D. Kuligowski
President & CEO

Pre-Vocational Services to Close

In 2014, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued new requirements under the Home and Community Based Settings Rule. The intent of this rule is to provide opportunities for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive services in their own home or community rather than institutions or other isolated settings. The state of Connecticut has been working since this ruling was issued, to develop plans to ensure compliance by March of 2019. For ARI, this means we have to close our pre-vocational services – which has been known in the past as “sheltered employment.”

As DDS took immediate action to close admissions to sheltered work programs when the ruling was issued, ARI has had a declining number of participants in the program over the past few years. ARI currently has eight individuals in what is now known as the pre-vocational services program. We have been working with their case managers to plan for the next steps for these individuals. Some will be going on to more independent work programs while others will be moving to our day service options program to participate in various activities and community volunteer services as they near their retirement years. In anticipation of the closing of this program, ARI has not taken any new contract work for over a year. This group continues to complete projects for vendors we have been working with for many years, and to process mailings for ARI. We anticipate this work continuing as we continue the transition process for our consumers.

As always, we will put the needs and interests of our consumers at the center of their transition and we will work to shift them into the programs and services that are best suited for them.

IN MEMORIAM – ROBERT MURPHY



September 26, 1944 – April 3, 2017. Robert Murphy, a Connecticut Yankee, was a recent resident of The Villa, Stamford, when he passed away from heart disease. His “ma,” a long-time guardian, was with him when he died. For many years he was a consumer of services at ARI of

CT. Robert lived independently before joining Palermo House in Stamford. He participated in many activities and held various jobs as part of the ARI “workshop.” Over the years, Robert participated in recreational activities, and devoted many hours to his love of music. He had a wonderful ability to recall staff and colleagues’ family names, former professions and latest news. He spoke to everyone and turned many anxious faces to smiling ones with his positive personality. Robert made friends wherever he went and will be sorely missed.

Day Service Options



The Day Service Options (DSO) program continues to meet the needs of each individual by offering a multitude of activities. Over the last few months we have added activities for all of the consumers based on their interests. The new program options include cooking groups, work readiness groups, sign language classes, Zumba/dance groups, field trips to museums (including the Housatonic Art Museum), Wii activities (to improve motor skills) and much more. Consumers change groups throughout the day based on their individualized schedules. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, groups have access to the gym at the Boys and Girls Club (Yerwood Center) where they play basketball, soccer and games. The DSO program continues to study and foster diversity with small group projects. In February, groups prepared small presentations on African Americans who've made a difference in our history, such as Maya Angelou, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Dr. Joyce Yerwood.

In January, the First Congregational Church donated a refrigerator which has allowed us to open the ARI Snack Bar. Consumers are in charge of maintaining inventory and selling products, with staff assistance. The snack bar is open for 45 minutes at 10:00 a.m. and noon, allowing staff and consumers the opportunity to purchase snacks and coffee.

Residential Services



Last December, Tally Ho residence received a two-year license from DDS. Both the Palermo and Truglia residences will be inspected in the spring. A two-year license is the maximum that you can receive.



ARI held a Decorating Contest during the holiday season. Truglia won for best decorated Christmas tree and all the homes outdid themselves over Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanzaa.



Sunrise Cottage in Ridgefield hosted a Super Bowl party for over 20 consumers and staff. All enjoyed the big game, with great food and comradery.

The Sunshine Committee

The Sunshine Committee, formed in the late fall, is made up of managers and support staff. The mission of the committee is to increase morale throughout the agency and inspire us to work and communicate better. The committee will be sending monthly birthday wishes to staff and create events that will bring staff together. The committee will reach out to employees to ask input on ways to increase working relationships throughout the agency.

Thank you for Supporting ARI of Connecticut!!

Just fill out and mail this form to ARI of CT, 174 Richmond Hill Avenue, Stamford CT 06902.

- Benefactor \$2,500 +
- Leader \$1,000-\$2,499
- Supporter \$500-\$999
- Contributor \$250-\$499
- Friend \$100-\$249
- Donor \$25-\$99
- Other _____

- Enclosed is a completed form from my employer's matching gift program.

Mr / Mrs / Ms Name _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Tel: (H) _____ (C) _____
 Email: _____
 Payment Type: Check Cash American Express Mastercard Visa
 Credit Card #: _____
 Name on Card: _____
 Exp _____ / _____ 3 digit # on back of card: _____

For more information, please go to www.arict.org or call 203 324-9258, ext. 3023

Recreation and Volunteers



For the 62nd year, the Stamford Police Association sponsored the annual ARI Holiday Party on December 9 for over 100 consumers and staff. We would like to thank the Boys and Girls Club of Stamford for allowing us to use the Yerwood Center for this festive event. Consumers and staff were treated to a great lunch

provided by Renee Brown, ARI parent, Board Member, and owner of Renee's Soul Food Cuisine. Presents were given to each consumer by Santa and Mrs. Claus, courtesy of the Stamford Police.



Monday, December 19, was the annual ARI Holiday Party at the Knights of Columbus. Consumers were treated to a dinner and dancing courtesy of the Knights of Columbus and Michael Power's Catering. Nearly 100 consumers and staff from ARI and other agencies danced the night away.



On Tuesday, February 7, sixteen consumers attended the Bridgeport Sound Tigers winning hockey game against Springfield. Ten of the tickets were provided by the Sound Tigers.



On Monday, February 13, over 100 consumers and staff enjoyed an evening of dancing at the Valentine's Party hosted by the Knights of Columbus. New caterers, Celebrations by Terry & Lina, served a delicious dinner for all in attendance.



On Friday, January 27, the United Way of Western Connecticut recognized Barbara Aronica and Peter Buck as Outstanding Volunteer Couple of the Year at their annual Volunteer Recognition Breakfast. Barbara and Peter were recognized for their decades of service to ARI, serving on the board of directors and volunteering with fundraising and recreational activities. We are grateful for their support over the years and congratulate them on this honor.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more about the ARI Recreation Program please contact Gerard J. Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at gasparinog@arict.org.

join us!

Susanne Kuligowski, CEO of ARI of Connecticut,
reports on the

State of the Agency

Thursday, May 11, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
St. Bridget of Ireland Church,
278 Strawberry Hill Avenue, Stamford, CT

Light refreshments
RSVP by 5/8/16 at www.arict.org
or contact Judy Bruen at 203 324-9258, ext. 3003



11th annual walk for independence

Sunday, APRIL 30
Cove Island Park, Stamford
10:00 a.m.

save the dates

22nd Annual Lotstein/Martin GOLF TOURNAMENT Thursday, JUNE 22

Sterling Farms
12:00 p.m. Lunch / 1:30 p.m. Tee off

Grants and Community Support

ARI received \$136,833 from the Estate of Denise Grove. Mrs. Grove and her husband Mel were involved with ARI for over 40 years, serving on the Board and in other capacities. Both their children, Steven and Gary, were consumers at ARI. Mrs. Grove passed away in 2015.

...

ARI received \$2,000 from the Stamford Police Association to fund the annual holiday party on December 9. Funds were used to purchase gifts for each of our 100 consumers, hire a DJ and cover other expenses. The SPA has supported a holiday party at ARI for 62 years. We continue to seek support from the community.

...

ARI received a check for \$13,000 from the Knights of Columbus Council 41 at their annual Communion Breakfast on Sunday, March 5.



If you are interested in volunteering or supporting ARI with a grant or volunteer project, please contact Gerard Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at gasparinog@arict.org or call (203) 324-9258 ext. 3023.

2ND ANNUAL

ARI of CT

Gospel Concert for Independence

Planning has begun!
Details coming soon!

Visit arict.org to register or sponsor

ARI Wish List – YOU CAN HELP!

Want to help but don't know where to start? Here is a list of opportunities to support our programs and services. You can make a real difference in the lives of our consumers by making a donation or giving your time and expertise. If you are interested in donating or assisting with any of these needs please contact Gerard Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at (203) 324-9258 ext. 3023 or email gasparinog@arict.org.

Sponsor the ARI Artists' Initiative

- Annual ARI Artists' Initiative Sponsor \$10,000
- Art Class Sponsor \$5,000
- Class supplies \$2,500
- Special projects, printing of greeting cards, and the calendar \$2,500

Upcoming Event Title Sponsors

- 11th Annual Walk for Independence, April 30, 2017 \$5,000
- 22nd Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament, June 22, 2017, 2017 \$5,000
- 2nd Annual Gospel Concert for Independence, Spring, 2017 \$5,000

In-Kind Donations and Volunteer Opportunities

- Vehicles
- Painting (interior and exterior)
- Landscaping at Group Homes
- ARI Committees and Events Volunteers
- Aqua-Aerobics Instructor
- Art Class Teacher / Assistant
- ARI Website Redesign
- Fundraising Database entry and updating
- Computers that meet the Windows 7 system requirements
- Lead activities and parties in group homes

AmazonSmile



Click on the AmazonSmile logo on the ARI homepage and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to ARI. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know – same products, same prices, same service.

ARI of Connecticut, Inc.

Susanne D. Kuligowski
PRESIDENT & CEO

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS

Peter A. Buck, Chairperson
John D. Russo, Treasurer
Lee Combrinck-Graham, M.D., Secretary

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Eric Brown, Sr.
Renee Brown
Calvin Chapman
Rickey Denes
Lynne Fife
Latoya Hunter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIRPERSONS EMERITI

Barbara Aronica-Buck
Peter A. Buck
Henry Brenner, Ph.D.*
Arlene O. DuBiago
Christopher M. Foxall
Edward Granelli
Sari Jaffe, Esq.
Louis Lotstein*
Paul G. Macari
Thelma V. Martin*
Philip Molstre
Dennis Murphy*
Mario Musilli, Esq.
Frank D. Rich III
Richard W. Saunders*
Allan Sussman
Richard E. Taber
Scott M. Wich
Francis White*

*deceased

ARI of Connecticut, Inc. is a non-profit organization under IRS code 501(c)(3). The ARI News is published for the members, board of directors, family members, people served, staff and friends of ARI of Connecticut, Inc. Edited and designed by Barbara C. Aronica-Buck. Published by ARI of Connecticut, Inc., 174 Richmond Hill Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut, 06902-5696.(203) 324-9258. Fax (203) 324-3949. Email: www.arict.org. ARI of Connecticut, Inc. supports equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, marital status, age, disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship or sexual orientation. ARI of Connecticut, Inc. is funded by DDS.

How Are We Doing?

ARI needs your feedback! We will be conducting surveys in the upcoming months to gauge how we are doing and to make sure we are focusing on the areas our key stakeholders believe to be most important. Surveys will be completed with our consumers in our day and residential programs and sent to family members and community members. We will rely on the results of these surveys to plan for our future. When you receive your survey, please complete and return it promptly.