Summer has arrived and with the beginning of summer comes the end of our fiscal year, as well as the state of Pennsylvania. As we close the year, we reflect upon the accomplishments of the year that ended June 30, 2018 and begin to plan for the next year.

One of our most successful programs last year was the Abilities and Employment Readiness Opportunities (AERO) Program. AERO is an afterschool program for high school students with disabilities. The program operates from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM; during those times students focus on job skills and independent living skills. AERO is operated out of the PARC Productions building in downtown Butler. The agency plans to open a second location in the Mars and South Butler School Districts in 2018.

The agency’s residential program continues to grow. In fiscal year 2017, the agency added two new houses and welcomed four new residents into the program. In addition to the new houses, the agency added a new hearing-impaired site. The new house will have staff that have been trained in American Sign Language and will enable the individuals living in the home to communicate with staff in their language.

SCHOOLS OUT FOR SUMMER & AERO WRAPS UP

Two years ago (thanks to the Hillman Family Foundation) we were able to start up an afterschool transitions program for students needing intensive transition services. We transformed the downstairs section of our workshop facility into a live classroom where students can come together to work on daily living and vocational skills.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

HERE’S TO A NEW YEAR

A LETTER TO YOU FROM OUR CEO, JOHN LINK.

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From the state of PA, our individuals have seen some major changes that effect their lives. One of these changes is the approval of the ABLE accounts. The ABLE accounts are a mechanism where individuals and families can save money and not have it count toward the asset limit imposed by Social Security. Setting up an ABLE account is a simple process that can be done online at www.PAABLE.gov.

Another bright area for our industry is the passing of the 2018/2019 PA Budget. Governor Wolfe signed the budget into law on June 28, 2019, insuring services and funding would not be delayed.
BUILDING THE BRIDGE TO INCLUSION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Many day-to-day technology tasks have become so intuitive for many of us that it’s easy to forget life before these clicks and swipes. For people with I/DD, these skills can make a world of difference by building bridges to community participation. (thearc.org)

With the help of funding from the start-up grant for AERO, The Arc of Butler County has started integrating the use of assistive technology in its programming. We started out with the AERO program and purchased 10 iPads for use within the afterschool program. We have been working with applications from AbleLink Technology—AbleLink’s products are all designed with one common purpose: To allow people with cognitive limitations to do the everyday tasks everyone else takes for granted.

Through the simple exposure of digital technology, participants are building skills that will support them to become more independent within their communities. We are looking forward to expanding assistive technology across our different program areas.

SCHOOL’S OUT FOR SUMMER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

AERO was designed to facilitate a successful transition to the adult world for students needing intensive transition services. It provides opportunity for employment and community living through formal planning (involving educators, parents, students, and community agencies), appropriate curriculum, and experiences to promote a smooth transition into living and working independently in the community.

Summer is here, and the kids are ready for it! From September until the end of May, eleven students from Butler Senior High School were engaged and building lifelong skills that they will be able to take with them for life after high school. We had two students graduate this year, who are continuing with COD to do job shadowing and Community Based Work Assessments.

This year was an exciting one. Working through the curriculum can sometimes be a drag—but we like to keep things exciting! Students had the chance to use our kitchen and do some cooking…popcorn chicken and mac and cheese. (Yes, please!) The students also wanted to lend some helping hands. We spent some time around Easter to make up goodie bags to donate to organizations who provide services to children.

Part of the program is helping students find coping mechanisms when they are struggling with a bad day or have a behavior that needs redirected. By the end of the year, our students improved and became comfortable with talking and communicating with our program staff and each other!

Students wrapped up the school year by participating in some spring cleaning! On May 23rd, we coordinated a park clean-up at a local park in Butler. From wiping down park benches and picnic areas to pulling weeds, Preston Park was in tip-top shape by the time AERO was finished.

INTERESTED?

We have many volunteer opportunities! Learn how YOU can get involved by contacting Marissa Wagner. mwagner@arcbutler.org
MEET ERIC.

“When I first started with The Arc, I didn’t want to be there,” Eric said. He explained how after time, The Arc has changed him in many ways and he has learned many things. “The Arc has helped me with many parts of my life— from buying cars to moving in with my fiancé, just support in anyway.” Eric has been a long-time participant of The Arc’s services, and many of the staff that has worked with him have seen a huge transformation.

“COD/Job Coaching Staff is proud of Eric for all of his accomplishments and we are proud to be working with him. Eric has come a long way throughout the years.”

Carmen, COD JOB COACH

Eric said his job coaches have helped him learn to stay calm and deal with pressure in the workplace. He says when times are difficult he feels comfortable calling his job coaches and is happy to know they believe in him and support him.

THE MCDONALD’S EXPERIENCE

Eric has been working at McDonald’s for almost a year now… this is one of the few times Eric has been able to successfully hold a job for this long of time. We asked Eric what he likes most about working at McDonald’s and he said “good staff, good support team and I have made good friends there. I enjoy just plain working at McDonald’s.”

NEW DATA REVEALS OUR NATION IS FAILING TO SUPPORT THOSE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The FINDS Survey revealed that, despite the progress that many states have made to increase availability of resources and public funding to provide supports for caregivers and individuals with disabilities, many critical challenges remain. The study revealed that:

80% of individuals with I/DD live with a caregiver who is their family member.

54% of caregivers reported that they did not have a plan for the future.

50% of individuals with I/DD leave high school without a high school diploma.

Only a minority of individuals with I/DD are fortunate enough to be employed; of those employed:

60% work in retail, janitorial, landscaping, or food service jobs.

3 out of 4 of survey respondents described that since becoming a caregiver they are more aware of policy issues and more involved in advocacy.

FINDS Community Report 2017

TO READ THE SURVEY REPORT, VISIT www.thearc.org/FINDS
**Tips & Tricks to Beat the Heat This Summer**

**Think Cool Thoughts**
When confronted with 100-degree temperatures that could melt plastic at the playground, it's best to let your thoughts drift to cold places. Picture icebergs, igloos, and snowstorms.

**A Good Soak**
Important pressure points that will help your whole body stay cool during a heat wave are the soles of your feet. Fill a basin with water and ice cubes, pull up a chair, and dip your feet in.

**Keep It Spicy**
This may seem counterintuitive, but eating spicy food causes you to sweat without raising your body temperature. Sweating is your body's way of cooling down!

**Order Out**
Whatever you do—do not turn on your oven! Cooking with an oven will quickly heat up your house. Take this opportunity to have a BBQ or order out!

**H2O Therapy**
Keep a few bottles of water in the refrigerator. Drink water frequently on hot days. As you lose water due to dehydration, your body temperature rises. By replacing those lost fluids, you'll stay nice and cool.

**The Popcicle Effect**
A helpful and tasty tip to stay cool, is to eat something cold! Stock your freezer with your favorite ice pops or ice cream and have something when you start feeling hot!

**Shower Power**
Sometimes the toughest time during a heat wave is at night. The best way to sleep through a heat wave is to take an ice-cold shower before bed.
MEET MARISSA.
ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

Marissa Wagner has been with The Arc of Butler County for close to three years. She graduated from Slippery Rock University in back in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in Exercise Science, and then again in 2009 with a master’s degree in Adapted Physical Activity. She was hired as the Activities Coordinator for the agency-- and since, has been a HUGE asset to our team.

As Activities Coordinator, Marissa organizes and plans all our special events (sidewalk sales, Fall Craft Show, Thursday Night Parties). She makes sure all of these events are staffed, supplied for, and organized!

“My job gives me the chance to express my creativity, and put my passion into play.”

MEET KATIE.
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SUPPORTS COORDINATOR

Katie Hilliard has been with The Arc of Butler County for close to three years. She has a bachelor’s Degree in Medical Imaging Sciences from Clarion University. Katie has worked in various fields, including: retail management, healthcare, hospitality, and childcare.

Her inspiration for working with individuals with disabilities came from her mom. Her mom has worked with kids with disabilities and when the opportunity opened with The Arc, she went for it!

As the only CPS coordinator for The Arc of Butler County, Katie describes her day-to-day job as busy.

“I have always believed that everyone should have the chance to be as active in the community as they want too, regardless of disabilities.”

MORE ON CPS

The Arc of Butler County’s Community Participation Supports program is intended to maximize opportunities for individuals to have access to the benefits of being integrated into their communities. This program increases an individual’s potential to achieve community employment by providing both facility based trainings and exploration into the community.

INTERESTED?

Have ideas about volunteer opportunities for our individuals? Please contact Katie Hilliard. khilliard@arcbutler.org
Congratulations! Empowerment Scholarship Recipients!

The Empowerment Scholarship is administered by The Arc of Butler County Board of Directors. It was created to encourage and support individuals with I/DD. The goal is to assist graduating seniors to achieve their post-graduation goals.

To apply for this scholarship, students fill out an application and submit a PowerPoint presentation explaining post-graduation goals and how the Empowerment Scholarship will help them achieve their goals.

This year we awarded 4 applicants each a $500.00 scholarship.

The students who received this scholarship plan to use the award accordingly. Some will be using it for assistive technology, while others will be using it for post-secondary tuition costs.

WORKING TOGETHER AND WHY GREAT PARTNERSHIP SUCCEED

DID YOU KNOW? PARC Productions is a full production facility specializing in business solutions for both large and small companies. What can we do for you?

- Cut your production costs
- Expansion without expense
- Community Involvement

PARC Productions provides customized and quality sub-contract services to businesses in Butler County and throughout the western Pennsylvania region. We take pride in seeing your product/service delivered to you on time and at a reasonable cost.

Specialties:
- Assembly
- Packaging
- Full mailroom services
- Light fabrication

Benefits:
- Pick-up and delivery of product
- Lower production costs
- Expand without the expense

The partnership between our company and yours provides meaningful work opportunities and job training to many of your friends and neighbors with disabilities.

CHECK OUT OUR PRODUCT!

Wood Pallet Decor... Customized orders upon request!

100% Soy Candles and Wax Melts

Firewood and Fire Starters

AND MORE!

For orders, contact Allen: aalston@arcbutler.org

Jeep Fest was a success!

Bantam Jeep Festival is one of the many local events The Arc of Butler County looks forward too. For months the workshop was busy getting together product to sell during the festival in June -- We set up our shop on Main and sold many Jeep signs, and hotdogs of course!
UPCOMING EVENTS

The Rich-Mar Rotary will be hosting...

ANNUAL CORN ROAST

Every Sheltered Workshop Employee, staff, and their guests are invited to attend. Rich-Mar Rotary will be providing food, entertainment, and prizes!

Date: Wednesday, August 8, 2018
Time: 5 PM
Place: Butler Memorial Park, Rotary Shelter

Tickets available for purchase at PARC Productions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday’s only. Purchase by July 26th and you will be entered to win a door prize.

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FALL CRAFT SHOW

The Arc of Butler County

September 22nd, 2018

Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Tanglewood Center
10 Austin Ave
Lyndora, PA 16045

For more information:
Marissa Wagner
724-283-3300 x 117
marisawagner@archbutler.org

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Butler Farm Show

AUGUST 6–11

Est. in 1948

Mums will be available for pick up:

WHEN: Last week of August, 2018
WHERE: PARC Productions (Workshop) facility
100 North Washington Street, Butler PA 16001
COST: $6.00 each—pay at window

Place your order today for a variety of colorful Mums
$6.00 each

Please place form in by August 26, 2018
Delivery date—end of August
The Arc of Butler County is committed to reducing the incidence and limiting the consequence of intellectual and developmental disabilities through:

- Advocacy
- Education
- Support
- Service Provision

The Arc of Butler County is committed to securing for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work, and play. The Arc of Butler County will work toward securing, consistent with the individual’s need, maximum personal independence, choices, inclusion, equal rights, and adequate supports, which are all necessary to guarantee a real quality of life to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Arc of Butler County will provide leadership in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities and develop the necessary human and financial resources to attain its goal.

HELP US ACHIEVE OUR MISSION

STAY INFORMED • STAY CONNECTED

Check Us Out Online. We can be found at www.arcbutler.org. Update your online bookmarks with this address!

Like Us on Facebook. Stay up-to-date with our latest news, view photos, and hear about upcoming events. You can also share your stories and give us feedback.

Tell Us What You Think. Did you enjoy this newsletter? Have a story you’d like to share for our next edition? Send us an email at mkrewduk@arcbutler.org