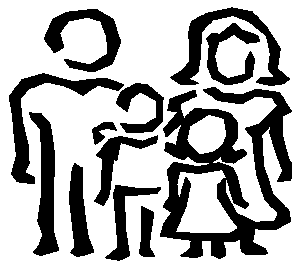


BI-COUNTY OBSERVER: Northampton Edition



Volume 19, Issue 1

Jan/Feb 2019

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Published six times a year to inform persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and the community about programs, trainings & events in Lehigh and Northampton Counties. Please visit www.arcoflehighnorthampton.org for more info.

Dear Families, Friends, and
Colleagues,



The 13th Annual Celebration Luncheon will be held on March 28, 2019.

If you've never attended, you're in for a treat. Please join us as we honor 12 individuals with intellectual disabilities who have made big strides at home, at school, at work, and in their community.

Bill Zimpfer will return as MC. A Bethlehem native, Bill started his radio career in the Lehigh Valley in 1977. Bill is well known to sports fans as the voice of Penn State Football from 1988-1993 and as the voice of the Miami Dolphins from 1994-2001. Last, but not least, Bill is also the proud dad of SAM Inc. Supports Coordination Supervisor Will Zimpfer.

Nominations will be accepted through the end of January. If you have a name to submit, please do so ASAP. In addition to employers, educators, case workers, & supports coordinators, parents may nominate their son or daughter. So, if your family member has done something exceptional, by all means let us know! If you'd like to serve on the planning committee for future Celebration events, please contact me. Monthly meetings are held at The Arc from October through March, but you may also participate by phone conference. The more input, the better.

Many of us make New Year's Resolutions. We have the best intentions, but the execution sure is difficult. Often, we resolve to tackle areas that have been "put on the back burner". One of The Arc's free January workshops focuses on a common back-burner issue: future planning. If you are interested in this or any other training, please RSVP to me. Email registrations are preferred. In case of bad weather, we will reschedule. Please check WFMZ TV 39 or the WFMZ website for cancellations. If The Arc is closed during the day, the evening event will be canceled even though the weather may have improved. Best wishes for a Happy, Healthy New Year!

Ramona

Oops. Did you forget to submit the name of someone who deserves recognition? There's still time, but hurry! The Celebration Awards committee will pick the winners at the end of January. The six categories are listed below. Please use the form on page 3 or request an electronic version. To be eligible, nominees must have an intellectual disability & reside in Lehigh or Northampton County.



Awards Descriptions

- Vocational Achievement** - Someone who has made great progress over the past year, has acquired a new skill, attained a new position/promotion, has good attendance, and has a positive attitude about work (includes sheltered employment).
- Employment Achievement** - Someone who is successfully employed in a job in the community or who has had a job in the community over the past year.
- Educational Achievement** - Someone in an educational setting who has made great educational progress over the past year, is motivated to learn, & is a positive influence on others.
- Transition Achievement** - Someone who has acquired a new skill or participated in activities that will enable him/her to attain a job or greater independence in life after school. Someone who is an inspiration to teachers and other students.
- Exemplary Citizenship** - Someone who has made contributions to the family, school, and community, specifically with actions that put others first. Someone who has moved beyond significant hardships or difficulties to enhance the lives of others.
- Personal Achievement** - Someone who has made great strides in reaching personal goals and who has enriched his/her own capabilities, thereby opening the door for others to achieve as well.

Note: An electronic version of this form is available. Please contact Ramona at 610-849-8076, ext. 325 or rneidig@arcoflehighnorthampton.org to obtain.

March is National Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month. Lehigh and Northampton County have been hosting this celebratory event for 13 years, and each year it gets bigger and better! You are cordially invited to attend.



March 28, 2019

11:30 am-1:30 pm

The Best Western

Lehigh Valley Hotel & Conference Center

Routes 512 & 22, Bethlehem PA

PLEASE CLIP & MAIL THIS FORM. USE ONE FORM FOR EACH PERSON ATTENDING.

Name _____

Email Address _____

House and/or Cell Phone _____

Menu Choice: Chicken _____ Pasta _____

Please indicate if you use a wheel chair or have special dietary needs

If possible, please seat me with:

Enclosed is a check payable to The Arc for a total of: _____ (\$18.00 per person)

Please return this form by March 22, 2019 to:
Bob Madden, The Arc of Lehigh & Northampton
2289 Avenue A, Bethlehem PA 18017

Note: Each table seats 8. Seating is assigned. It may not be possible to honor all seating requests. Please contact Bob Madden with questions or requests for special accommodations during the meal or during the award presentation itself. Bob may be reached at bmadden@arcoflehighnorthampton.org or call 610-849-8076, ext. 317.

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Financial Planning for Special Needs

Hosted by The Arc
2289 Avenue A, Bethlehem PA
January 9, 2019 from 6:00-8:00 pm
(Snow date is January 16, same time)

Guest Speakers:

- ⇒ **Paul and Ben Eichman**, Financial Advisors with Oaktree Advisors
- ⇒ **George Vasiliadis**, Attorney with Vasiliadis Pappas Associates



There's no time like the PRESENT to plan for the FUTURE! This is especially true if you have a loved one with a disability. What will happen to your family member when you are no longer alive? Will he or she be adequately supported and financially secure? Will inappropriate planning, or lack of any planning, jeopardize eligibility for government benefits? Do you have a will? Have you designated a guardian for minor children? Do you have questions about special needs trusts and how they can be funded? These and other related issues will be discussed in depth. Join us in gaining info that can lead to peace of mind.

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to get underway with sound financial planning, then this workshop is for you. Paul and Ben Eichman are certified financial advisors with Oaktree Advisors. They specialize in retirement planning, insurance analysis, and wealth management.

George Vasiliadis is an attorney with Vasiliadis Pappas Associates. His practice focuses on special needs planning, trusts & estate administration, asset protection, and long-term care planning. Let all 3 experience presenters address your questions and concerns.

Whether your family member is a child or an adult, this workshop will help you understand key aspects in planning for their future. The presentation is free, but you must register. Please RSVP to Ramona Neidig at 610-849-8076, ext. 325. Email registration preferred. Seating limited to 20.

(Please note snow date. If The Arc is closed that day, the event will be rescheduled for Jan. 16th.)

TESTING

Understanding Special Education Evaluation Reports: A Guide for Parents

Hosted by The Arc
2289 Avenue A, Bethlehem PA
January 23, 2019 6:00-8:00 pm

(Snow date is January 30, 2019 at same time)
Guest Presenter: Dr. Stephen Jacobson, Esq.

Tests, tests, and MORE tests. A variety of tests (a fancier word is assessments) are used by schools and independent evaluators. For example, there are intelligence & nonverbal intelligence tests, reading comprehension tests, auditory learning tests, social skills rating systems, and adaptive behavior scales to name just a few. How can families make sense of the data from tests like the WISC, the WIAT, MAP, or DIBELS?

There's so much that goes into a special education evaluation. That's as it should be. The goal is to identify troublesome areas & then recommend targeted help. A multitude of tests are often needed to determine what kind of specific help the child needs. Families who understand more about evaluations can better advocate for their children.

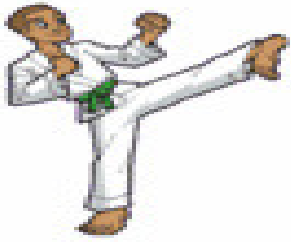
This workshop will explore your child's evaluation. Learn why it is conducted, how to understand the results, eligibility criteria for special education versus support through a 504 plan, what to do if you disagree with the school's evaluation, & what you should know about independent evaluations.

Dr. Jacobson has a doctorate in Clinical Psychology and a Law Degree. Following law school, he was employed by the U.S. District Attorney's Office and the Center for Psychotherapy Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a founding member & managing partner at Jacobson and John, where he practices Special Education Law.

This informational event is free, but you must RSVP to Ramona Neidig at 610-849-8076, Ext. 325 or rneidig@arcoflehighnorthampton.org. An email RSVP is preferred.

This is a popular topic, so early registration is recommended. Seating limited to 20, with preference given to first-time workshop attendees.

(Please note snow date. If The Arc is closed that day, the event will be rescheduled for Jan. 30th)



Good Shepherd Karate Academy

Good Shepherd Karate Academy provides traditional Okinawan style karate instruction to children and young adults, specializing in accommodative martial arts training for those with disabilities.

Located in Allentown, PA, GSKA's highly trained staff has been providing specialized martial arts instruction since 2003. Classes are offered Tuesday and Friday evenings, year round. Students ages 6-36 may participate. Tuesday nights are group classes at 5:45 & 6:30. Friday night 1/2 hour private lessons are also available. Classes are held in the Edwards Center at 850 S. 5th Street in Allentown. The ratio for beginner classes are 2:1 with 12 students and 3:1 with up to 18 students. **For more details & a fee schedule, please contact Sensei Catherine at 610-694-9311.**

Via All Star Basketball Clinics **Free Basketball Clinics for Athletes with Special Needs**

January 13, 2019
March 17, 2019

DeSales University
Northampton Community College



Check in starts at 12:30 pm. Clinic runs from 1:00-2:00 pm. Hosted by Tracy Cyr, Lehigh Valley Basketball Hall of Fame Member. Few will focus on the fundamentals of basketball in a fun, inclusive setting. Instructed by college coaches & their players. Participants must be 8 years of age or older. A parent or care-give must stay in the gym during the clinics. Athletes will receive a complimentary basketball at the March clinic.

Register at ViaNet.org/events or call 484-821-0024.



Hope Friendship Dances Hope Lutheran Church, Rte. 248 in Cherryville

Fee is \$5.00. No need to RSVP. Please park in the rear of the church & enter from rear.

Dance Dates for 2019

Jan. 21

Feb. 18

March 18

April 15

May 20

From 248: Take Airport Road North to stop sign. Make left onto 248W. Continue approx. 9 miles. Church is on the left.

From 145: Take 145 all the way over Treicher's Bridge. At the end of the bridge at light make a right onto Blue Mt. Drive. At next traffic light, make a right onto Lehigh Drive (Rte. 248). Continue 1/4 mile. Church will be on your right.



Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries

On April 13, 2018, *The Strengthening the Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018* was signed into law. Section 101 strengthens oversight of representative payees by requiring additional types of on-site reviews, & providing for an increased number of reviews. The law directs Social Security to work with state Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organizations to conduct periodic onsite reviews as well as additional discretionary reviews. In PA, the agency involved with this initiative is Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP). DRP will also conduct educational visits & reviews based on allegations they receive of payee misconduct.

Social Security will exempt the following representative payees from the annual report requirement:

- Natural or adoptive parents of a minor child beneficiary or recipient who primarily reside in the same household as the child;
- Legal guardians of a minor child beneficiary or recipient who primarily reside in the same household as the child;
- Natural or adoptive parents of a disabled adult beneficiary who primarily reside in the same household as the beneficiary; and
- Spouse of a beneficiary or recipient.

All representative payees are still required to keep records of how they spend or save the benefit payments. They must provide these records to Social Security for review if requested. For more information, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/payee.

Social Security Announces Cost of Living Increase for 2019

The Social Security Administration (SSA) has announced a 2.8 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2019. The Social Security Act provides for annual COLA increases based on inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. Because the CPI-W rose modestly over the last year, the 2019 COLA will increase benefits modestly.

According to SSA, the average monthly social security benefit for a retired worker will increase by \$34.00. The SSI Federal Payment Standard will increase from \$750 per month to \$771.00 per month. Important work incentive thresholds for Social Security and SSI beneficiaries with disabilities will also increase, including the Substantial Gainful Activity Level and the Trial Work Period earning level. For a detailed fact sheet, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov & look for 2019 COLA Fact Sheet.

The Mission of Neighborhood Health Centers of the Lehigh Valley (NHCLV) is to provide primary and preventative health and wellness services in the Lehigh Valley, regardless of a person’s ability to pay. We strive to do this directly and in partnership with other organizations, with a goal of creating a primary health care home for an underserved community. Mental health counseling and social services are also available. Social services can include Rx assistance & help with areas such as health insurance, public benefits, and social security.

Allentown Clinic: Vida Nueva at Casa Guadalupe

218 N. 2nd Street
Allentown, PA 18102

610-841-8400

Hours of Operation: (Parking on the east side of the facility. LANTA bus routes: #220 & #324)

- Monday and Tuesday 8 AM – 8 PM
- Wednesday 8 AM – 4:30 PM
- Thursday 8 AM – 8 PM
- Friday 8 AM – 4:30 PM
- Two Saturdays a month 8:30 AM – 1 pm

Bethlehem Clinic: Fowler Family Center at Donegan Elementary School

1210 East 4th Street
Bethlehem, PA 18015

484-408-0755

Hours of Operation: (LANTA bus route: #105)

- Monday 8 am – 8 pm
- Tuesday & Wednesday 8 am – 4:30 pm
- Thursday 8 am-8 pm
- Friday 8 am – 4:30 pm
- Saturday – once a month – 8:30 am – 1 pm

Easton Clinic: Two Rivers Health and Wellness Foundation Building

1101 Northampton St.
Easton, PA 18042

(484) 544-3113

Hours of Operation: (LANTA bus routes 220 & 106)

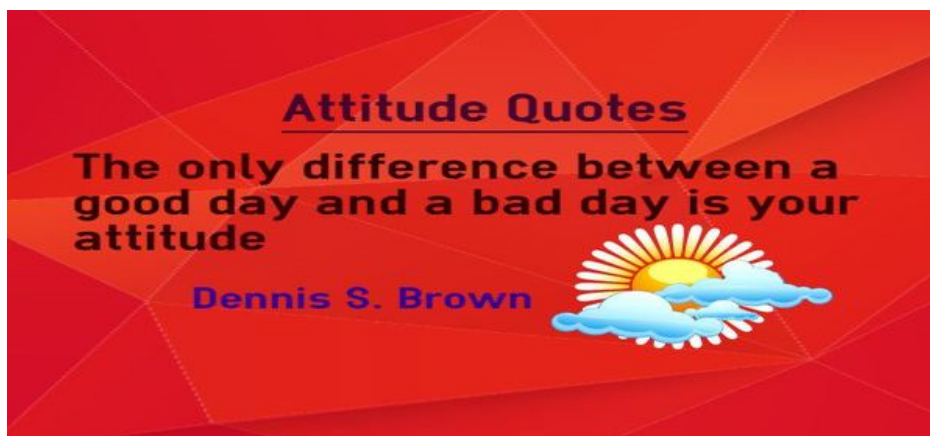
- Monday 8 am – 4:30 pm
- Tuesday 8 am – 8 pm
- Wednesday 8 am – 4:30 pm
- Thursday 8 am – 8 pm

Editor's note: I wish I knew who wrote this. I cut it out of a flyer in a restaurant. Be sure to follow the directions at the end or you'll miss the point entirely!

Worst Day Ever??

Today was the absolute worst day ever
And don't try to convince me that
There's something good in every day
Because, when you take a closer look, this world is a pretty evil place.
Even if some goodness does shine through once in a while,
Satisfaction and happiness don't last.
And it's not true that
It's all in the mind and heart.
Because
True happiness can be obtained
Only if one surroundings are good.
It's not true that good exists
I'm sure you can agree that
The reality
Creates
My attitude
It's all beyond my control
And you'll never in a million years hear me say
Today was a good day.

(Now read it from bottom to top.)



The Arc of Lehigh and
Northampton Counties, Inc.
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**BI-COUNTY
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Published six times a year for persons receiving services from the Intellectual Disabilities Departments in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.

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The Bi-County Observer is available by e-mail. You help save trees and the electronic newsletter comes to you before the print version. The electronic newsletter has links to e-mail and web sites that are just a click away!



We can always add someone to the distribution list (regular and email). Please contact Ramona Neidig to be included in the next newsletter or if you have

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