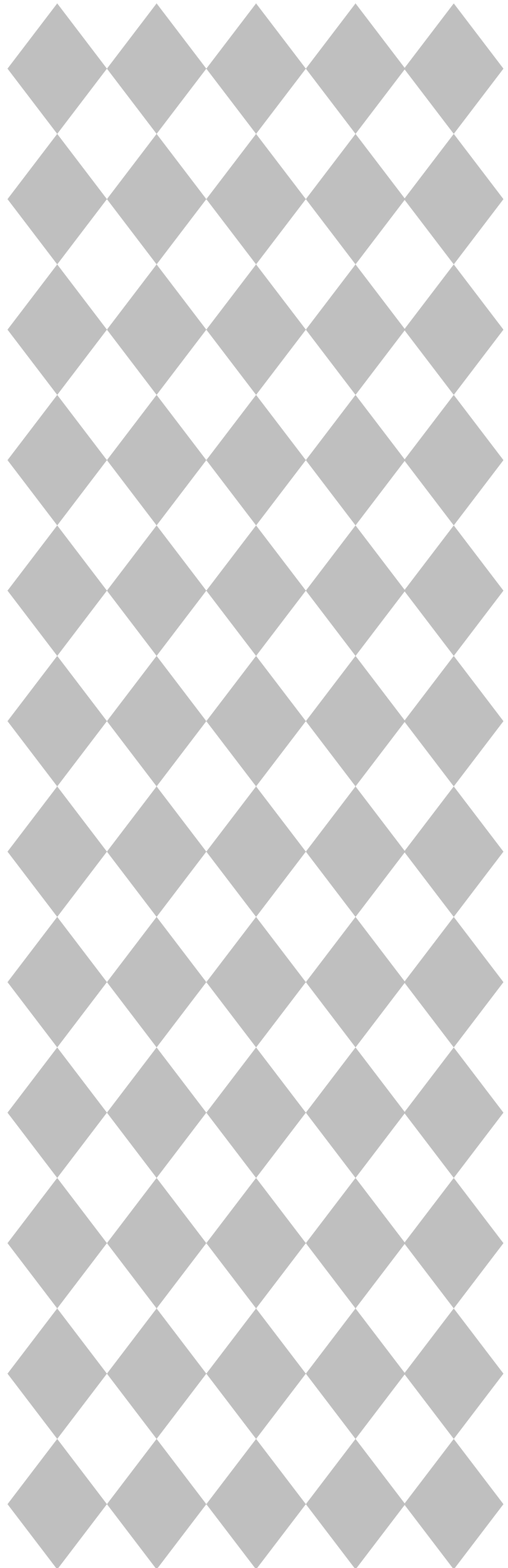




The Arc of Bismarck

Annual Report

September 31, 2009 – October 1, 2010



The Arc of Bismarck has seen much progress over the past year. Not only meeting and exceeding goals, but setting new ones has become a priority. In the process of carrying out our mission of “providing education, advocacy and supports” The Arc has accomplished the strategic plan goals of increasing active membership, providing supports to American People and implementing broader community education. Since 2006, goals have been achieved and advancements have been made which have resulted in monumental steps towards building a stronger organization and an inclusive community. To continue progress towards the realization of our vision, The Arc has adopted a new strategic plan which will truly aid in the creation of a united community where everyone belongs.

Organizational accomplishments from September 31, 2009 – October 1, 2010 have included:

The Arc of Bismarck has continued to provide supports to self-advocates, their families, professionals and community members. Supports have encouraged people to get connected with appropriate and available services; have contributed to independent community living and have provided services to our local self-advocacy group. All of these supports have created opportunities for independence and self reliance for individuals with disabilities, a first step towards powerful advocacy.

The Arc of Bismarck has persisted with advocacy efforts on all fronts, providing a compelling voice for the disability community. Individual and systemic advocacy activities have provided appropriate input to the support networks, organizations and government entities that serve people with disabilities. Advocacy endeavors have ranged over the past year focusing around themes of respect and enhancing quality of life.

The Arc of Bismarck has sustained and enhanced educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, families, professionals and community members. Training opportunities were provided to many, which encouraged people to actively participate in the community and increased understanding. Education and awareness efforts in relation to the disability world were explored and ultimately enhanced inclusivity and acceptance in our shared community.

Many have contributed to The Arc of Bismarck’s achievements; significantly improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families through support, advocacy and education. We are proud of our achievements in the past year and will continue to strive towards uniting a community where everyone belongs.

Respectfully,

Veronica Zietz
Executive Director



The Arc was formed in 1957 and incorporated in 1960. Originally, founded by a small group of parents and stakeholders, The Arc has developed into a powerful membership driven organization of over 700 chapters nationwide. Over the years, The Arc of Bismarck has offered a variety of services and supports always transforming to meet the current needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. From the beginning, The Arc of Bismarck has valued and worked to advance community supports and services, influence public policy at all levels, provide education and training for advocates, self-advocates and parents and to achieve full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. The Arc of Bismarck's continued efforts seek to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families while instilling empowerment and teaching skills for advocacy. It is these core values that continue to motivate The Arc to achieve its vision of uniting a community where everyone belongs. The Arc has had many opportunities over the past year that aided in the achievement of goals while aligning with our belief statement.

Supports

Information and Referral

The Arc of Bismarck provides individuals with disabilities and their families assistance in finding appropriate community resources. Trained professionals help self-advocates, parents and community members understand and navigate intricate systems. During the past year information and referrals have been given on topics like housing, guardianship, low-income services, family services, adaptive equipment and education amongst others.

Community Living Program

This program provides people with disabilities transitioning out of an institutional setting and into the community by providing them with a voucher that can be used at our Thrift Store for household items and personal effects. The Arc of Bismarck doesn't see large volumes of requests for this service. However, The Arc continues to provide assistance to people transitioning into independent living environments.

American People Self-Advocacy Association

American People is a self-advocacy organization with the mission of "helping all people with disabilities learn about their rights and responsibilities, while promoting self and systems advocacy in the community". This group is provided with advisory and fiscal support by The Arc. During the past year The Arc has worked closely with this group to encourage growth and development; Outcomes include: spearheading a snow removal campaign for the 2009-2010 winter; sponsoring several social events and providing stipends to self-advocates attending local and out of state conferences.

Advocacy

Individual & Systems Advocacy

The Arc of Bismarck provides advocacy regarding the rights of people with disabilities and their families. Advocacy plays a critical role in independence. Individual advocacy is provided upon request and has come largely in the form of information dispersal and connecting citizens with their federal delegation. Systems Advocacy at The Arc of Bismarck is displayed through

continued participation in the local Legislative Working Group and collaborative activities. Efforts The Arc is especially proud to have achieved over the past year include: providing a self-advocacy workshop to 31 students attending Bismarck Public Schools, training 37 self-advocates state-wide on emergency readiness and producing an emergency readiness video for self-advocates and dispersing it to over 100 advocates and professionals. In addition, it is streaming live on the web with over 200 views and playing on cable access television stations statewide.

Legislative Advocacy

The Arc of Bismarck tracks and monitors disability related legislation and provides written and oral testimony as needed. The Arc of Bismarck has focused on national public policy over the past year. Elements of healthcare reform, home and community based services, seclusion and restraints, and terminology came to the forefront as pressing issues for The Arc's constituents. Participating in The Arc of the United States' National Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, DC was a wonderful opportunity to speak with our federal delegation on some of these important topics. However, the highlight of this year's advocacy work was The Arc's ADA Rally providing over 100 area citizens with an opportunity to celebrate this significant piece of legislation and rededicate themselves to full inclusion.

Education

Partners in Policymaking

The Arc of Bismarck houses North Dakota's Partners in Policymaking Program, which offers adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities an opportunity to acquire the tools needed to attain leadership roles and to be effective advocates within their communities. In the past year 19 graduates became educated in a variety of topic areas, with intentions of achieving a productive partnership between people utilizing services and those providing services and creating policy. Partners continues to be a popular program, which is generously supported by the ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Braun Foundation.

Community Education Workshops

The Arc offers educational opportunities around the state; topics are varied, but always have a disability focus. These workshops provide information, resources and networking opportunities for people with disabilities and family members. During the past year The Arc has sponsored twelve educational events reaching 353 individuals. Educational events featured topics such as People First Language and Assistive Technology.

Disability Awareness

Awareness efforts and community outreach are an integral part of educating people in the community about disabilities. Increasing awareness not only busts stereotypes, but also promotes community inclusion. The Arc of Bismarck displayed at nine events in the past year sharing information with over 2,800 community members, business owners and educators. Additionally, The Arc has been spearheading public campaigns focusing on disability issues like the "r-word". However, the highlight for awareness activities has been the development of a new project; the Capability Chronicles, a television series that focuses on disability issues which

features the triumphs and successes of self-advocates. To date two episodes have been taped and will be aired publicly before the end of the year.

Community Contributions: Collaboration, Donations & Sponsorships

The Arc of Bismarck provided support to individuals and organizations to enhance community involvement. This is an opportunity for The Arc to invest in worthy individuals and efforts by providing financial or in-kind support. It also allows The Arc of Bismarck to form partnerships with future organizational stakeholders and build relationships within the community.

The Arc of Bismarck is dedicated to collaboration with diverse entities throughout the state to enhance opportunities available to people with disabilities, families and others. In order to utilize resources responsibly The Arc worked with several agencies over the past year including: ND Protection & Advocacy; The Arc of Cass County; The Arc, Upper Valley; Kiwanis; American People Self-Advocacy Association; Mandan Moose Lodge; AARP; Community Options; US Census; RSVP+; St. Alexius Neuroscience Center; LISTEN Drop-In Performing Arts; NDSCDD; Great Plains Rehab; Mental Health America of ND; Freedom Resource Center for Independent Living; ND Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health; St. Alexius Hospital Support Group; Bismarck Public Schools; Department of Public Instruction; Renaissance Massage; National Alliance on Mental Illness; Self-Advocacy Solutions; NDAD; Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health; NDDAC; University of Mary; NDACP; Red Cross; ND Department of Emergency Services; Dakota Media Access; ND Citizens Corps; FEMA; Pride; Designer Genes and the Bismarck Fire Department. These partnerships have greatly increased the quality and quantity of services and supports provided. Outcomes have included educational workshops, intensive trainings, disability awareness and networking opportunities for people with disabilities and the general public. The Arc of Bismarck would like to thank all of the partners it has worked with over the past year.

Sources of Revenue for Programs

Chapter Efforts

The Arc of Bismarck is able to fund quality programs and services through several resources. The Arc holds fundraisers and relies on members to offer support in the form of dues and monetary donations. The Arc also receives revenue from corporate sponsors and foundations. Over the past year The Arc was generously supported by Sam McQuades Charity Softball Tournament, the Walter L. & Lucille Braun Family Charitable Gift Fund, the Otto Bremer Foundation, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, MDU Resources Foundation, and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. The support of these organizations is greatly appreciated and ensures the impact and success of efforts.

The Arc Thrift Store Efforts

The Arc Thrift Store provides monetary support for programs. Thrift Store Sales for 2009-2010 were \$31,540 beyond sales over the same period last year (from October 1st – September 30th). The store had over 38,684 individual sales; 5,883 donations; 10,029 volunteer hours and 14,937 employee hours. The success of the Thrift Store greatly relies on the hard work of the volunteers and employees these include Kathy Puklich, Store Manager; Robbie Guthmiller,

Store Supervisor; Char Bolton, Mary Ann Burlingame, Justin Christmann, Carissa Feist, Addie Ireland, Lance Jahner, Silvia Pitzer, Roxie Riedinger, Lyle Schultz, Mary Spertzel and Stacie Wiard.

A Look Ahead

In late 2006, The Arc of Bismarck developed a Strategic Plan to be used as a guide for actions taken on by the organization. The Arc of Bismarck has made much progress in the three areas addressed in that plan. Goal 1 of increasing The Arc of Bismarck's "active" membership has been addressed. Currently, The Arc's membership is up 10% from 2006 levels. Goal 2 of providing the necessary services and advisory supports for American People to pursue their goals and objectives has been achieved through the facilitation of a strategic planning process and ongoing support. Goal 3 of developing and implementing a broader community education and training initiative has been met and far exceeded initial expectations. Though, The Arc has had great success in these areas; stakeholders have realized many areas for growth and development.

In April of 2010, The Arc of Bismarck revamped its strategic plan; members, self-advocates and staff gathered in the spirit of cooperation to re-visit our mission, vision and values. The group analyzed organizational performance by outlining strengths and identifying trends impacting our work. This naturally led to recognizing opportunities and selecting new goals to be undertaken over the next three to five years. Several areas for development were identified, but the new strategic plan focused on five goals including: to expand existing and grow new programs; to maintain organizational integrity and credibility; to address building and grounds needs; to educate people about disability issues in order to change attitudes and to support The Arc of North Dakota. These goals were identified as areas of need and as properly aligning with our mission. Each of these goals has been assigned to a related committee and is supported by specific steps of action; committees and staff have been working together to ensure that goals are accomplished. This strategic plan was created with the hopes of providing organizational and financial stability, while adhering to our mission of providing education, advocacy and supports to adults and children with disabilities to foster empowerment and full inclusion in the community. It also supports responsible progress which will aid The Arc of Bismarck in truly realizing its vision of creating a united community where everyone belongs.