

BC Arc

Berkshire County Arc

Annual Report *2007-2008*



**Residential * Vocational * Advocacy
Day Programs * Clinical and Nursing
TBI Programs * Zip 'N Sort Mail Services
Quality Assurance**

Berkshire County Arc is committed to assisting and supporting

From the Executive Director and Board President:

The past year has been an extremely successful one for Berkshire County Arc, thanks to our very dedicated and hard-working staff, as well as the great support we have received from the community. The individuals we serve in our residential, vocational and advocacy programs have had wonderful opportunities to enhance and enrich their lives with many new, exciting experiences. Our Community Advocates have worked hard to provide interesting choices for activities, travel and employment. The agency has continued its emphasis on creating new, accessible housing opportunities. Presently, we are in the midst of developing three new HUD homes, one to be located in Pittsfield, the other two in Lanesboro. It is our hope that construction will begin on these three projects in the spring of 2009. Two of these homes will replace older homes supported by the Department of Mental Retardation and the third home, funded by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, will house six new individuals with traumatic brain injury. In addition, the agency is developing two new homes in the Westfield area to serve individuals with traumatic brain injury. One will open at the end of 2008 and the other during the first quarter of 2009.

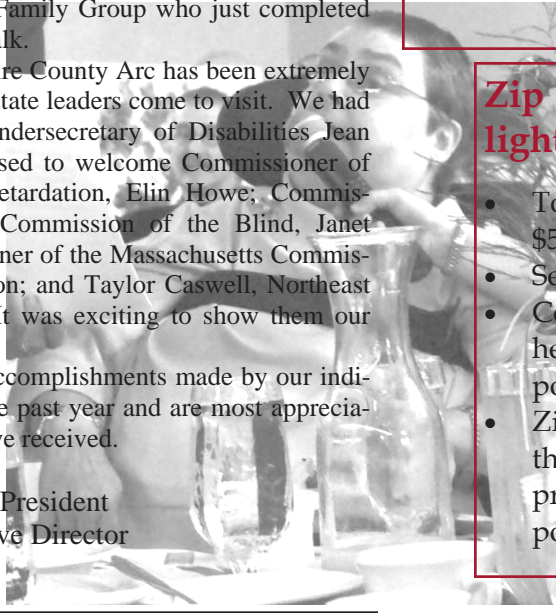
With a great emphasis on creating opportunities for individuals to be part of their local community, we currently have over 100 people employed through the Advantage Employee Network (AEN) and an additional 16 people employed through Zip 'N Sort Mail Services. Zip 'N Sort Mail Services has continued to grow and is now the largest mail house west of Springfield.

Our Family Support Department has worked hard on helping to support our Down Syndrome Family Group who just completed their second Annual Buddy Walk.

During the past year, Berkshire County Arc has been extremely fortunate to have a number of state leaders come to visit. We had the pleasure of welcoming Undersecretary of Disabilities Jean McGuire. We were also pleased to welcome Commissioner of the Department of Mental Retardation, Elin Howe; Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind, Janet LaBreck; Assistant Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind, Lynn Paulson; and Taylor Caswell, Northeast Regional Director of HUD. It was exciting to show them our outstanding programs.

We are proud of the many accomplishments made by our individuals and our staff during the past year and are most appreciative of the great support we have received.

Joseph P. Woitkoski, Board President
Kenneth W. Singer, Executive Director



Agency Highlights

- Voted best Non-Profit for 2008 by The Berkshire Eagle Reader's Poll
- Zip 'N Sort Mail Services income increased to \$3 million dollars and 237 customers
- Annual BCARC Golf Tournament raised \$43,000
- Received the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers Peer Provider Award
- Received the Massachusetts Arc Leadership Award
- Presented five high school seniors with scholarships valued at \$4,000
- Co-hosted Berkshire County's First Sibshop Training Conference
- Held the first Annual Sprout Film Festival sponsored by the BCARC Down Syndrome Family Group
- Second Annual BCARC Down Syndrome Family Group Buddy Walk raised over \$15,000

Zip 'N Sort Mail Services Highlights

- Total production sales increased by \$57,707, representing a 7.5% increase
- Served 237 customers
- Conducted three educational seminars to help 110 customers understand changing postal regulations
- Zip 'N Sort continued its leadership role in the Postal Consumer Council to ensure the prevention of adverse effects of changes in postal regulations

AEN Highlights

- Served over 150 individuals through vocational evaluations, career planning, job placements, on the job training, and support services
- Provided 23 students from 6 school districts with a wide range of vocational services leading to successful career transitions
- Developed a network of over 100 employers utilizing AEN services



individuals in their quest to identify and realize their chosen lifestyles.

Day Program Highlights

- Renovated extra space at the Social Development Center to implement specialized day habilitation services for people with traumatic brain injury
- Expanded services for school-aged children through contracts with school districts in Berkshire County
- Developed a relationship with Good Dog Foundation to provide therapy dogs in each of the day habilitation programs
- Continued to run the Saturday Sensory Integration Program for children with sensory processing disorders through the support of DMR, Berkshire Life, Berkshire Bank, the City of Pittsfield and the Coolidge Hill Foundation.

Quality Assurance Highlights

- Increased agency compliance with licensing and accreditations standards by conducting comprehensive office and on site record safety audits in residential homes, traumatic brain injury programs, day habilitation sites, respite site, and Zip 'N Sort Mail Services
- Advocated for the use of records management software, resulting in electronic archiving system to decrease the need for paper storage
- Incorporated "Choice Versus Risk" module into in-service training for new staff and continued co-facilitation of combined self-advocacy/focus groups to enhance individual choice making opportunities

Residential Highlights

- Three individuals moved into accessible homes, needed to address aging issues
- BCARC continued to move forward with plans to create accessible housing options through the use of HUD and other means of state and local funding
- Supported 142 individuals in 31 residences that promote health and safety, as well as community involvement
- Golden Years Committee supported the aging population through collaboration with Berkshire Medical Center
- Two individuals participated in the Adopt a Grandparent program with residents in local nursing homes
- Individuals went on various vacations to Hershey, PA, Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Florida and Bermuda

Clinical and Nursing Highlights

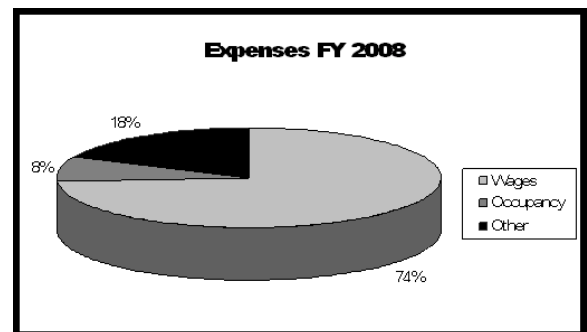
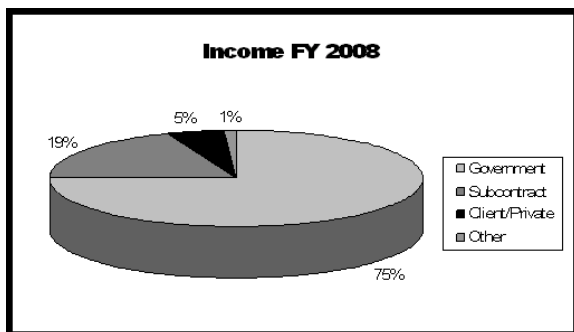
- Provided more efficient and effective CPR and First Aid staff trainings through the use of new mannequins and technology
- Nurses provided supports and training to staff in managing changing needs of individuals, including ostomy and feeding tube care, seizure disorders, and end-of-life care
- Developed new assessment and tracking procedures that ensure safe settings for individuals with pica

Traumatic Brain Injury Highlights

- Planned development of two new houses for people with TBI In Westfield, MA
- Provided Individual Aide Services for two individuals residing in nursing homes in South County
- Two individuals continued to successfully work through the Advantage Employee Network
- One individual took continuing education courses at Berkshire Community College
- Three individuals represented BCARC by taking active roles in a statewide meeting with the Commissioner of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Advocacy Highlights

- Supported over 100 individuals and their families needing planned or emergency respite through the Respite Outreach program, Family Directed Project or Respite House
- BCARC Down Syndrome Family Group hosted second annual Buddy Walk of the Berkshires, generating over \$15,000
- BCARC Down Syndrome Family Group sponsored the first annual Sprout Film Festival
- Collaborated with Community Resources for People With Autism, BFAIR, Central Berkshire Regional School District Parent Advisory Council, Williamstown School District Parent Advisory Council and United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County in the Berkshire Collaborative Workshops
- Co-hosted Sibshops conference with area agencies, presented by founder Don Meyer
- Provided educational advocacy services for 25 families in Berkshire County
- Berkshire and Southern Berkshire Self-Advocates attended regional conferences and events
- Increased Pooled Trust membership to 78 accounts and Trust value to over two million dollars
- Updated and enlarged trust advertising across the state of Massachusetts
- Chaired operations for the 11th Annual Berkshire Disability Pride Day and assisted with the 8th Annual BDPD Legislative Breakfast
- Completed marketing program to promote the Citizen Advocacy program



Berkshire County Arc Board of Directors

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Kenneth W. Singer
Executive Director