

VISIONS

For the friends of Berkshire County Arc

The Spirit of Friendship Spans the Globe!

See Story on Page 3



“Supporting People, Enriching Lives”



Kenneth W. Singer, President & CEO of Berkshire County Arc, and his granddaughter, Malina, pose in front of the Best Buddies Friendship Bear in Berlin, Germany (See story on page 3)

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Visions
2015
Issue 2

21st Annual BC Arc Golf Classic Raises \$44,000

Berkshire County Arc held its 21st Annual Golf Tournament at Berkshire Hills Country Club in Pittsfield, Mass. on Thursday, May 21, 2015. More than 180 golfers on 45 teams participated in the Tournament, which raised \$44,000 to support individuals with developmental disabilities and brain injuries throughout Berkshire and Hampden Counties.

Approximately 95 organizations contributed sponsorships to the Tournament, including Corporate Sponsors Health New England and Greylock Insurance Agency. In addition, more than 50 volunteers and organizations donated time, raffle prizes and silent auction items.

To date, the Tournament has raised approximately \$635,500 and awarded more than \$79,250 in scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are pursuing career in the human service field. "We are grateful for the combined efforts of the players, volunteers and sponsors who made the Tournament a success, enabling us to help the people we serve and award scholarships to our community's future human service professionals," commented Berkshire County Arc's President & CEO Kenneth W. Singer.

To view pictures from the Tournament, visit Berkshire County Arc's website and click on the Facebook icon: <http://bcarc.org/>



(Above) Corporate Sponsor
Greylock Insurance Agency



(Above) Corporate Sponsor
Health New England



(Above): Volunteers Shaun, Lisa and
Jon pose on the golf course.

(Below): Volunteers Kim and
Michelle are all smiles at the
hospitality table.



BCArc Golf Classic Committee

Chairpersons: Mike Caritey, Paul Gavrity & Chris Melski

Committee Members: Michelle Baity, Debra Caiola,
Ray DiNicola, Chris Ferrari, Rick Hawes & Jasmine Ryan

The Golf Classic Committee extends a special thank you to our many volunteers and friends who helped make this event a success!

Corporate Sponsors

Greylock Insurance Agency
Health New England

Platinum Sponsors

Insurance Professionals
of New England, Inc.

Gold Sponsors

BBE Office Interiors
Berkshire Bank
CIGNA: Dental, Life &
Disability Insurance
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George Apkin & Sons, Inc.
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Mutual of America
Tatro Flooring
The Amanti Family & Advanced
Manufacturing Co., Inc.

Silver Sponsors

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Sheehan Health Group

Bronze Sponsors

Barb Hassan Realty, Inc.
By Design Landscaping
Saloomy Construction, Inc.

From the President and CEO

Kenneth W. Singer



This spring, I had the opportunity to travel to Berlin, Germany with my family to attend a ceremony in honor of my parents, Hilde and Kurt Singer, who were forced from their home by the Nazis during the Holocaust. In recent years, a non-profit organization established by artist Gunter Demnig created and placed cobblestone-size memorials for individual victims of Nazism. After careful vetting of the individuals, memorials called Stolpersteins are placed in front of the home in which victims lived. Naturally, this was a very moving and emotional experience that put things in great perspective as to who we are as a family and how we got where we are. It was a time of much emotion and deep thought. One counts their blessings for being alive and being able to have a fulfilled life with family and friends.

This all came full circle when the following event took place: our family was exiting a bus in hopes of seeing the Berlin Wall and the area preserved with many paintings and graffiti. When we got off the bus, my five-year old granddaughter, Malina, turned to me and said, "What is that?" pointing to a very large Teddy Bear statue. Low and behold, one's roots and present-life seem to come together. In front of us was a 4,000 pound, beautiful, multi-colored painted statue of the Best Buddies Friendship Bear. As we walked over to this enormous and beautiful statue to take a closer look, we saw a plaque stating it was dedicated by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in honor of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Germany.

My granddaughter and I excitedly climbed onto the five-foot base of the statue and got the full experience of being there with the bear. As Berkshire County Arc has a wonderful Buddy Walk each year with over 1,000 marchers, the experience brought to life how the sacrifices by so many has influenced the destiny of my family.

I was humbled by all that took place in Berlin, honoring my family and helping me to remember the wonderful and fortunate things that have happened to me in my life.



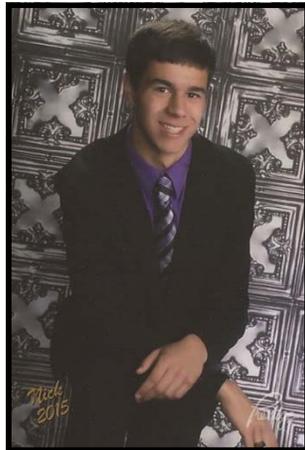
*In Loving
Memory of
Kurt & Hilde
Deutsch Singer*

Berkshire County Arc Awards 5th Annual Carol Craighead Memorial Scholarship Award and \$6250 in Scholarships



Laura Netti

*McCann Technical High School
\$1,250 Scholarship
Recipient of 5th Annual
Carol Craighead
Memorial Scholarship
Plans to attend:
University of New England in
Biddeford, Maine*



Nicholas Jamrog

*Wahconah Regional
High School
\$1,000 Scholarship
Plans to attend:
Roger Williams
University in
Bristol, Rhode Island*



Jamie Downer

*Wahconah Regional
High School
\$1,000 Scholarship
Plans to attend:
The Commonwealth
Honors College at
UMASS-Amherst, MA*



Vinh Ton

*Mt. Everett Regional
High School
\$1,000 Scholarship
Plans to attend:
Emmanuel College in
Boston, MA*



Ava Naylor

*Monument Mountain
Regional High School
\$1,000 Scholarship
Plans to attend:
Bridgewater State University
in Bridgewater, MA*



Molly Murphy

*Taconic High School
\$1,000 Scholarship
Plans to attend:
Massachusetts College of
Liberal Arts in
North Adams, MA*

Berkshire Disabilities Providers Legislative Breakfast Itam Lodge, Pittsfield, MA

Nearly 280 attendees packed the ITAM Lodge in Pittsfield for the 15th Annual Legislative Breakfast on April 10. The event brought together human service agencies from throughout Berkshire County to discuss issues impacting individuals with disabilities and was co-facilitated by Kenneth W. Singer, President and CEO of Berkshire County Arc, and Christine Singer, Executive Director of United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County. Participating in the forum were State Sen. Benjamin B. Downing and State Reps. William "Smitty" Pignatelli, Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Gailanne Cariddi and Paul Mark.

Pittsfield Mayor Dan Bianchi and North Adams Mayor Richard Alcombright and staff aides to Congressman Richard Neal and U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren provided introductory remarks, which were followed by personal stories from human service employees, individuals and parents.

Mark McCormick-Goodhart spoke about his son Matthew and how Berkshire County Arc's services have impacted his family's life. "I can't stress how important family supports are to the overall care and to the health and well-being of my family," he said.

Members of the Berkshire delegation each offered support and encouragement, as well as challenged the group to specifically advocate for services that are imperative to the quality of life for themselves and their families.

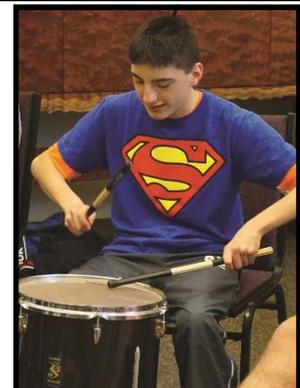


Senator Benjamin Downing and State Representatives Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Paul Mark, Gailanne Cariddi and William "Smitty" Pignatelli

Family Support Center Spring Break Camp -Berkshire South Regional Community Center, Great Barrington, MA

From April 20th through the 24th, BCARC's Family Support Center hosted its 5th Annual Spring Break Camp for youth with disabilities at Berkshire South Regional Community Center in Great Barrington. Ten youth participated, ranging in ages from 14 to 22, and everyone had a blast playing games and swimming each day in the recreational and therapy pools. The youth also played instruments and sang along with instructors from Berkshire Music School and danced with Barbara Pastie in her Shake Your Soul Class. Community Access to the Arts (CATA) artist Roger the Jester taught the kids how to juggle and that practice makes perfect!

Everyone enjoyed bowling at the Cove Lanes and a Playshop with Jeannie Bassis, and the group had a wonderful visit with the baby animals at the Hancock Shaker Village. We at Berkshire County Arc enjoyed getting to know and spending time with everyone who participated, and we look forward to seeing familiar and new faces next spring!



Michael LePrevost demonstrates his natural drumming talent.

Monument Games - Great Barrington, MA



Dinner Dance - Crowne Plaza, Pittsfield, MA



**Self-Advocate/Citizen Advocate Dinner
Zucchini's Restaurant, Pittsfield, MA**



**Relief Staff Appreciation Awards Dinner
Social Development Center, Dalton, MA**



Special Olympic Summer Games Boston, MA



12th Annual West Region Self-Advocacy Conference Westfield State University, Westfield, MA

The 12th Annual West Region Self-Advocacy Conference was held May 2, 2015. The self-advocates selected the theme, “Blossoming Into Our Best Selves.” Self-advocates selected the theme, keynote, workshops, resource tables, prizes, award winners and more. The keynote speaker, Dennis Pullen, discussed his story from disability to ability through art. He inspired self-advocates to be their best by demonstrating how he paints with his mouth. The Berkshire sponsored workshop, “Laugh for the Health of It” reached capacity for attendance. Self-advocates learned how to laugh off their stress! The workshop was such a great hit that the West Region would like to sponsor another laughter workshop in the future.

Berkshire self-advocate, Kathy Luscier won the new Growth and Spirit award. This award honored the self-advocate who brings energy to the self-advocacy movement. Kathy possesses passion, positivity and determination which inspires self-advocates to do their best and reach for their dreams. West Region Self-Advocacy is incredibly grateful for all the support the Berkshire and Southern Berkshire Self-Advocacy groups offer to make the conference such a success.



Arielle Cohen, Regional Self-Advocacy Coordinator poses with , Kathy Luscier who is proudly displaying her Growth and Spirit award.

Welcome Aboard



J.G. Ivy
General Manager of
Zip ‘N Sort Mail Services



Maryellen Andrews
Director of
Nursing



Chris Hunt
Director of Day
Program Services



Donna DeStasio
Director of
Crossroads Day Program

Stepping Stones

Carol, Michelle and Kathleen live in Housatonic — a small town of Great Barrington — as part of Berkshire County Arc’s residential program. Soon, they will be planting cucumbers, tomatoes, squash and herbs in the two raised garden beds in the backyard. They are looking forward to cooking delicious dishes with the items grown in the garden. The quaint front porch is laden with flower boxes filled to the brims with flowers of white, purple and pink.

True members of the local scene, the ladies have collaborated with the “Housatonic the Beautiful” project to bring colorful blooms to the “Old Maid” watering hole. The ladies will plant flowers of all types in two large wooden barrels. Neighbors wave to the women as they trek down the street to maintain the flowers through the growing season by weeding and watering them as needed. The blooms lend a warm and colorful presence all season long. The ladies are excited to contribute to the community and the community is excited to enjoy its garden.

The residents at Berkshire County Arc’s Valentine Road residential program have also been busy. Aside from planting their own vegetable gardens, planters and a new perennial garden, they took the time to help out the Giving Garden, a community project of the Pittsfield Church of Christ that distributes vegetables to area food banks and community dinners for those in need.



Michelle Goodman (left) and Jeri Frigon (right) help pick out flowers for their “Housatonic the Beautiful” project



Betsy and Cathy’s Corner



We’ve been planting in these raised beds for the past three years and we love it! This year, we planted geraniums, mums, petunias and snapdragons.



Cory Gagliardi (left) Francis Cahalan (center) and Francis Amanti (right) pull weeds from flower beds.

Written by: Cathy Crofut and Betsy Carlotto

Big Y Foods, Inc. Paying It Forward

Dave Smith, Store Manager of Big Y Foods, Inc. in Adams, Mass., presents Berkshire County Arc President & CEO Kenneth W. Singer with a \$5,000 check to support Respite House



Employees of the Quarter



Jonathan Crawford
Relief Supervisor



Suzanne Badger
Residential Support
Oxford Place



Brendan Bersaw
Brain Injury
Residential Support
Gamwell Avenue



Jasmine Ryan
Accounting Staff



“All Together Now”



“Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.” ~ Malcolm Forbes

My name is Erwin Orlando Figueroa Perez and I was born in Guatemala. During my childhood, I lived on a coffee farm in the village of Isnul. I am the eldest of seven brothers and two sisters. I grew up among Mayan indigenous people, many of whom are still my friends. I moved out of my home at age 14 to attend seventh grade and continued my schooling while working for room and board.

Guatemala is a very diverse country in Central America, just south of Mexico and it borders Belize, Honduras and El Salvador. Guatemala is nicknamed “The Country of Eternal Spring” because it is always green. The rainy season is what we called winter. In the high mountains, it gets very cold at night, so you will see frost in the early hours of the morning, but it never snows.

The food is very good and usually spicy or hot. We are taught to be polite to everyone, especially to the elderly and professionals. We begin working at a young age, so a strong work ethic is simply a part of us. This is just a glimpse of my background and an idea of the diversity in Guatemala, and I am happy to share it with you. While I grew up in Guatemala, my family and I have made Pittsfield our home, and we love it here! I feel blessed to have had such diverse experiences and travels.



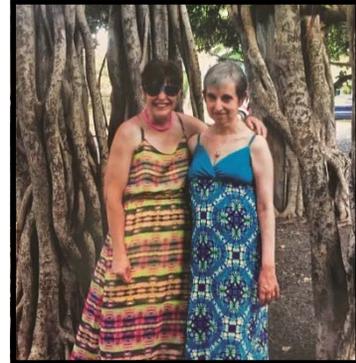
Guatemalan Flag
“The Country of Eternal Spring”



Who's Traveling Now?



Antoinette Gulotta and Lisa Harrington took a wonderful vacation to Hawaii. As this was a life-long dream for the two of them, they had a wonderful time. While in Maui, they met a lot of wonderful people and tried many new and different foods. They walked along beautiful beaches, took pictures at several amazing sceneries and had the time of their lives!



Artists in Residence



Darlene Fachini loves to do artwork while she is at home or attending a day program at the Social Development Center. At home she has a wide variety of art supplies including markers, crayons, coloring books, paint, canvas and easels. In this picture, Darlene is posing in front of one of her masterpieces.



Friends Remembered



Michael Desgroseilliers
March 4, 1962
May 27, 2015



David Ríos
April 23, 1960
May 8, 2015



Jody Furer
January 30, 1965
April 9, 2015

*"I can no longer see
you with my eyes or
touch you with my
hands...
But I will feel you in
my heart forever."
~Unknown~*

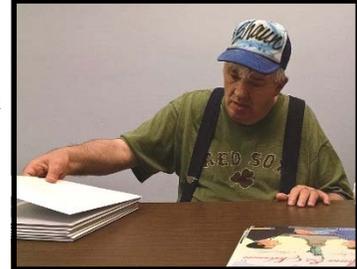




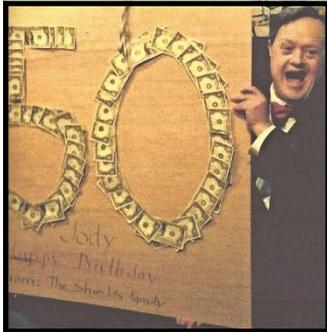
On Vocation



Shaun works in Zip 'N Sort Mail Service's Manual Operations Department, which handles one of our biggest clients, The PJ Library. Each month, Shaun and the rest of the team assemble a new storybook mailing for Jewish children in grades 6, 7 and 8 across the United States and abroad. The care, precision and the artistry he brings to the table cannot be overstated. It is always amazing to watch him work his magic on that job and to see the joy he gets out of it.



At the holidays when the rooms were decorated with lights and trees, Shaun made sure the lights were turned on, and if not, he would plug them in for us. One holiday when our general manager was about to deliver the Christmas tree for the Berkshire Museum's Festival of Trees fundraiser, Shaun plugged it in, came over and took my hand and we stood in front of the tree. It was a truly special moment that highlights his caring nature and why everyone at Zip 'N Sort enjoys working with him.



Advantage Employee Network lost a beloved individual on April 9, 2015. Jody Furer had been a part of our agency since 1986. He worked at Dresser Hull in Lee for nearly 5 years. He was loved by many! The entire Lee community lost a friend and family member in Jody. Not one person talks about him without remembering his friendly personality, jokes and wonderful smile, which were his gift to us all.

Jody had a magnetic personality and enjoyed traveling to destinations including New York, Florida and Europe; spending time with Michael, his friend and roommate; and being a part of the Red Raiders Special Olympics team. Jody was the type of person that made our jobs gratifying, and with regard to him, effortless. He will be missed by all.



A Day in the Life



We would like to welcome Ashley to the Social Development Center (SDC)! Ashley is a recent graduate of Wahconah High School. Starting out in the world after high school can cause anxiety for many people, but Ashley made it look easy. She has quickly become a valued member of our SDC team.

Ashley is a regular volunteer for Meals on Wheels, which delivers meals to elderly residents. Not only does she deliver a nice hot meal, but also a smile and often some much-needed conversation. Welcome aboard, Ashley!





Get Social with BC Arc! Look for us on:



facebook.com/BCountyArc



Berkshire County Arc



@BCArc

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Save the Date!

9th Annual Buddy Walk® Of the Berkshires
Saturday, September 26, 2015
Craneville Elementary School
71 Park Avenue, Dalton, MA
Registration - 10:00 a.m. Walk starts at 11:00 a.m.

To register or for more info, visit bcarc.org/dsfg
or contact:
Jessica Dennis: 413- 464-7262, ext. 12 jdennis@bcarc.org
or
Christine Ferrari: 413- 464-7262, ext. 11, cferrari@bcarc.org