



VISIONS



For the friends of Berkshire County Arc

Berkshire County Arc Receives *Spirit of Giving Award* From Greylock Federal Credit Union



See Story on Page 2

(From left): Greylock Federal Credit Union Assistant Branch Manager Barb Hinchliffe and Branch Manager Mark Mancari presents a check to Berkshire County Arc’s President & CEO Kenneth W. Singer.



“Supporting People, Enriching Lives”

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**Visions
2016
Issue 1**

BCArc's 61st Annual Meeting - Itam Lodge

Berkshire County Arc Board Chair Joseph P. Woitkoski and Berkshire County Arc President and CEO Kenneth W. Singer celebrated employees, partners and Board Members at its 61st Annual Meeting on Nov. 13, 2015. The meeting began with a fun video montage highlighting the agency and the individuals it has served over the past year.

Berkshire County Arc President & CEO Kenneth W. Singer received recognition for his 35 years of service from Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Rep. Gailanne M. Cariddi and Mayor Richard J. Alcombright. Singer started his career at Berkshire County Arc in 1980 and has served as President & CEO since 1994. "I am motivated every day because of our amazing staff and the people we serve. I am very fortunate to have a job like that." Singer said.

Rep. Farley-Bouvier praised Singer for his dedication serving individuals with disabilities and brain injuries for more than three decades, adding that her partnership with Singer extends even further than his tenure with the agency, as Singer was her first boss when she moved to the area.

Awards to BCARC Individuals Served by BCARC

Citizenship Award
Judy Brunelle

Work Achievement Award
Lindsay Blagg

Achievement Awards
Peter Britain, Ryan Phillips
Jay Katz

Personal Growth Award
Leslie Scarlet

Joan Grant Self-Advocate Awards
Margaret Hendricks
Kathy Luscier

Other Awards/Recognition

Board Member Service Award
Mike Ferry, Board Treasurer 10 Years of Service

Employer of the Year Award
Marshalls

Business Partnership Award
Miss Hall's School

Berkshire County Arc President & CEO
Kenneth W. Singer -35 years of service

Co-Director of Residential Services
Rhodora Higgins - 30 years of service

Residential Supervisor
Dennis Radford - 25 years of service

Assistant Site Manager Sampson Parkway
Michelle Drake - 25 years of service

Spirit of Giving

In 2015, 14 teams/departments within Greylock Federal Credit Union were asked to select a worthy cause or organization which they would like to receive the Spirit of Giving Award. The Elm Street Branch of Greylock Federal Credit Union selected Berkshire County Arc, and Assistant Branch Manager Barb Hinchliffe and Branch Manager Mark Mancari presented a \$1,000 check to Kenneth Singer, President & CEO of Berkshire County Arc. The donation was designated toward Berkshire County Arc's 2015 Annual Campaign, which raised funds to support the purchase of an accessible van for the agency's residential and day habilitation programs.

They also presented Singer with the Pay it Forward award; a \$250 gift card from Market 32. This was split among two families in Berkshire County Arc's Adult Family Care program, which provides support to caregivers of individuals who require assistance with daily living.

From the President and CEO

Kenneth W. Singer



Happy New Year! As we begin 2016, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Berkshire County Arc's 670 employees for their hard work and dedication in 2015, and to specifically acknowledge eight staff members who were recognized at our Annual Meeting in the fall. Congratulations to all the award winners!



Jose Taveras
Employee of the
Year Award



Amy Robandt
Citizen Advocate
of the Year Award
with her protégé,
Marilyn England



Bev Tobin
Outstanding
Administrative
Employee Award



Barbara Tanski
Carol Craighead
Mission Award



Hannah Bushway
Outstanding
Advocacy and
Family Support
Employee Award



Queen Caesar
Outstanding Brain
Injury Services
Employee Award



Marc Bourassa
Outstanding
Residential Services
Employee Award



Regan Tyer
Outstanding
Vocational Services
Employee Award

Tis The Season To Be Giving



“For it is in giving that we receive.”
~Francis of Assisi~



Second Annual Food Drive a Great Success

For the second year in a row, the men who live at Woodland Road in Westfield ran a successful neighborhood food drive. Under the direction of the Site Manager, Deb Gore, the pre-Thanksgiving drive was held in early November. On Sunday, November 1, 2015, the men distributed flyers to all of their neighbors explaining the drive and noting that the pick-up would be the following Sunday. This year, the drive was also opened up to individuals from other BC Arc residential homes in both the Westfield and Pittsfield areas.

On November 12, 2015, more than 275 pounds of food was delivered to the Westfield Open Pantry by the residents and their staff. The staff and volunteers at the Food Pantry were extremely grateful, as the need has increased significantly during the past couple of years.



(Left to right): Robert Slowey, Gerry Gelinas, Steven Jacobs, Deb Gore, Tyler Smith, Merry Crossler

Berkshire Dream Center Holiday Blessings

Berkshire County Arc individuals once again wanted to help out some needy families during this holiday season and contacted Pastor Katelynn Miner of the Berkshire Dream Center.

Many of our individuals picked up paper ornaments from the Berkshire Dream Center’s Giving Tree and bought presents for many children who belong to the organization. They shopped, wrapped and delivered the presents to the Berkshire Dream Center in time for Christmas.

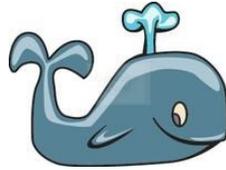


(Above): The Berkshire Self-Advocates went to the Berkshire Mall to go Christmas Shopping for gifts for children who are supported by the Berkshire Dream Center.



(Left): Our individuals posed with Pastor Katelynn Miner after dropping off presents they brought for the children.

 **Who's Traveling Now?** 



Betsy Carlotto, Leslie Engle, Christy Rich and Vicky Provencher enjoyed a day in Boston recently. They went to the Boston Harbor where they went on a three-hour whale watch tour. Once the tour was over, they enjoyed a nice dinner out. They had an amazing day and even saw some whale sightings.

Berkshire County Arc's Brain Injury Services Department Holds Photography Exhibit and Reception

On Nov. 6, 2015, Berkshire County Arc's Brain Injury Services Department held a photography exhibit and reception at the Marketplace Café in Pittsfield as part of First Fridays Artswalk. The exhibit — which was named "Post-Injury Survivor World Lens: As seen through the eyes of brain injury survivors" — had photographs on display from eight individuals in the agency's Brain Injury Services Department.

The photographs were available for purchase, with all monies going directly to the photographers. Four photographs were sold on opening night, providing an additional source of accomplishment and pride for those whose art was chosen. Individuals and members of the community had the opportunity to appreciate the artwork on opening night. There were plenty of smiles to be found as attendees toured the exhibit and met with the artists who attended the event. The photographs remained on display at the Marketplace Café throughout November, where they received many compliments about the artists' ability to capture that which is beautiful and unique through the camera lens. Due to their popularity, they are now also displayed and available for sale in the lobby of Berkshire County Arc's main building, located at 395 South Street in Pittsfield.



(Left): Artist Raymond Pulchalski is all smiles as he shows his art at the exhibit.



(Right): Kathleen Ryan and friends admiring the art work displayed on the wall.

Halloween Dance at the Crowne Plaza



Scarecrow Garden at the Center for Development



Winter Dinner Dance at the Crowne Plaza



Law Enforcement Torch Run Cop on Top Event - Walmart



(Left): Tom Couterut officially opened the Law Enforcement Torch Run Cop on Top event for our Special Olympics' Athletes by lighting the ceremonial fire on top of the roof.



Group pic of some of the Berkshire County Arc Titans who volunteered their time for this amazing event, which raised over \$60,000!



"All Together Now"



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

Hello. My name is Melanie Simmons and I was born and raised in Mambusao, Philippines.

Growing up in the Philippines, I was very poor. I lived in the poorest side of the city. My childhood home is a small shack with an aluminum tin roof and a small kitchen which had dirt floors. To survive, my family and I raised pigs, chickens, cows, goats and planted many vegetables & fruits.

As a child, we didn't have a lot of free time to play because we had to work in the rice fields to help support our family. I worked in the rice fields from the age of 9 until I was 19. The few times when we were able to play, we spent our time playing outside. Our grandmother made us a ball to play with that was made with coconut tree leaves.

One of my favorite traditions back home was Christmas. Family is very important to me. It was a special holiday for us. We would gather with our family eating special meals and enjoying our time together. Some of my favorite holiday meals were lechon (pig roast), eggrolls and pancit (lo-mein). These are cooked outdoors in a wok that sat on top of fire burning wood or charcoal. Rather than exchanging gifts, we were just thankful to be together, eating and enjoying each other's company.

I have been working at Berkshire County Arc for 9 years, and I enjoy what I do. It brings me pleasure to help others.

To read more about Melanie's story and see her recipe for spring rolls, visit: <http://www.bcarc.org/vision-news/>.



Melanie poses next to her Christmas tree.



Philippines National Flag

Stepping Stones

On Sunday, September 27, 2015, BCARC Brain Injury Services proudly participated with over 350 people in the 1st Annual Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts Walk & Roll for Brain Injury. Four BCARC residences were represented by five individuals and three staff to raise funds and educate the community on the impact of brain injuries and how to prevent them. It was a beautiful autumn day that was filled with hope, fun and community as all celebrated the spirit of camaraderie with other survivors, families and supporters. BCARC's team name was "Stupendous Survivors and Friends." T-shirts designed by the team members honored past BCARC's friends and survivors. Overall \$31,000 was raised to fund programs aimed at creating a better future for brain injury survivors and their families.



Back of their t-shirts honored the memory of their friends.



BCARC Brain Injury Team Stupendous Survivors and Friends

Betsy and Cathy's Corner



On December 16, 2015, The Center for Development held its Annual Holiday Luncheon. But first, Santa Claus arrived in the morning bearing gifts! We gathered around the Christmas tree and opened our gifts, and then waited in anticipation for our friends and family to arrive for lunch. This year we had a great turnout of 175 people! We enjoyed amazing food made by many of the staff and family members, and we had a wonderful time talking and laughing with our family and friends!



Kathy Horan enjoying the festivities of the day.



Written by: Betsy Carlotto

Holiday Cheer



(Above): Crossroads Center for Enrichment Gingerbread Houses done by staff.



Festival Of Trees at the Berkshire Museum

(Left): Crossroads Center for Enrichment Tree

(Right): Zip 'N Sort Mail Services Tree



Employees of the Quarter



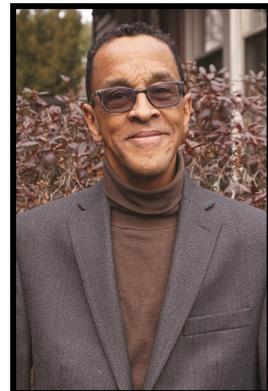
*Michelle Baity
Assistant Human
Resource Director
Administration*



*Kyle Harvey
Advantage Employee
Network (AEN)
Employment Manager*



*Lisa Kinnas
Advantage Employee
Network (AEN)
Employment Manager*



*Robert Blake
Brain Injury
Residential Support
North Road*



*Randi La
Advantage Employee
Network (AEN)
Employment Specialist*



*Sheri Griffin, RN
Adult Family Care
Registered Nurse*



*Pamela Kight
Crossroads -Center for
Enrichment Day
Program Case Manager*



A Day in the Life



Katie Jarck

Katie Jarck and Sarah Vannah go to Community Access to the Arts (CATA) on Wednesdays. CATA provides arts workshops for people with disabilities and then shares their creativity with the public.

This is one of the projects they did for a few weeks. They cut out the flowers and painted them with their favorite colors...and the finished project was beautiful. They showed them off and took them home.



Sarah Vannah

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Commissioners Visit Berkshire County Arc

In November 2015, Nicky Osborne, the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, visited two of Berkshire County Arc's residential homes in Pittsfield. The residents of the houses are individuals with brain injuries; and like all of the agency's residential homes, those who live there are provided with person-centered supports and engaging recreational and social activities. Commissioner Osborne said that she had a great time touring the facilities and meeting the residents and staff.

In December 2015, Deputy Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Jane F. Ryder visited a Berkshire County Arc residential home in Westfield, MA which is the home of six individuals with acquired brain injuries. After her visit, Deputy Commissioner Ryder wrote a letter to Berkshire County Arc President & CEO Kenneth W. Singer. Following is an excerpt from that letter:

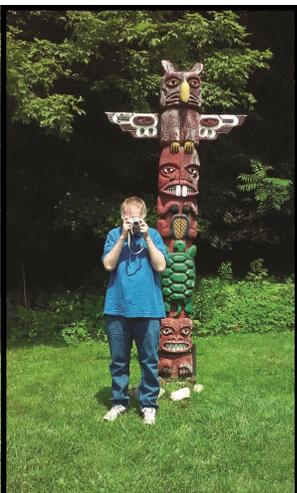
"The house is gorgeous, beautifully decorated, and more importantly, perfect for the needs of the people who live there. I understand why the residents can't wait to sit in front of that fireplace! And your staff were all very inspiring; they clearly were devoted to the people they support and knew each of them individually."

For more information about Berkshire County Arc's residential programs, visit <http://www.bcarc.org/programs/residential-services/>.

*Commissioner of the Massachusetts
Rehabilitation Commission Nicky
Osborne talks with Jim Ateson at his
home.*



Artists in Residence



This is Steven Jacobs taking a picture of something that caught his interest on our way to Shelburne Falls. He loves to take pictures of everything and has a good eye for things. He takes his camera out with him depending on where he is going and usually with him on his Saturday bus rides.

When he wants to get them developed, he gets them printed out at the photo kiosk at Walmart.



On Vocation



Heather Conkling

Of all the jobs that Heather Conkling has had, Zip 'N Sort Mail Services is her favorite. Why? Because of the variety of work she does and the friends she has made. Over the past five years that Heather has been employed with Zip 'N Sort Mail Services, she has worked in a variety of positions, from filing to strapping and palletizing catalogs to preparing mail.

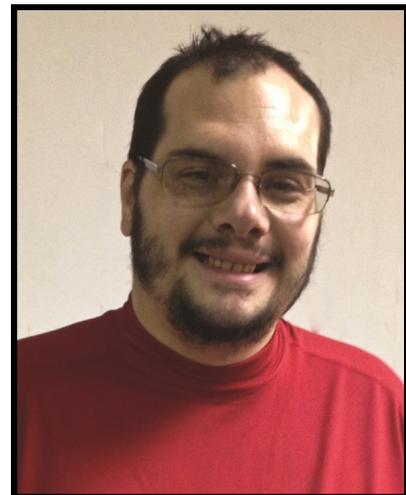
In her free time, Heather enjoys shopping for deals at local consignment stores. She also has a passion for cooking and attends a weekly cooking class with several of her friends.

Thank you, Heather, for all that you do!



Advantage Employee Network (AEN), the employment division of Berkshire County Arc, would like to recognize an outstanding individual for his dedication, strong work ethic and growth in the workplace. Two years ago, AEN worked with Johnathon Wallace to help him find employment that would be a good fit for his interests and skillset. He began working both at the Hudson Group and Sample Express – each part-time – and recently celebrated his two-year anniversary with both companies. Among his job duties at Hudson Group, his main focus is to remove weekly magazines and replace them with updated issues. Victor, his employment trainer, has seen a great deal of growth in Johnathon, and he has become a valuable asset to the Hudson team. He makes himself available to help his fellow co-workers, showing his improvement in leadership skills.

Johnathon's other part-time job is with Sample Express where he completes a large variety of tasks that he enjoys. The owner of Sample Express, Robert Glass, has been extremely pleased with Johnathon's work: "Johnathon has been a wonderful addition to our close-knit team. He is hardworking and reliable. He is also a loyal co-worker. We are incredibly proud of Johnathon's accomplishments and continued success at Sample Express."



Johnathon Wallace



Get Social with BC Arc! Look for us on:



facebook.com/BCountyArc



Berkshire County Arc



@ BC Arc

**Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Pittsfield, MA
Permit No. 121**

The logo for Zip 'N Sort Mail Services features a stylized globe made of blue and green geometric shapes. Below the globe, the text "Zip 'N Sort" is written in a large, white, serif font, with a small "SM" trademark symbol to the right. Underneath that, "Mail Services" is written in a smaller, white, serif font. At the bottom of the logo, the text "Providing local, national and international service" is written in a small, white, sans-serif font, followed by the phone number "413-443-9071" and the website "www.zipnsort.com" in the same font.

On the web!
www.bcarc.org



Save the Dates!

Legislative Breakfast

Friday, March 18, 2016
ITAM Lodge, Pittsfield, MA, 7:30 AM

Sprout Film Festival

Sunday, April 3, 2016
Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA

Berkshire County Arc 22nd Annual Golf Classic

Thursday, May 26, 2016
Berkshire Hills Country Club
Pittsfield, MA