



The Arc™

Bismarck

Annual Report

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

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The Arc of Bismarck Staff

Kirsten Dvorak, Executive Director

Brenda Kriedeman, Store Manager

November 2016

Greetings to all Members,

First and foremost, I would like to thank each and every member, staff person, donor and stakeholder that has made a commitment to the Arc of Bismarck and the Arc of North Dakota.

This last year has brought many changes for us as an organization. We have had the opportunity to learn from some great leaders over this last year, our former Executive Director, Nicole Peske and our former Program Director and Interim Director, April Dahme, both of whom have moved on to share their greatness with others. We are greatly thankful to them for all that they have given to the Arc and for their continued support during our transition.

We are very excited to have welcomed new individuals into our Arc family, our Executive Director, Kirsten Dvorak and our new store manager, Brenda Kreideman. Their commitment and ability to jump right in and help push the Arc to a higher plane has been evident in the short time that they have been with us.

This document highlights the activities and accomplishments of The Arc of Bismarck over the past year. This would not have been possible without help from many dedicated individuals who care deeply for The Arc.

This year has also brought challenges for the state of North Dakota. The past several years have been a time of growth and prosperity for our state. Over this last year, we have seen budget shortfalls which have led to reductions of services and financial support for those individuals who the Arc champions. With the beginning of the legislative session fast approaching, we will be front and center to advocate for the needs of our constituents.

We are so excited for the future and are foreseeing great things for the Arc in the upcoming year!

Tahna Stetson
President of Arc of Bismarck

MISSION STATEMENT

"To provide education, advocacy and supports to children and adults with disabilities to foster empowerment and full inclusion in the community."

BACKGROUND

The Arc is a private, non-profit 501(c)3 advocacy organization 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 state and local chapters. The Arc of Bismarck is affiliated with The Arc of the United States and The Arc of North Dakota. While the work of Arc chapters across the country is diverse, The Arc of Bismarck, like The Arc of North Dakota, does not provide any direct services to consumers. Throughout its history, The Arc of Bismarck has offered a variety of services and supports, always morphing to meet the current needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. The Arc of Bismarck is dedicated to improving community supports and services, influencing public policy at all levels, providing education and training for advocates, self-advocates, and parents, and achieving full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. Through these efforts, the organization teaches effective self-advocacy skills, fosters empowerment, and seeks to advance the overall quality of life for individuals with disabilities and their families. Many activities over the past year have allowed The Arc of Bismarck to remain relevant and important to the disability community.



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 complex systems of education, government, and community institutions. During the past year, information and referrals have been given on a variety of topics, such as housing, guardianship, low-income services, family services, adaptive equipment, and education. The Arc of Bismarck continues to service as a valuable resource in order to assist people to find the resources and services that they need within their community and within the state of North Dakota.

Community Living Program

This program provides people with disabilities transitioning out of an institutional setting and into the community a voucher that can be used at our thrift store for household items and personal effects. The Arc of Bismarck does not see large volumes of requests for this service. However, The Arc continues to provide assistance to people transitioning into independent living environments. We are actively involved with the Money Follows the Person program, which provides funding for one-time moving costs to people with disabilities and adults and assists individuals in obtaining the services and supports

needed to live independently.



American People Self-Advocacy Association

American People is a self-advocacy organization run by and for people with disabilities whose mission is, “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 of Bismarck. During the past year, The Arc has worked closely with this group to encourage growth and membership development. Some highlights include: attending transit meetings; selling cookbooks at community events and The Arc Thrift Store; hosting presenters on various topics at membership meetings; and sponsoring several social events, including a Halloween party, summer barbeque, and the annual Christmas dance. All adults (18+) with disabilities are invited to attend the group’s monthly membership meetings to learn more and get involved in self-advocacy. Meetings are held the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Bismarck Public Library.

ADVOCACY

Individual and Systems Advocacy

The Arc of Bismarck knows the critical role advocacy plays in independence, and is an active advocate for issues and concerns regarding the rights of people with disabilities and their families. Individual advocacy is provided upon request and has come largely in the form of information dispersal and connecting citizens with their legislators. Systems advocacy at The Arc of Bismarck is displayed through continued participation in the local Legislative Working Group, North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium, and other collaborative activities. The Arc is especially proud to have completed the twenty-third year of the North Dakota Partners in Policymaking program.

Legislative Advocacy

During the 2015 legislative session, The Arc of Bismarck tracked and monitored over 30 disability related bills and provided written and oral testimony on several. The Arc of Bismarck secured a contract and provided legislative advocacy services to The Arc of North Dakota for the 2015 Legislative Session. The Arc’s legislative priorities included employment, housing, transition services, and the marriage penalty in Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI). The number of individuals with disabilities and those receiving services continues to increase as the state experiences a population boom. Below is a list with brief descriptions of a few of the bills that we took a position on in the 2015 session. Find the full legislative recap on the website at www.thearcofbismarck.org. We are currently gearing up for the 2017 legislative session. We have continued to sit on the various committees, over this last year, in order to advocate for the continued growth and fair treatment of those we live to service.

EDUCATION

Partners in Policymaking

The Arc of Bismarck coordinates North Dakota's Partners in Policymaking program, an intensive training program for adults with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. The program teaches advocacy and leadership skills and creates paths for personal independence through a series of weekend training sessions. In the past year, 15 graduates received education in the program's topic areas, such as legislative processes, disability issues, and best practices. The program's intent is to achieve a productive partnership between people utilizing services and those providing services and creating policy. Partners continues to be a popular program, supported during the past year by the Otto Bremer Foundation, Walter L. Braun & Lucille Braun Family Charitable Gift Fund, Comfort Inn, and numerous individual contributors.



Speaking Engagements

At The Arc of Bismarck, we make ourselves available to do presentations within the community on a variety of subjects.

THE ARC OF NORTH DAKOTA

In March of 2014, The Arc of Bismarck entered into a contractual agreement with The Arc of North Dakota to provide administrative services to the state organization. This contract has allowed The Arc of North Dakota to return to Bismarck, improving access to legislators, policy, and state agencies. While the state organization is now housed at The Arc of Bismarck, it remains its own fiscal and legal entity and is managed by The Arc of Bismarck's executive director at the direction of the state board. Notable state activities over the past year include: a successful 2015 legislative session, participation on a variety of committees that impact the disability community and the start of monthly call-ins with chapter directors to share best practices and problem-solve.

Affiliate chapters of The Arc of North Dakota remain vital to the success of the state organization. A special thanks to all of the local chapters for their efforts over the past year: The Arc of Barnes County (Valley City), The Arc of Bismarck, The Arc of Cass County (Fargo), The Arc of Dickinson, The Arc of Little Missouri (Bowman), and The Arc, Upper Valley (Grand Forks).

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

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 and foster a collaborative spirit, The Arc worked with several organizations over the past year. Special thanks to our primary collaborators: Comfort Inn, North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities, North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium, Designer Genes, and many disability stakeholder organizations who have helped with our programming and education efforts.

SOURCES OF REVENUE FOR PROGRAMS

Chapter Efforts

The Arc of Bismarck is able to fund quality programs and services through several resources. Through dues and membership fees, The Arc's 120 members have helped support Arc programming. In addition, The Arc also holds fundraisers, receives revenue from corporate sponsors and foundations through grant writing, and operates a thrift store. Over the past year, The Arc was generously supported by the Sam McQuade Sr./Budweiser Charity Softball Tournament, HDR, Community Options, HIT, Inc., Support Systems Inc., Arc of United State, Wells Fargo Advisors - Kirk Pandolfo and the Otto Bremer Foundation. The financial support of these organizations is greatly appreciated and ensures the impact and success of our efforts. This past year we did participate in the Annual Giving Hearts Campaign with Dakota Medical Foundation and were able to raise over \$3,000 to support programming for the Arc.

The Arc Thrift Store

The Arc Thrift Store provides monetary support for the Bismarck chapter's programs. Thrift store sales for thus far for 2016 have been \$271,429.05, last year at this time sales were \$270,993.63.

The Arc Thrift Store continues to thrive in a business climate that is increasingly competitive for employees and in a community of many thrift stores. The store continues to be staffed by a dedicated group of individuals in both paid and volunteer positions.

A LOOK AHEAD

In April of 2010, members, self-advocates, and staff collaborated to update The Arc of Bismarck's strategic plan. Five growth areas were identified as organizational goals: 1) To support The Arc of North Dakota by exploring the taking of leadership; 2) To expand existing and grow new programs; 3) To retain paid staff to maintain integrity and credibility of The Arc of Bismarck; 4) To leverage finances to address buildings and grounds needs; and 5) To educate the public about disability issues in an effort to change attitudes. The Arc of Bismarck has done much to accomplish these goals, such as: 1) raised base wages of employees, 2) offer health insurance to full-time store employees, 3) completed remodel of the thrift store and updated certain fixtures, 4)

sell items through online mediums, 5) secured administrative services agreement and legislative advocacy services agreement with The Arc of North Dakota, and 6) completed another year of our Partners in Policymaking and Capability Chronicles programs, to name a few. The Arc of Bismarck revisited The Arc's strategic plan in the past year to identify new and existing growth areas as they relate to people with disabilities and the board is planning to form a new strategic plan in 2017.

Thank you for your continued support of our organization and people with disabilities.