Our Mission Statement

Working with local, state and national partners, The Arc of Florida advocates for local chapters, public policies and high quality supports for people with developmental and other disabilities to be fully included in all aspects of their community.

Executive Committee

Pat Young | President
Greg Roe | Vice President, Administration
Michele Poole | Vice President, Advancement
John DiRienzo | Vice President, Advocacy
Bobbie Lake | Secretary
Dick Bradley | Treasurer
Dr. Julia McNabb | FCE President
Executive Message

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that another year has already passed since our last Annual Report. We are so grateful for all of the participation and support from our membership this past year. Without you, we could not continue with expanding our services. As you read through our 2015 Annual Report, you can see that The Arc of Florida continues to grow in services and outreach to individuals and families in Florida.

Improvement in housing options for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) continued to expand this year. Not only were the local chapters of The Arc able to build beautiful new homes, we were also able to take advantage of several new multi-family developments around the state where some units were “set aside” for persons with I/DD. The Arc’s commitment to better quality services has always been a priority. This past year we were able to offer board trainings as well as self-advocate and service provider trainings. The Arc of Florida reached over 500 people in our quality improvement training efforts this past year. This training will be ongoing and, hopefully, will be a better way to obtain certification.

Once again, the Arc of Florida dental program met a crucial need for persons with I/DD. The dental program ends pain and suffering for those we serve. The Florida Legislature has recognized the success and necessity of this program by placing it in the state budget as a recurring expenditure. We are grateful to be able to offer this much needed service to Floridians with special needs.

We still have much left to accomplish.

A provider rate increase is the focus of our legislative platform this coming year. Individuals with I/DD as well as their families all agree, this is an advocacy as well as a provider issue. We must have an available and qualified workforce. Provider rates that begin at $6.72 per hour for pay are not adequate to support quality services. This must change!

The Arc of Florida will continue to fight for humane and positive behavioral supports so that children are safe at school. We remain hopeful that our Federal and State officials will recognize that all students deserve humane treatment. We’re grateful that Representative Ray Rodriguez is sponsoring legislation in the upcoming session to change some of the unacceptable practices in our Florida schools. We believe it is better to build strong children than to repair broken adults (F. Douglass).

Please take the time to browse through all of the accomplishments in this year’s report and commit to working with us on accomplishing even more next year!

Pat Young, President
Deborah Linton, Chief Executive Officer

Achieve with us.
The Arc of Florida’s Core Values

**People First**
The Arc of Florida believes that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are defined by their own strengths, abilities and inherent value, not by their disability.

**Equity**
The Arc of Florida believes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are entitled to the respect, dignity, equality, safety and security accorded to other members of society and are equal before the law.

**Community**
The Arc of Florida believes that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities belong in the community and have fundamental moral, civil and constitutional rights to be fully included and actively participate in all aspects of society.

**Self-determination**
The Arc of Florida believes in self-determination and self-advocacy. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with appropriate resources and supports, can make decisions about their own lives and must be heard on issues that affect their well-being.

**Diversity**
The Arc of Florida believes that society in general, and The Arc in particular, benefit from the contributions of people with diverse personal characteristics (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, religion, age, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender and type of disability).
The Arc of Florida’s Guiding Principles

**Participatory Democracy**

The Arc of Florida acts to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their parents, siblings, family members and other concerned members of the public have meaningful opportunities to inform and guide the direction of the organization’s advocacy, including determining policy and positions on important issues. The Arc of Florida strives for diversity in its leadership and in all facets of the work of the organization.

**Visionary Leadership**

The Arc of Florida leads by articulating a positive vision for the future of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and catalyzes public and private support in realization of that vision through carefully planned and well-executed goals, strategies and actions.

**Public Interest**

The Arc of Florida represents the public interest, supporting and acting with and on behalf of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families regardless of the type of disability or membership in the organization.

**Collaboration**

The Arc of Florida works with individuals, organizations and coalitions in a collaborative fashion. The Arc of Florida values and promotes effective partnerships between volunteer and staff leadership at all levels of the organization.

**Transparency, Integrity and Excellence**

The Arc of Florida conducts its business with integrity, accountability and open, honest and timely communications. The Arc of Florida is committed to quality and excellence in all it does.
Most everyone has dealt with or experienced dental pain at some point during their lifetime, and the individuals we serve are no different. Gena Rikard, a recipient of dental services from The Arc of Florida’s Dental Program, not only had dental issues, but also had issues with reliable transportation to and from her dentist office. She would often spend hours waiting for transportation to arrive to take her to her appointment, or in other instances, she would have to leave in the middle of her appointment because her transportation arrived early. The Arc of Florida was able to help assist Gena in coordinating transportation to and from the dental office as well as pay the dental provider to alleviate her pain.

For quite some time, the Baker family had been worried about their son, Steven Joseph Baker, as he had become completely bed ridden in the last three years and had been showing signs that he was having dental pain. “There was a point where we didn’t know what was happening….he could not tolerate the wheelchair, so there is no way we could have gotten him to the dentist to see what was happening”, said Mr. Baker. Since Steven was no longer able to sit in a wheelchair, The Arc of Florida was able to coordinate and pay for non-ambulatory transportation, and Steven was able to see his dental provider.

“I had pain in the lower parts of my jaw. If someone didn’t help provide for the services, I wouldn’t have gotten them done. I don’t have the money. I don’t have the transportation. My family can’t take me because of my chair.”

Gena Rikard | Orlando, Florida

The Baker Family | Port St. Lucie, Florida
Since receiving a special appropriation from the Florida Legislature during the 2012 Legislative Session, The Arc of Florida has continually provided critical dental services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. During the 2015 Legislative Session, Florida lawmakers approved a $2 million recurring appropriation, which afforded The Arc of Florida the opportunity to sign a 3 year contract with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, that will allow the dental program to seamlessly operate and continually serve individuals through the 2017 – 2018 fiscal year.

The Arc of Florida has recruited dentists at 189 offices across the state, and these dentists have performed procedures for over 1,500 self-advocates since the program began. An example of some of the services rendered include but are not limited to x-rays, extractions, root canals, crowns and dentures.

The Wilson family (above) and the Humphrey family (left), both have received funding through the Dental Program.
Home Is Where the Heart Is

We’ve all heard the saying, “Home is where the heart is.” Many of us have used it from time to time, and most of us whole-heartedly believe it!

The Arc of Florida has been working diligently this past year to improve housing options and residential settings for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) throughout the state of Florida.

We are so fortunate that many of our local chapters have received funding from The Florida Housing Finance Corporation for remodeling of existing group homes and new construction of additional homes. Residents will be able to move into four newly constructed group homes by the end of this calendar year. In addition, another 8 group homes will be under construction or renovated, and will be move-in ready by early 2016.

This much needed funding source has improved the quality of residences offered at the following Arc chapters for this fiscal year:

The Arc Indian River County: $367,000
The Arc of Alachua County: $367,000
The Arc Nature Coast: $367,000
The Arc Jacksonville: $148,000
The Arc St. Lucie County: $188,000
The Arc Gateway: $367,000
The Arc of Putnam County: $367,000
The Arc Sunrise of Central Florida: $367,000

These homes are in addition to the previous homes awarded funding from Florida Housing Finance Corporation in 2014.

(Above) A new group home for The Arc of the St. Johns in St. Augustine, Florida. (Below) A new privately funded group home for The Arc Indian River County in Vero Beach, Florida.
In addition to expanding residential options, The Arc of Florida has worked to coordinate the availability of affordable rental housing for persons with I/DD in various multifamily developments around the state.

The Arc of Florida serves as the referral agency for six multifamily properties which offer affordable rental units to individuals with I/DD at significantly reduced rental payments. These units were set aside through a special designation by the Florida Legislature. It has been rewarding to work with various developers around the state as their properties come on the market. Our partnership with these developers has been an opportunity to further educate Florida communities about the abilities of Floridians with I/DD.

Through this calendar year, The Arc of Florida has offered several trainings addressing housing issues and resources for persons with I/DD. One of these trainings entitled, “The Fair Housing Act and Persons with Disabilities”, was targeted to Waiver Support Coordinators and Supported Living Counselors as they tend to have to deal with discriminatory housing practices. Overall, we have now had over 275 individuals participate in our various trainings on housing topics.

We are excited to continue our work on improving housing options in the coming years.

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation awarding grant funding for new group homes.
Making Our Voices Heard

The Arc US and The Arc of Florida continue to represent the needs of individuals with I/DD at the national and state levels. In Washington while The Arc US worked on legislation in Congress to pass The ABLE Act, The Arc of Florida worked with the Florida Legislature to pass legislation to create Florida ABLE Inc. Working together, ABLE legislation is now a reality and in Florida, plans will begin in July of 2016.

We were also grateful that waitlist families were once again a focus of funding. Our state allocated $16.1 million for services for families on the waitlist while the Federal Government allocated $24.6 million towards serving these Floridians. This combined funding will place approximately 2,000 individuals onto the Medicaid Waiver this year.

The Legislature once again recognized the need for housing funding and placed another $10 million in the Florida Housing Finance to build and renovate small group homes.

This past session the Florida Legislature recognized the invaluable work of The Arc of Florida’s Dental Program and the state made the funding for this program a recurring appropriation. This will enable The Arc of Florida to continue to serve more individuals in the future and further expand our network of already 189 dentists.

An overall provider rate increase for services was not achieved in the past legislative session. The State of Florida through our Executive Office of the Governor and our Florida Legislature must realize that the service delivery system has become very fragile as the system has become more and more financially strapped. If it wasn’t for The Arc’s ability to fundraise, many individuals may have already lost services that are partially but not fully funded by the state through the Medicaid program. This has to be rectified in the upcoming session.

We look forward to representing individuals with I/DD, their families and service providers in the upcoming Florida Legislative session.
Legislative Priority for 2016: Provider Rate Increase

The key to improving life for Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) is to invest in community based services. The Arc of Florida is the state’s oldest and largest advocacy and service organization for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We have come to recognize that our advocacy must be focused on increasing provider reimbursement rates in order to sustain individuals in their community. It will be impossible to sustain quality provider community services for some waiver services at the current reimbursement rates. This is our number one legislative priority this upcoming session.

Provider Reimbursement Rates
Our priority is to increase provider rates by 7% this session and again by 7% next year. An investment this year of $27 million in general revenue funds would allow individuals with I/DD to remain in their home communities with the supports they need. It would allow providers of some of the most necessary services to pay minimum wage and meet various regulatory mandates such as staffing ratios.

Companies and the U.S. military considering Florida locations for installations desire communities where employees can have their family needs met. Offering community based services is an additional enticement for bringing jobs to Florida. Investing in a rate increase is essential in order to continue quality Developmental Disabilities Home and Community based Medicaid Waiver services.

Return on Investment
• An increase in Residential Habilitation rates provides a return on investment (ROI) when you consider the savings generated by maintaining individuals in Residential Habilitation (community homes) compared to institutional care. (The savings is $498.1 million.)

• An increase in the Adult Day Training (ADT) generates an ROI on the wages estimated to be earned by allowing one family member the ability to work and earn wages while their family member receives services during the day. The ROI is $167.9 million (2014 average FL wages and employment rate of working age individuals).

• An increase in Personal Supports generates an ROI by maintaining 12,774 individuals in supported living or the family home compared to group home placement. (The savings is $396.7 million.)

Planning for Future Legislative Priorities
Many students have been injured and some have died from the use of abusive seclusion and restraint techniques in their local school districts. The United States Congress has considered passing legislation, which will end the use of these practices in all school districts.

Looking forward to when Federal legislation is passed, The Arc of Florida asks that the Florida Legislature immediately pass legislation to end these practices in school districts around our state which can end future tragedies.
I Am... a Voice

The Centers for Medicaid and Medicare under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services promulgated a new home and community based rule this past year. This rule has the potential to bring major changes to services in the community which are funded by Medicaid.

The Arc of Florida brought over 100 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities from around the state together at Billy Jo Rish State Park for a two day retreat. The purpose of the retreat to was to listen to the individuals whose lives would be the most impacted by the new rule.

A variety of “I AM” activities took place over the two days and two overall concerns with the current service delivery system in Florida were expressed by self-advocates. A lack of true person centered planning and the ability to choose where and with whom they wanted to live were the most frequently cited issues causing dissatisfaction in the lives of these attendees.

The Arc of Florida will continue our efforts to ensure that individuals whose lives are the most impacted by rules and regulations are afforded an opportunity to provide input and speak for themselves.
The Arc of Florida | 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

"I am..."
The Arc Family is Strong!

The Arc continues to be a strong national and statewide leader in advocacy and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In the most recent tax season, The Arc (national, state and local combined) reported $3.98 billion in total revenue. The $3.98 billion included $2.76 billion in program service revenue, $989 million in contributions and grants and $21 million in investment income.

Of the total contributions, $149 million was from individuals, foundations and corporations while $840 million was from government funding.

Not only is The Arc a large economic entity, the data also illustrates that The Arc operates efficiently. Of the $3.9 billion in total expenses, nationally 89.8% was spent on program services while only 9.6% was spent on management and administration. Another 0.6% was spent on fundraising.

In addition, we couldn’t continue Medicaid Waiver services in Florida if it weren’t for the strong support of our national office fighting for the Medicaid Waiver dollars.

The chart to the right, illustrates how fortunate we are to have a voice in Washington as well as Tallahassee. The Federal Government has increased Medicaid Waiver funding in Florida by $129.3 million over the past five years. Florida has increased their effort in our waiver funding by less than 1/5 of that, by $23.6 million.

Nationally and statewide, the developmental disabilities community is fortunate to have a strong and committed advocacy effort to represent them!
Building a Well-Educated and Trained Workforce

The Arc of Florida took the lead in the state in trying to better prepare the workforce to work and support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The Arc of Florida introduced The State of Florida’s Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to the Florida TRAIN system. TRAIN, a learning management system sponsored by the Foundation for Public Health and operated by the Florida Department of Health, is the way to reach the available I/DD workforce in Florida. The APD has agreed to post required provider trainings in the TRAIN system in 2016 where the trainings can be accessed for free.

In addition to “required” provider trainings, The Arc of Florida hosted and sponsored several other training initiatives to improve the quality of life for individuals with I/DD. Those initiatives were:

- Three training videos on Aging and Developmental Disabilities by Dr. Ronald Lucchino, Bio-Gerontologist.
- Two affordable housing webinars co-hosted with the Florida Housing Coalition on the SHIP and SAIL housing programs.
- Two video trainings on “Community Living Strategies for Successful Behavior Outcomes.”
- Three webinars on Non-profit Board of Directors Roles and Responsibilities, by Frank Rainer, Esquire.
- Three videos produced by The Florida Department of Health on disability and health related issues posted to the TRAIN system by The Arc of Florida.
- The Developmental Disabilities Council dental training.

The Arc of Florida is committed to continuing the development of quality trainings for the I/DD community.

Dr. Ronald Lucchino presenting a training on Aging and Developmental Disabilities at The Arc Nature Coast in Brooksville, Florida.
ABLE Act

After many years of advocacy and bipartisan work in Congress, the Stephen Beck, Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act was signed into law on December 19, 2014. During those same years, The Arc of Florida had been lobbying the Florida Legislature to step out first and pass legislation to create ABLE plans.

The 2015 Florida Legislature passed Senate bills 642, 644 and 646 to create and implement the Florida ABLE program and Governor Rick Scott then signed the bills into law this past summer.

The Arc of Florida had many advocates and families working to pass this legislation. A special note of thanks goes to Michele Poole for her vision of how this could be accomplished and to the late Representative Clay Ford for his belief that we should assist those who want to help themselves.

It is anticipated that ABLE plans will be available to Floridians sometime in the summer of 2016.

ABLE plans will allow many individuals with disabilities to save for their disability related needs without endangering their other disability related benefits. This will assist individuals to be more self-sufficient and be able to better meet their own needs.

For more information on ABLE plans, please visit The Arc of Florida’s website at: www.arcflorida.org and click on Understanding ABLE by Chris Rodriguez.

Governor Rick Scott held a ceremonial bill signing for The ABLE Act at the Marian Center in Miami, and The Arc of Florida was in attendance.
During 2015, The Arc of Florida was afforded the opportunity to use funding provided by The Arc Gateway and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to support employment demonstration projects throughout the state of Florida. These projects were to meet the support needs of individuals with I/DD to have a meaningful employment experience where they could earn minimum wage or above.

The participating chapters of The Arc of Florida were creative in meeting some unique employment needs for the individuals we serve. The project as a whole was a great effort and success and one of the most cost efficient “jobs” programs to date. These employment initiatives resulted in meaningful work for over 90 individuals.

Agency initiatives included:

- The Arc Big Bend operated the Cherry Lake concession stand and maintained the Cherry Lake recreational park.
- The Arc of Walton County assisted several individuals in attending the University of Florida Master Gardener program. Afterwards, the Master Gardeners set up a roadside stand where they sold plants, vegetables and orchids, which they grew.
- St. Andrew Bay Center assisted self-advocates in opening and operating a community Thrift Store.
- Jackson County ARC placed individuals at Arizona Chemical Company.
- The Arc Washington-Holmes Counties opened a snow cone kiosk and sold snow cones and popcorn at the local Walmart and at a private school.
- The Arc of Alachua County worked with Alachua County and The Sleep Center Superstore on a recycling program.
- The Arc Nature Coast placed several individuals in jobs at Accuform Signs.
- The Arc of Levy County worked with the Levy County Board of Commissioners on park maintenance.
- The Arc Indian River County partnered with a local group that was working on the conservation and revitalization of the Indian River Lagoon. The group was able to employ several individuals to help manufacture Oyster Mats for the lagoon.
- The Arc Palm Beach County assisted individuals in creating various sea life artworks, and then assisted them in delivery and set up of their work to be sold at Loggerhead Marine Life Center gift shop.
## The Arc of Florida Financial Statement*

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**TOTAL ASSETS**

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**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

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* Internally produced report pending CPA audit
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS ACTIVITY

REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT

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EXPENSES

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Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets 36,200

NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR 440,914

NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR 477,114
The Arc of Florida’s Board of Directors

**Pat Young** | President
The Arc Gateway

**Michele Poole** | Vice President, Advancement
The Arc of Palm Beach County

**Greg Roe** | Vice President, Administration
The Arc Nature Coast

**Bobbie Lake** | Secretary
The Arc North Florida

**Dick Bradley** | Treasurer
The Arc of Alachua County

**John DiRienzo** | Vice President, Advocacy
The Arc Nature Coast

**Dr. Julia McNabb** | FCE President
The Arc of the Emerald Coast

**Derrick Snead** | Member At Large
The Arc Big Bend

**Rhonda Beckman** | Board Member
Ridge Area Arc

**Jeannie Betts** | Board Member
The Arc of Washington-Holmes Counties, Inc.

**Charles Bradley** | Board Member
The Arc Indian River County

**Roger Bradley** | Board Member
LARC, Inc.

**Missy Rogers** | Board Member
The Arc Gateway

**John DiRienzo** | Board Member
The Arc Nature Coast

**Jeff Egelston** | Board Member
The Arc St. Lucie County

**Frances Henderson** | Board Member
Jackson County ARC

**Kathy Jackson** | Board Member
The Arc of the St. Johns

**David James** | Board Member
The Arc of Volusia
**Dianna Harrison** | Board Member
Gulf County ARC

**Scot Kannel** | Board Member
The Arc of the Glades

**Beverly Standridge** | Board Member
The Arc North Florida

**Kim Lonas** | Board Member
The Arc of Walton County, Inc.

**Kimberly McCarten** | Board Member
The Arc of Palm Beach County

**Dr. Julia McNabb** | Board Member
The Arc of the Emerald Coast

**Tim Ressler** | Board Member
The Arc Big Bend

**Sherry Ruszkowski** | Board Member
The Arc of Bradford County

**Sheldon Hershman** | Board Member
The Arc Tampa Bay

**Doug Sloan** | Board Member
The Arc of Charlotte County

**Mark Swain** | Board Member
The Arc Sunrise of Central Florida

**Paul Sweeney** | Board Member
The Arc of South Florida

**Betty Walker** | Board Member
The Arc of Levy County

**Theodora Wenstrom** | Board Member
The Arc Flagler County

**Robin Westberry** | Board Member
Arc DeSoto, Inc.

**Jim Whittaker** | Board Member
The Arc Jacksonville & The Arc of Putnam County

**Bobbi Wigand** | Board Member
Victory Living Programs

**Dr. Bill Williams** | Board Member
The Arc of Alachua County