

The mission of the St. Louis Arc is to empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to lead better lives by providing a lifetime of high-quality services, family support and advocacy.



Arc Musicians and Artists Take the Stage

It's said that music is a universal language, connecting people of all ages, cultures, backgrounds and abilities more than any other form of communication.

For Arc's musicians and artists, opportunities to enjoy and perform music are empowering, enabling people to express emotions, build confidence, and engage with other performers and the audience. On Wednesday, April 24, more than two dozen adults took the stage for the 15th annual Creative Music Making concert at Maryville University.

Launched in 2009, Creative Music Making is a collaboration of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Maryville University's music therapy program, and St. Louis Arc. "Each year, these world-class musicians and music therapy students join with Arc

participants to spend several days learning about music, practicing music, creating music, and creating this fabulous shared experience," said Sharon Spurlock, Sr. Director of Family Support and Advocacy. Symphony musicians share their talent to enrich people's lives and the community, and music therapy students gain hands-on experience in their future profession.

"Each participant had the chance to be highlighted," said Sarah Ballance, program coordinator. In addition, the evening featured displays of visual art created by participants of St. Louis Arc's Artist in You program.

"I think the Arts level the playing field for many people who think and communicate differently," said Spurlock. "Our performers are filled with energy and joy when they take

the stage, and they are so proud for their family and friends to cheer them on from the audience."

Audience members included Laurie Chod, whose daughter Stacey has enjoyed Arc's music programs for many years. "I was very impressed with how well the staff made anyone of any ability feel included," she said. "They put a tambourine in Stacey's hand and helped her shake it. She was engaged the entire time with a big smile on her face."

“The beauty of music really is that anyone can enjoy it and participate,” Chod said. “It’s one of those all-inclusive activities.”

Mark's Message



Mark A. Keeley
President & CEO

As we approach the Arc's 75th anniversary in 2025, we reflect on the many great leaders who have contributed to the growth of our agency along the way. Regrettably, we recently bid farewell to two exceptional friends who left an indelible mark on the agency: **Curt Engler** and **Fred Jaeckle**.

Curt served on the Arc board from the late 1970s until 1989, including as board chair from 1984-85. His tenure saw incredible growth for the agency, especially in the area of residential development. Fred was a tremendous asset to the Arc for the past two decades, leading the way for our facilities projects, including the Arc Family Center and Maplewood site.

All of us at the Arc mourn the loss of these two great leaders and hold with gratitude their efforts to further our mission and improve the lives of the individuals and families we support.

All my best,

Mark



Board News

NEW BOARD CHAIR SHERRY WARD

The Arc elected Sherry Ward as our Board Chair for 2024-25. Although Sherry joined the Arc Board in 2020, she has been involved with the Human Resources Committee since 2010. As HR Chair for the past four years, Sherry helped implement strategies that improved the quality of job candidates, reduced turnover, and promoted a positive work culture.

Sherry is the Senior Vice President of Total Rewards for Corewell Health. Her past experience included leadership roles with SSM, BJC, Maritz, Brown Shoe Company, and Towers Perrin.

See page 8 for a complete list of the Board of Directors



NEW MEMBERS

TIM KRICK

Tim Krick serves as Vice President, Controller, at Spire, a position he's held for the past decade. Prior to joining Spire, he spent 14 years at Sigma-Aldrich in a variety of finance and accounting positions. Tim holds a B.S. in Accountancy from the University of Missouri-Columbia. While Tim is new to the Board, he has served on our Finance Committee since 2019.



JENNIFER ELIAS

Jennifer Elias brings an extensive background in Human Resources to the St. Louis Arc Board. She currently serves as Chief Talent Officer for Truck Centers, Inc., with prior experience including roles with Centene, BJC and Maritz. Jennifer, who joined the Arc's HR Committee in 2021, received her M.A. in Management/Leadership and HR Development from Webster University and her B.S. in Business Administration from Central Missouri State.



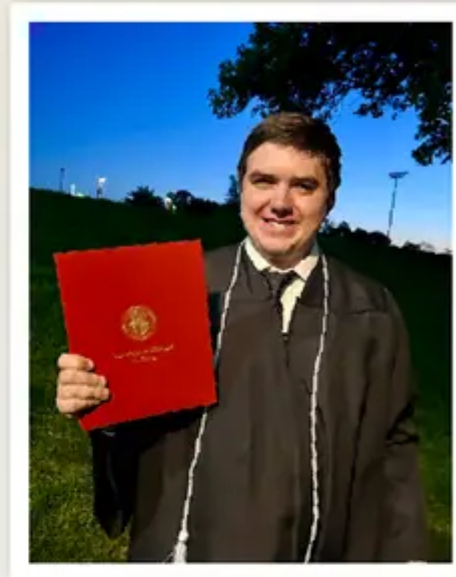
MATT DIEHR

Matt Diehr, attorney and partner with Husch Blackwell, LLP, is new to the Arc Board but not new to the St. Louis Arc. His family have been involved with the Arc for decades, and Matt has contributed his talents to the Arc's Program Strategy Committee and Young Friends Group. Matt received his J.D. from Saint Louis University School of Law and his B.A. in Political Economy and Political Science from Tulane University.

A Gateway Achievement for Ryan

Believe it or not, Ryan Hasty was considered “shy” when he started with the Arc back in 2018. But through the Arc’s Teens in Motion and Neighborhood Experiences programs, Ryan gained valuable social experience while volunteering at a variety of jobs. Later, he became involved in theatre and the school news crew at Dubourg High School, where his confidence and skills continued to grow.

Known for his love of history, Ryan volunteered at the Ulysses S. Grant National Historical Site until last summer when he got a new paid job as a Tour Guide at the St. Louis Gateway Arch. He’s not shy anymore! Four days a week you will find Ryan helping visitors in and out of the trams, pointing out landmarks at the top of the Arch, or his favorite task – introducing the “Monument to the Dream” movie. A recent graduate of UMSL’s Succeed program, Ryan is currently working on getting his driver’s license and will be moving into a house with two roommates in the fall. **Congratulations to Ryan on all of these incredible milestones!**



Reunions by Jacob



Jacob, center, at the reunion

Jacob Martine has a long history of participating in community activities, including many programs of St. Louis Arc. While working with Arc’s Family Navigators, Jacob identified a goal of reconnecting with childhood friends who, like him, had received services from the Belle Center in the early 2000s.

Staying in touch sounded like a great idea to Arc’s Family Navigators, who supported Jacob to present his idea to Kate Hannon, Senior Director of Belle Children’s Services at St. Louis Arc. Kate and Jacob joined with Lisa Liss, a former Belle Center parent and advocate, to plan a fabulous reunion party for Belle Center alumni and their families. More than 40 people attended the event earlier this year, and both Jacob and Kate hope to continue building alumni connections like these. **Great idea, Jacob!**

Calvin’s Adventures

For years, Calvin Douglas expressed a desire to travel to the places he saw on TV. With a lot of personal persistence and consistent advocacy from his Arc team, Calvin has traveled to seven states including New York and Hawaii. (And yes, that’s him petting a dolphin!)

Calvin receives support from St. Louis Arc’s Residential program and also participates in Arc’s cooking and art classes. As a top performing employee of Valley Industries, Calvin pays for all of his travel himself—with no grants or scholarships. “The confidence traveling has given Calvin encourages him to explore and ask for more of what he really wants in his life,” says Michele Roedder, a Residential Support Manager who has been advocating with Calvin for the past 14 years. Calvin is now working on obtaining his passport and has his sights set on Ireland. **Congratulations, Calvin, on making your dreams come true!**





Self-Advocates Lead at Annual Legislative Day

Several St. Louis Arc self-advocates participated in Disability Rights Legislative Day at the Missouri State Capitol building in Jefferson City, on March 13, where they joined Governor Parson for a photo. The statewide advocacy event featured a rally and visits with legislators.

Four St. Louis Arc self-advocates assumed important roles to make the day a success. Michkeal Cross, St. Louis Arc board member, served as “emcee” for the entire event. Katie Johnson shared her own self-advocacy story with a rally crowd of roughly 700 people. Adeline Liss and Jessica Morris were selected to be members of the “DRLD Access Team,” a group of self-advocates who supported others in navigating the rally and participating in legislator visits. Family Supports staff and interns supported participants by assisting them in applying for these leadership opportunities, preparing them for the rally and for their roles, and setting up visits with their legislators. **Great work by all!**

10-Year Recognition for Jason

One way Arc’s Community Engagement program connects people with their community is through meaningful volunteer opportunities. In May, the Missouri Botanical Garden recognized Arc participant Jason Moore for providing ten years of outstanding volunteer service to the Garden. Tiffany Follen, Production Supervisor-Horticulture at Missouri Botanical Garden presented Jason with a certificate and pin. “The relationship with the Botanical Garden has always been a positive experience for everyone,” said Dana Howard, Assistant Director of Day Services. **Congratulations, Jason, for work well done!**



Moti Meets with Metro and Makes a Difference



Moti Savi, a participant in St. Louis Arc’s CONNECT program, attended a Bi-State Development/Metro’s ADA Community Open House in April, but he felt disappointed and confused after leaving the meeting. He let Emma Burroughs, Arc Coordinator of Community Living, know he did not feel engaged by the meeting and that he had a difficult time speaking up for himself. Emma suggested Moti make a voicemail of his feedback, and then she supported him to pass this along to the Metro ADA Team via email. The following week, Metro’s ADA Coordinator called Moti directly for his feedback and discussed with him how Metro might make it easier for people to participate in the meetings. Moti reported he was proud he spoke up with his feedback and, thanks to St. Louis Arc, he felt empowered to do so.

Because of his feedback, and with help from the Metro ADA Coordinator, Moti may be one of the first community members eligible for enrollment in Metro’s re-implemented pre-booking service, enabling him to access a predictable, recurring scheduled ride to and from work. **Thanks for speaking up, Moti!**

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



MOD Pizza is known for being a leader in empowering people with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to thrive in the workplace. MOD currently employs over 300 people with I/DD company-wide, including seven locally who receive support through the St. Louis Arc.

Justin Emch has been a crew member at MOD Pizza for the past six years. His journey at MOD began with tasks such as dishwashing, assembling boxes, and cleaning tables. With encouragement from MOD staff and guidance from his Arc Employment Specialist Kevin, Justin developed new skills including working on the pizza line and handling transactions. He recently achieved a significant milestone by passing his All-Star test with an impressive score of 89%. This not only qualifies him to train his coworkers, but also earned him a well-deserved raise.

“We applaud MOD Pizza for creating a culture of opportunity for people with disabilities,” said Tom Hutson, Arc Assistant Director of Employment Services. “Their commitment to promoting an inclusive workplace serves as an example for others in the restaurant and retail industry.”

Arc Athletes Compete in First Triathlon

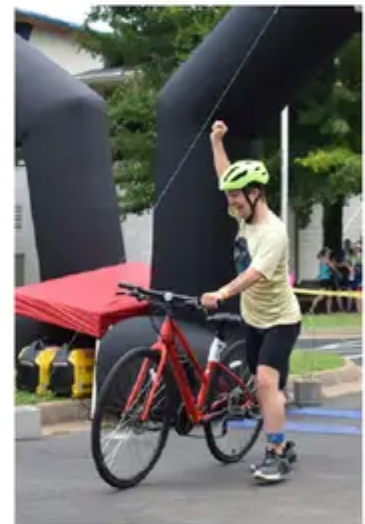
Competing in a triathlon offers challenges unlike many other sports. Whether swimming, cycling or running, it means pushing limits.

On Sunday, July 21, five teams of athletes challenged themselves by participating in the Ballwin Triathlon at the North Pointe Aquatic Center. Hosted by MSE Racing and the City of Ballwin, the event included a 300-yard pool swim, a 9-mile bike ride, and 3.4 mile run.

Competing under the team name “Remove the Limits,” each inclusive relay team was made up of 3-4 community and St. Louis Arc athletes who participated together in the events. Six training meetings were held prior to the triathlon for team members to become familiar with each other and the race format.

Remove the Limits teams placed first and second in the Sprint relay categories, and all the teams and athletes took part in fun race activities. “MSE Racing, their staff and volunteers, and all the spectators were incredibly supportive of our teams and cheering along with us,” said Paige Hawes, Leisure Services coordinator. “The amount of support for the dedication shown by both the Arc athletes and the community athletes was just phenomenal.”

Former St. Louis Arc board member Rich Elias brought the Remove the Limits Triathlon concept to the Arc and was instrumental in securing the resources to make it come to fruition. **Thank you, Rich!**



Staff Spotlight



GWEN HAMER

Gwen Hamer is the recipient of the 2024 Missouri's Direct Support Professional of the Year Award from ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources). Gwen, a parent educator with the Arc's Parents Learning Together program, teaches parents who have disabilities to raise their children in healthy, safe environments. She has supported more than 100 families and 200 children during her 32 years with the Arc. Congratulations Gwen!

LAURIE GATERMAN

Laurie Gaterman, Career Consultant with Employment Services, received the Eastern MO Chapter Missouri Rehabilitation Association's 2024 President's Award earlier this year. Laurie's passion and motivation for providing the highest quality supports are widely recognized. A community partner wrote "Laurie gets successful results on the most difficult cases. She never gives up and thinks of ideas and solutions many others miss. She's the best!"



JEFF LANDGRAF

Jeff Landgraf, Community Support Specialist with the Arc's Day Programs, was awarded the Direct Support Professional Award from the Gateway Coalition. Jeff's coworkers share that Jeff is often the first person to volunteer to float to assist another team during staff shortages or to learn a new skill from other departments. Jeff exemplifies the St. Louis Arc's Core Values of Empowerment, Respect, and Collaboration.

TOM HUTSON

Tom Hutson, Assistant Director of Employment Services, was awarded Missouri Rehabilitation Association's (MRA) 2024 Impact Award. This award is MRA's most prestigious award recognizing an exemplary Missouri Leader who has had a profound impact on changing the lives and championing the rights of people with disabilities. As part of the nomination for Tom, a community partner wrote "Tom creates opportunities for individuals to be able to demonstrate their best selves. Tom is patient and provides guidance and training to his staff and always interacts with participants, their families, employers, and other professionals in a professional, compassionate, and empathetic manner."



MEGAN FAVAZZA

Megan Favazza has been promoted to Vice President of Adult Day and Employment Services, overseeing the Arc’s Adult Day, Behavioral Supports, and Supported Employment programs. Megan joined the Arc in 2004 as a direct support professional within the Community Engagement (CE) program before being promoted to coordinator and then director. Megan serves as the chair of the Day Services Committee for Starling, a trade association for community providers, and is recognized on the state level as a tremendous leader and advocate. Megan holds a bachelor’s degree from New York University in community-based theatre with master’s classes in special education from Hunter University.



KATHARINE RUG

Katharine (Kate) Rug is our new Vice President of Residential and Medical Services, effective February, 2024. Kate started at the St. Louis Arc in 2015 as an employment specialist in the Employment Services department. In 2018, she accepted the Director of Nutrition Services and Project Management role, launching the St. Louis Arc’s Nutrition Center. Kate oversaw all nutritional programming and the electronic health record system in her most recent role. Kate holds a Master of Science in Medical Dietetics from St. Louis University and a Bachelor of Arts in Neuroscience and Psychology from Knox College. She is the Chair-Elect on the Board of Directors at Behavioral Health Nutrition Practice Group within the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.



TIM BRADBURY

Kate succeeded Tim Bradbury, Vice President of Residential and Medical Services, who announced his retirement from the St. Louis Arc effective June 7. Bradbury joined the St. Louis Arc in 1990 as the Assistant Director of Residential Services. Under his leadership, the St. Louis Arc greatly expanded its residential supports throughout the metropolitan area. Bradbury was promoted to Vice President of Comprehensive Services in 2006. We thank Tim for the positive difference he made on the Arc and the hundreds of individuals and families he impacted during his career.



Make a Lasting Difference

Have you ever thought, “I wish there was a way to support the St. Louis Arc forever?”

There is a way to support the St. Louis Arc forever—by creating a legacy gift through your will or trust. Your gift will go to the Arc Endowment Fund and provide perpetual support to help people with disabilities live better, happier lives.

Want to learn more? Scan the QR code or contact the Arc at (314) 817-2240.





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