

# Achieve

Spring/Summer 2024



**The Arc**  
Bristol County

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**  
**LIVE UNITED.** 



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## From Surviving to Thriving with the Arc

Each April we celebrate World Autism Acceptance, Advocacy, and Appreciation Month. This year's theme is "From Surviving to Thriving." Recently, we hosted autistic self-advocate Andrew Arboe to speak with families and self-advocates. He focused on "Overcoming Barriers and Roadblocks to Achieving Your Goals." He provided concrete examples of how he worked towards conquering challenges. The Autism Service Navigation program started a weekly group activity, outdoor nature walks. Jacob Anderson, the coordinator, reports more people attend each week. We are partnering with Community Autism Resources (CAR) in Taunton to provide upcoming informational webinars and in-person resource discussions. Check our socials or



Andrew Arboe

contact your Family Support Coordinator for more information.

As advocates for progress, we want to highlight the new "Blue Envelope Program" in Massachusetts, which helps drivers with autism safely navigate a traffic stop. Drivers participating in the program are given a blue envelope that provides communication information and tips for the driver on the front of the envelope. Information for the officer is provided on the back of the envelope. Inside the envelope a driver should place a copy of their license and registration. If you are interested in accessing a free blue envelope, please contact your Family Support Coordinator. Learn more about the program at [mass.gov](http://mass.gov).



*Achieve with us.*

## Welcome



Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you living your best, most authentic and inspired lives and that you are excited by the prospect of warm weather and the freedom to enjoy the days of summer. We all need time to recharge and relax, as doing so helps us to be better equipped to handle the challenges we all face from time to time. May was Mental Health Awareness Month but it truly is something we all need to be conscious of year round.

This year, at The Arc, has been extremely productive. If you weren't aware, in late March, we moved our day habilitation site in Middleboro to a new, much larger space in Taunton. This site offers so much and we are excited to welcome in new families needing this service.

On the residential front, in Massachusetts, we are about to open our fifth Acquired Brain Injury home in June and are building another slated to open in the fall. These beautiful homes allow individuals, needing specialized care, a warm and welcoming family-style space. We also purchased a "Turning 22" home, to meet the increasing demands for safe and affordable housing for individuals who have recently transitioned to adult services. This staff supported home offers adults a place to reside, explore and live their best lives within the community. In Rhode Island, with the help of Rhode Island Housing, we acquired a home in North Smithfield that we hope will ultimately serve the needs of five individuals. We are very excited to explore what North Smithfield has to offer.

We are also excited by the prospect of offering Remote Supports and Assistive Technology to more of the people we serve. This service will

allow independent living for those wanting it and peace of mind for the people who love them. Read about the successful launch and Joe's story below.

As you might imagine, with such growth comes a need for new staff and we are actively hiring. You are our greatest source of referrals. Please share the careers page on our website with your friends.

Now if that isn't enough, after our hugely successful Winter Celebration, we are in the planning phase for our End of Summer Gathering in August, our 41st Annual Golf Tournament to be held Monday, September 23rd in New Bedford and the next Arc Strong Walk / Run event at the end of October. We'd love to see you soon at one or all of these events!

Warm Regards,

  
Michael Andrade  
President & CEO

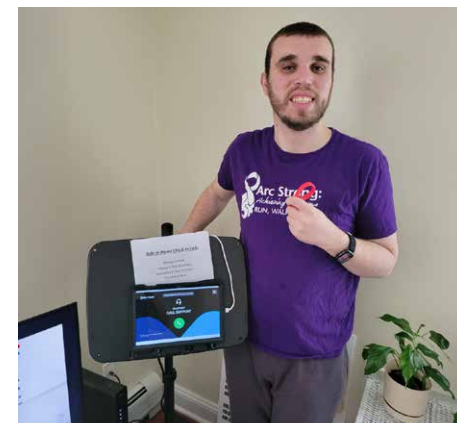
## New Opportunities for Independent Living By Katie Baril

The Arc of Bristol County has partnered with SafeinHome to provide a new innovative service model called "Remote Monitoring and Supports." This model offers adults living in the community a combination of individualized person-centered support with the advantages of assistive technology. Remote Monitoring and Support allow individuals 24/7 access to highly trained and knowledgeable staff through electronic devices, such as live video calls with SafeinHome staff through provided tablets. This new service model has proven successful in allowing individuals the confidence and "peace of mind" to safely live in the setting of their choice.

Meet Joe, who received an independent housing voucher to apply to the local community. Having never lived alone, Joe sought additional support to assist him with the transition.

Joe and The Arc of Bristol County began working with SafeinHome in 2023. SafeinHome completed a thorough evaluation and developed a care plan to meet Joe's individualized needs. Joe now resides in his apartment with personalized support from SafeinHome's check-ins and on-demand support schedule. The goal of Remote Monitoring and Supports is empowering people to live independently in their own

homes & communities to make the dream of independence real. For more information on this innovative movement, please call The Arc of Bristol County.



## Unlocking Opportunities: Empowering DJs with Autism

The Massachusetts Social Navigation program, formerly RecConnect, encourages social skill development, among other skills. Through this program, staff work with adults living with disabilities to integrate safely into the community. Johnathon and Kyle are twin brothers with autism and are highly active in the Social Navigation program. John and Kyle often attend events together and are accompanied by their friend, Rob. This trio is often found listening to music and creating new playlists. Why are they making playlists?

According to John and Kyle's mom, Jackie, they have always enjoyed listening to music, thanks to an early childhood program teacher. This love for music blossomed when they attended events with a DJ, as they would run to talk with the DJs and get their business cards at the end of the event. One DJ in particular, DJ Eddie Cruz of Boston, has deejayed at several Special Olympics events over the years, and the boys grew to know him as a mentor. In 2011, John and Kyle assisted DJ Cruz with a spring fling event. DJ Cruz donated his equipment to the boys to help them get their own business started.

Initially deejaying family cookouts, John and Kyle's professional journey began. Their aunt supported them by hosting a condo cookout and assisting in creating a songbook. Remarkably, they are non-readers, but with friend Rob's help, they expanded deejaying. Leveraging technology, they use voice-to-search for song lyrics and requests on their phones.

It would be remiss not to mention Jackie, Kyle and John's mother, and the key role she plays in their business. She ensures that the equipment is transported to every event and has also provided rides for many of John and Kyle's friends. A

few years ago, with the help of their mother, they purchased their own equipment, including speakers and stands, a table, and a mixer. This passion has grown into a business for the brothers.

In the last year, John and Kyle deejayed five events for The Arc of Bristol County proAbility, including a Memorial Day Cookout for Social Navigation, the Family Support Department Halloween event, Friendsgiving for Social Navigation, Valentine's Day for Social Navigation, and most recently the agency-wide Winter Celebration.

John and Kyle have also deejayed for The League School over the last couple of years, including their prom and their 5K Walk/Run for Autism in 2023. They were honored with a Director's Award on their Night of Champions in 2023. Now they

are donating their former deejay equipment from DJ Eddie Cruz back to The League School to encourage others to pursue their passions!

John and Kyle, apart from excelling in music and deejaying, are avid local sports enthusiasts, particularly passionate about teams like the Boston Celtics, New England Revolution, Boston Red Sox, and Providence Bruins. Social Navigation Coordinator Danielle Martin praises their selflessness and sociability, contributing to their DJ business's success.



**The Arc**  
Bristol County  
**proAbility**

# You're invited!

Join our End-of-Summer Celebration!

**The Overlook at Meehan**  
Gov. Notte Park, 2 Gov Notte Pkwy Building # 3,  
North Providence, RI 02904

**Tuesday August 20, 2024**  
11:00 AM-4:00 PM

To register without using the QR code, please call  
508-226-1445.

**RSVP NOW >**



## New ABI Home Opening in Dighton

Meeting the ever-growing needs of the residential programs is at the top of our annual goals. In our residential programs, we have invested in providing placement for people who have acquired brain injuries (ABI). People living with ABIs need specialized and individualized care, often requiring significant assistance with their activities of daily living. These homes serve as a way of community reintegration after long-term nursing home stays.

The Arc of Bristol County has a new home opening in Dighton, in early June with five new individuals approved to live there. With this opening we will have additional employment opportunities.



*Pictured from left to right are Rui, Kim, Chris, Chrissy, and Harold.*



## 2024 Winter Celebration

In February, we held our first large, in-person gathering for The Arc of Bristol County proAbility since 2019. We were honored to have dinner and celebrate with over three hundred people we support, their families, our staff, as well as several members of the Board of Directors.

Johnathon, Rob, and Kyle were the DJs for this event. Jon and Kyle are twin brothers living with autism and began their deejay career in their early years, having had a lifelong significant interest in music. They provided excellent entertainment- the dance floor was packed with smiling faces moving along to all the great songs.

We would like to express our gratitude to our sponsors who included the Attleboro Lodge of Elks, Attleboro Elk's Bingo Committee, Young's

Caterers, and the Filibuster Club. We also thank the Winter Celebration Committee, comprised of over ten full-time employees across the agency, for their extra hours of work and donations to the event. We appreciate and would like to recognize the area businesses that donated raffle items to the event: Navigant Credit Union, Attleboro Arts Museum, Capron Park Zoo, New England Tire, AJ's Family Pizza, Singapore Chinese Restaurant, Burgundian Restaurant, Stop & Shop, Attleboro Junior Girl Scout Troop #456, Willow Tree Poultry Farm, Attleboro House of Pizza, Shaw's, Shell Gas, Dunkin at 217 So. Main Street in Attleboro, and The Acorn Family.

Once again, we would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all our sponsors, donors, and supporters for helping us assemble a fantastic event!



## The Arc of Bristol County's DEI Opportunity

Dr. Roosevelt Thomas, a cultural diversity pioneer, once said, "Creating and managing a diverse workforce is a process, not a destination." Thanks to a grant from the SouthCoast Community Foundation, The Arc of Bristol County proAbility staff is embarking on the next phase of their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) journey. A committee of nine staff members from different departments within The Arc- led by Attleboro resident, diversity coaching consultant, and former pastor- Cheryl Harris- met for their initial meeting on March 1st.

The initial meeting took place over Zoom to allow people from different areas of the organization to meet.

The discussion included being asked a couple of questions and having meaningful dialogue around diversity. This process permitted coworkers to discuss, reflect, and learn more about one another by finding mutual similarities and comparing differences.

Harris provided a diversity wheel graphic depicting different demographic characteristics and how a person can control some factors, like religion, education, and military experience. In contrast, others, such as race, age, and physical abilities, cannot be controlled. This wheel provided an excellent foundation for thought and future discussions. The Arc of Bristol County staff is thrilled to

continue this path toward embracing all differences.

As an organization devoted to supporting people from diverse backgrounds with intellectual and developmental disabilities, having a more diverse workforce is paramount. A well-blended workforce provides an outstanding wealth of ideas, philosophies, and viewpoints, leading to a greater understanding and acceptance of people from all races and ethnicities. The Arc of Bristol County will continue meeting with Cheryl Harris in module-like training, while the recruiters will learn to recruit and market to more members from BIPOC communities.

## Expanding Opportunities with our New Day Hab

Each year, we commemorate the month of March as Developmental Disability Awareness Month. This year, the theme is Celebrating a World of Opportunities. At The Arc of Bristol County, we proudly acknowledge the opportunities we embrace for the families and people we serve. In the last year, we have accomplished several new goals. One of those includes adding space to help address the increasing needs of Day Habilitation services throughout the state.

We moved our Day Habilitation location from Middleborough to Taunton in late March. Based in the Myles Standish Industrial Park, the site provides an opportunity for additional space for supports. New in this location is a shared space for everyone to sit and enjoy lunch together and a revamped sensory room. The space also holds a fitness room and an arts and crafts room.

Due to the abundance of space in their new location, many people served at the Day Hab explained they love going from room to room to participate in and enjoy

the activities. The sensory room is a well-loved and utilized space by each person, and the fitness room is a close second. Craig Simmons, Director of Community Living, and Alicia Snowman, Assistant Director of Adult Day Services, agreed that the best part of the new space is that everyone can move around the building and experience different activities. With the people in attendance separated into three groups, the lunchroom provides a common meeting space where they can interact.

The new space boasts an additional opportunity for more than 50 people to access our supports.

However, we will need adequate staffing for new people, and we are diligently working towards that. We are working towards hiring in both our Attleboro and Taunton locations. We are also accepting referrals for both locations.



*Sensory Room*



*Fitness Room*



*Central eating location*

## ArcStrong: Walk, Run, & Roll with the 25th Annual Flutie 5K

We are honored to be a Charity Partner of the 25th Annual Flutie 5K for Autism to raise funds for The Arc of Bristol County dba proAbility. As an official Charity Partner of the Flutie Foundation, 100% of our funds raised will be used to support our programs including, but not limited to: assisted language devices not covered by insurance, allowing non-verbal individuals greater access to all aspects of their daily life, adaptive equipment and facilities improvements that will help people build valuable life skills, such as cooking, cleaning and other fine motor skills, and offsetting of costs associated with activities and social recreation opportunities. Last year we had several runners showing support for us in Natick, but this year we are hoping to have an even greater turnout. Please consider joining us! Visit <https://rb.gy/qnuc4x> to join us at the 5K in Natick, or to support our efforts in fundraising.

**SAVE THE DATE**

Arc Strong: Achieving Dreams RUN, WALK & ROLL

**FLUTIE 5K FOR AUTISM**  
DOUGIE'S EPIC ADVENTURE

**Sunday, Oct. 27, 2024**

Leonard Morse Hospital Race starts at 10 AM  
67 UNION ST, NATICK, MA 01760

- 5K Run or Roll, 1/2 5K Walk or Roll
- Kids Fun Run
- Chirichella Adaptive Division

Please visit our website for more information on supporting and/or joining The Arc of Bristol County proAbility Team!

Board Member, William Taksar, Doug Flutie, and Michael Andrade, CEO

## Driven by Passion for Autism

The 3rd Annual Jon's Ride for Autism was held on a chilly Sunday in early May. Despite the cool and cloudy weather, we had an incredible turnout that raised \$8,700 to support The Arc of Bristol County dba proAbility. The ride began at Sheldon's Harley Davidson in Auburn led by a police escort, through the backroads and hills of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and ended at Valley Pub in Whitinsville, MA.

At the conclusion of this year's ride, the Massachusetts State Police spoke regarding the new Blue Envelope Program. The Massachusetts State Police in conjunction with the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, the Massachusetts State Police, Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts and The Arc of Massachusetts created a

'blue envelope' program where participating drivers with autism have an envelope with a copy of their driver's license, registration, and insurance inside, and special instructions to assist with communication with the officers.

Without the incredible support of the crew at Sheldon's and the team at Valley Pub this annual run would not be possible. The run is led and organized by Nick Procopio, a fitter at Sheldon's, with the support of his entire family- Chuck, Donna, and his brother Jon. We are grateful for the support of the Worcester Harley Davidson Owner's Group, the teams at Valley Pub and Sheldon's for the success of the run. We appreciate the Procopio family for selecting us as the recipient for the funds raised from this year's run.



## Embracing Inclusive Employment Opportunities

The employment department at The Arc of Bristol County dba proAbility, has expanded within the last two years. From a growing team of three employment coaches to a crew of seven spending time with each employment candidate, and a director overseeing the employment department in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, the success stories of those we support encourage others to seek inclusive employment.

Jon began his maintenance job at McDonald's in early 2024, bringing work experience from RES Bistro. Living nearby, he cleans the bathrooms, grounds, parking lot, drive-through, and dining room, washes windows, and removes trash. One of the employment support professionals (ESP), Ashley, reports that the job has boosted Jon's confidence and independence. While Jon enjoys the financial benefits, he values his relationships with coworkers the most.

James started working at the Roger Williams Park Zoo Gift Shop as a cashier in March of 2024. He has previous experience at CVS, Stop & Shop, and Marshalls. Cory, an ESP, noted that James needs minimal assistance due to his extensive experience. James enjoys marketing the toys, interacting with customers, and covering coworkers' breaks. James also likes the ability to pick up extra shifts, and his supervisor, Marsala, appreciates his reliability with the coverage. According to the Job Accommodation Network, hiring people with disabilities boosts employee retention and productivity within the workplace.

Another face and personality that has brought so much joy to his workplace is Muhamet. Muhamet began interning at Gingersnaps, a local Lincoln, Rhode Island bakery, in the spring of 2023. As an intern, he had a job coach from his high school program at Blackstone Valley Prep. Gingersnaps hired him in the fall of 2023 when he transitioned from high school but needed a job coach.

proAbility was the answer to their need. Gingersnaps' owner and Pastry chef, Kayla, notes that customers and staff alike fell in love with Muhamet, his energy, his smile, and his passion for singing along to Michael Jackson music. Muhamet's current duties include stamping and folding boxes, stamping cookie bags, and portioning bakery necessities. Kayla and Muhamet's ESP, Cory, are working with him to transition him to the front of the bakery, where he will take walk-in orders and act as a cashier.

Last August, we shared how Kyle, Ryan, Rachel, and Damaris had secured volunteer and employment opportunities. Kyle still volunteers weekly at the Village at Waterman Lake and has added walking dogs from a local animal shelter, the Hotel for Homeless Dogs in Cumberland. Rachel and Damaris continue excelling at 401 Nourish in Roger Williams Park Zoo's Food Court. With coworker turnover, they continue to work diligently in their duties. Ryan is thriving at Stop & Shop and was chosen as the Employee of the Month in January. He was thrilled to be acknowledged with this honor.

Again, all these stories continue to inspire others we support to seek inclusive employment in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We appreciate the businesses that have embraced working with us to create inclusive workplaces and communities!



**Administration Office**

16 Hillside Ave  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (508) 226-1476  
Toll Free: (888) 343-3301  
Web: www.arcnbc.org

**Family Supports**

140 Park Street, 3rd Floor  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (508) 226-1476

**Attleboro Day Supports**

141 Park Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (508) 226-1476

**proAbility**

25 Thurber Blvd.  
Smithfield, RI 02917  
Tel: (401) 233-1634 • Fax: (401) 233-1674

**Taunton Day Habilitation Services**

101 Industrial Park Road, First Floor  
Taunton, MA 02708  
Tel: 508-946-2121 • Fax: 508-946-2195

**The Arc of Greater Fall River**

99 South Main Street, Ste 310  
Fall River, MA 02721  
Tel: (508) 679-0001 • Fax: (508) 679-9375

**The Arc of Greater New Bedford**

412 B County Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Tel: (508) 996-8551 • Fax: (508) 996-8553



*Achieve with us.*

# save the date

**41st Annual  
STATE  
REPRESENTATIVES  
CUP**



**GOLF  
TOURNAMENT**



*to benefit Educational Advocacy*



**The Arc™**

*Greater New Bedford  
a division of The Arc of Bristol County*

**Monday, September 23, 2024**

**11-12:15pm Registration & Box Lunch**

**12:30pm Shotgun**

**Country Club of New Bedford**

**North Dartmouth, MA**

*Please call Janice at 1-888-343-3301 x3108 for more information. Sponsorship opportunities available.*