

Advocacy Spotlight

Joan Flesher has a long history of leadership in our local community. She has served on the Interagency Coordinating Council, spent 3 years as a Parent to Parent Coordinator, worked 19 years as a Family Resource Coordinator with Infant Toddler Snohomish County Early Intervention Program, and has been an Arc of Snohomish County board member for 20 years. Joan remains actively involved with The Arc and is also connected with Village Community Services, the Arlington Lion's Club, and her church. I recently had the opportunity to chat with Joan and gather some insight into what she feels it means to be a leader.



Joan Flesher

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Leadership Training

What does the term leadership mean to you?

To me, leadership means to do something and be a good example for others. I think you can be a leader in different ways and your role as a leader can change throughout your life.

How did you first become a leader?

It started 38 years ago when my oldest son, who was about 2 at the time, was diagnosed with autism. This was a time before anyone knew much about autism, unlike now. Becoming a leader started with a willingness as a parent to step up.

What would you recommend to someone who is interested in becoming a leader but doesn't know where to begin?

Start with your community and get involved. Go to activities, connect with a special interest group like Mother's Network or Father's Network, attend trainings, call your legislators, join a board. It doesn't matter if you have a lot of time, a little bit of time, or even what life stage you are in. What matters is that you find something that works for you. It might be something small, like educating yourself about important issues, but it could lead to something bigger, like serving on a committee. And before you know it, you could find yourself in the role of a leader.

What advice would you like to share with individuals who don't think they are capable of becoming a leader?

Leadership seems scary, but just try it. See if you can branch out of your comfort zone. You can start with small steps, then bigger steps. Becoming a leader is a gradual process, it doesn't just happen overnight. You learn as you go. Most people will understand if you make a mistake. You just need a willingness to try.

"Somewhere inside all of us is the power to change the world."

-Roald Dahl

The Arc is very excited to welcome two new staff members to the team.

Autumn Chancellor, *Parent Family Coalition Coordinator* and Nicholas Wright, *Parent to Parent Coordinator*.

I am thrilled to join the team at the Arc of Snohomish County. I have a background in Social Services which has proved valuable in navigating services and supports in my personal and professional life.

I am the mom of two children. My youngest was diagnosed with an I/DD at the age of three. My son is full of spunk and often sports a mischievous grin. He is a handful and makes me laugh every day. My daughter is my son's greatest teacher and advocate. She is always full of ideas and never hesitates to voice her opinion.



Autumn Chancellor
Parent Family Coalition Coordinator

My family and I first became involved with The Arc three years ago. We started with an event at M-Bar-C Ranch and gradually became more involved as we began attending additional events, guest speaker nights, and workshops. It didn't take long before I knew that I wanted to become part of the team at The Arc.

I truly felt that I landed my dream job when I was offered a position at The Arc. As a Parent Family Coalition Coordinator, I have the opportunity to help people understand and become actively involved in the legislative process. I am excited to be part of a team that strives to make a positive difference in the lives of others and the community we live in.

The Arc is sad to announce that Megan Edmonds is no longer working with us. Megan brought passion and dedication to her role as a Parent Family Coalition Coordinator and Sibshops Coordinator.

We wish her well in her new role at the County level, where she is continuing to support and advocate for individuals with I/DD and their families.



Nicholas Wright
Parent to Parent Coordinator

I am thrilled to join The Arc team as a Parent to Parent Coordinator. We offer a listening ear, support and guidance to parents with child(ren) with special needs. Through The Arc, it's great to connect with families, share a dad's perspective, and be a part of Fathers Network.

For the past several years, I have spent precious time as a stay at home dad with two young children. When my son was diagnosed with an I/DD, it didn't change the fact that he was the same great lovable guy before and after the diagnosis. The world changed. I remember the "what now" and feeling both overwhelmed and determined to navigate systems, resources, services and IEPs. When we contacted organizations like The

Arc, we realized we didn't have to go it alone. The Arc of Snohomish has been a positive influence on our family and we are grateful that The Arc is accessible in our local community. When my son started full-time kindergarten recently, I found myself with a chance to get back out there. I felt motivated to serve others and their families with relatable challenges and I feel privileged to do so through The Arc.

Advocacy in Action

2018 Legislative Forum Recap

On Thursday, October 18th, about 100 people attended The Arc's 2018 Legislative Forum at the Weyerhaeuser Room at Everett Station. Snohomish County candidates were invited to the Forum to learn about critical issues facing people with I/DD and their families. During the event, a panel of speakers gave a series of presentations while the executive director of The Arc, Shayne Nagel, acted as facilitator. The topics of focus included Early Intervention Services, Transition Services, and Supported Living.

Lana Balan from ChildStrive spoke about the importance of Early Intervention Services. Lana was followed by parent Roma Gray. Roma's daughter, Paige, received early intervention services from Child Strive. Not only was Paige able to receive physical, occupational, and speech therapy in the home, but the staff at Child Strive supported the whole family as a unit. Roma felt this was particularly important because, "When just one child has a developmental challenge, everyone in the home is affected."

Deb Gall, Transition Coordinator for Snohomish County Developmental Disabilities, spoke about the role of Transition Services. Zack and Elizabeth Griffin, a transition student and parent, respectively, shared their experiences. With the help of Transition Services, Zack was able to acquire a position stocking Dave's Killer Bread at a Costco store. Zack's position has increased his confidence and expanded his abilities. Zack is now training for a second job that will allow him to become even more involved in the community.



***Candidate Debra Blodgett,
Elizabeth, Zack and Jay Griffin***

Soundview Supported Living employees Kim Velasco and Leah Duncan spoke about the need to fund Supported Living. Leah shared that supported living staff experience about a 50% turnover rate due to the lack of a livable wage. Kim pointed out that caregivers are among the lowest paid professionals in the healthcare industry, yet almost everyone will need a caregiver at some point in their lives. Kathie and Stephanie Davis, a parent and supported living resident, shared their story about the benefits of supported living to improve and create independence.



After the presentations, candidates were given the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves and share their takeaways with the audience. There were a total of 17 legislative candidates in attendance from 6 of the 7 districts in Snohomish County.

The evening ended with time for candidates and attendees to mingle. Attendees were strongly encouraged to find candidates from their district and have a conversation about some of the critical issues highlighted during the evening's presentations. All participants are now more prepared for the upcoming legislative session.

Advocacy Days are a great way to learn about the legislative process in person.

Each Advocacy Day begins with an hour briefing at 10:00 in the morning. The briefing includes:

- Special speakers
- Information on current issues
- Tips for success

Participants have several ways to advocate during the day:

- Meeting with legislators or their aides*
- Attending hearings
- Writing and delivering messages to legislators

**Appointments with legislators must be made well in advance. Please contact Autumn Chancellor at Autumn@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x 107 if you need help making your appointments.*

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Advocacy Days

January 16, 2019 – Legislative Briefing/Reception

Our theme this year is “Incredible Advocacy” as we encourage legislators to champion bills/budget items that are incredibly important to people with developmental disabilities. A new “Incredible” button will be distributed each week. Join us at 2 pm at The United Churches for a briefing of the current issues of concern. Go have dinner, then attend the Legislative Reception which will be held in the Columbia Room from 5:30 - 7:30 pm.

January 30th – Family Supports

Incredible families provide the majority of care for people with DD, saving our state an incredible amount of money and helping individuals be participating members of their local communities. Whether your child is very young, a teen, or an adult, there are services that can benefit them. Respite care is an incredibly critical service, but it’s often difficult to find a provider. Parent to Parent, local chapters of The Arc and Parent Coalitions will share their educational campaign “Vote DD!”. We encourage parents to come to this meeting and bring your incredible children with you.

February 6th – Employment

Having a job means that individuals with DD can be incredibly productive citizens, contributing to our economy by paying taxes, while also providing valuable services. Being gainfully employed provides self-esteem and helps individuals work toward being self-supporting. Join some incredible self-advocates, families and employment service providers from Community Employment Alliance (CEA) as we ensure that supports are available to all those who need them. An incredibly important rally will be held at the capital at noon.

February 13th – Self-Advocacy

Incredible self-advocates will lead the way on issues for the 2019 session that help them live in their community as independently as possible and show their pride in being valued members of society. They have three priorities they are pursuing this session: 1) closing state institutions and building community services; 2) having real jobs with real pay (not sub-minimum wages); and 3) providing supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship.

February 20th – Providers

Some incredible self-advocates, supported living providers as well as family members and others join to let legislators know how incredibly important living in the community is and ask them to ensure that providers of these supports are paid a fair living wage. We will meet at United Churches at 10 am, and then we will head over to the capitol steps for a rally with Community Residential Services Association (CRSA).

February 27th – Home Life

Finding affordable, accessible housing in our local communities is incredibly difficult. Some individuals with DD are having to live in our state DD institutions or continue living with their families simply because of a lack of housing. The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance will partner with us to advocate for more funding, particularly in the Housing Trust Fund which has a “DD Set-aside” account and to look at more creative ways to have an impact on this crisis. Help legislators understand the incredible need for community housing for people with DD.

The Arc would love for you to join us in Olympia.

Please let us know if you would like help setting up appointments with your legislators or would like to join The Arc caravan.

For more information contact: Autumn Chancellor
Autumn@arcsno.org
425-258-2459 x107



Briefing held at 10 AM
The United Churches
110 Eleventh Ave SE
Olympia, WA 98501

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Advocacy Days

March 6th — Disability Awareness

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan made a public proclamation that the month of March should be recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month to increase public awareness of the needs and potential of Americans with developmental disabilities. Governor Inslee and our Legislature also recognize the value of children and adults with DD and will present our state's Proclamation during Advocacy Day. Also, join us and help us share our "Just Like Me!" campaign.

March 13th — Lifelong Learning

Learning is a lifelong process. Early Intervention services help babies and toddlers who struggle to meet developmental milestones. Public education has special funding for children with developmental disabilities that need extra supports to learn. Transition from high school to the adult world of working involves coordination from multiple state agencies and funding to help with supported employment or to help individuals with DD attend higher education or technical schools.

March 20th — Budget

Creating a biennial budget is the one thing legislators are required to do during this legislative session. With many new legislators, it is important that you educate yours about the needs of people with DD. This year, about half of our Residential Habilitation Centers (our state's DD institutions) have been found to not be meeting federal requirements for health and safety. The Governor's answer is to pour money into these outdated and dangerous places when the funding should go to community supports. Learn what services and supports are proposed for cuts or increases and what you can do to help.

March 27th — Community Supports

This legislative session we have a number of protection issues being raised. Most importantly is building community supports to move people out of institutions and let them live near family and friends in the community. Other issues include providing disability information to the Smart 911 database, supported decision-making, protection from institutionalization due to the incredible lack of sufficient resources in the community, guardianship and more.

April 3rd — Autism

Almost 50 years have passed since the first National Autism Awareness month in April of 1970. With the diagnosis rate of children with autism increasing from 1 in every 2000 children in the 1970's to 1 in every 68 children today, we celebrate not just Awareness, but also Acceptance and Appreciation of the autistic community and those who support them. The Governor and the Legislature recognize the incredible value of autistic individuals to our communities. Join us for an Autism Rally at noon, more details to come!

April 10th — Session End

As the regular session is coming to a close, our incredible legislators are spending most of their time on the House or Senate floor voting on bills. You still have an incredibly important job to do! Many bills never get a chance to be voted on, not because they aren't important, but because there is not enough time to vote on all of them. You can help move your bills up in importance by sending notes in to your legislator while they are on the floor.

We're Here to Help You

You are the expert in telling your story and how it relates to decisions being made by lawmakers.

Impacting government may feel overwhelming but we're here to help you have a voice. It only takes a few simple steps:

Be informed

- Sign up for Action Alerts

Get Connected

- Join The Arc
- Join a parent coalition
- Join a self-advocacy group

Take Action

- Visit The Arc of Washington State's Online Action Center
- Send emails
- Make phone calls
- Attend town hall meetings
- Participate in Advocacy Days
- Visit your legislators in person.

To read this article and other tips on Legislative Advocacy visit *Hot Tips* http://arcwa.org/resources/Hot_Tips_2018.pdf

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Tools & Resources

Legislative Alerts & Updates

Arc of Washington State

<http://capwiz.com/arcwa/mlm/signup/>

Sign up for legislative action alerts related to developmental disability. Receive the information you need, to voice your opinions on bills during the legislative session. Alerts provide you with messages for your legislators that you can use as is, or edit using your own words. Enter your name and address and click! Your message will automatically be sent to all of your legislators.

Toll free Legislative Hotline 1-800-562-6000.

Email or call, action takes less than 5 minutes!

Legislative District and Elected Officials

Washington Legislature

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

Find your legislative district and elected officials.

Hot Tips for Legislative Advocates on Developmental Disabilities

Arc of Washington State

http://arcwa.org/resources/Hot_Tips_2018.pdf

Some of the topics included:

- Tips for meeting with elected officials.
- How to create a short, clear message.
- The bill process—how a bill becomes a law.
- The state budget process.

**At the time of publication, the 2019 Advocacy Days information has not yet been updated in the Hot Tips brochure. Please refer to pages 4-5 of this newsletter for current topics and dates.*

Resource Library

Arc of Washington State

<http://arcwa.org/library/all>

A comprehensive list of documents and websites that support developmental disability issues.

Transportation Resource Guide and Accessible Travel Map

Snohomish County Transportation Coalition

https://everettwa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16175/SNOTRAC-map-brochure_web_complete

There are many ways to travel and a wide variety of payment options. SNOTRAC partners and affiliates offer transportation in Snohomish County and throughout the region. www.gosnotrac.org

Save The Date

Special Needs Trusts, ABLE Act, and Estate Planning

Wednesday, November 28, 11 AM–12:30 PM

The Arc Office 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

Presented by Denise Redinger, Attorney at Law from Redinger Law Offices.

Proper estate planning is essential to preserve Medicaid and SSI benefits, provide protection for a vulnerable individual and protect assets from the State's "payback" rule.

Legislative Kickoff

Monday, January 9 6:30-8 PM

The Arc Office 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

Come meet the Arc's leadership staff and get briefed on the upcoming legislative issues. Learn how you can get involved, whether it's 15 minutes or a larger commitment, you can make a difference! No experience necessary.

RSVP to Autumn Chancellor Autumn@arcsno.org

Guardianship and Special Needs Trusts

Monday, December 10, 7-8:30 PM

The Arc Office 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

Presented by Steven Matyas, Attorney at Law from Jones & Ibrahim, PLLC.

Social Security Benefits Planning

Wednesday, January 16, 11 AM–12:30 PM

The Arc Office 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

Presented by Melinda Bocci, Benefits Planner from Snohomish County Developmental Disabilities.

Transition Fair

Tuesday, March 26, 4-8:30 PM

Cascade High School 801 East Casino Rd, Everett, 98203

Workshops & Resource Tables

Sponsored by the Snohomish County Transition Network and Everett School District

Questions? Contact Melinda at 425-388-7259 ddinfo@snoco.org

www.snohomishcountywa.gov/dd

Community Summit 2019—Enriching Lives

Tuesday, June 11—Thursday, June 13, 2019

Wenatchee Convention Center, Wenatchee, WA

Call for Proposals:

If you are interested in presenting at the Summit download a Proposal application and submit no later than **January 11, 2019** to Ron Bryan at BryanRE@dshs.wa.gov or questions call 360-407-1544. <http://files.constantcontact.com/d142b3ad001/60ee7316-1cfc-419f-ae9c-52c225d0d504.pdf>

*The secret of change is to
focus all of your energy
not on fighting the old,
but on building the new.*

-Socrates

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The Arc of Snohomish County encourages individuals and family members to participate on boards and committees, to be the voice for developmental disabilities as decisions are made in our community.

The Arc can provide support, resources and tools to help you be effective and successful.

For information contact:
Jamie Coonts at
Jamie@arcsno.org
425-258-2459 x104.

Boards & Commissions

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Endowment Governing Board

The Developmental Disabilities Endowment Governing Board establishes policy for the Trust Program. The Governor-appointed board is looking for a candidate with a family member with a developmental disability to join the board. For more information and to submit an online application visit <http://ddetf.wa.gov/news/>.

Edmonds Diversity Commission Member

Edmonds residents interested in working on issues, programs and activities associated with the changing demographics of our community and enhancing an environment of mutual respect and understanding are encouraged to apply to fill an open position on the City's Diversity Commission. The purpose of the Edmonds Diversity Commission is to promote an environment that accepts, celebrates, and appreciates diversity within the community. For more information or to apply online visit http://www.edmondswa.gov/images/COE/Press_Release/PDF/2018/Press_Release_-_Diversity_Commission_Open_Position_11-18.pdf.

Open Edmonds positions:

<http://www.edmondswa.gov/boards-commissions-committees-openings.html>

Everett Diversity Advisory Board

The Diversity Advisory Board was established to identify and prioritize issues regarding diversity and inclusion and offer recommendations to the Mayor of the City of Everett. The Diversity Advisory Board meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 4:00 PM. For more information visit www.everettwa.gov/1201/Diversity-Advisory-Board. For an online application visit www.everettwa.gov/FormCenter/Boards-Commissions-25/Boards-and-Commissions-Application-164.

Open Everett Positions:

<https://everettwa.gov/1537/Boards-and-Commissions>

Lynnwood Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission

The DEI Commission provides advice and recommendations on being a safe and welcoming city, strategies for effective public engagement and removal of barriers, and they serve as trusted messengers to the community at large.

Members are appointed to serve three-year terms and must live within Lynnwood's City limits. For more information visit <http://www.lynnwoodwa.gov/Government/Boards--Commissions--and-Committees/Diversity--Equity--and-Inclusion-Commission.htm>.

Lynnwood Police Department Citizen's Academy

This 14 week program helps familiarize the public with common police procedures, activities and investigative techniques. For more information or to apply online visit <http://www.lynnwoodwa.gov/Public-Safety/Police-Department/Safety---Crime-Prevention/Citizen-s-Academy.htm>.

Lynnwood Boards & Commissions:

<http://www.lynnwoodwa.gov/City-Services/Community-Outreach/Volunteer/Board-and-Commission-Volunteers.htm>

The Arc of
Snohomish County

2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300
Everett, WA 98201
425-258-2459

www.arcsno.org
info@arcsno.org

Shayne Nagel
Executive Director
Shayne@arcsno.org

Jamie Coonts
Program Director
Jamie@arcsno.org

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Get Involved

People First of Snohomish County

4th Tuesday of each month, 11 AM–1 PM

The Arc Office - 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

A Self-Advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We believe we are people first and our disabilities are secondary.

For more information contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121.

I.CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Tuesday of each month, 10:30 AM–12 PM

The Arc Office - 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201

A casual environment that combines learning with fun.

We believe everyone has something to share. Open to all women age 16 and up.

For more information contact Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103.

Looking Ahead

Leadership Training 2019

We are seeking a diverse group of highly motivated and enthusiastic men and women to participate in our leadership training. A limited number of participants will be selected with an emphasis on representation from Snohomish County.

- Adults with developmental disabilities
- Parents of children or adults with developmental disabilities
- Adult Sibs who have a sibling with developmental disabilities
- Community members or professionals

Training

There will be at least one in person meeting, some online meetings, and also a variety of self-paced learning opportunities.

Topics covered

The civil rights movement/history, government systems, community systems, skill building, self-determination training, systems advocacy as well as developing and implementing community projects.

Dates and Timeline to be determined.

A limited number of participants will be selected.

For more information contact Jamie Coonts at Jamie@arcsno.org or 425.258.2459 x104.

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

Participate in a virtual meeting and interact with other self-advocates from around the region. Using technology, attend the SAIL meeting held in Seattle.

For more information contact Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103.

Starting in early 2019

2nd Tuesday of each month, 1 PM–4 PM

Held at The Arc Office - 2500 Hewitt Ave, Suite 300, Everett, 98201