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425-258-2459 x121

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Advocacy Spotlight

People First of Snohomish County is a self-advocacy organization, by and for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. They have been very busy, since the chapter first formed, less than a year ago.

In September the chapter members traveled to Yakima, where they attended the People First of Washington state convention. Getting together with peers from all over the state was a great experience.

They had the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions that focused on topics and current issues that affect people living with intellectual or developmental disabilities. It wasn't all work though. There was a lot of fun too, making new friends and being reacquainted with old.



Disability Pride Advocacy Day, Capital Building, Olympia



Mike Gantala, Ryan Carlson, Rep Dan Kristiansen

In the fall, gearing up for the legislative session, the chapter hosted several speakers to learn more about self-advocacy, legislative-advocacy and disability-rights.

During the Legislative Session, they wrote personal letters to each of their three legislators, traveled to Olympia to participate in Disability Pride Advocacy Day, and met with some of their legislators. Representing four legislative districts, collectively they met with nine legislators. They were able to share the issues that are important and necessary for them to be able to live as independently as possible and be contributing members of their community.

"It was uplifting to see how interested the representatives were to hear what we had to say. We have received responses from some of the representatives on the stories we left them with."

- Corinna Fale

"Since becoming a member of People First, I have felt empowered. The trip to Olympia was exciting because it was the first time I have had any opportunity to get involved and have a say with what I want or need from our Government officials. I really enjoyed talking with my local district's State Representative about my concerns. It's become really important for me to advocate for myself, and get involved in my community." - Leigh Spruce

Siblings In Leadership

A SIBLING'S REFLECTION OF ADVOCACY

- Megan Edmonds is an Arc staff member and a sibling.

I don't recall the exact moment I knew that my brother had a developmental disability. What I do recall, is my Mom sitting me down and explaining to me what the word disabled meant. She said that it meant that sometimes my brother would do things a little differently, he wouldn't learn as fast, and he might require extra help. She said that people would not always treat him very nicely because he was different, but it was my job to show them how he should be treated.

She didn't use the word Advocacy at that time but now 25 years later, I know that is exactly what she was calling me to do.

Currently, at the Arc, I have the great privilege of coordinating both our sibling programs and our advocacy efforts. At each Sibshop we host, I hear the kids' stories of the joys and the hard things about having a sibling with a developmental disability. I am continually impressed with their maturity and deep understanding of what their family and siblings need to succeed.



Family Services Advocacy Day, Capitol Building, Olympia

It was my admiration for their stories, and their own will to fight for their siblings, that inspired us to start the first Sibling Advocacy Group here at the Arc. This year we had six siblings ranging in age from 9-15. These sibs came together three times to learn about the government structure, advocacy, and telling their story. This experience culminated in our first time of taking siblings to Family Advocacy Day in Olympia at our state capitol.

The sibs shared their stories with three legislators as well as their aids. They also had the opportunity to speak with the Governor's Senior Policy Advisor for Human Services, who also happens to be a sibling of someone with a developmental disability.

The sibs shared their deep desires for their families. They asked that respite would be available and supported in the community so that their parents could have a break and their siblings could stay in their own homes. They shared their desire for their sibs to get support in school so they too could learn to read and write. Legislators were informed that, in some cases, their sib cannot even get a para-educator. They shared their desire for their sibs to have employment and for the community to be accessible so their sibs could be active members.



Meeting with Representative Dan Kristiansen

Each sibling had their own unique story to tell, and I (especially as a fellow sibling) could not have been more encouraged or proud of their advocacy, voice and story. These sibs are the future, and if they are any indication, the future is indeed bright.

"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope... those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

— Robert F. Kennedy

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The Arc is excited to welcome Nicki Solie, Special Education Coordinator, to The Arc team. Nicki has the unique ability to be able to bring her perspective of being both a parent of a child on an IEP, as well as that of an educator.

One of Nicki's focuses has been to develop Transition resources, to help parents who have children that are transitioning from high school to adulthood. Nicki has also been working on forming new partnerships with local school parent groups (PTSA's) as well as with local school districts' special services departments.

The Arc was sorry to bid Erika Larimer farewell. Erika did an amazing job helping parents navigate the world of Special Education and IEPs. Nicki is here to continue to support parents and to train parent volunteers that would like to be part of The Arc's *IEP Parent-Partner Program*. Nicki can be contacted at Nicki@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x110.

I'm thrilled to join the team at the Arc of Snohomish County as the Special Education Coordinator. The Arc mission to *"to foster respect and access, giving them the power to achieve a full and satisfying life"* resonated with me from my perspective as a para-educator but most importantly as a parent. I had switched careers to a para educator working with 3rd-8th grade students with behavior challenges because I wanted to work with kids. It was a new experience working with students with different abilities and challenges in need of additional and creative supports

but the experience taught me to celebrate the victories and the value of including the student in any decision-making process. Then our journey took a turn when our son was diagnosed, but I had learned how vital my input was, as a parent, to help guide the priorities of my son's IEP. Since living here in Snohomish County, I have made it a point to get out as a family, to be part of the community, to make it inclusive for all children and have forged many relationships with other families, and most importantly learned from each other's experiences. It's easy to become overwhelmed and I'm here, to help families navigate special education and foster self-advocacy. One of IDEA's principles is to make families an essential partner on the IEP team because the best outcomes can be achieved when families and schools work together.

The Arc of Snohomish County also trains parents and guardians as IEP Parent Partners, matching them with other families to mentor before, during and after the IEP meeting at no cost to families. I know first-hand how tough and emotionally draining it can be for parents and caregivers supporting a child with developmental disabilities. And one of the most important lessons I've learned over the years and what the Arc exemplifies is that no one needs to go it alone. - Nicki Solie



To learn more about The Arc of Snohomish County Special Education Program and IEP Parent-Partner Program [click here](#).

Did You Know?

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) TRAINING

Are you prepared for a disaster or major emergency? It's likely that people will be on their own during the early stages of a catastrophic disaster.

CERT is about people helping people. CERT training is a program that provides community members with the skills necessary to be able to assist their neighbors and community until first responders or other assistance arrives, increasing the survival rate.

The Everett Office of Emergency Management and Everett Fire Department offers Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training twice a year. The 8-week course is conducted one evening each week and covers a variety of basic disaster survival and rescue skills. Participants also learn to establish their own three day home survival kit.

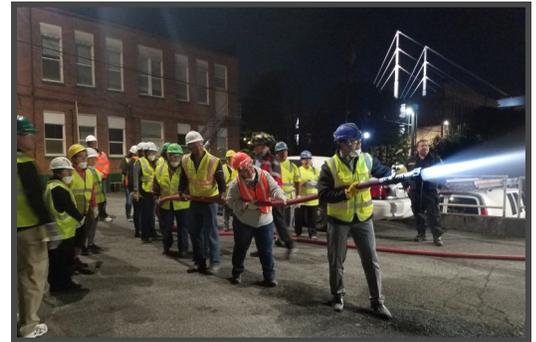
Nine parents from The Arc's *Padres Unidos*, participated in Washington State's first ever All Spanish Speaking Only CERT class.

"I am so proud of our Arc families who wanted to be prepared for a disaster and be able to help not only their own family, but also their community.

It was a great opportunity for inclusion, not only a sense of belonging as a parent of a child with a disability, or a Spanish speaking individual, but as an active community member.

Opportunities like this bring our community together."

- Mely Cervantes, The Arc's Hispanic Outreach Coordinator



Padres Unidos is an Arc Support Group for families who's primary language is Spanish and have a family member with an intellectual or developmental disability.

3rd Friday of each month from **6-7:30 pm**.

The Arc of Snohomish County, 2500 Hewitt Ave, Everett, 98201.

For more information contact Mely Cervantes

Mely@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x 114.

To learn more about Everett's CERT Training Classes, including upcoming dates and application forms [click here](#).

To read an article about this valuable training class published in MyEverettNews.com [click here](#).

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Legislative Update

LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2018

The 2018 legislative session ended as of March 8th. Legislators spent long hours reconciling differences in bill versions and approving them before the session ended. Bills that withstood the legislative process are now waiting to be signed by the Governor.

BILLS OF INTEREST

[SHB 2448](#) **Housing for People with DD**- Delivered to Governor

An exemption to the real-estate tax is authorized for the transfer of a residential property by a legal representative of a person with developmental disabilities, to a qualified entity that provides residential supported living for persons with developmental disabilities. A qualified entity is a nonprofit organization that provides residential supported living for persons with developmental disabilities or a nonprofit adult family home that exclusively serves persons with developmental disabilities.

[ESSB 6199](#) **Individual Provider Management** – Delivered to Governor

The Department of Social and Health Services is authorized to establish a Consumer Directed Employer (CDE) program. A CDE is a private entity that contracts with the Department (DSHS) to be the legal employer of individual providers for the purpose of administrative functions related to providing personal care, respite care, and similar services to individuals with functional impairments under Medicaid programs.

SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET

In the current operating budget, we see \$22 million dollars going to Residential Habilitation Centers. In Washington, we currently have four state institutions where approximately 700 individuals with developmental disabilities still reside. The funding will go to a myriad of fixes including staffing increases, maintenance, increase to food and medical costs, etc. Rainer School failed a Corrective Action Plan and now must pass a System Improvement Agreement. If they do not pass the SIA, they will be subject to decertification.

Currently on the Developmental Disability Administration caseload there are 44,330 people living in the community. Sixty three percent (63%) of those people are living at home supported by their families. In terms of funding for those in the community, there is funding allocated for moving 47 people out of the institutions, \$290,000 for Parent to Parent family support program, and, funds to restore hearing aids under Medicaid.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Before the end of session, we also saw continued work on the state Capital Budget. This work included a \$2.1 million set aside for the Housing Trust Fund. The Housing Trust Fund supports a wide range of projects serving low-income populations, including those with developmental disabilities. We also see allocations for the Institutions, similar to that of the operating budget. There is an allocation of \$5,000,000 for infrastructure upgrades and \$600,000 for roofing replacement and repairs .

Action Network

Be Informed.
Take Action!

Receive weekly updates
and **Action Alerts**
throughout the
legislative session.

To join the legislative
email list [click here](#).

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BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

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 City of Everett is currently seeking volunteers to serve the [Tree Committee](#), and [Council of Neighborhoods](#) (Boulevard Bluffs, Cascade View, Delta, Evergreen, Glacier View, Holly, Riverside, Silver Lake, South Forest Park, Twin Creeks, Westmont neighborhoods).

Check your city's webpage to view current openings. Here are links to a few in Snohomish County: [Edmonds](#), [Everett](#), [Lynnwood](#), [Snohomish](#).

Interested in serving on a public or private committee or board?

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

If you're already serving on a board or committee let us know. We'd love to hear from you!

For more about leadership opportunities and training contact Megan Edmonds at MeganE@arcsno.org 425-258-2459 x107

I.CAN

Women's Self-Advocacy Group

A group aimed at Self-Advocates, open to all women ages 16 and up, wanting to share resources and skills.

We believe everyone has something to share!

3rd Monday of each month from 5 – 6 pm

The Arc of Snohomish County, 2500 Hewitt Ave, Everett, 98201

For more information contact:

Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103

Independence
Community
Advocacy
Now



PEOPLE FIRST OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY

A Self-Advocacy Organization

by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

MISSION

To facilitate and promote public awareness and appreciation that we are people first, our disabilities are secondary, and that we are equal citizens in our communities.

EDUCATE ♦ ADVOCATE ♦ CELEBRATE

4th Tuesday each month from 11am—1 pm

The Arc of Snohomish County, 2500 Hewitt Ave, Everett, 98201

For more information contact:

Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121

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Save The Date

21st Annual Snohomish County Free Transition Resource Fair

Tuesday, March 27, 2018

4:00pm—8:30 pm

Workshops 4:30-8:30pm Resource Tables 4:00 pm-7:30 pm

Cascade High School

801 East Casino Road, Everett, WA 98203

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

[Workshop Schedule](#) [Agencies Attending](#)

Sponsored by the Snohomish County Transition Network and Everett School District

Infant and Early Childhood Conference

May 2nd - 4th 2018

Tacoma, WA

[Information & Registration](#)

Community Summit

June 12th – 14th 2018

Wenatchee, WA



Click Forward, Connect, Refresh, and Evolve!

[Information & Registration](#)

Snohomish County Parent/Family Coalition

2018 Legislative Forum

Thursday, October 18th 2018

6:30pm-8:00pm

Everett Station - Weyerhaeuser Room
3201 Smith Avenue, Everett