

Advocacy Spotlight

Doug Wennerberg is a self advocate from Marysville

Doug Wennerberg is an active member of many advocacy organizations, including People First, and recently has become a board member on the Developmental Disability Advisory Board. He has also been helping out with transition clubs in Monroe and Snohomish.

Doug first got involved in advocacy about three years ago on the advice of his counselor. Doug was pointed towards People First, and while there he worked on increasing awareness and sensitivity training for police officers so that they could better handle situations with individuals with developmental disabilities. Doug knew that there needed to be improvements in this area, and has spoken to both the police department and his local legislators on this matter. His goal is to make sure that people with I/DD stop having negative interactions with the police force and that all parties can understand each other better.

Transportation is another issue that Doug has been advocating for. Transportation issues for the I/DD community are all too common, and the average commute time continues to rise. Doug has spoken to his legislators about this issue, in an effort to improve the transportation experience for individuals with I/DD.

"If I have to get to Seattle," Doug said, "And I have to transfer, on a good day, it takes 3-4 hours."

But most importantly, advocacy has helped Doug learn who he is.

"I learned it's something that is important to me. I'm capable of doing it, and more capable than I thought myself. It's important for everyone to learn, including myself. The Arc has helped me be more effective in my advocacy skills, and to find avenues in my community for advocacy. They helped me find resources that I didn't know were available."

But what's the most important thing Doug has learned in his advocacy journey?

"Advocate for what is important to you."



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“Rebellion against your handicaps gets you nowhere. Self-pity gets you nowhere. One must have the adventurous daring to accept oneself as a bundle of possibilities and undertake the most interesting game in the world—making the most of one’s best.”
- Harry Emerson Fosdick

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Advocacy in Action

Snohomish County Parents Receive Unsung Hero Award

The Arc of Snohomish County is proud to announce that Crystal Peek, Emilie Everett, and Monica Holmes, are all recipients of the 2021 Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) Unsung Hero Award. The Unsung Hero Award shines a light onto the hard work of Washington state parents, primary caregivers or guardians who demonstrate tremendous leadership and compassion for their family and community. We are proud of our Arc leaders for their parental resilience, knowing where to turn for concrete supports in time of need, and for their strong community connections.



Crystal Peek is the mother to 4 children, including a young adult daughter who is nonverbal with autism, Turner syndrome, and special health care needs. In addition, Crystal provides caregiving support to her aging grandmother. Crystal is an active Arc volunteer Helping Parent, IEP Parent Partner, and Marysville Special Education PTSA board member. She helps families navigate disability services, find support and connect to others. The Arc could not do the level of work it does in the community without leaders like Crystal.

Emilie Everett is the mother of 3 young children, including 2 sons on the autism spectrum. She is an active volunteer Arc Helping Parent and IEP Parent Partner, and recently completed The Arc’s Leadership Development program. In August, she was a parent panelist in a statewide webinar with OSPI hosted by The Arc of Washington and the WA State Developmental Disabilities Council addressing the needs of special education families during COVID. Emilie shared, “I used to think I had no voice, but then I had to become a voice for my sons, and it has forever changed me.”



Monica Holmes is the mom to 4 adopted sons from foster care, all on the autism spectrum with additional behavioral health challenges. Monica reaches out to other special needs and foster/adoptive parents to provide peer support and connection. Monica’s work in her community and with individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities includes teaching life skills, culinary skills, positive behavior supports, sensory development, suicide & drug prevention, and art therapy. She is also a certified birth and postpartum doula. Monica combines her skills, creativity, and empathy to make her community a more inclusive and loving place for ALL!

Advocacy in Action

Legislative Recap

The Washington state legislative session is at the midway point, but there is still plenty that has happened, and plenty more to come that you can help make happen.

Probably the biggest news to come out of the legislature this year is SB 5268, the bill that moves forward on the Ruckleshaus recommendations from 2019. There was a lot of dispute over one aspect of the Ruckleshaus recommendations, that being the construction of a nursing facility on the Fircrest campus. That provision was still in this bill, but was removed so the bill could proceed. This was great news, as the rest of the Ruckleshaus recommendations are universally supported and will move forward.

However, while the nursing facility was removed from the bill, it was added to the capital budget in HB 1080. As of right now, there is \$120 million budgeted for the building of this new nursing facility. Many legislators and even the governor believe that this congregate setting is best for the I/DD community, and as such have actually been prioritizing it moving forward. There is still time to push back on this budgetary item, especially once budget hearings begin at the end of March. Before then you can still contact your legislators about this budget item to push back against it.

“Being disabled should not mean being disqualified from having access to every aspect of life.”
- Emma Thompson

While the advancement of SB 5268 is important, there is another bill that finally moved through the legislator, SB 5284, which will finally put an end to subminimum wage in Washington state! This effort has been pushed very hard by self advocate organizations in the state, and marks a huge victory moving forward. This bill will also help ensure that jobs are kept, as the end of subminimum wage will be a gradual implementation.



Many other bills are still being debated, and are scheduled to receive further public hearing. There is much more to come, so if you want to stay informed, go here—<https://www.arcsno.org/get-involved/take-action>—to sign up for legislative updates.

For any legislative questions or how you can get involved, contact either Jake@arcsno.org or Rachel@arcsno.org to get involved!

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My name is Rachel Kube and I am happy to serve as your Advocacy and Communications Coordinator here at The Arc of Snohomish County! You may know me from our recent Legislative Coffee series or our Legislative Lookout weekly newsletter. I have been a proud volunteer with The Arc of Snohomish County since 2014, helping with Sibshops, Mothers Network childcare, and Connecting Families events. In 2019, I graduated with my Bachelor's Degree from the University of Washington for my studies in Law, Societies and Justice as well as Political Science. I have experience in the fields of research, law, and developmental disabilities.



"I am neither an optimist or a pessimist, but a possibilist."

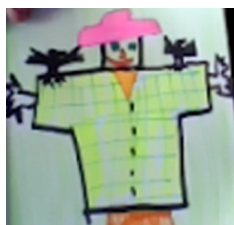
- Max Lerner

Working under the UW Political Science Department, I researched international journalism. With The Office of the Developmental Disabilities Ombuds, I conducted comparative policy research into the intersection of foster care and I/DD services in all 50 states. This research culminated in the 2019 DD Ombuds report "Improving Services for Youth with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities in Foster Care." Additionally, I have experience with paralegal functions from my time interning at the Unemployment Law Project. In the future, I plan to attend law school and work as an attorney within the field of disability justice. In my free time, I love biking, being out in nature, spending quality time with my dog and cat, and creating art.

I enjoy bringing my professional and personal experience with disability rights to my position at The Arc of Snohomish County. Creating accessible avenues for engaging in the legislative process is essential to the concept "Nothing About Us Without Us." I am excited to work with our I/DD community on topics of advocacy and leadership. Please feel free to connect with me via phone or email, I am here to support you.

Arc Remote Events

We at The Arc of Snohomish County are still running all of our usual events! Everything is still remote due to COVID, but everything is alive and well on Zoom! Lego Club has become Lego and Art Club, but otherwise it's still the same. Here's just a small sampling of some of the projects from Lego and Art Club! As always, feel free to attend any and all of our social functions. We look forward to seeing you there!



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**We're here to help
you have a voice**

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

Although impacting government may feel overwhelming, we're here to help you have a voice.

It only takes a few 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
- Meet with your legislators virtually

For tips on Legislative Advocacy visit *Hot Tips*
<https://arcwa.org/content/uploads/sites/35/2019/11/Hot-Tips-2020.pdf>

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Tools & Resources

Sign up

Legislative Alerts & Updates

The 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!

Find Your

Legislative District and Elected Officials

Washington Legislature | <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>
Find your legislative district and elected officials.

Hot Tips

Legislative Advocates on Developmental Disabilities

The Arc of Washington State |

<https://arcwa.org/content/uploads/sites/35/2019/11/Hot-Tips-2020.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.

Resource Library

The Arc of Washington State | <https://arcwa.org/resource-library/>

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

Transportation Resource Guide and Accessible Travel Map

Snohomish County Transportation Coalition

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

Find an open board or commission, get involved and have your voice heard!

The Arc can provide support, resources and tools to help you be an effective and successful disability advocate on local Boards and Commissions.

For information contact:
Jake Murray
Jake@arcsno.org
425-258-2459 x105

Rachel Kube
Rachel@arcsno.org
425-258-2459 x107

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Coming Up!

Advocacy Days

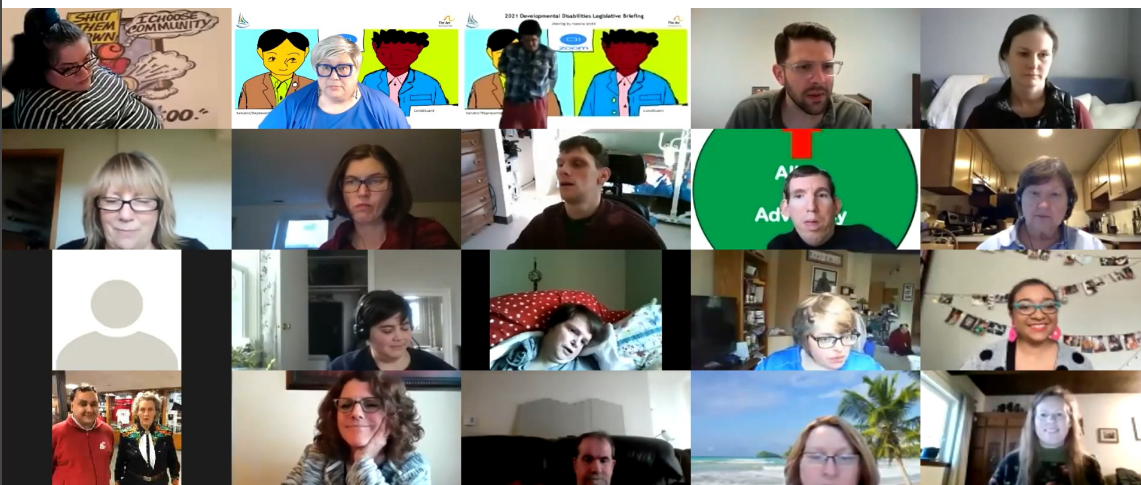
The 2021 legislative session is in full force, and getting involved may possibly be the easiest it has ever been. The addition of remote testimony has made it possible for more people than ever before to testify before committees regarding the legislative matters important to them. No longer is a trip to Olympia required to make your voice heard, something that has been a great boon to all, especially those east of the Cascades. There are still several more Virtual Advocacy days scheduled, so sign up if you wish to participate!

March 17th—Self-Advocacy: Nothing About Us Without Us!

The last few years have seen the legislature convene work groups about developmental disabilities, but without representation of the self-advocates that the work group outcomes would affect. Last year a report to the legislature proposed to build a new nursing facility on the grounds of Fircrest, something self-advocates strongly oppose! Learn about this new bill that will change this inequity and give people with DD a voice where it matters most. Register [HERE](#)

March 24th—Budget: NO Cuts!

Creating a balanced 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. Because COVID-19 has created such an economic catastrophe in our state, revenues are woefully short of what is needed to keep current programs going in this biennial budget. Learn what services and supports are proposed for cuts or increases and what you can do to help. Register [HERE](#)



March 31st —April is Autism Awareness Month

On December 18, 2007, the United Nations declared April 2nd to be World Autism Awareness Day, to be observed every year. In 1970, the Autism Society began spreading awareness about autism in the month of April and it is now recognized nationally. It is not enough to be aware of what autism is. We need to be accepting of the many gifts autistic people have to share and appreciate the diversity they bring.

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Get Involved

Note that all events are currently conducted remotely. We will be conducting in person events again once it is safe for all interested parties. Thank you for your understanding at this time.

I.CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Tuesday of each month | 10:30am–12pm

We are a group of self-advocates open to all women ages 16 and up. A casual environment that combines learning with fun experiences. We share resources and skills, and hold the belief that everyone has something to contribute to our group. Please contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121 or Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103.

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

2nd Tuesday of each month | 1pm–4pm

Group of self-advocates focused on legislative change. Open to all. SAIL is a statewide coalition of people with developmental disabilities that strives to shape public policies that affect people with developmental disabilities.

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

People First of Snohomish County

4th Tuesday of each month | 11am–12:30pm

A self-advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are focused on educating ourselves and others, advocating for our rights, having fun! We believe we are PEOPLE FIRST and our disabilities are secondary. Please contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121.

Due to coronavirus cancellations, please check our website calendar at www.arcsno.org/calendar for updates

Did You Know?

You can host a legislative coffee!

This upcoming legislative session is going to be vital in maintaining I/DD services. With the session being conducted remotely, the ability to meet and chat individually with legislators is far different than in years past. But that doesn't mean you can't! You can still host a legislative coffee with your legislators during session! Take the time to chat with your legislators about matters that are important, or just get to know them better. Contact Jake@arcsno.org if interested in hosting.

Federal Bills of Interest

HR 1319, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

This bill provides additional relief to address the continued impact of COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019) on the economy, public health, state and local governments, individuals, and businesses. Specifically, the bill provides funding for agriculture and nutrition programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as the food stamp program); child care and programs for older Americans and their families; COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, treatment, and prevention; emergency rental assistance, homeowner assistance, and other housing programs; payments to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments for economic relief; and programs for health care workers, transportation workers, federal employees, veterans, and other targeted populations.