

# Join the Arc and Support our Local Community Today

By Van Mitchell

The Arc of Washington County, located at 111 West Pike Street in Canonsburg, PA, is an affiliated chapter of the Arc of Pennsylvania and the Arc of the United States. Its mission is to promote the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively support their full inclusion and participation in their community throughout their lifetime.

The Arc of Washington County consistently strives to meet the changing needs of individuals and their families by providing innovative support through awareness, education, community integration, and social inclusion. They uniquely offer the local community the opportunity to engage through their inclusive art gallery and classes, events, and social/educational programs.

We advocate for people with disabilities in their home, community, and work to ensure they live an everyday life.

## ADVOCACY

“Our goals are simple: to provide advocacy, assurance, assistance and accessibility to ensure active involvement for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Darrilyn McCrerey, Advocacy Director for The Arc of Washington. “Throughout the year, we assist numerous individuals with disabilities and their families by providing resources, information, and support in navigating the system to ensure they receive their needed services.”

McCrerey said, “The Arc of Washington County works collaboratively with local school districts and families to provide special education advocacy to ensure students’ needs are met and the families’ voices are heard.”

The Arc of Washington County provides guidance and resources to help families and people with disabilities understand their rights and empower them to use their voice.

## SELF-ADVOCACY

The Arc of Washington County, with the support of Washington County BHDS, has created a program that focuses on developing a local self-advocacy network that includes ongoing education and resources to assist with connecting and developing skills and relationships.

Self-Advocacy is about people speaking up for themselves. The Self-Advocacy movement seeks to reduce the isolation of people with disabilities and give them the tools to take greater control over their own lives. Self-Advocacy refers to an individual’s ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert their own interests, desires, needs, and rights. It involves making informed decisions and taking responsibility for those decisions.

## SELF ADVOCATE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

“Our self-advocate leader training program teaches individuals skills in self-awareness and assessment, self-advocacy, problem-solving and decision-making, goal-setting, and teamwork and group development.” Darrilyn McCrerey said.

The leadership program provides a self-advocate leader who is able to build relationships with each self-advocate and assist them in working through their individual concerns or issues.

## ART GALLERY

The Arc of Washington has an art gallery inside its Canonsburg headquarters called Connecting Through Inspiration Art Gallery



and showcases a variety of artists and styles of artwork. “We have a beautiful gallery space within our building.” “Our non-traditional art gallery celebrates diversity and inclusive opportunities in our community by sharing the talents of local artists. Our hopes are to bring the community together through the creative arts and cultivate an inclusive environment. Once a piece of artwork is purchased, a portion of the proceeds will go to The Arc of Washington County for their advocacy program to support people with disabilities and their families with necessary resources and advocacy support. Our gallery welcomes and hosts art created by people of all abilities.”

## EVENTS AND CLASSES

The Arc of Washington County hosts several events and classes throughout the year, offering multiple opportunities for the community to connect to our mission of full inclusion. Enrollment is currently open for our community artist-led drawing and painting classes, as well as evening yoga taught by Energy Fitness Studio.

“We strive to connect with community members and businesses to raise awareness, bring people into our building, and show people firsthand what we have to offer,” said McCrerey. All events and classes are offered to people of all abilities.

## MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The Arc of Washington County has a membership program that helps support its services. By becoming a member, supporters receive up-to-date information regarding services, educational training opportunities, social activities, discounted events/classes and en-

gagement with other families. “Our new membership year starts July 1 and runs through June 30,” McCrerey said.

Anyone is welcome to join and support our mission!

“We are engaged in our schools, businesses, and churches and are a part of the fabric of our community. In that same way, we welcome you to become a member of the Arc of Washington County and become a part of our community,” said Ed Picchiarini, CEO.

*For more information about The Arc of Washington County or how to become a member, visit us at [www.archumanservices.org/advocacy](http://www.archumanservices.org/advocacy), call 724-470-9327 or email [advocacy@arcofwashpa.org](mailto:advocacy@arcofwashpa.org)*

*To learn more about our events and classes, visit our calendar of events on [www.archumanservices.org/calender-of-events](http://www.archumanservices.org/calender-of-events).*

*We would love to see you there!*

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