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## The Link

May/June 2015

# Legislative Wrap-Up

The Arc of Frederick County joined partners from across Maryland to take an active role in the 2015 Legislative Session. The busy session resulted in both positive and negative movement in terms of supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Maryland.

Governor Hogan's budget fully funded the Transitioning Youth initiative. This funding will provide support to nearly 600 students with developmental disabilities as they transition from special education to the adult world. This funding is a critical piece of legislation that supports young adults to put the skills they have learned to practical use.

Sponsors Senator Ron Young and Delegate Carol Krimm led the way for a coalition of supporters to establish the Ethan Saylor Alliance for Self-Advocates as Educators in the Maryland Department of Disabilities. The purpose of the Alliance is to advance the community inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities by having law enforcement receive training directly from people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The 2015 session also mandated that a task force be created on the Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Program. This task force is in follow up to Congress' passing of the ABLE Act. The ABLE Act allows individuals to open a tax free savings account that can be used to pay for disability-related expenses without counting toward asset caps that would compromise an individual's eligibility for federal programs. The recommendations of the task force are to be made to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2015.

Along with the success, there were also negative outcomes that will impact people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Governor's budget did not include any additional funds for the more than 8,000 people on the DDA Waiting List.

Historically, \$3M was provided for the highest category of need – Crisis Resolution. The 2015 legislature adopted the budget with \$3M for 125 people on the Crisis Resolution list; however the Governor failed to issue a Supplemental Budget to specifically authorize funds for this purpose. The Governor can use the funds for this need; or not. Unspent funds will revert to the General Fund. Given the tremendous need, The Arc has issued action alerts for members to request the Governor to designate these funds for people on the Crisis Resolution List.

To become an active participant in The Arc of Frederick County's advocacy efforts please contact Aaron Stephens at (301) 663-0909 x 126 or [astephens@arcfc.org](mailto:astephens@arcfc.org).

## National Institutes of Health Revises Research Priorities

In the first-ever update to The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Down Syndrome Research Plan, originally issued in 2007, is the addition of a new focus on Down Syndrome and Aging. The revision takes into account extensive input from the Down syndrome community, including researchers, constituency organizations, and individuals with Down Syndrome and their families. The plan is organized into five major research goals:

- Pathophysiology of Down Syndrome and Disease Progression
- Down Syndrome-Related Conditions: Screening, Diagnosis, and Functional Measures
- Treatment and Management
- Down Syndrome and Aging
- Research Infrastructure

Included within each of these goals are more specific objectives designed to advance these areas of research. "Because more people with Down Syndrome are living longer lives, new research questions are emerging," NIH says, "warranting a new goal, Down Syndrome and Aging, which, in conjunction with Treatment and Management, replaces the original category Living with Down Syndrome from the 2007 plan." The 2014 revised plan also provides an extensive bibliography of NIH-supported publications since 2007, grouped according to each of the research goals in the revised plan.

For more information, The plan is available at:

**[www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/Documents/DSResearchPlan\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/Documents/DSResearchPlan_2014.pdf)**

## Apple's Autism Awareness Apps

In honor of the 8th Annual Autism Awareness Month, Apple debuted sixteen new apps on the App Store designed specifically for individuals with autism. These new apps covered a wide variety of functionality from helping users develop communication skills, creative methods for adjusting to new environments, and even a kids science show that can help children navigate the social and emotional world.

Even though Autism Awareness month is over these apps are still available on Apple's App Store if you search the word "autism" In addition, many apps that can help those living with autism are available for use outside of Apple products and can be located with a quick google search.

## Fundraiser Round-Up

The Arc of Frederick County recently held two successful fundraisers to benefit individuals with developmental disabilities in our local community. On Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, The Arc of Frederick County held its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Trivia Playoff 1980s style! Over 120 participants and spectators enjoyed a fantastic evening of Trivia fun while raising monies for The Arc.

On Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> The Arc of Frederick County held its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Show Choir Festival at Oakdale High School. Nearly 600 people attended! Participating schools this year were Oakdale High School, Urbana High School, Thurmont Middle School, and Tuscarora High School. Students put on incredible performances and Urbana won based upon purchased voting tickets from the audience.

Both events raised over \$15,000 for The Arc of Frederick County. We appreciate your support!

# Development

Shauna Mulcahy, Development Director • 301.663.0909 • ext. 140 • [Smulcahy@arcfc.org](mailto:Smulcahy@arcfc.org)

## Memorial Day 5K/Fun Walk for The Arc of Frederick County and Epilepsy Research

A group of families in Middletown, the Middletown High School Track and Field teams (and their coaches), and The Arc of Frederick County would like to invite you to participate in a 5K/Fun Walk on Memorial Day from 8AM-11AM. The money raised will be donated 50/50 to The Arc of Frederick County's new facility on Market Street and Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy (CURE). This is our 6th annual event. The 5K is a combination of trail and pavement and the Walk is fully wheelchair accessible.

To Register online, go to: **[www.imathlete.com](http://www.imathlete.com)** and search for **Memorial Day 5k/Fun Walk for The Arc of Frederick County and Epilepsy Research.**

**\$25 adult**

**\$20 student**

**\$20 per person in team of ten or more**

## Thanks To Our Contributors

### Car Donations

Mr. Steven Cappela

### Memorial Contributions— Donald “Scotty” Watcher

Donald and Ann Cochran  
Clyde and Kitty Crum

### Memorial Contributions— Adelaide McGovern

Ms. Elizabeth Deery  
Randy and Linda Grossnickel  
Calvin and JoAnn Rich  
Robin Roux

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301.663.0909

May/June 2015

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## Calendar of Events

*Group meetings take place  
at The Arc unless otherwise noted.  
FMI 301.663.0909*

### Human Rights Committee

May 18 @ 6:30PM

### Executive Committee

May 18 @ 5:30 PM

### Board of Directors

June 8 @ 5:45 PM

### Brain Injury Support Group

May 7 & June 4 @ 6:30 PM

### Parents Day Out

May 16 & June 20 @ 10 AM

### Parent Support Group

May 13 & June 10 @ 11:30 AM

### Hispanic Family

### Support Group

May 16 & June 20 @ 2 PM

### Healthy Relationships

### Support Group

May 12 & June 9 @ 6:30 PM

### Sibshop

May 2nd & June 6th @ 10 AM

At "Pump It Up!"

### Working Together

May 27 (4th Wed.) @ 3:30 PM

C. Burr Artz Library

### Transitioning Youth Parent

### Support Group

May 20th, May 27 & June 17 @  
5:30 PM

## Board of Directors

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*Achieve with us.*