



Reflection



westchester **Arc**
Annual Report 2009



On September 17, 2009 nearly 30 individuals from Westchester Arc headed to Albany to participate in a statewide event which culminated at the steps of the NYS Capitol in Albany. The event kicked off at the Corning Preserve Riverfront Park as a procession of 1,500 people walked over the Hudson River Way Pedestrian Bridge and up State Street to the Capitol Steps lead by Schenectady Pipe and Drum. At the Capitol steps flags from the 55 NYSARC Chapters were placed by individuals who use the supports and services of NYSARC Chapters.

The 60th Anniversary Celebration walk to the Capitol was symbolic of what NYSARC, Inc. is—local grassroots energies spreading from community to community to ultimately come together as a statewide, parent driven organization that supports more than 60,000 people with developmental disabilities as they pursue their dreams and personal goals.



From our President and Executive Director



This year, Westchester Arc celebrates its 60th anniversary. In 1949, Westchester Arc was founded by a small group of parents seeking companionship for their children who were referred to as having “mental retardation.” At that time no community-based services existed for these children, and since public schools were not required to teach them, they had little opportunity to make friends or begin to think about what their lives could be.

Since that time, our accomplishments over the years have been staggering: from closing institutional settings and centered based programs, to developing programs that are now offered fully in the community. In the beginning of 2009, as we reflected on the tremendous strides our industry has made over the past 60 years, we had no idea that perhaps some of our successes may in fact be in jeopardy.

When we received word that the state’s “deficit reduction plan” proposed 10% cuts in services for people with developmental disabilities, we were immediately concerned that this would severely limit our ability to provide integrated, community-based services which we have fought for so many years to achieve. We feared that families may then be forced to provide services for their loved ones.

We did not wait to hear what this outcome would be, we acted and asked for help. The individuals we serve and their families, our board and staff, and our industry colleagues all responded. You wrote hundreds of letters to Albany, and gave generously, both by donations and of your time to advocate for those we serve. We need to continue these efforts over the coming year.

While the year may have been incredibly challenging, it did not stop our board and staff from continuing to develop innovative ways to provide opportunities to people with developmental disabilities.

We also found ways to save dollars by carefully managing our expenses. One such measure is the effort to “go green”. You will find that more of our communications will be electronic, like this Annual Report, in the effort to reduce our expenditure of dollars for printing and paper.

We remain committed to this innovation. In this report we reflect on our 60 years and celebrate our continued commitment to people with developmental disabilities.

Thank you for responding in a very difficult year. The commitment of our families and staff today is just as strong as it was in 1949 when that small group of families took those first very important steps.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheryl R. Frishman".

Sheryl R. Frishman
President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard P. Swierat".

Richard P. Swierat
Executive Director



Ethan proudly shows off his Spiderman watch to his classmate.



Donna Delohery pictured here with some of her students, who receive individualized attention and support when needed.



The Children's School for Early Development Social Worker Debra Cohen and Teacher Donna Delohery interact with all the students at the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center in Tarrytown.

“Inclusion just works, it really does.”

Twenty-five years ago when Westchester Arc’s special education teacher Donna Delohery was asked to merge her self-contained classroom with a typical functioning class she was skeptical.

Donna explains, “I just wasn’t sure what to expect. I worried that the typical children would not accept our kids. I was wrong; they immediately opened up and we could see the difference in the ways the children played together. It did not take me long to realize how well this could work.”

Today at the Elizabeth Mascia Child Care Center in Tarrytown, Donna still teaches a pre-kindergarten inclusion class which has 14 students. In the classroom there are two teachers, an occupational therapist, speech therapist and social worker who work as a team to provide an integrated approach. A few of the kids from The Children’s School were in self-contained classrooms last year and were non-verbal. Today, all 14 students sit together and talk to one another regularly.

“There is real acceptance for the children that may be different. The typical children become big sisters and brothers mentoring the other children. They do understand that there is a difference, but they don’t treat them differently, they just help them,” explains Donna. “The Children’s School kids begin to model the behaviors of the typical functioning children and, in return, the typical kids become more patient and accepting. Inclusion just works, it really does.”

Ethan is a shining example. Last year, he was in a self-contained class for children on the autism spectrum, and was non-verbal. Ethan loved shirts and toys with cars on them. “One of the behaviors of children on the spectrum is they tend to over-fixate on one thing,” explains Donna. “The boys in the class just seem to naturally notice this. They took Ethan under their wing and encouraged him to learn about and explore other things—suggesting super heroes. Ethan went home and expressed to his mother that he wanted to give the cars a rest for a while. He came in one day with a Spiderman watch and was so proud to show his classmates.”

Westchester Arc’s Children’s School for Early Development provides educational, social and support services for children, from birth to five years of age, and their families. In keeping with Westchester Arc’s mission to promote community integration for people with developmental disabilities, our Children’s School is the largest provider of community-based services for children with developmental disabilities in Westchester County. Each year nearly 250 children receive services from the Children’s School.

This year, the school added another inclusion class which will be located at the Country Children’s Center in Yorktown Heights. This brings the total to 20 classes that are now offered at local early childhood programs throughout the county. The Children’s School also offers a number of specialized classes serving children on the autism spectrum.



Tuckahoe High School students attend a Yankee game. While this is a fun and social event for the class, students also learn about activities related to a sporting event, including stadium maintenance, team management, and promotional events.



Lynn Winfield, transition planner/teacher, works with students at Mount Vernon High School.



Mount Vernon High School students visit Westchester Arc for a tour of the Gateway Center.

“Every parent of a child with a disability worries about what will happen when the bus stops coming,” explains Tibi Guzman, assistant executive director for day services. “Westchester Arc offers support and programs designed to help students continue to develop specific skills and the confidence they need to succeed. These skills include community integration, personal development, career goal exploration, and self-advocacy.”

Westchester Arc’s Transition Program offers classes, in partnership with school districts, that focus on teaching students skills in the areas of personal, life and career management. Job shadowing, internship experience and job coaching are also offered. In 2009, Westchester Arc developed new partnerships with several school districts, including Scarsdale, Blind Brook, White Plains, and the Hallen School. In addition to classroom teaching, Westchester Arc offers resource training for teachers and a Dream Book activity where students explore their dreams using a fun and innovative approach. Last year, 85 students from the Westchester school districts participated in Westchester Arc’s transition program.

“As we met with parents and discussed opportunities for their children after high school, we realized that there was a gap in service,” explains Tibi. “Parents needed more support concerning the eligibility process, and understandably, it is a very cumbersome process.”

Mary Ann Shelton, Westchester Arc’s lead navigator agrees, “We often hear from parents that they don’t know where to start when it comes to ensuring their child’s future from high school and beyond. To meet this need, Westchester Arc created navigation services to walk families

through each step of the eligibility process which their child will need in order to obtain services from any adult services providers.” A navigator is a Westchester Arc employee who specializes in the step-by-step process that families must take to ensure that their child receives services.

Navigation can help overcome the obstacles to eligibility for services after high school. Our navigators meet families where they are in the eligibility process. They review existing documentation to ensure that it is accurate, current and complete and also assist families

“Parents needed more support concerning the eligibility process, and understandably, it is a very cumbersome process.”

with choosing the right services for their child. Navigation serves as a bridge to a range of choices for site and community based activities that can include employment, volunteering, continued learning, social and community connections, recreation and socialization opportunities.

Westchester Arc offers this service free of charge to help students make the difficult transition from high school to adult life as seamless as possible. “I encourage families to start as early as possible because the eligibility process typically takes 6 months or more. Any family member or guardian who has a child with a developmental disability in their last year of high school is eligible for a navigator,” explains Mary Ann. “This gives students the opportunity to explore their interests, abilities, dreams and goals for the future.”



The Customer Service Council

The Customer Service Council is a board-level group that is comprised of individuals with developmental disabilities. The Council represents all of the individuals who receive services from Westchester Arc. The Council directly contributes to decisions on Westchester Arc's strategy and operations.

At The Gleeson-Israel Gateway Center there is a room designated for the meetings and activities of The Customer Service Council and all of the self-advocates at Westchester Arc.

On the wall in the self-advocacy room the quote, "Nothing about us without us," is proudly displayed.

From our Customer Service Council President



As President of Westchester Arc's Customer Service Council, I am pleased to present this report on the work of the committee of self-advocates. I am proud of our work and accomplishments this year.

Our committee covers a wide range of issues that concern the agency and the individuals we serve. Our committee represents more than 1,600 consumers that are involved with the programs here at Westchester Arc. We present challenges to one another, on issues that are important to us. This past year, our accomplishments included:

- The Council re-established the advocacy group as one unit. We talked to many of the individuals we serve about how important their voice is when we all speak as one. Council members met with their local committees and encouraged these sites to become more engaged in self-advocacy.
- We arranged a Halloween party that was very successful, and raised \$850.00. \$100.00 is going to the American Red Cross for the people of Haiti. The remaining funds will be used for self-advocacy initiatives. We are working towards doing more events where all consumers are involved and take a leadership role.
- We created our own newsletter with personal stories from consumers. This will be distributed four times a year.
- Our Council Vice President Chinika Thompson has been appointed to the Statewide Self Advocacy Board of Directors.
- We are encouraging our peers to take a good look at self-advocacy as a tool to assist us in our daily lives.

This upcoming year we will continue to wish nothing but the best to all here at Westchester Arc and remind all that we are in this together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pasquale Ginese". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Pasquale Ginese
Customer Service Council President

2009 Highlights



Westchester Arc's Employer Recognition Breakfast honored more than 26 local businesses and civic groups last April for their support in hiring people with developmental disabilities. Guest Speaker Timothy Itoni, westchester county clerk, (second from the right) discussed the importance of employing individuals with developmental disabilities.

Westchester Arc has partnered with over 300 businesses over the past several years. Currently, nearly 275 Westchester Arc individuals are employed in the community.

2009 Regional School to Work: Community Partnerships Conference was held at Westchester Arc in partnership with the Association for People in Supported Employment (APSE) on October 21, 2009.

The conference focused on ways to improve and expand integrated employment services and outcomes through supported employment (SE) for persons with disabilities. Pictured right are Westchester school districts, attendees at the event.



Laura Owens, Ph.D., executive director, National APSE, gave a lecture on The Power of Connection: Maximizing Relationships.



Larry and Laureen depart to begin their lives together

2009 Highlights



Gallery265, Westchester Arc's art gallery located at the Gleeson Israel Gateway Center in Hawthorne, held three successful art events in 2009, including a special art show for high school students to display their art work. In this show, 95 students proudly displayed their work.



Westchester Arc's 21st Annual Spring Ball, held at the Westchester Marriott last May. Nearly 600 people enjoyed an evening of dinner and dancing.



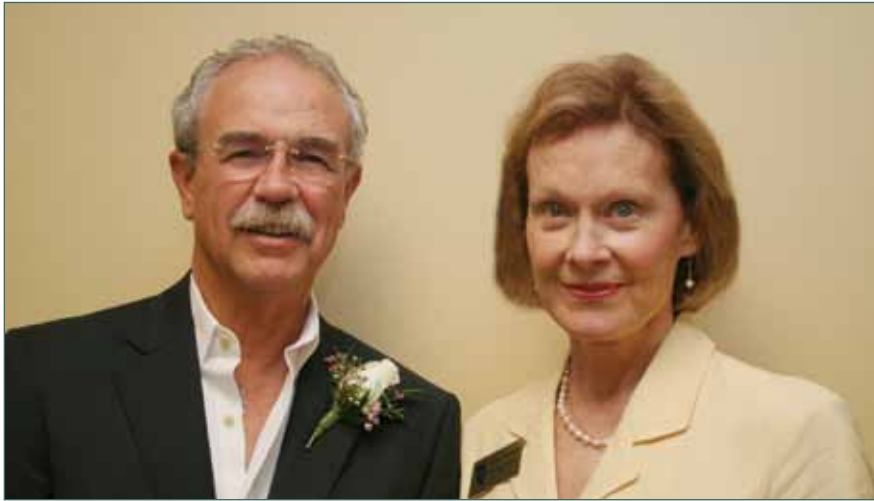
In 2009, eDocNY (Westchester Arc's document management company) increased its sales income 122% compared to 2008. It employed 11 individuals with disabilities and secured the Westchester County Clerk scanning contract for three years and a contract to scan Charitable Bureau files for the New York State Attorney General's Office.

Over 130 families and social service professionals received practical advice on a broad range of issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities during Westchester Arc's Annual Family Resource Day.

Representatives from over 26 state and local organizations participated in a resource vendor fair providing information on healthcare, financial and legal planning, job opportunities and recreational programs.



Westchester Arc Foundation



Larry McNaughton
President

Anne Sweazey
Executive Director

Westchester Arc Foundation, created in 2003, is now more than six years old. Its record of success includes a successful capital campaign that raised over \$8 million in gifts and pledges for the new Gleeson-Israel Gateway Center and a Fund for the Future. In 2009, we put up a wall in the new Gleeson-Israel Center that lists our generous donors, in alphabetical order, to thank them for joining in to make the new building possible and to establish a Fund for the Future.

The Foundation raises funds through Golfing for Kids, the Bresnan Bike Tour, A Matter of Taste, the yearly gala, and contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals to support operational and program needs of Westchester Arc.

Pooled Supplemental Needs Trusts

Two trusts are available to family members and others who want to assure quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. The Foundation now administers six supplemental needs trusts. They

are held in trust and disbursed according to the needs of the people benefiting from the assets.

Family Resource Day was an excellent opportunity to encourage families to consider these trusts as part of their financial planning. Panelists discussed the use of the supplemental needs trusts as part of an overall financial and estate plan and family members engaged in conversations about how these trusts could meet the needs of their loved ones.

Special Events

Many people contributed their time and energy to raise the donations that make Westchester Arc programs outstanding. Foundation Director, Justin Israel, raised nearly \$20,000 from a special mailing to his friends and associates asking them to renew their membership.

Members of The Northern Westchester League sponsored a performance of Damaged Care. Greg LaGana, Barry Levy and Brad

A QUICK VIEW OF 2009 YEAR END RESULTS FOR FUNDRAISING

	Total Income for 2009	Total Income for 2008
Balances		
Supplemental Needs Trusts	\$641,663	\$553,152
Funds for the Future	1,152,601	944,352
Total liabilities and net assets:	\$2,992,169	\$2,613,907
Total Income	\$2,218,712	\$1,930,296

In 2009, the Foundation was able to transfer \$785,679 to Westchester Arc, representing donations to programs and for the building fund. In addition, the Foundation transferred another \$1,000,000 which represented the proceeds from a bequest.

“More often than not, the missing ingredient is money. Our generous members and donors change lives.”

—Larry McNaughton, President

Ross delighted the crowd with their original parodies spoofing the medical profession. Those in attendance were given information about how to make a bequest or planned gift to the Foundation.

Bikers with the Bresnan Bike Tour rode from New York to Vermont to raise funds for the Westchester Arc Foundation and Special Olympics New York Hudson Valley Region.

Golfing for Kids, chaired by Tony Rizzi and co-chaired by Bob Paladino and Gene Porcaro, continues to surpass itself each year. In 2009, its ninth year, net proceeds were more than \$125,000 for the innovative programs at the Children’s School for Early Development.

Peter Herrero and Adrienne Arkontaky again chaired Matter of Taste which has become a much-anticipated event. The evening’s honorees were Ric Swierat and Jim and Lauren Watkins. Net proceeds from the event were \$85,000.



Katharine Conroy, president of NYSARC, Inc., with Damaged Care performers.



Tony Rizzi, Golfing for Kids chairman, presents the award to the honorees, Maggie and Fred Mascia, while Fran Porcaro looks on.



Congratulations to our 2009 cyclists who met the challenge by biking from New York to Vermont to benefit people with developmental disabilities in Westchester/Putnam.

Westchester Arc Foundation



Peter Herrero, co-chairman, assembled the finest chefs in Westchester for the 6th annual Matter of Taste.



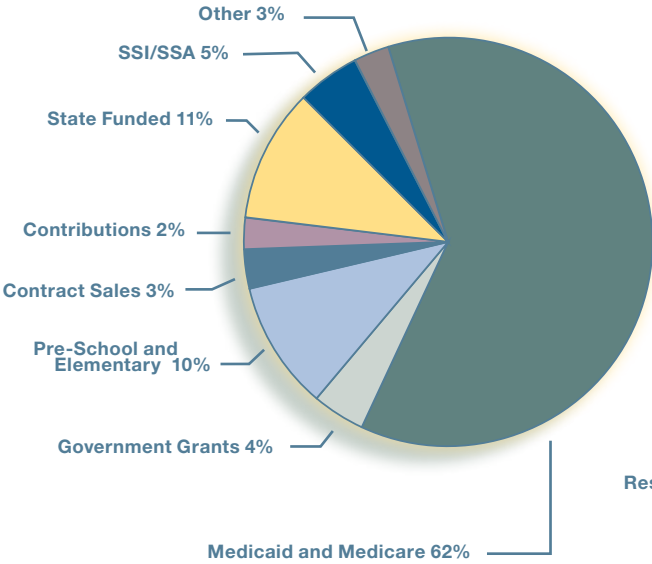
Throughout the year The Golfing for Kids Committee meets to plan the special event.



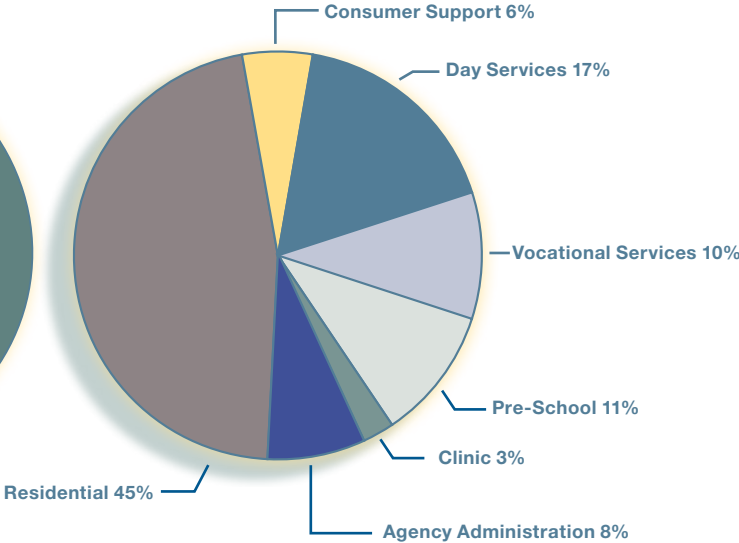
Anne Sweazey, executive director of the Westchester Arc Foundation, with Jim Watkins, recipient of the Matter of Taste 6 Family Partner Award, and Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director who received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Westchester Arc Dollar 2009

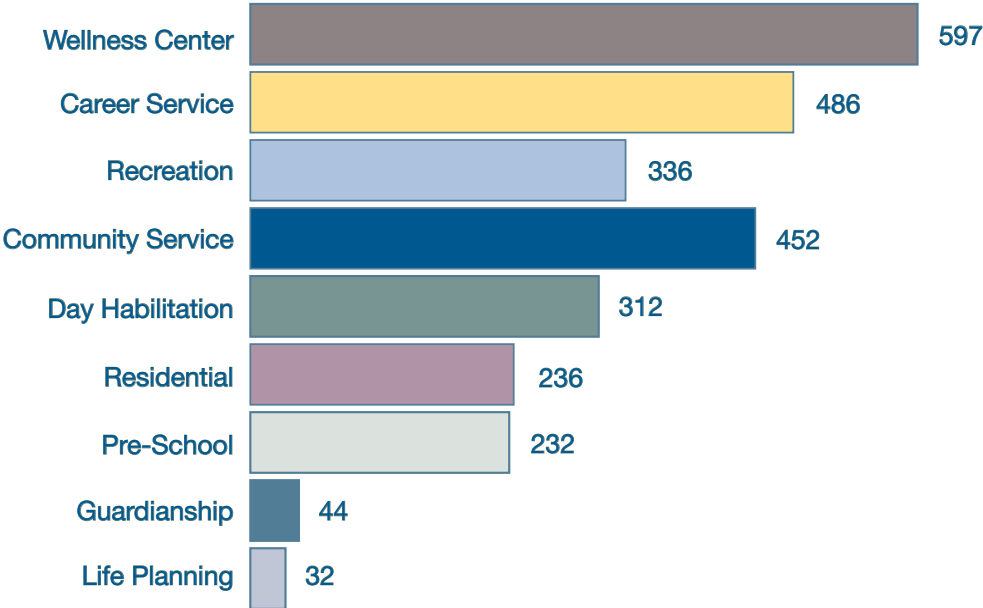
Where it came from



Where it went



Individuals Served



Our Donors

Generous contributions ensure superlative services.

We are grateful to the following members and donors for their gifts in 2009.

We wish we could list everyone!

Supernova

\$960,000

The Estate of Annette Edwards

Shooting Stars

\$50,000 +

Bresnan Bike Tour

Golfing for Kids

Mr. Justin Israel

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Matter of Taste 6

The Estate of Marjorie A. Elbers

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We gratefully recognize those people who have included Westchester Arc or Westchester Arc Foundation in their estate plans. These far-sighted and generous people help to ensure future services for developmentally disabled people in Westchester County.

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Margaret Annie Wilkins
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2009 Annual Report is published by the Marketing and Public Affairs
Department of Westchester Arc, a chapter of NYSARC, Inc.

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Design, layout, photography: Victoria Grinapol
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westchesterArc Mission

To empower children and adults with developmental disabilities to achieve their potential based on personal choices, abilities and interests. This is accomplished through person-centered services, support to families, advocacy and leadership, which together inspire the community to value the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

westchesterArc Foundation Mission

To increase public awareness and to raise financial support from the community, generating income through long-term investments and distributing funds to support services for people with developmental disabilities in Westchester County.

envision possibilities. explore choices.



Westchester Arc • Westchester Arc Foundation
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