



WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHAPTER, THE ARC NEW YORK  
74th ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
June 6, 2023  
Virtual Broadcast – Zoom

**Attendance:** Members of the Westchester County Chapter and guests.

**Call to Order:** President Jeff Wood called the meeting to order at 6:06PM. A quorum was present.

Jeff Wood noted that due to the virtual nature of the meeting all voting would take place by poll vote that would appear on screen where members cast their vote with the result announced after each vote. Employees of The Arc Westchester were reminded they are not permitted to vote.

**Approval of Minutes:** Jeff Wood requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2022 Special Meeting and the Annual Membership Meeting of the members.

Steve Masket moved to approve the minutes; Katharine Conroy seconded; employees were reminded they are not permitted to vote; a virtual vote was taken; and the motion passed with a majority vote in favor.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bob Nuccio noted that the Treasurer's Report is available on the website. The 2022 Statement of Revenue and Financial Positions reports revenue of \$63,526,535 with investment losses of \$760,683 and total revenue of \$62,765,852. Total expenses were \$61,243,025 leaving net income of \$1,522,827 for the year. Revenue and expenses were unusually high this year due to a government program authorized in the American Recovery Act of 2021, known as FMAP. The Chapter received and paid out over \$8m in FMAP funds, all paid to eligible employees, the majority being DSPs. The Statement of Financial Position is very healthy with a Balance Sheet of \$11,542,225 in Cash; Current Assets \$29,890,395; and Total Liabilities of \$18,321,327, leaving Net Assets without donor restrictions of \$31,606,856. Fifty-seven percent of revenue came from Medicaid or Medicare programs; 14% FMAP program; 6% preschool; 23% from other third parties and programs. Fifty-seven percent of expenses were paid out to Residential services; 22% Day services; 6% preschool; 6% agency administration. Ninety-four percent of expenses were paid out to various chapter programs to provide direct services to the people served.

Jeff Wood requested a motion to approve the 2022 Treasurer's Report; Carolyn Holodak made the motion; Katharine Conroy seconded; employees were reminded they are not permitted to vote; a virtual vote was taken; and the motion passed with a majority vote in favor voting yes.

**The Arc Westchester Foundation Report:** Foundation President, Ruedi Laager reviewed The Foundation Mission:

- Increase public awareness
- Raise financial support from the community
- Generate income through long-term investments
- Make contributions to programs and services for people with developmental disabilities supported by The Arc Westchester

Mr. Laager expressed gratitude for the partnership with Tibi Guzman and The Arc Westchester staff, and thanked Chapter members for their support this past year, noting we are founded by families for families. In addition, Mr. Laager thanked former Foundation Executive Director, Nancy Patota for her direction and support during her nine-year tenure which helped the Foundation increase revenue by 52% and investments by 19%, leaving The Foundation in a strong position of growth during the transition to a new Executive Director. The Foundation raised \$3.059m in 2022 with Total Net Assts of \$9.815m. Mr. Laager welcomed Fran Higgins, Assistant Executive Director/Director of Development to provide detail on The Foundation activities from the past year.

Fran Higgins, Assistant Executive Director/Director of Development reviewed the 2022 Foundation Report and Financial Snapshot reporting: all budgeted contributions were met; membership increased, increasing weighted vote in The Arc New York; Golfing For Kids was in person for the second year since COVID and was very successful; the third A Matter of Safety appeal was also very successful. Ms. Higgins thanked all who participated. The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation awarded The Arc Westchester with a grant over \$1m over three years to renovate the Ann Manzi Center. Ms. Higgins reported that 2023 is off to a great start with the record breaking A Matter of Taste event honoring Zaro's Bakery, and the Masket Family, which has raised almost \$600k and encouraged members to patronize the restaurant sponsors of the event. The Save the Date for Golfing For Kids on October 2<sup>nd</sup> will go out soon and members were encouraged to attend. Ms. Higgins thanked Tibi Guzmán, Jeff Wood and the entire Board of Directors for their support.

**Elections and Oath of Office:** Jeff Wood reviewed the following list of nominations as presented by the Nominating Committee to be acted upon by the Chapter membership at its Annual Meeting on June 6, 2023:

1. Michael Briganti nominated for a three-year term on the Board
2. Jacob Cane nominated for a three-year term on the Board
3. Mary Costello-Lazare nominated for a three-year term on the Board
4. Daphne Daddino nominated for a three-year term on the Board
5. Mark Glucksman nominated for a three-year term on the Board
6. Jennifer Huggins nominated for a three-year term on the Board
7. John McAndrew nominated for a three-year term on the Board
8. Robert Picone nominated for a three-year term on the Board
9. Abby Reuben nominated for a three-year term on the Board
10. Rosa Rodriguez nominated for a three-year term on the Board
11. Bradly Serlin nominated for a three-year term on the Board
12. Debra Bornstein is nominated for a two-year position on the Nominating Committee
13. Kyle O'Loughlin-Cahill nominated for a two-year position on the Nominating Committee
14. Robert Picone nominated for a two-year position on the Nominating Committee
15. Danusia Pawska nominated for the position of Secretary of the Board
16. Robert Nuccio nominated for the position of Treasurer of the Board

Mr. Wood requested a motion to approve the Slate of Nominees; Steve Masket made the motion; Katharine Conroy seconded; employees were reminded they are not permitted to vote; a virtual vote was taken; and the motion passed with a majority vote in favor voting yes.

Mr. Wood noted that due to the remote nature of the Annual Meeting, elected directors, officers, and members of the Nominating Committee will submit written attestations of acceptance and commitment to their elected positions.

**President's Remarks:** Jeff Wood welcomed the seven newly elected Board Members to the Board of Directors and thanked retiring Board Member, Robert Diana, for his six years of time, compassion, and expertise. Mr. Wood also thanked the Board of Directors for dedicating themselves to the organization and assisting him in his first year as president, giving a special thanks to Immediate Past President, Kyle O'Loughlin-Cahill and President Elect, Steve Masket.

Mr. Wood shared his gratitude for everyone that is part of The Arc Westchester, noting that every single employee plays a vital role in our ability to support people with developmental disabilities, adding that our professional and resilient workforce makes us a leader in progressive services in Westchester County. Mr. Wood expressed the importance of everyone working together to ensure that The Arc Westchester remains a place where everyone feels excepted, valued, and safe, adding that we need to practice what we preach when speaking to potential employers for our members, that workplaces are better when they are diverse, and inclusive workforces where people are treated equally. Mr. Wood noted it is The Arc Westchester's goal to be the leader in

local communities in ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, and everyone's rights are respected. Mr. Wood applauded Tibi Guzman, her leadership team, and the entire workforce for fulfilling this responsibility and expressed his gratitude for the services and care provided to member's loved ones.

Mr. Wood thanked The Arc Westchester Foundation and Board for their efforts in raising record-breaking funds this past year, noting these funds ensure fiscal sustainability and added that the Foundation is doing an excellent job reminding donors that we are not a government agency, but a private organization in need of funds to provide services to our underfunded vital programs. Mr. Wood expressed his gratitude to everyone who made a gift this past year, no matter how large or small, and thanked everyone for being a part of the meeting.

**Special Guest:** Tibi Guzman shared that guest speaker, Kimberly Hill Ridley, Chief Disability Officer for New York State, was appointed by Governor Hochul in February 2022 as the state's first ever Chief Disability Officer and expressed pride that New York State was one of the first states in the country to establish such an office. Ms. Ridley is charged with advising the Governor and executive staff on policy and budgetary issues as they pertain to disabilities; serves as the NY State ADA Coordinator; and chairs the NYS Most Integrated Services Coordinating Council which is responsible for the state's Olmstead compliance.

Ms. Guzmán shared gratitude for having Ms. Ridley as guest speaker and welcomed Ms. Ridley to introduce herself and share some of the plans she has for her position.

Kimberly Hill Ridley acknowledged email correspondence concerns that were received regarding the staffing shortage and wage crisis and gave assurance that it is one of the top priorities her office is working on, and encouraged everyone to email with any questions, comments, or concerns. Ms. Ridley highlighted her office's key priorities:

- ADA compliance within all state agencies – conducted state-wide ADA coordinator training
- Chair NYS Most Integrated Services Coordinating Council – ensure NYS is compliant with Olmstead, and people are served in the most integrated settings, leading to home care, direct service care, and housing priorities
- Policy advisor to Governor Hochul on disability issues – a shared responsibility with Jihoon Kim, NYS Deputy Secretary for Human Services & Mental Hygiene, who oversees all agencies, including OPWDD and OMH

Ms. Ridley noted in person events are taking place and encouraged members to continue participation. Plans are being made for an ADA celebration, and they are hosting a "DREAM" event in October in conjunction with national Disability Employment Month, they add "R" for Rights, as they are fully aware that people with disabilities cannot work unless all of their rights, including home care, housing, education, transportation, and a multitude of layers are met. The goal going forward with the DREAM event is not only employment issues but making sure all needs are met. Ms. Ridley welcomed everyone to email any concerns, stressing that people with disabilities now have a voice within the Executive Chamber both organizationally and physically on the same office floor. Ms. Ridley encouraged everyone to advocate to local assembly members and senators and join lobby days for issues supported and go to Albany to be seen and have voices heard, adding that local legislators are particularly important as much of the work of her office has to go through the legislature. Ms. Ridley thanked everyone.

**Executive Director's Remarks:** Ms. Guzman noted that the COVID emergency declaration and most of the restrictions have been lifted, adding that during this time of transition, the people we support have thrived thanks to the perseverance of dedicated staff, the trust and patience of families, and the generosity of donors who have filled the gaps where government supports have fallen short.

Ms. Guzman stated that recruitment and retention of new staff is the top priority as we continue to face challenges, adding that we have joined forces with The Arc New York in a statewide campaign aimed at attracting

candidates seeking employment. Ms. Guzman noted that this initiative invites potential employees to discover the rewards of a career in human services and is imperative that we include in our workforce those not just looking for a paycheck, but employees that align with our mission and values. Ms. Guzman stated it is our goal that all employees view their employment as a rewarding and meaningful career and gave special thanks to The Arc New York for organizing successful advocacy campaigns focused on a commitment to increase funding for our recruitment efforts.

Ms. Guzman shared that recruitment efforts have become more challenging with the release of the NYS Budget and shared deep disappointment with the inadequate investment allocated for our workforce. Ms. Guzman stated that the minimal Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase of 4% does not provide necessary resources to continue to invest in the vital workforce needed to provide high quality life supports and erases progress made over the past year which necessitated an 8.5% COLA to provide equitable resources for DSPs and essentially is a 4.5% cut. Ms. Guzman noted that not only does it escalate our workforce crisis, but it also does nothing to reverse the growing decline in care and services for Westchester citizens with disabilities and provided no COLA adjustments for our preschool and early intervention services, adding that several local preschools have closed due to a lack of funding. Ms. Guzman concluded saying that we will continue to urge our legislators to fix the unfair allocation of funds and make sure New Yorkers with disabilities are not neglected.

Ms. Guzman thanked everyone for their ongoing advocacy and participation in campaigns this past year and encouraged their continued advocacy and support and thanked dedicated Board Members for their availability, leadership, and support. Ms. Guzman welcomed the seven new Board Members and thanked all Chapter members for their commitment, generosity, and encouragement and thanked families and caregivers for their trust and support during this transition.

**The Richard P. Swierat Advocate of the Year Award:** Tibi Guzman announced the 2023 Advocate of the Year Award winner, Jennifer Huggins. Jennifer Huggins has first-hand experience as a member of The Arc Westchester services program and serves on the Core Committee of Advocates, and more recently on the Program Quality Improvement Committee, and is now a member of The Arc Westchester Board of Directors. Jennifer enjoys researching current issues pertaining to the disability community and it is her dream to be an advocate on the national level shaping policy and influencing change. Jennifer has created writings, artwork, and videos as a tool to increase awareness. Ms. Guzman welcomed Ms. Huggins to say a few words.

Jennifer Huggins thanked everyone and expressed her gratitude in receiving the award. Ms. Huggins shared that from the beginning, The Arc Westchester was very welcoming and helpful adding that she had previously struggled in other programs before coming to The Arc Westchester. Ms. Huggins expressed her gratitude for everyone who helped her get into OPWDD and Arc Westchester programs and have supported her ever since. Ms. Huggins shared that she has been in programs for people with disabilities since she was two years old and wants to make sure that everyone is safe and happy and that people with disabilities know that their voice matters. Ms. Huggins thanked everyone.

Mr. Wood thanked Ms. Huggins for her inspiring words, noting that she will have big shoes to fill when Board Member Carolyn Holodak leaves the Board next year, as Ms. Holodak has done an exceptional job in keeping the Chapter Board informed on what is going on throughout Westchester County in The Arc Westchester family.

**Adjournment:** Jeff Wood requested a motion to adjourn the Annual Membership Meeting. Katharine Conroy made the motion; Steve Masket seconded; employees were reminded they are not permitted to vote; a virtual vote was taken; and the motion passed with a majority vote in favor voting yes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40PM.

Minutes respectively submitted by Danusia Pawaska.