

Farewell to an Arc Matriarch



Teddi Leiden passed in February. Teddi was a fixture at The Arc for decades. She served on the board of directors for over 30 years. She was President several times and also served on the state of Pennsylvania board for many years. Teddi was a tireless advocate in closing institutions and including people in schools and in the community.

Teddi did not become an advocate because she was fighting for her own child's rights. No - Teddi was passionately involved because she thought it was unjust that people with disabilities were not respected. How unusual in the 1950's and 60's to make a social stand without a personal connection. Years later, through her involvement with The Arc and Catholic Charities, Teddi adopted a child from a state

institution and the family lovingly embraced the little girl as a permanent part of their family.

Teddi leaves behind six children, including Leah, who attends many Arc programs, plus a clan of grandchildren. Following is an excerpt from the program distributed at Teddi's mass: 'In honor of Teddi, go out and make a difference in the world - one person at a time.'

Every single one of us can do something - *anything* - to make the world a better place. It doesn't have to be a huge endeavor. Touch someone's life today. Do not think of yourself or how many problems or worries you have. Scientific research has proven that by doing good for others, we improve our physical and mental health.

Teddi, we cannot repay you for your unselfish service. We can only honor you by striving to be the very best version of ourselves. May we meet again, Teddi....

Editor/Executive Director's Note: I am going to go rogue on this article and share a passionate opinion. You can call me or send your hate letters. I feel strongly that we are becoming a selfish organization. The Arc of Blair County used to be a family, a family where we took care of one another. The funeral home and the church where Teddi's mass was held should have been overflowing into the streets. Yes, there was an adequate size at both. However, I think of politicians or business people and how long lines form when they die. Yet, a quiet woman, who never asked for accolades but did more in one month than most people do in a lifetime, passes and we cannot fill every seat in the church? Shame on us! Did we forget all the energy Teddi put into her life - sacrificing time from her own family - to make our lives a better one? New mothers would receive a visit in the hospital from Teddi and receive hope as she informed them of the wonderful life their child born with a disability could achieve. Special Education happened in large part because Teddi insisted that the state Arc sue the Department of Education. Imagine a world where people with disabilities are ridiculed, left in institutions with terrible living conditions, not able to attend school, and basically thought of as less than part of society. This was the reality before folks like Teddi Leiden came along. We need to continue what the pioneers before us did and continue the journey for ourselves and for people with disabilities. We need to stop taking for granted the gift given to us by others to make our journey easier. We need to stop thinking others will take care of us and stop making excuses - I'm tired, I don't feel well, I have a busy day - and start acting. **The Arc needs to be a family again.**

NOTIFICATION ALERT

The Arc is trying to foster independence and therefore will no longer be leaving messages on the answering machine for cancelled classes. Updates to programs will only be found on the home page of The Arc of Blair County website or The Arc's facebook and Twitter pages.

Please do not call in to see if a class is taking place. Though we love to hear from members, calling the office does not teach computer skills. Instead, check the website or facebook. If nothing is listed it means the class is still on.

Bear in mind that sometimes The Arc does not realize a program is not taking place. Occasionally, the instructor forgets to inform us that a routine class will not be occurring.

Many times flyers are distributed far enough in advance or notification is placed in the newsletter. In those situations, we do not post anything to the webpage or on social media.

Congratulations to Richard Fry who placed at the Special Olympics Bowling Tournament in Altoona. Richard called The Arc to share his good news so we thought we'd pass it on.

Hooray! We change the clocks in March. Remember to move your clock ahead one hour (spring the clock forward) on Sunday, March 12. Actually, change the clocks Saturday night or you will be late Sunday morning if you have anything planned! So long winter!

Medicaid Cuts Looming - What Can You Do to Stop It?

Congress has already begun the process of repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and is now on the fast track to include drastic cuts to the Medicaid program as part of the replacement plan. People's health, services, and lives are at stake! We need advocates to reach out to their Senators and Representatives to let them know why the ACA and Medicaid are essential to people with disabilities and their families.

Take action NOW – every call counts!

Get on The National Arc's Advocacy Email List and Act. Sign up to stay connected on public policy advocacy, and take action today by calling your Senators and Representative - don't let them take away health care and services for millions of people and replace it with a plan that cuts Medicaid. Please share widely since Congress is starting the process this week! (<http://disabilityadvocacynetwork.org/app/register?0&m=9899>)

Attend Town Hall Meetings. Check out this great new resource listing all scheduled town hall meetings across the country- <https://townhallproject.com>. If your Senators or Representative has any scheduled this week or soon, please attend and tell them what Medicaid and the ACA mean to you, and tell them no on cuts. Block grants or per capita caps are cuts- ask them to vote against these proposals.

Money Class coming in May

The Arc was founded as an advocacy group. Our main focus is offering a quality of life for people who have disabilities. This includes inclusion in the community, having the same typical life as a person without a disability, and competitive employment (minimum wage or higher).

The Arc Board of Directors has adopted a 'Can Do' mantra for Arc programs. Instead of having others do for someone, assume competence and teach people to do for themselves.

Sticking with that philosophy, and piggy backing on other programs that have already begun and instill independence at The Arc, a banking class will begin in May.

Participants will learn the basics about money, budgets, balancing a checkbook and saving money. Participants will receive cash with the expectation that change will be returned at the next class.

The initial class will run for 3 weeks in May, on Monday afternoons. More details will be in the April newsletter and on The Arc website.



No Need to Scare - Just Prepare!

Please don't make the assumption that someone else will take care of you during an emergency. The person you are relying on might be injured or might not be able to reach you. Learn some tools that might save your life.

This free training, the flyer is to the right, will allow you to meet first responders and help them to learn more about your individual situation.

The day will be full of interaction. Groups will sit together with first responders and enact 2 different emergency scenarios. All of us have dangerous chemicals sitting in our homes. Are we at risk?

The Arc, along with our Emergency Planning Partners throughout Blair County, do not want our community to be another Hurricane Katrina or another Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Just as you purchase life insurance and health insurance but might not have to use it, get some 'emergency preparedness' insurance by knowing what to do and where to go!

Registrations are being taken through The Arc website on the training page - www.thearcblair.org

Emergency Preparedness

For Persons With Disabilities and Their Families

Will you know exactly what to do when an emergency happens? Please join us to learn more about steps to take in an emergency situation.

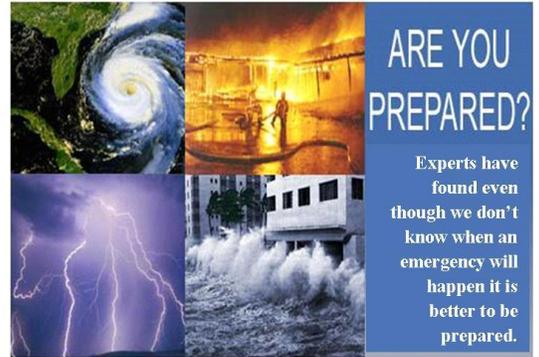
Date: **Thursday, March 30th**
9 am to 4 pm

(registration/coffee opens at 8 am)
at

The Arc of Blair County

FREE TO THE PUBLIC (Pre-
registration is required)
Registration Deadline: March 24
814-946-1011
www.thearcblair.org/training

Training and Lunch
Provided at No Cost



Learn what to do when an emergency happens!

This unique day-long training will bring together people with disabilities, their families and/or caregivers to inform them what to do in an emergency situation. A discussion will take place through a table top exercise with first responders. A tabletop exercise is a prearranged disaster scenario centered around a group at a table that allows you to think of options in an ever evolving emergency situation.

We are hopeful that you will go away with the following:

- ◆ Learn what to do if you have to shelter in place.
- ◆ Learn what you need to do if an evacuation is enacted.
- ◆ Obtain knowledge that could potentially save your life and the lives of loved ones.
- ◆ Discover how to follow first responder's instructions and media alerts to protect yourself and your family.

First Responders from Blair County will be on hand to answer any questions you might have on what to do in an emergency. If you are a person with a disability, family member and/or caregiver you don't want to miss this important opportunity to learn from First Responders what to do.



A Partnership between local agencies, First Responders and Blair County
Department of Emergency Services

To register contact: The Arc of Blair County (431 Jackson Ave, Altoona) at 814-946-1011 or via the internet www.thearcblair.org. Go to the training page. Please list accommodations required or dietary restrictions when registering.



A big thank you to the women who donated their time to make aprons for Rotary. The Arc gives back! Tina Lanborn and Gayle Perry are modeling the aprons, bottom left. They turned out very nice - exceeding expectations! Jamie Stasky (top photo) shows the 2 pillows that folks also got to make. Cortny Himes, in the middle of bottom photo, was the instructor. You ROCK Cortny! Many thanks to the group - Gayle, Tina, Jamie, Alice Moist and Christina Polito. A big shout out to Janice Moist for assisting and lending her machine plus Mary Meyers, Deb Suder and Betty Polito for assisting us. We could not have done it without everyone's help!



It was amazing how many people wore red at the Valentine's Dance. They must have wanted raffle tickets! The baskets were a big hit.

Thank you Rhinehart&Susan Replogle plus Jenda/Georgina Sible and the Ermin Family, and, of course, Janice Moist, for making the Valentine's Dance possible. We owe you for all that you did that night. Without these great people, dances will not happen.

The Arc of Blair County

www.thearcblair.org
431 Jackson Ave
Altoona, PA 16602
814-946-1011

Non Profit Org
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Altoona, PA
Permit # 218

Current Resident or



more Valentine photos



CLASS SCHEDULE for March 2017

Stay connected for the latest changes by visiting The Arc's homepage at www.thearcblair.org. If there is a change it is listed on the blog on the home page, in rectangle box to the right. Otherwise, it means the class is still on.

Emergency Training - See page 3 for more information. You owe it to yourself to come. Too important to miss!

ABLE ACT - Learn information about Pennsylvania's new savings account for people with disabilities. Tuesday, March 21. Details still being finalized. Check the home page of The Arc website or Twitter or Facebook.

Cooking Class – Monday, March 6, from 6 pm to 8 pm. Dinner is served so don't eat before coming. Class size is limited to 15 people and is based on the first to call and reserve a spot.

Craft Class – 6:30 p.m. Monday, March 13. Limited to 20 people. Must call and reserve.

Acting Troupe - Tuesday's at 6:30 p.m. Bring a water bottle.

Line Dancing – 6:30 pm Wed. nights. Water bottle needed. No dancing on Wed, March 1, Ash Wednesday.

Square Dancing – 6:15 p.m. Thursday nights. Bring water.

All are welcome to any activity but must pay \$5 per class if not an Arc member.
This includes dance classes.

SAVE THE DATE: A spring dance is coming in May. It has been a long time since The Arc has held a dance in the spring. It will probably be a Friday night. We are checking with a couple of community events to be sure we pick a date that will not be a conflict. More details in April's newsletter. Let's make it an 80's theme! Puff up your hair and get your jean jackets out!