

TARC *in Action* Fall/Winter 2007

TARC is committed to ensuring a high quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families through education, empowerment, support and advocacy.


TARC Distributes Household Items to Oklahomans with Developmental Disabilities

Undistributed items from Hurricane Katrina benefit local individuals

Throughout the fall and winter of 2007, TARC employees have distributed surplus household items purchased by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for Hurricane Katrina evacuees. These “homecoming boxes” contain items such as dinnerware, bedding, and ironing boards and were initially purchased for distribution to Katrina evacuees who settled in Oklahoma to begin rebuilding their lives and households.

Earlier this year, FEMA turned the remaining items over to the Developmental Disabilities Services Division of DHS, who appointed TARC to distribute the items to DDS service recipients in the Tulsa area. TARC has since distributed more than \$12,000 worth of household items to Oklahomans with developmental disabilities.

Staff in TARC’s Oklahoma Advocates Involved in Monitoring (OK-AIM) program contacted case managers and provider agencies in the area, alerting them to the availability of these commonly sought-after items and began organizing a schedule of distribution dates and locations. Margaret Goatcher, past president of the TARC board of directors and longtime agency supporter, graciously donated warehouse space to house the items until they could be distributed.

The distributed merchandise was issued to adults moving into their first apartments, people needing to replace worn or damaged items, and those lacking these common household items. 



The boxes don’t load themselves! John F. Gajda, TARC executive director, and Aaron Brown load a truck with an ironing board and bedding for a local adult with developmental disabilities.



TARC assistant executive director Aaron Brown and Fran Redding, OK-AIM field coordinator, prepare packages for provider agencies and case managers to pick up.



Bobby Lewis and Kat Avendano, of BIOS, pick up a truckload of household items for adults with developmental disabilities.

TARC in Action is published quarterly by Tulsa Advocates for the Rights of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Inc., for its members, for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and friends, for people interested in the challenges faced by this unique community, and for individuals who work in the field of mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. Contact TARC at 16 E. 16th St., Ste 405, Tulsa, OK 74119-4447. Phone 918/582-8272 or 800/688-8272. Fax 918/582-3628. Email us at: tarc@ddadvocacy.net

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A Message from Kent Garrett

As I compose my final address as

President, I wish to remind all who read this of the tremendous good this organization does for so many. The programs administered by TARC are many and varied. TARC programs offer supports to individuals and their families at all stages of the lifespan. Furthermore, TARC promotes advocacy and activism that benefits its members and clients, and the community as a whole. I am personally forever grateful for the support TARC has provided my family, and fully expect the ongoing programs to further benefit my son and family for many years to come.

I also wish to remind you of the wealth of information that appears in the monthly newsletter. If you are reading this newsletter, the quarterly *TARC in Action*, and are not familiar with the agency's monthly newsletter, I urge you to visit our website to read back issues of the monthly newsletter. TARC, and its Executive Director John Gajda in particular, keep us informed of the many resources and issues related to persons with developmental disabilities, their families, care providers, and advocates. I want to highlight just a few of the pieces that have appeared in recent newsletters...

- John shared some inspirational comments about influential persons in his life. Among them was Ms. Elizabeth Boggs, a founder of what now is the ARC of the US, and a renowned advocate for persons with developmental disabilities.

- *ADA 101: Parents' rights regarding childcare providers*, a valuable resource for parents as they seek quality childcare for their son or daughter with a disability.

- An article noting that with the late increase in the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders, there has been a dramatic increase in fad treatments. Often, these treatments are untested and unproven, at best, or harmful at worst.

- A U.S. Government Accountability Office study concluded that most of the over 200 federal programs on disability were ill prepared to



provide intended supports.

- The annual TARC speaker series was announced with topics including estate planning, self-directed services, lessons to be learned from our children, and tips for professionals working with Hispanic clients.


- An announcement of a National Institute of Health program to study causes and treatments for Autism.

- And, last but not least, the Oklahoma Developmental

Disabilities Services Division released its latest annual statistics that showed the number of persons on the waiting list for services and support has *grown!*

These are only a very few of the many important and useful pieces of information that have been brought to us in the most recent monthly TARC newsletters. Please, always take a moment to scan the newsletter to see if it contains information that can help your family. If you do not currently receive the monthly newsletter, I encourage you to become a member of TARC so you can enjoy the publication. Contact TARC at 918-582-8272 for information on becoming a member, or simply complete and return the membership form on page four of this newsletter.

TARC recently held its Annual meeting and Advocacy Awards-watch the spring edition of this newsletter for photos and a listing of winners. At the meeting, we elected several new members to the TARC Board of Directors. I am grateful for their commitment to serve the organization. We were also again inspired by the many nominees for the Advocacy Awards. Throughout the program, we were reminded again and again of the many ways in which individuals strive to improve the lives of Oklahomans with developmental disabilities.

It has been my pleasure to serve again as President of the Board of Directors of TARC. I wish to thank the other Board members who have served with me, and I wish to thank the staff of TARC for your continued good work. You are most appreciated. 

Day Makers Goes to the Birds

Winged visitors bring excitement to weekly meeting

Special guests made a big impression on participants in DayMakers, TARC's weekly activities program for adults with developmental disabilities earlier this year. Gifted Wings Ministry, an organization offering therapy birds and educational programming, brought nearly 20 birds to DayMakers to provide information and insight on these magnificent animals.

Participants learned about each bird's natural habitat, eating habits, and behavioral traits and were able to ask questions about the birds. The presenters also brought several of the birds into the audience, allowing participants to examine and pet the birds. The visit was a huge hit with those in attendance and Amie Farinella, TARC self-advocacy coordinator and facilitator of the group hopes to invite the birds and their caretakers back to DayMakers in the future. "This was by far the most popular activity we've ever done. In fact, several of the participants asked me the following week when the birds were coming back! It is




Michael Villines makes a new, winged, friend.



DayMakers participants, including Ace Manis, enjoyed the opportunity to hold the birds.

my hope that we can make Gifted Wings' visit an annual event."

DayMakers is a fun activities group for adults offering informative presentations and creative projects, as well as social interaction. Activities are often centered on various cultural traditions and holidays, in addition to crafts and games. 



Volunteers from Gifted Wings Ministry provided information about each of the birds, then walked through the aisles so participants could see each bird up close.

Join us for DayMakers!

When: Every Thursday from 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Where: McClure Park Recreation Center,
7440 E. 7th Street

Questions? Call Amie Farinella,
582-TARC

\$2 donation accepted

Donor Honor Roll

TARC wishes to thank the following organizations and individuals who made a donation to TARC from July to December 2007.

Virginia and Doug Baldrige
 Sylvia Braverman
 Stan and Irene Burnstein Foundation
 Care Dynamics, Inc.
 Kathleen and Richard Davis
 Christine Detrick
 Dr. Mary Bea Drummond
 Dorothy Endrizzi
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 Randa and Rowland Vernon
 Wodloe Foundation
 Emily and John Wolf
 Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation
 Maxine and Jack Zarrow Family
 Foundation

Welcome New TARC Members

TARC welcomes the following organizations and individuals who have joined TARC since July 2007.

Al Silkey

TARC Marks Disabilities Awareness Month with 5th Annual Speaker Series

TARC once again marked October as Disabilities Awareness Month by presenting the 5th annual speaker series. Informative lectures presented by dynamic speakers again drew individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and interested citizens to the lectures.

Topics covered in 2007 included:

Estate Planning Essentials for Your Child with Special Needs, an overview of estate planning tools available to provide for the long term needs of children with disabilities, was presented by Curt Shacklett, of the Barber and Bartz law firm.

The Autism Pilot and Self-Directed Services: What Lies Ahead?, a summary of findings from Oklahoma's autism pilot to date, as well as an overview of information on self-directed services was presented by Rene Daman of the Oklahoma Autism Network and James Nicholson, Director, DDSD.

What Can We Learn From Children With Special Needs?, the inspiring story of Zachary Moore's battle with Progeria, a




Molly Moore and Hobbs share information with parents on how service animals can increase quality of life by assisting with everyday tasks, such as removing socks.

rare and fatal disease that causes rapid aging was presented by his parents, Keith and Molly Moore.

The Culture Factor: An Overview of Working with Hispanic Clients, a presentation designed to define what "Hispanic" means and provide a basic knowledge about government, social class, race, formalities and lifestyle in Spanish-speaking countries, as well as teaching professionals techniques to interact more effectively with Hispanic clients, was presented by Zaida

Castro-Kepford and Lorena Arista.

Many of those in attendance completed comment cards, noting that they appreciated the amount of helpful information available in such a short time, as well as the quality of speakers making the presentations. Information for the 2008 Speaker Series, to be held in October, will be posted on the agency's website, www.dddadvocacy.net, as soon as it becomes available. 



Curt Shacklett leads a presentation on the importance of estate planning for parents of children with special needs.

Yes, I want to join TARC.

This is your invitation to join TARC, a grassroots organization of and for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Since 1952, TARC has been committed to Oklahomans with developmental disabilities and working to ensure a high quality of life for them and their families through education, empowerment, support, and advocacy.

Name _____

Address _____

Organization _____

City _____

Zip Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Please select the type of membership:

- Individual, \$25 Family, \$40 Organization, \$60 Sustaining, \$100 Patron, \$200

A TARC membership is an annual membership renewable in the month you join.

Please return this form to: TARC, 16 East 16th Street, Suite 405, Tulsa, OK 74119-4447

We welcome suggestions!

If there is a topic you would like to see covered in the 2008 Disabilities Month Speaker Series, please contact Amanda Turner, TARC director of communications at aturner@ddadvocacy.net or by calling 918-582-8272 x223.

TARC QuickTakes



Participants in DayMakers, TARC's activity group for adults, attended Tulsa's Day of the Dead Festival, a cultural event celebrating the Mexican holiday. DayMakers attendees created traditional art pieces, including sugar skulls and tissue paper marigolds, which were sold to raise funds for the program.



Rowena Hladik, receptionist and bookkeeper for TARC, retired from the agency this fall, after five years of service. Rowena is shown here with a gift basket of camping supplies presented to her by the TARC staff as a retirement gift. She and her husband Jim plan to see the country in their RV in their retirement-happy trails, Rowena!


Day of Caring Volunteers Visit TARC

To kickoff the 2007 Tulsa Area United Way campaign, more than 4,000 volunteers took part in the 16th Annual Day of Caring. Volunteers from area corporations gave their time to TAUW's 65 member agencies, including TARC, making the event the largest one-day volunteer event in the nation. Day of Caring participants contributed over 24,000 hours of community service to agencies, completing projects ranging from planting flowers, to painting buildings, to tackling filing cabinets in need of organization.



Volunteers from Payless Shoes donated their time to TARC as part of the Tulsa Area United Way's Day of Caring. Payless employees archived agency photographs, folded flyers, and created bookmarks for the Family Support Program.

Volunteers from Payless Shoes visited TARC to complete projects for the Family Support and Core Services programs. Payless volunteers helped preserve TARC's history by archiving old agency photographs from past annual meetings, People First conferences, and legislative rallies. In addition, volunteers

folded hundreds of support group brochures for the Family Support program so staff has copies readily available for meetings, community events, and appointments with clients. The volunteers also created decorative bookmarks for the Family Support Program, which include a poem describing a parent's journey as they learn their child has a developmental disability. The bookmarks are distributed at parent information fairs, conferences, and in the TARC office. 

- John F. Gajda**
Executive Director
- Aaron Brown**
Assistant Executive Director
- Lisa Berry**
ARCCorps Volunteer Recruiter/Coordinator
- Michelle Bissell**
ARCCorps Volunteer Recruiter/Coordinator
- Kelley Bowler**
OK-AIM Administrative Assistant
- Jeremy Clark**
ARCCorps Volunteer Recruiter/Coordinator
- Amie Farinella**
Self-Advocacy Coordinator
- Brenda Garrett**
ARCCorps Volunteer Recruiter/Coordinator
- Sally Hull**
Receptionist/Bookkeeper
- Jill Johnson Kliewer**
OK-AIM Area I Field Coordinator
- Donna Kerr**
OK-AIM Coordinator
- Kathleen Maupin**
ARCCorps Volunteer Recruiter/Coordinator
- Fran Redding**
OK-AIM Area II Field Coordinator
- Susan Reed**
OK-AIM Area III Field Coordinator
- Marla Stewart**
ARCCorps Administrative Assistant
- Amanda Turner**
Director of Communications
- Sherilyn Walton**
Family Support Coordinator
- Zaida Castro-Kepford**
Bilingual Outreach Specialist



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In Memoriam

Nathan Wofford

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The TARC family lost a dear friend this fall. On October 4, 2007, Nathan Wofford, son of TARC board member Kim Wofford, passed away. Nathan and Kim have been involved in TARC's family support program since Nathan's birth and he was the face of TARC, appearing in several brochures and posters, on the agency's website and traveling display, and in other agency marketing materials. Nathan was only 10 years old at the time of his death, but he made a lasting impression on those lucky enough to know him during his short time on earth.

The members, board of directors, and staff of TARC send our heartfelt condolences to Kim and her family, as well as our appreciation for their work to advocate for all families of children with developmental disabilities. 