

TARC *in Action* AUTUMN 2008

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

We have many skills, talents and abilities, but we are **People First!**

Self-advocacy organization teaches individuals to stand up for themselves

Tulsa People First (TPF) is a self-advocacy group sponsored by TARC and run by adults with developmental disabilities. Members elect officers each year to lead the group and Amie Farinella, TARC Self-Advocacy Coordinator, serves as the organization's advisor.


Each month, TPF hosts a monthly meeting including presentations on topics such as finances, community events, relationships, transportation and voting and for its members. The organization's mission is to help its members learn to speak for themselves, to provide a place for peer support, and to educate the community on disabilities issues. There are also monthly social activities such as bowling, attending community events, movies, and dances. All meetings and social outings are organized and planned by and for adults with developmental disabilities.

Farinella sees the impact involvement in the group has on the lives of self-advocates on a daily basis. "When individuals attend for the first time, they are often shy and somewhat withdrawn. Over time, though, they make friends with other members and become very outspoken in meetings and

and national self-advocacy conferences. TPF members recently participated in the planning of the Oklahoma People First state conference, which was held in Tulsa in October. TPF members helped secure conference speakers, organized logistics, and attended various workshops on topics such as guardianship, home ownership, civil rights and personal safety.

"TPF offers a unique environment for self-advocates to thrive. Not only does it provide an opportunity to make new friends, but it gives participants a venue to practice social skills, gain confidence, and build leadership skills," says Farinella. "The members' desire for and efforts to build a community where everyone is

respected and treated with dignity is a great model for the rest of us."

For more information on Tulsa People First meetings and activities, contact Farinella at 918-582-8272. 



TPF members Will Watkins, Mike Hilton and Kyle Graham help set-up for the statewide Oklahoma People First conference, held in Tulsa this October.

involved in planning activities. That carries over into their lives outside the group as well, and members become more outspoken, involved members of their communities as a result."

Not only do TPF members gain confidence and make new friends as a result of participating in the group, but they have the opportunity to network with other self-advocates and professionals in the field through state



Self-advocate Donnette Scott signs a petition during Tulsa People First's annual outing to the Tulsa State Fair.

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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Autumn 2008

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From the President

It's difficult to believe that 2008 is winding down and the board of directors and staff of TARC are busy planning for 2009! I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board of directors for the guidance and support they have provided to the agency this year. My tenure as board president was made much easier with the help of their expertise, leadership, and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

As the year draws to a close, it won't be long before we gather with family and friends to celebrate holiday traditions and give thanks for the blessings in our lives. I am thankful for the dedicated professionals working in the field of developmental disabilities, the parents of children with disabilities whose advocacy on their child's behalf improves services available to all children, and the advocates who work for changes in our government to better provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. I challenge you to look back over the last year and reflect on the needs you have seen for people with developmental disabilities and make a conscious effort in 2009 to become involved in organizations and activities that are working to meet those needs. Of course, TARC offers several opportunities for those looking to volunteer their time, be it as a volunteer guardian or advocate in the ARCCorps program or as a monitor reviewing the quality of residential services funded by the state in the OK-AIM program. Call TARC at 918-582-8272 to learn more about either of these opportunities today!

2009 will undoubtedly be met with feelings of anxiety and uncertainty for most of us, as we nervously await indicators to tell us if our struggling economy will soon be on the road to recovery or if more hard times lie ahead. Families across Oklahoma are feeling the pinch of higher fuel prices, increased utility costs, layoffs, and stock market losses. History shows that when we are in an economic downturn, social service agencies inevitably see an increased need for their services. That being said, I encourage you to consider making a year-end gift to TARC to ensure that the agency continues to meet the needs of Oklahomans with developmental disabilities and their families. A donation of any amount is appreciated, and will be used to provide support to individuals and families as they navigate the service system at critical times in their lives; coordinate support groups for both English and Spanish-speaking families of children with developmental disabilities, and for adolescents and adults with Asperger's syndrome; offer a variety of self-advocacy activities that help adults with developmental disabilities to be successful in their daily lives and live more independently; and provide information and referrals to the thousands of callers who turn to TARC each year for information on disabilities topics.

It has been an honor to serve as president of the TARC board of directors and I appreciate all that our members, donors and staff do for individuals and their families. I wish each of you a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year! 



Donor Honor Roll

TARC wishes to thank the following are organizations and individuals who made a donation to TARC between June-October 2008.

- Tom and Billie Clarke
- Goatcher Foundation
- Tulsa Metro Civitan Club
- Jack and Maxine Zarrow Foundation

Welcome New TARC Members

TARC welcomes the following organizations and individuals who have joined TARC since June 2008.

- Catherine Abram
- Tom Claiborne
- Patricia Cox
- Suzanne Drover
- Dawn Harig
- Kristy Mabbs
- Wanda Wells

ARCCorps Volunteer Honored for Dedication to Individuals with Developmental Disabilities



The Polony's on a recent visit to the home of the three men they serve through TARC's ARCCorps program. From left: Rex Medley, Cathy Polony, Larry Hall, Bob Polony, and James King (seated).

Cathy Polony, a volunteer with TARC's ARCCorps program, was recently named a finalist for Allstate Insurance Company's Ray Lynch Community Service Award, which recognizes Allstate agency owners dedicated to making positive contributions in the communities they serve. One Ray Lynch Award finalist in each of Allstate's 14 regions receives \$500 from The Allstate Foundation to distribute to a non-profit organization where they give their time to serve the local community. The annual award winner receives a \$5,000 Allstate Foundation grant for a local, charitable organization.

Cathy and her husband Bob have been ARCCorps volunteers since 2005. They are the appointed guardians of two men with developmental disabilities and the advocate for another. As ARCCorps volunteers, Cathy and Bob assist the men in making important decisions that affect their health, safety, and personal development. They attend all meetings, visit the home regularly, and ensure they have quality care, services, and nutrition. In the past, when their care has been less than adequate, Bob and Cathy have called team meetings and advocated to quickly remedy the situation. They have built strong relationships with

themselves. TARC makes sure there is an advocate who cares enough to make sure their home is clean, there is food in the fridge, they are getting out occasionally for a fun activity, and that someone spends quality time with them. It is such a worthy cause."

Congratulations on this recognition for your important work, Cathy! 🎉

all three IP teams and will drop everything to attend to "their guys."

"Working with TARC is very rewarding for me, but important work as well," said Polony. "Most of these individuals do not have anyone to care about them or make sure they are being treated fairly because they cannot advocate or speak up for them-

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

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- Zaida Castro-Kepford**
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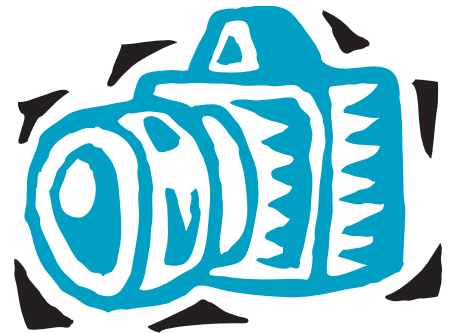


Member Agency



Tulsa Area United Way

TARC QuickTakes



A panel of experts makes a presentation on recruiting, retaining and supporting quality support staff for individuals with developmental disabilities during TARC's 6th annual Disabilities Month Speaker Series. Nearly 100 people attended the three installments of the series, which was held throughout October.

Volunteers from Bank of Oklahoma made bookmarks outlining services provided by TARC's Family Support Program to be handed out at resource fairs and community events as part of the annual Day of Caring, held in September.

