Providing Advocacy and Support to Families and Individuals with Disabilities

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

Arc Community Services
MATSON COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.
Alliance for Resource Management
"I am only one, but still, I am one.
I cannot do everything but I can do something.
And, because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do what I can."

- Edward Everett Hale

There were many successes as well as many challenges in Fiscal Year 2011, which drew upon the strength and resilience of our individuals and staff. No one person can do everything, but each person affiliated with the organization has done something to make a difference.

Some of the year’s highlights include:
- Progressed on goals outlined in the strategic plan by both staff and board members
- Hired a new design team for the renovation project: McKenzie Engineering of Leominster
- Received a $600,000 gift from an anonymous donor, which was facilitated by the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts
  - Hired an internal construction project manager to oversee the renovations
  - Significantly increased our media presence in several newspapers, as well as on TV, internet and radio
  - Launched the Renovate-a-Square Campaign; donations can still be made at www.arc-matson.org/squares
  - Secured a $50,000 grant from The Crocker Foundation
  - Received a matching challenge grant from HH Gagnon, Inc. of up to $125,000
  - Supported families and individuals to convince state legislators to delay Mass Health cuts
  - Advocated with funders to cover deficits caused by historically underfunded contracts with end-of-year money
- Acquired three new business partners for our in-house production center representing 13 new job training opportunities and three new group work sites
- Placed inaccessible group home on the market and began search for accessible group home
- Launched The Ron Hurd Lecture Series with six educational opportunities provided to families
- Worked with 89 local and regional artists to transform old chairs from Monson State Hospital into works of art sold at the Artistic Chair Auction
- Restructured the Home Based Support division into two focused areas: Enhanced Adult Family Supports (Medicaid funded) and Shared Living (DDS funded), which resulted in program expansion in both areas and better supports to families
- Revised the staff compensation structure based upon 2010 data gathered by Third Sector, which resulted in improved wages for most staff although not yet providing a living wage for our direct care professionals
- Introduced the Young Athletes program to 10 families of 3 to 8 year olds
- Successfully completed our annual audit once again with no findings and with commendations for our strong financial practices
- Sustained $400,000 in damage to our Park Snow Building as a result of the Johnsonia Fire
- Supported all individuals in a safe and secure manner during Hurricane Irene
- Infused new monies into our Vocational, Day Habilitation and Supported Community Options Programs by recruiting students who were turning 22
- Responded to the roller coaster of changes in funding of our Department of Elementary and Secondary Education program

In the coming year, I ask you to join me to do what you can for this vibrant, experienced and determined organization. With each one doing what we can, we will change the world for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities of all ages and their families.

Yours in Service,

Mary Heafy

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Day Services

The Day Services Program operates under two models: Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) and Day Habilitation. The Supported Community Options (SCOP) and Elder Services programs fall under the CBDS model. SCOP, a stepping-stone to and from full time work, includes a blend of employment and recreational activities. The Elder Services program offers older adults a retirement option while supporting them through the aging process. Day Habilitation provides a therapeutic and medical approach to skill building that includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, behavioral management, and health care supervision through nursing.

Family Support and Advocacy

The Family Support Program responds to families by providing a non-judgmental and confidential setting to share information and get answers to situations they are facing. A variety of supports are offered including support groups, family education and trainings, legislative and programmatic updates, family fun and networking days, food baskets and gifts during the holiday season, information and referral services, resource material, links to local specialized and main-streamed services.

Jillian was a shy young woman reluctant to speak for herself when she first joined the Arc Self-Advocacy group. The group gave her encouragement that helped her begin to develop the skills to articulate her thoughts and feelings, take on a leadership role with her peers, and become active in her community. She helped write a letter protesting proposed budget cuts for disability services to the State Rate Setting Commission and the Massachusetts Legislature and attends many state advocacy events. As her confidence grew, Jillian found a job in a retail store, signed up for drama courses, and registered for classes at Mt. Wachusett Community College. Jillian is poised to begin a vibrant life as a contributing member of her community.

Annually, students from Lawrence Academy in Groton MA, participate in a two-week project in the Day Services program. Many of the students have an impact on the lives of the people we support; however, in 2009, Nick came in with a group of students and we immediately recognized something more in him. He displayed a natural and compassionate way of making special connections with people that changed his life forever. At the end of the project, Nick inquired about doing volunteer work over the summer and committed two days a week offering an extra pair of hands while assisting our music therapist with groups. His experience with us has led him to make a life changing career choice in Music Therapy.
Home Based Supports - Shared Living Program

The Shared Living Program matches adults with disabilities to people in the community who are willing to share their homes and lives by offering support, stability, and skill development so that the individual can live in community settings and meet his or her personal goals of independence. Each home care provider undergoes an intensive screening process to be eligible for this program and must be approved by committee before any placement is made.

Richard is a 61 year-old man who is well known and respected in his community. Each day, he accompanies his provider to their local gift shop where he spends his time greeting and engaging the customers. With their commitment to make Richard a part of the family and help him fulfill his dreams, his provider took him on vacation to Florida this year by train. They recognized that due to Down Syndrome and the early onset of Alzheimer’s, this may be the last opportunity for Richard to fulfill a personal goal of travel.

Home Based Supports - EAFC

The Enhanced Adult Foster Care (EAFC) program assists families caring for a relative in their home who has a developmental disability or who is elderly and is in need of assistance with daily living or medical supports. The EAFC program offers a number of resources including nursing, trainings, social work visits, along with opportunities to network and connect with other families living with similar circumstances. In addition, each family receives a stipend to aid with additional expenses. EAFC gives the opportunity for a family member with disabilities to continue living at home in their community where they thrive and lead fulfilling lives.

One family encourages and actively fosters their son Kevin’s involvement with his school, friends, family and the community as a whole. Like most young men, Kevin desires to live an independent life including the option to date without mom and dad tagging along. Using funding provided by the EAFC program, the family recently hired a support person to accompany Kevin on a date with his girlfriend. The support person, a young man around Kevin’s age, brought his girlfriend along and they went on a double date. The family shaped an opportunity that allowed Kevin to go out into the community on a date in a way that was independent yet supportive.
Supported Community Living

The Supported Community Living Program (SCL) provides people, 22 years of age or older, with person-centered case management supports necessary to live independently and safely in the community. Supports include assistance with housing, transportation, money management, meal preparation, life skills, and medical care. The SCL program actively supports participants to become integrated members of their community.

Previously, Sam participated in DESE program until three years ago when he turned 22 and was no longer eligible for the program. As if graduating high school was not a big enough step to take, Sam moved into his own condo in a new town and began receiving independent living supports through the SCL program. Sam quickly adjusted to living on his own and learned how to fully access his new community. He uses the Dial-a-Ride transportation system to go to the gym, walks to the local hospital to pick up his medication, to the grocery store for small purchases and to the church down his street to join other locals for dinner once a week. Sam gives back to his community by volunteering with outside maintenance work the Veteran’s Skating Arena.

Residential Supports

The Residential program supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in multiple community residences throughout the Worcester and North Central Massachusetts areas. Individuals are encouraged and supported by staff to become independent, productive, and active members of their community.

Tracy, a 31 year-old woman living in one of our community residences, participates in community activities that bring her happiness and lasting friendships. Tracy is an active member at the Seventh Day Adventist church in Fitchburg where she participates in worship, sings hymns with friends, and bakes monthly for their potluck meal. Through her joy of singing, Tracy has built a close connection to the song leader at the church who checks with her each week as to what songs she would like on the song list.
DESE / DDS

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education / Department of Developmental Services (DESE/DDS) program supports children between 6 and 21 years of age with significant behavioral and/or physical needs to continue living at home, thus preventing a restrictive residential placement. The program provides the flexibility to deliver cost effective family support services while meeting the necessary requirements to support the child’s unique needs.

Recreation Program

The Recreation program provides diverse, year-round leisure and group activities that play an important role in the emotional and social growth of people of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Programs include the Special Olympics, bowling and miniature golf leagues, monthly dances, weekend recreation club, overnight trips, annual family vacation, holiday gatherings, and many other special events throughout the year.

Chad, a sixteen-year-old boy with Autism, works at a local barn, feeding animals, grooming horses, and sheering sheep. Due to this connection made through DESE services, Chad is learning the importance of asking his co-workers necessary questions concerning the care of the animals and following a routine to ensure the health and safety of the animals. This spring, Chad attended his school prom with his Best Buddy from the Best Buddies program where he danced with his friends and received the “Best Dancer” award. These experiences within the community are helping Chad develop critical social and communication skills.

After years of playing on town sports teams with his younger brother, 12-year old Ryan joined the Challenger Little League sponsored by the Fitchburg Recreation Department. After a couple years, his coach encouraged Ryan to join a more competitive program through the Arc’s Special Olympics unified sports. Ryan joined the Blue Jay team where he refined his baseball skills. Along with the support of family and friends, this gave him the self-confidence to try out and make for the Junior Varsity team at the Minuteman Technical High School in Lexington. Ryan is a determined young man who never lets a disability keep him from playing sports.
Vocational - Employment Resources

Employment Resources offers work to everyone who enters the vocational program through on the job training and skill building. The program offers a continuum of opportunities that allows people to progressively build the skills they need to obtain competitive employment including center-based production, small groups working in the community, and competitive employment placement.

By The Numbers

Individuals may have been counted in more than one service area

**FAMILY SUPPORTS** 11,096
- Legislative Alerts & Informational Emails • 2,500
- Mailings • 1,250 families, 6 times a year
- Information & Referral • 325
- Family Events • 578
- Workshops & Training • 30
- Support Groups • 163

**RECREATION** 1,980
- Dances • 800
- Trips • 120
- Special Olympics • 265
- Bowling & Mini Golf League • 95
- Weekend Drop-in • 700

**RESIDENTIAL** 43
- Six North Central Residential Homes • 29
- Three Worcester Residential Homes • 14

**URBAN YOUTH PROGRAM** 8

**SERVICE STATISTICS 2011**

**VOCATIONAL** 118
- Employment Resources • 60
- Enclaves • 28
- Competitive Placements • 15
- Assessments • 15

**COMMUNITY BASED DAY SUPPORTS** 65
- Elder Services • 19
- Supportive Community Options • 46

**DAY HABILITATION** 58

**SUPPORTED COMMUNITY LIVING** 65

**DESE/DDS PROGRAM** 14

**HOME-BASED SUPPORTS** 71
- Enhanced AFC Program • 36 families / 37 individuals
- Shared Living • 34

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Our Mission

To create lifetime opportunities for persons with disabilities to reach their fullest potential by providing advocacy, education, employment, residential and recreational services.

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