

Learning About and Celebrating Our Diversity



ARI has begun a new initiative to learn about diversity within our community and beyond. Together, consumers and staff are focusing on awareness and different cultures. The Day Program is focusing on one culture at a time.

On April 21, the Community Experience Group #1 presented information about El Coqui, a very small frog that lives in Puerto Rico. Joey read the definition of diversity to the group. Staff member Hector Torres provided information about El Coqui to the group. Each consumer in the CE #1 group did art work and made a necklace with El Coqui on it. They also created a poster with pictures and information about El Coqui. They included music with the sounds of El Coqui in the background. After the presentation, salsa music was played for everyone to listen and dance to.

On April 28, the Seniors Group presented information on Passover. This group created a poster providing information and pictures about this major Jewish holiday. Information was provided by staff Carline Archer and Christine Alexander about the Seder and stories. Consumers Rita, Katherine, Laura and Betty all showed some of the ceremonial items used during the eight days of Passover. They provided Jewish music, grape juice and Matzah for everyone to taste and enjoy.



On May 4, the Life Skills Group presented information about Italy. Each consumer made an Italian flag. Libby explained the colors of the flag and Latoya was able to explain what each color represents; Hope, Faith and Charity. The group also created a poster with pictures and information about Italian culture. Staff member Felicia Drungo provided everyone with information about Italian food, sports, capital and art. After the oral presentation, they played Italian music for all to listen and dance to. They also made a light Italian snack which included fruit, Italian cheese, bread, and sparkling cider.



Enriching the lives of people with disabilities and their families by enabling them to achieve their fullest potential at home, at work and in the community.

From the President & CEO

Photo by Bernie Weiss



The cold days of winter and early spring are finally behind us and now we can look forward to the warmth of summer! I love this time of year as the trees and flowers bloom and remind us that even things that appear to be dormant or dying can bring forth new life, hope and beauty.

We continue to be challenged by cuts in state funding, increasing needs of the aging population we serve, and growing expenses to maintain aging facilities. Yet, we press on knowing that seasons change and new opportunities will develop, just as surely as spring returns each year.

We have now completed three quarters of our fiscal year and are managing our operating expenses much better than the last few years. We have made strides to improve our program services, as evidenced by state program reviews. And, we are seeing an increase in both financial and volunteer support from our community. These are wonderful signs that things are looking up. But we still have far to go. We continue to evaluate every one of our programs and are making difficult yet essential decisions to help strengthen our organization. To learn more about where we are, what our future may look like, *and* what you can do to help, PLEASE attend the State of the Agency meeting on June 9. See the back page of this newsletter for more information. All are welcome!

I am truly grateful for every one of our family members, volunteers, donors and supporters. It is because of you that we are able to keep doing our important work. I am deeply thankful to our staff that is dedicated to ensuring that the people we serve live happy, productive lives in a healthy, safe environment. Most of all, I am continually inspired by the people we serve, who work hard each day to be the best that they can be. They are the ones who challenge us to find new and creative ways to meet their needs with fewer resources.

I fully believe that it takes a village to raise a family. The ARI family might be smaller than others, but we are determined and devoted. With your help, we will grow our village of friends, donors and supporters to ensure that our family thrives for many years to come.

Thank you for being an essential part of our village!

With sincere appreciation,
Susanne D. Kuligowski
President & CEO

If you are interested in receiving the newsletter and other communications from ARI electronically, please email gasparinog@arict.org.

10th Walk for Independence



Despite the cold rain on Sunday, May 1, 2016, over 250 people attended the 10th Annual Walk for Independence at Cove Island Park. Mayor David Martin, Senator Richard Blumenthal (who served on ARI's Board of Directors from 1987 to 1990), State Representative Caroline Simmons, and the Stamford Police were there to support us. Mayor Martin once again led the walk, with the assistance of Rickey Denes, ARI Consumer representative to the Board of Directors. Eleanor Casale, from Dance with El, led the warm up. We would like to thank all of our sponsors including Liz Sue Bagels, Napoli Meat and Sausage Company, W.B. Mason, and Subway of West Main Street for providing food and drink for the event. Photos were taken by ARI art teacher and professional photographer, Charles Wieschahn. They can be seen on the ARI facebook page. A list of all sponsors can be seen in this newsletter or at www.arict.org.



Recreation & Volunteers



ARI volunteer Diana Holdtsman returned to our weekly Aqua-Aerobics program. Twenty individuals from ARI and other organizations enjoy exercising in the Darien YMCA pool.

On Friday, December 11, 2015, members of the Stamford Police Association handed out presents to each of the consumers at ARI at the annual Holiday Party. Along with the presents, consumers were treated to lunch provided by board member Renee Brown, owner of Renee's Soul Food Kitchen and music provided by DJ Jeffree Stroffolino.

On Monday, December 21, 2015, over seventy consumers attended a Holiday Party at the Knights of Columbus. This annual tradition is

donated by Michael Powers Catering and the Knights of Columbus. On Tuesday, November 17, 2015, a group of volunteers from the University of Virginia Alumni Association spearheaded a bingo night for 15 consumers. The group donated pizza and prizes for the event.

The Stamford Symphony continued their support by donating tickets to the November and January concerts for 10 consumers.

On Friday, January 8, 2016, the United Way of Western Connecticut presented the Stamford Volunteer of the Year Award to Donald Axleroad for his work with the ARI Artists' Initiative and his years of service on the ARI Board of Directors. ARI is truly grateful for Don's commitment to our agency.



For more information about volunteer opportunities, please contact Gerard J. Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at gasparinog@arict.org.

We remember . . .



Douglas "Dougie" White passed away on December 30, 2015 at the age of 68. Dougie was the son of Francis White, a founding parent of ARI. Dougie was well known in the Stamford community and a consumer at ARI for several decades. Dougie was well known for the bike he rode up and down the High Ridge area of Stamford. Dougie was a caring individual, loved by many at ARI and in the community.

James Goldsmith passed away on Monday, January 11, 2016 at the age of 81. Jim, though never a formal consumer at ARI, was involved with many of the recreation activities at ARI. He was married to

long-time ARI consumer, Sandy Goldsmith. Jim was a member of the ARI Artist Initiative and produced a large portfolio of artwork that was seen in many shows throughout the area. Jim was also a Special Olympian competing in swimming, bowling, bocce and other sports. Jim had a passion to continue learning, became proficient on the computer and took many classes at the Senior Center.



Dougie and Jim were true inspirations and proof that people with disabilities can thrive in their communities and accomplish anything they desire. ARI will miss both of these special individuals.

Thank you for Supporting ARI of Connecticut!!
Just fill out and mail this form to ARI of CT, 174 Richmond Hill Avenue, Stamford CT 06902.

- ☐ Benefactor \$2,500 +
- ☐ Leader \$1,000-\$2,499
- ☐ Supporter \$500-\$999
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- ☐ Enclosed is a completed form from my employer's matching gift program.

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Exp ____/____/____ 3 digit # on back of card: _____

For more information, please go to www.arict.org or call 203 324-9258, ext. 3023

Grants and Support



On Saturday, November 14, 2015, 30 individuals from Charter Communications and the Stamford Police Force volunteered their time at the Lotstein Residence. The project was coordinated by Rebuilding Together Hartford and Fairfield County. Volunteers painted the kitchen and dining area, along with repairing the kitchen cabinets and outside stairwell. All supplies for the project were purchased and donated by Rebuilding Together and Charter Communications.



ARI of Connecticut, Inc. received \$1,000 from the Berkowitz Law Firm Charitable Trust for general support.

Robert Riith, Knights of Columbus Grand Knight and Kenny D'Andrea, Past ARI Board Member & KOC member, presented a check for \$10,000 to ARI at their Annual Communion Breakfast on Sunday, February 14, 2016. The Knights of Columbus support ARI of Connecticut, Inc. each year through the annual Tootsie Roll Drive and Frank J. Robotti Memorial Golf Outing.

Donald Axleroad, founder of the ARI Artist Initiative Art Program, will continue to support the 2015–2016 sessions. Funding will be utilized for the teacher and supplies for 37 classes.

First Congregational Church donated \$500 and gift cards to their thrift shop to assist consumers. They also continue to treat ARI consumers to their “Downtown Eats” luncheon on the second Saturday of each month.

The Stamford Police Association sponsored their 60th Holiday Party with a generous donation of \$2,000, which was used for over 100 consumer gifts and other party expenses.

In April, ARI of Connecticut, Inc., was awarded a \$1,000 grant from the Staples 2 Million & Change program to assist in purchasing equipment and curriculum materials for the Day Program

Friends of ARI pledged \$4,000 to support the purchase and installation of an exterior lift at the Lotstein Residence. The lift will provide accessibility to the home for our aging residents.

An anonymous supporter donated \$13,000 for the purchase and installation of a stair lift at the Tally Ho residence. The stair lift will allow residents to continue living in their home as their physical needs increase.



On Sunday, January 31, 2016, 20 individuals, coordinated through Rebuilding Together Fairfield County, painted 6 program rooms at the Richmond Hill facility. Volunteers included groups from AFA, Inc., First County Bank, University of Michigan Alumni Association, Community Volunteers in Action, Ski Bears and Rebuilding Together Board of Directors. All supplies for the project were purchased and donated by Rebuilding Together.

On Saturday, April 23, 2016, 20 individuals, coordinated through Rebuilding Together Fairfield County and the University of Virginia Alumni Association, painted 4 program rooms at the Richmond Hill facility. Volunteers included groups from the University of Virginia Alumni Association, University of Michigan Alumni Association, Ski Bears and Rebuilding Together Board of Directors. All supplies for the project were purchased and donated by Rebuilding Together and the UVA Alumni Association.

Thank you to the following sponsors of the **10th Annual ARI Walk for Independence.**

For information on becoming a sponsor for future events, contact Gerard Gasparino, Manager of Development and Recreation at gasparinog@arict.org or (203) 324-9258 ext. 3023.

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Staff News

New Hires

Shawn Chisolm, Residential Counselor, Truglia
Shawnita Coote, Residential Counselor, Truglia
Aesha Felton, Residential Counselor, I.H.S.
Gillian Graham, Residential Counselor, Palermo
Peter Heinsohn, Director of Finance
Farah Jasmin, Registered Nurse
Toshaunda Powell, Residential Counselor, Lotstein
Natoiya Williams, Licensed Practical Nurse

Promotions

Tiajuana Fogle was promoted from Residential Counselor, Lotstein to Day Service Options Coordinator.

Recognition

Congratulations to our staff celebrating their 5, 10, 15, and 20 year anniversaries and the winners of our annual staff awards.

5 Year

Daphne Charlow, Residential Counselor, I.H.S.;
Willie Clark, Employment Specialist, Group Supported Employment
Tiajuana Fogle, Residential Counselor, Lotstein
Herbert Kasedde, Skills Instructor, Day Service Options
Kendra Williams, Residential Counselor, Tally Ho

10 Year

Valerie Ennis, Employment Specialist, Employment Services
Micheline Gabriel, Residential Counselor, Palermo
Gerard Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation
Gloria Jackson, Skills Instructor, Volunteer Services
Sharon Jennings, Program Manager
Vickie Manuel, Residential Counselor, Lotstein
Carlton Martin, Residential Counselor, I.H.S.
Sheldon Morrison, Systems Administrator
Jolene Mazzeo, Director of Human Resources
Jacques Richeme, Skills Instructor, Day Service Options
Robin White-Dimmock, Skills Instructor, Day Service Options

15 Year

Joy Henry-Oguguo, Skills Instructor, Day Service Options

20 Year

Max Brisseaux, Residential Counselor, Sunrise Cottage
Theresa Brown, Skills Instructor, Employment Services
Elizabeth King, Finance Department

Rookie of the Year Award: Inna Zelenberg, Manager of Day Service Options

Heart of the Agency Award: Christine Alexander, Skills Instructor, Day Service Options

Always Reaching for Independence Award: Juan Tavarez Espinal, Residential Counselor, Sunrise Cottage

Team Award: Group Support Employment, Clifford Beaulieu, Manager of Employment Services; Willie Clark, Employment Specialist; Marvin Lewis, Skills Instructor

ARI Wish List – YOU CAN HELP!

Want to help but don't know where to start? Here is a list of opportunities to support our programs and services. You can make a real difference in the lives of our consumers by making a donation or giving your time and expertise. If you are interested in donating or assisting with any of these needs please contact Gerard Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at (203) 324-9258 ext. 3023 or email gasparinog@arict.org.

Sponsor the ARI Artists' Initiative

- ☐ Annual ARI Artists' Initiative Sponsor \$10,000
- ☐ Art Class Sponsor \$5,000
- ☐ Class supplies \$2,500
- ☐ Special projects, printing of greeting cards, and the calendar \$2,500

Upcoming Event Title Sponsors

- ☐ 21st Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament, July 28 2016, \$5,000
- ☐ 2nd Annual Gospel Concert for Independence, Fall 2016, \$5,000
- ☐ 10th Annual Walk for Independence, May 2017, \$5,000

In-Kind Donations and Volunteer Opportunities

- ☐ Refrigerator (like new) for the new ARI Snack Bar
- ☐ Painting (interior and exterior)
- ☐ Landscaping at Group Homes
- ☐ ARI Committees and Events Volunteers
- ☐ Aqua-Aerobics Instructor
- ☐ Art Class Teacher / Assistant
- ☐ ARI Website Redesign
- ☐ Fundraising Database entry and updating
- ☐ Computers that meet the Windows 7 system requirements
- ☐ Lead activities and parties in group homes

AmazonSmile

Shopping online? Go to our website www.arict.org first and click on the AmazonSmile logo on the ARI homepage. Designate ARI of CT and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to us whenever you shop via AmazonSmile. It is the same Amazon you know – same products, same prices, same service.



Click on the Goodshop Logo on the ARI homepage and a portion of purchases made on this site will be donated to ARI.



21st ANNUAL ARI Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament and Awards Dinner



Thursday, July 28, 2016 • Sterling Farms Golf Course, Stamford

Registration and Lunch beginning at noon.

Shotgun Start at 1:45 p.m.

Awards Dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Proceeds to support programs and services provided by ARI of CT whose mission is to enrich the lives of people with disabilities by enabling them to achieve their fullest potential at home, at work and in the community.

EVENT Sponsorships

☐ Tournament Sponsor \$5,000

Two Foursomes
Primary listing as Official Sponsor
Banner on course
Additional dinner guest invitations

☐ Major Sponsor \$2,500

One Foursome
Listing on all printed materials
Tee sign on course
Additional dinner guest invitations

☐ Hole-in-One Sponsor \$1,000

Two Golfers
Listing in program
Tee sign on course
Two additional dinner invitations

☐ Eagle Sponsor \$750

One Golfer
Listing in program
Tee sign on course
One additional dinner invitation

☐ Birdie Sponsor \$500

One Golfer
Listing in program
Tee sign on course

☐ Tee Sponsor \$250

Listing in program
Tee sign on course
One dinner invitation

☐ Personalized Golf Flag \$75

☐ Dinner only, per person \$75

REGISTRATION

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

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Other golfer's names _____

☐ _____ Golf @ \$175 each \$ _____

☐ _____ Golf and one dinner guest @ \$225 \$ _____

☐ _____ Dinner only @ \$75 each \$ _____

☐ \$5,000 Tournament Sponsor

☐ \$2,500 Major Sponsor

☐ \$1,000 Hole-in-One Sponsor

☐ \$750 Eagle Sponsor

☐ \$500 Birdie Sponsor

☐ \$250 Tee Sponsor

For more information
or questions, please call
Gerard Gasparino,
(203) 324-9258 ext. 3023 or
email gasparinog@arict.org
or go to
www.arict.org

Please make checks payable to ARI of CT
and mail with this form to:
Golf Tournament c/o ARI of CT
174 Richmond Hill Ave., Stamford, CT 06902



ARI of Connecticut, Inc.,
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Stamford, Connecticut 06902
WWW.ARICT.ORG

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SUSANNE KULIGOWSKI, CEO OF ARI OF CONNECTICUT, REPORTS ON THE
STATE OF THE AGENCY
THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2016 AT 6:30 P.M.

ST. BRIDGET OF IRELAND CHURCH, 278 STRAWBERRY HILL AVENUE, STAMFORD, CT

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS.

RSVP BY 6/6/16 AT WWW.ARICT.ORG OR CONTACT JUDY BRUEN AT 203 324-9258, EXT. 3003

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