

## DDS Mandated Furlough Day Draws ARI Together



Every day without a properly-funded state budget, people with disabilities suffer.

As a result of the DDS Commissioner's implemented Resource Allocation Plan, (absent of a state budget) ARI's Day Services program was closed on Wednesday, July 26, 2017. This was the first of six furlough days that Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) non-profit providers will be forced to take, at great cost to their agencies. Consumers had no choice but to stay home that day, disrupting family routines and expectations for much-needed care.

Staff, family members and members of the community attended an ARI press conference to express their serious concerns about the devastating impact this has upon the most vulnerable citizens in our community. The press conference was covered in the *Stamford Advocate* and News 12 CT.

The furlough days are only a part of the devastating cuts to private providers. Funding cuts of an average of 10% to all services will begin in the fall, unless a budget is approved that will adequately fund services for people with disabilities.

Despite the fiscal climate and the added stress of the furlough day – true to ARI's unwavering spirit – staff arranged for uninterrupted coverage and care for our residential consumers who would have been at ARI that day. In fact, they gathered together for a big BBQ at Palermo House. This is clear evidence that commitment to our mission remains undeterred and enriching the lives of the people we support will continue, despite these challenges.

In order for ARI to continue to fulfill our mission and provide essential services, we need a budget that fully funds supports for people with disabilities. Our consumers, their families and our staff are all counting on our legislators to act quickly.

Our legislators need to be made aware that their inaction is causing a threatening situation for individuals with disabilities and the non-profit agencies like ARI that serve them. Please keep the pressure on, reach out to your elected officials, write letters to the editor of local newspapers, and "like" and "share" ARI's Facebook postings to spread the word about the impact of this inhumane crisis.

For more information on how you can advocate for people with developmental disabilities, please contact Susanne D. Kuligowski at [kuligowskis@arict.org](mailto:kuligowskis@arict.org) or by calling (203) 324-9258 ext. 3028.

**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



I hope you are enjoying your summer, and that you have taken time to slow down and spend time with friends and family. At ARI, things haven't really slowed down much at all, but we do value the opportunity to spend time together while enjoying this beautiful time of year.

This is a very challenging time for ARI and all of the private providers in Connecticut. We are struggling to keep up while our funding from the state has been cut and furlough days are being imposed on us. But we won't let that get in the way of fulfilling our mission.

Many of our consumers have enjoyed wonderful vacations with family and friends, or summer camp. Many of our staff members have also taken vacation time to be with family, rest, and return to work refreshed, energized.

As we close the books on the fiscal year ending June 30th, we are happy to report that it was the best year we've had in a very long time. I am incredibly thankful to our generous donors and supporters for making this possible. Through their support, we've been able to purchase eight vehicles, update our computer lab with new hardware and software programs to teach essential skills to our consumers, and provide a level of staffing to ensure that our consumers are healthy and happy.

There is much to look forward to in the months ahead. I am most excited about our 65th Anniversary Celebration on October 27th. For this fun-filled night, we are planning a spectacular party for our consumers and guests. We will also be honoring our founding families – the Martins and the Lotsteins – and our past board chairs for the impact they have had on ARI and those we serve. I hope you will save this date and come celebrate with us!

I am extremely thankful for the ongoing support of every member of the ARI Family – our donors and sponsors, our staff, and mostly our consumers and their families. It is such a privilege for me to serve in this role, knowing the impact that ARI is having on so many people.

Thank you for being an essential part of our ARI Family!

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](mailto:gasparinog@arict.org).

## ARI Walk for Independence



Over 300 people attended the 11th Annual Walk for Independence at Cove Island Park on Sunday, April 30. Once again, we raised awareness and funds with the help of our friends, families, staff, consumers and board. The event was a raving success thanks to all our walkers, local and national dignitaries, donors, and sponsors. Mayor David Martin, Senator Richard Blumenthal and State Representative Caroline Simmons were on hand to support us. Eleanor Casale, of Dance with El, led the warm up exercises before Mayor Martin and the Stamford Police started the walk. Stamford Hospital returned as the Race Sponsor. Other corporate sponsors included Distance Sponsors: The Umbrella Club and The Schuster Group; Pacesetter Sponsors: Connecticut Pharmacy, First County Bank, First Congregational Church, Konica Minolta, Synapse Group, J&A Mechanical Service, Kiwanis Club of Stamford, and Carmody Torrence, Sandak & Hennessey

New this year was the exciting Bubble Bus, which created a sea of bubbles throughout the park.

Over 50 businesses and families joined the event as sponsors. We would like to thank all of our sponsors including Liz Sue Bagels, Napoli Meat and Sausage Company, Pepsi, Pepperidge Farms and Subway of West Main Street for providing food and drink for the event. For a complete list of sponsors please visit our website, [arict.org](http://arict.org).





## ARI Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament

The 22nd Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament, honoring two of our founding families, took place on Thursday, June 22 at Sterling Farms Golf Course. Over 100 people played golf and/or attended the awards dinner. This year, two consumers participated in the golf tournament, playing the full 18 holes, and four consumers assisted by handing out the participant bags at registration.



Seventy-five golfers attended and over fifty groups, businesses and individuals supported the event. We would specifically like to thank our Tournament Sponsor, KAF Manufacturing and our Major Sponsors Axel Johnson Inc., PFK O'Connor Davies, The Umbrella Club, and West High Service Station. We also wish to thank our generous tee sponsors and those who supported the raffle and auction. A special thanks to Pepsi and Pepperidge Farms for donating snacks and drinks for golfers to enjoy.

Thank you to all the golfers, volunteers and dinner guests for making this year's tournament a success. We look forward to the 23rd tournament, tentatively scheduled for June 21, 2018 at Sterling Farms.



## Grants and Community Support



ARI received \$7,500 from the **First County Bank Foundation** to fund the I.H.S. & Residential Emergency program. This program allows individuals to receive scholarships to assist with unforeseen expenses incurred due to life's emergencies or loss of income.

ARI received \$5,000 from the **Pitney Bowes Foundation** for use in the Day Program's Life Skills & Career Development Training Program. Funds will be used to purchase teaching tools to assist with life skills and employment goals for each consumer.

A \$311,161 grant for the purchase of vehicles as part of the **OPM Nonprofit Grant Program** through the State of Connecticut was accepted. The funding will be used to purchase up to twelve new vehicles over the next several months.

ARI was the beneficiary of support from **The Rat Pack**, A Tribute to Frank, Sammy and Dean, a fundraiser on Friday, June 16, at the **Knights of Columbus**. Over 200 people attended this benefit show, where 100% of the proceeds, about \$5,000, will benefit ARI.

Over seventy employees of the **Synapse Group** spent a day at the Lotstein Residence painting bedrooms and common areas, landscaping and gardening on Wednesday, May 17. The project was coordinated through HomeFronts, Inc. Impact Day.

Ten employees from **Cartus** spent a day at the Ridgefield Sunrise Cottage painting common areas and bathrooms on Tuesday, June 6. The project was coordinated through the United Way Day of Action.



ARI received \$100,000 from an anonymous donor for general purposes. We are grateful for this donor's inspiring support.

We would like to thank all of these individuals and groups for their commitment to ARI. If you are interested in supporting ARI with a grant or volunteer project, please contact Gerard Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at [gasparinog@arict.org](mailto:gasparinog@arict.org) or by calling (203) 324-9258 ext. 3023.

*Shopping online? Go to our website [www.arict.org](http://www.arict.org) 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. You can also click on the Goodshop Logo and a portion of purchases made on this site will be donated to ARI.*

## Day Services

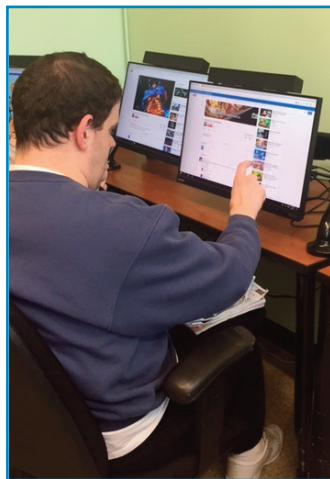
Two new consumers joined the Day Service Program over the past four months. One has joined Group Supported Employment as part of the housekeeping and landscaping teams. The other has joined the Day Service Options program in a non-work setting, where participants learn important skills to build their independence.

In June, we celebrated the graduation of one of our High School Transition students. Over the past two years, Catherine has excelled in many areas of her life. We wish her well.

We celebrated Autism Awareness month on April 3. Staff and consumers wore blue in support.



This spring, we purchased computers, televisions, speakers, educational curriculum and adaptive equipment to better teach consumers the myriad life skills needed to build independence at home and in the community. Consumers have demonstrated their new abilities working at the consumer-based snack bar. With an enhanced focus on career development, many consumers are eager to apply for jobs and work in the community.



A special thanks to Valerie Ennis ARI's Employment Specialist for assisting our employment team in making a new community connection with Scholastic Books in Danbury CT. ARI's Group Employment team started a new contract with Scholastic Books in July, 2017.

## Residential Services

Residential Services has been busy completing the licensing process for two of our five group homes. In May and June, the Truglia and Palermo group homes went through the stringent procedure and expect to receive a two-year license. Once confirmed, all ARI group homes will have two-year licenses, the highest result awarded by the State of Connecticut.

This summer, five consumers have already enjoyed time off, visiting family across the country or attending weekly camps specifically geared for people with developmental disabilities.

For those who do not get away, we continue to offer activities to meet the interests of specific consumers. One of the most popular activities is fishing with our own Carey Jaffe. Carey teaches them all about fishing and how to enjoy their time near the water. Upcoming activities and trips will include the Maritime Aquarium, a train museum, concerts and other local attractions.

The Sunrise Cottage hosted a Cinco De Mayo party in May for over 20 consumers. The event was enjoyed by all with Mexican-themed food, games and, of course, dancing.



## Staff News

### New Hires:

Darren Gill, *Residential Counselor, Lotstein*  
Latreana Thompson, *Residential Counselor, I.H.S.*  
Marc Guery, *Residential Counselor, Tally Ho*  
Nyema Joseph, *L.P.N., Medical Department*  
Channell Ramsey, *Residential Counselor, Palermo*  
Ashley Stukes, *Residential Counselor, Tally Ho*  
Barbara Eppes, *Residential Counselor, Palermo*  
Naquisha Campbell, *Residential Counselor, Palermo*  
Cheressia Dennison, *L.P.N., Medical Department*



## Recreation and Volunteers



*Joey, Kevin, Nefi and Laura prepare for the 2017 Special Olympics Summer Games*

The Aqua Aerobics season has ended. Special thanks to the Darien YMCA for the use of their pool for the past eight months, and our four volunteers, for their time and dedication.

Twenty consumers honed their golfing skills at the Challenged People in Motion Golf Program. This program has been teaching golf to people with disabilities for more than twenty years. This year we expect at least four consumers to participate in their mid-season golf tournament in August. With the assistance of over ten volunteers, consumers are able to learn and enjoy this great game.

In June, eight consumers participated in the Special Olympics Summer Games at Southern Connecticut State University. Our delegates competed and earned several medals in bicycling, swimming, and tennis as members of the Darien Lions Club and the Ridgefield Special Olympics Team.

Bocce resumed in July. Consumers are learning the game in hopes of competing in the Special Olympics in September.

Many of these events cannot happen without the support of the extraordinary volunteers at ARI. Special thanks to everyone who has assisted with the recreation program. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more about the ARI Recreation Program please contact Gerard J. Gasparino, Manager of Development & Recreation at [gasparinog@arict.org](mailto:gasparinog@arict.org).

## ARI Wish List – You can help!

Want to help but don't know where to start?

Have a special skill/hobby that you would like to share with our consumers?

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](mailto:gasparinog@arict.org).

### Upcoming Event Title Sponsors

- 65th Anniversary Celebration, October 27, 2017
- 12th Annual Walk for Independence, April/May 2018
- 23rd Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament, Summer, 2018
- 2nd Annual Gospel Concert for Independence, TBD

### In-Kind Donations and Volunteer Opportunities

- Painting (interior and exterior)
- Landscaping at Group Homes
- Aqua-Aerobics Instructor
- ARI Website Redesign
- Computers that meet the Windows 7 system requirements
- Lead activities and parties in group homes



## Thank you for Supporting ARI of Connecticut!!

*Your investment in our mission is vital to our success. Thank you for considering the following levels of individual support. To donate and for more information, please go to [arict.org](http://arict.org) or contact Gerard Gasparino, at 203 324-9258, ext. 3023 or [gasparinog@arict.org](mailto:gasparinog@arict.org).*

- ☐ Benefactor \$2,500 +
- ☐ Leader \$1,000–\$2,499
- ☐ Supporter \$500–\$999
- ☐ Contributor \$250–\$499
- ☐ Friend \$100–\$249
- ☐ Donor \$25–\$99
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ In-kind gift of \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I have an employer's matching gift program.



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SAVE THE DATE

*Friday, October 27, 2017*



*Anniversary Celebration*

**Honoring our Founding Families,  
The Lotsteins and The Martins,  
and our Past Board Chairs**

**6 pm at The Waters Edge at Giovanni's  
Black Tie Optional**

For sponsorship, tickets and more information contact  
Gerard Gasparino at 203 324 9258, ext 3023, or [gasparinog@arict.org](mailto:gasparinog@arict.org)

**always reaching for independence  
[www.arict.org](http://www.arict.org)**



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

## ARI of Connecticut, Inc. • Established 1952

Susanne D. Kuligowski  
PRESIDENT & CEO

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