

The Arc of Colorado is highlighting our local units who are the backbone and the grassroots of this organization. Each unit has its own mission and goals and reaches out to meet the needs of their membership and we want to share their work.

The Arc of Aurora

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

The Arc of Aurora is actively working with many different families on the services and supports their children receive in school. Insuring each child's growth and safety are primary concerns. Families are served in both the Cherry Creek and Aurora Public School Districts. On the adult horizon, we are actively working to support people with developmental disabilities and their families obtain services that reflect their wishes and needs.

SYSTEMS CHANGE ADVOCACY

We are actively seeking funding to support Project Illumination, Unheard Voices. The funding will support bringing a national exhibition of sculpted plaster panels of the faces of victims of domestic and sexual violence to our community. We plan on adding a face of a person with developmental disabilities who is a victim of sexual violence to this exhibition, and on launching an awareness campaign of the incidence, prevalence and impact of domestic and sexual violence among people with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Aurora is appalled that 51% to 79% of women with disabilities will be victims of sexual violence, and only 19% to 23% of these assaults will be limited to one episode. Statistics such as these point to the need to make the general population aware of the unheard voices among victims of sexual assault, the voices of people with developmental disabilities.

Even though the Governor did not include Developmental Disabilities in his statewide budget cuts, there is still the possibility of cuts through the legislative process that could affect people with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Aurora staff stands prepared to file appeals on any reduction in services and is working actively with leaders statewide to create a systemic advocacy strategy to address the bigger issues associated with long term care services delivery and cuts.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Public education continues to be a priority for The Arc of Aurora. We worked with Aurora Sentinel staff on an article about the newest arc Thrift Store that opened here in Aurora in August. The Arc of Aurora staff worked with Sentinel writers to show the relationship between shopping at an arc Thrift Store and helping people with developmental disabilities. The article provided terrific coverage for that newest arc Thrift Store and touched upon the "shopping with a purpose" pitch The Arc of Aurora made.

Our Annual Meeting was held in November at the Gateway to the Rockies Conference and Events Center with Mayor Tauer as our Masters of Ceremony. Our Holiday Project was busy contacting local businesses to sponsor a family or an individual to give them a joyous holiday.

In an effort to facilitate communication and education, The Arc of Aurora is publishing weekly E-News that is a compilation of local, state and national news that affects people with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Aurora can be reached at 14111 E. Alameda Ave., Suite 310, Aurora, CO 80012-2509, or phone # 303-344-5390 or fax # 303-344-5393.