

# Update on The Arc of Colorado's Activities

The Arc of Colorado remains very active in many statewide programs, committees and coalitions dedicated to supporting people with developmental disabilities in becoming full and active members of their communities.

**The Criminal Justice Advocacy Program**, a statewide training and information/referral program designed to educate law enforcement officers about people with developmental disabilities, continues to be very well received. Since March, The Arc of Colorado has conducted trainings in the cities of Lamar, Fort Morgan, and Burlington. Future training locations include the cities of Alamosa and Walsenburg. The majority of law enforcement officers receive no training in this area, so the two-hour program focuses on practical ways the officers may recognize a person with a developmental disability. The training also provides numerous examples of ways the officers may modify their criminal justice language to ensure equal justice for people with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Colorado is very excited about the overwhelming interest in this program and looks forward to maintaining positive relationships with local law enforcement offices throughout the state.

In addition, Nora Earnest, Director of Advocacy & Support, has been invited to sit on the Board of Directors for **The HERO Alliance**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing education, resources, and assistance for people with disabilities seeking homeownership in Colorado. On May 2, 2003, The HERO Alliance hosted an educational seminar for service providers and advocacy organizations entitled "Homeownership 101: Assisting People with Disabilities in Purchasing a Home of Their Own." The seminar was well attended and a great source of information for anyone that supports people with disabilities. The HERO Alliance is planning two additional educational seminars during 2003. The next seminar will take place in September and will focus on accessible and affordable homes for people with disabilities. The final seminar will take place in January and will focus on the Section 8 Homeownership Program, a relatively new program that allows eligible individuals and families to use their Section 8 rental voucher toward the purchase of a home. Through collaborating with The HERO Alliance, The Arc of Colorado hopes to become a useful resource for individuals and families considering homeownership.

The Arc of Colorado is also actively involved in the **Colorado Lifespan Respite Coalition**, a committee comprised of interested organizations and individuals dedicated to strengthening the respite care system in Colorado. The Respite Coalition is exploring ways to create more funding for statewide respite care and is working to compile a statewide directory of respite providers. Through partnering with the Colorado Lifespan Respite Coalition, The Arc of Colorado looks forward to creating a quality and accessible respite care system throughout the state.

If you are interested in any of these programs, please contact Nora Earnest at (303) 864-9334 or at [nearest@thearcofco.org](mailto:nearest@thearcofco.org).