



Schenectady ARC

UPDATE

PROVIDING SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SINCE 1952

Different People, Different Lives, One Family

Two different people, leading very different lives were brought together and over time became a family. Was it by chance or the result of unforeseen circumstances? Longtime Schenectady ARC employee, Peter Panetta believes that having ARC consumer John Golden move into his home was “just one of those things that was meant to be.”

Peter Panetta began working at Schenectady ARC’s Maple Ridge in 1994 as a Direct Support Professional. His job required him to lead activities and care for individuals with developmental disabilities. John Golden, a Long Island, NY native, moved from his family’s home at 19 and received services from several different agencies. By age 25, John was attending day services at Schenectady ARC’s Maple Ridge while living at another agency’s residence.

When John was in need of a Personal Care Assistant (an individual who could help him with some of his daily activities both in and outside of his home), his residential staff looked to Maple Ridge staff in hopes to find someone who was both familiar with John and who John would be comfortable with. Peter Panetta

applied, was hired and scheduled to start work immediately.

On his first scheduled day to work, Peter went to John’s home, only to learn that there had been a fire. The blaze was so damaging that the residents were moved to a local hotel for weeks until another suitable home became available. Within a month, the individuals moved into a residence at the agency, however there weren’t enough vacancies for John and he was moved into a home within agency.

John became increasingly unhappy about being

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Different People, Different Lives, One Family, continued

displaced from his housemates and when his Thanksgiving plans fell through, Peter invited him to join his family to lift his spirits. Having had such a good time, John also joined Peter for Christmas and quickly became a regular at all of the Panetta family gatherings. As the unlikely pair spent more time together, they became more and more like a family. Peter and John's family soon began discussing the possibility of John living with Peter. This life-altering decision was an enormous commitment; however the Golden family knew that if there were an individual capable of providing their son with a safe, happy and fulfilled life; it was Peter Panetta.

Shortly after the process to have John move in with Peter had started, Peter and his long-time girlfriend Margie got engaged. "John was an important part of Peter's life when I met him." Margie recalled, "I knew when I had accepted Peter's proposal that Peter and John were a package deal and I was looking forward to being a part of the family."

By the end of the year Margie and Peter moved in together and within months John moved in

"I knew when I had accepted Peter's proposal that Peter and John were a package deal and I was looking forward to being a part of the family."

as well. The couple married in 1999 and John joined Peter's father as Peter's Best Man. "I can remember reciting my wedding vows to Margie and listening to John repeating each one of them right after me!" Peter laughs. "We joke that Margie married both of us!"

John and Margie are obligated by the NY state to undergo monthly reviews and have numerous



Peter and John stop for a picture before Peter and Margie's wedding. John was the Best Man.

certifications. As a household they have fire drills and receive ongoing training to ensure John's safety in the home. It has been over 10 years since Peter, Margie and John have lived together. They are a family in every sense, eating meals together, traveling together, sharing household responsibilities, and most importantly caring for one another.

Schenectady ARC Employee Completes MIS Degree through Schenectady ARC Tuition Program

Michael Manico, a computer technician in the MIS Department at Schenectady ARC, recently completed his associate's degree at Schenectady County Community College. Michael started off his education at SCCC on a part time basis about 4 years ago. He will receive his two-year degree at graduation ceremonies this May in Networking and Systems Management. "It was through my enrollment in the SCCC program that I was able to secure my current position," stated Manico. "I did not have the skills needed at the time, but the SCCC program was well respected and assisted me in learning the skills I lacked," continued Manico. Michael will be continuing his educational pursuits at a four year college to obtain his bachelor's degree.



Michael's tuition was largely subsidized through Schenectady ARC's tuition reimbursement program. In Michael's case he applied through the Professional Development program, the ARC will reimburse 100% of the State University rate for two courses per semester.

Schenectady ARC and Schenectady County Community College have a long standing partnership in the education of ARC employees. Schenectady ARC recently launched a new Career Path Prep Course with SCCC. This 18 hour course begins by base lining an employee's knowledge and then trains the employee on job specific documentation. Services are provided by a Schenectady County Community College educational instructor at both Schenectady ARC's 214 State Street site and the SCCC campus. Employees receive their existing hourly wage while participating in this free program.

Annual Membership Dinner is just around the corner

The warm weather is coming and Schenectady ARC members, consumers, families and staff are getting ready for a gathering at Princetown Ridge for the agency's Annual Membership Dinner.

The Annual Membership Dinner will present this year's annual report and recognize the individuals highlighted within it. The evening event will also welcome newly elected board members through a swearing in ceremony. The night will conclude with a presentation by staff, consumers and families from Schenectady ARC's Residential Services. Schenectady ARC now has over 20 residential houses and various other supported living units throughout Schenectady County.

The Membership Dinner is on **May 12, 2009** from 5:00 PM to 7:00 pm at Princetown Ridge. Invitations will be coming in the mail. If you would like to make a reservation today contact Beverly at 688-8278. Tickets cost \$10 per person. Checks may be made payable to Schenectady ARC. Please mail payments to Schenectady ARC, 214 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

Welcome to Schenectady ARC.

What can we do for You?

Schenectady ARC has a multitude of services ready for individuals with a developmental disability. From transportation to educational programs you can find just about everything at Schenectady ARC. The place to start is in our Intake and Service Coordination Departments.

Intake department serves as the first point of contact for individuals seeking any of the services offered by the Schenectady ARC. Melissa Acosta, Senior Intake Specialist, and Yvonne Waite, intake specialist provide individuals and their families with information, guidance and support. They discuss what services are available and which services will best serve individuals needs. The department schedules tours of the programs and assists individuals in applying for eligibility with the NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

Melissa Acosta has been with the agency for 15 years and was recently promoted to the departments Senior Intake Specialist "I like to think of this department as the welcoming committee to Schenectady ARC. Many people are referred to our department with little or no knowledge of what Schenectady ARC has to offer. One of the best parts of my job is educating people about all of the different services that we have."

From Intake an individual will often be referred to Service Coordination. Service Coordinators work with families to identify and coordinate the appropriate services for your loved one. Service coordinators will assist individuals from the age of three and up in developing individualized service plans that are based on their needs and interests. In addition, they can identify resources and supports within Schenectady ARC, as well as in the community to ensure that each person is given a variety of options to fulfill their life goals.

"People deserve every opportunity for independence including the chance to plan for and access quality services," stated Marcy Wilson, Director of Service Coordination "we talk with people about their dreams and experiences, help them develop a plan, locate supports and services, and help individuals achieve their goals."

If you are new to Schenectady County and are seeking services for an individual with a Developmental Disability you can contact Schenectady ARC at 372-1160. If you would like to research more about Schenectady ARC's services you can visit our website at www.arcschenectady.org.



Above: Melissa Acosta, Sr. Intake Coordinator speaks with ARC Consumer Jeff Younes and Ruth Hester shares a smile and a laugh with Medicaid Service Coordinator Molly Serafini.

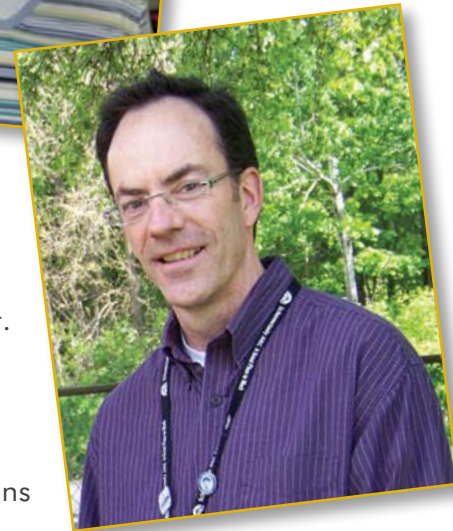
Longevity, ARC becomes a life long career for many

Passion, dedication and an ethical responsibility to serve individuals with developmental disabilities is a common theme among ARC employees. But, there is one other thing that many employees share, and that is the number of years they serve.

Just this past month the Human Resources office at Schenectady ARC joined with staff across the agency as we celebrated the 25th anniversary of two employees. Pam Gatto, our transportation coordinator and Bill Mulligan, the director of training. Both employees have devoted a great deal of time to developing effective programs in both of their expertise areas. Pam has risen through the ranks to lead coordination for all of Schenectady ARC's transportation. This is a tremendous task.

Schenectady ARC has 26 handicapped-accessible buses and over 100 vehicles that provide transportation to individuals who attend our programs. The agency's full-service repair facility ensures the safety and efficiency of all SARC agency vehicles, as well as many vehicles for other non-profit agencies including Rotterdam EMS, Catholic Charities, Northeast Parent and Child, Schenectady Head-Start and the Eddy. Certifications in Defensive Driving and 19A are also provided through Ridge Service to Schenectady ARC staff as well as individuals from other agencies. Ridge Service also provides transportation for Medicaid medical transports and the seniors for Rotterdam group and has volunteered for the Schenectady City of Lights Tour and the Chamber of Schenectady County.

Bill Mulligan has also work hard at ARC to develop a comprehensive training and professional development program that now offers over 15



courses and includes programs for re-certification and professional development. Bill is also the lead on Schenectady ARC's community training program, Training Solutions NOW. Training Solutions NOW is open to corporate and other non-profit agencies. It allows small to mid size businesses and non-profits to get the necessary training that they need for their employees when they may lack their own training specialists.

Since 2006, Bill's team has trained more than 2,000 employees and over 300 individuals from outside organizations. Our past customers include: the YMCA, the City of Schenectady, Burnt Hills School District, Ellis Hospital, Day Haven as well as other ARC chapters. With over 450 training opportunities, from CPR and Medication Administration: OMRDD & OCFS certification, to Defensive Driving, Team Building and Effective Supervision; Training Solutions Now is a cost-effective alternative to ensure that your employees receive proper training.

For more information on either of these great programs at Schenectady ARC call 372-1160 or visit us online at arcschenectady.org.

At Top: Pam Gatto, our transportation coordinator
Bottom: Bill Mulligan, the director of training.

Schenectady ARC Tweets with New Technology

In an effort to stay connected in an ever changing media market Schenectady ARC is now Twittering. Twitter is a free service that lets you keep in touch with people through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?



The move is part of a series of new technologies that are being looked as tools to expand the membership base and grow awareness of the Schenectady ARC mission and services that are provided.



Schenectady ARC's communications department is responsible for updating information on the twitter site <http://twitter.com/SchenectadyARC>. However, anyone can follow the twitter site by simply creating an account. "The purpose of our using a social network site, such as Twitter is to keep members and community partners informed of activities and events at Schenectady ARC," stated Marc DeNofio, director of public relations.

In a fast paced and heavily electronic world Schenectady ARC is making strides to stay connected to younger families, existing members and develop new community partnerships as we continue moving forward.

"Social networks are becoming more common among business leaders who want to connect for prospective work, new employees, advice, and for partnership opportunities," continued DeNofio. "It is important that Schenectady ARC be aware of these tools and uses them advantageously."

If you would like to start twittering and keep track of what's happening at Schenectady ARC logon to www.twitter.com. You can also connect with Schenectady ARC on Facebook www.facebook.com.



Rotary Hears the Message

On March 12, Schenectady ARC's Missy Alger, a participant in our Life Prep II program, spoke to members of the Schenectady Rotary Club at their weekly luncheon. Missy and her speech therapist, Laurel Skultety educated Schenectady Rotarians about what it is like to be deaf, the types of adaptive equipment currently available, and the various strategies that everyone can use to effectively communicate with someone who is hearing impaired. Mark Sheehan, Schenectady ARC's Director of New Initiatives and a past-president of the Schenectady Rotary Club, helped arrange the presentation.

Princetown Celebrates Spring In Style

Consumers at Schenectady ARC's Princetown Ridge celebrates the coming of Spring with a dance. The event was held March 20.

Wearin' O' the Green

We are all Irish on St. Patrick's Day. Consumers at Schenectady ARC's Maple Ridge were involved in many activities during the St. Patrick's Day Celebration. Festivities included cookie making, door decorating and an Irish Dance.

At Schenectady ARC Spring means 'Going Green'

While constructing new green buildings or homes is perhaps the most public way for a charity to proclaim their environmental awareness, more and more nonprofit groups of all stripes — not just those dedicated to protecting the environment — are “greening” their operations in ways big and small. Whether installing new energy-efficient light bulbs, boosting recycling efforts, or cutting down on employees’ car usage now that gas prices are soaring by making it easier for people to bike to work, the nonprofit world is increasingly embracing various ways to go green.

Schenectady ARC is no exception. For the past two months an internal department wide team has assembled to look at ways to cut high energy costs. The group is currently developing a series of conservation steps that will lessen the impact that Schenectady ARC has on the environment. The steps will also assist Schenectady ARC in reducing energy costs. The group will also focus on educating employees and Schenectady ARC consumers on how to reduce their environmental impact and lead a “greener” life.

“There are almost always environmentally-friendly alternatives to everyday tasks and products,” states project director, Mark Sheehan, “we hope to enlighten and educate both consumers and staff on ways in which they can do their small part to change the current climate crisis that faces our world today.”

Look for more on the Going Green campaign in upcoming issues of the Schenectady ARC newsletter.



Schenectady ARC Sends Two to the Master's

Schenectady ARC recently held a raffle for two tickets to the Master's Golf Tournament in Augusta, GA. The raffle drawing was held March 24 at the Schenectady City Court. The Honorable Vincent W. Versaci and Schenectady ARC consumer Joan Orpin had the honor of drawing the lucky winner.

Charles Steiner, president of the Chamber of Schenectady County and a guest will be headed to Augusta to see all the golf action. Steiner will travel in first class accommodations on a private jet; he will receive two day passes for April 9 to attend the tournament.

When notified of his prize Steiner said, “This has been a lifelong dream of mine, and I am really looking forward to going.”

The raffle prize valued at \$6000 was generously donated by Relph Benefit Advisors.



ARC Already a Winner with New Sponsor for the GHI Race

The GHI Workforce Team Challenge is the Capital Region's workforce team run — and the largest annual road race between Utica and New York City. There were 7,186 runners and 393 participating companies/organizations in the 2008 race — a record turnout.

Since 1980, on one spring evening after work, thousands gather in historic downtown Albany for this classic 3.5 mile road race. From the CEO to the most recent hire, they come as colleagues and co-workers and friends to make up the Teams that represent every enterprise in the Capital Region — from emerging nanotechs to established blue-chips, from school districts, colleges, and hospitals, banks and law firms, from government agencies and non-profits.

Schenectady ARC will once again be among the teams that compete. The race takes place on May 21, 2009. The ARC team fielded over 100 participants at the 2008 Workforce Team Challenge. Team Captain Bill Mulligan is hoping that this year will be the largest participation year for Schenectady ARC's Team.



This year thanks to a sponsorship by Continuing Care Rx (CCRx) the Schenectady ARC team will compete like never before. Continuing Care Rx (CCRx) formed in 1996 to serve the health care industry's need for an experienced, efficient, and cost-effective provider of pharmaceutical services agreed to sponsor the ARC team.

CCRx has a dedicated staff that includes several implementation teams. The company's staff regularly assists the client facilities in achieving and maintaining compliance with state, federal, and OBRA regulations. CCRx will partner with administration, nursing and your medical services providers to develop a cost-effective program that will keep your pharmacy costs, as well as your overall medical costs, under control.

Get Ready for a Rockin' Luau in the Park



Schenectady Arc is preparing to host our biggest event of the year, The Rockin' Luau in the Park. Join us June 18, 2009 for our Annual BBQ in the Park. The event starts at 4:30 PM and goes until 7:00 PM. Last year over 300 guests attended the 50's era themed event in Schenectady's Central Park. Schenectady ARC staff, family and friends along with community leaders and local politicians enjoyed the music, food, and attractions.

This year the event moves back to the Pavilion at Central Park. The summer 50's themed Beach Luau will feature local musical talents a "Hula Dancing contest" and more.

The Schenectady ARC BBQ was a tremendous success this past year thanks to the

Schenectady ARC Social Worker Gets Published for Work on Aging with Developmental Disabilities

Tammie Morley an LCSW-R with Schenectady ARC was recently published in the Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education News

Tammie Morley a social worker with Schenectady ARC was recently selected by the Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education (HPPAE) for an article she submitted regarding aging in individuals with developmental disabilities.

Mrs. Morley developed a state-wide training that focuses on providing skills and education to employees that work with individuals with developmental disabilities that are aging. Schenectady ARC, with Mrs. Morley's training program, developed a new program called Spring Hill. The room specializes in care for individuals with developmental disabilities that suffer from the effects of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Individuals with developmental disabilities have been found to have a shorter life span due to their medical complications. However with advances in medicine, individuals with developmental disabilities are living longer and better quality lives. Individuals with developmental disabilities and Down syndrome have an increased risk of developing dementia in their 40's and 50's and the progression is often more rapid than in individuals without disabilities.

Mrs. Morley's article reviews the significance of Alzheimer's and dementia within the developmental disabilities population. She also explains the various programs that Schenectady ARC has developed to care for individuals with developmental disabilities as they age. Her article was published in the Winter 2008 issues of the HPPAE Happenings. Reprints are available through the Public Relations Office at Schenectady ARC.



Tammie Morley, LCSW-R and supervisor Rocky Bonsal read through the HPPAE publication featuring Tammie's article.

generous donations from our corporate sponsors, prize donors and volunteers at the event.

This year we are again seeking the support of the community as we host this great event for individuals with developmental disabilities. If you would like to donate or sponsor a portion of the event please contact the Public Relations Office at 372-1160.



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Schenectady ARC is committed to helping people in the Capital Region enjoy healthy, rewarding lives as members of their community. Schenectady ARC brings staff, families and community together to encourage dreams and respond to each person's life choices by offering high quality services, resources and support.



A member of The Arc of the United States

Donate now!

www.arcschenectady.org

THERE IS STILL TIME TO JOIN!

Everyone served by Schenectady ARC is part of your community. With over 1,000 families receiving services, over 500 dedicated staff and hundreds of community partnerships with local businesses and other organizations, it is easy to find someone who is connected to Schenectady ARC. Now, we would like you to become a part of our great ARC family. We are seeking new members to join our mission and carry forward our vision for providing quality services, resources and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. Your membership commitment will ensure that the voice of every individual with a developmental disability in Schenectady County is clearly heard.

As a member, you will have access to discounts at select community

businesses, the option to join Schenectady ARC committees and participate in ARC functions. In addition, you will receive our quarterly newsletter with rich stories and useful tips and advice.

Your Membership plays an important role for Schenectady ARC and people with developmental disabilities. For just **\$10.00** you can help strengthen Schenectady ARC's voice when we advocate on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.

Become a member today!

**Membership is open to individuals who have a family member served by Schenectady ARC or live or work in Schenectady County.*