

THE ADVOCATE

News of Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization, PA Summer, 2020



Delaware County
Advocacy & Resource
Organization

What's Happening You Ask?????



But just remember.....



IN THIS ISSUE

Messages from the President.....2

Message from the Executive Director.....3

Adult Advocacy4

Brew-Ha-Ha Bingo.... 5

Education Advocacy...6,7

Legislative Breakfast...8

IM4Q.....9

Support Needed.....10

Social/Rec.....11

Thrift Shop Reopens..12

Supporters.....13

STAY CONNECTED



thearcofdelco.org



Happy Summer!

Happy summer everyone!

Well, we made it through the *weirdest* Spring season in most of our lifetimes! Let's hope we keep making progress on the Coronavirus so we can get back to our in-person Social/Recreation Program events and activities and, of course, next year's Gala!

We've had a number of changes on the board this year. You probably know that I took over as President in January, succeeding Diane Perry, and therefore have some huge shoes to fill. We have also added a new board member as Julinda Hoxha was just welcomed as a board member last week. We have a few more people interested in joining our board and supporting our organization, so more to come on that. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the board, please let me know! We've got tons of work ahead so the more hands (and minds) the better.

I look forward to serving as your President and hope to make a positive impact at DCARO during my first term as your Board President.

Thank you all for your support and I wish you and your family and friends a safe and happy Summer!

Chris

BOARD MEMBERS

Officers

Chris Clements
President

Darlene Luther
First Vice-President

Nancy Larson
Second Vice-President

Geralyn Arango
Treasurer

Directors

Jessica Clark
Kathy Perry
Jennifer Hill
Katrina Schwab
Julinda Hoxha
Diane Perry



Hello everyone... from a distance of course !!!

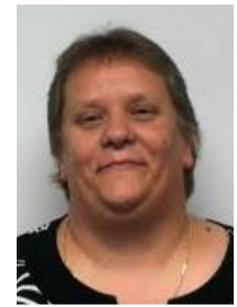
Well it is certainly nice to finally have an opportunity to reach out to everyone once again. Needless to say, it has been an interesting last four months and it continues to be, as we all try to adapt to the “new normal”, even though that continues to evolve on a daily basis. The good news is, the Delaware County Advocacy and Resource Organization has been minimally affected by the current COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to our ability to continue providing our Advocacy and Social/Recreation services. Although we are still prohibited from in-person, face-to-face meetings, we are very lucky to have the ability to operate remotely and virtually with the same effective services and positive outcomes.

We understand the current conditions can create feelings of isolation, depression, and confusion and we would like everyone to know that all of us here at the Delaware County Advocacy and Resource Organization are here for you. Whether it is advocacy services you might need, questions about upcoming Social/Recreation virtual activities, or if you just need someone to talk to, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. All of our staff are currently working our regular business hours of Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM and can be reached via email and telephone.

Probably the biggest effect on DCARO by the COVID-19 pandemic was the unfortunate forced cancellation of our annual signature fundraising event, the **Giving Hands Gala**, that was originally scheduled to take place in March. This event is our largest fundraising event each year and aside from a great night out, this event supports our programs significantly. The inability to hold the **2020 Giving Hands Gala** will have an unfortunate negative financial impact on our organization. We are hopeful, that are loyal and generous supporters and donors will consider making a donation to DCARO to assist us in recovering from the cancellation of this event. We invite you to visit our website at www.delcoadvocacy.org to make a donation today.

On a more positive note, DCARO is pleased to announce that beginning July 1, 2020 we have taken on the Pennhurst monitoring program for Delaware County. DCARO would ask you to join us in welcoming Donna Wetherill and Pam Lutz to the DCARO staff. Both Donna and Pam will be performing the monitorings and Donna will be administering the Pennhurst monitoring program.

Further, our ESEL (Engaging Support Enriching Lives), School to Prison Pipeline Program, will be undertaking an additional project in relation to our School to Prison Pipeline amelioration efforts. We will be creating a documentary film regarding the School to Prison Pipeline and our efforts to combat this epidemic utilizing mindfulness and other strategic processes. Nicole Mendez, our Education Advocate and ESEL Program Coordinator will be leading the documentary film project.



STAFF

Eileen MacDonald

Executive Director

emacdonald@delcoadvocacy.org

Colleen Foti

Financial Director

cfoti@delcoadvocacy.org

Vera D'Ercole

IM4Q Coordinator

vdercole@delcoadvocacy.org

Nicole Mendez

Education Advocate

nmendez@delcoadvocacy.org

Christine Shearon

Adult Advocate

cshearon@delcoadvocacy.org

Kristy Marigliano

Social/Rec & Membership

Coordinator

kmarigliano@delcoadvocacy.org

Donna Wetherill

Pennhurst Monitoring

dwetherill@delcoadvocacy.org

Pam Lutz

Pennhurst Monitoring

plutz@delcoadvocacy.org

Eileen

Technology-The New Hero

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, along with their families, caregivers and advocates, have long campaigned for accommodations and technology to support their everyday lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the use of many technologies to the forefront and forced a reliance on technology to learn, live and stay connected. Things that were once considered a luxury or impractical have become a necessity. Supermarkets, restaurants and pharmacies can deliver; remote working, medicine and education are possible for many; and social interactions can still be rewarding from home.



Why not keep it going? That is not to say that technology should replace valuable face to face interactions and community experiences that we need, but we could let COVID-19 continue to expand our awareness and use of assistive technology for individuals with IDD in unique and progressive ways.

I have to admit I am not tech savvy. I carry a planner and notebook everywhere; I still keep a hand-written to-do list and prefer personal interaction. The pandemic forced me to embrace the use of online platforms like Zoom and Teams for professional, personal and educational reasons, and I found it to be really effective in many ways- not all, but many. However, I quickly realized that I needed to up my game when it comes to having a more workable level of IT literacy. I was so impressed by a number of my clients and their family members and support staff who used technology to participate in important transition meetings, meetings with new providers and doctors, therapy sessions, online social activities, advocacy groups, educational programs, virtual tours and daily video chats, but I observed that many people shared my same struggles with technology and would benefit from more training.

As we all adjust to new practices with fewer face to face interactions for now and more reliance on communication through technology, I would like to see much more focus on accessing and teaching technology, as well as creatively using technology for individuals with IDD. When individuals have access to technology, the options for delivery of services as well as opportunities to engage with people is increased. Of course one size does not fit all when it comes to using technology, so it is important to objectively consider a person's needs; for example, positioning, touch screen devices, adapted keyboards, switches, etc. It will be necessary for family members and caregivers to have training to use technology and new practices to make sure they are effective, but also protect confidentiality. COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance of technology-readiness in order to allow life and IDD supports to continue--as much as possible--during pandemics. Let's keep it going in the post-COVID-19 world!



Christine Shearon, Adult Advocate
Can be reached at ext. 110
cshearon@delcoadvocacy.org

2020 Bingo Brew-Ha-Ha

YEP....
we're
doin' it!!

Join us as we host our 1st ever Virtual
Bingo Brew-Ha-Ha Fundraiser
On the ZOOM Platform

Friday, September 25, 2020
7:00 PM

Tickets are \$25 each
(includes all 6 games of Bingo)
Cash prizes for each game!!!

Same great games, Same great prizes, Same great Raffles....you'll just have to drink your own beer!!!



RAFFLE TICKETS

\$25 for 1 wheel space for each of the 16 baskets
\$35 for 2 wheel spaces for each of the 16 baskets
Raffle basket winners will be selected by a spin of the wheel which will appear live during the event!

- ◆ **Event and Raffle Tickets** can be purchased on our website at www.delcoadvocacy.org or by mailing a check or money order to the office at 740 S. Chester Rd., Ste G, Swarthmore, PA 19081 ATTN: Bingo Brew-Ha-Ha
- ◆ **Raffle Tickets** can be purchased even if not attending the event
- ◆ **Event Tickets** must be purchased by September 18th to allow mailing time for Bingo cards
- ◆ **Raffle Tickets** must be purchased by September 24th
- ◆ **Bingo Cards** may be picked up at the office if preferred by reservation by calling 610-544-6600, EXT. 104



Delaware County
Advocacy & Resource
Organization

740 S. Chester Rd., Ste G, Swarthmore, PA 19081
610-544-6600 / www.delcoadvocacy.org

One thing I know to be true is that no one anticipated a pandemic. Very few were adequately prepared as indicated by the vast differences in how School Districts rolled out Continuity of Education plans. Debates over privacy and synchronous vs asynchronous continue as district contingency plans are currently being developed. But there are some Covid-19 silver linings here... this unmitigated mandated pause has allowed the nation to witness and be affected by the vast inequities within our communities. Conversations regarding equality, equity, access to technology, teacher training, and most importantly systemic racism abound; and are most welcomed and long overdue! While I can't say for certain that these conversations would have taken center stage without the mandatory closure I do believe it is highly unlikely they would have otherwise.

Disparities in access to education has been an ongoing concern within the Education Advocacy Department at DCARO. Since 2018, thanks to funding from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council, we have worked to combat the [School to Prison Pipeline](#) by providing Social Emotional Education by way of [Explicit Mindfulness Programming to faculty and students](#) in Chester Upland School District. While we were able to continue programming for faculty virtually, unfortunately, due to the lack of access to technology many of our students missed out on the opportunity for continued mindfulness education. DCARO will continue to develop creative ways to deliver mindfulness and necessary supports to our communities in need. If you are interested in learning more about this effort and or supporting historically disadvantaged and marginalized communities within Delaware County please email nmendez@delcoadvocacy.org.

While some families enjoyed the extra down time with their children, families with students with significant needs were overwhelmed with the lack of in person support and access to a free and appropriate education.

As we approach the 2020 – 2021 academic year there are several unknowns. The guidance on safe reopening from the Department of Education can be found [here](#) and guidance regarding compensatory services can be found [here](#). Parents should also note, regarding academic assessment for compensatory services, [The National Association of School Psychologists](#) state that “schools will need to assume that children have lost about 25% of the prior grade level’s instruction because most schools were closed for 8–10 weeks of the typical 36-week school year.” Be sure to check your school district’s website often for updates on their plans.

Below are a few advocacy best practices I like to follow that may be particularly helpful during this time:

Hope for the best but prepare for the worst. While most of us are praying that September 2020 will look a lot like September 2019 it most certainly will not. Plan for some sort of hybrid education delivery model – a combination of remote and in person, half days over full days, or continued virtual instruction. Expect some level of home instruction. This can prove to be especially difficult for parents who are essential workers and for working from home parents whose students who require a 1:1 to participate.

Document everything. Keep a running journal on your student’s successes, challenges, and behaviors accessing the spring and or ESY remote education plan. I like to keep a spreadsheet with date/time, contact person, service/subject, mode of delivery, time spent, number of prompts, completion time/date, & notes.

Engage in Collaborative Problem Solving – PLAN B. I am a huge fan of Dr. Ross Greene’s approach to challenging behaviors. Not surprisingly, this model can be a very effective communication tool with IEP teams as well. Listen, repeat to clarify your understanding, state your concerns, ask if there is a way to address the need/problem and all concerns. Get creative.

Focus on what worked, ideal learning environments, and student strengths. We experienced at least two positives during this closure – sleep and consistent use of assistive technology. The science is in on Sleep and shortly before Covid 19, The Joint State Government Commission published [“Sleep Deprivation in Adolescents: The Case for Delaying Secondary School Start Times.”](#) Districts across the region were actively contemplating pushing back school start times. The combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning from home has allowed our kids to get more sleep. My teenager is able to sleep in most days which has proved to be helpful with behavior and overall disposition. We were able to identify when he is the most focused and what times of the day work best for him.

Increased reliance on technology and the need to expand our creativity modifying assignments has helped to inform our education team how to best access my son’s aptitude. Perhaps your kiddo is an aspiring YouTuber like mine? Instead of writing or typing essays and creating slideshows he was able to create and submit videos. He was able to expand his video editing skills, practice speech and language, and with guidance learn how to create a short informational film with a beginning, middle, and end (hello, planning and executive functioning!)

Any and all information on how your student learns in the home will be extremely helpful to the IEP team when schools reopen, whether partial or full- time.

Ask for what you need. Do not be afraid to ask for Parent training and counseling if that is what you need. Now more than ever, Parents are an essential and critical part of the students IEP team. Parents are entitled to receive support and training on how to implement SDIs, behavioral plans and in many cases deliver education. This goes for related services as well.

If you need further guidance navigating special education during these unprecedented times do not hesitate to reach out to our [Education Advocacy department](#) for help.

Best of luck and stay well and safe!

Nicole Mendez, Education Advocate,
can be reached at #107 or
nmendez@delcoadvocacy.org



Save The Date

*Please mark your calendars now
and plan to join us for the.....*

Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization's 2020 Legislative Breakfast

Friday, October 16, 2020

8 am—10 am

at

The Lazaretto Ballroom

99 Wanamaker Ave., Essington, PA 19029

**** This event will follow all CDC
guidelines. A Virtual Event
alternative will be available should
the Covid-19 pandemic conditions
dictate that format ****



**Delaware County
Advocacy & Resource
Organization**

*740 S. Chester Road, Ste G, Swarthmore, PA 19081 / 610-544-6600
www.delcoadvocacy.org*

Working Through Covid-19 IM4Q

Covid-19-Ugh!!!!!! Coronavirus—double Ugh!!!! Our world as we knew it stopped mid-March and at that time so did the IM4Q 2019-2020 cycle monitorings. However, that didn't mean that the IM4Q work stopped!

There was still data input to do to ensure all of those interviewed had their considerations entered. I bet you are wondering--what is a consideration. A consideration is a concern or request you may have told the IM4Q interviewer at the monitoring. Those concerns or requests are entered into a database system so that your team can begin to discuss a resolution for the consideration. The entire team including staff, family, supports coordinator, etc. all work to find a solution that works best for you.

Many times after the resolution is identified, the IM4Q coordinator will call to make sure the resolution is to your satisfaction. Of course, that too, needed to be done during the Covid "shut-down" period. Those calls are always the best part of the process, because it is amazing to hear about the success of the IM4Q process—the difference it is making in your everyday life.

Of course, just like everyone else the IM4Q team has been meeting to discuss change to our process in the midst of the "new normal". Specifically, how will the interviews be conducted for the 2020-2021 cycle. I'm sure we will find a way to continue to make a difference and keep everyone safe. For those who haven't had the opportunity to participate in an IM4Q interview, don't give up hope. ODP sends a list every year and the names are drawn from that list. It's your opportunity to tell us about your services and how we can make your life better. The IM4Q team is looks forward to having the opportunity to meet with each of you who receive services through ODP.



Help Wanted—IM4Q Team

Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization is seeking individuals who want to assist with our IM4Q (Independent Monitoring for Quality) surveys. Training will be provided for the position. The position is part-time. It's perfect for a retired individual, an individual the IDD community or an individual who wants to supplement their income. A stipend for each survey returned will be paid.



If you are interested in this position, please contact Vera D'Ercole at 610-566-4400 ext. 104.



2020 Giving Hands Gala



Giving Hands Gala, our signature event, raises \$40,000 in support of all DCARO programs, with a majority of the support benefitting our Social/Rec programs which are so important for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For many, our Social/Recreation events are the only social outlet some individuals participate in, especially during these uncertain times of the pandemic. Due to Covid-19, our **2020 Giving Hands Gala** event had to be cancelled which has created a significant deficit in our budget and now, **your support means more now than ever before!!!**

We are asking if you are able, to please consider making a donation. Maybe giving the \$60 price of a Gala ticket, or the \$100 cost of a table sponsorship of the event, or even the \$50 value of an auction item? Whatever your donation, large or small, we sincerely appreciate your generosity and unwavering support!

Early on in the pandemic, DCARO realized how important it was to continue our Social/Recreation events to the individuals we serve as they need our support more now than ever before. Although, we have had to move our Social/Recreation events to a virtual environment, it has become an outlet and a lifeline to our program participants to socialize with friends while participating in a fun activity. Of course, we will continue to offer these events until it is safe for us to once again come together in person.

Please consider making your gift through clicking the DONATE button below or mail your check or money order today to DCARO, Attn: Gala Campaign, 740 S Chester Road, Suite G, Swarthmore, PA 19081.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE DCARO MEMBERS!!!!!!

DONATE

P.S. If your company offers employees a matching gift option, please consider DCARO as your matching gift option. We will gladly assist in completing the necessary forms.

P.S.S. DCARO can also receive your designated donation through United Way. Our designee number is 00348.

A Different Look—Same Great Fun!!

Virtual Trips



DCARO Virtual Bingo Social
 Wednesday July 29, 2020 6:30 pm
VIRTUAL BINGO

If you would like to participate, please send an email to kmarliango@delcoadvocacy.org, no later than **Tuesday July 28, 2020** and we can mail or email out your bingo card.

Unfortunately you will need a BINGO card to play!!!

Click here to [join Bingo through ZOOM!](#)



The Social Recreational Department is looking a little different these days! Unfortunately, because of the dangers of Covid-19! We are all learning to navigate this “new normal” and trying to come up with fun and exciting alternative ways for our members to still be social and have a little fun during these unprecedented and very uncertain times! It is challenging, but we’ve got it!

We have successfully developed some exciting virtual events that we’ve implemented throughout the past few months. Our Bingo event in particular has a great hit! Another virtual event that we have been experimenting with is “What’s in the Bag”? Participants are given various clues on an item in an unmarked bag and then have to guess what that item is. We also took a trip to Disney World! When we virtually traveled on the top 10 rides at Disney World’s Florida theme park.

Social Quizzes



Name that Disney Tune
 Wednesday, May 27th 6:30 PM
[Zoom Link Below](#)

You all have spoken, and have been heard!! I have received much feedback about doing a virtual event with Musical! So please join us! Wednesday May 27th 2020 for:

"Name That Tune" Disney style!!



Many of our members love music, and now, thanks to Nancy Larson we will soon be able to have the experience of watching a live band perform! I’m looking forward to enjoying the music with everyone and would love to receive any requests for songs you might want to hear. Please contact me with your requests!

Scavenger Hunt



Can you guess, What's In The Bag?

Join us for a unique event of questions and answers as we reveal,

What's In The Bag?

Wednesday June 3, 2020 6:30 pm

Is it a candle? A match box car?

A Disney character?

Join us to guess and find out!

Click Zoom Link Below to join!!



I have not been a part of the DCARO Family for very long, but I must say I have very much enjoyed getting to know all of you. I have a lot of fun facilitating our virtual events and having the opportunity to see everyone regularly. I am hopeful and excited for what the future holds for all of us. The Social Recreational Department will adapt and be flexible no matter what comes our way. We will keep a positive outlook and continue to strive to keep the fun going! In the spirit of continuing our virtual events and diversifying a broader selection of activities, we are welcoming all ideas for virtual social activities. Please contact Kristy Marliango at 610-544-6600 Ext. 109 or you can always send me an email at kmarliango@delcoadvocacy.org with all of your creative ideas!



Wednesday July 1, 2020 6:30 pm

Can you guess.....

What's In The Bag? PART 2!!

Is it a Disney character?

Is it a candle?

Is it a flower?

Is it a match box car?

Come and have some fun with this unique event of questions and answers as we reveal,

What's In The Bag? PT 2

Join us to guess and find out!

Click Zoom Link Below to join!!

Thrift Shop on the Avenue

19 S Lansdowne Ave, Lansdowne, PA 19050



Re-Opening 7/14/2020

July Hours: Tue – Fri 10am –  2pm



Sidewalk Sale 7/14 – 7/16

- ♦ All glasses 4 for \$1
- ♦ Assorted Pictures \$2
- ♦ Assorted Picture Frames \$1
- ♦ Vases .50 cents each
- ♦ VHS 5 for \$1
- ♦ Vinyl Albums 5 for \$1
- ♦ DVD 2 for \$1



Sidewalk Sale 7/14 – 7/16
Christmas in July sale 7/21 – 7/24

We accept CASH ONLY

SUPPORTERS

Piazza Honda of Springfield



THE PHILADELPHIA FOUNDATION

The Power of Endless Possibilities.



Mechanical Contractor, Inc.



Strategic Claims Services



Dr. Chaya Herzberg
Pediatric Optometrist



CIDER MILL LANDSCAPES



DREXELBROOK



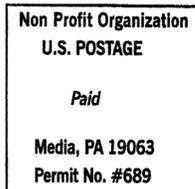
KEYADVISORS



Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization

740 South Chester Road, Suite G
Swarthmore, PA 19081
610.544.6600

www.delcoadvocacy.org



Advocating for inclusive community practices and influence public policy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities



**Delaware County
Advocacy & Resource
Organization**

Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization (Formerly known as The Arc of Delaware County)

Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization - donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law. The official registration and financial information of Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1.800.732.0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

United Way of Southeastern Pa · #00348