History of The Arc Movement

PARENT POWER

The Arc has a long, rich history of advocacy and is truly a parent-fueled civil rights movement. We continue today to carry out the mission and vision of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.

In the early 1950’s, small groups of parents and other concerned individuals came together to act as voices for change. At the time, little was known about the condition of intellectual disability (at the time referred to as "mental retardation") or its causes. There were virtually no programs and activities in communities to assist in the development and care of children and adults with intellectual disability or to support families.

It was common at that time for doctors to tell parents that the best place for their child was in an institution. Emboldened by their collective desire to raise their children in the home and their stubborn refusal to accept that institutionalization was the only option, The Arc’s founders fought even harder.

Like every parent of any child, they wanted more for their children. They wanted their children to lead fulfilling lives out in the community and not shuttered away in dark institutions. It was in that spirit that The Arc was born.

GROWING WITH THE TIMES

For over 60 years, The Arc Connecticut has grown and adapted to the changes that people with disabilities face across their life span. Through the decades,

The Arc has seen several name changes, advocated for the passage of state legislation on behalf of people with disabilities, assisted in the creation of and advocated for the private providers system of support, filed 4 class action lawsuits, advocated for the closure of institutions, and continued to advocate for individuals with I/DD and their families.

The Arc Connecticut is part of the oldest and largest charity federation in the nation that is dedicated to promoting and protecting the civil rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their inclusion and participation in their communities.

PART OF A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Nationwide, The Arc is the 8th largest charity federation in the U.S. with a total revenue of nearly $4 billion dollars. There are 675 chapters in 49 states, with about 4,700 service locations. Across the country we have about 6,900 board members, 124,000 staff, more than 46,000 volunteers, and collectively we serve more than 1 million individuals with I/DD and their family members.

Here in Connecticut there are 17 chapters with total revenue of about $103 million dollars, more than 195 board members, 3,729 staff, and 1,288 volunteers.