

Families Soar Once Again with Wings for Autism®

The sky's the limit for families wishing to fly after participating in The Arc of Arizona's second annual **Wings for Autism®** at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport on Saturday, September 26th!

For more than 235 participants, as well as 105 volunteers and aviation professionals, the event was both personal and purposeful. An "airport rehearsal" that gives children with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities a realistic experience of navigating the airport environment and boarding a commercial airplane, **Wings for Autism** also helps airline, airport, and TSA personnel learn more about the needs of individuals with I/DD whom they serve.



Sara, Jennifer and Ken Roger pass through TSA security at **Wings for Autism 2015**

The impact of this experience for attendees is profound. Jennifer Roger of Glendale, whose daughter Sara has autism, felt it opened a new world of travel possibilities for her family.

"The event was absolutely wonderful for our 15 year old daughter!" Roger said. "Prior to this event, we were very apprehensive to take her on a flight, not knowing what types of behaviors she may exhibit in the confinement of an aircraft. After **Wings for Autism**, we can now purchase tickets and board with confidence!"

With an estimated 1 child in 64 in Arizona diagnosed with autism, the need for this program is undeniable. And while **Wings for Autism** is held at 23 airports across the U.S.,

The Arc of Arizona is still the only chapter to bring together two airlines and two airplanes in a single staging – meaning double the number of families who can participate at one time.

Special thanks go out to all our aviation partners – **Southwest Airlines** and **American Airlines** (see related story, inside) as well as **Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport** and the **Transportation Security Administration**, and the **Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism**. We also extend our gratitude to Bronze Sponsors of the event, **GOALS for Autism, Inc.**, and **Prospect Air Services**, and the many businesses and individuals who contributed to the success of this inspiring program. (To find out more about these invaluable partners, visit www.arcarizona.org/event/wings-for-autism.)

A date for our next **Wings for Autism** will be announced in Spring 2016. To be placed on the priority notification list, contact Jon Meyers at The Arc of Arizona, jon@arcarizona.org.



The stage was set for excitement at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport

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Families Soar Once Again with Wings for Autism®



Families filled the planes for their *Wings for Autism* adventure



A visit to the cockpit was just one of the special memories for *Wings* attendees



American Airlines Goes “Above and Beyond” for Wings for Autism®

The Arc of Arizona’s **Wings for Autism®** has the finest aviation partners imaginable in the Sky Harbor staffs of American Airlines and Southwest Airlines, the City of Phoenix Aviation Department, and the TSA. They are, you might say, a “dream team”.

This year, **American Airlines** ascended to even greater heights by adding a \$5,000 grant to its already substantial commitment of time and equipment to **Wings**.

Just a few examples of American’s leadership on **Wings for Autism**: Staff from the airline – most notably Pat Chilton, executive assistant to PHX Managing Director John Daley – spent nearly four months on planning and logistics. More than half of the 105 volunteers were American employees or their friends and relatives. The cost of aircraft fuel alone to taxi **Wings** participants around the airport was nearly \$4,500. All in all, it’s an astounding level of support. (Did we forget to mention all this occurred while American served record-high passenger loads at one of its busiest hub airports during the final weeks of a merger involving two of the largest airlines in the world...?)



John Daley, PHX Managing Director for American Airlines, addresses attendees at Wings for Autism

Add in a grant to offset the many costs for The Arc of Arizona to present **Wings for Autism** and you have a partnership based on unwavering dedication to the community being served.

According to American’s John Daley, “Our effort here is to really help provide children with autism and their families a new opportunity and to feel confident in the travel experience, and our effort and our hope is that this event helps everybody be able to do that.”

The Arc is grateful for all the individuals and businesses that make **Wings for Autism** so meaningful for participating families. American Airlines’ contributions this year – financial, material, and human – truly took the event “above and beyond”. We can’t wait to see what 2016 has in store!



TASH@NAU volunteers get instructions from Pat Chilton, Wings for Autism coordinator for American Airlines

Excitement was on faces everywhere as families arrived at **Wings for Autism**





Dental Care, ABLE Act Top Key Legislation for 2016 Session

Public policy priorities for The Arc of Arizona heading into the Legislature’s 2016 Session include bills to restore oral health care to adults receiving ALTCS and AHCCCS benefits and to allow federally-approved savings accounts for persons with disabilities.

Preventative and emergency dental care were among the first benefits cut when the “Great Recession” hit Arizona – despite overwhelming evidence they actually are cost savers for the State. The Arc continues to work with a coalition of health and human services agencies advocating to reinstate funding for these fundamental services.

The **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act** of 2014 created a new type of savings account specifically for individuals with disabilities, similar to the Section 529 accounts used to save for a child’s education. While there are limits on the

amount that may be accumulated, ABLE accounts will allow more individual choice and control over spending on qualified disability expenses and limited investment decisions, even as they protect eligibility for Medicaid, SSI, and other federal benefits. Without these accounts, many people with disabilities have very limited avenues to save and allow for further independence.

Establishment of ABLE accounts in Arizona awaits passage of enabling legislation in the State Legislature. This legislation will be introduced in the 2016 session, also backed by a broad coalition of organizations statewide.

Advocates and self-advocates are vital to ensuring success in these and other legislative efforts. To receive the latest **Advocacy Alerts** about legislation and policies important to you, contact The Arc of Arizona at arc@arcarizona.org.

Sprout Will Bloom Again in 2016!

If you missed seeing the world’s most entertaining, enlightening films about individuals with I/DD last April – or if you attended and just can’t wait to see more – have no fear.

The Arc and Sprout Touring Film Festival returns to the Phoenix area in Spring 2016!

Building on the enthusiasm generated by our first Sprout event, The Arc of Arizona and The Chandler-Gilbert Arc are joining forces to make 2016’s The Arc and Sprout Touring Film Festival bigger and better. You will see a new lineup of films focusing on the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities – some funny, some sad, all thought-provoking and insightful. You’ll be inspired by the richness and depth of the subjects they present. And you will be talking about the experience all the way home.

Details on a date and location will be available soon. Be sure to check frequently at www.arcarizona.org for more information.

Chapter Spotlight: 40 Years and Growing Strong for The Chandler-Gilbert Arc

What began in 1975 as a labor of love for the parents of eight adults with developmental disabilities has transformed into an organization that offers some of the Valley’s best programs in day treatment for adults, housing, and specialized community-based employment.

Welcome to the first 40 years of The Chandler-Gilbert Arc.

“CGArc”, as it is known, today offers services that “facilitate growth for people with disabilities through choice, experience, guidance, and respect”. Participants in the DTA, for example, engage in a wide variety of activities geared toward personal care, socialization, communication, and community participation.

Employment opportunities for members are numerous, including positions with Arc Enterprises, which serves individuals through center- and community-based jobs. CGArc boasts relationships with organizations such as Dignity Health, Basha’s, Harkins, and Intel, to name a few, in addition to various small businesses operated by the Chapter. CGArc’s Sign Shop manufactures custom professional vinyl signs for businesses and individuals throughout Arizona and the U.S. and can handle quantities from 1-100,000.

But the programs don’t end there. The Chandler-Gilbert Arc operates 12 group homes and an apartment living program supporting individuals in everything from home/life management to recreation.

Most recently, the Chapter partnered with the AZ Department

of Child Safety (DCS) in opening two “Receiving Homes” designed to provide short-term housing to children with I/DD involved in the DCS system.

Through its Transportation and Mobility Management effort, CGArc also operates a fleet of 30 vehicles providing client transportation and supporting a vehicle sharing and Coordinated Mobility partnership with the Maricopa Association of Governments and City of Phoenix. And its High School Transitional Program partners with East Valley high schools so students who are preparing to graduate can participate in Chapter programs while still attending high school – thus providing for a smoother transition into adult life.

From eight to now more than 500 each year, The Chandler-Gilbert Arc’s efforts are touching lives and expanding horizons for local residents with I/DD. The first 40 years, it seems, are just the beginning for this dynamic and forward-looking organization. Find out more at www.cgarc.org.



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Achieve with us.®

Did You Know...?

* YOU CAN KEEP UP WITH THE ARC OF ARIZONA ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay on top of the latest news from The Arc of Arizona and get updates on issues and events affecting individuals with I/DD by checking us out on these social media sites:



Follow us on Twitter – www.twitter.com/TheArcAZ (@TheArcAZ)



Like us on Facebook – www.facebook.com/TheArcofArizona



Follow us on LinkedIn – www.linkedin.com/company/the-arc-of-arizona-inc

* MEMBERSHIP OFFERS YOU AN ARRAY OF BENEFITS

For as little as \$10.00 a year, your Membership in The Arc of Arizona adds your voice to the growing call for protecting the rights of all Arizonans. And, because membership in The Arc of Arizona includes membership in The Arc of the United States, it provides you timely updates from state and national leaders; discounts on The Arc's trainings and materials; and exclusive newsletters and legislative alerts.

To find out more, and to start or renew your membership today, visit www.arcarizona.org or call Kristi Short at (602) 234-2721.

* YOUR USED VEHICLE CAN HELP “DRIVE” THE ARC’S SUCCESS

If you're getting rid of a car, truck, boat or RV, let The Arc of Arizona's Vehicle Donation Program take it off your hands – and give you the possibility of a nice tax deduction, too!

Simply visit www.thearc.org/donate-my-car or call (877) 272-2270 to speak with a representative. No hassles (we'll even haul it away for you and provide all the necessary documentation for your records), just a great opportunity for you to support a great cause!

* YOU CAN CREATE A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE ARC

A **Memorial** or **Planned Gift** ensures your impact lives on long after you or a loved one passes away. To learn more about the many ways to make a Memorial or Planned Gift to The Arc, and the tax advantages that may be available to you, contact Jon Meyers, Executive Director, at (602) 290-1632 or jon@arcarizona.org.

Supporting The Arc – As Easy as Spending on Yourself!



Now you can feed your family and support The Arc of Arizona through the

Fry's Community Rewards Program.

Simply link your Community Rewards card to The Arc of Arizona at www.frysfood.com. There's no additional cost to you — and there's a huge benefit to Arizonans with intellectual and developmental disabilities!

Visit our website at www.arcarizona.org to find out more — and get involved today!

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With the **BBVA Compass For Your Cause** program, every purchase you make supports the vital advocacy and outreach of The Arc of Arizona.

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By opening a BBVA Compass Checking Account using The Arc of Arizona's unique Affinity code – **110904** – your purchases automatically generate a donation from Compass Bank to The Arc. Compass even makes an initial \$50 donation every time an account associated with The Arc is opened. Best of all, there's no additional cost to you. It's a winning proposition all the way around!

For more information about the BBVA Compass For Your Cause program, visit www.arcarizona.org or www.bbvacompass.com/checking-accounts.

If you wish to make an online donation to The Arc of Arizona, please visit our website at www.arcarizona.org and click on the **Donate** button.

All donations to The Arc of Arizona are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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12th Annual American Indian Disability Summit
March 17, 2016 – Desert Willow Conference Center, Phoenix
www.facebook.com/aidisabilitysummit/

7th Annual Ability 360 Health & Wellness Fair
April 29-30, 2016
Ability 360 Center (formerly the Disability Empowerment Center), Phoenix
www.ability360.org

Y.E.S. The Arc 41st Annual Holiday Dinner Dance
December 12, 2014 – Hilton Sedona Hotel & Spa
www.yesthear.org

5th Annual African American Conference on Disabilities
February 12, 2016 – Desert Willow Conference Center, Phoenix
www.ability360.org

