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LARC Safety Meeting at Torrington Riverfront

LARC's Clinical and Residential staff recently held a safety meeting at Torrington Riverfront Apartments featuring Officer Gallagher from the Torrington Police Department. The event was held in Torrington Riverfront's Community Room and was attended by several staff members and many of the LARC-supported residents who live in the state-of-the art apartments.



Officer Gallagher, Torrington Police Officer, sharing tips on staying safe.

According to Jill Sahlin, Director of Clinical Supports at LARC, these events are important as they provide opportunities for residents supported by LARC to get together, ask questions in a group setting, and discuss ways to stay safe. (continued on page 5)

LARC at Five Points Art Center

LARC's Day Support Option (DSO) Program returned to Five Points Art Center to participate in another art workshop this winter.

For 12 weeks, individuals in LARC's DSO travelled up to the center on University Drive to create art projects. Under the guidance of instructor, Noel Croce, the artists explored their creativity using a variety of materials and techniques. (continued on page 6)



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Dear friend,

This winter LARC staff continued to update training skills and knowledge so as to ensure the best care and support of the individuals in our programs. The agency continues to work towards the addition of a new group home to our Residential program. Project SEARCH is accepting registrations for the fall program. The Day Support Program is greatly benefitting from the donations from our generous community that make possible enriching activities.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with our dedicated and talented staff and to witness daily the individuals in our programs leading their best lives. We look forward to seeing you at LARC's 60th Anniversary & Wine Tasting event on April 5.

Michael Menard, Ph.D.

Executive Director



LARC's 60th Anniversary & Wine Tasting Celebration

Tickets now on sale

<https://www.litchfieldarc.org/larcs-spring-wine-tasting-2024.html>

Friday, April 5, 5-8 p.m.

Crystal Peak



Michael Menard welcomed former LARC Board Member, Tim Waldron, who stopped by to drop off a sponsorship check from Eversource where he is a Community Relations Specialist.



Tastings of Fine Wines, Spirits and Ales

Hearty hors d'oeuvres

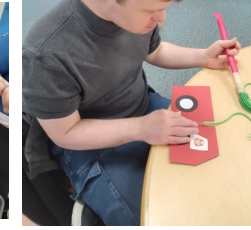
Groovy activities

Live music

Tablescapes Raffle—Baskets with themed items to complete your next party!

In the Community

LARC's Day Support Option (DSO) program participants were out in the community this winter enjoying all that Litchfield County and surrounding towns have to offer, including Institute for Native American Studies in Washington, Bristol Library, a local tree farm, Thomaston Bowling, and Five Points Art Center to name a few!



Culture Celebration—Our Culture is Beautiful

Torrington residents, Effie and Angaza Mwando, founders of *Our Culture is Beautiful*, recently demonstrated for LARC staff and program participants Djembe drumming as part of the agency's Culture Celebration.

Drums were available for those who wanted to try drumming while others took to the dance floor and moved with the rhythm. The audience was enthralled not only with the drumming but by the brilliant African clothing and accessories worn by Effie. "It was a spectacular event and everyone was engaged," said Dwayne Small, Day Support Option (DSO)

Coordinator at LARC. "Effie and Angaza provided a stimulating and entertaining event."



This was the third Culture Celebration event held at LARC over the last few months as a way to celebrate the rich and diverse traditions of the vibrant cultures in the area.

Our Culture is Beautiful offers services that include conversation, storytelling, African drumming, diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops as well as cultural awareness events and trainings. The organization, located in Torrington, envisions a vibrant community of people who are committed to preserving and promoting the cultural, historical, intellectual, and social movement traditions of people of color and other minorities throughout the Northwest Corner of Connecticut.

LARC's Culture Celebration is made possible by Thomaston Savings Bank Foundation.

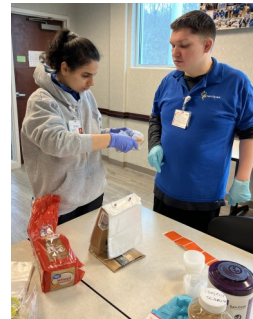
Project SEARCH News

Contributed by Kathy Riberdy, Special Educator and Project SEARCH Coordinator



Project SEARCH Interns are halfway through their 2nd Internship at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital. Emma has been supporting Nutritional Services and learning food preparation for Meals on Wheels. She is the first intern to support the hospital's new Food 4 Health food pantry. She's working on assisting patients pick out food and restocking inventory. Brian is supporting Cardiology by "turning over" patient rooms and restocking supplies. Brian has progressed to the skill of making patient appointment reminder phone calls. He is also learning filing skills in Human Resources.

The team went to Torrington's City Hall for a Job Fair to practice communication skills and presenting themselves in professional manner. Emma and Brian are working towards employment! Applications are now being accepted for Fall 2024 program.



60 YEARS OF LARC



In 1964, a group of parents in the Torrington area made the decision that they would join forces to make possible opportunities – at the time unavailable – for their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It was their efforts 60 years ago, that built the foundation for The Arc of Litchfield County that we know today. Over the next year, the Community Newsletter will share highlights of the past 60 years of LARC. Congratulations to the staff, families, LARC partners, and the greater community who make possible the vibrant, impactful, resourceful, and adaptable agency that today serves over 200 individuals on a daily basis.

LARC is now accepting applications for the Fall 2024 Project SEARCH Internship Program

The Project SEARCH Program, offered through The Arc of Litchfield County (LARC), is a unique, business led, nine-month internship program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Interns in the program complete three rotations at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington, CT, with the main goal of gaining the necessary skills to obtain competitive employment. The Project SEARCH model involves an extensive period of training and career exploration, long-term job coaching and continuous feedback from teachers, skills trainer, and mentors.

The program is making a real impact on graduates from previous internships at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, many of whom are now employed at businesses throughout Northwest Connecticut.

To be eligible for the program participants must be young adults with disabilities aged 18-35; reside in Northwestern CT; in the process of completing or have already completed a high school education; receiving DDS funding for employment services and/or have an IEP; have a strong desire to work and demonstrate potential for competitive employment.

LARC is accepting Project SEARCH Internship Program applications until May 1, 2024. For more information, contact Kathy Riberdy, Project SEARCH Special Educator/Coordinator (860) 482-9364 Ext. 340 kriberdy@litchfieldarc.org; www.litchfieldarc.org

Riverfront meeting (continued from page 1)

"This is a new experience for LARC-supported individuals," explains Jill. "We provide these meetings periodically as a means for sharing knowledge, building rapport with the police officers serving the community, and reminding everyone about staying safe."



Hilary Paden, Director of LARC's In Home Supports (IHS) Program, is directly involved on a daily basis with the individuals residing at Torrington Riverfront. "These meetings are especially important for this type of living arrangement. Unlike a group home, the individuals at Riverfront share the building with many people who are not familiar with the challenges faced by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities," explains Hilary. "It's a different model that presents many challenges but also many rewards. We take every opportunity to remind staff and the people they support of how important it is to communicate with each other and be safe."

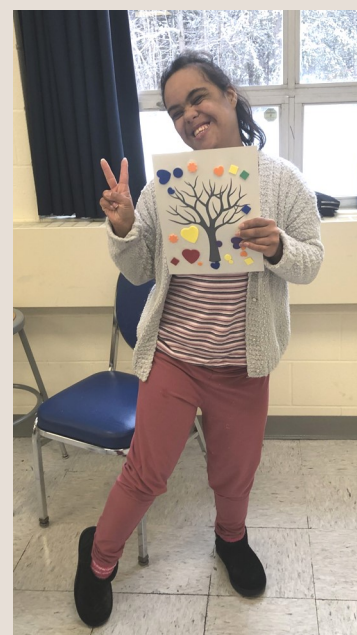
Creating Art at Five Points Art Center (continued from page 1)

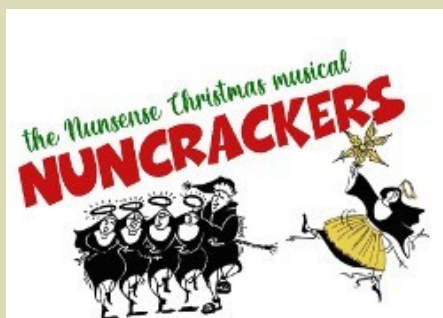
The workshop, funded by LARC's Annual Appeal donors, encourages independent creation, with assistance and guidance provided as needed. This very popular program is one that everyone, including staff, look forward to each week. We are so grateful for the generous support of LARC's donors and our fabulous friends at Five Points Art Center.



Your donation has real impact!

Your support helps LARC provide many of the programs and activities that help make life better for the hundreds of people served by the agency on a daily basis. Monthly donations can be set up on LARC's website www.litchfieldarc.org. Many employers match donations. Questions? Call Mary Ellen Kunz at 860-482-9364, ext. 390.





Festive Musical Enjoyed thanks to generous donor

For the second year in a row, friend of LARC, Larry Wilson, donated theater tickets to a show at the Thomaston Opera House.

This year's performance was



Nuncrackers, a popular musical that celebrates Christmas. Three residents accompanied by two LARC staff attended. All enjoyed the fun afternoon—and though the weather was frightful the experience was delightful. Thank you to Mr. Wilson for his thoughtfulness and generosity.



Be An Advocate

Advocate for agencies like The Arc of Litchfield County! Reach out to your state legislators and let them know you are concerned about the impact of skyrocketing demand for services such as those provided by LARC, increasing costs, the ongoing workforce crisis as well as the life-changing work staff undertake everyday.

The 2024 General Assembly Session, a short session, began on February 7th and policymakers are already hearing the needs from multiple interest groups for more funding. Help nonprofits like LARC by being one of the loudest voices!

For more information, read "**Nonprofit Providers Make the Case for More Funding**" by CT News Junkie (copy and paste into your browser: [Nonprofit Providers Make the Case for More Funding | CT News Junkie](#))

If you would prefer to receive our quarterly community newsletter by email, please contact

Mary Ellen Kunz at mkunz@litchfieldarc.org.





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Mary Ellen Kunz
Director of Development & Marketing
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Our vision, **Community for All**,
strives to achieve inclusion for all
individuals.

The principles which have guided
LARC in its delivery of programs
since 1964 are individual
empowerment, choice, respect and
dignity.

COMMUNITY FOR ALL