

"The greatest gift parents can give their children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence."

~ Dr. Maria Montessori

"In the end, it's not what you do for your children but what you've taught them to do for themselves."

~ Ann Landers

Spring has Sprung - It's time to rotate programs

Now that spring is set to arrive bringing all its fragrances and new life, it is time to add new life to The Arc programs. Sticking with changing some of the programs seasonally, there will be some new programs added soon as we end some others until next year. Please reach out to The Arc if you have any suggestions for something you want to see taking place.

Things to look forward to in the next couple of months include a spring dance, Arts at The Arc, movie night off site at the theater and kayaking/fishing. Again, before the spring schedule is finalized, contact The Arc with a new class you would like to see take place.

Keep looking at the website under the announcement page or read the newsletters for the new schedule. In the meantime, there will be a game night taking place this month of March. In the past, game night has always been a fun night. Page 3 of the newsletter has the details. Registration required.

ADVOCACY NEWS

Many With Disabilities Earn Far Less Than Minimum Wage. A Push For Equal Pay Continues

by Jessie Van Berkel, Jana Hollingsworth, Star Tribune/TNS

DULUTH, Minn. — Josh Haug patiently folded each towel from a massive green bin at Essential Health's fitness center in Duluth on Tuesday, stacking them in neat piles. The 41-year-old, who has an intellectual disability, spends two shifts a week laundering and delivering clean towels to gym-goers — and earning more than minimum wage. It's a dramatic departure from the nearly two decades when he received "pennies on the dollar" to complete menial tasks at a segregated facility alongside dozens of other people with disabilities, said his mother, Joanne Steinke.

"It would be a great month if he brought home a check of \$17. And now he makes \$11 an hour," she said. "There's just something about having your own money, and being accountable for it, that has given him a lot of pride."

The state is putting additional grant dollars toward helping employers transition away from the decades-old practice of paying people with disabilities subminimum wage to do repetitive tasks in centers, often called sheltered workshops. "As long as we're allowing subminimum wage to happen, we are sending a universal message to all of Minnesota that people with disabilities are worth less than (others)," said Jillian Nelson with the Autism Society of Minnesota, who co-chaired the subminimum wage elimination task force.

Employers shift away from subminimum pay The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights recommended in 2020 that Congress repeal the law allowing subminimum wages. It suggested a phase-out period for service providers and people with disabilities to transition to other options, with the priority being competitive-wage jobs integrated in the community. The federal Department of Labor announced in September that it will review the use of federal certificates that allow employers to pay subminimum wages and look at the impacts if it stopped issuing the certificates.

March 2024 class calendar

Reservations to sign up for classes only available at: www.thearcblair.org, click on announcement page for updates/cancellations or click members tab to register for classes.

Monday, March 4, at 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm: Coloring Class

Intent: This class is open to everyone to enjoy a minute to catch our breath and just relax through coloring pages.

Description: It will be a quiet class where we simply color with soft music playing in background. There is no set teaching. Each person will color something different with a choice of marker, crayon or colored pencil. There will be limited talking as it designed to bring calmness and relaxation. *Level:* Beginner. open/social teaching *Registration Required:* No

Tuesday, March 5 and March 19, at 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm: West African Drums

Intent: To enjoy the lively beat of the drum.

Description: This class forms a circle and learns different 'rhythms'. It is a great stress release and data supports that it alters the neurons in the brain. *Level:* Beginner open/social teaching *Registration Required:* No, just show up.

Tuesday, March 5 and March 19, at 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm: Arc Angels Chorus

Intent: To express one's self through music and singing

Description: This class is for anyone who enjoys music and likes to sing. Always an upbeat time!

Level: Beginner open/social teaching *Registration Required:* No, just show up.

Thursday, March 7, at 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm: Basic Craft Class

Intent: To teach basic concepts of gluing, places object in correct position, finger manipulation and scissor use. If you participate in this class you CANNOT participate in the woodworking/artisan class.

Description: This class is designed for individuals who want to try their creative side but need to learn at a slower pace. It is for people who are nervous to try more challenging artisan classes. The classes are small so the instructors can give more individual attention to each participant with goal of having participants grow in skills and be able to advance to more challenging classes.

Level: Beginner Type: Independent/Skill Building Teaching.

Registration Required: yes. visit www.thearcblair.org, hover over membership tab, click down arrow to hover over register for class or program.

Monday, March 11, March 18, & March 25, at 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm: Garden Club RETURNS!

Intent: To learn how to grow plants and vegetables at home. Allow nature to release your tension and stress.

Description: This group will meet weekly throughout the spring and summer doing very hands on weeding, planting, and growing. Power tools used. This is a very interactive class and participants are expected to assist during lessons.

Level: Intermediate/Skill Building Educational *Registration Required:* Yes.

Tuesday, March 12 and March 26, at 5:30 to 6:30 pm: Uke Group (practicing for upcoming concerts)

Intent: To celebrate wonderful music together through ukulele.

Description: A fun, interactive, lively group that learns a lot of chords in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. No experience necessary or musical background needed.

Level: beginner open/social teaching *Registration Required:* No. The Arc provides the instruments.

Thursday, March 14 and March 28, 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm: Pickleball

Intent: To gain a little exercise while learning a new sport

Description: This class is for someone who does not believe they have 'athletic' ability or doesn't want to compete but just get a little exercise. Don't label yourself - you may enjoy this 'sport'. Find out what the craze across the nation is all about.

Level: Beginner.open/social teaching *Registration Required:* No, The Arc provides the paddles.

Friday, March 22, at 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm: GAME NIGHT

Intent: To socialize and have fun

Description: UNO, Trouble, Jenga, and many more table top games. Plus, some team competition games involving balls, hula hoops and so much more! *Level:* Beginner.open/social night

Registration Required: yes. Visit www.thearcblair.org, hover over membership tab, click down arrow to hover over register for class or program.

Wednesday's/Every Wednesday at 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm: Line Dance

Intent: To get exercise in a fun, social atmosphere

Description: Learn dance steps set to music of all genres and decades. Wheelchairs and walkers can join in the fun. Don't like to dance? This class encourages folks to just clap along in seats.

Level: Beginner.open/social teaching *Registration Required:* No

The "WE ARE...Friends" club held a Valentine's dinner and dance at The Arc. Everyone paired off into groups of two and planned their own agenda from beginning to end: decorating, cooking the meal, planning what to do for fun, cleaning up and discussing the next big event. It's nice to witness the independence and how people have come out of their shell from meeting new people to the development of natural friendships doing 'typical' young people things.



Drumming jams to their own beat. The West African Drum Group is practicing for some upcoming concerts. They are a lively bunch who always leave energized and in good moods. Everyone is welcome to join. The Arc provides the drums. See The Arc calendar for specifics.



Garden club returns!

Calling anyone interested in gardening. We are starting back up in March to start the 'seedlings'. We need time for the seeds to form baby plants before we can replant outside for the spring and summer. Everyone is welcome but registration is required. This class requires a lot of physical labor (hard work) and participants must be able to only miss 3 classes (average of one class missed per month) throughout the entire summer. If you cannot commit to this, please do not register. See the newsletter for more details.



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Chorus had not one, but two guitar players during rehearsals in February. This extra layer added a nice dimension to the music. The group is back and starting to remember songs after a long break. We should be ready for performances that are scheduled in April!



The fundraiser on March 2 is shaping up to be quite a fun time. Dancing, check. Dinner, check. Chance to win money, check and double check. If you haven't purchased your ticket yet, there is a little wee bit of time left to do so. Scan the QR code or go to our website, www.thearcblair.org and click on the Cash Bash tab.



Oh - and did we share that Arc groups will be performing that night? Like we said, lots of fun things so let your hair down and celebrate life!