



LIBERTY
ARC

A chapter of *The Arc*
New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE ARC NEW YORK FEBRUARY PHONE BLITZ YIELDS OVERWHELMING RESPONSE WITH 2,000 CALLS ADVOCATING FOR NEW YORKERS WITH DISABILITIES

Amsterdam – Disability advocates in the Capitol Region, including in Montgomery County, sent a powerful message to state leaders about the critical need for investment in supports and services for New Yorkers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). A February Phone Blitz held by Northeast Region Chapters of The Arc New York, which Liberty ARC participated in, saw an incredible response with over 2,000 calls from engaged community members in a single week.

The calls urged State Representatives to support the inclusion of a 3.2% Cost-of-Living Adjustment and a Direct Support Wage Enhancement (A5268/S4127A) in their respective house budget proposal to reverse years of underfunding and address an escalating staffing crisis that is having a devastating impact on people with disabilities in need of essential support. One in five direct care positions are currently vacant across the state, and nearly 40% of providers were forced to close or reduce programs in a single year.

The Arc New York is the largest non-profit provider of supports and services for people with I/DD in the state. The phone blitz was conducted by 17 Arc Chapters the Northeast Region, including Liberty ARC. Collectively, these 17 Chapters support more than 7,000 individuals and families, and employ nearly 8,000 people in the region in their shared mission to provide people with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities the ordinary and extraordinary opportunities of life.

"The response from the community shows how passionate people are about quality services for those with disabilities," said Liberty ARC CEO Jennifer Saunders. "New York needs to continue to make a meaningful investment in the services and the staff that our family, friends, and neighbors with disabilities rely on every day. Lawmakers in Albany need to know how vital these services are for the people we support, and that our communities all benefit when every New Yorker has the support they need and the opportunities to thrive."

“As a brother of a person who receives services from Liberty ARC and a board member of the agency, I’m proud to be fully committed to this campaign,” said Paul DiCaprio, who also serves on the Arc New York’s Board of Governors. “Funding and support from New York State can’t be pushed off to another year. The people who depend on providers like Liberty ARC need their voices heard, and so many family and friends came through with these important calls.”

"We are thrilled with the enthusiastic response from the community," said Susan Lucas, Regional Vice President of the Board of Governors. Thousands of voices were lifted to call on state leaders to make a commitment to support New Yorkers with disabilities. Meeting that commitment means making a meaningful investment in the services and staff they rely on for health, safety, wellbeing, integration, and opportunity."

Learn more about the workforce challenge and our solutions here: <https://thearcny.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024BudgetPrioritiesKG2824.pdf>

About Liberty ARC

Liberty ARC, the Montgomery County Chapter of The Arc New York, is a not-for-profit agency that provides top-quality supports and services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are proud of our six decades of bringing these innovative and valuable programs to those most vulnerable in our community. While staying committed to our framework the agency has grown our employment, residential, day supports, family support and health-related programming throughout the years. Our mission- *Together we support people with disabilities to achieve a quality of life each person values* - together with our *Values* make up the foundation on which our culture is framed. We are extremely proud to be a pioneering agency, which coupled with a dynamic workforce and our person-centered mission makes Liberty ARC a stand-out in our field.

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