



News Release: March 21, 2025

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Liberty ARC Opens New Barrier-Free Home For People With Disabilities In Amsterdam, NY

Amsterdam – Officials, friends, and community members gathered to celebrate the opening of Liberty ARC's newest residence with a ribbon cutting ceremony on March 21 in the city of Amsterdam.

The residence, located on Second Avenue, is a state-of-the-art barrier-free and fully accessible home for people with disabilities supported by Liberty ARC, providing greater independence for those who live there. The home is an upgrade to the agency's facilities and will replace older homes in the city of Amsterdam. The home was made possible with funding from New York State's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and funding from Liberty Foundation.

The 5,000 square foot, \$1.7 million home houses three primary apartments and an independent living apartment. The model is unique as it is designed to accommodate aging in place or changes in medical status, such as the need for a wheelchair or lift, allowing people to stay in their home even if their medical situation changes.

The home, built by Baker Construction, sits on a 2.3 acre lot with plenty of green space and a covered patio for outdoor activities for the residents.

"Liberty ARC's strong commitment to high-quality, person-centered services is reflected and preserved in the construction of this state-of-the-art build that will be a home, for years to come, to those we support," said Liberty ARC CEO Jennifer Saunders. "Our agency is proud to have collaborated with our stakeholders, including OPWDD, family members, committee members, community members, board members, and those residing in the home as well as staff to bring this project to fruition."

New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities Acting Commissioner Willow Baer said, "Helping to provide opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live with as much independence as possible is a cornerstone of OPWDD services and supports. OPWDD is proud to partner with Liberty ARC and applauds their commitment to building innovative residences that allow people to

remain in their current homes as they age or require a change in medical care. This innovation is truly changing the way that people are being supported and respected throughout their lifespan.”

Baker Construction broke ground on the project in November 2023. This is the agency’s second barrier-free home that incorporates apartment layouts on single level living. Liberty ARC opened a similar home in 2020 in Palatine Bridge that contained three separate apartments. Each apartment has a unique character and ambience that reflects the personalities and preferences of the residents.

“I am very excited. I can’t wait to move,” said Ken Shumaker, one of the residents of the Second Avenue home. “I am going to put my [bird] feeders in my new backyard. They are going love it, and I am going to love it.”

“As the president of the Liberty Foundation Board, it is my honor to see this project completed,” said Donna Canestraro, President of the Liberty Foundation Board of Directors. “Liberty Foundation, thanks to the support of hundreds of our donors, made a significant contribution to the building of this home. This gorgeous home is an outstanding example of why the Foundation was created in 1993, and what the mission has been since then. Donations to Liberty Foundation support vital programs, services, improvements to homes, and life-enhancing experiences for people supported by Liberty ARC that are not funded through other means. I would like to take a moment to thank our loyal and generous donors.”

Board members for Liberty Foundation and Liberty ARC and several elected officials were also in attendance for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

About Liberty Foundation

The Liberty Foundation was started in 1993 to benefit people with intellectual and developmental disabilities served by Liberty ARC. The Liberty Foundation funds programs, services, and items that are not otherwise funded through state or federal government programs to enhance the lives of Liberty ARC participants. Throughout the years, the opportunities and services provided by Liberty ARC and supported by the Liberty Foundation has helped people with disabilities to live their best lives. The Foundation provides resources that allows Liberty ARC to deliver an outstanding level of service and program excellence, so that each person can achieve a quality of life they value.

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 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Montgomery and Schenectady Counties. 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.

About The Arc New York

The Arc New York is the largest provider of supports and services for people intellectual and developmental disabilities in New York state. The 35 local Chapters of The Arc New York collectively support more than 60,000 people with disabilities and their families in every county of the state, and

employ more than 30,000 people in the shared mission to provide people with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities the ordinary and extraordinary opportunities of life. Founded by families more than 75 years ago, The Arc New York continues to be an influential advocate for the rights, opportunities, and inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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