

# **The Arc of Massachusetts 2010 Annual Report April 15, 2010**

This report covers the period since our last annual meeting in April 2009, beginning April 19, 2009 with a focus on our present fiscal year. During that period of time, The Arc's governmental activities focused upon maintaining existing services, increased media attention upon the disability sector, health care both here and nationally (latter focused on including disability/long term supports in reform package), continuing disability first and eligibility efforts, maintaining branding and partnership work and beginning a strategic planning process.

The affiliates of The Arc of Massachusetts form a key foundation in its work. The extent to which affiliates together via The Arc "In" Massachusetts can change our game in terms of branding and resources is unrealized. Despite that the financial and in-kind resources make a tremendous difference in the effectiveness of the state and national organizations. Further, the support of the MDDC (Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council), recent additional support from provider agencies and individual donors stabilize The Arc's funding base.

In January the board of directors reviewed material which demonstrated however that the funding model for The Arc of Massachusetts needs review and revision if it is to grow in its effectiveness. A committee began work on this area- representation for two to three work group meetings from chapters will be essential.

## **Public Policy & Government Affairs**

2009-2010 was a year during which new public policy initiatives were few and most efforts were geared to maintain existing services and supports.

Massachusetts' 2010 state budget was a harsh reflection of the worldwide recession. With a \$5 billion slide in revenue for 2010 alone, it seemed certain that there was no hope. An increase in the sales tax allowed the Senate to restore MassHealth and further DDS cuts. Although some solace was taken as \$75 Million in cuts were avoided, \$25 Million in family support (including DESE-DDS) and day/employment services were lost. The Arc however distinguished itself via two important sets of partnerships which prevented further reductions and which increased efforts during this crisis (The Arc and ADDP, The Arc, MDDC, MFOFC, MASS, AFAM & MDSC). As a result, we had a key role in:

- 1) Meetings with Governor Patrick
- 2) Developed close relationships with Governor's team
- 3) Meetings with legislative leadership and our legislative champions (long list but leading it are Rep. L'Italien, Sannicandro & Khan, Sen. Berry, Spilka & Canderas)
- 4) Making the case successfully that reductions were onerous

Activities with partners resulted in

- A May rally with Peter and Paul of Peter, Paul and Mary; it fortuitously coincided with the Senate vote on sales tax and restoration of DD/Mass Health funds
- A vigil in the fall to avoid deep cuts to DDS, the governor met with vigil attendees on 4 different occasions; staff welcomed them; shorter vigils were held in the Speaker's and Senate President's office

- Second series of efforts resulted in another meeting with the Governor and prevention of MassHealth cuts (the governor also later restored cuts in transitional assistance which would have inequitably affected heads of households where a person is disabled)
- Media efforts including templates for agencies to report on cuts, we were covered in Metro media (and other parts of state) including WBZ radio talk show; promoted “Stating Our Case” forums in the state with press release templates and helping get “Walk in Our Shoes” campaign off the ground and we participated in the Committee on Taxation’s public forums

#### Other State Policy

- MA21- Massachusetts Disability Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Coalition is aimed at administrative systems change; we want the state more transparent, and we want resources to be more flexible so they can be used more effectively by individuals and families – a conference was held in the fall with our partners with support from MDDC and regional groups were established
- Work on legislation continued including National background check, the Governor signed two bills- Self Determination for DDS services (Sponsor Rep. Tom Sannicandro) and Disability History Month (Sponsor Sen. Steven Tolman); and we filed a health care bill (training of health professionals by Rep. Peter Koutoujian) and supported a number of other bills of value for persons with disabilities
- Continued to work on prevention via Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
- Held or attended many meetings with Commissioner (s), Secretaries (HHS, A/F) and other key officials; some meetings focused on advocacy issues such as eligibility while other meetings may have been briefings on policy changes such as Medicaid Waivers (2 new ones for state) and change in Family Support model of services
- Joined advisory committee to maintain 40B; new efforts to scuttle Chapter 40B are underway via ballot initiative; 80 municipalities have or are close to reaching the 10% affordability benchmark of this law; great progress has been made

On the federal level the passage of health care reform with disability components was the primary work of The Arc and its partners. Three examples of important components in the bill include:

- CLASS Act, public opt out long term care program which will provide two tiers of cash assistance for long term care; it will take some pressure off of Medicaid and allow individuals to receive some long term care assistance without impoverishment
- Community Choice, statutory language changed to lessen the financial advantages to states to provide institutional care over community care
- Corrections to the State Plan Waiver (originally proposed by Senator Kerry in previous session), makes it much easier for states to propose and implement community waiver programs for federal reimbursement; cumbersome applications and revisions can be avoided; The Arc was involved in proposing language (and we assisted in Mass) with Sen. Kerry.
- We lost Senator Ted Kennedy and his sister, Eunice Shriver. Both were great champions. Senator Kennedy cannot be replaced and the CLASS Act’s adoption is another legacy.
- We continue to fight Barney Frank’s efforts to give extra rights to institution plaintiffs; his bill has come up in 3 sessions and keeping our Congressional delegation informed is one key activity to discourage co-sponsors

## **Education and Outreach**

- The Support Brokers and PALS completed a merger. A strong committee has developed and marketing and chapter partnerships are a high priority for this year
- The Arc published a guide for individuals who lost services; it received praise from many corners
- Due to resources we have NOT implemented our new webinar series but did purchase Webex and plan to implement in the coming months
- The coalition of MA21 although focused on systems change, released a booklet (also on web) on key principles and developed a power point guide for training
- Annual federal disability seminar includes working with LEND Fellows from Shriver and ICI and partners at MDDC to educate family members, individuals and professional; The Arc schedules capitol hill visits for the delegation
- The Arc of Massachusetts was one of 44 award recipients from The Arc US and Walmart for transition - \$100,000 over 3 years in partnership with The Arc of Gr. Haverhill & Newburyport
- The Arc IN Massachusetts held two innovation conferences since our last meeting – a very successful one took place at Holy Cross on April 1 – the session facilitates networking on best practices in addition to sessions

## **Organization and Development**

- Thanks to The Arc of Massachusetts board with staff support, The Arc's annual art event focused on the talents of individuals with disabilities has become a source of new funds and a positive public image
- On April 10, 2011, The Arc IN Massachusetts will hold its signature event "All Aboard The Arc" (soon to be on AllAboardTheArc.com); Virtually all chapters have agreed to participate on some level
- Development Directors have begun meeting thanks to initiation of Craig Pina of The Arc of South Shore; Brenda Asis of our office and Craig have coordinated a number of productive meetings
- The Capital-Growth Committee has recommended renovation of our existing building which will result in increased space, addressing drainage problems and aesthetic improvements; we plan to agree on a final plan and to begin work in the coming year.

## **Goals for 2010-2011**

- 1) Establish new, implementable funding model for The Arc of Massachusetts
- 2) Policy
  - i) Continue to address state budget priorities during recession and recovery
  - ii) Develop and publicize long term plan for policy and services
  - iii) Increase participation in MA21 groups to support system change activities
  - iv) Advance health care goals while stabilizing program support
- 3) Increase brand visibility of The Arc via "All Aboard The Arc" and any related activities chapters put forward
- 4) Continue education efforts of The Arc via Support Brokers/PALS, Webinars, Electronic media
- 5) Implement capital –growth committee plan for building on South Street
- 6) Establish new strategic plan