



# ARC Life



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## VICTOR GIRLS BUILD EACH OTHER UP AT EMPOWERMENT GROUP

An Empowerment Group for girls in 5th and 6th grade at the Victor Intermediate School has assisted girls in improving their self-esteem by promoting self-exploration stress management, problem solving, positive body image, and more.

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Ontario ARC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to assisting individuals with disabilities or other challenges and their families. We offer personalized services and supports that foster life-long fulfillment through active citizenship and enriched community living.

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## MESSAGE FROM ANN SCHEETZ EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Ann Scheetz

At Ontario ARC, our community connections inspire us. They open doors for the people we support, and every day we are closer to our vision that all people with disabilities or other challenges are one with their communities. As you read this newsletter, I hope you are inspired by these connections and continue to look for ways to welcome the people we support into your own lives.

In this edition, you will read about the incredible volunteer work our Day Programs are involved with— together 100 individuals give a combined total of over 3,300 hours of their time volunteering in our

communities each year. We are so proud of the important work they are doing every day, and we hope you will be too!

Our Self-Advocacy Group continues to raise awareness for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with a focus on the future and educating others, they are bringing awareness to more people in our community than ever before. In early March, they hosted a “Spread the Word to End the Word” celebration to encourage acceptance and respect for people with disabilities. This day was part of a national movement to end the use of the “R-Word” and replace it with the new R-word: Respect. You can continue to stay updated on the group’s latest news and upcoming events on our website at [ontarioarc.org/self-advocacy](http://ontarioarc.org/self-advocacy).

Through our new Empowerment Group at Victor Intermediate School, girls of all abilities are having fun with activities like Zumba, while learning important life skills and improving self-esteem. The quotes from students speak for themselves— read on to learn more!

We continue to be thankful for the commitment our community shows to Ontario ARC. This winter, we welcomed Mary Kraus to our Community Advisory Board. As the County Administrator, Mary has unique insight into our community, and we know she will be a wonderful asset to our organization as we continue to create opportunities for people with disabilities.

Finally, we are thrilled to be gearing up for our spring signature fundraiser, the Canandaigua Wine Mixer. You— the family members, friends, and supporters of Ontario ARC, are the people who continue to make these events a success year after year. We hope you will join us for this unforgettable evening filled with new and creative twists!

It’s hard to believe the end of winter is near and a new season is fast approaching, but what a wonderful time of year Spring is – new beginnings, wonderful opportunities, fresh ideas. We are committed to embracing all of these things and thrilled that YOU continue to be with us every step of the way. ✨

Sincerely,

Ann Scheetz, Executive Director

On the Cover: Girls in the 5th and 6th Grade at Victor Intermediate School gather weekly to take part in Empowerment Group.



Empowerment Group offers girls at Victor Intermediate School the chance to improve self-esteem through Zumba, Yoga, mindfulness activities, and peer-led discussions.

### *Victor Girls Build Each Other Up At Empowerment Group continued from Cover*

The girls meet Friday afternoons after school and use their time together learning valuable life skills in a fun, safe, and supported environment. They do this through various activities like Zumba, Yoga, mindfulness activities, and peer-led discussions.

*"The Empowerment Group is really fun and helps me feel safe when talking about my feelings."*

Sophia

The weekly topics of group discussions, generated by the girls, vary to address issues such as peer pressure, bullying, body image, anxiety, stress, and more. Sometimes the girls simply share positive upcoming events or good outcomes, and other times they use the group discussion for support in resolving problems.

Physical and mental wellness components are designed to help the girls connect their feelings to their own thought processes, and in turn, they learn how to listen to their bodies for signs of stress.

"The girls offer kind words to each other and share how they have navigated peer relationships," says Jamie Buttaccio, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Zumba instructor and Aging and Wellness Coordinator at Ontario ARC, who is also the group leader.

*"Empowerment is special for me because I can talk to someone who will not tell anyone."*

Haley

"They learn how to manage their emotions, and also learn how to give empathy and compassion. Most of all, they realize they are not alone. Students are encouraged to embrace their differences and

*"It makes me feel at home and very happy. They are all my friends, and it's awesome."*

Madelyn

qualities that make them unique individuals and our hope is that they will transfer skills learned within this group with their friends, at home, and at school." ✨

**Empowerment Group meets Friday Afternoons, 3:15PM to 4:30PM at Victor Central School Intermediate Building. The next session runs April 13 to June 8 (no class 5/25). \$80 registration fee per 8 week session. For more information or to register, contact Jamie Buttaccio at [jbuttaccio@ontarioarc.org](mailto:jbuttaccio@ontarioarc.org) or (585) 919-2161.**



Speak Up, Speak Out Self-Advocacy Group President, Ben Green, thanks the audience during the group's Inauguration Ceremony.

## SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

In January, the Speak Up, Speak Out Self-Advocacy Group held a swearing-in ceremony to inaugurate their 2018 Officers. Ben Green (President), MJ Cooper (Vice-President), Tammy Gross (Secretary), and Marge Toth (Treasurer) are leading the group through an ambitious agenda. The group has already finalized a Statement of Rights, which is the subject of a video now in production. Goals include fundraising, forming a subcommittee to develop a constitution and mission statement, and preparing to provide Rights and Responsibilities training to people at the agency and in the community.

The Speak Up, Speak Out Self-Advocacy Group serves to support the group members and their communities. Each of the group's twice monthly meetings include a "teach

piece" presentation given by a group member. Teach piece topics have covered ways to stand up for your own rights as well as sharing frustrations and successes.

While the group continues to explore how to structure their activities to support each other, members

also carve out time to consider how to reflect outward, like annually participating in parades in Canandaigua and hosting awareness events such as their Spread the Word to End the "R-Word" event which was held in early March.

Fundraising events such as car washes and bake sales have helped to cover registrations for conferences, but the group's recent fundraising goals are driven by a desire to use their collective efforts to donate back to their communities. ✨

**The Speak Up, Speak Out, Self-Advocacy Group of Ontario ARC meets every other Thursday at 2:00PM in the Pathways area at the Main Facility. Drop-ins are welcome. For more information—including photos, the group's Statement of Rights, Mission Statement, Constitution, and a calendar of events—visit [ontarioarc.org/about/self-advocacy-group](http://ontarioarc.org/about/self-advocacy-group), or contact Michael Dowdle at [mdowdle@ontarioarc.org](mailto:mdowdle@ontarioarc.org) or (585) 919-2137.**

## SAVE THE DATE!



### CANANDAIGUA WINE MIXER RETURNS APRIL 21, 2018

Raise a glass – and funds for the Friends of Ontario ARC Foundation! Your support gives people with disabilities or other challenges the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Join us for the Canandaigua Wine Mixer at the New York Wine & Culinary Center on Saturday, April 21st at 6PM for an unforgettable evening filled with new and creative twists!

Enjoy food, wine and friends featuring the sounds of The Swooners and a very special performance by our Creative Expressions musicians! Compete for the winning bid in our live and silent auctions or try your luck at one of our exciting new auction boards - there are more ways to win than ever before! Artwork by our Creative Expressions artist will also be showcased and available for purchase throughout the evening. The festivities will be led by honorary chairs Laura and Rusty Barone.

Whether you purchase a ticket or become a sponsor, all proceeds support opportunities for people with disabilities or other challenges in our community, helping them to enjoy independent lives and reach their full potential. ✨

For more information or to purchase a ticket, visit [ontarioarc.org/Canandaigua-Wine-Mixer](http://ontarioarc.org/Canandaigua-Wine-Mixer). To learn more about sponsoring this event, contact Michele Wistner at 585.919.2156 or [mwistner@ontarioarc.org](mailto:mwistner@ontarioarc.org).

## ONTARIO ARC COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD WELCOMES NEW MEMBER



Mary Krause

Ontario ARC is pleased to announce a recent addition to the Community Advisory Board, a non-governing body of local professionals and leaders who provide the agency with community based input. Their valuable connections and insight help people with disabilities to become engaging community members who are welcomed, respected, and valued in our society. ✨

**Mary Krause, of Canandaigua is the County Administrator for Ontario County.**

## DAY PROGRAMS CELEBRATE VOLUNTEERS

Many members of Ontario ARC's Day Programs are well-known to community groups for their commitment to volunteerism. To celebrate, a Volunteer Appreciation Party was held this winter at Phelps Community Center. Everyone shared in the fun, lifting up one another with music, singing, dancing, and relaxing with an ice cream social and holiday crafts. It was a wonderful way to honor one another for the over 3,300 hours per year that the members of our Day Programs spend volunteering. They donate their time and skills to more than a dozen local nonprofits that support people in need.

For nearly 10 years, the volunteers have assisted on 15 Meals on Wheels delivery routes, and most recently began volunteering at Habitat for Humanity's



*Michele B. works alongside volunteers serving meals at the Methodist Soup Kitchen in Geneva.*

ReStore in Canandaigua. They support our oldest and youngest community members, lending a hand in activities and crafts with seniors residing at the M.M. Ewing

Continuing Care Center, Ontario Center, and Vienna Gardens, and with children at the Canandaigua Early Childhood Center and FLCC Child Care Center.

Volunteers also bake for the Gleaner's Community Kitchen, set up for meals at the Methodist Soup Kitchen in Geneva, and are outdoors assisting Finger Lakes Thoroughbred Adoption Program and sprucing up Sonnenberg Gardens during the spring and summer months.

One hundred individuals volunteer about 65 hours each week, in keeping with the Day Program's mission to learn about, engage with, and give back to their communities. They enjoy sharing their time and talents, and some members use volunteer opportunities to work toward personal goals such as developing their interests or practicing being prepared and organized.

"The volunteers love to share their time and their passions," says Michelle Jungermann, Director of Employment and Meaningful Activities. "They build connections with each other while demonstrating that people of all abilities are committed to giving back to their communities." ✨



*Kim J. is happy to help serve meals at the Methodist Soup Kitchen in Geneva.*

Ontario ARC

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## *Celebrating Disability Awareness Month*

March is National Disability Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness and promote inclusion and acceptance for people with disabilities. Join us on Facebook or Instagram to keep up on the success stories happening every day at Ontario ARC! ✨