



CATALYST AWARDS 2015

HONORING THOSE ADVOCATING
FOR INCLUSION NATIONWIDE

“

The avenue to true equality for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will not be paved by a single person or organization—but by thousands who share a vision and a passion. The Catalyst Awards gives us an opportunity to honor like-minded leaders in fields both inside and outside of our network who are trailblazing to make the future more inclusive.

”

—Peter V. Berns
Chief Executive Officer, The Arc

PROGRAM

Welcome

Ron Brown, President, The Arc's Board of Directors

Lunch

Remarks

Chris Littlefield, Founder, AcknowledgmentWorks, Peter V. Berns, Chief Executive Officer, The Arc

National Employer of the Year

Presented by Tanya Regli, Executive Director, The Arc of Philadelphia

Small Business Employer of the Year

Presented by Shawn Kros, Executive Director, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region

Entertainment Industry Excellence

Presented by David DeSanctis

Individual Philanthropist of the Year

Presented by Barbara Coppens, The Arc's Board of Directors

Federal Government Advocate of the Year

Presented by Tom Judd, The Arc's Board of Directors

Remarks

Nancy Webster, Immediate Past President, The Arc's Board of Directors & Chair of the Catalyst Awards Selection Committee

Public Policy Victory of the Year

Presented by Fred Misilo Jr., The Arc's Board of Directors & Marty Ford, Senior Executive Officer of Public Policy, The Arc

Self-Advocate of the Year

Presented by Stephanie Scott, Director of Quality Enhancement and Sharon Spurlock, Director of Family Supports, St. Louis Arc

Closing Remarks

Peter V. Berns, Chief Executive Officer, The Arc

CATALYST AWARDS



The Arc's Catalyst Awards have been created to recognize individuals, businesses, and other organizations that are catalysts for achievement in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Each honoree has done something remarkable that helps fulfill The Arc's mission to promote and protect the human rights of people with I/DD. Their work embodies what inclusion truly means.

Furthermore, their contributions are of national significance because they advance public understanding and acceptance of people with I/DD in a variety of arenas—from employment and philanthropy to advocacy and media. Each award illustrates what can be achieved and how we must move forward to create a fully inclusive society. The goal of these awards is to turn a national spotlight to individuals and organizations that are setting an example of what civil rights for people I/DD should be.

PUBLIC POLICY VICTORY OF THE YEAR

The Stephen Beck, Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014

The Stephen Beck, Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (ABLE) Act was signed into law on December 19, 2014 after many years of advocacy and bipartisan work in the House and Senate. The law allows eligible individuals with disabilities to establish “ABLE accounts” for qualified beneficiaries. ABLE accounts will allow the person with a disability more control over spending on qualified disability expenses and limited investment decisions, while protecting eligibility for Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, and other federal benefits. Without these accounts, many have limited avenues to save and allow for further independence. The passage of this bill comes after years of advocacy by Members of Congress and leaders in the disability community. Honorees include:

Congressman Ander Crenshaw (FL-4) • Congressman Chris Van Hollen (MD-8) • Senator Richard Burr (NC) • Senator Bob Casey (PA) • House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (CA-23) • House Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (TX-32) • House Republican Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-5) • Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin G. Hatch (UT) • Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (OR) • Sara Wolff: A powerful self-advocate who has worked closely with the lead sponsors of this bill in Congress and participated in a number of national events to raise awareness and promote passage • Stephen Beck (honored posthumously): The driving force behind this bill, he dedicated nights and weekends—on top of his full time job—to lobby Members of Congress • Catherine Beck, his wife, will accept on his behalf • John Ariale: Former Chief of Staff for Chief of Representative Ander Crenshaw, he drafted and steered the ABLE Act through the 8+ year process, leading to its passage

SELF-ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Adonis Reddick *St. Louis, Missouri*



It is difficult to advocate for yourself when the people you are speaking to have a hard time understanding what you are saying. However, that has never deterred Adonis Reddick from patiently educating others about the messages of equality. He founded his own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (Association of Spanish Lake Advocates), partners with agencies around St. Louis to change unjust laws, sits on various committees within the St. Louis Arc, and speaks to volunteer groups.

Adonis became a partner of the St. Louis Arc in 2012 when the agency began its accreditation process with The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL). He worked with St. Louis Arc staff through a three-day accreditation process. After the process, Adonis joined the St. Louis Arc's Social Justice Committee and more recently the Human Rights Committee. Adonis has challenged the committee to minimize the restrictions in place and offer creative solutions as alternatives. Additionally, Adonis has addressed over 50 corporate volunteers on behalf of St. Louis Arc, sharing his story and advocating for people of all abilities.

Outside of the St. Louis Arc, Adonis has become a consultant for Writing for the Soul Workshop, a program that aims to eliminate illiteracy among youth and promote self-reliance. He leads by example and writes what life was like for him growing up with a disability.

SMALL BUSINESS EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

Acadia Windows and Doors Aberdeen, Maryland



Acadia Windows and Doors is a pioneer in employing people with I/DD in Maryland. The business has been partnering with The Arc of Northern Chesapeake to employ people with I/DD and educate other employers throughout the state about supporting employees with disabilities.

Acadia Windows and Doors has created a work environment that is inclusive, equitable and promotes independence while providing a safe and productive working environment. Each employee is paid a commensurate wage and benefits for the work they perform. Individuals with I/DD are included in staff meetings, trainings and plant discussions, and their input is important. Accommodations have been made to promote independence within the manufacturing plant. For example, the work space for an employee who is legally blind and has I/DD was re-oriented and moved to the front of the plant so she could access the lunch room and restrooms without assistance.

Acadia Windows and Door's philosophy and practice of hiring employees with differing abilities and giving individuals an opportunity to work and make a living to support themselves has created a diverse and stable workforce. It has also led to a safer working environment for all of their employees, earning them safety awards. The leadership of this organization provides a sought-after example of excellence of supported employment throughout Maryland and the nation.

NATIONAL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

SAP

Newtown Square, Pennsylvania



With Jose Velasco heading The Autism at Work initiative, SAP is becoming a global leader in hiring individuals with I/DD. In 2014, SAP partnered with Specialisterne USA and The Arc to develop an IT

Training and on-boarding program in the U.S. Pilot programs in Newtown Square, PA and Palo Alto, CA.



Through the pilot sites, 12 individuals with autism were hired and are now working at SAP.

At the culmination of the first round of hiring, SAP held awareness events at both sites and invited staff and other partner companies to attend. Both events were heavily attended where the audience was able to learn about The Autism at Work program, meet some of the new hires, and get information about supporting individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Following the awareness events, SAP created a video to spread even greater awareness of the success of people with autism to a national and international audience. SAP has now begun a second round of hiring and plans to continue to hire individuals with autism for years to come in even more locations and in greater numbers.

SAP has given individuals with I/DD the opportunity to thrive in the workplace. They have promoted their values both internally and externally to corporate partners across the country and internationally.

ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE

Kazarian/Measures/Ruskin & Associates & Gail Williamson Los Angeles, CA



Kazarian/Measures/Ruskin (KMR) & Associates has been a part of the Los Angeles talent landscape since 1957. With more than 20 years of experience casting talent with disabilities in Hollywood, Gail Williamson was brought on board at KMR & Associates to develop its Diversity Department. Both at KMR and previously, Gail has represented some of the best and most experienced Hollywood talents with disabilities, including Lauren Potter, Jamie Brewer, and David DeSanctis.



She also created and operates a nonprofit, Downs Syndrome in Arts and Media, to help budding actors with I/DD to get started in their careers. Gail and KMR have provided an opportunity for individuals with I/DD to not only participate but succeed in a field that many would have viewed “out of their reach” years ago. Their work has led to individuals with I/DD being internationally-recognized actors.

INDIVIDUAL PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR

The Golisano Foundation & Tom Golisano *Rochester, New York*



Tom Golisano made his first philanthropic gift when he established the Golisano Foundation in 1985. The Foundation is one of the largest private foundations in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to helping people with intellectual disabilities.

GOLISANO
FOUNDATION

Through his funding of needed services and innovative initiatives his giving has focused on “imagining the possibilities”—making the world a better place for people with intellectual disabilities, enhancing their dignity, and giving them the opportunity to achieve and maximize their abilities and potential.

Mr. Golisano has shown through his philanthropy that he is champion for people with I/DD, and that he truly understands the needs of the I/DD community. His philanthropy has been a shining example of all that can be accomplished, and all that needs to be done.

In addition to establishing the Golisano Foundation, which has given millions of dollars to serve people with I/DD, his generous personal philanthropy totaling more than \$250 million has helped advance healthcare and education for hospitals, colleges, universities, and others organizations.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

*Tom Wheeler, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC*



Chairman Wheeler has made it his mission to ensure people with I/DD are included in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) workforce. Since the first day of his appointment, he has worked to create opportunities within the FCC hiring to onboard people with I/DD. Additionally, he created the Disability Advisory Committee of the FCC.

The FCC hiring initiative supports individuals with I/DD to be valued and included in their communities. Over the last year, seven individuals have obtained great careers within the federal government and its contractors. These positions have salaries at competitive levels and great benefits. The seven individuals are valued and included in the workplace in the same manner as individuals without disabilities. Their success has led to financial stability, an expanded circle of support, new invaluable friendships, and opportunities to become spokespersons for the FCC. This initiative serves as an example to other branches of the federal government.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all the of the Catalyst Awards selection committee members. Your contributions were essential to the success of this event. A special thank you to Nancy Webster, Immediate Past President of The Arc's Board of Directors, who chaired the selection committee for the Catalyst Awards.

Committee Members:

M.J. Bartelmay, Jr. | Secretary, The Arc's Board of Directors

Doug Church | Director, The Arc's Board of Directors

Barbara Coppens | The Arc's Board of Directors

Amy Goodman | Director, Autism Now Center

Carrie Hobbs Guiden | Executive Director, The Arc Tennessee

Trudy Jacobson | Senior Executive Officer of Development & Marketing, The Arc

Amie Lulinski | Director of Research and Evaluation, The Arc

Nancy Murray | President, The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh (ACHIEVA)

Casey Nitsch | Proposal Manager, The Arc

Chris Stewart | President/CEO, The Arc of Jefferson County

Shira Wakschlag | Staff Attorney and Special Assistant to the CEO, The Arc

Vila-Sheree Watson | Director of Marketing, The Arc

Karen Wolf-Branigin | Senior Executive Officer of National Initiatives, The Arc

Nancy Webster | Immediate Past President, The Arc's Board of Directors



1825 K Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006
800.433.5255
thearc.org