

**The Arc of Blackstone Valley**  
LIVE · LEARN · WORK · PLAY

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## SAVE THE DATE

### Flying Shuttles Exhibit

The Gallery at Central Congregational Church  
March 4th- March 31st  
Gallery Hours: M-F 9:30am to 4:30pm

For more information, visit our website: [www.bvcriarc.org](http://www.bvcriarc.org)

### Donations of \$100 or more from July 1, 2019 and November 30, 2019

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**Donations Received in Memory of:**  
Joseph Cherry  
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Joseph McHale  
Gerald O'Neill  
Linda Rabczak  
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**In Memoriam:**  
Joseph Cherry  
Beatrice Annette Dufour  
Gerald O'Neill  
Debbie Penedo

FALL  
2019

# The Arc of Blackstone Valley Resource

LIVE · LEARN · WORK

A PUBLICATION FOR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE ARC OF BLACKSTONE VALLEY



## A proud employee tells his story

Greg Peotrowski is a respected and committed employee of Mobility Equipment Recyclers of New England (MERNE) in North Kingstown. Beyond running a business of selling recycled mobility equipment, MERNE's underlying mission is one of

social responsibility—keeping discarded equipment out of the landfill. MERNE typically accepts used power equipment—medical beds, wheelchairs, and much more.

As a Workshop Assistant, Greg works in several capacities. He often works downstairs at the “lift station” where he tests the functionality of newly acquired wheelchairs and other devices. If the equipment doesn't work, his job will include taking it apart, cleaning the parts, cataloging and storing the items that can be re-sold. If it is a slow day at work, he is often asked to help out upstairs in the showroom, cleaning rows of equipment that are tagged for sale.

“I really like this job because it is challenging and everyone here is really nice and friendly” explains Greg. “They take the time to explain the work to me and this is really helpful.”

Every Thursday and Friday, Greg takes the bus to and from work. His goal over time is to be able to work fulltime. Arc staff member Jamie Johnson explained that it took a mere month and a half for Greg to be coached for this job and now he is fully independent. This is Greg's first non-provider paid job and he is very excited about this opportunity.

MERNE Owner John Perrotti said, “We just love Greg. He always comes in to work with a great spirit and energy. We're so happy to have him. He always brings a big smile to our faces; we are very lucky to have him on board.”

**CONGRATULATIONS GREG!**



Greg (left) and MERNE owner John Perrotti (right) inspecting a new acquisition



Greg

For more information about our programs, call (401) 727-0150, go to our Web site at [www.bvcriarc.org](http://www.bvcriarc.org) or e-mail contact [contact@bvcriarc.org](mailto:contact@bvcriarc.org).

The Arc of Blackstone Valley is committed to supporting people with developmental disabilities secure the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they live, learn, work and play



## Letter from the CEO

Giving back to the community is a theme of the holiday season each year. "Giving" can come in many shapes and sizes but the one I would like to celebrate, is how our own advocacy group, Citizens With Power, selects and gathers gifts for a needy family each year. This sense of civic responsibility and engagement is important and one that the Arc family should celebrate during this season of giving.

Another project worth celebrating is our new Straight Talk video, produced by Mongeau Productions and funded by the Fogarty Foundation. This training tape gives a voice to the individuals we support every day and offers thoughtful and honest advice to future employees of The Arc. I applaud John Mongeau for scripting and filming a strong training tape for our agency. His work and direction was the result of written comments developed by our self-advocates and directed to our HR department --- who recognized the need to create a long-lasting visual of these voices.

As always, I like to acknowledge the hard work of our Resource Center staff and the effort made to find employment opportunities in the community, earning competitive wages. Please take a moment to read about Greg who is enjoying his new job with Mobility Equipment Recyclers of New England in North Kingston. Congratulations as well to Maria in her new found commitment to exercising weekly at the MacColl YMCA. She is an inspiration to her peers.

We are in receipt of the final report of the year-long strategic planning process developed and coordinated by our consultant Dr. Jennifer Meade. As we move into the 2020 year, we look forward to prioritizing the outcomes of this report and piloting a few new initiatives.

I celebrate the hard work of all our staff and hope that our Arc families will consider a year-end gift to keep our community-based activities going strong including our sports teams, trips to Sail To Prevail, the Holiday Party and many other events.

Thank you for your interest and dedication to our mission.



*John J. Padien III*  
Chief Executive Officer

# An inspiration to peers!



Maria at 1.5 miles

The highlight of Maria DaSilva's week is her visit to the MacColl YMCA in Lincoln. Every Tuesday she goes to the Y with others from The Arc, to exercise and walk miles on the treadmill. Maria is a happy and familiar face to staff at the YMCA. With encouragement from her service coordinator and direct support professional (DSP), she has gone from just a few exhausting minutes on the treadmill in the early days to three miles each time.

This is a huge change for a woman who had an aversion to exercise. Initially Maria's physical and mental health conditions made it challenging for staff at The Arc to get her to exercise. But this has all changed now. She is able to independently control the speed of her machine which might start out slow, but eventually is cranked up to a higher speed. If Maria has a peer on the treadmill next to her, a friendly conversation and competition gets her really engaged.



Watching the screen numbers climb

When asked about her exercise plan and the use of the treadmill she comments, "I have a lot of energy when I leave the gym and I feel happier too." Theresa, Maria's DSP, commented that Maria is willing to try new things but is really committed to the treadmill. "She is interested in the stationary bicycle too but since her height is just around 4', reaching the pedals is a bit challenging."

Her doctor noticed the change too. She has lost weight and her numbers related to her type 2 diabetes have improved. These are large changes for a person who resisted going to the Y in the first place.

Maria's face lights up when she talks about the YMCA and staff at the Y say that she is an inspiration to others. She loves to motivate others to exercise and thanks to a group membership grant award from the John E. Fogarty Foundation, many are able to join Maria at the Y. "I want to tell my friends that I enjoy it and that they would enjoy it too. You just have to start slow."

## CONGRATULATIONS



**to the The Arc of Blackstone Valley Bullets, you won another Gold medal!**

Great teamwork and dedication led to another gold medal for the BVC Bullets! They began practicing back in September and this hard work clearly paid off. A special thanks to the volunteer partners and coaches: Antoine Tavares, Ras Sostre, Darius Debnam, Claudio Rodrigues, Michelle Rattray and Denia Tavares

## Give the gift of independence

Do you have the consumers of The Arc of Blackstone Valley on your holiday gift list? Do you know how important community and social engagement is for individuals with developmental disabilities? The Arc of Blackstone Valley celebrates and supports the individual abilities of all of our consumers!

But we can't do it alone. Please help us with a year-end gift to roll in 2020 with a strong start.

Please use the enclosed envelope or visit [www.bvcri-arc.org](http://www.bvcri-arc.org) to press the donate button!

