

## Evansville ARC Helps to Develop Adult Guardianship Program



*Judge Brett Niemeier*

In the summer of 2008, Evansville ARC began working with the Indiana Adult Guardianship Services Project to explore the need for adult guardianship services in Vanderburgh County and the southwestern Indiana region. The Indiana Adult Guardianship Services Project (IAGS Project) is a program of the Arc of Indiana. Funding for the Project has been made available through a state appropriation from the

Indiana Family & Social Services Administration (FSSA) Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services.

As part of its involvement with the IAGS Project, Evansville ARC agreed to serve as the lead agency for supporting and developing an adult guardianship services initiative in the southwestern Indiana community.

The IAGS Project and Evansville ARC began convening monthly meetings of local key stakeholder agencies and individuals to discuss the need for guardianship services in the fall of 2008. Since then, more than 20 agencies and individuals, including the Vanderburgh Superior Court – Probate Division, have been involved in creating a strategic plan to develop and implement adult guardianship services for persons in the community who are incapacitated due to aging, mental illness, developmental disabilities and/or medical conditions. The design of the initiative will be to provide a source of adult guardianship services for persons 18 years and older who do not have a willing, capable or suitable family member or other involved person to be their guardian. The use of trained and supervised community volunteers to serve as volunteer advocates is an important component of the project. State funds will help to support the development of the model pilot project, including training community volunteers and addressing the need for community education and information about guardianship and other less restrictive decision-making alternatives.

Along with meeting monthly, the planning group of local key stakeholders has hosted two community forums in the past year to solicit input regarding the level of need for guardianship services and to seek the support of the community at large. The overwhelming response to the forums was that a need exists for additional adult guardianship services and for a resource to provide guardianship education and information in Vanderburgh County and the southwestern Indiana region.

Based upon the input from the community forums, the existing commitment from the Court and the support of the IAGS Project, the key stakeholder group has moved forward to develop and implement a strategic plan to create a new resource for adult guardianship services in the community. The model pilot project has now been incorporated as a new nonprofit adult guardianship organization named “Guardianship Services of Southwestern Indiana, Inc. (GSSI).” The mission of the organization is to provide guardianship services for incapacitated adults when such services are not available from willing, capable or suitable relatives or from other concerned persons. The organization is committed to meeting the guardianship needs of all incapacitated adults in the community and to protecting the rights of individuals to live their lives as independently as possible.

Thanks to the support of Judge Brett Niemeier and the Vanderburgh Superior Court

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## Tri-State's Got Talent

Do you have a special talent you want to share with the Tri-State? We'll here's your chance!

Vectren, 14newstube.com and Evansville ARC are teaming up to bring you Tri-State's Got Talent.

Send in your audition by video taping your performance and uploading it to 14newstube.com. Encourage family and friends to watch you online.

The top ten most-viewed performers will make guest appearances on 14 WFIE's *Midday with Mike*. The top ten winners also will compete live during

Tri-State's Got Talent finals, sponsored by Vectren at 6:00 p.m. January 14, 2010 at Washington Square Mall. Judges will decide which live performance is the best choice to join the 2010 Really Big Show line up.

Entries will be accepted through December 4, 2009. Submitting your entry to 14newstube is easy! Visit [www.14wfie.com](http://www.14wfie.com) and follow the directions. If you need help submitting your talent entry, please contact Evansville ARC at 812-428-4500, ext. 309 or by emailing [kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org](mailto:kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org).



## Our Mission

The mission of Evansville ARC is to advance the value of and respect for all individuals with disabilities by providing opportunities for development, employment, and independence.



### Evansville ARC

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[www.evansvillearc.org](http://www.evansvillearc.org)

#### Deidra R. Conner, President

Please direct any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to Denise Seibert, Director of Development.

## Guardianship Program ...Continued from page 1

– Probate Division, the new GSSI agency office will be located adjacent to the court and will share training/meeting space with Vanderburgh County CASA.

Also in the plans for early in 2010 is the recruitment and training of individuals from the community to serve as volunteer advocates for adults who need guardians. Volunteers must be willing to undergo an intensive application process, including a criminal history background check, and successfully complete 40 hours of required training to participate in the program.

If you are interested in learning more about Guardianship Services of Southwestern Indiana, you may contact Deidra Conner or Kelly Barnett at Evansville ARC at (812) 428-4500. To learn more about the Arc of Indiana – Indiana Adult Guardianship Services Project go to [www.arcind.org/iags](http://www.arcind.org/iags) or e-mail to [iagsproject@yahoo.com](mailto:iagsproject@yahoo.com).

*Becky Pryor, Project Coordinator of the IAGS Project, contributed to this article.*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Arts and Crafts Assistants

Do you enjoy working with others on art projects? Three pieces of mosaic art need to be completed. Volunteers will work with adults with disabilities, staff, and other volunteers to glue fabric pieces onto pre-drawn shapes. Scheduling is flexible between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

### Clerical Assistants

We need volunteers to assist with routine clerical tasks and office procedures such as filing and shredding at our ARC Industries offices located on Kotter Avenue. Scheduling is flexible between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

### Special Events

Do you enjoy working with other volunteers and meeting new people? You may like assisting with a special event. Evansville ARC needs interested people to help others learn more about our agency and the ways we help individuals with disabilities achieve independent lives. Volunteers work as needed, usually no more than 1 to 2 hours per event.

### There's more

We are looking for talented individuals to share their lives with our agency in a variety of ways. Opportunities to make a contribution to our agency are limitless. Please contact Kathy Oeth at (812) 428-4500, ext. 309 or email [kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org](mailto:kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org) for more information.

*Thanks to Eric Strehl and other alumni of Wabash College for recently volunteering on Wabash Day, which is the National Association of Wabash Men's annual, national day of community service.*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS



- Evansville ARC is excited to announce we received our sixth consecutive CARF accreditation effective through 2012. Evansville ARC is accredited in Community Integration, Community Employment Services, and Organizational Employment Services! Visit [www.evansvillearc.org](http://www.evansvillearc.org) for more info.

- Our Child Life Center recently earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals. Only an estimated 8% of U.S. childcare centers and preschools have earned the accreditation!



## MEALS READY TO EAT

Are you in need of supplies for your family's emergency kit? If so, check out [www.mrefoods.com](http://www.mrefoods.com). ARC Industries is a distributor of the self-heating, emergency MRE meal. You can place an order online at [www.mrefoods.com](http://www.mrefoods.com) or by calling (812) 492-1246.



## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE'S NEW LOOK



For more information about Evansville ARC's services, news, and events, visit us online at [www.evansvillearc.org](http://www.evansvillearc.org). You can also make a donation online!



## CAN YOU HELP?

We are in need of the following items for our programs. Can you help us? If so, please contact Kathy Oeth at (812) 428-4500, ext. 309 or [kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org](mailto:kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org).

### Child Life Center needs:

- Baby wipes (in plastic containers)
- Batteries (AA, C and D)
- Blank check registers
- Children's books (especially board books for infants and toddlers)
- Clothes /shoes/purses/hats for dress up
- Cookbooks/recipe cards
- Digital cameras
- New bibs
- Old phones, remotes, etc.
- Ziplock bags

### Our adult programs need:

- Adult puzzles – new or gently used
- Colored pencils
- Construction paper
- Flash cards (sign language, words, math) – new or gently used
- Hand sanitizer
- Markers
- Paper towels
- Pens
- Plastic spoons
- Sweatpants – XL, XXL, XXXL



## THE REALLY BIG SHOW SILENT AUCTION NEEDS...

New items, gift cards, and gift baskets that can be included in the silent auction which will be held at the Curtain Call Reception following The Really Big Show on February 13, 2010. Proceeds from the auction go toward the Bayleigh Pauckner Endowment established to fund Evansville ARC Child Life Center programs and services. To donate an item, please contact Kathy Oeth at (812) 428-4500 ext. 309 or [kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org](mailto:kathleen.oeth@evansvillearc.org).

A promotional poster for 'Celebrate Carnival!'. At the top, it says 'Presented by OLD NATIONAL BANK'. The main title 'Celebrate Carnival!' is in a large, white, serif font. Below the title, it says 'February 13, 2010' and '7 P.M. at The Centre'. A man in a suit is shown holding a tablet. The Evansville ARC logo is also present. At the bottom, there is information about reserved seating for adults (\$20) and children (\$10), and a list of performers including Boom Squad, Don Baggett, Gina Moore, Helken Puppets, Karen Ellerbrook, Troy Tornatta, and Signature School Musical Theatre students. It also mentions 'Show Tickets are a Great Gift Idea!' and lists additional support from Berry Plastics Corporation, Custom Staffing Services, Farmers State Bank, Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana Vectren, Evansville Courier & Press, 14WFIE, WIKY 104.1 FM, and 93.5 The Wolf. The website [www.evansvillearc.org](http://www.evansvillearc.org) is mentioned at the bottom.



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## Evansville ARC

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



*Patty contributes to her community through her volunteer work.*

Over the past several years, Patty Hernandez has provided a tremendous amount of volunteer service in her community. As a result, Patty received **The Arc of Indiana's Citizenship Award** in October.

The Citizenship Award recognizes an individual with a developmental disability for outstanding participation in, or contribution to, the community. Patty more than meets these criteria. Through the support of Evansville ARC's Connections For Life program, Patty volunteers for several not-for-profit agencies. She currently volunteers at Wesselman Nature Center, two long-term care centers, a soup kitchen for the homeless, the Vanderburgh County Humane Society, Community Marriage Builders and the Susan G. Komen Foundation. In addition, Patty works part-time at an off-site enclave of ARC Industries (a division of Evansville ARC) in order to make money to purchase items for individuals who are less fortunate. Patty has provided more than 300 hours of volunteer service in her community during the past year. She is a tireless worker who shares her many gifts in making the lives of others better.

Patty's mother, Delores Sanchez says, "Because of the Connections For Life program, Patty is excited to start her day and is very happy participating in activities and volunteering. When she comes home she looks forward to going out in the community the next day. Now, we can say that our dream has finally materialized."

Patty is truly an inspiration to everyone who desires to make an impact on their community!