

# ARC RUTLAND AREA 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

## YEAR IN REVIEW

**Mission Statement:** To advocate for the right of individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families to be regarded as valued citizens with the same entitlements as non-disabled individuals, including the right to lifelong opportunities for personal growth and full participation in the community.

### PROGRAMS:

Our feature for this year was the ability to hire a new program director, Ginger Merrigan, due to being the recipient of a Bowse Health Trust grant. Having one person dedicated to developing and managing the program details has a direct impact on the current and future programs for our members and is already turning heads this year!

**Life Skills:** We began the Spring Session of Life Skills courses, Budgeting and Holistic Health, this May with six members in each course participating. At the end of five weeks, all twelve members received certificates of completion of the courses they took. The people who took these courses learned a lot of practical information and key skills that they have already begun using in their daily lives. The fall courses are How to Eat Well for Myself and Reading For Joy. The fall courses began in early September.

**Events:** As you know, the historical impetus of ARC has been to provide free social events for our members. Over the years, we have increased those to include outdoor events and now include events within the community. We are making glorious strides to be active and inclusive, with participating members in all towns of Rutland County. This year, we added the "Summer Splash" barbecue at Bomoseen State Park, which included contests and games to keep our focus on good health with activities that improve physical and mental health wellbeing with increased participation and interactions with peers and reduces loneliness.

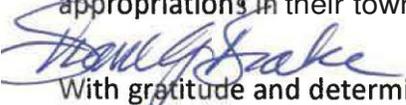
**Representative Payee:** We were fortunate to hire Jess Corey as our new Rep Payee Administrator. Because Jess was our Administrative Assistant, she has already built great relationships with members. We currently serve about forty individuals in managing their funds so that their shared living providers, rents, and all bills are paid timely, every month on the first and third. We are actively looking for individuals with DD to serve.

**Self-Advocates & Aktion Club:** This year we expanded our Self-Advocate Disability Acceptance presentations to include personal experiences as a disabled adult using a "stone theme" as the model. This is an interactive experience between our members and the audience. This is truly a learning experience for all. We have presented twice to VTSU at Castleton Campus, at the Free Clinic, Vermont Dept. of Health, and elsewhere. Under the guidance of Ginger, our Aktion Club members raised funds again at their Annual Car Wash, have made and are selling Sun Catchers from crystals and glass beads, and are embarking on showing their talents in an Art Show at Castleton Gallery. The show will last until Nov 1.

**Transportation:** For over twenty-five years, MVRTD has provided transportation for all ARC events and monthly meetings through the Older Adults & Disabilities Grant from VT Transit. We are pleased to say that despite so many federal cuts this year, we will still be able to have transportation to our events through MVRTD. This is a blessing given so many do not have access to transportation so they can participate.

We continue to seek members of the community to join our Board of Directors. We believe that talent at the table from all walks of life and professions is necessary to guide our organization.

We at ARC are so very grateful to the generosity of the voters of all of Rutland County who approve of the appropriations in their towns.

  
With gratitude and determination,

Diane Drake, Executive Director