

A Note from your Executive Director!

Happy Summertime to our Arc Northland friends and supporters! I am honored to have joined this amazing team as Executive Director this past April. Everyone has been incredibly welcoming and kind as I learn the ins and outs of Arc Northland for success in my new role.



I might be new to the Arc Northland team but I am no stranger to disability advocacy. I have spent the last 20 years working in the "field" and my passion for disability rights, civil rights and equality have only grown stronger. I started my career working in a home with five adult men who had all experienced a Brain Injury. My brother is a person with disabilities so I felt it was a natural fit for me to work as a DSP as I completed my undergraduate degree. I learned and experienced a lot during my time working with these men and it was my first introduction to "the system". Fun fact, this is also where I met my husband who was also a DSP!

After college I became a supervisor of a home that supported individuals with disabilities, the agency was great but the bureaucratic nature of that work was not for me! I spent a majority of my career working for the Center for Independent Living. This is where I could shine and where my love and passion for disability history and advocacy flourished. I am grateful to be able to work for Arc Northland, an amazing agency, where my passion can be my career. I look forward to serving you all!



Arc Northland

*Over 70 Years
and Counting!*

Here for you!

Arc Northland Staff Spotlight

~ Beth Johnson ~

Hello, my name is Beth Ann Johnson, and I was hired by The Arc Northland in January 2022 to be the Arrowhead Regional Quality Council -Program Coordinator. I am so excited to be a part of this amazing organization and I hope to do remarkable things in the years to come. I wanted you all to get to know me, so here is a little background information.

I have lived in Duluth, MN my whole life and would not have it any other way. The mighty Lake Superior never ceases to amaze me, and I feel blessed to see its beauty every day. I love being in nature and with my animals; so, when I am not working you will find me hiking on a local trail with my three dogs (Ely's Peak off the Becks Rd. is my favorite). Fall is my favorite season; I am in awe of the leaves and their colors every year. I love the sound of the leaves crunching at my feet as I walk through the woods in the Fall time. I like to laugh, and my favorite quote is by E.E. Cummings which states "The most wasted of all days, is one without laughter."

I earned a bachelor's degree in social work from the College of Saint Scholastica in 1999 and have been working in social services ever since. I briefly worked for the Salvation Army; but for the last 19 years, I have been working for TBI Residential and Community Service as a House Supervisor. TBI Residential and Community Services is an Adult Foster Care facility which focuses on Brain injury and mental health rehabilitation. This job has given me extensive knowledge of brain injury and the power of the brain to heal, the importance of rehabilitation programs to aid in recovery, and patience. Most importantly, TBI has taught me the power of the human spirit, the power of human resilience, the importance of the right medications, and what it is like to live with a disability in the world today.



I hope to bring all this knowledge, a positive attitude, and good energy to my work here at The Arc Northland and with the Arrowhead Regional Quality Council.

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Happenings at Arc Northland ~ Progress in Motion

Looking back, access to affordable and accessible housing has been an ongoing issue facing the disability community. In 2022 housing insecurity across our nation is becoming more and more of a threat to public health, safety, and welfare. For those who are housed, affording to stay housed is becoming a real concern. According to the Century Foundation 4 in 10 individuals with disabilities struggled to afford rent in 2021. In addition, many individuals with disabilities are getting “priced out” of housing and affordable accessible housing options are far and few between. This is partly due to a serious wage gap (persons with disabilities tend to make \$0.74 on the dollar of their non-disabled peers). In addition, many individuals with disabilities live on fixed incomes and struggle with other costs such as healthcare services and food security. The National Alliance to End Homelessness reports 580,000 homeless Americans, 40% are considered persons with disabilities. When you take in to account our aging population and Veterans the numbers begin to increase exponentially.

Over the past several months, the Arc Northland housing team has had the opportunity to advocate for housing equality with multiple key community players. This includes presenting to the Duluth City Council, the Commission on Disabilities and attending the Homeless Day on the Hill where we had the opportunity to talk directly with Senator Jenn McEwan and Representative Liz Olson about the dire need for affordable, accessible housing in the Northland. In conjunction with other members of the Affordable Housing Coalition, we are planning a Housing Summit for Spring 2023. The Housing Summit is a grassroots collaboration between service providers, community members and people with lived experience of homelessness coming together to talk, listen, learn and find solutions for issues that create housing instability. Several very important initiatives have come directly from previous Housing Summits including the Landlord Incentive Program and the Landlord-Tenant Connection. We are proud of our advocacy work within the community and continue to seek out advocacy opportunities in support of Homes for All.

The Arc Northland is honored to be a part of the solution. Between our involvement with local housing initiatives, support of HF2695 and providing housing access programs, we strive to change the system.

Upcoming Events!

Thursday 7/21—Rev-Up MN is hosting a virtual Voter Education Forum with the Secretary of State’s office from 1PM-2:30PM. The virtual event includes two speakers and a Q&A Forum. For more information reach out to Beth Johnson in ARQC.

Friday 7/22– Is the last day to apply for Minnesota’s Frontline Worker pay. All of Arc Northland’s PCA Choice DSPs are eligible to apply for this pay as an essential worker. You can find more information and apply here <https://frontlinepay.mn.gov/submit>

Tuesday 7/26– Greater MN, ADA32 Celebration. This event is virtual and you can sign up here <https://celebrateadamn.com/>

Thursday 8/18– The Arc Northland Summer Picnic. Come join us for food and fun! Location: Fairmount Park (next to the Lake Superior Zoo). Time: 12PM-3PM, rain or shine. Watch our FaceBook page for further details!

Wednesday 8/24– People First, along with our ACF Department and CHOICE Unlimited are hosting a day of Art, Music and Movement. The day is all about self-advocacy, self-expression and collaboration. Brittanie Wilson from the Minnesota Council on Disability will be joining us for the day. Brittanie will share her personal experience and provide ideas on how self-advocates can get a “seat at the table” and be more involved in decision making roles. For more information on this event please contact one of our ACF staff.



“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana). That is why after 32 years we still actively celebrate the signing of the ADA. This is partly to preserve and cherish the rich history of the disability rights movement but also as a reminder that even though we have come this far, the work is never over. Even after 32 years individuals with disabilities (1 in 4 of us) experience literal and figurative barriers every day.

The history of the ADA didn't start in 1990, it started many decades before when individuals living with disabilities alongside advocates began to stand up against the societal barriers and challenges that prevented them from having the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Advocacy starting in the 1940's led us up to a greater collective movement, the Civil Rights movement. The Civil Rights movement created an opportunity for persons with disabilities to act. Human rights, including Disability Rights and the Independent Living Movement are nestled under the umbrella of Civil Rights. Civil Rights are essential for democracy as they offer full and equal citizenship for those traditionally discriminated against. This is done by using government action. Civil rights are essential for democracy and we thank those who helped pave the way to where we are now. As we know, the disability landscape is constantly shifting, intersecting and changing. It is our job now to take the torch and continue the fight for an inclusive and equitable society.

Did you know it had been a year since the ADA was passed before the law was broken down into four titles?

Title I – Employment

Title II - State & Local Government

Title III - Public Accommodations

Title IV - Telecommunications

Later a fifth Title was added ,Title V - Miscellaneous

Arc Northland Team:

PCA Choice

Jenny Kempfert

Jenny Feehan

Naomi Gordon

Adult, Children, Families

Karel Hedstrom

Summer Thomas

Alison Stucke

Housing Services

Karel Hedstrom

Seth Borovsky

Michaela Mullin

Arrowhead Regional Quality Council

Becky Lambert

Beth Johnson

Finance

Rick Sailstad

Executive Director

Amanda Crosby



Since 1990 the law has been updated and amended several times and resulted in several different lawsuits, many of which went to the Supreme Court for example *Olmstead v. L.C.* in 1999. Even the early 2000s the ADA saw changes and updates. In 2008 George W Bush, following in his dad's footsteps, signed the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA). The ADA continues to be an enforceable “working” document.

About the Photographer Tom Olin—You may have noticed that our newsletter articles are paired with captivating photos that seem to evoke a “feel” for the moment. The man behind these photos is Tom Olin. Over that last 4 decades, Tom has been a documentarian for the disability rights movement using his photos to tell the stories of the people and moments that led to today. Right out of high school Tom got a job working with a rehabilitation center which first struck his interest in disability rights. He attended college at UC Berkeley where he worked for a video production company. To support the expense of his photography classes, he began working for an individual as a personal care attendant and persons with disabilities happened to be his first subjects. He got connected with ADAPT, a disability rights grass roots advocacy group, when he photographed the founders and the rest is history. Well captured raw and beautiful history.



Arc Northland
424 West Superior Street
Suite 500
Duluth, MN 55802

“Let the shameful walls of exclusion come down” -President George HW Bush

The signing of the American’s with Disabilities Act July 26th, 1990



Mission:

To promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities and their families while supporting inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetime.

Contact Us:

Arc Northland

424 W Superior Street
Suite 500
Duluth, MN 55802

Phone: (218) 726-4725

Contact us at:

info@arcnorthland.org

www.arcnorthland.org

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