



CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER



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VOLUME 1

Welcome to the First Edition of the ArcGNO Connections Newsletter!

This newsletter will serve as a way for the entire ArcGNO community to stay up-to-date on all of the exciting and progressive ways that ArcGNO is serving the members of our community with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Keep an eye out for a new edition to be released every quarter.



LET'S HEAR IT FOR DESHINE!!

Deshine Jourdan joined the ArcGNO Metairie Community Center (MCC) in May of 2022. Since then, she has become an invaluable member of the team. Her hard work and dedication are appreciated by everyone. Be sure to congratulate her on her recent promotion to Lead DSP at MCC.

An Interview With Dr. Mary Ann Ross!

DR. MARY ANN ROSS HAS BEEN AT THE HELM OF ARCGNO SINCE JULY OF 2022. SHE WAS ASKED ABOUT HOW HER FIRST SIX MONTHS HAVE GONE AND HER VISION FOR THE FUTURE.



1. What was most appealing to you about joining the ArcGNO organization?

That's an easy question! The most appealing thing about Arc of Greater New Orleans is the warmth and welcoming family atmosphere that is apart of the organizational culture. I know that many view me as just being “the Boss” but at the end of the day, my greatest role is being a mom to a son with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). So as a mom to a kiddo with special needs, it is an honor to know that our members and families in Uptown, Metairie, Covington, Westwego, and Chalmette are being welcomed by the smiles of their peers and supported by dedicated staff who will ensure that they receive training/employment resources, transportation, advocacy, direct service provision, medication assistance, daily community outings, and adult daily living skills via psycho-educational groups in a heart-centered and strength-based environment.

2. What are you most excited about for ArcGNO's future under your leadership?

The Arc of Greater New Orleans is great; however, I believe that we have yet to reach our greatest yet to be. I say this because as of current, we have a gap in service. Meaning, traditionally, we have not served kiddos and families aged 4-17 years old. This is exciting because it allows me to not only design new programs to provide comprehensive services (i.e. case management, family therapy, mental health services, substance use disorder counseling, service coordination/community linkages, parent support groups etc.) but to also diversify our funding and thereby increase wages for all staff. We are on the cusps of an amazing opportunity to not only increase our ability to meet the needs of individuals with I/DD aged 0-99 but, perhaps for the first time, ensure that our staff are paid a competitive living wage. So yes—exciting things to come

3. What experiences have you had at ArcGNO that have left the biggest impression?

Too many to name! Our “Fun Days” are the nice because it allows our members the opportunity to relax, dance, eat and practice pro-social behavior. But I believe that what I enjoy most are the things that folks do not see...the quiet conversations that I have with staff in their offices or each time a member pulls me aside just to say “hello” or to tell me about their “weekend” and “birthday celebrations.” It's at those times that, as an employee, I am assured that I belong to a cause much greater than myself... and that makes all the difference.

WHAT'S GOING ON AT UCC?

Deidre Braneon, Program Coordinator at the ArcGNO Uptown Community Center (UCC), along with staff and members, have been out and about in full force. Our amazing members were excited to return to volunteering at Second Harvest and Bunkhouse. They have also enjoyed Zumba, dance, fitness, basketball, and cooking demonstrations at NORD. In addition, they have had the opportunity to visit Colonial Bowling Lanes – for one of the members' favorite activities--**BOWLING!!**

UCC also welcomed Antoinette Hart back as Lead DSP!



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: ANDY BROWN



Andy Brown began working at the Arc of Greater New Orleans in 2014. He started on our Lakefront Janitorial Crew. He transferred to the Grounds Crew in 2020. His job requires him to prep the New Orleans Lakefront by picking up the trash on the grounds and replacing trash bags in the bins.

Andy is a giant teddy bear. He's very shy and thoughtful. He inspires and motivates his fellow crew members through his consistent work ethic. Andy works five days a week, including Saturdays, and he rarely misses work unless it's for a doctor's visit. Whenever supervisors need extra assistance, Andy is always willing to lend a hand, no matter the task. He is super supportive of his crew members, whom he has formed strong bond with.

Andy is an extraordinary guy and we appreciate him and his hard work!

Holiday Ugly Sweater Party



OH WHAT FUN IT IS....

ArcGNO members enjoyed a lively holiday celebration on December 9, 2022. Festivities included an ugly sweater contest, a dance contest, gift exchange, and a delicious breakfast-themed meal.

Winter White Christmas Party

December 16, 2022



WALKING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND....

ArcGNO employees, board members, and guests were all smiles at the Winter White Christmas Party. The event was held at the Hilton New Orleans Airport. Dinner and dancing complemented the relaxing and festive atmosphere. The party was a welcome break for those that give so much to ArcGNO.