

Spotlight

Fall 2025



From Opportunity to Impact: How One Partnership is Changing Lives



Wendy Smith, LFJCC Inclusion Director, and Betzy Lynch, LFJCC Chief Executive Officer, receive award from Anthony J. DeSalis, Esq., President & CEO of The Arc of San Diego

The Arc of San Diego is proud to present the 2025 Community Partnership Award to the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center (LFJCC) in recognition of their outstanding commitment to inclusive employment. This prestigious award honors community partners who go above and beyond in creating meaningful pathways for individuals with disabilities to thrive in the workplace.

The LFJCC has been a beacon of inclusion, offering internships and employment opportunities to clients of The Arc of San Diego across various departments—from guest services to early childhood education. Their team has welcomed Arc clients not just as employees, but as valued members of their community. This partnership has empowered individuals with disabilities to pursue their passions, develop new skills, and achieve personal and professional milestones.

One shining example of this partnership is Yesenia Siordia, who recently joined the LFJCC as a Healthy Living Assistant in the preschool. A client of The Arc's Employment Services Program, Yesenia's journey is a testament to the power of opportunity and support.

Starting with group employment at The Bean coffee shop, she progressed through a Paid Internship Program at the preschool and now thrives in an Individual Placement role.

Yesenia is known for her infectious smile, strong work ethic, and deep connection with the children she serves. Each weekday, she prepares meals, plans snack schedules, and even orders ingredients—demonstrating independence, organization, and dedication. Her favorite moments are spent engaging with the children, whether in the classroom or on the playground.

“Yesenia has become an integral part of our team. Her enthusiasm and genuine love for the children are evident in everything she does,” says Jennifer Meltzer, Program Coordinator at LFJCC. Her job coach, Michaela Caluza, adds, “Yesenia's positive attitude and infectious smile make her a joy to be around. Her dedication and enthusiasm shine through in everything she does.”



Yesenia Siordia at The Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center

Yesenia's story is one of growth, resilience, and achievement—and a powerful reflection of what's possible when organizations like the LFJCC open their doors to inclusive employment.

“The Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center exemplifies what it means to be a true community partner, and we are deeply grateful for their continued collaboration and dedication to empowering individuals with disabilities,” said Anthony J. DeSalis, Esq., President & CEO of The Arc of San Diego.

Congratulations to the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center and to Yesenia Siordia—together, we are building a more inclusive and inspiring community.

President's Message

DEAR FRIENDS,



At The Arc of San Diego, our mission to empower individuals with disabilities is more vital than ever. In today's shifting political landscape, we are reminded that advocacy is not a one-time effort—it is a continuous commitment. As proposed policy changes threaten to delay or reduce essential funding for disability services, we are actively engaging with legislators and community leaders to ensure that the voices of those we serve are heard loud and clear. I encourage each of you to join us in this advocacy—because your voice matters.

Amid these challenges, we are also celebrating the incredible achievements of our clients. From gaining meaningful employment to reaching personal milestones in independence and self-expression, their stories inspire us daily. These successes are a testament to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and supporters who make our work possible.

Thank you to our supporters for your generous contributions to our events that benefit our programs and services. The Arc San Diego Foundation 32nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament on September 15, 2025 raised much needed funds for our organization. This event has been an incredible success since its inception, raising millions of dollars for individuals with disabilities throughout San Diego. Don't forget to mark your calendar for Winter Wonderland Fashion Show & Luncheon on December 5, 2025! You won't want to miss this incredible event.

Together, we are building a more inclusive and equitable future. Thank you for standing with us, advocating with us, and celebrating the remarkable individuals who are at the heart of The Arc of San Diego.

With gratitude,

Anthony J. DeSalis, Esq.

Anthony J. DeSalis, Esq.
President & CEO, The Arc of San Diego

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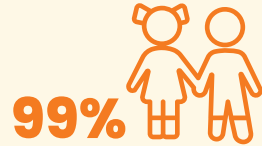
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Outcome Measurements Report

Summary of results from
July 1, 2023 — June 30, 2024



Presented with Candid's Platinum Seal of Transparency for The Arc of San Diego and Arc San Diego Foundation

Driven by Dedication: Honoring Our Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of our team, helping us extend our reach and deepen our impact. Their dedication and generosity help us provide vital services to over 2,000 individuals with disabilities each year. In 2024 alone, more than 250 volunteers contributed nearly 4,800 hours of their time—making a real and lasting impact. Whether supporting events, sharing skills in the classroom environment, or lending a helping hand, our volunteers play a crucial role in empowering people to reach their goals. We're incredibly thankful for their continued support and commitment.



Patricia teaching adaptive yoga to clients at The Arc's North County Center

MEET PATRICIA!

Patricia Joyce brings her passion for wellness and love for animals to The Arc of San Diego's North County Center in San Marcos. Patricia discovered The Arc of San Diego through Volunteer Match in 2015 and was immediately drawn to the organization's mission. As a semi-retired fitness and wellness coach and certified pet therapy team member, Patricia was looking for a way to give back to the community and share her years of experience.

"I felt welcome, included, and right at home the minute I walked in the door," Patricia recalls. She teaches chair yoga to everyone and offers pet therapy visits with her dog, Luke. "Offering Love on a Leash Pet Therapy has been a game changer for everyone! When I spend time with people with special needs, I feel a joy-filled and heartwarming connection."



Patricia and her dog, Luke

Patricia's dedication has brought joy and calmness to many students over the years. She believes that her volunteer work has made a difference by providing healthy and fun activities that benefit everyone, including the staff. "Look inside your heart, and you will find many gifts you can share with the world," Patricia advises those considering volunteering.

For Patricia, volunteering at The Arc of San Diego is not just about giving back; it has also been a rewarding and transformative experience. "Volunteering gives me a sense of purpose. I have learned to let go of my perfectionism while teaching people with special needs in a large group setting," she shares. Patricia feels honored to be part of an organization that makes a difference in people's lives and loves following her divine path to share her gifts with the world.

How can you make a difference?

Volunteers are essential to our mission of supporting and empowering people with disabilities to achieve their life goals. There are many ways to get involved:

- **Try it!** — Assist with special events, join a hands-on project, or participate in a virtual project.
- **Love it!** — Volunteer on an ongoing basis in the classroom, teach specialized classes, or provide administrative support.

- **Learn together!** — Hone your professional skills with a volunteer internship in various departments.
- **Be a Leader!** — Serve on our Board of Directors, Chapter Advisory Boards, or Committees.

Learn more about available volunteer opportunities at The Arc of San Diego, go to www.arc-sd.com/volunteer.

Start volunteering at The Arc of San Diego today, you just might love it!

THE ARC OF SAN DIEGO 2025 GALA

THE GREATEST PLACE ON EARTH

The Arc of San Diego's 2025 Gala on May 3, 2025 brought together a vibrant network of donors, volunteers, and friends of The Arc of San Diego for an unforgettable evening at Coasterra. Generosity from the attendees ensures the ability to continue providing essential services such as adult day program, vocational training, residential homes, and employment placement to Arc clients.

The evening began on the red carpet with a cocktail reception and silent auction. Guests enjoyed carnival games, a stilt walker, hors d'oeuvres, and cotton candy martinis. After a gourmet dinner, highlights included a touching musical performance by an Arc client, a dazzling LED hula hoop show, and a lively auction. The night concluded with dancing to Wayne Foster Entertainment.

The magic of the evening was made possible by the unstoppable energy and vision of Gala Chair Linda Kurtin—a local philanthropist and longtime supporter of The Arc of San Diego. Many thanks to committee members Amy Balelo, Esther Coit, Lily Fallah, Eric Hansen, Jolie Jackson-Martine, Cris Joseph, Roxi Link, and Joanne Mull, whose behind-the-scenes brilliance helped make the night truly unforgettable.



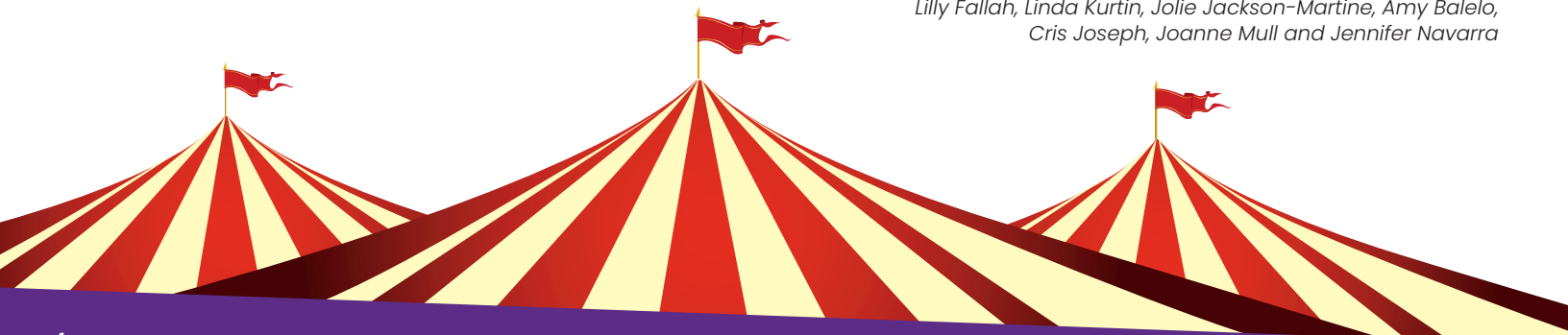
Jackie Husson and Frankie Husson



Anthony J. DeSalis, Esq. and Dr. Gaynell Laptosky



(L-R) Gala Committee, comprised of Eric Hansen, Lilly Fallah, Linda Kurtin, Jolie Jackson-Martine, Amy Balelo, Cris Joseph, Joanne Mull and Jennifer Navarra





Joanne Mull, Lisa Klick, Whitney Bishop, Minerva Jimenez, Christina Jacquez, Melanie McCoy and Maria Espinoza



Larry Paris, Valentina Martin and Nigel McCarty



LED Hula Hoop Performance by Valentina Martin with Twisted Orbit



Jennifer Bates Navarra and Linda Kurtin



Moses Jackson and Vickie Lawrence



Dr. Howard and Barbara Milstein

Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration

On Friday, June 6, 2025, clients, staff, and community members gathered at The Dana on Mission Bay for The Arc of San Diego's Annual Meeting & Awards Celebration. This event serves to honor and award those who have helped The Arc of San Diego become who we are today. Joined by Emcee Perette Godwin, clients, staff, and volunteers were recognized for their achievements, and all attendees thoroughly enjoyed a night of dinner, dancing, and laughter!

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Barbara Steinkirchner

Early Intervention Services

Katherine Espana Sagastume

Respite Services

Blanca Kelly

Employment Services

Jasmine Firman

North County Center

Rogers Atugonza

Residential Services

Merle Thomas

Community Living Services

Lidia "Gabby" Barraga

The Sol and Ruth Gerber Family Center

Aydee Garcia

East County Training Center

Tamra Lopez

Sulpizio Family Center

Yolanda Sepulveda

Community Inclusion Services

CHILD OF THE YEAR

Milo Christensen

Early Intervention Services

CLIENT OF THE YEAR

Ryuki Ono

Respite Services

Jerry Crockett, Jr.

Employment Services

Keith Cagasan

North County Center

Chris Hill

Residential Services

Natalie Jackson

Community Living Services

Leonardo "Leo" De Cristofaro

The Sol and Ruth Gerber Family Center

Jeffrey Baker-Miller

East County Training Center

Guy Lovullo

Sulpizio Family Center

Brissa Pacheco

Community Inclusion Services

CHERRIE SEVICK LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Susan J. Fuller

PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD

Judy Adams

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center

FRANK B. LALOR AWARD

Ann Wysong

Congratulations to all honorees recognized!



Foundation Honorees & New Chairperson Announced

The Arc San Diego Foundation Annual Meeting & 26th Annual Recognition Luncheon took place on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at Mister A's. Attendees gathered to recognize and celebrate the Foundation's generous donors, who's unwavering support enables The Arc of San Diego to offer a wide range of services throughout San Diego County.

After many years of dedicated service, Paul La Bounty has concluded his tenure as Chairperson of the Arc San Diego Foundation. We extend our gratitude for his many years of leadership. We are proud to announce that Rachele Tubongbanua will be leading as new Chairperson. With her energy, vision, and commitment to The Arc's mission, we are excited for what the future holds under her service.



Paul La Bounty, past Chairperson, and Rachele Tubongbanua, new Chairperson

2025 CIRCLE OF LIGHT SILVER AWARDEES

Bryan Holker
Marriott Daughters Foundation
Lois Wray

2025 CIRCLE OF LIGHT GOLD AWARD

Star Larcs

OFFICERS

Rachele Tubongbanua, *Chairperson*
Mike Lichtenberger, CPA,
Secretary/Treasurer
Paul La Bounty, *Past Chairperson*

DIRECTORS

Ron Blair
Jorge Ceballos
Esther Coit
Tim Himstreet
John Miles
Donald Molloy, JD



Guests enjoying Circle of Light luncheon.



Tonita McKone and Kim Danielson

*Congratulations to all Circle of Light Members and honorees!
Your generosity is deeply appreciated and making a significant
impact on services provided by The Arc of San Diego.*

The Arc of San Diego

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2025 | US GRANT HOTEL

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The Arc
of San Diego

Providing services for people with disabilities and their families since 1951.



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