



COMMUNITY CONNECTION

in partnership with



Greetings from Advocacy and Family Support at The Arc of Spokane! We've had a whirlwind of a month, working tirelessly to ensure that the voices of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families are heard where it matters the most - in the hallowed halls of our state legislature.



MANY VOICES, ONE VISION

by Taylor Crisp, Spokane County Parent Coalition Self-Advocate

On September 12, 2023, I had the privilege of traveling to Seattle to help emcee/co-facilitate the first annual Developmental Disabilities (DD) Champions Legislative Breakfast along with Tanika Aden from Pierce County. This event was to show appreciation and gratitude for our state legislators, specifically those who are on the DD caucus that sponsor or co-sponsor bills that benefit individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities along with their families.

We refer to them as our "DD champions," because they truly champion for policies that support the IDD community! We thanked them for the bills that they helped pass in the 2023 legislative session. We made each Representative and Senator feel recognized by naming them individually as well as their accomplishments in the past session. The legislators we acknowledged were the following:

- Representative Senn
- Senator Kauffman
- Representative Taylor
- Representative Chopp
- Senator Trudeau
- Senator Frame
- Representative Couture
- Representative Dye
- Representative Lowe
- Representative Farivar
- Representative Wilson

We also took time to mention the upcoming legislative priorities we are working towards for the 2024 legislative session. These asks are affordable and accessible housing, an increase for special education services funding, eliminating the practice of seclusion and restraints, affordable childcare, increases in provider rates, increasing supports for aging families and long-term care, behavioral health supports, and many more.

Tanika Aden and I are the 2023 co-chairs for the Community Advocacy Coalition. The Community Advocacy Coalition is a self-advocacy organization that consists of self-advocates with disabilities, parents and providers who share similar lived experiences and put that energy into promoting policy change into legislation.

This was a truly unforgettable experience; it was a pleasure to get to meet these legislators in person and directly speak to them. It felt like our communities were truly coming together to show support for one another. This is what community is, this is what inclusion is supposed to look like. Building these relationships with our legislators in the community is important as well as continuing to keep in touch with them so we can maintain that personal and professional connection.



VISITS FROM STATE LEGISLATORS

by Kate Burke, Individual Advocacy

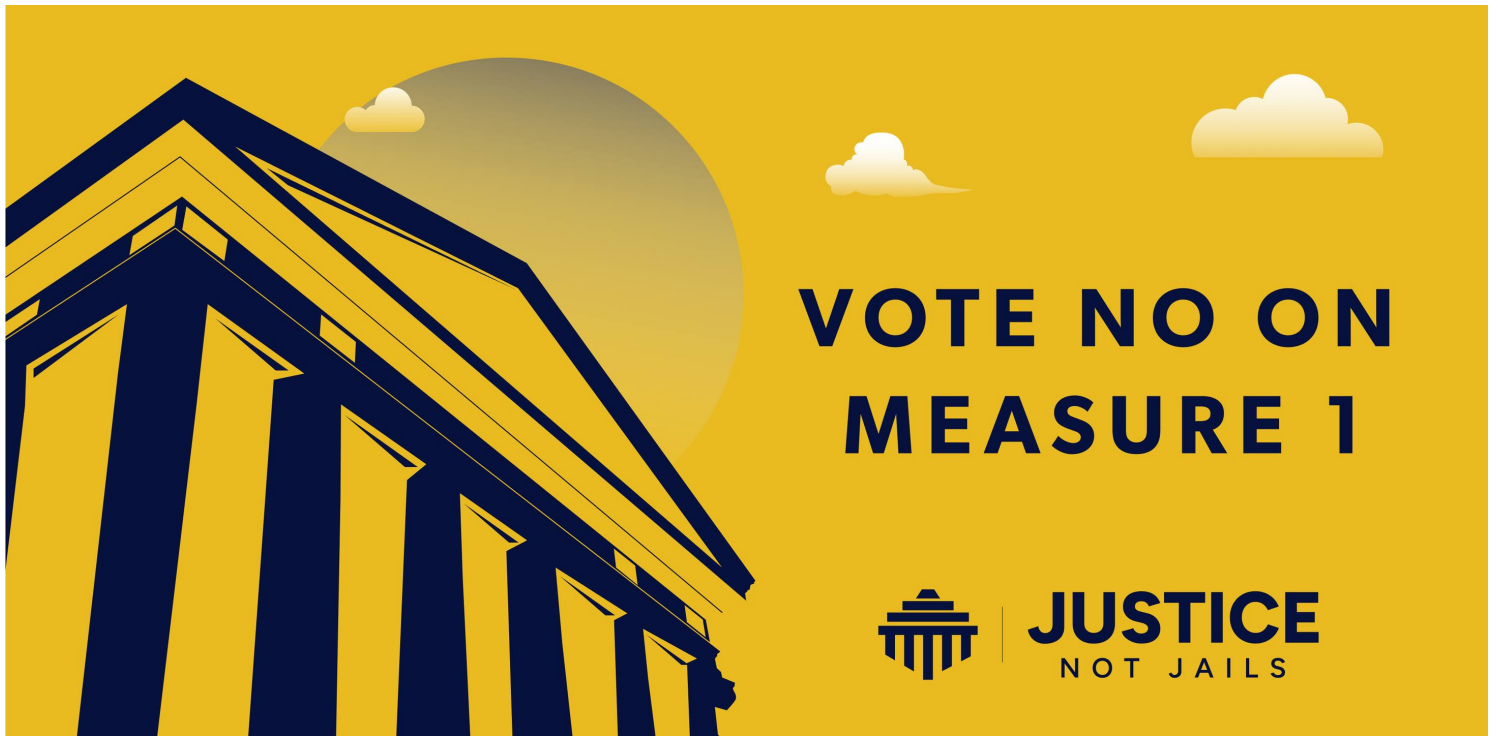
Another highlight of our busy month was the opportunity to sit down with some of Washington's finest legislators including, Sen. Andy Billig, Rep. Marcus Riccelli, Rep. Timm Ormsby, Rep. Mike Volz and Rep. Jenny Graham. These dedicated public servants took the time to listen to our concerns and priorities for the upcoming 2024 legislative session.

Our discussions covered a range of critical topics, with a strong focus on affordable housing and funding issues that directly impact individuals with IDD. We also advocate for additional resources, including funding for a legal services project coordinator and a lawyer who will place a pivotal role in supporting our community and clients. This ask is coming from our legal feasibility study "[Nowhere to turn](#)".

What truly warmed our hearts was the depth of knowledge our representatives showed about the challenges and needs of the people we serve. They were not only receptive to our asks but demonstrated genuine commitment to supporting our mission.

As we navigate a short session and a supplemental budget year, we understand that not every request can be fulfilled. However, the unwavering support of our dedicated representatives gives us hope that positive changes are on the horizon. Together, we will continue to make strides towards a more inclusive and supportive future for individuals with IDD in the Spokane region.

Thank you for your ongoing support and stay tuned for more updates on our dynamic department!



VOTE NO ON MEASURE 1

We strongly oppose Measure 1 due to its regressive nature and detrimental consequences for individuals with IDD. According to alarming statistics, approximately 40 percent of individuals in our jails have a disability, including brain injuries, developmental disabilities, and serious mental illnesses. This tax increase would place a disproportionate burden on low-income households, including those with disabilities, who are already more likely to face financial hardships. Furthermore, the emphasis on jail expansion as the primary solution overlooks the pressing need for comprehensive criminal justice reform and fails to address the systemic issues that perpetuate disparities. The realities of people with IDD in the criminal justice system, including inadequate screening for cognitive disabilities, highlight the urgency of implementing better practices and standards. Rather than allocating resources towards measures that risk perpetuating mass incarceration and overlooking the needs of marginalized communities, we advocate for policies that prioritize the well-being of inclusion of individuals with IDD, promoting equity and social justice.

[REGISTER TO VOTE](#)

STARS OF THE ARC

Friday, October 20, 2023
4-6 p.m.

The Georgian Room
The Spokane Club
1002 W Riverside Ave
Spokane, WA 99201

The Arc of Spokane is excited for an evening to commemorate the past year and recognize the community members and businesses who have helped us make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Hors d'oeuvres and non-alcoholic drinks will be provided. A no-host bar will be available.

***Please reserve your seats by October 16, 2023.
Seats are limited.***

RESERVE YOUR SEAT



CEO SIMA THORPE'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION

You're invited to join us in celebrating Chief Executive Officer Sima Thorpe's eight years of service to the The Arc of Spokane! Since 2015, Thorpe has led The Arc through a period of growth, strategic change, and a global pandemic. Under Thorpe's leadership, The Arc's budget grew from \$15 million to nearly \$18 million, matching the agency's efforts to provide and expand programing and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families in Spokane and eastern Washington.

We're so grateful for Thorpe's dedication and leadership to The Arc of Spokane over the past eight years and wish to congratulate her on her retirement!

Wednesday, November 1, 4-6 p.m.

**The Boxcar Room
116 W Pacific Ave. #100
Spokane, WA 99201**

Open house with food and a no-host bar. Short program at 5 p.m.

While a RSVP is not required for your attendance, please help us estimate our number of guests and **RSVP by Thursday, October 26.**

RSVP

TYAP FALL INTO FUN



Celebrate the fall season with The Arc of Spokane! Fall into Fun activities range from crafting, karaoke and dancing, trivia, and even a cooking class.

REGISTER

[Learn More About Parent to Parent Resources](#)

Parents may have questions and concerns as they learn about services that can help their child and family and often need time and support to navigate their own emotions and adjust to raising a child with special needs.

Personal support from fellow parent can help with:

- Emotional support for parents
- Information and referrals to community resources
- Connecting you to Trained Helping Parents
- Social and recreational events
- Current information on disabilities, medical conditions and community resources
- Training for parents who would like to become Volunteer Helping Parents
- Public awareness and outreach to the community regarding individuals with disabilities

Learn more about Parent to Parent resources [here](#).

Find local resources for the help you need!

Did you know The Arc of Spokane has a digital resource guide? Click [here](#) for information on a variety of different resources!

If you want a more comprehensive and personalized list of resources for your specific situation, please contact our Individual Advocacy Team at advocacy@arc-spokane.org or call (509) 789-8327. They will help you untangle complex issues and the service is free. The Individual Advocacy team is ready to help!

Contact Us

Contact the Advocacy and Family Support Team by emailing us at advocacy@arc-spokane.org.

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The Arc of Spokane

The Arc of Spokane

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