The Arc of Blackstone Valley is committed to supporting people with developmental disabilities secure the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they live, learn, work and play.

A proud employee tells his story

Greg Peotrowski is a respected and committed employee of Mobility Equipment Recyclers of New England (MERNE) in North Kingstown. Beyond running a business of selling recycled mobility equipment, MERNE’s underlying mission is one of social responsibility—keeping repurposed equipment out of the landfill. MERNE typically accepts used power equipment—medical beds, wheelchairs, and much more.

As a Workshop Assistant, Greg works in several capacities. He often works downstairs at the “lift station” where he tests the functionality of newly acquired wheelchairs and other devices. If the equipment doesn’t work, his job will include taking it apart, cleaning the parts, cataloging and storing the items that can be resold. If it is a slow day at work, he is often asked to help out upstairs in the showroom, cleaning rows of equipment that are tagged for sale.

“I really like this job because it is challenging and everyone here is really nice and friendly” explains Greg. “They take the time to explain the work to me and it is really helpful.”

Every Thursday and Friday, Greg takes the bus to and from work. His goal over time is to be able to work fulltime. Arc staff member Jamie Johnson explained that it took a mere month and a half for Greg to be coached for this job and now he is fully independent. This is Greg’s first non-provider paid job and he is very excited about this opportunity.

MERNE Owner John Perrotti said, “We just love Greg. He always comes in to work with a great spirit and energy. We’re so happy to have him. He always brings a big smile to our faces; we are very lucky to have him on board.”

DONATIONS OF $100 OR MORE FROM JULY 1, 2019 AND NOVEMBER 30, 2019

Anonymous
Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Bourque
Bristol County Savings Bank
Mr. Linda Burky
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Moran Ventre Charitable Foundation
Donations Received in Memory of:
Joseph Cherry
Theresa Langevin
Joseph McHale
Gerald O’Neill
Linda Rabczak
Martha Wallace
In Memoriam:
Joseph Cherry
Beatrice Annette Dufour
Gerald O’Neill
Debbie Penedo

For more information about our programs, call (401) 727-0150, go to our Web site at www.bvcriarc.org or e-mail contact@bvcriarc.org.
Another project worth celebrating is our new Straight Talk video, produced by Mongeau Productions and funded by the Fogarty Foundation. This training tape gives a voice to the individuals we support every day and offers thoughtful and honest advice to future employees of The Arc. I applaud John Mongeau for scripting and filming a strong training tape for our agency. His work and direction was the result of written comments developed by our self-advocates and directed to our HR department---who recognized the need to create a long-lasting visual of these voices.

As always, I like to acknowledge the hard work of our Resource Center, staff and the effort made to find employment opportunities in the community, earning competitive wages. Please take a moment to read about Greg who is enjoying his new job with Mobility Equipment Recyclers of New England in North Kingston. Congratulations as well to Maria in her new found commitment to exercising weekly at the MacColl YMCA. She is an inspiration to her peers.

We are in receipt of the final report of the year-long strategic planning process developed and coordinated by our consultant Dr. Jennifer Meade. As we move into the 2020 year, we look forward to prioritizing the outcomes of this report and piloting a few new initiatives.

I celebrate the hard work of all our staff and hope that our Arc families will consider a year-end gift to keep our community-based activities going strong including our sports teams, trips to Sail To Prevail, the Holiday Party and many other events.

Thank you for your interest and dedication to our mission.

Letter from the CEO

Giving back to the community is a theme of the holiday season each year. “Giving” can come in many shapes and sizes but the one I would like to celebrate, is how our own advocacy group, Citizens With Power, selects and gathers gifts for a needy family each year. This sense of civic responsibility and engagement is important and one that the Arc family should celebrate during this season of giving.

The highlight of Maria DaSilva’s week is her visit to the MacColl YMCA in Lincoln. Every Tuesday she goes to the Y with others from The Arc, to exercise and walk miles on the treadmill. Maria is a happy and familiar face to staff at the YMCA. With encouragement from her service coordinator and direct support professional (DSP), she has gone from just a few exhausting minutes on the treadmill in the early days to three miles each time.

This is a huge change for a woman who had an aversion to exercise. Initially Maria’s physical and mental health conditions made it challenging for staff at The Arc to get her to exercise. But this has all changed now. She is able to independently control the speed of her machine which might start out slow, but eventually is cranked up to a higher speed. If Maria has a peer on the treadmill next to her, a friendly conversation and competition gets her really engaged.

When asked about her exercise plan and the use of the treadmill she comments, “I have a lot of energy when I leave the gym and I feel happier too.” Theresa, Maria’s DSP, commented that Maria is willing to try new things but is really committed to the treadmill. “She is interested in the stationary bicycle too but since her height is just around 4’, reaching the pedals is a bit challenging.” Her doctor noticed the change too. Maria is a happy, healthy woman who avoided exercise years ago. When asked about her exercise plan she replied that she has lost weight and her numbers related to her type 2 diabetes have improved. These are large changes for a person who resisted going to the Y in the first place.

Maria’s face lights up when she talks about the YMCA and staff at the Y say that she is an inspiration to others. She loves to motivate others to exercise and thanks to a group membership grant award from the John E. Fogarty Foundation, many are able to join Maria at the Y. “I want to tell my friends that I enjoy it and that they would enjoy it too. You just have to start slow.”

Happy Holidays

John J. Bolioen III
Chief Executive Officer

Happy Holidays

Give the gift of independence

Do you have the consumers of The Arc of Blackstone Valley on your holiday gift list? Do you know how important community and social engagement is for individuals with developmental disabilities? The Arc of Blackstone Valley celebrates and supports the individual abilities of all of our consumers! But we can’t do it alone.

Please help us with a year-end gift to roll in 2020 with a strong start.

Please use the enclosed envelope or visit www.bvcarc.org to press the donate button!