



March 2022

Issue 6



IN THIS ISSUE

PG. 2

Dates to Remember and Announcements

PG. 3

Random Acts of Kindness Week and Findhelp Information

PG. 4-5

Provider Spotlight-ARC Human Services

PG. 6

Brain Injury Awareness Month-Provided by Melissa Hunter,
Guest Columnist



Dates to Remember

March 2-Grief Talks Educational Webinar: [Register Here](#)

March 8- Findhelp 101

March 9-Children Task Force Committee Meeting at 11:30
[Join Here](#)

March 15-Findhelp 201

March 21 & 22- Suicide Bereavement Clinician Training (cost associated): [More Information Here](#)

March 22-Suicide Prevention Task Force Meeting

March 22-Out of the Darkness Walk Committee Meeting at 2:00 [Join Here](#)

Walk to Fight Suicide

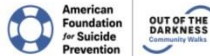


Washington County Out of the Darkness Walk

October 2, 2022

Wild Things Park
1 Federal Way, Washington, PA 15301

Register at
afsp.org/WashingtonPA



We are now accepting submission for the April, May and June issue! If you are interested in being a guest columnist, know of a training/date to remember or would like a corner feature in a future newsletter please reach out to Rebecca Salsbury at Rebecca.Salsbury@co.washington.pa.us.



Random Acts of Kindness Week

Random Act of Kindness Week (RAK) was celebrated February 13-19, 2022. Several of the school districts in Washington County celebrated in creative ways!

Laura Jacobs, Superintendent of California Area School District created a kindness TikTok challenge [Watch Here!](#)

Karol Snead-IU1 Social Worker at Chartiers-Houston JSHS shared that they celebrated RAK week by sending letters healthcare workers, painting affirmation rocks that ended up in their alumni garden, and posting hearts on lockers with positive messages!

Citation:

Make kindness the norm. Random Acts of Kindness. (n.d.). Retrieved January 17, 2022, from <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

FindHelp Information

Washington County is launching a new site to help community members connect to services more easily. The site will be hosted on a platform called findhelp which enables users to quickly pinpoint the services they need by zip code then by category such as: food, utility, and housing assistance, legal help, employment support, and counseling.

In the coming months, the County will launch a branded version of the site called Help in Washington PA (washingtonpa.findhelp.com). Local human services agencies are being asked to add their programs or verify the information on their program listings on washingtonpa.findhelp.com so that they may be represented in the search results. Agencies can search by their zip code and then name of their agency to view their current program listings and suggest edits or use the Suggest Program button on washingtonpa.findhelp.com to add a new program. Action must be taken by March 31 in order to be included by the start of the County's publicity campaign.

For more information about using the findhelp platform, suggesting your programs, and managing your listing(s), please register for findhelp's two-part training series on March 8th and 15th using the links below or contact Dede Carmichael at dcarmichael@findhelp.com.

Findhelp 101: March 8th: [Register Here](#)

Findhelp 201: March 15th: [Register Here](#)



ARC Human Services

Spotlight information provided by Mary Jo Podroskey

Arc Washington was established in 1952 by a group of parents of children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities or I/DD (then known as mental retardation).

In an effort to adapt to meet the changing needs of our community, Arc Washington restructured its services, resulting in a corporate parent and two subsidiaries, which are private, non-profit organizations under Section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code: AAdvantage Inc.; Arc Human Services Inc.; and The Arc of Washington County.

Arc serves individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illness in the following counties in Western Pennsylvania: Washington, Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Clearfield/Jefferson, Fayette, Clarion, Crawford, and Greene.

Arc Human Services (AHS) maintains operations for all residential programming, employment and home and community services in various counties in Western Pennsylvania for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness. Its mission is to teach individual skills so that they may successfully live and work in their community.

Most services can be accessed through referrals from Supports Coordinators/Case Managers. More information can be obtained through the website contact portal or by calling the office at 724-745-3010.

The QR Code to the left will provide direct access to the website for additional information.





Current programs include:

- Residential Services (Trauma Informed Care Model)
- Home and Community Services (Behavioral Consultation and Skill Building/Habilitation, Summer Camp, and Specialized Training)
- Employment Services (Transitional Employment Services, Supported Employment, Job Finding)
- Student Transition Program
- Supports Brokering Services
- Community Residential Rehabilitation Services (Residents live in a home-like setting & receive counseling)
- Mental Health Supportive Housing (Residents are semi-independent and receive subsidies to maintain housing)
- Shelter Plus Care (Residents receive similar services as MH Supportive Housing and must meet Federal Definition of “homeless”)

We recently moved into a new administrative and program office in a renovated building in downtown Canonsburg. We are excited to be joining with Chicco Baccello to open a cafe on the street level which will also house an art gallery highlighting local artists of all abilities to increase community appreciation and integration of the arts



**111 West Pike Street
Canonsburg, PA 15317
724-745-3010**

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Column information provided by Melissa Hunter-IU1-BrainSTEPS Team Leader

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

A brain injury can make learning difficult for anyone, especially children. Brain injury can impact a student's ability to process information, maintain focus and attention, commit information to memory, regulate emotions and behavior, organize, plan, and more. Brain injury can also affect physical functions such as vision, hearing, balance and coordination.

The BrainSTEPS Program

In 2007, the Pennsylvania Department of Health created the BrainSTEPS Program (Strategies Teaching Educators, Parents, and Students) to help students, their families, and school staff understand brain injury and how to support student learning. BrainSTEPS is available to schools, families, and students in Pennsylvania in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade who sustain acquired brain injuries at any point after birth. Students are referred by school personnel, parents, medical, or rehabilitation staff either online at www.brainsteps.net or by phone.

BrainSTEPS consulting teams are housed within the regional Intermediate Units across the state under the PA Department of Education. School personnel implementing BrainSTEPS are provided with in-depth brain injury training that allows them to identify student strengths and weaknesses following brain injury, and ensure these students receive individualized, appropriate educational and community supports until they graduate from high school. BrainSTEPS team members are also able to provide more generalized training for district wide in-services.

More About Brain Injuries

Acquired brain injuries include any injury to the brain sustained after a period of development and includes all traumatic brain injuries (injury caused by an external force and includes concussions) and non-traumatic brain injuries (strokes, tumors, seizures, aneurysms, etc.). BrainSTEPS Teams assist school staff to develop educational programs, academic interventions, strategy implementation, and monitoring of students who have sustained brain injury. Teams conduct the following consultation activities:

- Education and awareness of brain injury for school professionals
- Consultation from local medical & rehabilitation professionals
- Hospital to school re-entry planning
- IEP and 504 Plan development
- Academic interventions
- Strategy implementation
- Educational programming
- Monitoring of students until graduation
- Brain Injury trainings for schools and families

BrainSTEPS School-Based Return to Learn Concussion Management Teams

Approximately 80% of the traumatic brain injury (TBI) referrals made to BrainSTEPS are for students' post-concussion. In 2013, the PA Department of Education asked BrainSTEPS to create a Return to Learn Concussion Management Team model and Return to Learn School Protocol that would train and guide school-based teams to support students following concussion for 4 weeks, at which point the local Intermediate Unit BrainSTEPS Team would be invited to support the school teams.

To date, BrainSTEPS has trained over 3,000 school-based Return to Learn Concussion Management Teams in Pennsylvania. The Return to Learn Concussion Management Team model serves as a statewide screening tool for students who require higher level support following concussion. BrainSTEPS supports both student athletes and non-athletes, regardless of the cause of their concussion.

School-based teams include academic and symptom monitors who serve as the gatekeepers for all students in their building who sustain concussions and they track academics and symptoms weekly through recovery. The teams are provided with a Concussion Return to Learn Electronic Monitoring Toolkit that includes teacher accommodation letters, a parent letter questioning history of modifiers, an Academic Monitoring Tool, and Symptom Monitoring Tool (elementary/middle/high school versions), as well as concussion in the classroom materials.

BrainSTEPS is funded by the PA Department of Health and the PA Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education via the PaTTAN Network and is implemented by the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania.

Intermediate Unit One BrainSTEPS Contact information:
(Serving Washington, Fayette, and Greene Counties)
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Melissa.Hunter@iu1.org
724-938-3241 x721

A full list of BrainSTEPS Team contact information by Intermediate Unit can be found here:
[PA BrainSTEPS Team Leader Listing](#)

