



All Aboard The Arc

Arc of Greater Brockton Newsletter



SPRING 2026



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UPCOMING EVENTS at The Arc of Greater Brockton

SAVE THE DATE!

June 25th, 4:30–6:00 PM
AGB Expansion and Enhancement Ceremony at Champions Hall!

July TBD, 5:00–7:00 PM
AGB’s Got Talent: Talent Show is open for registering! If you have a talent you’d like to show off, contact Tracey Glynn at tglynn@arcofgreaterbrockton.org!

August 27th, 4:00–6:00 PM
Back to School Bash and Open House



Introducing:

Champions Hall
at AGB

A New Home for
Community, Creativity,
& Connection at The Arc
of Greater Brockton!

The Arc of Greater Brockton is proud to announce the upcoming Grand Opening of Champions Hall on June 25th! It’s a brand-new theater and event space designed to bring people together and expand opportunities for the individuals we serve.

The name “Champions Hall” was selected through a vote of both employees and participants, reflecting a shared sense of pride and identity. It’s a nod to Brockton’s well-known nickname, The City of Champions, and recognition that the individuals, families, and staff who make up The Arc community are champions in their own right as we advocate every day for inclusion, dignity, and opportunity.

“This space represents what’s possible when we invest in people and believe in their potential,” said Executive Director Dean Rizzo. “Champions Hall is a place where individuals can express themselves, connect with others, and be seen and valued as members of the community they are.”

This exciting new space was made possible by the relocation of our Bottle & Can Redemption Center across the street last August, which freed up the space to be transformed into a true community asset. Today, Champions Hall is a flexible, welcoming venue that can accommodate 114 guests seated at tables, or approximately 150 guests in theater-style seating.



AGB Participants in our Culinary Training Program serve food catered in-house to guests at a Brockton Rotary Cub Meeting!

Even before its official opening, Champions Hall is already making an impact. On April 30, we proudly hosted the Metro South Chamber of Commerce for their “Good Day Metro South” event, welcoming over 100 attendees. The program featured a conversation with AGB Executive Director Dean Rizzo and Bridgewater State University President Fred Clark.



The panel discussion at the Metro South Chamber of Commerce Meeting

The event was a tremendous success, and showcased the outstanding work of our AGB Culinary Training Program, which provided the catering.

We’re not done yet!

To fully realize the vision for this space, we are continuing to raise funds for essential lighting, sound, and video equipment. These are critical elements that will allow us to host high-quality performances, presentations, and community events.

“This final phase is critical,” added Rizzo. “With 21st-century lighting, sound, and technology, Champions Hall becomes a platform for our participants to shine and for our community to come together in a meaningful way.”

With your support, it will become everything we know it can be!



AGB's First Culinary Training Graduation!



On Tuesday, March 24th, The Arc of Greater Brockton celebrated the graduation of the first class of our Culinary Arts Training Program, with 18 participants successfully completing the program. It was a historic milestone for our organization!

Held in our brand new auditorium, Champions Hall, the event was a celebration of hard work, growth, and achievement. Graduates crossed the stage to the applause of family members, friends, staff, and our community partners, marking the beginning of their new opportunities!

Our graduates completed an extensive curriculum, getting their Serve Safe food safety certification, food allergies certification, work readiness training, and 40 hours of kitchen experience.

We were honored to be joined by a number of distinguished guests and



A Musical Theater performance to warm up the crowd!

partners who have helped make this program possible, including representatives from the Department of Developmental Services, Copley at Stoughton—which has already hired one of our graduates—MetroSouth Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Chris Cooney, and Amanda Sakaguchi from Commonwealth Corporation, whose early investment helped launch the program. Their presence reinforced the importance of strong community partnerships in creating real pathways to employment.

The event was expertly emceed by our Director of Employment Services, Adam Belmore, who helped guide the program and highlight the significance of this achievement for the future of workforce development at The Arc of Greater Brockton.

One of the most powerful moments of the ceremony came from Assistant Director of Employment Services, Mark Auger, who reminded graduates of their value and potential:

"You belong. You matter. And don't let anybody ever tell you otherwise. You have developed the skills, and you've earned your certifications."



Employment Services Director Adam Belmore recognizes our grads

The Culinary Arts Training Program is about more than learning how to cook—it's about building confidence, developing real-world skills, and creating meaningful opportunities for employment and independence.

As we look ahead, this first graduating class represents just the beginning. With strong partnerships, dedicated staff, and a commitment to inclusion, The Arc of Greater Brockton will continue to expand opportunities for the individuals we serve.

We'll be looking for employment opportunities for our recent program grads! If you have any opportunities, contact Adam Belmore at abelmore@arcofgreaterbrockton.org!

Congratulations to our graduates! We are incredibly proud of you and excited for what comes next!

Calling all Creators!

Located inside AGB's Employment Services Building at 1215 West Chestnut Street in Brockton, **The Nook is a small storefront designed to showcase and sell items created by makers of all abilities!** The space allows artists and creators to display everything from artwork and jewelry to crafts and other handmade items.

The Nook isn't just for AGB members: AGB is always seeking additional items for display and sale from anyone with a disability interested in participating! Community members are encouraged to stop by and support local creators from our AGB programs and beyond!

For any questions or to apply for space in our store, contact **Sam DeCoste** at sdecoste@arcofgreaterbrockton.org, or call **508-583-8030 (ext. 244)**

The Nook at AGB



Redemption Center



The Arc of Greater Brockton's Can and Bottle Redemption Center

Hours of Operation
Monday–Friday:
9:00AM to 2:00PM
Saturday:
8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Location:
1250 West Chestnut St,
Brockton MA 02301

See our website for redemption guidelines and restrictions

About The Redemption Center
The Arc of Greater Brockton operates a full service Redemption Center, which takes MA redeemable cans and bottles and provides a refund of 5 cents per item.

- Staffed by individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Participants count, sort, and prepare the redeemables for return to distributors
- Provides our participants paid employment and skill development opportunities

OPENINGS AVAILABLE! in our Brockton CBDS Program



We're excited to share that The Arc of Greater Brockton currently has openings in our Community Based Day Supports (CBDS) program!

In CBDS, participants make friends, have fun, and learn practical skills that improve their daily lives. Our program focuses on helping each person grow and thrive in a supportive and inclusive environment.

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining our CBDS program, contact:

Rosenee Belizaire at rbelizaire@arcofgreaterbrockton.org or call **508-583-8030 (ext. 237)**



The Easton Night Club's non-alcoholic bar!

The Easton Team Brings The Nightclub Experience to AGB!

At The Arc of Greater Brockton's Easton location, creativity and adaptability are helping participants experience new activities in ways that are both exciting and inclusive.

Recently, several participants began talking with staff about nightclubs. Some shared that they had never been to one before and were curious about what the atmosphere and experience might be like. Rather than simply describing it, the Easton team decided to create the experience themselves.

So one day before Valentine's Day, the Easton location was transformed into a full-fledged nightclub experience.

The team converted part of the building into a lively dance environment complete with music, colorful lighting effects, strobe lights, snacks, and a makeshift drink bar serving flavored non-alcoholic beverages. Staff members even dressed as security for the event, helping create an authentic and playful atmosphere that participants embraced.

Recognizing that some individuals may feel overwhelmed by loud music or flashing lights, staff created alternative options for participants who preferred quieter environments. Some participants enjoyed outings in the community, while others spent time in quieter activity areas on the opposite side of the building.

That same commitment to inclusion and flexibility has also inspired another recent innovation at the Easton site: the creation of a new sensory sensitive room designed for participants seeking a low-stimulation environment.

The room offers softer lighting, a quieter atmosphere, and a calming space for individuals who may need a break from louder or more active settings. The Easton team has made great efforts to create environments that meet a wide variety of participant needs while still encouraging engagement and comfort!

Ashley Santos said the club event reflects a larger philosophy embraced by the team.

"At AGB, fun isn't 'nice to have'. It's essential," Santos said. "We're always



looking for creative ways to help the people we support experience new things and enjoy themselves in ways that feel safe, yet exciting."

Whether transforming a day program into a dance club for an afternoon or creating calming spaces for those seeking quiet, our Easton staff continue to show that creativity and compassion go hand in hand.



Musical Theater & Dance Crew Brings Disney Magic to Champions Hall!

The Arc of Greater Brockton's Musical Theater & Dance Crew filled Champions Hall with energy, music, and excitement on Saturday afternoon as participants performed a lively showcase featuring many of their favorite Disney songs.

The event began with an art show at 2:00 PM, which further highlighted the creativity and talent of AGB participants, before the musical theater performance officially kicked off at 3:00 PM inside Champions Hall.

The performance marked the first major theatrical production held in Champions Hall, AGB's newly developed community and event space. The room came alive with singing, dancing, laughter, and enthusiastic audience participation as performers proudly showcased the results of months of hard work and preparation.



A great use of props engaged our crowd!

Participants rehearsed every Tuesday afternoon since the latter half of 2025, dedicating countless hours to practicing songs, choreography, and stage performance skills in preparation for the event.

"Champions Hall was created to be a place where people can come together and express themselves," said AGB Executive Director Dean Rizzo.



AGB performers show off their group coordination mid-song!

Tracey Glynn, AGB's Director of Recreation, said, "The participants showed tremendous commitment, teamwork, confidence, and creativity throughout this entire process. Watching them perform with so much joy and pride was incredibly rewarding for all of us."

The event also highlighted the growing role Champions Hall will play as a hub for creativity, inclusion, and community engagement at AGB.

Family members, staff, and so many community supporters filled the room. The show was so energetic and passionate, that it was impossible not to be engaged in its positivity!

The Arc of Greater Brockton is grateful to our staff, families, supporters, and most of all, to our participants, who made the event such a memorable success.

Voices for Advocacy: AGB Representation Makes a National Impact

Over the past several months, The Arc of Greater Brockton has continued to expand its advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national levels. This advocacy is crucial to ensure the voices of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities remain part of the conversations that will shape public policy.

That work behind our recent efforts began last November, when six members of AGB's Board of Directors and three staff members traveled to Charlotte, North Carolina to attend The Arc's National Conference. The conference brought together advocates, self-advocates, and organizational leaders from across the country to share ideas and learn new strategies for strengthening advocacy efforts in their communities.



AGB Participants at the State House!

In March: Participants and staff from AGB traveled to the Massachusetts State House to participate in The Arc of Massachusetts' Annual Legislative Reception. The event brought together organizations and advocates from across the Commonwealth to speak directly with legislators.

Advocates discussed issues ranging from workforce shortages in human services to the need for continued investment in inclusive community



The Board of Directors and AGB Directors at The Arc National Conference in North Carolina!

programming. The day provided an opportunity for self-advocates and staff to share firsthand experiences about the impact services have on daily life.

Meanwhile, Executive Director Dean Rizzo traveled to Washington, D.C. in March alongside other nonprofit leaders from Massachusetts to participate in the National Disability Policy Seminar. The conference and advocacy event let professionals from across the country discuss federal disability policy.

During the trip, Dean met with representatives from Congressman Stephen Lynch's office and joined others in



Dean Rizzo with members of Stephen Lynch's staff



Executive Director Dean Rizzo & Maura Healey

discussing issues impacting individuals with disabilities.

Dean also attended a New England Council breakfast featuring Governor Maura Healey, using the opportunity to advocate for the needs of individuals with disabilities and thank the Governor for her continued support of inclusion efforts across Massachusetts.

"Advocacy is not optional for organizations like ours," said Dean. "If we want Massachusetts and our country to continue moving forward as leaders in inclusion, we have to continue building relationships and making sure the voices of the individuals and families we serve are heard."



AGB Participants and Staff with State Reps Bridget Plouffe and Rita Mendes

than Gardner. "Autism looks different for everyone," Gardner said during the program. "And no matter how they speak—through language, devices, or behavior—everyone deserves to be understood and respected."

Participants of The Arc of Greater Brockton also connected with local legislators during the event, including State Representatives Bridget Plouffe and Rita Mendes, continuing the organization's commitment to maintaining strong relationships with policymakers.



The Gardners after Jonathan's speech

By bringing together stakeholders, rallies like this create space for meaningful conversations about how to strengthen systems, expand opportunities, and ensure that individuals of all abilities can fully participate in their communities.

Advocacy extends far beyond a single event or legislative session. It is an ongoing commitment that individuals with disabilities are fully included in conversations about policy, opportunity, employment, education, and community life.

In April: AGB returned to the State House for The Arc of Massachusetts Annual Autism Acceptance Rally, held in recognition of Autism Acceptance Month. The event celebrated progress toward inclusion while also emphasizing the continued need for strong policy and investment in disability services.

During the rally, Senator Paul Feeney and Senator-elect Vanna Howard were recognized for their support of the autism community. The program was emceed by longtime self-advocate and AGB community member Jona-



Jonathan Gardner speaks from his own experiences about being an advocate

As the conversation around inclusion continues to evolve, progress depends on strong partnerships between advocates, service providers, and policymakers—and on the continued willingness to show up, speak out, and push forward together. The Arc of Greater Brockton will always be part of the conversation!



Day Hab Brockton Continues to Celebrate Our Participants!

Our staff make an effort every day to help our participants feel special, and the last few months have been no exception. Day Hab has been celebrating a number of birthdays, with which they celebrate all together with a cake at the end of each month!

Day Hab also wants to recognize the accomplishments of Colleen Ahern, who's been volunteering with Meals on Wheels for over 10 years! Way to go Colleen!

How You Can Make a Difference With The Arc of Greater Brockton

Disability rights are human rights.

Everyone deserves to live a fulfilling and meaningful life, regardless of their challenges. Our goal is to help create a society where everyone is valued. That's why we offer a variety of services and resources to help people with disabilities achieve their goals and dreams.

We Offer:

- Advocacy and education on disability rights and issues
- Information and referral to local and state resources
- Family support
- Recreation and social activities
- Employment and vocational training

But we can't do it alone. We need everyone's help. Fortunately, there are so many ways you can **#AchieveWithUs**.

1. Become a Member

By becoming a member of The Arc of Greater Brockton, you support our organization and gain access to a network of services and resources through The National Arc and The Arc of Massachusetts. Membership is \$25 per year, and comes with many benefits, such as:

- Receiving our quarterly newsletter and other updates
- Getting discounts on AGB recreational events and merchandise
- Access to benefits from the National and State Arc

And more!

To join The Arc of Greater Brockton, please email rmoore@arcofgreaterbrockton.org.

2. Volunteer

If you want to make a difference in someone's life, why not volunteer at The Arc of Greater Brockton? We are always looking for additional volunteers to help us with various tasks and events, such as:

- Assisting with weekend and after-hours activities, such as bowling, movies, dances, etc.
- Helping with fundraising and outreach efforts, such as mailings, phone calls, social media, etc.
- Sharing your skills and talents, such as art, anime, music, sports, etc.

Volunteering with The Arc of Greater Brockton is rewarding and fun. You will meet new people and make a positive impact. Our volunteers say they get more out of volunteering than they give because it is such an uplifting experience. To become a volunteer, please call us at 508-583-8030 ext. 212

3. Make a Donation

Another way you can support The Arc of Greater Brockton is to donate money. No amount is too small or too large because every dollar counts. Your donation will help us provide essential services and programs to our members and the people we serve, such as:

- Transportation and accessibility
- Personal care and medical equipment
- Educational and recreational materials
- Emergency and crisis assistance

You can donate online at www.arcofgreaterbrockton.org/donate/, or send a check or money order to 1250 West Chestnut Street, Brockton, MA, 02301. We also have various levels of individual and corporate sponsorship opportunities, which come with recognition and benefits. Please contact us at 508-583-8030 ext. 212 for more information.

4. Lobby Your Representatives and Public Officials

Lastly, you can help improve the lives of people with disabilities by contacting your local, state, and federal officials and asking them to support legislation that will improve their lives and make our society more inclusive.

To find out more about relevant bills and initiatives, please follow us on social media—Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, LinkedIn—visit our advocacy page at www.arcofgreaterbrockton.org/advocacy, and join our email list by emailing rmoore@arcofgreaterbrockton.org

Celebrating New Staff, Recent Advancements and 2025 Milestones

Welcome New Staff!



Meredith Conway
Direct Support Specialist
Brockton CBDS



Chris Minich
Direct Support Specialist
Easton CBDS



Mo Osteen
Direct Support Specialist
Easton CBDS



Ronnie Williams
Direct Support Specialist
Brockton Day Hab

Staff Updates:

Milestones:



Nelson Cordeiro
5 Year Anniversary
Director of Day Hab & Family Support
Congratulations Nelson!



Cathy Hickey
Retiring after 9 Years
Assistant Director of Family Support
Congratulations Cathy!

Promoted:



Milixa Valazquez
CBDS Coordinator/
Case Manager
Brockton CBDS



Gertha Louis
CBDS Case Manager
Brockton CBDS

Staff Recognition Awards

As AGB has expanded in the last few years, we wanted to recognize the tireless work of our Program Directors, who have been so vital to the many positive changes we've fostered. Their efforts have resulted in better facilities, more of our wonderful staff, and more people in the Greater Brockton Area serviced than ever before. Executive Director Dean Rizzo presented all department directors with a recognition award this spring. Thank you, directors!



Nelson Cordeiro
Day Hab and Family Support Director
Tracey Glynn
Recreation Director
Rosenee Belizaire
Brockton CBDS Director
Russell Moore
Director of Development

Sonia Walrond
Director of Finance
Adam Belmore
Employment Services Director
Ashley Santos
Easton Day Hab & CBDS Director



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Brockton, MA 02301
1215 West Chestnut Street
Brockton, MA 02301
406 Turnpike Street
Easton, MA 02375
Phone: 508-583-8030
Web: arcofgreaterbrockton.org



**PROUDLY SERVING THE
FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES:**

**Abington • Avon • Bridgewater
Brockton • East Bridgewater • Easton
Holbrook • Rockland • Stoughton
West Bridgewater • Whitman**

Grateful for a Community That Gives Back!



Pictured: AGB Board of Directors President Marc Zade with Bettina Hoffman, the Treasurer of the Easton Festival of Trees, accepting the award!

On March 24th, members of The Arc of Greater Brockton Team had the honor of attending the Easton Festival of Trees awards ceremony at Easton Country Club, where The Arc of Greater Brockton was proud to be named one of last year's beneficiaries.

We are incredibly grateful to receive \$11,000 in support of our mission.

The Easton Festival of Trees, hosted by the Easton Charitable Trust, is a powerful community effort that brings people together to support local nonprofits through creativity, generosity, and shared celebration. Each year, funds raised through the festival are distributed to organizations working to strengthen and enrich our community. It makes the holiday season feel even warmer.

A heartfelt thank you to the entire Easton Festival of Trees team: Cathy Estey, Bettina Hoffman, Patty Grogan, Shelley Bashaw, Tara Ryan, Dawn Szum, and Audra Mancini, for your commitment to supporting organizations like ours.