

THE ARC OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2023



Message from The Director

It's hard to believe that in July of 2016, I started as the first Executive Director of The Arc of Southwest Colorado which has been the most rewarding job of my career. I am so proud of where we have come as an organization and I am thrilled to be celebrating ten years of advocating for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities this Fall!

We have gone from serving 45 students annually with our core programming, Education Advocacy, to serving over 100 students annually. In addition to this work, we also host educational workshops, parent support groups, ongoing educational and social activities for adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Speaking for Ourselves, a self advocacy group, AND we just completed year two of our Camp Peak Energy summer camp where we served 26 campers age 5-18 doubling our numbers from the the first camp in June 2023. I am so proud of how our programming has grown and the impact we are making! As we are only ten years old, we still have a lot of work to do. I look forward to continuing to share all that we are doing with you. In the meantime, please enjoy recapping with us what we have been up to the last year. I am so grateful to all of you for your support over the last ten years and also to the staff and board of directors for their commitment to such an amazing organization that I am honored to be a part of.

Warmly,

Liz Mora

Executive Director, The Arc of Southwest Colorado

OUR MISSION

Our mission at The Arc of Southwest Colorado is to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We are committed to providing unwavering care, resources, and opportunities through education advocacy, community collaboration, support groups, and inclusive activities.

VISION

We envision a community where all people, with or without disabilities, have inherent value with innate abilities and strengths and are equal before the law.

Who we are...

The Arc of Southwest Colorado's primary objective is to ensure the rights, responsibilities and participation of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in society through advocacy, education, and social opportunities in La Plata, Montezuma, Archuleta, San Juan and Dolores counties. The Arc is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We encompass all ages and more than 100 different diagnoses including autism, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, and various other developmental disabilities. There are over 600 chapters in the United States, 15 of them across the state of Colorado.

A Big Thanks to...

Jamie Van Houten - Direct Services Coordinator

Ashley Hein - Education Advocate

The Arc of Southwest Colorado Board of Directors

Gregg Donaldson - Past President

Blair Ruder - President

Megan Ellis - Treasurer

Anita Albright - Secretary

Joe Concelman - Member and Camp Peak Energy Camp Director

Frances Dance - Member and Speak Up Facilitator



MEMBERSHIP & GRANT FUNDING

*Thank you to arc Thrift and all of our
members, corporate members and
grantors for your support
year after year*

2023 CORPORATE DONORS

The arc Thrift, Bank of Colorado, Sinberg Capital Lending, Pediatric Partners of the Southwest, Bronson Family McDonalds, Maynes Bradford Shipps and Sheftel, The Durango Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad and The WalMart Foundation

2023 GRANT FUNDERS

United Way of Southwest Colorado, The La Plata Electric Round Up Fund, Disabling Barriers, Ballantine Family Fund

Education Advocacy

The goal of our Education Advocacy programming is to facilitate communication between families and school teams to ensure that students with intellectual and developmental disabilities are educated in the Least Restrictive Environment and their IEP's and 504's are being followed. Throughout the past year, The Arc of Southwest Colorado has had the privilege of supporting over 100 families, spanning from Pagosa Springs to Dove Creek. We have achieved milestones, including navigating the identification, evaluation, and IEP process, resolving conflicts between schools and families, and collaborating with schools to provide the best possible support for your student in the Least Restrictive Environment. Additionally, we have assisted numerous students in transitioning from high school to adult services, paving the way for continued success beyond graduation. We have served students with diagnosis's from ADHD to Autism and Down's Syndrome.

EDUCATION ADVOCACY NUMBERS AT A GLANCE:

LA PLATA COUNTY:

- 77 Education Advocacy cases.
- 4 early childhood students.
- 31 elementary students.
- 18 middle school students.
- 24 high school students.
- 3 transition students.
- 41 IEP students.
- 12 504 students.
- 14 'other plan' or students pending evaluation.

MONTEZUMA COUNTY:

- 20 Education Advocacy cases.
- 7 elementary students.
- 6 middle school students.
- 5 high school students.
- 8 IEP students.
- 1 504 student.
- 11 'other plan' or students pending evaluation.

ARCHULETA COUNTY:

- 10 Education Advocacy cases.
- 3 elementary students.
- 6 middle school students.
- 2 high school students.
- 1 IEP student.
- 1 504 student.
- 6 pending evaluations.

DOLORES COUNTY:

- 3 Education Advocacy cases
- 2 high school students
- 1 elementary student
- 1 504 student
- 2 IEP students

GOALS FOR 2024/2025 SCHOOL YEAR:

- Expand presence and services in outlying counties by 25%.
- Focus on mental health and education advocacy.
- Continue to develop and improve current services.

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

This year, our Parent Support Groups have continued to make a profound impact on the families involved. With 34 active families, our meetings have provided a much-needed sense of community and support for parents navigating the challenges and blessings of raising children with special needs.

DURANGO GROUP:

- Summit Church Durango
- 2917 Aspen Dr, Durango
- 2nd & 4th Thursdays
- 5:30 - 7:30 pm



BAYFIELD GROUP:

- Bayfield Early Education Program
- 645 Fox Farm Cir, Bayfield
- 1st & 3rd Thursdays
- 5:30 - 7:30 pm

We are incredibly grateful to The Community Treehouse, Summit Church, Durango Dance, BEEP, and Heartwood for hosting us this year. Thank you to everyone who cares for our kids weekly, giving parents a much-needed break. Your support makes our success possible, building a stronger, inclusive community.

Next year, we aim to find new leaders, create a replicable support group model, and grow by 10%. We're excited about the future of our Parent Support Groups. If you can help with childcare or funding, please contact Jamie@thearcofswco.org.

Testimonials

"I have become somewhat of an introverted person because it is not always comfortable to take our son out in public. Typically I don't attend groups, but I am so glad that I joined the Durango PIE group. I didn't realize how grateful I would be to meet other parents and know them as we are attending functions in the community. It has given me the confidence to include our son in other opportunities like Special Olympics that I was not taking advantage of prior to getting the confidence from the PIE group"



"As the father of a son with special needs, sometimes we feel alone out in the world. But PIE group helped us find our tribe. We're all different, yet we share common challenges and experiences. We've shared knowledge and insider tricks with other PIE families, and we're all better than when we started."

Workshops & Outreach

This year, our workshops have provided invaluable resources and support to families navigating the complexities of special needs education and care.

IEP & TRANSITIONS RESOURCE NIGHT

- 12 attendees
- 7 community partners

TRANSITION WORKSHOPS & WEBINAR

- 64 attendees- held in Durango, Cortez, and Bayfield.

GUARDIANSHIP WORKSHOP

- 8 attendees

ONE-ON-ONE BENEFITS INFO MEETINGS W/ EASTERSEALS

- 15 families signed up

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce our plans for a hands-on workshop called HOW. This workshop will cater to all ages and cover a wide range of topics, including IEPs, transitions, guardianship & alternatives, benefits, and more.



Our community outreach has been extensive. We attended events such as Boker Games, Montezuma Games, 9R's Fall & Spring Resource Fairs with hundreds of attendees, and the Future's Fair in Cortez. Additionally, we initiated a Family Resource Collaborative with community partners to further support our mission.

By continually expanding our social and educational activities, we are creating vibrant, supportive environments where individuals can learn, grow, and connect with the community. Our goal is to build on these successes and offer even more diverse and impactful programs in the coming year, encouraging not just inclusion, but real belonging.

ADULT SERVICES/SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

This year, our Adult Services have provided enriching social and educational activities, fostering personal growth and community engagement. Through our Speak Up Classes, Speaking For Ourselves Group, Cooking and Art Classes, Movie and Game Days, Adult Advocacy Program, and other community outings, we have served around 50 adults with IDD.

Speak Up Colorado

The Speak Up class is designed to teach people with disabilities receiving Home and Community Based Services to lead their lives through the creation of their own Person Driven Plan.



Our participants have shared how impactful our classes have been. One individual noted, "What I am learning from class so far is that it's OK to make mistakes. And to advocate for what I need and we're all human and nobody's perfect." Another shared, "What I learned from the class is to stand up for myself and advocate for myself what I need." These testimonials highlight the confidence and self-advocacy skills our participants are developing.

GAME DAY

We continue to hold Game Day in Durango weekly and this year added a monthly Game Day in Cortez. We average 15 participants each week and Uno is still the favorite!

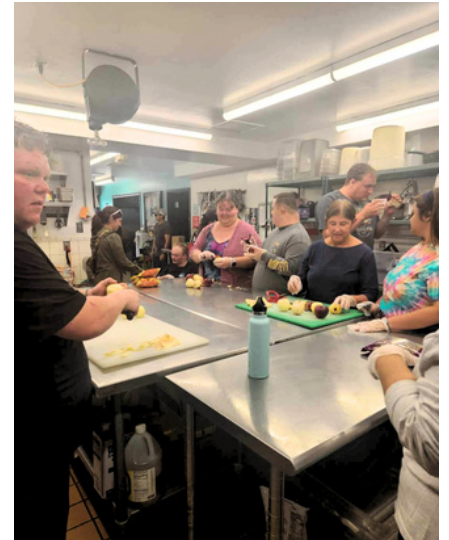


Speaking For Ourselves



Speaking for Ourselves is our self advocacy group that meets monthly. It is a space where participants learn how to impact change and give back to the community. This year our Walkathon raised \$1,000 for The Hive with an average of 9 walkers each week in May. Annually we participate in the Festival of Trees. Our creative efforts won us 2nd place for Best Theme!

Cooking & Art Classes



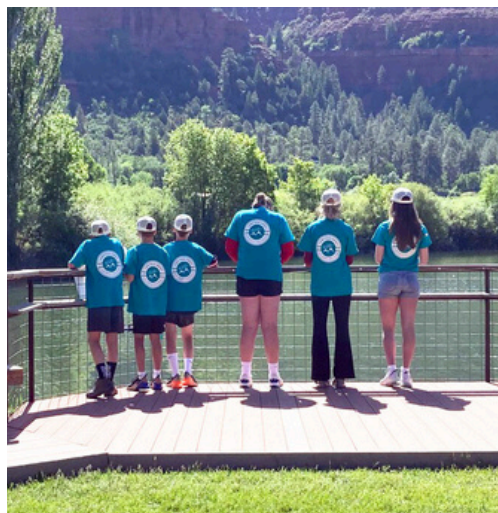
We added art classes in Cortez and Durango that were an instant hit! One participant shared, "I love getting messy during art class the messier I get the more fun I have," and another said, "I love getting messy and learning new fun art projects!"

In addition, we partnered with Manna for two cooking series this year with ten participants each.

Camp Peak Energy



In 2023, we introduced our first summer day camp for campers age 5-21 with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their siblings. For the inaugural year we served 19 campers. We were thrilled to double that number in 2024! Thank you to Riverbend Ranch for hosting the event and to Adaptive Sports Association, 9-R School District Transportation, Rolling Thunder Lanes, Durango Gymnastics, Durango Recreation Center, and Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad for partnering with us for the daily camp activities. Thank you to our sponsors, Bank of Colorado, The arc Thrift, La Plata Electric Round Up Association, Wal Mart Foundation, Bronson Family McDonalds, and Maynes Bradford Shipp and Sheftel. Lastly, but certainly not least, THANK YOU to all of our amazing volunteers!



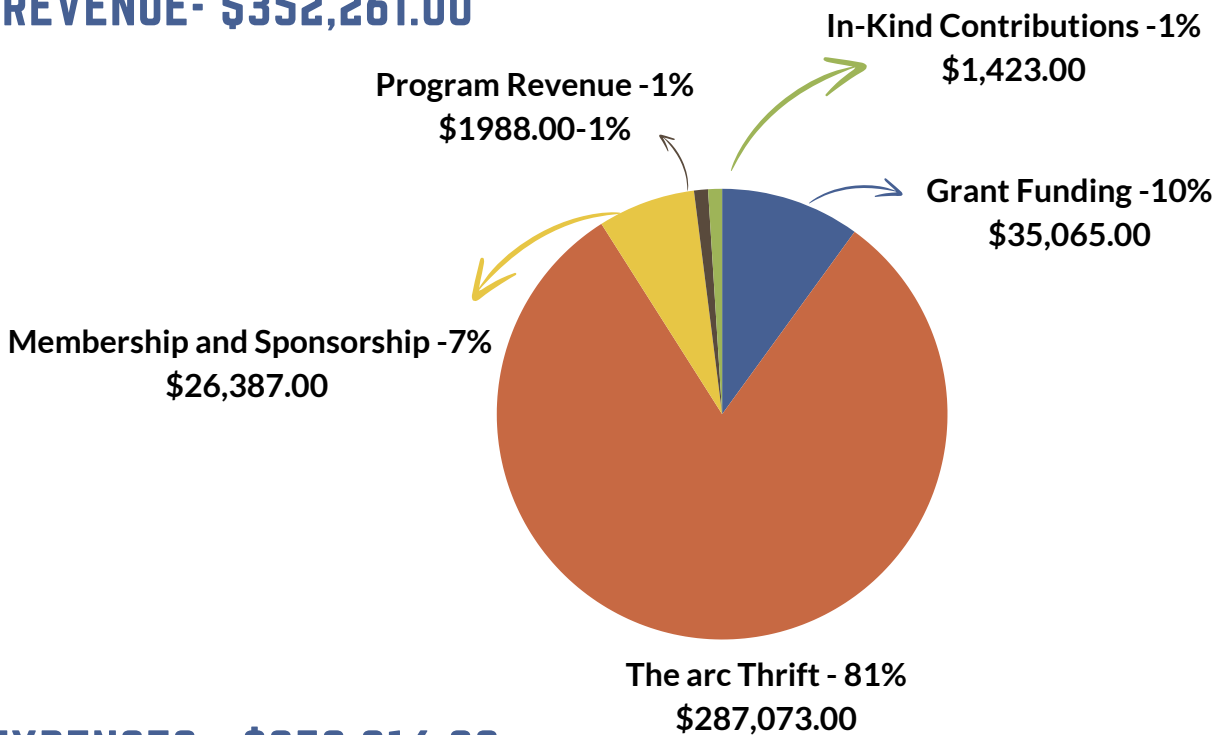


FY 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

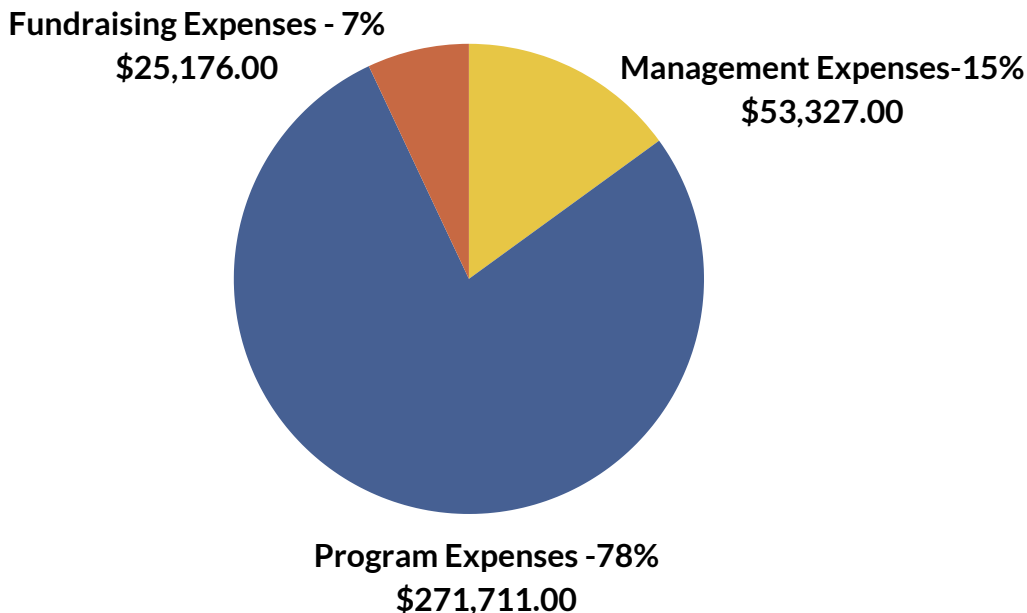
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We continue to be blessed with financial stability because of support from the arc Thrift, members and corporate sponsors.

REVENUE- \$352,261.00



EXPENSES - \$350,214.00



THE ARC OF SOUTHWEST COLORADO

PLEASE JOIN US IN CELEBRATING OUR TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY



- **DONATE** to our Annual Campaign, \$10,0000 for 10 years!
- **SIGN UP** for our newsletter to hear about upcoming anniversary celebrations

Thank you!



Visit www.thearcofswco.org