



# ARK ADVOCATES - NEWS & VIEWS

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Web Site: [www.arkadvocates.org](http://www.arkadvocates.org); E-Mail: [info@arkadvocates.org](mailto:info@arkadvocates.org)

## TWELVETH ANNUAL "FILL THE ARK" WALK/FUN DAY 2011

*By Julie Jordahl*

ARK Advocates Board of Directors is busy with plans for the 12th annual community event that helps to raise awareness for ARK Advocates - who we are, what we do, and the many services we provide to families of persons with disabilities.

The goal of this community event "**Fill the ARK**" **Walk/Fun Day** is to pair people with and without disabilities in order to have a fun day filled with walking, games, inflatable slide and bounce house, food, and music. Come and join the fun on **Saturday, November 19, 2011 at Loras College Graber Center - indoor track**. Time of the event will be from 1:00 - 4:00 P.M.

The purpose of hosting such a walk is:

- ◆ To create greater awareness in the Dubuque area for what the ARK is and the types of services the ARK can provide to families
- ◆ To provide a social event for our participants
- ◆ To raise money that will be used to fund ongoing programming in addition to adding new programs and services for persons with disabilities.

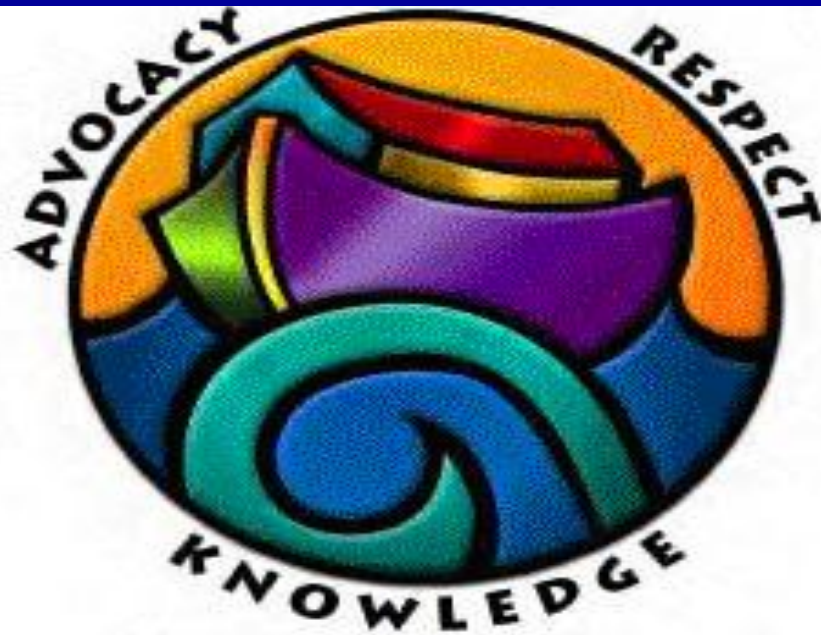
Participants are encouraged to pair up prior to the walk, but if a "buddy" is needed you may also be paired up at the door. This is the basis for our theme of "walking two by two" and our hope is to "fill the ARK" with laughter, happiness and funds to provide additional programming and services in our community.

We will be sending information to businesses in our area, schools, local membership, and family donors. If you are contacted, please take the time to fill out your donation form. Remember no donation is too small. We are also in need of volunteers to be greeters, help register participants, and be a "buddy". If you know of a person(s) with disabilities, please invite them to come to the walk. In the past this has been a special day for all who have participated and we hope to continue this tradition.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS now for this fun event! This year we are having prizes for the persons with the top three total pledge amounts. The prizes are as follows: Grand Harbor Water Park Pass, Jumpin Jane's Pass, or a portable DVD player.

If you have any questions, want to make a contribution, or would like to get involved in any way, contact Julie Jordahl at 556-0065 or call the office voice mail at 556-1785. Your participation in this event is greatly appreciated by all those we advocate for, their families, and caregivers.

**See you Saturday, November 19 at Loras College Graber Center!!!!**



**ARK**  
**ADVOCATES**

# **ARK Walk/Fun Day**

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**ARK Advocates**  
**ADVOCACY - RESPECT - KNOWLEDGE**  
**ADVOCATING FOR AND SERVING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**A COMMUNITY-WIDE WALK & FUN DAY**  
**LORAS COLLEGE - GRABER CENTER - INDOOR TRACK**  
**NOVEMBER 19, 2011**  
**1:00 - 4:00 P.M.**

**CALL 556-1785 FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
**Website: [www.arkadvocates.org](http://www.arkadvocates.org)**

# ARK Advocates Walk/Fun Day Sponsorship Form

Yes! We would like to participate by contributing to the **ARK** Walk/  
Fun Day to be held on November 19, 2011 from 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. at  
Loras College's Graber Center – indoor track.

We are enclosing the following contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor's Name or Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer by:

- \_\_\_\_\_ helping with promotions
- \_\_\_\_\_ helping to pair walkers
- \_\_\_\_\_ helping serve refreshments the day of the event
- \_\_\_\_\_ helping register participants

Donor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please forward this form along with your contribution to ARK Advocates at P.O. Box 3024,  
Dubuque, IA 52004-3024. All donations are tax deductible.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION**

Treasurer/Executive Secretary Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Kids on the Block and ARK Advocates WRITING CONTEST

This year third grade students in the Dubuque and Western Dubuque school districts will have an opportunity to participate in the first Kids on the Block and ARK Advocates writing contest.

The Kids on the Block and ARK Advocates board members will review the writings and select 2 winners that demonstrate compassion and acceptance toward individuals with disabilities.

The winners will be recognized at the ARK Advocates annual awards potluck in May, 2012.

RESPIRE

ARK Advocates partners with local youth to provide free respite to families who have children with



Respite provides a safe and fun environment for people with special needs while their family members take a "break" from being 24-hour caregivers. ARK's event is completely free which means we do not use waiver dollars.



The September 25<sup>th</sup> event, completes our 3<sup>rd</sup> Respite event supporting a total of 30 young people with disabilities ranging in age from 3 to 19 years old. ARK Advocates goal is to continue with a minimum of 2 respite events each year, but hope to expand in the future.

Our next event will be scheduled this winter for ages 13-21 year olds. If you would like to volunteer or know of a young adult with a disability, please watch for a date.

## Annual ARK Awards Presented

*By Jean Wuertzer*

ARK Advocates is proud to present the annual awards this year in five different categories. Two categories had multiple winners as the nominations were so exceptional that one winner could not be narrowed down. The respective categories and winners are as follows:

**Professional of the Year** – an individual employed in community services who has demonstrated sensitivity and the ability to promote outstanding quality which results in increased independence and/or opportunities for people with disabilities

***Gisella Aitken-Shadle*** – a foreign language interpreter for the Dubuque Community Schools. Gisella has been an instrumental part of an IPC team, bridging language barriers with a Spanish speaking family, helping them to learn strategies to help their son at home, and to allow the teacher to connect with the family on a deeper level. The family is quoted as saying “She is always encouraging people and us. She says ‘You can do it’; we appreciate her friendship and help”.

**Teacher of the Year** – a classroom teacher who has demonstrated excellence in teaching students with disabilities/special needs

***Sue Flogel*** – a music teacher with over 25 years of experience teaching students with disabilities. She has positively influenced the attitudes and thinking of other professionals as well as the general public. She casts each and every student in the musicals she directs at both the Bell Tower and at Eisenhower School no matter how talented or what the disability. Sue also makes a difference in the lives of many students by helping those who are hard to reach, lonely, and challenged by reaching out and finding each child’s gifts, no matter how buried those gifts are.

***Jason Schottmiller*** – a high school special education teacher at Hempstead High School. He was nominated by a parent for being creative in defining the unique abilities in each student and for helping their son to achieve his fullest potential. Jason is described as having a passion for teaching, a positive attitude, and being very adaptable. He is a mentor, brother, and friend to his students. They credit Jason with the ability to adapt, organize, and create a means for Scott to communicate and learn which has translated into his ability to interact with his peers.

**Community Inclusion** – to recognize an outstanding citizen who makes a substantial effort to ensure that persons with disabilities are fully integrated in the community, professionally socially, academically, or otherwise.

***Melissa Turner*** – owner of the business Jumpin’ Janes. She has opened her doors to special events to promote inclusion when Jones and Fulton teachers bring their Hand-in Hand preschool students for an end of the year celebration. She is supportive and willing to provide extra assistance to make the event special; Additionally, Melissa went above and beyond to open her doors on a night they are usually closed to accommodate a going away party for a student with special needs and his 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class. She offered discounts to allow all students to participate. The turnout was superb and the impact made on the student was life long and a one of a kind memory.

**Distinguished Community Service** – to recognize a company or organization that has performed an outstanding service on behalf of persons with disabilities.

***Dubuque Racing Association/Mystique Casino*** – a longtime supporter of ARK Advocates and the endeavors the organization undertakes through financial grant awards. In 2010, the award funded the purchase of a new Kyocera digital copier which allowed the organization to update a 10-year old piece of office equipment. Receipt of grant monies for such things as upgrading equipment allows ARK Advocates to continue to use our funds to provide assistance to persons with disabilities and further our mission.

**Annual ARK Awards Presented - con't**

**Super Siblings** – an individual or individuals who have a sibling with a mental and/or physical disability and have provided extraordinary support to that sibling to help increase his/her level of independence.

***Brittany and Brianna Galle*** – sisters to Broc Galle. This brother describes his sisters’ steady and solid relationship with him by saying: “I am deaf and I am voting for my sisters because they help me to find my job for the summer. They interpret for me in church or if someone talks to me and at restaurants. I always love them. They are good sisters. They help me with speech and word cards. I teach them to learn to sign language because they love to talk to me.” With love and appreciation for all they do for him, Broc symbolizes what the super sibling award is all about.



***Caitlyn Hancock*** – a sister of a young boy with disabilities nominated by her mother and described as “a great big help, a big sister, and a voice for her little brother. . . .she is always there for him”. Many examples were listed of Caitlyn’s help illustrated by helping him get dressed, cutting up his food, getting him into the car, on/off the bus, and babysitting whenever needed. She also took the time to accompany her little brother to numerous rehearsals in order for him to be involved in a school musical. She was there for him to encourage him and cheer him on!



***Jessica Melchert*** – this sister is aptly described as “a gift to the heart, a friend to the spirit, a golden thread to the meaning of life” from a quote by Isadora James. She is a true example of perseverance, devotion, and unwavering commitment to a sibling. This twin sister traveled 1000 miles to assist in an adventure of helping her sister find a new and more independent residential apartment. She has endured heartache and joy in her bond with her sister. . . heartache in being separated geographically by a 1000 miles from her sister as they entered adulthood and joy in seeing the amazing potential and opportunities that her sister has been present with through hard work, devotion to one another, and being reunited in the state of Iowa. While her own husband was on active duty in the military, Jessica single-handedly managed to help Jennifer move to Hills and Dales. The sisters have both traveled to see each other and keep in touch almost every night to talk over the days’ events and share news. The bond between these two sisters is truly remarkable. They will continue to explore what life has to offer side by side.



## Looking Back & Moving Forward

*By Sharon Dalton*

### Looking Back....

It is always nice to see the accomplishments and service that come out of an organization like ARK. The hard work, commitment and support of the ARK team, ARK members and contributing community individuals and businesses all make it possible for ARK Advocates to aid individuals with disabilities financially. In an effort to keep you updated, we would like to share our very successful 2010 Financial Assistance support! All awarded monies have been reviewed without bias or discrimination by the Direct Service Committee and are based upon need.

Attorney Fees and Guardianships, \$1850; Camperships, \$826; Education (classes, conferences), \$650; Medical, \$350; Christmas shopping for residents at Hills and Dales, Area Residential Care and Julien Care Facility, \$1250; Sponsorship to support families, \$350; Pizza Party for students, \$30.

In addition to our financial support, we sponsored two free respite events and hosted the Annual ARK Awards Potluck honoring those individuals who have gone above and beyond in service and support of those with disabilities!

We are very humbled and amazed at what the power of service to others can achieve....and remember, it could not have happened without YOU!

### ....And Moving Forward.

Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration!!! ARK is very proud to announce one new direction and focus for our organization...collaboration!!

col·lab·o·rate [kuh-lab-uh-reyt]

verb (used without object), -rat·ed, -rat·ing.

1. to work, one with another; cooperate

We are currently giving great effort toward working with other agencies and organizations to provide “one stop shopping”, if you will, for those individuals and families who are looking for resources to support their needs. We recently have joined forces with the local chapter of Up With Families ([www.upwithfamilies.org](http://www.upwithfamilies.org)) and are having informational meetings with the local chapter of Kids on the Block, ([www.kotb.com](http://www.kotb.com)). Also, in its infancy, is a group of educators who are taking a serious look at the services, support and social needs of young adults with disabilities...i.e. what happens after High School? Our vision is to have all of these resources under the “ARK Umbrella” and that there will be awareness, between organizations and professionals, of where people can go for any given concern, issue or just plain fun! We would also like to have a community calendar on our website to coordinate county-wide events, so don’t forget to check out our website... [www.arkadvocates.org](http://www.arkadvocates.org)

**!! Stay tuned, the future looks exciting!!**

## Up With Families

*By Jan Pacholke*

Up With Families is an annual event that is designed for families with children that have mental, physical, emotional or developmental disabilities or other health care needs. Families that have a child with a disability know what a joy such a child provides but they also know the unyielding responsibilities and stress. Up With Families provides local speakers to help families provide for the daily needs as well as plan for future needs of these special children. Recently, Up With Families has joined with ARK Advocates to help reach out to families in need of such information and support.

We are in the process of planning for our event in 2012. It will be held on Saturday, March 3, 2012 at Westminster Church in Dubuque. The speakers for the event this year will focus on the needs of children during the transition years as well as younger children. Funding for this event is provided by local donations from businesses, service organizations, and individuals. We are very fortunate in our community to have this support. Further information for this event will be provided on the ARK Website. Please let us know of any families that may benefit from this event.

## ARK Advocates Survey

*By Aulanda Krause*

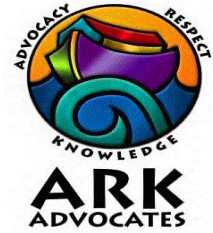
Throughout August and September our members took time to complete the ARK Advocates survey. This survey was sent to help ARK identify who our current members are and how we can grow as a non-profit organization. We appreciate the valuable feedback we received and will use it as we work towards increasing our membership and financial assistance in our local community.

- 31 members completed the survey
- 50% of those who completed the survey have been members for over 10 years
- 20% of those who completed the survey have been members for 5 or less years.
- 95% of those who completed the survey agreed or strongly agreed their contributions to ARK are worthwhile.
- 92% of those who completed the survey would be willing to volunteer at an ARK event
- Those who completed the survey like the support, resources and activities ARK provides to our local community.
- Those who completed the survey feel ARK does not have enough exposure and needs to work towards appreciating volunteers more.
- Many ideas were given when those who completed the survey were asked how ARK can build awareness.

As you talk with ARK board members and attend ARK events, please continue to provide us with feedback and ideas for our non-profit organization to grow.

**You, our members, are the heart of our organization. Without you, our financial assistance services would suffer. Please, at this time, challenge yourself to recruit 2 new members and help us continue our support of those who need it!"**      **THANK YOU for your support!**





Dear Friends of ARK Advocates,

Our Community needs you! ARK Advocates (Advocacy, Respect, and Knowledge) has been in Dubuque fighting for and supporting individuals with special needs since the 1950's. ARK, a non-profit organization, was started by parents and throughout the years has accomplished many tasks to help those with disabilities in our community. The exciting news is that we are growing and the ARK team has met, and the next goal has been set.

ARK would like to develop an equipment lending library for individuals in our community with special needs! The equipment would range from adaptive bath chairs for increased independence to adaptive bicycles for participation in a healthier lifestyle and everything in between. We will have a "Roll-a-Thon" fundraising event to kick off our program this spring. Wouldn't it feel great to be a part of the team that builds such an amazing program for our community?

We are asking only for a little of your time. The commitment is just 1-2 meetings a month starting in October and would end in April. Through our professional and personal lives all of us have met many people who can make things happen. We are calling on you now as one of those people to be part of our team and help make this happen.

The commitment is temporary, but the difference you would be making is life altering and ever lasting!

Please contact one of our committee members or [akrause@arkadvocates.org](mailto:akrause@arkadvocates.org) for more information.

Sincerely,

The ARK Team  
Lending Library Executive Committee

Aulanda Krause  
Kelly Heysinger

Peggy Rolling  
Jean Wuertzer  
Julie Jordahl

Gina Blean  
Sharon Dalton

ARK Advocates  
P.O. Box 3024  
Dubuque, IA 52004-3024



**Membership Application for 2011**  
Please cut out and mail to:  
ARK Advocates  
P.O. Box 3024, Dubuque, IA 52004-3024

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership \$30.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Family Membership \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Partnership Membership \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to have your name published in  
our newsletter. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Please make your check payable to: ARK Advocates

Please indicate below the name, address and birthday of your family member with disabilities and we will  
add this person to our birthday list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_