



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kathleen Stauffer, Executive Director

EMAIL: kstauffer@thearcnlc.org

PHONE: 860-889-4435

www.thearcnlc.org

August 30, 2010

Grand Opening for The Arc General Store and Bakery in Groton

Groton, CT – *The Arc of New London County*, providing services for nearly 600 people with intellectual and related developmental disabilities in Southeastern Connecticut, will host an official **Grand Opening for its General Store and Bakery from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on September 16 at 52 Sacred Heart Drive in Groton.**

Located in the Thomas J. Sullivan Employment Transition Center next to Sacred Heart School and Church, The Arc General Store operates daily from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., brewing Cool Beans coffee and selling **fresh baked goods prepared by Arc participants and pastry chef Sharon Foret. Also on sale at the store are jewelry, crafts, custom greeting cards and more – the majority created by Arc program participants.** Arc specialty items such as T-shirts, sweat shirts and coffee mugs also can be purchased at the store.

Under the leadership of Employment Director Kim Blair and store manager Allan Selserman, The Arc General Store provides a training ground for people with intellectual and related disabilities in Southeastern Connecticut. "Working with the Arc Individuals, helping building self esteem and confidence, is the best part of my job," says Selserman. "I am making a difference in their lives and they are making a huge difference in my life."

Via partnerships with schools and families, The Arc General Store and Bakery, along with The Thomas J. Sullivan Employment Transition Center, provides **vocational and culinary training as well as education in retail skills and independent living such as computer awareness.** "Both the retail and culinary programs are stepping stones," explains Kim Blair. "Individuals receive training, building confidence to pursue employment. This in turn helps them work toward realizing their hopes and dreams."

"We support people with intellectual and related disabilities in working toward optimal independence," The Arc of New London County's Executive Director Kathleen Stauffer says. **"In the current economic downturn, critical skills are important for all of us, and people with disabilities are no different than you or me in the desire to seek fulfilling employment."**

NOTE: The Arc of New London County is New London County's agency of choice for many people with intellectual and related developmental disabilities. Located at 125 Sachem Street in Norwich, Connecticut, The Arc was established in 1952 by parents of children with intellectual disabilities to serve the citizens of New London County. Board of Directors: John Fournier, President; Enrico DeMatto, Vice President; Linda Rhodes, Secretary; Emily Fournier Treasurer; Jessica Starling, Client Representative; Members: Shannon Aiello, Dawn DeCristofaro, Karen DiSaia, Mary Ann Duchene, Deborah Gregoire, Alan Messier, Alice Munyan, Immediate Past President: Diane Aubin.