



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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MAY 25, 2009

### ***Southeastern Connecticut's Generosity Funds Respite Care for Families***

NORWICH, CT – The number of Americans with intellectual disabilities is estimated to be as high as 7.5 million nationally, and the U.S. Department of Health reports that autism alone is increasing by 20% per year. Thanks to the generosity of Southeastern Connecticut's citizens and businesses and The Arc of New London County, up to 25 local youth who have intellectual disabilities or who are on the autism spectrum will be eligible to benefit this summer from a new Pilot Day Camp program slated for August 9 – 14 at Camp Harkness in Waterford. This new initiative is being offered by The Arc in partnership with the Family Support Network of Southeastern Connecticut.

With a portion of its financing derived from The Arc's April 25<sup>th</sup> annual Pirate Party fundraiser and other generous donors, the Day Camp offers a week of fun outdoor activities for young people as well as respite for care-taking families. Sponsored by The Arc and led by Camp Director Jeannette Hickey, the program adapts to each participant's abilities, serving youth ages 8 to 21.

"It's a fantastic program with a lot of individualized attention provided by our specially trained staff," says Tom Sullivan, executive director for The Arc of New London County. "Despite the economy, Pirate Party attendance was up this year and local businesses and citizens were generous." Held in April, the event netted \$19,000 – of which \$2,500 is earmarked for the one week Day Camp and \$10,000 for the 7 week overnight Camp program. All remaining funds raised at the Pirate Party will support The Arc's Recreation and Respite programs. Event chair was Karen DiSaia, Board member for The Arc.

Pirate Party sponsors included: Mohegan Tribal Nation, Chelsea Groton Bank, Barefoot Wine & Bubbly, Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, Arc of Greater New Haven, The Day, The Resident, Dime Bank, Oriental Rugs, Ltd., The Savings Institute, Denise & Tony Band, Blum Shapiro, Central CT Carpenters Union, Coastal Connecticut Dentistry, Cottrell Brewing Company, Linda J. Kidder Associates, LLC, Mattern Construction, Inc., Rug Protective Agency, Sacred Heart Church, J. Solomon, Sportees, and Tom & Candy Sullivan. Ledyard businessman Perry Lorenz served as Honorary Chairman for the event. New London city councilor Mike Buscetto was Celebrity Auctioneer. Next year's Pirate Party will be held at the Mystic Arts Center on Saturday, April 24, 2010.

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: Diane Aubin, President; Enrico DeMatto, Vice President; Catherine Steel, Secretary; John Fournier, Treasurer; Jessica Clark, Client Representative; Members: Karen DiSaia, Deborah Gregoire, Diane Harrington, Joanne Kerr, Alan Messier, Tom Reynolds, Linda Rhodes, Anthony Walstra. Immediate Past President: Shannon Aiello.