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Awareness and support for people with disabilities to result Connecticut Sun, Arc of New London County Announce Partnership

NORWICH, CT –The Connecticut Sun and The Arc of New London County have struck a partnership to improve public awareness around issues of disability and to advocate for full inclusion of people with intellectual and related disabilities in Southeastern Connecticut.

Leaders for the WNBA basketball team and the 58-year-old Arc believe that women's experience in attaining sports inclusion credibly positions The Sun to champion empowerment for people with disabilities in areas of workplace opportunity, education and social supports, housing and respectful language.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to create a long-term partnership with The Arc of New London County," Connecticut Sun Vice President and General Manager Chris Sienko said. "The service and support Arc provides makes our community better and stronger. It gives people with disabilities a better chance to lead productive and happy lives."

"As recently as the 1970s, schools were not always obligated by law to provide educational services to students with special needs," said Kathleen Stauffer, Executive Director of The Arc of New London County. "Success in the face of obstacles is familiar to both of us. Now – together – we can celebrate progress. The Sun's support is heartfelt in its underscoring of community inclusion, and we are appreciative."

To tip off the partnership, Connecticut Sun players will meet and greet visitors from 7 to 10 p.m. at The Arc's 3rd annual Pirate Party fundraiser on April 24, 2010 at the Mystic Arts Center. The Sun also will provide memorabilia for the Party's silent auction. The Arc will seek to raise awareness about issues of disability at an upcoming Arc Night hosted by The Connecticut Sun. The Sun will further enjoy 'preferred partnership' status among The Arc of New London County's membership, its staff and participants and families. The Arc will provide Web links for The Sun and celebrate the new partnership on an Arc of New London County transportation van. Arc families and participants will enjoy reduced-price tickets and a welcoming and affirming environment at Sun games.

To purchase tickets for The Arc of New London County's 3rd annual Pirate Party fundraiser, with proceeds benefitting camp, recreation and respite opportunities for families in Southeastern Connecticut, visit www.thearcnlc.org.

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, Joanne Kerr, Alan Messier, Tom Reynolds, Linda Rhodes, Emily Fournier. Immediate Past President: Shannon Aiello.