

Advocacy Spotlight

Erica Knapp

Local artist, mother of three and a newly elected Arlington School Board member, Erica Knapp has taken the leap into more involved advocacy during the pandemic.

“When the pandemic hit, I reprioritized,” Erica shared. “I had been working on things, but keeping my head down. I really found a connection in advocacy, and during that time, I felt like I could really help.” In 2020, Knapp began leading a local parents group in Arlington.

“I wanted to be more involved in this community I’ve lived in for 15 years,” said Knapp. “I built up confidence [in myself] working for non-profits in the area. I got lots of personal support from friends to get more active in my advocacy.”

Knapp took the opportunity presented to her by the pandemic to participate in more local community zoom meetings, and began participating in political ones as well.



“The more connections I made, the more I learned I could be a stronger voice because I knew I wasn’t alone. I knew I wanted to get involved. I have three kids in the Arlington School District, so I have a strong vested interest there. As I went along this path, I realized I had lots of school connections, which made me more comfortable advocating in that realm. I knew it was important as a special needs parent to be in the room with that voice.”

Knapp won her election in the fall of 2021, and right away, realized how important it was to shine a light on special education and unmet needs.

“At the [Washington State School Director’s Association] meeting, a new director looked at me and asked ‘What’s an IEP?’ and I knew then how important it was to have a special education voice at the table.”

Knapp also works to build LGBTQ+ awareness in Arlington and co-founded *Arlington WA Pride*, a non-profit working with the school district and community to increase resources and education for and about the LGBTQ+ community.

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“As human beings, our job in life is to help people realize how rare and valuable each one of us really is, that each of us has something that no one else has or ever will have, something inside that is unique to all time. It’s our job to encourage each other to discover that uniqueness and to provide ways of developing its expression.”
 -Fred Rogers-

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Quarterly Focus

HOUSING

With the recent end to the eviction moratorium, housing crises are occurring far more frequently than they were just a few months ago. Fortunately, there are still a number of ways to get assistance. Tenants who are behind on rent, tenants who receive an eviction notice, or tenants who are being pressured by their landlords to leave, can seek help. Tenants should not ignore any notice – but should not leave their home without first seeking help.



Tenant resources:

- For information about tenant rights regarding eviction, visit WashingtonLawHelp.org. Information is available in multiple languages.
- Snohomish County has a rental assistance program. [Contact them here](#). (Note that some of the County listed services are no longer available.)
- Tenants Union of Washington State - Tenants Rights Hotline: 206-723-0500
- Eviction Defense Screening line: 1-855-657-8387 (help is available in languages other than English).

While a lot of rental assistance programs are no longer taking applicants, there is still utility assistance available from *Workforce Snohomish*.

To be eligible, households must:

- Have an income at or below 50% of Area Median Income;
- Have experienced a financial hardship directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic that has impacted their ability to pay rent; and
- Be at risk of experiencing homelessness or currently experiencing housing instability.

In accordance with federal and state guidelines, priority will be given to households:

- Under 50% of Area Median Income, and
- Households with at least one person currently unemployed and have been unemployed for 90 days before application date.

To apply for utility assistance through Workforce Snohomish, you can contact 425-300-6006, or email utilities@workforcesnohomish.org

The last day to apply for utility assistance through Workforce Snohomish is May 13.

What to Know

Legislative Updates

At the end of the 2022 legislative session, there were a number of bills and budget provisos that moved forward to become law with the signature of Governor Inslee. Here is an overview of important bills that The Arc followed and supported this legislative session.

SB 5268, Transforming Services —This bill was a carry-over from last session and is a massively transformative bill for the disability community. This bill was birthed from the [Ruckelshaus Report](#) from 2019 and still carries many of the recommendations from that original report. The primary beneficial impact from this bill will be caseload forecasting. Caseload forecasting means projecting the amount of clients eligible for DDA waivers to show the state what needs to be funded and how many people need disability services. This is a huge step to transforming services across the entire state. Governor Inslee signed this bill into law on March 30, and it will go into effect on June 9.

HB 1980, Dual Services — This bill will allow for concurrent enrollment in both community and employment services for adults with disabilities. Concurrent services are not currently possible, which creates a problem when there is a gap in employment services for one reason or another. With this bill, a person can continue to be enrolled in employment services and also take part in community services while waiting for an employment opportunity. Governor Inslee signed this bill into law on March 24, and it will go into effect on June 9.

HB 1153, Language Access in Public Schools — This bill will expand language access in public schools and includes provisions for American Sign Language as well. This expands the translator services that schools will have to provide, creating additional equity and ensuring understanding of school services for non-English speakers for more technical programs, such as IEP and 504 meetings. Governor Inslee signed this bill into law on March 23, and it will go into effect on June 9.

SB 5790, Strengthening Community Services — This bill expands high school transition services on a statewide level, creating school to work programs in every county in the state. This will expand on the successful programs that already exist in some counties, like in Snohomish County, and provide more opportunities for students who are able to take advantage of these programs. Governor Inslee signed this bill into law on March 24, and it will go into effect on June 9.

For more information on the bills that passed through the legislature this year, or to get involved in advocacy efforts in the future, contact [Jake@arcsno.org](mailto:jake@arcsno.org) or Rachel@arcsno.org.



“Employers have recognized for some time that it’s smart business to have a diverse workforce - one in which many views are represented and everyone’s talents are valued. Well, disability is part of diversity.”
-Thomas Perez-

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"We know that equality of individual ability has never existed and never will, but we do insist that equality of opportunity still must be sought."
— Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Around The Arc

2022 Legislative Forum

Legislative Forums are advocacy events for Snohomish County residents to connect with local legislators about supporting the intellectual and developmental disability community.

Are you interested in advocating for the intellectual and developmental disability community and making a difference in Washington state policy?

The Arc of Snohomish County is looking for Legislative Forum constituent speakers and committee members for the new **Legislative Forum Planning Committee.**

Want to get involved or learn more?
Please fill out the Legislative Forum

QUESTIONNAIRE



Contact: Rachel Kube | Rachel@arcsno.org | 425-258-2459 x107

DEPARTURES AND NEW ARRIVALS

Shayne Nagel, Executive Director of The Arc of Snohomish County since 2006, formally retired from her position earlier this year. While we will miss her, we are excited for her to enjoy her new role—as a grandmother. The Arc of Snohomish County proudly congratulates Shayne's entire family on this new journey.

Taking over as Executive Director is our longtime Program Director Jamie Coonts. Jamie was one of Shayne's first hires, having worked with The Arc of Snohomish County since 2006. Jamie became Program Director in 2008 and will now be taking over as our new Executive Director.

The previous role of Program Director is being broken up into two different positions. One of those will be filled by our own Alaina Kube, who has been with The Arc of Snohomish County as a Parent to Parent Coordinator since 2014. Alaina will be filling the role of Family Support and Education Program Manager.

Whitney Stohr, who also worked as a Parent to Parent Coordinator since August of last year, will step into the role of Leadership and Independent Living Program Manager.

**We are here to help
you have a voice!**

You are the expert in telling your story and how it relates to decisions being made by lawmakers.

Although impacting government may feel overwhelming, we are here to help you have a voice.

It only takes a few steps:

Be informed

- Sign up for Action Alerts

Get Connected

- Join The Arc
- Join a parent coalition
- Join a self-advocacy group

Take Action

- Visit The Arc of Washington State's Online Action Center
- Send emails
- Make phone calls
- Attend town hall meetings
- Participate in Advocacy Days
- Meet with your legislators virtually

For tips on Legislative Advocacy visit *Hot Tips*
<https://arcwa.org/content/uploads/sites/35/2019/11/Hot-Tips-2020.pdf>

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Tools & Resources

Sign up

Legislative Alerts & Updates

The Arc of Washington State | <https://arcwa.org/action-center/>
Sign up for legislative action alerts related to developmental disability. Receive the information you need to voice your opinions on bills during the legislative session. Alerts provide you with messages for your legislators that you can use as-is, or edit using your own words. Enter your name and address and click! Your message will automatically be sent to all of your legislators. Toll free Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000. Email or call! Action takes less than 5 minutes!

Find Your

Legislative District and Elected Officials

Washington Legislature | <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>
Find your legislative district and elected officials.

Hot Tips

Legislative Advocates on Developmental Disabilities

The Arc of Washington State | <https://tinyurl.com/3d293ce3>

Some of the topics included:

- Tips for meeting with elected officials.
- How to create a short, clear message.
- The bill process—how a bill becomes a law.

Arc Leadership Training

Become a 2022 Arc Trained Leader with our online self-paced Leadership Training!

Gain foundational knowledge and skills to support your legislative advocacy and community leadership goals.

Leadership Training Courses:

- **Community Resources for Developmental Disabilities**
- **Family Resiliency and Siblings**
- **Government Resources for Developmental Disabilities**
- **History of Developmental Disabilities**
- **Language, Culture, Intersectionality, and Disability**
- **Legislative Advocacy**
- **Self-Advocacy**
- **Special Education**
- **Trauma Informed Approaches and Self Care**

Register to receive training website link.

Click to Register



Contact: Rachel Kube | Rachel@arcsno.org | 425-258-2459 x107

Get Involved

Note that all events are currently conducted remotely.

I.CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Tuesday of each month | 10:30am–12pm

We are a group of self-advocates open to all women ages 18 and up. A casual environment that combines learning with fun experiences. We share resources and skills and hold the belief that everyone has something to contribute to our group. Please contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121 or Corinna Fale at Corinna@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x103.

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

2nd Tuesday of each month | 1pm–4pm

Group of self-advocates focused on legislative change. Open to all. SAIL is a statewide coalition of people with developmental disabilities that strives to shape public policies that affect people with developmental disabilities. Please contact Jennifer Martin at Jennifer@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459.

People First of Snohomish County

4th Tuesday of each month | 11am–12:30pm

A self-advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are focused on educating ourselves and others, advocating for our rights, and having fun! We believe we are PEOPLE FIRST and our disabilities are secondary. Please contact Kylie Walsh at Kylie@arcsno.org or 425-258-2459 x121.

Did You Know?

Find support for siblings!

The Arc of Snohomish County offers regular Sibshop programs and meet-ups for the siblings of youth with disabilities. Sibshops provide an opportunity for both kids and teens to connect with others in their peer group who also have siblings with disabilities. For more information about the SIB CONNECTIONS (ages 8-12) and TEEN SIB CONNECT (ages 13-18) programs, contact Whitney Stohr at whitney@arcsno.org.

Federal Bills of Interest

On January 11, 2022, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI) reintroduced the SECURE Act to combat sexual violence against people with disabilities on college campuses. The Arc of the United States supports this bill.

On January 13, 2022, Representative Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) introduced the Marriage Equality for Disabled Adults Act, which would eliminate requirements that disabled adult children (DAC) remain unmarried in order to receive Social Security benefits and Medicare and Medicaid. The Arc of the United States endorsed this legislation.

The Build Back Better Act is still awaiting a vote in the US Senate. This bill would improve the quality of life for millions of people with disabilities, their families, and the direct support personal workforce. The Arc of the United States supports this bill.