

Focus on Family

The
Arc
of the South Shore

www.arcsouthshore.org

Linda Sera is a very warm and friendly person who beams with love and pride for her son David. It would be a mistake to think that her warm personality is a sign of weakness, Linda has been fighting for David for the last 24 years, and after speaking with her for a few moments, one learns that she will never stop! I was able to get to know her after a recent rally at the State House that was organized by the Arc of Massachusetts.

It's her determination that has led her to The Arc of the South Shore. Her experiences with special ed. departments in two towns and a local agency, after David turned 22, led her to search for something more. "Since coming to the Arc of the South Shore, David has shown more maturity and independence than I ever thought he would." She says with a sigh. "Before coming to the Arc he was always attached to my hip. Now through working at Harbor Industries and taking part in the Community Supports program, he has become much more independent and enjoys being with his friends. Its gotten to the point where I can now volunteer to work in the kitchen during the Arc's Friday night dances and he doesn't need me to be

with him all the time, he's out enjoying the dance with his friends and can function much better without me than he ever has before."

To someone who doesn't have a child, or family member, with special needs this may not seem like such a big deal. To the Sera family and many others like them; it's a world of difference. Linda went on to say "David has made so much progress, thanks to the Arc of the South Shore that he's never made anywhere else." She says, "If these cuts are allowed to stand . . . I can't even think about what that would mean to my family." Linda and her husband David, Sr. both work full time, Linda also works a part-time job, and they've recently completed putting their daughter, Jackie, through college and have student loans to worry about.

The threat of losing his work at Harbor Industries and respite care through Family Support Services due to state budget cuts, could mean that David would be placed in a day program that would not



David Sera (left) enjoys a break with friends at a recent outing with the Arc of the South Shore's Community/Family Supports program

encourage him to grow as much as an employment setting does. Even worse, there is the threat that he could lose services altogether.

"That would mean that one of us (her or her husband) would have to leave our job to take care of him." Says Linda. "In that case, I don't know how we could pay the mortgage, student loans, and take care of special needs for David. By staying at home, and not with other people, all of the progress he's made with the Arc would be erased. I'm very afraid that he would regress."

The situation the Sera's find themselves in is tragic, but unfortunately not unique. In fact up to 14 people are currently at risk of losing their space at Harbor Industries, in addition to the elimination of funding for Family Support. The Arc of the South Shore needs your help!

- Craig Pina, Director of Development

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Provides social opportunities for children and adults in a fun and stimulating environment. Programs are designed to provide activities that;

- *Provide activities that facilitate the development of interpersonal skills and relationships,*
- *Enhance emotional and social functioning*
- *Promote greater community inclusion*



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Provides training and employment opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities*
- *Provides guidance and instruction to individuals who need to increase their work and social skills*
- *Supported employment enables individuals with disabilities to work in the community because of support from our agency*

- *Services include;*

Printing

Light Assembly

Fulfillment

Mailing Services

For more information contact:

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