



## Legislative News

Floridians with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are receiving less services today than a dozen years ago due to inadequate state funding.

The facts are:

- **PUBLIC FUNDING HAS BEEN SLASHED.** Reimbursement for services provided to our neighbors with I/DD is 14% lower, on average, than in 2003.
- **FLORIDA SPENDS LESS THAN MOST STATES.** Florida ranks at the bottom compared to the spending of other states for services to vulnerable citizens with I/DD. (The State of the States in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 10th Edition, 2015 Braddock)
- **STAFF WAGES CONTINUE TO INCREASE BUT NOT REIMBURSEMENTS.** While reimbursement rates are stagnant, Florida's minimum wage continues to increase. The average direct care worker who cares for individuals with I/DD in Florida is paid, on average, \$9 per hour compared to many fast food restaurants that are now paying their workers \$10 per hour.
- **INCREASING COSTS OF SERVICES CONTINUE TO PUT MANY PROVIDERS OUT OF BUSINESS.** Increased costs for personnel, property insurance and expanded screening and training of staff in the face of stagnant and decreased funding have resulted in a 35% drop in the number of service providers in Florida since 2008.



*Self-advocates and staff from The Arc Jacksonville traveled to Tallahassee on February 18th to deliver, in person, the message to legislators that change must happen.*

It is essential that the Florida Legislature and Governor address these critical issues NOW and restore funding to levels adequate to care for Floridians with I/DD.

Communicate your concerns to your Florida Legislature.

Find your Representative at:

[www.myfloridahouse.gov/sections/representatives/myrepresentative.aspx](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/sections/representatives/myrepresentative.aspx)



## Innovation Grant Awarded to The Arc Jacksonville

The Arc Jacksonville recently received a \$195,000 innovation grant from the Board of Trustees of the Riverside Hospital Foundation for a program to advance the clinical training of nurses in serving the high-risk population of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), a group traditionally underserved by healthcare providers.

[Click here to visit our blog and read more about the innovation grant awarded to The Arc Jacksonville](#)



## The True Impact of Service



*Katie (center) featured with participants at The Arc Jacksonville Valentine's Day Ball*

When Katie Shaneyfelt began volunteering with The Arc Jacksonville in October 2014 she had no idea it would be life changing. She started as a Club Arc volunteer at The Arc Jacksonville's Westside location, looking to fulfill volunteer hours needed for a course at Florida State College of Jacksonville.

Unlike previous volunteer experiences, once Katie completed her hours she continued to volunteer because she had fallen in love with the people. "I had never felt more at home. They became my best friends," she said.

[Click here to read more about Katie and her volunteer experience with The Arc Jacksonville](#)



## Blake Bortles Establishes Foundation

Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Blake Bortles announced on February 22, 2016 the establishment of the Blake Bortles Foundation. Bortles explained that the charity was founded to support children with intellectual and developmental challenges in the pursuit of full, independent lives and other causes.

"We are grateful that Blake intends to donate his time and resources to helping people with I/DD.

His involvement will bring greater awareness to our mission," said Arc Jacksonville President/CEO Jim Whittaker.

The foundation will host its first concert and celebrity golf tournament on April 15-16, 2016 to raise funds.

[Click here to read the Florida Times-Union article on the Blake Bortles Foundation](#)



### **Arc Jacksonville Village**

Construction for The Arc Jacksonville Village continues on schedule for the April opening.

Beginning February 24th, applications for residency were accepted from person who had completed the eligibility process.

[Click here to view photos from the progress of construction](#)



*Romell Hall & Stacia Johnson*

### **Valentine's Day Ball**

The Arc Jacksonville annual Valentine's Day Ball was held February 5th. Thank you to The Jacksonville Pilot Club for sponsoring the ball every year.

[Click here to visit the full online photo album](#)

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

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