

Mission Accomplished – One Life at a Time

Doris Meroni - Grand Dame of The Arc of Warren County A Good Death Concluding a Very Good Life

Robert A. Pruznick, CEO



“When your time comes to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song, and die like a hero going home.” Tecumseh

Doris Meroni came to live with us in 1984. We were opening a home for women in Belvidere to complement our first home in Asbury that served men. She was living with family friends after her father had died and her mother subsequently moved into a nursing home. Now her caretaker’s health was failing and DDD referred her to us for long term placement. While we could not know then, her residency in our Community Living Arrangements program would indeed be lengthy – thirty two years in fact! But from the beginning we did know that it would be a delightfully successful consumer/provider match.

Doris was a sweet, but spunky woman who lived her life with intensity. Vivacious and compassionate, she brought great joy to everyone around her. She had a natural capacity for what we call “self-advocacy” – clearly representing her interests and preferences without hesitation, doing her best to direct the course of her life’s journey. While passionate in pursuit of her desires and goals, she learned to trust our guidance as she graciously acknowledged her limitations and agreed to practical compromises. Under our simple operating formula of respect and love, Doris thrived.

In her early years with us, Doris was able to graduate into more independent, less supervised living programs. For many years she had a personal tutor who helped her retain her reading skills. She did much with the talents she was given. We were able to find a perfect volunteer work opportunity for her at the Hunterdon Developmental Center, where she put her high energy levels together with her deep well of maternal instincts to create a lengthy career as an institutional “foster grandparent.” She so loved being productive that it was traumatic when her diminished capacities led to her “retirement.” Likewise, Doris resisted her doctor’s recommendation to use a walking cane and she cried when we informed her that her advanced age precluded “alone time.” Eventually, she came to accept the accommodations of her senior citizen status.

In retrospect, Doris Meroni lived a rich, full, good life within The Arc, Warren family and in her adopted community of Washington where she was truly and happily included. We were able to properly celebrate her reign as eldest and most beloved resident at a glorious 89th birthday party in August. We had hoped she would see nine decades, but the diagnoses of a terminal condition made that anniversary unlikely. In her remaining months, however, Doris was able to join us in celebrating our chapter’s sixty years of human service, as well as dressing up to attend the CLA’s department’s annual prom-like gala for consumers.

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3.3 Million

More than 3 million US women are at risk of exposing their developing baby to alcohol.



#VitalSigns

VitalSigns
www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/fasd



CDC Warns of Dangers of Alcohol During Pregnancy

There is no known safe amount of alcohol use during pregnancy or while trying to get pregnant. There is also no safe time during pregnancy to drink. All types of alcohol are equally harmful, including all wines and beer. When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby.

Women also should not drink alcohol if they are sexually active and do not use effective contraception (birth control). This is because a woman might get pregnant and expose her baby to alcohol before she knows she is pregnant. Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned. Most women will not know they are pregnant for up to 4 to 6 weeks.

FASDs are completely preventable if a woman does not drink alcohol during pregnancy. Why take the risk? For more information, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/fasd.

For information about The Arc's early intervention program, Project First Step, please call 908-689-4542 or visit: www.arcwarren.org



Doris Meroni, A Life Well Lived, *continued from front*

While I am proud of all the opportunities we afforded Doris relative to her pursuit of happiness, I am most pleased that we were able to allow her to direct the conclusion of her life. With the help of the Quinlan Hospice Care staff and Doris's pastor at the United Methodist Church, Pastor Jean McMullen, my incomparable direct support staff, along with our nursing and program support staff orchestrated a "good death" for Doris in the comfort of her accessible apartment in the center of the town that had been her home for so many years. At this, the most profound of human passages, the liberty of informed choice should be sacrosanct. Having witnessed the tender process of Doris's departure from this vale of tears, I am content that we properly fulfilled our mission to her.

"The phenomenon of a good death is the integration of many concepts, including pain and symptom management, clear decision making, preparation for death, completion, experience of dignity and respect, closeness to people that care, and being at peace." – Amy Callaha-Lesher, National Institutes of Health.

The photos above demonstrate Doris' enjoyment of a good laugh and spending time with those she loved. In the photo at left, Doris and Betty Burham share a joke, while Doris takes a celebratory photo with CLA Director John Whitehead during the All Sports Banquet where she, along with other athletes, was recognized for her participation in Recreation Services athletics programs.

Arc Warren Athletes Successfully Competed in Winter Games



Congratulations to athletes who competed in the 2016 Special Olympic Winter Games held at Mountain Creek in Vernon in February. We had a total of 9 skiers and 2 athletes on the snowshoe team who competed in two events, the Super G and the Giant Slalom. Our Snowshoe team competed in 100M and 200M snowshoe events. Our athletes came home with a very impressive medal count of 7 Gold, 9 Silver, 5 Bronze, and 1 Fourth place medal. From The Arc of Warren County team, from left, is Chris Wolf and, middle right, is Eric Schoener.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ARC RECREATION SERVICES, PLEASE CONTACT MEGHAN MOYER AND MARCI GUBICH AT 908-689-7525

The 26th Annual WRNJ Radiothon for The Arc Friday, April 22 Hackettstown Hyundai

Please make your pledge in support of The Arc and the quality services and programs that have benefitted you and your family member with an intellectual disability. Or, make a pledge on behalf of a neighbor, co-worker, or customer whose life has been made better as a result of having The Arc in their life.

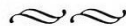
We all benefit from the success of this vital fundraising program!

RADIOTHON

The Arc Foundation
P.O. Box 389, Washington, NJ 07882



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Expiration Date: _____ CCV# _____

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The Arc Foundation
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Thank you for your contribution to The Arc Foundation
Your gift is tax-deductible, and will help ensure the continuance of quality programs for children and adults who have intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

THE ARC OF WARREN COUNTY

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Post Office Box 389
Washington, New Jersey
07882



**SINCE 1954,
PROVIDING QUALITY
SERVICE AND SUPPORT
TO PEOPLE WITH
INTELLECTUAL AND
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THE ARC FOUNDATION

Maria DiGiovanni Named President of The Arc Foundation

Maria DiGiovanni, Mayor of Hackettstown and Vice President/Business Development Officer for First Hope Bank, has been named president of The Arc Foundation.

Announcement of her appointment is made by Foundation Director Kevin M. Guyette. Other officers include John Sommer, treasurer, and Robert Pruznick, secretary.

Ms. DiGiovanni is a longtime volunteer for The Arc of Warren County, the area's leading nonprofit organization specializing in maximum quality service and support for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, and their families. Founded in 1954, The Arc serves more than 1,100 individuals and families annually with a wide menu of lifespan services that include early intervention, residential, referral and advocacy, therapeutic leisure recreation, Special Olympics training and participation, Camp Warren, family support, and more. The Arc Foundation provides financial support for these vital services supplemental to local and state funding.

She serves, once again, as chair of The Arc's annual WRNJ Radiothon, which will be held Fri., April 22 from the showroom of Hackettstown Hyundai. In addition to her professional and volunteer involvement, she is active with the HRMC Foundation Gala and the Hackettstown Rotary Club.

Maria is married to Dr. Phil Linfante and has two grown children and two young grandsons. For more information, please call 908-689-7525 x212.

