

VOL. 8 ISSUE 2 • SUMMER 2024

THE BUZZ

Official Newsletter of Oswego Industries and
the Arc of Oswego County



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The Buzz is published four times annually by Oswego Industries Inc. and Arc of Oswego County 7 Morrill Place Fulton, NY 13126
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Oswego Industries, Inc. mission is to be a leader in the field of developmental disabilities, committed to meeting the needs of individual growth, productivity and independence through education, advocacy and increased community acceptance and participation

Arc of Oswego County's mission is to help people with disabilities live rich, fulfilling lives of their own choosing.

Core Values

Team Unity -> Respect-> Communication->
Professional-> People First -> Innovative ->
Integrity



Allen Connely
President & CEO

The Relaunch of the Buzz – Oswego Industries and the Arc of Oswego

We are thrilled to announce the relaunch of our newsletter, "The Buzz," dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities. Our mission is to create a vibrant, inclusive community where people of all abilities can thrive. Each issue will provide valuable resources, inspiring stories, and practical tips to help navigate the unique challenges faced by those with disabilities.

"The Buzz" will highlight advancements in accessibility technology, spotlight advocacy efforts, and provide updates on relevant legislation. We will feature interviews with experts in the field, share success stories from individuals making a difference, and offer advice on everything from supports and services to employment opportunities.

In addition, we will, from time to time, include a section for readers to share their own experiences and insights, providing a sense of connection and mutual support. By furnishing a platform for these voices, we hope to promote understanding and encourage positive change in our communities.

Our goal is to inform, inspire, and empower. Whether you are someone with a disability, a family member, a caregiver, or simply an ally, "The Buzz" is for you. Join us in celebrating the strengths and capabilities of all individuals as we work together towards a more inclusive world. Sign up today and become part of this transformative journey.

Thank you,

Allen Connely
President and CEO, Oswego Industries/Arc of Oswego

On the Cover: Plan Coordinator Tacy Bricker and Kathy L.



BUZZ byte

Lee Sullivan,
Director of Services

In case we haven't met, I am Lee Sullivan, the Services Director for Oswego Industries (OI) and Arc of Oswego (Arc) since March 2022. Despite the challenging landscape of staff shortages and turnover, we've demonstrated remarkable resilience, making significant progress in Habilitation Services, bringing people back to programming, adding new youth services, and expanding classroom-style services with Smartboard Technology. Our DSPs have been the bedrock of our accomplishments, and I deeply appreciate their unwavering dedication.

New York Disability Advocates conducted a workforce study of Direct Support professionals. They learned that of the 4,497 DSPs surveyed, nearly half experienced food insecurity and unstable housing conditions due to low pay. Nearly 48% of providers were forced to close or reduce programs. Statewide vacancy rates increased 75% since pre-pandemic levels, 93% saw a decrease in job applicants, and 39% did not reopen due to staffing shortages.

Fortunately, OI/Arc has absorbed referrals from closed agencies and is now the leading force in Employment Services in Oswego County. Soon, it will offer services like Community-Based Pre-Voc, Employment Training Program- a discovery process for potential internships, and Pathways to Employment. The department is excited to introduce VR Technology for career exploration, allowing individuals to explore jobs safely.

We are at a historical point with a pivot in our industry with the Home and Community-Based Final Rule. This rule takes the philosophy of Intellectual Developmental Disability being in completely inclusive environments as the standard. It's a significant shift that we are prepared for and excited about. We are ready to innovate and reimagine what services look like now, and this is just the beginning of our journey.

We are committed to expanding services in Oswego County with the support of our CEO, Allen Connely, and our boards. They have increased the minimum wage rate for our DSPs. This will pave the way for a more stable future, not only for the people we serve but also for our DSPs.



DSP Pat took a Respite group to Oswego Speedway for Autograph Night at the end of June. Pictured are Germaine A, Brian A, Dan H, John M.,

INTEGRATED BUSINESS



An inside look at the Business Operations Division of Oswego Industries

From the desk of
Lisa Guernsey,
Director of Operations

Oswego Industries' Business Operations is a division that branches off into two distinctive directions: Operations and Services. Both Operations and Services provide employment opportunities that generate revenue, which is reinvested in products, pays employees' wages, and most importantly, enables us to meet our mission.

Business Services provides janitorial and grounds services, while Operations provides products and production services through textiles, assembly, repacking, indexing/imaging, and warehousing.

OI has three types of contracts/customers: Commercial, Source America through the AbilityOne program, and NYSID (New York Industries for the Disabled).

Business Snapshot-Series 1: Who are Source America and NYSID?

Source America - Source America is a nonprofit agency with the mission: "Increase the employment of people with disabilities by building strong partnerships with the federal government and engaging a national network of nonprofit agencies and experts." Their vision is: "Every American with a disability has career path and employment choices."

New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID) - NYSID, established in 1975 and based in Albany, is a non-profit membership organization with a mission of "advancing employment and other opportunities for individuals with disabilities and qualified veterans." NYSID contracts with government entities and private companies for products and services on New York's Preferred Source List.

Our member agencies provide the individuals who make the products and/or perform the services for which NYSID contracts.

Both Source America and NYSID administer contracts, providing support throughout the bidding process and negotiations to secure opportunities. They ensure compliance once awarded and offer additional supports including engineering support, grants, and a wealth of training.

Oswego Industries currently holds one product contract with Source America and four service contracts, and two service contracts with NYSID. In our next newsletter, we will share more details on what we do, our outstanding capabilities, and our desire to partner with other local companies to grow our business and help bring more jobs to our community.



Above: Oswego Industries sewing line that is part of Oswego Integrated Business Operations Commercial Sewing and Textile divisions

PROGRAM NEWS AND NOTES



Program Happenings

From the desk of
Nicole Ames,
Services Manager

The Services Team has been making a significant impact in the community. Our collective efforts in the Arc of NYS 75 “Acts of Service” have been commendable, with our team members volunteering their time and skills to renovate local organizations and complete community service projects. The successful return of the first dances since COVID, the upcoming bowling league, and the first annual weekend camping trip in five years reflects our team's dedication and spirit.

Our Services Team has undergone some positive changes in its staffing structure, significantly enhancing our programming. Community Habilitation Coordinator Janel Ridgeway, in addition to her current role, now oversees the Respite program. This change has brought a more cohesive and person-centered approach to programming. Site-Based Day Habilitation Coordinator Chris Cowen started in early 2024 and has significantly improved morale in his respective departments. Adding Billing/Intake Coordinator Tabettha Hofman has improved our documentation and intake processes, ensuring a smoother and more efficient experience for those interested in enrolling.

We have also seen some other significant changes in recent years. The Plan Coordinator is the main point of contact for people supported across all services offered. For instance, a person who receives Respite, Community Habilitation, and LIFE has one Plan Coordinator overseeing their person-centered plans. The department has seen a considerable increase in teamwork and overall service. The new classroom-style service offerings are well received by the individuals being supported, as they appreciate the variety of classes available to them. Continuous onboarding and training have increased staffing to a much better level compared to last year.



Jean F, Sarah F, Kevin W, John BI, Austin L, Germaine helped with various tasks around the Fulton Elks Lodge# 830 Dawn Gibbs from the Fulton Elks was instrumental in assisting with this opportunity.



DSPs Lauren, Gabby, Leah, Kim, Mindy with individuals supported Robin W, Terrif F, Jean F, Jessica J, Jessica B, Erin B, and Gary C. at Bullhead Point where they teamed up with Parks and Rec and the Fulton Garden Club to help clean up around the lake.



Pictured L to R
Tabetha Hofman, Billing/Intake Coordinator
Chris Cowen, Site Based Day Hab Coordinator
Janel Ridgeway, Comm Hab & Respite Coordinator

PROGRAMS FOSTERING GROWTH, INDEPENDENCE AND OPPORTUNITY

PROJECT BLOOM



Photo Credit: GOFCC

Austin L, Larissa C, Kevin W, Ashley T, and John BI. volunteered with DSPs Jasmine, Lauren, and Leaha to help deliver flowers for the Greater Oswego Fulton Chamber of Commerce's Project Bloom.

SENIORS



Photo Credit: City of Fulton Special Events

Sandy S, Danny G, and DSP Courtney enjoyed a beautiful day while enjoying the City of Fultons Tunes In June

COMMUNITY HAB



DSP Jasmine has been helping Tyler L. and Kevin W. learn about different modes of transportation, such as CENTRO, Medicaid Transport, and cab companies. After following the bus several times, they finally took the plunge. During a recent outing with Community Habilitation, they rode CENTRO for the first time and practiced their personal safety skills.

COMMUNITY HAB



During a Community Habilitation outing, with DSP Kat, Chase E met the pilots and saw a Boeing B-29 Superfortress at Syracuse Hancock Airport during the CAF AirPower History Tour. Currently, there are only two flying B-29s remaining worldwide.

RESPIRE



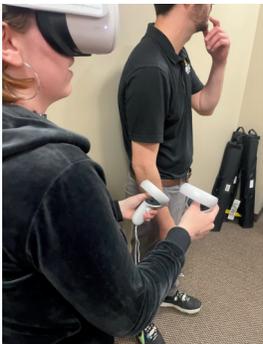
In May the Arc of Oswego County's Respite Bowling League returned. Thank you to Gregg Nichols and the staff at Lakeview Lanes for making this happen.

ARC AND OI SPRING DANCE



In April participants enrolled in programs from both Arc of Oswego County and Oswego Industries enjoyed the second dance of 2024. The dance was held in our Cafe and more dances are planned for 2024 and beyond.

VIRTUAL REALITY FOR CAREER EXPLORATION



Employment Services Coordinator and VR Administrator, Kyle Cushman and Job Consultant, Hannah Hobby, demonstrates Oswego Industries' new portable VR for Career Exploration. This system allow individuals supported to explore new careers in safe environment.

SERVICE NEWS AND NOTES



Employment Services

From the desk of
Su-Ann Howard,
Employment Services
Manager

The employment team at Oswego Industries has been active since the early 1990s. Over the years, our services have experienced significant growth and innovation. Initially, we focused mainly on finding employment for individuals within the community. However, we have since introduced new and innovative ideas to create advanced educational and employment opportunities for students and adults. Our services have expanded from traditional janitorial and retail positions to include roles in advanced fields within the community. For example, we have assisted individuals in securing positions as teachers, air traffic controllers at airports, and members of the Coast Guard.

Over the past three years, student involvement in our schools has increased. This increased involvement has allowed students to start planning for their futures at a younger age. Our employment team is actively exploring career opportunities and college activities and organizing field trips to help students explore their interests.

Additionally, we have recently acquired VR sets to provide students and adults with a safe and exciting way to explore various interests and careers

These systems will become an integral part of our services within the school districts starting in the fall of 2024.

Our team, a dynamic and diverse group, has experienced significant growth in the past year, both in size and services. We are proud of our supportive and encouraging work environment, where many team members thrive on healthy competition. To foster this, we have implemented internal competitions aimed at securing employment bonuses for placed individuals. Our goal is to excel in placements and provide quality services each month, a testament to our dedication and drive.

We are excited to announce our plans to offer community-based services for individuals who are not yet ready for employment. This initiative will provide them with the necessary training and experience to prepare for future employment. We are also actively participating in pathways to employment, the Employment Training Program (ETP), and community-based prevocational services. We are eager to expand each of these teams to serve our community better and promote employment, underscoring our ongoing commitment to growth and innovation.



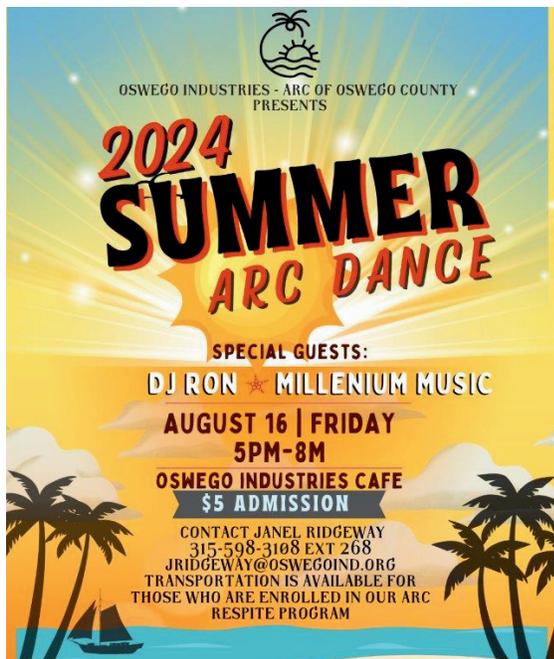
Pictured L to R
Hannah Hobby Job Consultant,
Sam Britton Employment Specialist,
Ally Froio Assistant Employment Services
Manager.

ARC OF OSWEGO COUNTY RECEIVES NYSARC TRUST GRANT

FULTON -Arc of Oswego County, a not-for-profit organization supporting people with disabilities, has been awarded \$9,236 in grants from the Trustee Management Board of NYSARC Trust Services to support Arc of Oswego County's recreation programs.

NYSARC Trust Services administers supplemental needs trusts and pooled trusts that can dramatically improve the lives of people with disabilities by enabling individuals to maintain financial eligibility for Medicaid and other means-tested government benefit programs. For 2024, NYSARC Trust Services is proud to fulfill its commitment to enhancing the lives of people with disabilities by awarding \$2,697,508 to The Arc New York Chapters statewide.

Arc of Oswego County plans to use the recreation grant funds to enable people supported to experience events that our community offers, promote physically and mentally healthy lifestyles, and allow people supported more opportunities for community integration.



NEWS FROM HR

Open Enrollment

July 8th through 12th

Open enrollment which is the period in which individuals can sign up for or modify health, dental, life, and other insurance and benefits.

i OSWEGO INDUSTRIES

MAKE YOUR HEALTH A PRIORITY

Schedule your Biometric Screening today

Wednesday, August 27
12:00pm - 3:30pm
7 Morrill Pl
Fulton

A Biometric Screening is a fifteen-minute, confidential consultation with a Registered Nurse to measure and review your vitals, body composition, blood sugar, and cholesterol

MVP Members only. Appointments are required.

To register and for more information, please visit <https://wpvinc.as.me/Oswegoindustries> or scan the QR code

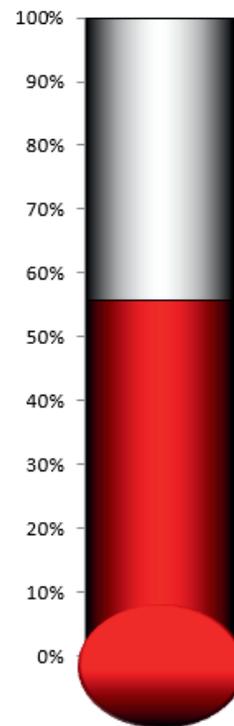
Join Us February 8th 2025, at the Oswego Elks Club for the 2nd Annual Casino Night benefitting

i OSWEGO INDUSTRIES

Why MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Thank you for considering this opportunity to be part of something truly meaningful. Your potential contribution is deeply appreciated. Together, we can make a lasting impact and build a more inclusive and supportive community for individuals with IDD.

Are you passionate about making a difference in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)? If so, we invite you to join us at The Arc of Oswego County! As a member, you'll strengthen the Arc's voice in advocating for critical issues such as education, employment, housing, and safety for the disability community. Your support is crucial in contributing to a more inclusive community for all. Your involvement with us would benefit individuals with IDD and their families and enrich our entire community. Together, we can achieve more and create a brighter future for everyone. So why wait? Join The Arc today, and let's achieve great things together!



It's easy to become a member of The Arc of Oswego County. Visit our website, www.arcofoswegocounty.org and click on the "Become A Member" button, scan the QR Code below or contact Jeff Weigand via telephone (315) 598-3108; ext. 314 or email jweigand@oswegoind.org to learn more about membership opportunities and how you can get involved.



GRANTS, GIFTS AND ARC MEMBERSHIP

GRANTS



\$9,326

ARC CORPORATE GIFTS

Compass FCU
Fulton Savings Bank

ARC CIVIC ORGANIZATION GIFTS

BPO Elks No. 271 of Oswego

OSWEGO INDUSTRIES- GENERAL FUND

Brittany Bruce
Allen Connely^
Kyle Cushman^
Christian DeRoever^
Michael Egan*
Khristine Ercums
Sevgi Evren Familo
Amanda Gregory^
Sabine Ingerson
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Mr. & Mrs. David Murray
Mr. & Mrs. James Rice
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Rima*
Pam Shelton^
Tammy Slayton^
Timothy Sollenberger
Lee Sullivan^
Cody Taylor^
Jennifer Torrese
Kay Wallen^
Kristy West

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Carolyn Bonanni
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Carolyn Bonanni
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Mr. Larry Steinburg
Amy Strong^
Kathy Timmons^
Jeff Weigand^
Carol Waterman
Mr. & Mrs. Matt Welling
Robert Whitman



Key: ^Employee ^^Retired Employee *Board Member

Don't Miss Out! Subscribe now...

Kindly ensure that your contact information is kept up to date and that you are subscribed to our newsletter. This will enable you to stay informed about our programs, services, and business operations, and gain an understanding of the advantages of Arc membership. Additionally, as a member, you will qualify for exclusive discounts on upcoming events.



To Subscribe to The Buzz, please scan the QR Code and complete the Subscribe to Our Newsletter form on the page

Spring Edition of The Buzz

Posted on April 15, 2024 at 1:38 pm.
Written by [Jeff Weigand](#)



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Summer 2023
Spring 2023

Recent Posts

- Spring Edition of The Buzz
- Join Us Saturday April 13 for the Oswego Industries Inaugural Casino Night
- KeyBank Donates to Oswego Industries through the Community Leadership Program
- NEW DATE
- Winter Edition of The Buzz

Archives

Select Month

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Name

First Last

Email

Address

About Oswego Industries Inc.

Our mission is to be a partner in the development of comprehensive community services designed to improve the quality of life for all people by providing the necessary support programs to enable individuals to grow with dignity and achieve their highest level of independence and self- fulfillment.



About Arc of Oswego County

The mission of Arc of Oswego County is to be the premier provider of services to persons with developmental disabilities. Our commitment, first and foremost, is to individuals and their families, to provide choices, information, education and supports that will allow informed decisions and opportunities for growth, personal development and fulfillment.

