



The Arc of Greater Tarrant County

February 3, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arc of Greater Tarrant County is pleased to have worked with the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) on our Basic Advocacy Training Project. TCDD's effort on this project is a strong example of the important work of DD Councils in Texas and throughout the country in encouraging the independence and self-sufficiency of people with developmental disabilities.

With TCDD's support and guidance, our Advocacy Training Project has provided training to more than 700 individuals on leadership, community organizing and advocacy skills over the past 3 years. Trainees participate in real-world advocacy with local, county, school and state governments. The Advocacy Training Project also works to improve opportunities for the advocates to serve on local boards and work groups. This project is also successful in helping individuals build interpersonal, communication, conflict resolution and problem solving skills which further increases self sufficiency and involvement in the community. Participants from this project continue to be instrumental in community collaborative efforts, providing invaluable input to address needs in the community and increasing the visibility of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Other examples of activities supported by this grant from TCDD include self-advocates:

- registered as first-time voters;
- joined the community and ran in the local Race for the Cure and other community awareness activities;
- advocated and provided input during numerous legislative visits to elected representatives and special committees about various measures including the Texas Respectful Language Bill;
- participated in a documentary on intellectual and developmental disabilities;
- teach a class each semester at The University of Texas at Arlington's Diversity in Social Work Practice class; and
- provided testimony at a public hearing hosted by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities about the importance of living independently in the community and making their own decisions.

As our Project continues, we look forward to training more self-advocates and their families on how to be fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives.

I am happy to provide additional information on our Advocacy Training Project if desired. I also welcome the opportunity for some of our project graduates to provide input. In the meantime, please know what a critical and measurable difference TCDD is making in the lives of people with developmental disabilities in Texas.

Sincerely,

Erinn Hall
Executive Director

