

SPRING

2025

# KC ARC

## NEWSLETTER

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SINCE 1972



EDITOR - ELIZABETH HARDIN

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# President's Message...



Much has been said about children being the future of our world and our duty as citizens of this earth to empower them. Taking care of the children in our community isn't just the right thing to do because they are some of the most innocent and vulnerable members of our society, it's the right thing to do to protect and grow our future as human beings. While the seedlings we plant every spring rely on their roots to guide them to be firmly planted into the soil, children rely on their parents, guardians, siblings, and mentors to provide them with an environment where they can thrive. They both need room to grow, room to spread those roots and reach toward the sky.

Through partnerships with the Vincennes Community School Corporation, the City of Vincennes, and Building Blocks, KCARC is in the final stages of reoutfitting the Civitan Children's Center with all new materials to support new curriculum implementation. This new program, Creative Curriculum, will mirror the same educational opportunities offered through VCSC's early learning options

and allow for a more consistent educational path for the early learners of Knox County. What's more!? KCARC is looking to open up a new classroom to expand the educational opportunities at the Civitan Children's Center this fall through a partnership with the Lilly Foundation. You can keep up to date on our activities and upcoming opportunities by following us on social media, reading your local newspaper, or just pick up the phone and give us a call at 812-886-4312!

Like the major components of soil, members of this community have been working together to help create the solid foundation for Knox County Children to thrive. You never know what seed will create a flower, a crop, or a tall oak tree: all equally important aspects of a healthy environment. We're so excited at KCARC to be a part of helping plant the seeds for tomorrow's future, to be supporting the greatest treasure our community has: our children.



*Nash Dunn*

President, KCARC



# WELCOME TO COONROD PRODUCTION CENTER

KCARC had a successful ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the expansion, renovation, and renaming of KCARC Plant 5 to the KCARC Coonrod Production Center on Wednesday, April 2nd. This special event honored Jerry Coonrod, a KCARC board member for over 55 years, whose dedication and leadership helped shape the organization into what it is today. We also celebrate the contributions of his son, Mark, who was an inspiration to the growth of KCARC.

This was an exciting milestone and will continue KCARC's legacy of growth and community impact.

President of KCARC, Nash Dunn explained, "In 1969 members of the Knox county community came together to write the articles of incorporation for KCARC to dedicate themselves to building a supportive community for individuals and families with special needs. This building dedication is so significant for the organization, as it is allowing us to thank one of the families



President of KCARC, Nash Dunn proudly poses with the Coonrod family, Andrea, Jerry, Georgeann and Angela, during the ribbon cutting ceremony.



that helped create and support KCARC for 55 years. We simply wouldn't be here without the Coonrod family."

KCARC was thrilled with the success of the Coonrod Production Center ribbon cutting. A heartfelt thank you to our incredible supporters and dedicated employees who made this event memorable.

Dunn continued on to say, "This opportunity provides KCARC the ability to continue to be one of the largest employers in the county and helps keep Knox County on the map as a source of high-quality goods and services.



KCARC received the "Member of the Year" award from Martin County Alliance.

The Martin County Alliance for Economic Growth serves businesses and residents of Martin County, Indiana with the mission to promote, encourage, and assist in the growth and development of our communities.

Martin County Alliance is located in Loogootee, IN.

The 2025 Martin County Alliance Annual Dinner was a resounding success, bringing together community leaders and business supporters for an evening of connection and celebration. A highlight of the night was honoring KCARC as the 2025 Member of the Year for their outstanding commitment to community impact and economic growth.

Employees of the Coonrod Production Center were on hand to conduct tours and give demonstration on production techniques at the Coonrod Production Center ribbon cutting ceremony.







# Civitan Children's Center

## Enhancing Exceptional Learning at the Civitan Children's Center

KCARC is thrilled to announce an exciting expansion and enhancement of the exceptional early learning opportunities at the Civitan Children's Center. Thanks to a collaborative effort with the Mayor and the City of Vincennes through a HELP grant, along with support from the Early Years Initiative grant via Early Learning Indiana, our young learners will embark on a journey filled with innovative multi-sensory experiences, dynamic curriculum, and evidence-based goal tracking aimed at bolstering their readiness for Kindergarten. The grant funds, managed by the Southern Indiana Development Commission, will also facilitate ongoing professional development for our employees through Building Blocks Regional Training Center.



KCARCs' vision is to create a high-quality, integrated learning environment that welcomes children of all abilities, which includes the addition of an eighth classroom. This new space will enable us to welcome 10 to 14 more students, with all designs prioritizing accessibility. The classroom will be equipped with new changing tables, furniture, tables and chairs, toys, art supplies, projectors, and whiteboards, all crafted to foster a decade of enriching learning experiences.

The common area of the Civitan Children's Center will be transformed to include a Learning Tree library, a serene quiet zone, illumination tables, sound treatment, and specialized equipment to enhance motor skills. KAPLAN Early Learning Company was present to assist in the setup of this new equipment and to provide employee training on innovative teaching methods, utilizing these resources.

The playgrounds will be revitalized, featuring new shaded areas, sandboxes, and toddler-friendly play equipment.

The support from Vincennes Community School Corporation, the City of Vincennes, Packaging Corporation of America in Vincennes, KAPLAN and Building Blocks has been invaluable in driving these improvements forward. Watch for our upcoming "Open House" to view the fresh, new spaces.



# Civitan Children's Corner



Spring has sprung!



Nancy Jean, Civitan Children's Center Director, Trudy McCormick, 1972 Facilities Coordinator, Nash Dunn, KCARC President, Mr. Easter Bunny, and Kris Opell, Administrative Assistant to the President hopped into the Easter



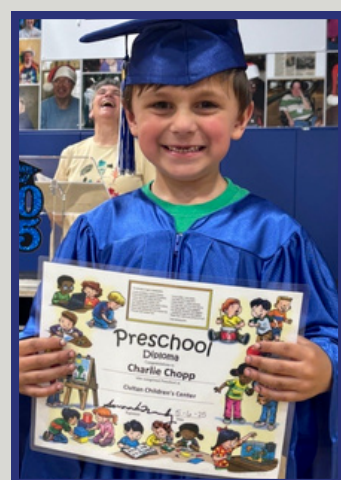
Spring has sprung and it was fun, HOPPY times at Civitan Children's Center! Mr. Easter Bunny himself spread joy by delivering colorful Easter eggs filled with treats to each child.

The excitement didn't stop there—our little ones enjoyed an epic Easter Egg hunt throughout the center! What a fantastic day filled with smiles and laughter!

We proudly celebrated the graduation of our amazing preschool students at the 1972 Community Center. Dressed in their caps and gowns, they received their well-earned certificates, marking a significant milestone. This summer, the Civitan Children's Center will be implementing the Ready Rosie, a Parent engagement program to further enhance our learning environment and, prepare each child for kindergarten. The Civitan Children's Center will continue to strive and shape bright futures! Congratulations Graduates!



  
*Class of 2025*





# KCARC Mission Champions of the Month

## Jayda Messeman and Deb Burris



Another successful month of voting at KCARC. Our Mission Champion of the Month is none other than Jayda Messeman. Jayda stepped up to help a choking client. She had to perform the Heimlich maneuver many times saving her clients' life. Jayda was nominated after this selfless act. Jayda embodies what it means to serve, commit and advocate for the people that KCARC serves.

Jayda is a Direct Support Professional and has been with KCARC for a year. She loves being able to help the people she serves in their everyday life and making a positive impact. She feels inspired by one of her supervisors, Amanda Lewis. Jayda says "Amanda is so good with clients and is very hardworking."

Jayda Messeman



A memorable moment for Jayda was the very first time she got to attend Special Olympics with the people she serves.

As far as advice, Jayda says it came from her mom who is also a KCARC employee. She always said to have patience and to remember that a small act of kindness can be so huge to someone.

When asked about how she felt when she realized she had won Mission Champion of the Month she said, "I was shocked but also very appreciative to be recognized." She also wanted to thank Nash Dunn, KCARC President and everyone who was involved to make this happen. Congratulations, Jayda!

Deb Burris



Our next Mission Champion of the Month is none other than our Director of Manufacturing at KCARC, Deb Burris. Deb has been with KCARC for 8 years and has built a team, rooted in compassion.

Deb loves mentoring and enjoys knowing that she may somehow make a difference in someone's life.

"Helping someone learn something new, guiding someone in the right direction with a different perspective. I just love it all. Every day is a chance to learn and grow", explained Deb.

One of Deb's inspiring ideas became a heartfelt project and came with the overhaul and opening of the Coonrod Production Center. She took initiative in designing the break room for her employees. She asked for quotes explaining what KCARC meant to them, and the outcome was extremely inspiring. One quote stated "KCARC saved me". Many people were emotional when reading the quotes and felt Deb's passion for her work and employees.



Deb was nominated by a co-worker who stated "Deb is a problem-solver, a motivator, and the driving force behind a thriving mission-driven workplace. Her dedication to both people and the success of KCARC makes her the perfect choice.

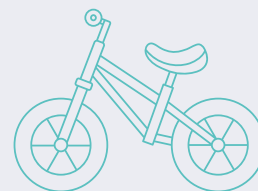
Great job, Deb!





# KC ARC

## Pedaling Hope and Helping Hands



### Adult and Youth Day Programming

Our Adult Day Program proudly sponsored the Knox County Child and Family Wellness event, partnering with the Department of Children Services and local providers on April 26th. Our Adult Day Program participants skillfully selected, budgeted for, and delivered a perfect bike for a child in need! Their smiles say it all—what a meaningful way to give back to our community! Great job, everyone!

### Serving up burgers, fries, and smiles



Our Adult Day Program participants were super busy serving up burgers, fries, and smiles while giving and getting community support. KCARC's Adult Day Programming participant's kept busy for four hours to serve, clean and help out anyway possible. A percentage of proceeds went back into KCARC programming.

Kylor Shields, a Periodic Care Supervisor at KCARC ran food with our Adult Day Program participant's and said, "I knew our Culver's

night was successful but, I was blown away by the community response and the hard work our folks put into serving! It makes me beyond happy to be able to come to work and see the smiling faces of the folks I work with and around, but it makes me even happier for them to be able to share those smiles and their joy with folks in the community! I heard nothing but great feedback about the night and I truly hope to do it again sometime soon!"

Participants also greeted patrons while handing out stickers and literature about KCARC.

Some other activities our Day programming participants have been involved in are bell ringing, food drives, flowerpot decorating and being characters for the Downtown Vincennes Christmas parade.







# What is a Navigator?

## Adult and Youth Day Programs



Barbara Lowe is said to be the unsung hero of KCARC! For seven years, she has been a dedicated navigator, connecting our community with vital resources, assisting with understanding, and getting through processes. KCARC has a desire to help our community as a whole and Barbara is here for everyone—no diagnosis needed. Her passion? Empowering lives by securing essential services, childcare, medical care, and more!

Lowe has assisted people with housing applications, food stamps, Social Security processes and paperwork, finding childcare, medical providers, private insurance, finances, education, and so many other things. You don't have to have an intellectual diagnosis for someone at KCARC to do the best they can to help you when you need help. Lowe says the best part of her job is helping people to get the resources they need, and she enjoys seeing how it changes the lives of people.

KCARC specifically provides services supported by Medicaid Waiver programs. She can help clients with those processes, and then once they are established, accessing and using those services. KCARC has a desire to help in our community as a whole though. Not just Medicaid Waiver recipients.

A large part of what Lowe does is building connections. She says that there are people that donate money to many organizations, but it might surprise you to know that the biggest needs are not money in these cases. It is time and compassion. More people that are willing to offer their time, compassion, and their skills are needed.

Lowe says, "Volunteering and just sharing your talents are so helpful. If you love cooking, why not share that passion by teaching someone or whipping up a meal for them? Are you skilled at sports? Got a knack for hair and nails? Share your skills with someone who'd appreciate it. Sometimes, all it takes is offering to give a ride or sitting in solidarity during tough times. Your kindness can be the support they need!"

Barbara is here to help everyone in need as the Navigator for KCARC. She feels that everyone deserves access to resources, regardless of their background. Join us in celebrating her unwavering commitment to changing lives for the better. Thank You, Barbara!



Rachl Ballard, Behavior Clinician has officially completed her Masters degree.

Rachl Ballard, Curriculum Coordinator at KCARC is all smiles after being surprised with a cake and balloons to recognize her latest accomplishment!

Rachl has completed her courses to receive a Master's degree in applied Behavior Analysis in Autism Spectrum Disorder. She began her graduate program in August of 2023. She graduated from Palestine High School and is a former Career Counselor. She has been the Curriculum Coordinator in the KCARC Day Program and currently serves as the Behavior Clinician at KCARC.

Rachl says, "The most important lesson she has learned is that it is okay to ask for help and to lean on your support team."

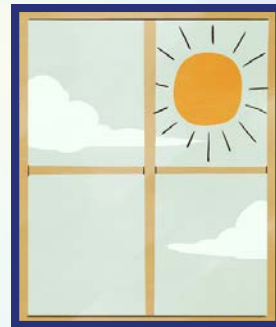
Rachl is most excited about helping others and helping them gain the tools and skills to be able to accomplish their goals. Congratulations Rachl!





BY: MARIA PUCKETT

# From the Window of the Baker Center



## Easter fun!



I always enjoy the Easter Holiday. I enjoy all of the goodies, Easter egg hunts and spending time with my family. KCARCs' Day Program participants enjoyed baking up some delicious cakes and coloring eggs.

With all of this festive preparation it reminded me of great memories I have of when I was younger. My family and I colored Easter eggs, enjoyed going to church and hunting eggs. It was a challenge with 4 brothers, but, it made for a fun and exciting Easter!



I will always remember sitting down to ham, mashed potatoes, noodles and of course amazing sweet treats. All of these things prepared by my mother who had wonderful compassion and a great smile.

One of my favorite desserts is actually something that is a little bit healthy and I am going to share it with you. It is an Easter egg fruit tart. It is chocolate-free with plenty of colorful fruit and it is shaped like an Easter egg. This is a super simple dessert that is easy to customize. Here is the recipe so you can enjoy it too.



### Crust:

- 1 ½ cups (162g) graham cracker crumbs
- 7 tablespoons (99g) unsalted Challenge Butter
- ¼ cup (50g) granulated sugar

### Filling:

- ¾ cup cold heavy whipping cream
- 8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice



### Topping:

- 1 pound Assorted fruits (approximately)
- 2 tablespoons apricot or raspberry jam
- 2 teaspoons lime juice or water

### Easter Egg Fruit Tart



### Instructions:



1. Make the crust, stir together the Graham Cracker Crumbs, melted butter and sugar. Press into the bottom of a 10- inch tart pan and chill.
2. Make the filling: add heavy whipping cream to a large bowl and beat with a hand or a stand mixer until stiff peaks form. Refrigerate while making filling.
3. Add cream cheese, sugar and vanilla to another large bowl. Mix using a hand or a stand mixer until smooth and creamy.
4. Add whipped cream to the cream cheese mixture and use a spatula to fold in.
5. Serve chilled within one day. You can make the cheesecake up to 24 hours ahead, just don't top it until the day of serving.

Enjoy!



# Time for Camp at 1972!



Spring Break Camp at 1972 was a huge success. This year Trudy McCormick, Facility Coordinator, decided to add some fun, educational and exciting events. Arts and Crafts, Field Trips and some STEM activities were part of the growth of Spring Break Camp.

An experience to see what would happen to Peeps Candy when it was being dissolved with salt, sugar or plain water was a fun way to learn. The best part was that everyone got to enjoy their own peep at the end of the experiment.



The Campers had some incredible experiences while attending the 2025 Spring Break Camp at 1972. Campers at 1972 have incredible experiences for those attending Camp. Tiffany Muranaka, the coordinator of the Knox County Community Learning Kitchen gave a fantastic lesson on how to peel a carrot, core an apple and construct a personal pizza. Muranaka says teaching kids to be more confident in the kitchen helps with their independence when cooking in the kitchen.

Muranaka says she loved teaching the kids basic nutrition and cooking skills and these skills are very



important for kids to learn at a young age so they are able to make healthier choices and form healthier habits in the future.

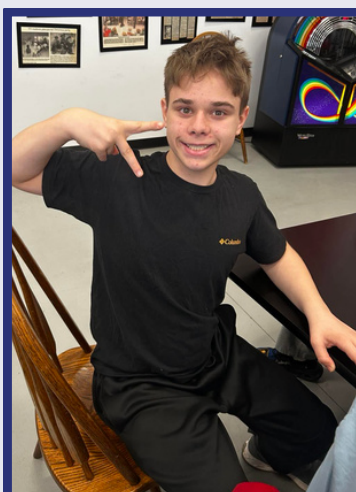
The Community Learning Kitchen is a program through the Knox County Library. Their goal is providing healthy eating education to fill plates with fresh local food.





# Here's what's new at:

## Field Trip Fun!



The closer we get to the summer brings out our fun Field Trips at 1972. We were so happy to host Washington High Schools Life Skills Class at 1972.

They enjoyed pizza for lunch and had a fun afternoon of basketball; giant connect four and battleship as well as time on our fun inflatables.

KCARCs' 1972 Community Center host numerous children during yearly field trips.

1972 Summer camp is around the corner and Assistant Facilities Coordinator, Lauren Wolfe has been busy planning field trips, STEM projects, arts and crafts, movie days and some splashing fun trips to Rainbow Beach. If you still want to get your child signed up for some summer fun contact, Trudy McCormick at 812-316-0641.



1972 is still offering a wide variety of activities like canvas painting, pottery painting and the venture crew. 1972 also provides fitness classes to keep you in shape. Yoga is every Monday from 5:30-6:30 PM EST and is taught by Debbie Dunn.

Cardio Drumming is also a fun way to stay in shape. This workout combines rhythm and movement, using drumsticks and exercise balls—all set to upbeat music. Perfect for all abilities!

Trudy McCormick teaches Cardio Drumming, and they meet every Wednesday at 1972 from 5:30-6:30 PM EST. Call Trudy at 812-316-0641 to get registered.

Mark your calendars! Style For a Smile is back! July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This year we have added vendors and some exciting performers, creation stations and prizes to give away. Watch for updates on this event!





KCARC is certified to provide many services under the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver system in Indiana.  
For more information about KCARC's services, contact:

Barbara Lowe  
Navigator  
812-886-4312

**KCARC**  
**2525 North 6th St**  
**Vincennes, IN 47591**



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DONATION  
AMOUNT:

\$25	\$50	\$100	\$150	\$200	OTHER
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NAME:

ADDRESS:

DESIGNATION:

- DAY PROGRAMS
- 1972 COMMUNITY CENTER
- RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS
- WELLNESS COORDINATION
- MISS MARVELOUS PAGEANT
- CIVITAN CHILDREN'S CENTER
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- PRE-ETS  
(HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION PROGRAM)
- BEHAVIOR SERVICES

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO KCARC  
AND MAIL TO:

2525 NORTH 6TH STREET  
VINCENNES, IN 47591