

SPRING

2026

KC ARC

NEWSLETTER

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SINCE 1972



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CO-EDITOR - MARIA PUCKETT

President's Message...



On July 4, 2026, Mr. Jerry Coonrod, one of KCARC's founders and Chairman of the Board, passed away with his family close by.

While the world keeps turning, it is incumbent on us at KCARC to reflect on his legacy so we may be reminded of the true purpose that the organization was created for: to advocate and provide opportunities in a dignified and respectful manner for the total well-being of individuals and families with special needs.

What is a legacy? Merriam-Webster dictionary defines legacy as "something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past." I can't help but feel a little underwhelmed when reading this rather transactional definition. When I reflect on someone like Jerry's life work and the legacy he leaves behind, my mind goes to an individual's character, their values, traditions, family, and the impact they leave on the world around us.

Jerry once said, "back in the 70's I'd quote every project that came across my desk, because I believed that my staff could do anything."

That deep belief in the capable nature of every human-being is simply one part of the indelible legacy that Mr. Coonrod leaves behind for KCARC employees to carry and it is that belief that has helped grow KCARC into the community leader that it is today.

In the beginning of 1972, Jerry helped to usher in a new journey for Knox County that surpassed all expectations when KCARC hired its first employee and began its path to becoming one of the largest employers in Knox County and a beacon of inclusion for our region. Just three years prior, a group of families had started KCARC as a 501c3 dedicated to creating a brighter future for individuals and families with special needs. With leadership like Jerry Coonrod at the helm, KCARC began providing services to individuals and families with special needs before special education was formally established. This work helped to lead the way for a new method of creating an inclusive community simply because those in Knox County needed it.

Jerry was a trailblazer, a visionary, a community service leader, a friend, a mentor, but most of all he was a dedicated husband and father. Everything that KCARC is or has done, is because of the love of parents like Jerry Coonrod: all the services, all the advocacy, all the high-quality products, all the financial impact in our community. Each and every employee that has walked through the halls of KCARC and received a paycheck to support their family can thank the dogged perseverance of those that came before us to build this foundation. And to think, it all happened because of the love that parents like Jerry had for their children.

As I reflect on the legacy that Jerry leaves behind, I can only hope that I live up to high bar he set as an employee, as a community servant, and, most importantly, as a parent. Thank you for paving the way, Jerry. Those at KCARC are blessed to follow in your footsteps.

Civitan Children's Corner

Growing Through Education: Investing in Excellence at Civitan Children's Center

Exciting milestones at KCARC's Civitan Children's Center! We proudly celebrated 27 graduates from our Preschool program who are ready to embark on their kindergarten journey! With kids heading to North Knox, South Knox, VCSC, and Parkside in Lawrenceville, the future looks bright!

We utilize Teaching Strategies' Creative Curriculum to foster a love for learning. While summer brings fun adventures and guests like the Vincennes Animal Shelter, Melted Magic, and Willow the therapy dog.

We encourage interested families to check our waiting list first. Join us as we continue shaping tomorrow's leaders! To get on the waiting list, Contact Nancy Jean, Director of Civitan Children's Center at 812-886-4882.



Growing Through Education: Investing in Excellence at Civitan Children's Center

At KCARC's Civitan Children's Center, we believe in investing in the future of the children and families we serve. We are incredibly proud to recognize three dedicated educators who have recently achieved important professional milestones through their commitment to continuing education.

We are proud to recognize three outstanding teachers at KCARC's Civitan Children's Center for their commitment to continuing education and professional growth.

Congratulations to Shaylie Phegley on earning her Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education, and to Brenda Haley and Heidi Deisher on earning their Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials.

These accomplishments not only reflect their dedication to providing quality care and education but also help Civitan Children's Center maintain the accreditation standards that ensure excellence for the children and families we serve.

Please join us in congratulating Shaylie, Brenda, and Heidi on these well-earned achievements!



KCARC Welcomes INARF Leaders and Senator Daryl Schmitt



KCARC was honored to host the INARF CEO Regional Lunch 'n Learn, welcoming an outstanding group of professionals from Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, along with Senator Daryl Schmitt, for an afternoon focused on leadership, collaboration, and community impact.

Guests toured the Coonrod Production Center, where they learned about the wide variety of products manufactured at KCARC and experienced an up-close look at the production process. The visit provided an opportunity to showcase the meaningful work being accomplished each day by the employees who make KCARC's mission possible.

One highlight of the tour was KCARC's employee quote wall located in the breakroom, which drew special attention from attendees. The display reflects the pride, positivity, and personal stories that help define KCARC's culture and commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities.

"These gatherings are about more than networking," said Nash Dunn, President of KCARC. "They create opportunities to raise awareness about our mission, strengthen partnerships, and share valuable resources with one another. Our goal at KCARC is to ensure people understand who we are, the work we do, and the impact our programs have within the community."

KCARC was proud to serve as host for the regional event and appreciates everyone who attended and contributed to such a positive and inspiring afternoon. The event also comes at an exciting time for KCARC leadership. Nash Dunn, President of KCARC, has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors for Indiana Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. INARF is Indiana's leading membership organization dedicated to strengthening services and support systems for individuals with disabilities by representing providers throughout the state.

INARF members collectively serve more than 50,000 Hoosiers annually and employ nearly 15,000 professionals. For more than 50 years, the organization has promoted collaboration, professional development, advocacy, and high-quality programs that support individuals with disabilities across Indiana. KCARC extends its sincere thanks to all attendees and looks forward to continuing to build strong partnerships that benefit the individuals and communities it serves.



COONROD
PRODUCTION CENTER

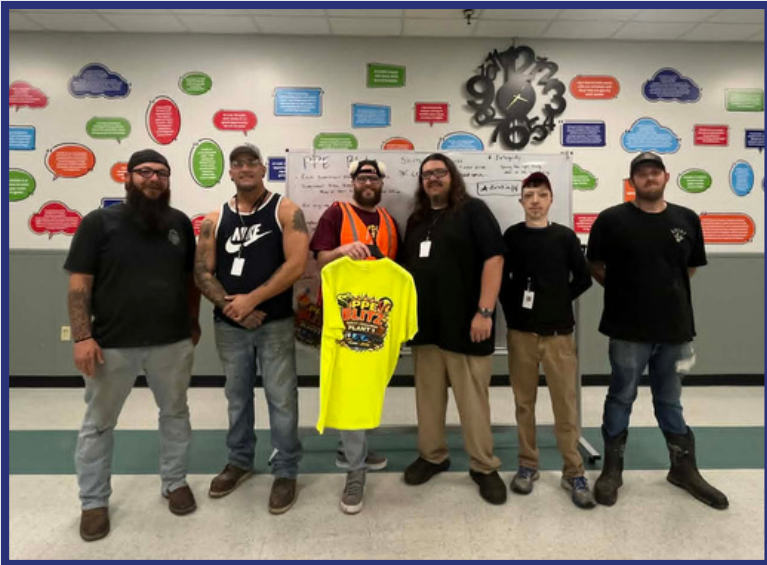
Professional Development

Left: Staci Porter attended the Buy Indiana Conference, connecting with industry leaders and exploring new opportunities for growth and innovation.

Right: Nash Dunn, Brian Shae, Keith Peacock, and Deb Burrell represented KCARC at the Xforce Conference, gaining insights and building valuable industry connections.



PPE Blitz names nine winners in Manufacturing



Coonrod Production Center, recently wrapped up our successful Personal Protective Equipment Blitz, a safety initiative designed to strengthen consistent use of required personal protective equipment through positive reinforcement and peer accountability. The program encouraged employees to look out for one another by using “PPE Check” reminders and exchanging tokens throughout the workday. The employee with the most tokens each week was named the winner.

The Blitz helped build new habits following the rollout of mandatory hearing protection and quickly improved PPE consistency across the Coonrod Production Center. Employees embraced the friendly competition, proving that safety and fun can coexist in the workplace.

Nine employees earned top honors during the Blitz: Jacob Rodgers (three-time winner), Jonathan Peters, Paul Burton, Squeak Potter, Nicole Vaughan, Phillip Merydith, Gunnar Lamkin, Chris Smith, and Justin Potter.

Adding to the excitement, the custom PPE Blitz shirts were fully designed and produced in-house using KCARC’s Direct-to-Film printing process—showcasing the creativity and manufacturing skill of KCARC employees.

The initiative left a lasting impact: PPE compliance is now consistently high, and employees continue to take pride in maintaining a safe work environment. Great job, everyone!



KC ARC Mission Champions of the Month



Gina Zeabart



Congrats to Gina Zeabart as being named one of the Mission Champion Employees of the month. She has been a dedicated member of the KCARC family for 35 years, including 33 years as a full-time employee. As a Direct Support Professional, she has made a lasting impact on the lives of the individuals she serves. Gina says that the people she supports are her greatest inspiration and the reason she continues to love her work at KCARC.

Before joining KCARC, Gina had plans to become a nurse. However, after working with the individuals we serve, she discovered a passion for direct support and chose to build her career with KCARC. Her commitment and compassion have made her an invaluable part of our organization.

Outside of work, Gina enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing cards, and caring for her dogs and grand-dogs. One of her most memorable moments at KCARC was receiving the prestigious Lois Little Award, an honor that recognized her dedication and service.

KC ARC is proud to recognize Abrianna Sprinkle as one of our Mission Champion Employees of the Month.

Abrianna serves as a dedicated teacher at Civitan Children's Center, where she is passionate about building strong relationships with her students and helping them reach their full potential. She credits both her students and mentors as her greatest inspirations and values the opportunity to learn and grow each year at KCARC.

Outside of work, Abrianna enjoys shopping, spending time outdoors, and making memories with her family.

Abrianna shared that she feels both appreciated and honored to have been chosen as Mission Champion Employee of the Month. Congratulations, Abrianna, and thank you for your dedication, hard work, and positive impact on the children and families you serve!

Abrianna Sprinkle



Rhiannon Hamm



KC ARC is proud to congratulate Rhiannon Hamm as one of our Mission Champions of the Month! Even though Rhiannon has only been with KCARC for a short time, her dedication, positive attitude, and caring heart quickly made her stand out as a true Mission Champion.

Rhiannon works as an Employment Specialist and shared that she was both surprised and excited to receive this recognition. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, exploring the outdoors, baking, gardening, and taking day trips with her husband.

One of Rhiannon's favorite memories at KCARC was during the KCARC Christmas party when she "jumped on Kris's back" during a lively game of musical chairs — a moment she says perfectly captures the fun and friendly spirit of KCARC!

Rhiannon says one of the most inspiring parts of working at KCARC is seeing how welcoming and supportive everyone is. Congratulations!



Miss Marvelous 2026:



A Celebration Created with Community Care

What an unforgettable evening! The 2026 Miss Marvelous Pageant was filled with laughter, confidence, friendship, and moments that reminded us all that true beauty shines from within.

Our contestants lit up the stage with their personalities, courage, and joy, creating memories that will last a lifetime. It was a celebration of empowerment and the amazing abilities of every participant.

A special thank you goes to the students from Penny Kirk's Study Skills program, who volunteered their time to help assemble stage decorations, organize seating, and prepare the stage lighting. Their hard work and positive attitudes helped everything run smoothly. They even returned to help serve meals before the pageant began.



We are also incredibly grateful to Jimmy John's for generously donating 100 meals for the Miss Marvelous contestants and crew. The Enchanted Florist provided a generous discount on the queens' bouquets and beautiful stage flowers, adding elegance and charm to the event.

Local titleholders volunteered their time to help crown the contestants, making the experience even more meaningful and memorable for the participants. Dancers from Triple Threat entertained the audience with wonderful performances, while singer Remington Schultz quickly became a favorite part of the evening for many of the contestants and crowd.

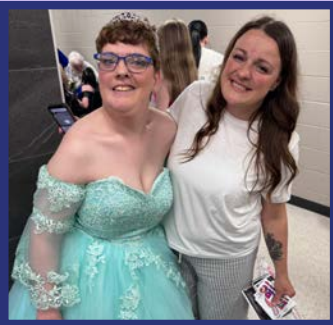
KCARC employees and volunteers worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help the event succeed. We are also thankful for the two judges and one auditor who donated their time and expertise to help select the winners.

Adding to the magic of the evening, all dresses, as well as hair and makeup services, were generously donated. The ladies were thrilled to be crowned and celebrated.

As Miss Marvelous continues to grow, organizers have created sponsorship packets to help support the expenses needed to continue providing this magical experience for these extraordinary women.

To continue supporting Miss Marvelous or to request sponsorship information, please contact Elizabeth Hardin at 812-886-4312 or email elizabeth.hardin@knoxcountyarcc.com.

Miss Marvelous 2027 is scheduled for April 9th.





Adventures in Day Programming.



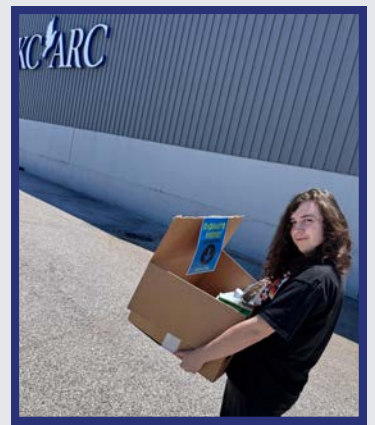
Stronger Together:

KCARC's Day Programs and the Civitan Children's Center came together to make a lasting impact.

When our Adult Day Program participants and the children from the Civitan Children's Center come together, they make a remarkable impact.

Together, they collected donations for KCARC's Pet Pal Drive, benefiting the Vincennes Animal Shelter. Thanks to the generosity of our staff, families, and community members, the shelter received much-needed supplies to help care for local animals. In turn our folks got to visit with the animals.

This project was a wonderful example of teamwork, compassion, and community service. Thank you to everyone who donated and supported this meaningful effort. Together, we truly are stronger.



L to R- Day Program participants have been having fun painting positive rocks to leave around the community. Another way to get involved.

Isabella May and Anika Fox do an interview with WVUB. They talked about how to contact KCARC for a job and how much they love their positions at KCARC.



Lights, Camera, Action!

KCARC Employees Featured in "People in Your Neighborhood"

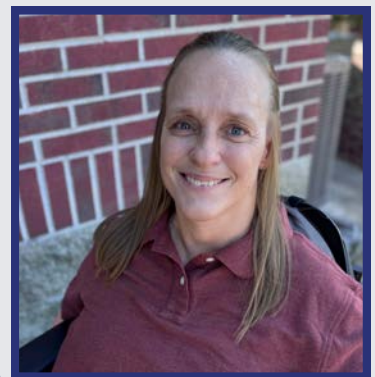
KCARC was thrilled to be asked to be involved in a great community program. Vincennes PBS's "People in your neighborhood is 25 different videos that feature local people and their careers. It is an engaging educational video series designed to introduce children to many careers and the people that that make up the world around them. Each episode featured people from a wide variety of professionals and backgrounds, helping children explore the important roles people play in their community everyday. The series highlights careers across all fields and education levels. The program celebrates diversity by including people



Above- Branden Banks poses with his family at the premiere of the "People in your Neighborhood".

of different abilities, backgrounds, experiences, and paths to success, showing children that there are many ways to build a meaningful future.

KCARC was thrilled to have three participants in the program. Karla Steimel discussed her secretarial position at the Baker Center. Ray Broadus introduced his Manufacturing Worker position and Branden Banks shared what a Production line Worker does. A premiere at the Red Skelton Museum of American Comedy was held on Saturday, June 6. The film had all of the workers featured along with coloring pages of each participant and many photo opportunities. KCARC is so proud of you all!





MOMENTS WITH MARIA

BY: MARIA PUCKETT



A NEW SEASON, A NEW LOOK!

Summer is here, and just like the flowers outside, everything at KCARC seems to be blooming! With so much growth and so many exciting things happening, I thought it was the perfect time to give my page a fresh new look.

While I still love spending time at the Baker Center, our Day Program has been buzzing with activity. From new clubs and inspiring guest speakers to community adventures and meaningful work opportunities, there is always something exciting around the corner. That energy inspired me to create a page that feels just as bright, fresh, and full of life.

If you noticed the beautiful peonies, there's a reason! They happen to be my birth flower, and I've always loved what they symbolize—growth, joy, and new beginnings. Plus, who can resist those gorgeous blooms?

I hope this little refresh brings a smile to your face. Thanks for following along with all the wonderful things happening at KCARC, and here's to a season filled with sunshine, laughter, and lots of new memories. Happy Summer!



FROM CONTESTANT TO COMMITTEE: MY MISS MARVELOUS JOURNEY

Miss Marvelous 2026 is in the books, and what a fabulous experience it was! I was honored to serve on the Miss Marvelous Planning Committee this year and truly enjoyed being part of such a special event. One of my responsibilities was selecting the music for the show, and I chose nostalgic favorites like A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes from Cinderella and When You Wish Upon a Star. These songs made the formal wear showcase feel even more magical.

One of the highlights of the evening was the crowning ceremony. I was honored to receive the award for Best On-Stage Question and proudly accepted a crown and sash. I guess I really do have a way with words!

It was also a wonderful surprise to have my brother, Russ Puckett, travel from Rochester, New York, to cheer me on. Spending the evening with my amazing friends made the experience even more special, and I can't wait to participate again next year. My goal is to one day be crowned Senior Miss Marvelous Queen!





Cue Summer Fun at 1972!



SUMMER FUN BEGINS AT KCARC'S 1972!

Excitement was in the air as families gathered at KCARC's 1972 Community Center for our Meet Your Counselor Night! From first-time campers to familiar faces, the evening was filled with smiles, laughter, and anticipation for an amazing summer. Campers enjoyed meeting their counselors, reconnecting with friends, and getting a sneak peek at all the adventures ahead.

Summer Camp at 1972 is packed with opportunities to learn, explore, and make lasting memories. Throughout the summer, campers enjoy exciting field trips, tours of KCARC's Coonrod Production Center, arts and crafts, an upcoming talent show, indoor and outdoor games, karaoke and visits from special guests throughout our community. It's a summer full of fun, friendship, and unforgettable experiences!

Every day brings new adventures for campers to learn, stay active, build friendships, and enjoy healthy snacks along the way. If you're interested in learning more about our next camp session, contact Trudy McCormick at 812-316-0641.



COOKING, CREATING AND LEARNING!

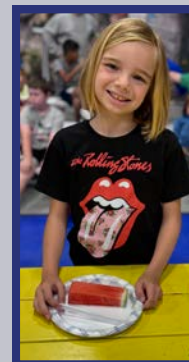


One of the highlights of camp each year is the educational presentation by educator Tiffany Muranaka from Knox County's Community Learning Kitchen. Tiffany leads engaging cooking and nutrition classes that campers eagerly anticipate.

During her visit, she taught the importance of kitchen cleanliness, healthy ingredients, nutritional value, and safe food preparation, including proper techniques for cutting watermelon and cantaloupe. She also brought a variety of ingredients so campers could create their own customized trail mix.

The campers were excited to make their own healthy snacks, and Tiffany's kind, encouraging teaching style made the experience both educational and fun. She answered questions, assisted with food preparation, and inspired campers to learn more about nutrition.

Thank you, Tiffany, for making healthy eating and food preparation such an enjoyable experience!



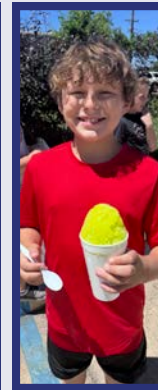
Here's what's new at 1972

SUMMER CAMP 2026



Summer may be a short season, but the memories made at KCARC's 1972 Summer Camp last a lifetime. From weekly trips to Rainbow Beach Pool to outdoor activities, art projects, mission work, and exciting adventures, our 10-week camp is filled with opportunities for every child to learn, grow, and create unforgettable memories.

This summer has already been packed with fun! Campers cooled off with treats from Oscones, created their own moon sand during a hands-on STEM activity, and welcomed PBS Education and Community Outreach Coordinator Allyson Bowers, who shared an engaging presentation about autism featuring popular shows like Carl the Collector and Sesame Street that promote inclusion, understanding, and acceptance.



Fitness at 1972



Contact Trudy McCormick: 812-316-0641

Join us at 1972 for a fun and energizing fitness experience! We offer a variety of classes, including yoga, cardio drumming, and an exciting new addition—Zumba.

All of our classes are designed to be upbeat, welcoming, and suitable for every fitness level, whether you're just getting started or looking to stay active.

We are also excited to offer fitness class cards—enjoy 5 classes for just \$20, available for purchase at the front desk. Don't miss this great opportunity to stay active, try something new, and have fun doing it!

*Monday: 5:30-6:30pm- Yoga



*Wednesday: 5:30-6:30pm- Cardio Drumming

*Thursday: 5:30-6:30pm- Zumba

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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:

Hunter Henderson

Navigator

812-886-4312

KCARC

2525 North 6th St

Vincennes, IN 47591

KC ARC

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career opportunities!**

www.knoxcountyarcc.com



DONATION
AMOUNT:

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$150

\$200

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MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO KCARC
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- 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