

Ark Annual Report 2009



July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009

Message from the President

Fiscal Year 2009 was a dynamic and challenging year in our effort to provide the highest quality services possible for people with intellectual disabilities. This year afforded us many opportunities to establish partnerships with other agencies as we work toward the vision of all people, regardless of their disability, fully experiencing their world.

Since our inception in 1963, we have held fast to beliefs and principles which recognize each individual's right regardless of intellectual disability, to be treated with dignity and respect while being provided opportunities to live, learn, work, and pursue the things in life which are important to them. These beliefs and philosophical principles will continue to be a beacon which guides our organization as we seek new and greater opportunities for the people we serve.

J. Darryl Cooper
President and CEO

Organizational Goals

The organizational goals for the 2009 fiscal year were:

- Ark will support community inclusion and quality of life for individuals served.
- Ark will promote healthy lifestyles among people served.
- Ark will leave a smaller carbon footprint by becoming greener and more efficient.
- Ark will increase the availability of opportunities for individuals served to explore artistic interests.
- Ark will promote quality services and supports which satisfy participants and their families.
- Ark will provide services that promote success in community employment for people served.
- Community employment will be a cost efficient service.
- Opportunities for community employment will be available to persons served.
- Ark will promote quality community employment services that are satisfactory to participants and employers.

Mission

The Mission of Ark Regional Services is to provide the best supports possible for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Ark promotes value and respect for each person as an individual, and will strive to:

- Assist each person to achieve the highest degree of independence, satisfaction and quality of life possible;
- Have a well-trained workforce; and
- Provide a safe, healthy environment in which people work and live.

Satisfaction Survey

Ark completed the Annual Family Satisfaction Survey and had tremendous satisfaction results. Results from the survey include:

- “Overall, I am satisfied with the supports and services provided by Ark.”
98.7% responded favorably.
- “Overall, I feel that services and supports that Ark provides are making a positive difference in the life of my family member.”
100% responded favorably.

Some of the comments that we received included:

“The staff seem to be truly concerned about the care and quality of life for the persons served.”

“I appreciate the level of service and respect each person receives. We see them in the community (sporting events, plays, grocery store.)”

“We appreciate the way my son is treated at the Ark. Ark staff are helpful when I have questions or concerns.”

“Thank you for being there for my son. He just keeps growing and is happy with his life.”

CARF Survey

During the past fiscal year Ark Regional Services received a three year accreditation from CARF the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Some of the comments from the surveyors included:

- The commitment of Ark Regional Services to the process of continued improvement is evident throughout the organization, and services reflect the individualized needs and wishes of the persons served and/or their families.
- Staff is commended on its dedication and passion toward the success of the persons served. The direct service staff members, program managers, and leadership show commitment and creativity in an organizational culture of respect and dignity for all.
- The organization's community housing residences are well maintained and compliment the community. The organization provides the persons served and the staff with a safe and attractive environment that promotes both organizational and individual pride. The decor in the individuals' private rooms truly reflects the interests and supports required of the person's served.
- Direct service personnel are consistently well trained. Their training is provided internally, thereby ensuring that the training is relevant and timely.

Grants and Funding

During the fiscal year Ark Regional Services received grants and funding from the following organizations:

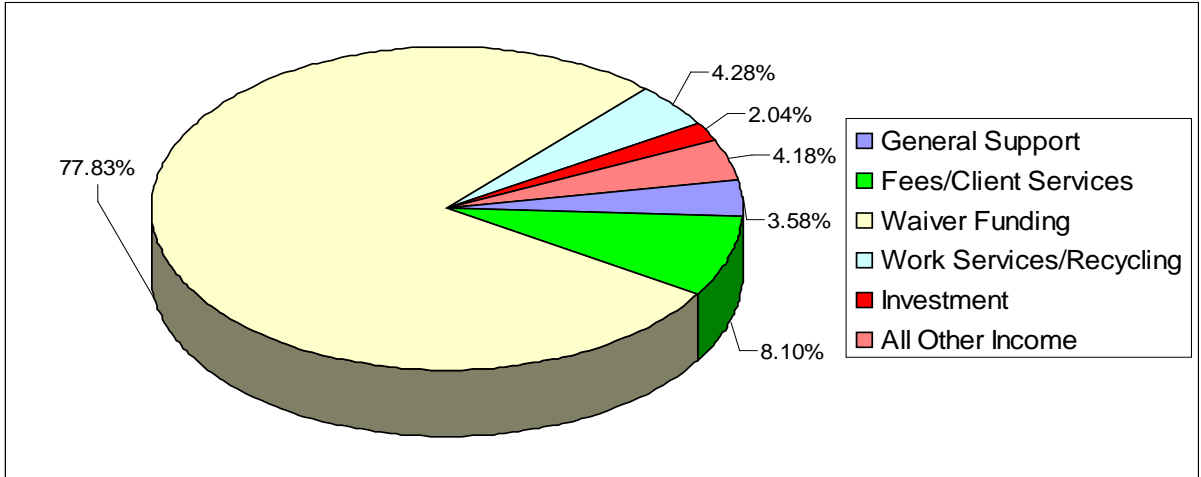
- The Daniel's Fund
- City of Laramie
- Guthrie Family Foundation
- Laramie Fraternal Order of Eagles
- Susan G. Koman Foundation
- United Way of Albany County
- Wyoming Arts Council
- Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund

Laramie Fraternal Order of Eagles

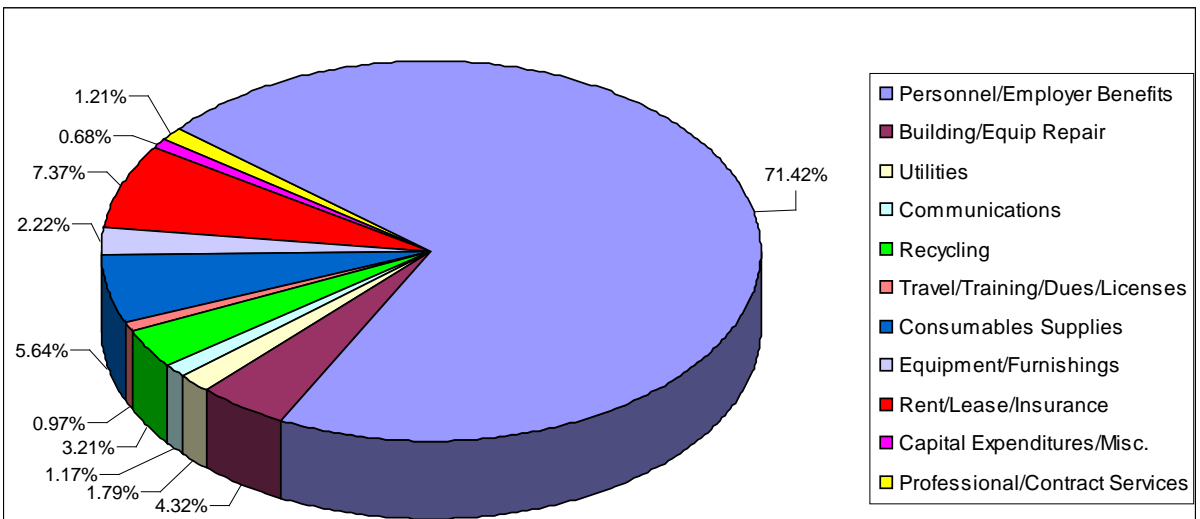
The Laramie Fraternal Order of Eagles has been extremely supportive of Ark Regional Services and the individuals for whom we provide support. With assistance from Ark employee, Kim Atkinson, a positive relationship with the Laramie Eagles has been established. They have raised a considerable amount of money on our behalf and have provided equipment for the Creative Arts Center, bikes for client use, and a backyard swing.

Financial Information

Income



Expenses



Daniel's Fund

During the past fiscal year Ark Regional Services received a grant from the Daniel's Fund for the purchase of additional technology for use in our Day Habilitation programs. One piece of technology purchased was a second V-Tree system. The V-Tree is a virtual reality system that is designed for use by people with disabilities. The system allows people to reach their full potential in many areas including range of motion, balance, and life skills. The addition of a second system allows more people the opportunity to utilize the system. We have also purchased a Nintendo Wii system that will be incorporated into the Day Habilitation schedule to compliment the V-Tree.

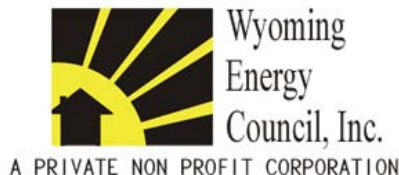
New computer systems were also purchased for the Day Habilitation programs. The computers are equipped with a variety of learning software that will aid in reading, language, communication, cooking, and community and life skills. The computer in the program for people with severe and profound intellectual disabilities is equipped with adaptive features to make the use of the computer easier for everyone. The computer features a touch screen monitor and an adaptive mouse.



Energy Education Program

As part of our organizational goal to leave a smaller carbon footprint and be more efficient with our resources, Ark staff conducted an Energy Education Program for many people in our Supported Living and Day Habilitation service areas. The four week program, held in January and February of 2009, included pre-assessment, educational session, and post-assessment phases. A final monitoring and verification phase was conducted through the months of March – May, 2009.

Representatives from the Wyoming Energy Council (WEC) were on hand to assist with the assessment phases and conduct the informative educational sessions on energy conservation. During the months of March, April and May, people implemented the changes they'd been encouraged to make through the Energy Education Program. We tracked energy usage to see if these changes decreased our overall energy consumption. We found a 7% average decrease in energy consumption over the three month period, which exceeds our organizational goal of 5%.



Susan G. Koman Foundation

Through funding received from the Susan G. Koman Foundation, Ark was able to continue its monthly breast exam clinic for the fifth year. Each month at the clinic 44 women are seen by the clinic nurse. The objective of the clinic is to ensure that the women who rely on Ark to access their health care receive the best education, treatment, and advance care possible in regard to their health. Most of these women lack the ability to perform self breast exams.



Wyoming Division of Developmental Disabilities State Site Survey

Our annual site survey was conducted by the Developmental Disabilities Division Survey and Certification Unit in October 2008. Ark Regional Services was successfully certified to provide services to adults with intellectual disabilities, children with intellectual disabilities, and people with acquired brain injuries through the Title 19 Home and Community Based Waiver.

Some of the noteworthy observations from the survey team were;

- "Individualized choices of clients are respected, as well as the promotion of independence and positive staff interactions".
- "People are regularly offered choices for community integration and activities".
- "People have a high degree of satisfaction with their homes".
- "People are satisfied with their employment opportunities".
- "The home décor promotes personal preferences".
- "Many people expressed high satisfaction of the different opportunities within the organization and in the community".

Ark was recognized for providing a variety of service settings and opportunities.

Ark Regional Services was commended for the use of the Creative Arts Center as an opportunity for community awareness and integration for persons with or without disabilities.

Our current certification runs through October of 2009.

Case Management

Ark employs six full-time Case Managers who help identify and coordinate the services that each individual needs. Case Managers write the plan of care and then monitor the plan throughout the year to ensure that individuals are healthy and safe while doing the things that they want to do.

Case Managers visit people where they live, learn, work, and play. People receiving services, their staff, guardians, and family members, are able to approach their Case Managers, discuss concerns, and have those concerns acknowledged and acted upon in a timely fashion. Because the Case Managers' offices are on site, the individuals are able to come to them (no appointment necessary) with questions and concerns and talk to them in a relaxed atmosphere.

Project Orange Thumb

This fiscal year we partnered with the Master Gardeners through the Albany County Cooperative Extension Office. Their program entails applying their horticulture knowledge in a way that benefits the community. The Master Gardeners assisted in preparing the raised beds for planting and making repairs to them as necessary. They also assisted in cleaning out the green house.

Kellie Chichester, the county extension agent, received a grant from Fiskars. The grant received was a part of Project Orange Thumb. Started in 2003, Project Orange Thumb® is a grant program that provides community garden groups with the tools and materials they need to reach their goals for neighborhood beautification and horticulture education. The \$1500 grant supplied Ark's horticulture program with planting materials and Fiskars gardening tools.

Through this project, the people participated in mini workshops where they learned how a seed grows, the importance of water, and the care of the plants. People were able to cut flowers and harvest vegetables which were entered into the Albany County Fair. The relationships that were formed between the Master Gardeners and the people in Ark's horticulture program during this project provided an opportunity to teach each other about cultural diversity and tolerance.



Staff Development and Training

The Staff Development & Training department created training teams in early 2009 to focus more effectively on Residential and Day Habilitation supervisor and direct support staff job development. The residential team focused on supervisory development in the areas of supervision and Level System skill development as well as household operations, a house maintenance and furniture replacement system, supervisory paper work and the new Healthy Living program which encourages people to make healthy choices.

The Day Habilitation team focused on supervisory and direct support staff development with the Levels system and developed cultural study materials to be premiered in the Fall of 2009 for Life Ed. South, Life Ed. Central, the Red House, and Creative Arts.

Creative Arts

The Creative Arts Program had another exciting and productive year. Some highlights include:

- Over 375 people attending the Creative Arts Center production of Reflections which was a collection of poetry, dance, and music celebrating the holiday season on November 19-22, 2008.
- Selected paintings from “Wyoming, the Wild West and Beyond” being displayed at the Wyoming State DDD offices in Cheyenne, Wyoming beginning on January 2009.
- Over 400 people saw the Creative Arts Center production of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet on April 29 to May 2, 2009.
- The work of six scenic design students being displayed in the gallery at the Creative Arts Center. Working with Casey Kearns, professional scenic designer and Associate Professor at the University of Wyoming, the students were able to document and display their experiences during the scenic design process for the Creative Arts Center productions of Reflections and Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet.
- Bob Seabeck returning as an Artist in Residence.

J. Darryl Cooper

2009 marks Darryl’s 30th year as President and CEO of Ark Regional Services. Darryl has been a bellwether for the DD service system in the State of Wyoming and for the organization. His leadership and vision have been instrumental in making the organization what it is today. Congratulations Darryl and thank you for making a difference for all of these years!

Summit Home Health

An exciting partnership between Ark and Summit Home Health was established this fiscal year. This partnership provides people the highest quality of health care.

Summit Home Health nurses are providing comprehensive nursing assessments on each person every eight weeks. This preventative measure is intended to provide people with information to remain healthy and to identify illness and injury as soon as possible.

Summit Home Health is also available to residential staff Monday through Friday from 5pm to 8am, and 24 hours a day on the weekends to serve as a medical resource for questions or care beyond the staff's basic level of knowledge. This access assures quality medical care to the people we support all the time, without having to rely on the emergency room.

Recycling

In August of 2008 Bill Vance, Recycling Services Coordinator, was named President of the Wyoming Solid Waste and Recycling Association. Bill has been a member of the Association's board for several years and is responsible for planning their annual conference to be held in Laramie in August of 2009.

The fiscal year saw some challenges and some success for the Recycling Center. The economy had an effect on the price of commodities, which dropped between 60% and 70%. Despite the slow market we were still able to expand. Ark Recycling Services started receiving materials from Wyoming's penitentiaries in Lusk and Rawlins. The first load of materials received from the Wyoming Women's Center in Lusk consisted of 25,000 pounds of recyclables that would have ended up in a landfill. The Wyoming State Penitentiary is currently spending \$12,000 a month on garbage collection; with the new recycling program in place it is projected that the cost can be cut in half. Additionally, Ark Recycling Services will now be receiving materials from Alliance, Nebraska.

Albany County School District #1

During the past fiscal year Ark continued to work closely with the Albany County School District #1 and the new Transition Academy to help students that are transitioning from high school. A representative from Ark attended IEP meetings in order to learn about the person and their family so that we might assist them in transitioning out of the high school setting. We also contracted with the School District to provide training in job skills, activities of daily living skills, and expression through Creative Arts classes.

Duplex Remodel

Three of the four 6th Street duplexes have been remodeled. They were transformed from two bedroom apartments with very small bathrooms with walk-in showers to single bedroom units with full baths. These units were brought up to date, modernized and now have modern cabinets and appliances. Necessary structural issues were addressed and all the flooring was replaced. The fourth unit should be completed next fiscal year.

Community Employment

Ark continues to contract with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide Job Development and Job Coaching services to people seeking competitive employment in the community. Together we help people with disabilities establish and reach vocational goals.

During the past fiscal year Ark worked with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services to provide employment related services to people and their employers. We helped employers access incentives and job training resources offered through the Wyoming Workforce Center. This allowed people in our Community Employment program to experience new job opportunities. Some of the funding for these services was a direct result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The Department of Workforce Services uses the Workforce Investment Act funding to help adults, dislocated workers, and youth find employment that leads to self sufficiency through various services available at it's local support centers.

Healthy Living

In response to feedback from our Satisfaction Survey, Ark implemented a healthy living program during the past fiscal year. Each person who receives Residential Services has chosen two things that they could do to be more healthy. People were encouraged to avoid the drastic kinds of changes that are difficult to maintain, but to choose small and simple things that are easy to incorporate into their lives. Taking the stairs instead of the elevator, drinking one or two more glasses of water during the day, eating at least one fresh fruit or vegetable each day, and walking or riding a bike instead of taking a car are examples of choices that were made that will have a significant effect on the people's overall health. This program addresses our overall organizational goal of healthy living.

Ark Memorial Foundation

A variety of gift and endowment plans are available through the Foundation to offer you individualized options for giving. Support through the Foundation will help to ensure the future of Ark Regional Services. For more information about gift plans and the Memorial Foundation please contact Ark. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Contact Us

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