

# LEADERSHIP COLLECTIVE

*Visibility ~ Advocacy ~ Leadership ~ Knowledge*

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### The Arc of Snohomish County

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## ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

Laura Akers

**Laura Akers** is a self-advocate from Everett who manages multiple jobs while advocating for herself and others.

"I keep busy. I have three jobs. I've been working at Lumen Field since 2015, Angel of the Winds arena since 2018, and just started at Climate Pledge Arena in October 2021. I work at guest services, as a ticket-taker, or as an usher, depending on the day. I'm able to make my own schedule, so I'm able to choose when and where I work. It takes a lot of planning, though. I have to ride the light rail and multiple buses to get to work, so I have to make sure I have plenty of time to get there."

Laura was able to find these employment opportunities on her own and used her job coach to help her apply to each one.

"I found the Lumen Field job online and my job coach helped me with the application. I heard about the Angel of the Winds job through word of mouth, and Climate Pledge was also online. My job coach helped me with all the applications, but I arrange everything myself now."

Laura's work experience has helped her with her own self-advocacy, helping her advocate for herself, and in doing so, helping her advocate for others.

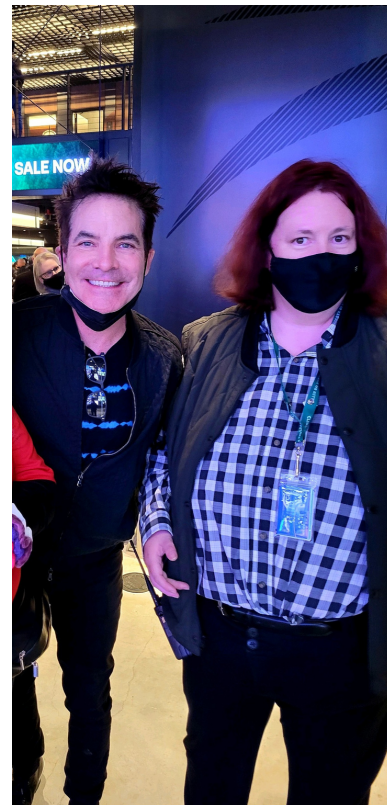
"I advocate for myself and others with accessibility. I need a chair for certain things and making sure I have that is advocacy. Now, I advocate for accessibility for others. I advocate to make sure medical equipment is accessible and make sure everyone can participate."

Beyond her personal advocacy, Laura is also actively involved in local groups for self-advocates, including People First of Snohomish County and The Arc's Women's Group.

"I have a lot of ideas that I'm always suggesting. I have lots of staycation ideas."

In March of 2022, Laura began serving on the Citizens Accessibility Advisory Committee for Sound Transit.

"It was really important to me to get on that board. They really wanted somebody with disabilities to speak about accessibility for the light rail expansion. They don't think about location a lot, and I can tell them a location won't work because of traffic. Like, they wanted a stop on Casino Road [in Everett], and I told them that is a very dangerous place to cross and, hopefully, they'll be moving it."



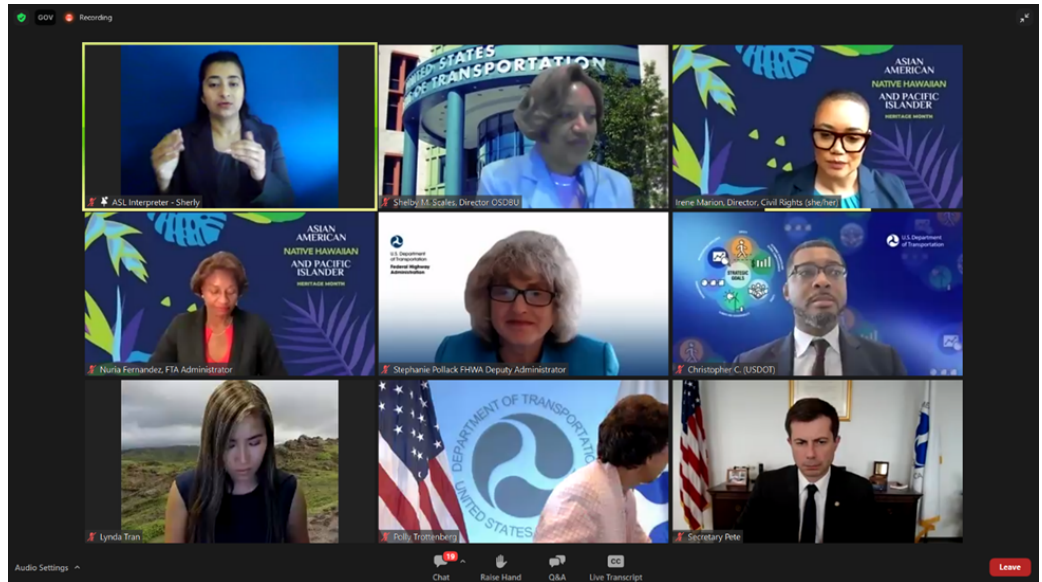
Laura Akers with Pat Monahan, lead singer of Train

# QUARTERLY FOCUS

## TRANSPORTATION

By: Leigh Spruce – Arc Self-Advocacy Coordinator

On May 25th, the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) hosted an online listening session to discuss transportation issues around the country and what plans are being put forward to address them. The ultimate goal of the Department of Transportation is to find where the most services are needed and address those issues in alignment with President Biden's goal to promote and ensure equity.



"It's always impossible, until it's done"

-Nelson Mandela-

One of the goals discussed was to grant more funding to smaller, underserved communities to support small businesses, bringing them to various communities, as well as creating ways for people to get to them. This will give everyone who is underserved in their communities a chance to participate equally. DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg stated: "Everyone is deserving [of equity] in their lives," and, that equal access, particularly to transit, helps change lives.

Secretary Buttigieg continued to discuss how the original intent of public transportation was to be equal and how it needs to work to provide equal access to everyone for connection to work, medical care, and life, in general.

Deputy Secretary of Transportation Polly Trottenberg spoke specifically about supporting ADA and that \$22 billion would allow for more accessibility with emphasis on building safer streets. This would include easier sidewalk access, accessible transit stations, and better access to Amtrak and other rail solutions.

Due to a higher cost of living in a lot of areas, more people are moving from metropolitan regions to more rural locations. Discussions have focused on increasing paratransit access to rural areas to help with the influx of more people to these communities. Secretary Buttigieg has discussed increasing funding by up to 44% for rural paratransit expansion. This would greatly help rural areas by creating more inclusion and providing affordable transportation options to more people in more areas.

### Get Involved!

You can make a difference locally with transportation! Sign up for the Snohomish County Infrastructure Coordinating Committee to learn about how and where improvements to our transportation system are being made and to offer input and advice on what the community needs to fully access all the services available.

"One person can  
make a difference,  
and everyone  
should try."

-John F. Kennedy-

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

## LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, JULY 23 | 10 AM – 2 PM | ZOOM

We are all leaders. Join The Arc of Snohomish County and your fellow leaders in our first ever Leadership and Advocacy Workshop. This interactive event will help you identify your strengths as a leader, outline your disability advocacy goals, build leadership skills with real world applications, and connect you with opportunities to make a difference in your community. The Leadership and Advocacy Workshop will also delve into disability rights history, self-advocacy, and legislative advocacy for the intellectual and developmental disability community. All are welcome to attend and receive an Arc Trained Leader certificate at the end of the workshop.

Register for the Leadership and Advocacy Workshop [here](#).

## SELF-ADVOCACY & LEADERSHIP ZOOM WORKSHOPS

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4 | 1 – 3 PM | "[SELF-ADVOCACY 101](#)"

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11 | 6 – 8 PM | "[SELF-DETERMINATION 101](#)"

A summer leadership and learning opportunity for self-advocates: The Arc of Snohomish County will host a leadership focused training to teach young adults, ages 18 and older, to be effective self-advocates. This is an opportunity to empower individuals to develop advocacy and leadership skills and set lifetime goals for employment, recreation, independent living and community involvement. Questions? Contact Jessie Moore at [Jessie@arcsno.org](mailto:Jessie@arcsno.org).

## PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Snohomish County primary elections will be held August 2nd. The primary election cycle is crucial to determine who will be on the final election ballot in November. In Washington state, primaries serve a more unique purpose, as well, since the passing of Initiative-872 in 2004. This Initiative made the results of the primaries critical as the top two candidates, regardless of party affiliation, will be the only two to proceed to the general election ballot. In certain districts, this could lead to two candidates from the same party vying for a single legislative seat.

### Key Primary Election Dates

- July 13 – Local Voter Pamphlets mailed
- July 14 – Local Ballots mailed
- July 25 – Last day for voters to register ONLINE to vote. You can register by clicking on this link: [HERE](#)
- August 2 – Election Day! Also, the last day to register IN-PERSON to vote. Register at the Snohomish County Elections Office:

3000 Rockefeller Ave  
Admin West Building  
Everett, WA 98201

Get out the vote and MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

[Find a ballot drop box near you](#)

The Arc of Snohomish County: Leadership Collective Newsletter



## NEWS AROUND THE ARC

### NEW HIRES!

#### Jenny Sommer

Jenny is a new Parent to Parent / Sibshop Coordinator for The Arc of Snohomish County! She enjoys volunteering for various organizations and was Assistant Coordinator for the 2022 Seattle Rare Disease Fair. In her spare time, she enjoys being outdoors and immersing herself in nature, playing board games, watching movies and spending quality time with her loving husband and three wildly unique kids. Jenny has been involved with The Arc for several years, participating in trainings, workshops and support groups. She is so proud to be a part of such a meaningful organization!



#### Tara Hand

My name is Tara Hand, and I have just started as a Parent to Parent Coordinator with The Arc of Snohomish County. I currently live in Lynnwood but was raised in Eastern Washington. I have 4 kids ranging in ages, from 5 to 13 years old, and ranging in diagnoses from Autism Spectrum Disorder to ADHD. I have previously worked in many areas from a non-profit animal shelter, opening MoPop, building stages for concerts and setting up large corporate events. After my oldest son was diagnosed with ASD, I really wanted to find a way to help other families learn about resources available and just have support, so I am very excited to be working and supporting the community in Snohomish and look forward to connecting with families.



#### Jenna Myers

My name is Jenna Meyers, and I am the new Parent-to-Parent Coordinator at The Arc of Snohomish County. I am originally from Northern California (Go Giants!) and just celebrated 8 years as a "Washingtonian." I live in the beautiful town of Snohomish with my husband and our two children, Kaia and Casey. Kaia was diagnosed with autism at the age of 5. I am passionate about advocacy, being an active and collaborative community member, supporting families and celebrating each person's unique and amazing qualities and achievements. My professional background is diverse; spending time in public relations, hospitality, owner/operator of several pour-over coffee bars in San Diego, and then, retail banking management. Of all these things, however, I am most excited about this next chapter with The Arc and being a pillar of support to those in our community!



"Take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly, and try another. But by all means, try something."

—Franklin Roosevelt—

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"What lies behind us  
and what lies before  
us are tiny matters  
compared to what  
lies within us."

-Ralph Waldo  
Emerson-

*Achieve with us.®*

## COMING UP!

### State Leadership Opportunity: PARENT INSTITUTE FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) is accepting applications for the Parent Institute for Engagement (PIE), a 12-month training program for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities, who have received Early Intervention services through the Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers program (ESIT). There is also one spot in this year's PIE cohort that is designated for someone working in the Early Intervention field. DCYF seeks to identify a racially and geographically diverse group of participants.

DCYF is looking for parents and caregivers who:

- Participated in Early Intervention services within the last five years;
- Are not currently working in the Early Intervention field;
- Want to build their leadership and presentation skills;
- Are curious about being on a committee and have little to no experience;
- Can attend and/or participate in up to five (5) virtual/online meetings (meeting times will vary) and four (4) in-person, two-day meetings (travel and child care costs reimbursed).

PIE participants will learn about:

- Robert's Rules of Order (a framework commonly used in public meetings);
- The State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC), and its role in advising and assisting ESIT;
- Reviewing and providing feedback on written materials between meetings;
- The Early Intervention system and Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- Leadership and advocacy;
- Public speaking and presentations.

If you are interested in applying for this leadership opportunity, you can fill out the application here. The deadline to submit applications is August 1. Selected individuals will be notified of their application status by the week of August 8th.

### INCLUSIVE RECREATION ROUNDTABLE

MONDAY, JULY 11 | 7 - 8:30 PM | ZOOM

Join The Arc of Snohomish County for a summer Inclusive Recreation Roundtable event! Join the discussion around what inclusion is, what it looks like, and how to achieve it in recreational settings. Hear from families and local community programs about their success with inclusion and opportunities available in your area! Finally, the evening will end with a question-and-answer session with public participation. Register here.



Get  
Connected!

Be  
informed!

Take  
Action!

## TOOLS & RESOURCES

### Legislative Alerts & Updates

The Arc of Washington State | [arcwa.org/action-center](http://arcwa.org/action-center)

Sign up for legislative action alerts related to developmental disability. Receive the information you need to voice your opinions on bills during the legislative session. Alerts provide you with messages for your legislators that you can use as-is or edit using your own words. Enter your name and address and click! Your message will automatically be sent to all of your legislators. Email or call the toll-free Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000. Action takes less than five minutes!

### Legislative District and Elected Officials

Washington Legislature | [leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder](http://leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder)

Find your legislative district and elected officials using the link above.

### Legislative Advocates on Developmental Disabilities

The Arc of Washington State | [tinyurl.com/3d293ce3](http://tinyurl.com/3d293ce3)

Some of the topics included:

- Tips for meeting with elected officials.
- How to create a short, clear advocacy message.
- The bill process – How a bill becomes a law.
- The state budget process.



### Get Involved!

Your local government is looking for volunteers, committee members, and board members for projects throughout your community. For more information about what positions are available in your community, contact [Jake@arcsno.org](mailto:Jake@arcsno.org) for a complete list. Sign up today to get involved and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

### Virtual Leadership Training

The Arc of Snohomish County invites you to become a trained Arc Leader in our self-paced [Virtual Leadership Training](#)!

Our 8-course training is designed to provide you with the knowledge and skills you need to engage in community leadership. Whether you are interested in joining a local board or committee, speaking with your legislators, or learning more about disability advocacy, our training is a great place to start!

Course topics include: Community and government resources, family resiliency, the history of developmental disabilities and the Disability Rights Movement, disability language and culture, intersectionality, legislative advocacy for the developmental disability community, self-advocacy, and special education.

Register [here](#) or contact [Rachel@arcsno.org](mailto:Rachel@arcsno.org) for more information!





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Jamie Coonts  
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## GET INVOLVED!

### I-CAN Women's Self-Advocacy Group

2nd Tuesday of each month | 10:30 AM – 12 PM

I-CAN is a group for self-advocates open to all women, ages 18 and up. The group meets in a casual environment that combines leadership and learning with fun experiences. The group shares resources and skills and holds the belief that everyone has something to contribute. Questions? Contact Kylie Walsh at [Kylie@arcsno.org](mailto:Kylie@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x121, or Leigh Spruce at [Leigh@arcsno.org](mailto:Leigh@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x103.

### Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

2nd Tuesday of each month | 1 – 4 PM

A group for self-advocates focused on legislative change and open to all. SAIL is a statewide coalition of people with developmental disabilities that strives to shape public policies that affect people with developmental disabilities. Questions? Contact Leigh Spruce at [Leigh@arcsno.org](mailto:Leigh@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x103.

### People First of Snohomish County

4th Tuesday of each month | 11 AM – 12:30 PM

A self-advocacy organization by and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. People First is focused on educating self-advocates and others, advocating for disability rights, and having fun! We believe we are PEOPLE FIRST and disabilities are secondary. Questions? Contact Kylie Walsh at [Kylie@arcsno.org](mailto:Kylie@arcsno.org) or 425-258-2459 x121.

## Did you know?

This year is an election year, and candidates want to hear from YOU! The Arc of Snohomish County is proud to announce the 2022 edition of our Legislative Forum series. These forums will be conducted virtually with the candidates for every legislative position in each individual district invited to participate. The Arc of Snohomish County is searching for hosts for each district, along with individuals who wish to share their stories with their legislators. If you are interested in participating in this process, please fill out [this questionnaire](#). We look forward to seeing you this Fall!

Redistricting has changed many Legislative districts. If you need help finding your new district, please contact [Jake@arcsno.org](mailto:Jake@arcsno.org)

## FEDERAL BILLS OF INTEREST

On June 14th, the U.S. Senate marked up the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Landmark Advancements (FDASLA) Act [S.4348]. During the markup, Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) offered an amendment to include a ban on the electro-shock devices used on adults and children with disabilities at the Judge Rotenberg Educational Center (JRC) in Massachusetts. The Amendment to ban the device was adopted with bipartisan support and is now part of the bill. Similar language was included in the House version of this legislation, the Food and Drug Amendments of 2022 [H.R. 7667], which passed the House on June 8th with a bipartisan 392-28 vote. The Arc of the United States strongly supports inclusion of the ban of electro-shock devices in the final version of the bill.