



NEWS YOU CAN USE

What's new in events, resources, public policy, and happenings at The Arc of Aurora and in our local community.



As the winter season unfolds, we're excited to highlight two annual opportunities — Member scholarships and our online auction! You'll also find THINK+change trainings, policy updates, and community resources to support you.

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Spotlight On

Our 9th Annual Online Auction



Mark your calendar for May 1–7, 2026!

This year's auction is designed to give back in more than one way. Alongside donated items from community partners, we're also taking a more intentional, community-centered approach by **purchasing select items and experiences from local small businesses at fair market value.**

Together, these efforts support our **Basic Needs Fund** – providing dignity, stability, and essential support where it's needed most, while also strengthening local businesses.

Have a favorite local small business we should know about? We'd love your suggestions as we curate this year's auction. Donors are also welcome to purchase an item or experience they'd like to contribute. **Items will be finalized by April 25.**

Questions or ideas? Reach out to Lisa at ltownsend@thearcofaurora.org

For Our Members

Scholarship Applications Now Open

Apply by Friday, March 6! The Arc of Aurora offers two scholarships for Members to support camps, education, dance, music, and other enrichment opportunities. Review

eligibility and apply using the links below.

- For **individuals with** an IDD: [Glen Talladay Scholarship](#)
- For **siblings** of someone with an IDD: [Sibling Scholarship](#)



Need help applying? Contact your Advocate (if applicable) or email Lisa at ltownsend@thearcofaurora.org

In the Community

As part of our ongoing work in the community, **The Arc of Aurora's THINK+change team continues to partner with local organizations** in meaningful ways!



Recently, two self-advocate guest trainers joined the THINK+change team to lead a training with the City of Aurora's Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department with the Morrison Nature Center crew. Together, we explored intellectual and developmental disabilities, communication strategies, and ways to make nature spaces more welcoming for everyone.

During a tour of the center, our self-advocates shared sensory-friendly and accessibility suggestions to help make every visit inclusive. The City of Aurora also has [Action Trackchairs](#) that allow more visitors to hit the trails with confidence. Adventure has no limits!



THINK+change was also invited to train Colorado State Courts Competency Program Coordinators, most of whom are just stepping into these roles as part of [HB24-1355](#). It was a great opportunity to share info about intellectual and developmental disabilities, communication strategies, the ADA, and more.

The best part? Our amazing self-advocate guest trainers co-trained with us! Hearing directly from people with lived experience always takes the impact of our trainings to the next level, and we were so grateful to learn and teach alongside them.



Resource Roundup

Quick links to good things!

The [City of Aurora's Spring Activity Guide](#) is now available, and registration is open! Highlights include indoor soccer leagues and outdoor nature adventures.

[Colorado Respite Coalition](#) exists to encourage caregivers to take a break. Explore low-cost and free respite resources for those caring for older adults, adults with disabilities, and kids with disabilities through their [Caregiver Resource Library](#).

[Aurora Rides](#) offers free, flexible transit for the 60+ community. Like a shared taxi, but better! Wheelchair accessible vehicles are also available.

Through the Donate to a Colorado Nonprofit program, [ReFUND CO](#) enables Colorado taxpayers to [donate a portion of their tax refund](#) to eligible nonprofits. **Consider donating to The Arc of Aurora!** Simply look for the "Donate to a Colorado Nonprofit" line in your tax return/software, enter **The Arc of Aurora #20023003597**, and add the amount you would like to donate. *The IRS does not release information on donors, so please let The Arc of Aurora know that you donated so we can thank you!*

Policy Profile

We're Standing With You!

The Arc of Aurora is part of a statewide network of Arc chapters working together to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. As conversations continue about possible changes and reductions to services and supports, we want you to know that we are standing with you!



We are actively engaged behind the scenes – organizing, advocating, and working with partners to reduce harm, influence implementation, and ensure that the voices of people most impacted are not lost.

While not every outcome is within our control, **our commitment is unwavering: we will continue to stand alongside you, lift your experiences, and work tirelessly to protect access, dignity, and inclusion – now and in the months ahead.**

Click below to see The Colorado Arc Network Statement.

Hanni Raley, Executive Director

[Read the Colorado Arc Network Statement HERE](#)

THINK+change: Training and Education

Created by The Arc of Aurora in 2017, THINK+change offers original content that **helps people learn, change how they think, and take action** to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities in our community.

 **Watch: TALKS** — Short videos that share real stories and lived experiences.

 **Listen and Learn: TRAININGS** — Podcasts (audio), video podcasts, short lessons, and simple courses.

 **Use Anytime: TOOLS** — Quick tips, worksheets, guides, and posters.

Accessibility & Language: Most videos offer English captions and Spanish subtitles, and many tools are also available in Spanish. More will be added over time.

Here are the THINK+change resources we're highlighting this season!



Government decisions affect people with disabilities every day, yet disability voices are often missing. [Government Access for People with Disabilities](#) offers resources to help you take the first steps toward getting involved in government decisions, making your voice heard, and increasing representation of the disability community in leadership and government.

We're especially proud of [Policy & Power: A Disability Community Story](#), an inspiring documentary that features local changemakers with disabilities, showing what can happen when a disability community comes together to use their voice for change.

 [Watch the 30-minute documentary](#) |  [Listen to the full-length episode](#)

Students in Special Education deserve to be considered in school safety planning. Listen to our [School Safety for Special Education](#) podcast conversation with Brad Stiles, M.A., Emergency Response Outreach Consultant at the Colorado Office of School Safety (OSS) and learn how schools are adapting their planning to ensure that *all* students will be accounted for in an emergency.

 [Listen to the podcast](#) |  [Watch the video](#)

THINK+change Casting Call!

Have you or someone you know ended guardianship and now use supported decision making? We are looking for **self-advocates** who have **moved from guardianship to supported decision making** and want to share their experiences. You can help families, professionals, and communities better understand what is possible. Participants will receive a **\$50 honorarium** to thank them for their time and expertise. The deadline to express interest is **Monday, February 16**.

Interested? Please contact sdawson@thearcofaurora.org.

[Sign up for the THINK+change newsletter](#) to stay connected and learn about new and updated resources.



Colorado Arc Chapters, including [The Arc of Aurora](#), are supported by [arc Thrift Stores](#). Every donation and sale goes to help individuals in your community. [Donate and find a location near you!](#)



Have questions about anything in this newsletter? Contact Lisa Townsend:
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