

ArcHealth

Promoting Wellness. Driving Change. Empowering Voices.

Sending you peace and warm wishes this holiday season. Subscribe to ArcHealth to stay connected - see you in 2026!

Questions or feedback? Let us know!
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Accessible Activities

This December, focus on accessible winter wellness and safety with simple activities that support comfort, independence, and peace of mind. Try a short scenic drive to enjoy the winter landscape, set up a cozy sensory-friendly corner at home, or build a small winter safety kit with things like extra medication, backup chargers, and warm layers.

A few easy steps, like checking ramp surfaces and walkways for ice, adding traction to mobility aids, or planning accessible transportation routes, can make winter feel a lot more manageable. However you move through the season, taking care of yourself is the most important activity of all.



Get Involved

The Arc of PA Events:

Activities hosted by The Arc of PA, including ACRE trainings, IncludeMe series, and more!

MyODP Events:

Opportunities hosted by ODP for support groups, virtual physical education classes, and more!

Temple University Institute on Disabilities Events:

Learning opportunities, training series, and community engagement events hosted by Temple IOD.

Events Calendar from PA Autism:

A comprehensive calendar of events from different organizations across Pennsylvania.

Looking to get involved at your local Arc chapter? See information here.



WELLNESS Corner

As the year comes to a close, be gentle with yourself and allow space to slow down. December can feel busy, and some days the holiday cheer just doesn't shine as brightly - and that's okay. Take a minute breather, lower the lights or noise around you, or simply rest your hands in your lap and take a deep, steady breath.

Food for Thought

It's easy to forget about hydration in the colder months, but your body still needs plenty of fluids to stay healthy. Warm drinks like herbal tea, hot cocoa, or even warm water with lemon can be a way to stay hydrated in chilly weather.

If strong flavors or high temperatures aren't your "cup of tea", try mild flavors or let your drink cool before sipping. For more information on hydration in cold weather, check out [this article from Penn State Extension](#).



Elevating Voices



December invites us to look back on the moments that shaped us - the challenges, the resilience, and the voices that carried us through. This month, we're revisiting stories shared by Pennsylvanians with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their experiences continue to guide our advocacy and remind us that every voice matters.

The Arc of PA's listening tours, interviews, and surveys captured hundreds of these experiences - stories that reveal not only the barriers people faced, but also their strength, solutions, and the need for disability-inclusive public health.

Individuals with lived experience described how inaccessible information, limited testing and vaccination access, and provider inexperience intensified the impact of the pandemic. As one self-advocate put it:

"We're not second-class citizens... we just operate a little bit differently."

Others spoke about the danger of making decisions without disability representation. Put simply by another self-advocate:

"If you do not have lived experience - you leave stuff out, and in leaving stuff out, you put people with disabilities' lives in danger."

Families and caregivers echoed this pain. One parent shared:

"I did end up quitting my job. We had gone through about seven nurses."

While these experiences reveal deep gaps in the system, they also highlight paths forward, through empowering voices.

"The voices of people with lived experiences must be heard. We all have the right to share our stories."

To read the full reports and watch videos of self-advocates, visit [our website](#).

Want to share your story? Email us at sebelhar@thearcpa.org. You might be featured in a future issue of ArcHealth!

Monthly

Give the Gift of Sight
Hand-Washing Awareness
HIV/AIDS Awareness
Integrative Health
International Sharps Injury Prevention
Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness
Seasonal Affective Disorder Awareness



Weekly

2nd-8th - National Influenza Vaccination Week

Daily

3rd - International Day of Persons with Disabilities
10th - International Human Rights Day

December Awareness Round-Up

With fewer observances this month, December offers a welcome chance to pause and breathe. Use this slower season to explore the topics highlighted at your own pace, take care of your health, and support those around you as we move into a new year.

Happy Holidays from The Arc of Pennsylvania



Save the FINAL NEW Date!

The Arc of PA invites you to save the date for the **2026 Disability Health Action Summit from May 19-20**. For more information, visit our website. We are currently welcoming organizations interested in sponsorship opportunities!

Upcoming Teeth Talks

Join Special Outreach Services (SOS) and Special Smiles virtually for this month's **Teeth Talks for Caregivers**. For more information and registration, visit the hyperlinks on each date: 12/3 and 12/10.