

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Autism Event Promoting Acceptance and Inclusion

Archway Programs hosts its annual community-wide event

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ATCO, NEW JERSEY (April 19, 2018) – Archway Programs hosted its 9th Annual Hands Around the Lake event yesterday, which promotes autism awareness. This is a community-wide event where individuals served, staff members and families all attended to show their support. The goal of the event is to educate others about autism, so that as a community, we can not only be more aware, but accept and include all of those affected by autism and other disabilities. Those who attended the event lined up around Archway Programs' main campus lake and held hands while Executive Director of Education, Susan Lafferty, welcomed everyone and students from both of the Archway schools read facts about autism before the walk began.

Music teachers from both schools and students performed live music, which featured a drum circle. Activities included climbing into a sensory-friendly firetruck, thanks to the Evesham Township Fire Department, and a petting zoo, thanks to Amy Derman Miduski, Pony Tyme owner, for making this extra special for those we serve. Students also made Light It Up Blue candles which were for sale at the event, a beautiful floral arrangement which was raffled off and baked goods organized by both Archway schools. Money raised directly supports those with autism at Archway throughout its numerous programs. Many individuals served at Archway Programs are on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), so this is something that hits close to home for many of our families.

“We’re quite proud of our students and their community spirit in wanting to participate in activities that support a cause such as autism,” Susan Lafferty, Executive Director of Education explained. “Through efforts such as this they will grow and learn and continue to see they can make valuable contributions to their communities in many ways.”

Kids and adults throughout our programs were thrilled to get a chance to meet real-life every day super heroes – policemen and firefighters from the Waterford Township Police Department, the Evesham Township Police Department and the Evesham Township Fire Department.



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Students from Archway's Lower School with officers from the Waterford Township Police Department.

Archway staff was proud to welcome back school alumni to the event as well. "I love coming back to this event to show my support, talk to my old teachers and visit my Archway family," stated John King, former Archway School student who graduated in 2015.



George Richards, Chief Financial Officer and Interim Chief Executive Officer with John King, Archway Lower School alumni.



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The Evesham Township Fire Department attended the event and students were able to climb into a sensory-friendly firetruck.



Another sensory-friendly activity was the petting zoo, thanks to Pony Tyme owner, Amy Derman Miduski.



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Mr. Gabe, Jacob and the rest of the drum circle students provided the live entertainment.



Stacey Edwards, Early Intervention Program Director, Archway Programs; George Richards, Chief Financial Officer and Interim Chief Executive Officer, Archway Programs; Tine Hansen-Turton, Chief Executive Officer, Woods Services; Ashlee Battle, Partial Care Programs Director, Archway Programs; and Woods Services Education Department staff and students.

“Every year for the past nine years Archway has taken the opportunity to gather as a community in order to raise awareness of autism, as well as to promote acceptance and inclusion for all special needs people. Thank you to



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everyone for joining us on this beautiful day and participating in the fun activities, food and fellowship,” said Michael Graff, Lower School Principal at Archway Programs.

For more information on Archway Programs, visit www.archwayprograms.org.

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About Archway Programs

Since 1965, Archway Programs has been meeting the special needs of thousands of families throughout the state of New Jersey. It is a private, non-profit human services organization. Archway Programs maintains numerous model programs where individuals with physical, emotional and neurological disabilities are partnered with passionate, committed and talented professionals in a safe environment. Archway Programs strives to improve the life of every individual we serve. Approximately 440 individuals are employed through Archway Programs throughout all of its programs, which provide services up to 1,800 students and adults with special needs. Please visit www.archwayprograms.org for more information.



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