

# R E P O R T

Your United Way of Broome County investment at work

October 2003

## ARC helps the disabled have fun and make friends

Michael Friends often spent weekends alone at home with his parents, with few social activities to fill his time. Michael, who is 35 years old and mentally disabled, didn't have many options in which to get out and meet new friends. Then, over a year ago, he discovered the **Recreation/Respite Program** organized by the **Broome-Tioga Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC)**.

The program provides opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities living at home with family members to participate in recreational, educational, and social activities. The program helps these individuals develop independence, enhance their self-esteem and self-image, improve their interpersonal skills, and develop creative abilities and skills. The program also gives the families of those with mental retardation and developmental disabilities free time to do something for themselves and respite from the responsibilities of caring for someone with special needs.



**Michael Friends (third from left on top row) with a group of his friends from the Recreation/Respite Program at the Broome-Tioga Association for Retarded Citizens. The program gives those with developmental disabilities the opportunity to go on weekend social outings while giving their caregivers some time for themselves.**

and other developmental disabilities. Whether it's finding them employment, housing, or providing them with valuable social activities, ARC helps these individuals lead better, more productive lives. ARC provides a comprehensive continuum of services, offering a full range of Summer, Day, Residential, and Family Support programs to individuals and their families throughout Broome and Tioga Counties.

Your support of United Way helps individuals like

**October is National Disability Employment Awareness month, which helps to bring awareness of the contributions of those with disabilities to the workplace.**

Through the program, Michael and other individuals like himself get together every Friday and Saturday to go on social outings and do various activities together. Some of the types of activities the group does together include museums, arts and craft projects, movies and theater, sports and recreational activities, parties, picnics, dinners, and Binghamton Senators hockey games (which, as a big hockey fan, is Michael's favorite activity). The cost of these activities is subsidized by United Way funds, making it easier for participants to afford them.

"I really enjoy being in the program," says Michael. "It has made life easier for me and has given me the opportunity to get out and make new friends. I don't have to sit home by myself on weekends anymore. It's great!"

During the week, Michael works at Country Valley Industries in Johnson City packaging chips for Frito-Lay. He has worked there for the past 15 years and says he finds the work very rewarding. He got the job through ARC's **Supported Work Program**, which places individuals with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities with jobs at Country Valley and other employers in the region.

### ARC enhances the quality of life of the mentally disabled

For over 50 years, ARC has provided services and support to enhance the quality of life for individuals with mental retar-

Michael get out of the house and do something positive. Without your support, people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities may not have the opportunities to make friends and enjoy life.

To learn more about ARC and its services, please call 723-8361, e-mail [info@btarc.org](mailto:info@btarc.org), or visit its web site at [www.btarc.org](http://www.btarc.org).

When you support "what matters" in the 2003 United Way Campaign, you may win a **2004 Nissan Sentra** courtesy of Serafini Nissan-Volvo, or **\$1,000 in groceries** courtesy of Wegmans.



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