

KC ARC

Fall/Winter
2021

Newsletter

A History Overview

KC ARC

2525 N. 6th St.
Vincennes, IN 47591

*Celebrating 50
years!*



"The role that KCARC plays in creating positive interaction and relationships among individuals and groups empowers our community and plays a major role in making our community a better and healthier place for the benefit of all."

- Dr. Alan Stewart, community leader

"KCARC is a great place to learn about patience, compassion, trust and much more."

- Alisa Bilskie, employee

"We hadn't been around anything like this before, I don't know what we would have done without KCARC"

- Mrs. Jones, parent of individual



Michael R. Carney President

Michael R. Carney was born on June 28, 1947 in Lebanon, Indiana. Mike was raised on a dairy farm. He was heavily involved in school activities and wrestling. Mike continued his wrestling at Indiana State University where he graduated in 1969 with a B. S. degree. His master's degree is from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. The state of Wisconsin came calling and he worked at the Southern Wisconsin Colony and Training School at Union Grove Wisconsin before moving back to Lebanon to be employed by Marion County ARC. Immediately following that employment, Mike started his long career at KCARC.

President's Message

As the sun rose on February 1, 1972 dawning a new day replete with high expectations so, too, did the hopes of people with disabilities in Knox County. However, a barren landscape devoid of opportunities for people with disabilities and their families bore testament to the stark reality of life. And on that same February day KCARC took its first breath germinating the start of something new.

Newness came in the form of three men who would go on to serve on the KCARC board of directors for many years. Ron Kerr, Gene Bell and Jerry Coonrod ushered the first KCARC employee into Knox County and thus began a journey surpassing all expectations. After all, what can you do with a beginning balance of \$1,976?

The early formative years revealed a thirsty community of people eager to grow, participate in, develop and prosper. Yielding to an unfettered quest for never ending opportunities and expansion, KCARC moved on from one achievement to the next manifesting integrity, quality, safety and teamwork. Time has a way of independently maturing those who pursue a worthy goal.

All along the way, one challenge after another made the journey interesting, fun, difficult, and rewarding. Grit, determination and never accepting defeat, KCARC persevered and triumphed. The greater Knox County community enthusiastically jumped in to help, donate time and money, while championing the cause of KCARC. Year after year and decade after decade for the entirety of half a century the community and its citizens have lived up to the KCARC mission of advocating and providing opportunities in a dignified and respectful manner for the total well-being of individuals and families with special needs.

It is my judgement KCARC and the people of Knox County will continue to be so inclined during the second 50 years.

DID YOU KNOW?

KCARC was the FIRST community rehabilitation program on the North American Continent to have their financial offices and manufacturing & program services to be ISO registered.



Certificate of Incorporation

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Welcome

This newsletter will give an insight on the diverse history of KCARC. As you dive into our history, digest the difficult hurdles and challenges that KCARC has overcome to be where we are today!



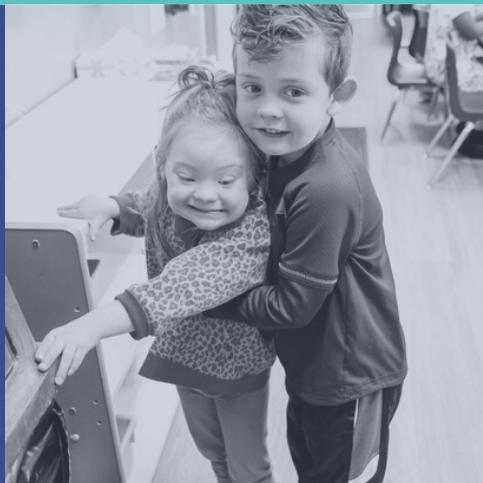
Extreme Cold Weather Manufacturing Begins

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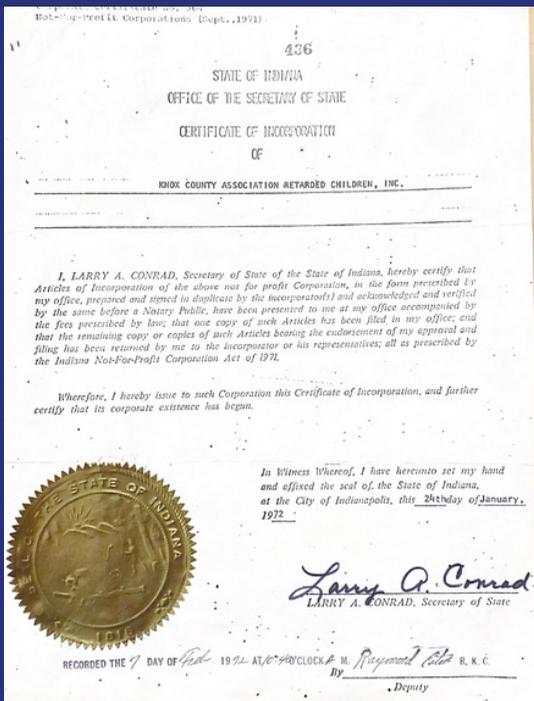
Construction of Charles and Mary Baker Center

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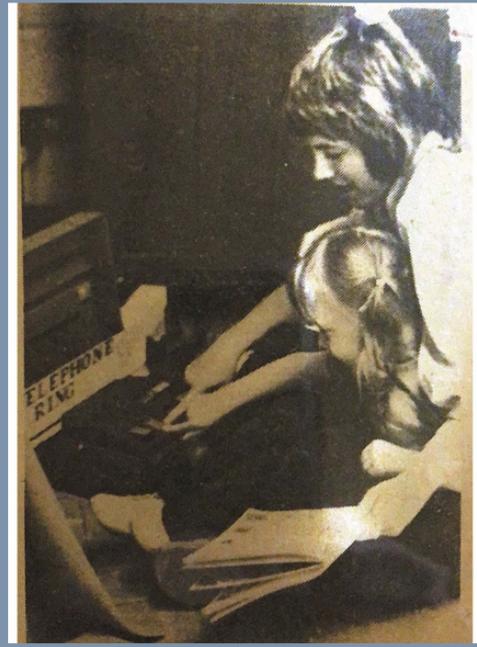
KCARC BEGINS SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

As cities, businesses, and social appearances became more developed, the attitude towards individuals with disabilities began to change. The concentration of people, like institutions, in a more congregated area meant that there were more disabled individuals in one area. As a result people began to notice that individuals with disabilities were ostracized, hidden and not part of the community. Finally, someone began to realize if we could have an area where these individuals can go to live life and be taken care of this would be beneficial for the communities, the families, and individuals. From this institutions were born.



Certificate of Incorporation

1970'S



KCARC OPENS PRE-K FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

Maria Puckett recalls her time spent at KCARC's preschool. "It was the best place for a young child with disabilities. The occupational therapy was beneficial for me."

Evelyn Woods, Speech Therapist.
Tiffany Jones, child.

While initially, institutions had a good intent, soon these institutions became grossly underfunded places that individuals with disabilities were sent to live out their lives in awful environments.

"I worked at a state institution in the state of Wisconsin in 1969/1970 and the conditions were worse than deplorable."

- Mike Carney

In the 60's, families began to realize they didn't want their children in any institutions because of the conditions. Parents started questioning, "Why can't my kid be like other kids?", and "Why can't my kid develop and prosper just like the other children?". From that, parents began raising awareness of these questions and from that, started organizations like The Arc of Indiana. The Arc is an organization that focuses on making the lives of individuals with disabilities a great one. Simultaneously, KCARC began raising money and hosting various outreach events. Awareness spread the word and parents of individuals with disabilities started community ARC's. In 1972, three people, Jean Perry, Katie Ballard, and Mike Jacobs signed incorporation papers, sent a \$7.50 check to the Secretary of State of Indiana, and KCARC was born.

During the years immediately following 1972, parents gathered other parents and began holding monthly meetings in the basement of the Central Christian Church. During these meetings, they would come together and bring their children with disabilities and have small parties, and talk about the future for KCARC. This is where they developed a group of people known as the Board of Directors. They thought up fundraisers like cookie sales and food booths at the county fair. Those dollars, along with a few others, enabled them to hire their first employee in 1972. Michael Carney was hired on as the Executive Director and today still stands as President of KCARC.

From then immense growth created opportunities for people with disabilities. In the summer of 1972, KCARC opened its pre-school program and in December opened a shelter work center called Opportunity Work Industries for the youth with mental retardations and their beginning of sheltered work opportunities. From 4 beginning students, KCARC Civitan Center now has 104 students enrolled in an integrated system with typically developing children. In 1974, the first men's group home opened. This home was the first of 16 developed by KCARC.

4-28-75 Ground Is Broken For Opportunity Building

Ground was broken Monday for an Opportunity Industries building that will be part of the Knox County Association For Retarded Citizens program.

The building, adjacent the Knox County Home on Hart Street Road, will be completed by June 1 and will house a sheltered workshop for the adult mentally retarded.

Knox County Commissioners Walter DeLisle, Joe Vieck and Wilbur Parrish, County Councilman Robert Hill, KCARC director Michael Carney and KCARC board president Jerry Coonrod took part in the ceremony.

The ground breaking marks the official beginning of the structure to be built in stages at a total cost of \$57,000. The County Council and County Commission approved \$37,000 in revenue sharing funds for the building. KCARC has added \$20,000.

The Commission also approved use of the land next to the Knox County Home on a long term lease basis. They have discussed the possibility of giving the land to the asso-

ciation with a clause that it revert to the county when it no longer is used by that group.

The ceremony at 11:45 a.m., was opened with an invocation by the Rev. Don Barker, Knox Presbyterian Church.

In a short speech that followed, Carney praised county councilmen and commissioners for their "leadership and generosity" and said that the building would have been impossible without them and the guidance of the parents of KCARC clients.

Speaking on behalf of the commission, Vieck said that "any time you (KARC) need help, you can count on the commission". He said that the commissioners were appreciative of the association's efforts to become self supporting, which aids the county.

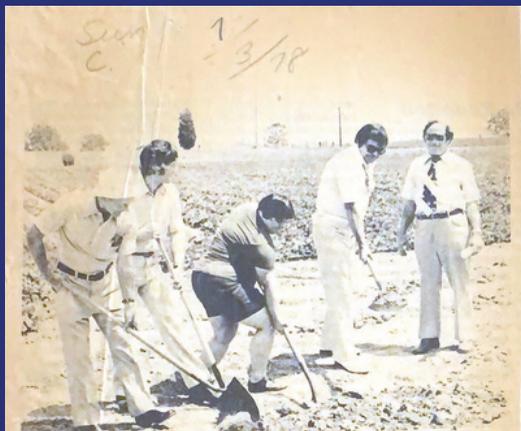
Coonrod spoke of his appreciation of help given by the county.

Carney said that the city council had been helpful in many respects although they have contributed no money toward the project.



BREAK GROUND - County councilman Robert Hill, Frank Tucker, KCARC director Mike Carney, City councilman Woody Allen and County Commission president Walter

DeLisle, from left, break ground Monday for the new \$57,000 sheltered workshop KCARC is building adjacent the Knox County Home on Hart Street Road. (Photo by Alen Malot)



BREAKING GROUND - Participating Wednesday in a ground-breaking ceremony for the 16,000-foot addition to the Opportunities Industries workshop are (from left) Charlie Baker, president of the board of directors for the Knox County Association for Retarded Citizens; Mike Carney, KCARC executive director; Melissa Matthews, a workshop employee; George Lane, Knox County Council vice president, and Wayne Donovan, of Donovan and Donovan Associates Inc., Vincennes.

KCARC Prepares For Addition

Expansion of the Knox County Association for Retarded Citizens' Opportunity Industries workshop is scheduled to be completed in November.

A ground-breaking ceremony for the 16,000-foot addition was Wednesday at the present facility on Hart Street Road.

The addition will increase the current building to 20,000 square feet. It will house pre-vocational testing facilities,

an adult daily living class, work activities area and the major manufacturing sections.

The new space will allow the workshop, which employs 56 mentally retarded persons, to have an additional 100 employees. Funding for the \$250,000 project was obtained from the Indiana Rehabilitation Services, the Knox County Council and KCARC.

The county's economy will be boosted from the expansion by \$980,000 to \$1.19 million annually when wages and expenditures are applied to the economic multiplication factor.

The addition is scheduled to be in full operation in early 1979. An open house will be held after the expansion to better acquaint the community with the workshop's functions.

With great expectations to prosper and make money, the beginning of manufacturing began in 1972. Then in 1975, a 4,800 sq. ft. workshop known as Plant 1 was constructed and later expanded two more times within the span of five years.

KCARC was hitting the newspapers consistently with headlines of additions, expansion, and growth. In 1976, the first women's group home opened making KCARC a place for both men and women with disabilities to excel and prosper.

Many great events like Honey Sunday, the infamous Newspaper drive, Ride-A-Bike and the packing of Halloween candy all became staples of KCARC.

1980'S

*Growth.
Expansion.*

Expansion of
Plant 1 by
30,000 sq. ft.

Second all
men's group
home opened

'82

'84

'80

'83

First Co-Ed
Group home
opened

Third all men's
group home
opened.

The '80's were a decade of significant growth in the number of people served, the number of products produced, services provided, and the growth of revenue. During the 1980's we saw a significant expansion in residential programs, by the building of new homes and the acquisition of existing homes in the community. The 80's also saw significant expansion in manufacturing. Plant I was expanded by 30,000 sq. ft.

1980'S

DID YOU KNOW?

Through KCARC's DLA Clothing and Troop Support contract, KCARC manufactures **approximately 56%** of the ECWS (Entended Coldweather System) Gen III shirts.

KCARC was founded in 1972 and garment manufacturing began in 1987. The plant produces light to medium weight clothing, pouches, and gear. Our Cut and Sew Manufacturing Plants are located in Vincennes and Loogootee, Indiana. Some capabilities you can find at Plant 2 are:

AccuMark

Pattern Design Software

Digitize Pattern Table

CNC Cutting

Began cold weather clothing manufacturing at Plant II

Construction of group home in Bicknell, IN

'87

'86

KCARC includes manufacturing in metal & wood products, paint applications, and light-to-heavy assembly operations. Specific services provided are acoustical phone booths for high noise applications; wire payout and take-up reels; specialty pallets – industrial, munitions, boxes and crates; conference tables, oak tables, plastic lamination; dimensional furniture stock; and contract paint applications. KCARC also subcontracts to leading American wood and metal product manufacturers.

Opening of newly constructed Civitan Children's Center

'88



1990's

The birth of Baker Center *Mike Carney*

I was sitting in my office. My office was upstairs in what had been the First Baptist Church parsonage. So Ron Kerr, previous board member and board President, allowed me to use the upstairs space which was converted into my office. One day, I hear someone coming up the old wooden stairs and in walks this man. There was a chair beside my desk, he immediately introduced himself as Charlie Baker, promptly sat down and began telling me his story about his son, Jim.

"You didn't know Charlie but you never had to ask him what he thought because he was straight up with you and never beat around the bush."

Construction
of geriatric
home in
Bicknell, IN.

Expansion of
Plant III

'91

'90

'92

Construction of
Plant III/ Bicknell
Business Center

He started asking about what KCARC was going to do with people who had severe disabilities. He said, knowing everything that was already set up or available was for higher functioning disabled people. Charlie Baker's son was really low functioning. He had been a brilliant mathematician in high school and on prom night of his senior year Charlie's son and his date tried to cross Bell crossing and was struck by a train killing his date and leaving Jim Baker, Charlie's son, severely disabled. Charlie during his description of the incident broke down. calmed down and finally said, ***"Mary and I really need your help."***

1990's



Construction
of Plant IV

KCARC became the first not-for-profit on the North American continent to be ISO registered for manufacturing, Human Resources, program services, and finance offices.

'97

'93

Construction of Charles
and Mary Baker Center

'99

I admitted we had just started as an organization and didn't necessarily have an answer but guaranteed I would work hard to find one if Charlie worked hard with me to do so. Charlie began to volunteer along with Mary and got involved in all that KCARC did whether it was membership drives, working at the county fair food booth, or any other special events. They were tireless advocates in all that KCARC did. Charlie soon became a board member and then the Board President.

When we built the Baker Center, we were debating on what to name it and to me it ***just seemed appropriate that we call it the Charles and Mary Baker Center to honor their name and advocacy for individuals with severe disabilities.***

The Baker Center is now a location where people with the most severe disabilities enjoy an opportunity to participate in arts and crafts, physical rehabilitation, and cognitive growth activities.

2000's



Purchase of Vincennes
Manufacturing Plant

Expansion of Civitan
Children's Center and an
addition of four classrooms

Construction of USDA
approved milk
manufacturing plant

'00

Construction
of Tommy
Wolfe Center
(Mildly Ill
Child Care)

'01

'02

Dry goods packaging began
in Plant V

'03

DID YOU KNOW?

During the COVID-19 pandemic, KCARC continued offering services to people with disabilities, provided **free child care** to staff, provided **16,313 free meals** to staff and people with disabilities, and randomly handed out **gas cards, gift cards, and gift certificates** to employees who continued to come to work!

2000's - current



'07

Remodeled formerly known Plant II into 1972 Community Center



Construction of 3 new ADA accessible homes completed

'19

Became management agent for LAM (Life After Meth)

Received grant to start School-to-Work Transition Program

Began Discover the Possibilities media campaign

'17



'18

Construction and opening of KCARC's The Shop, a facility providing Life Skills training

Derek Hopper

The Navigator

812-887-2606

KCARC

2525 North 6th St.

Vincennes, IN 47591

KCARC



**Check out our
career opportunities!**

www.knoxcountyarc.com

Follow us on social media!



What do you want to see more of in the Newsletter? Email: katie.lovell@knoxcountyarc.com

Christmas Candy Crush

Simple, easy, and delicious Christmas snack for the whole family.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups Chex cereal, rice or corn is best
- 2 cups pretzels, mini twists are best
- 1/2 cup Reese's Mini Peanut Butter Cups, more if you like
- 1 cup M&M's candy
- 4 blocks White Almond Bark or 1 cup White Chocolate Chips

To start:

1. Gather your ingredients. Then line a baking sheet with parchment paper. You will want everything ready because this recipe will move quickly.
2. Add all of the ingredients to a very large bowl
3. Melt almond bark in the microwave. Start with 1 minute, then stir, then heat in 10-second intervals, stirring after each heating. Stop when there are a few pieces remaining, then stir until they are completely melted and the chocolate is smooth.
4. Pour melted white chocolate over the mixture and stir well to coat completely
5. Spread mixture onto parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Let sit about 5-10 minutes to set.
6. Break pieces apart. Enjoy!