

# ARCH of LV (Autism Resource Community Hub of Lehigh Valley)

## *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*

*Updating in Progress (6-3-09)*

### **1. What is ARCH of LV?**

The **Autism Resource Community Hub of the Lehigh Valley (ARCH of LV)** will be a cohesive, multifaceted integration of clinical and non-clinical approaches and training to individuals who have a diagnosis on the autism spectrum and to family members touched by this diagnosis. The *ARCH of Lehigh Valley* will work in collaboration with individuals on the spectrum, families, experts in the field and other stakeholders to coordinate a continuum of services for individuals whose lives are touched by autism.

### **2. Timeline for the initial concept of the Autism Hub**

#### **2003**

The Lehigh County ASD Task Force grew out of a need for parents of children with autism to meet and have open dialogue about issues they were facing. With the help of the county, the Autism Task Force was formed. Without the grassroots efforts of a few committed parents and the County's backing, the dream would not have been possible

#### **2005**

A reinvestment committee was formed to shape and spearhead the "Hub" vision.

#### **2006**

County staff, in conjunction with parents, providers and the Bureau of Autism Affairs decided to secure a provider to write a reinvestment plan to develop what was formally known as the HUB. The HUB would be a one-stop shopping model that would provide services, resources, materials, information to children on the Autism Spectrum and their families. The plan needed to keep the vision intact, be financially sustainable and be approved by both OMHSAS and the Bureau of Autism Affairs.

#### **February/March 2007**

Developed and distributed a Request for Proposal (RFP) to secure a provider to write the reinvestment plan and eventually become the operator of the HUB. Held a bidder's session for providers interested in submitting a proposal.

#### **Spring 2007**

Proposals due back to County. County convened a committee of county staff and parents to review the proposals. Reviewed proposals and select group to interview. Elwyn was selected to write the reinvestment plan and to become the eventual operator of the HUB. County secured a contract with Elwyn to begin writing the plan. Elwyn is contracted by the County to implement the HUB concept. Elwyn began meeting as an Executive Team with County and MBH. Held 1st Stakeholders Meeting. Elwyn attended first taskforce meeting.

### 3. Who is Elwyn?

Established in 1852, Elwyn is one of the nation's oldest and largest private, nonprofit (501C3) human service organizations serving both children and adults. Currently, the organization serves over 12,000 individuals each year in a variety of settings, including campus locations, community sites, schools, workplaces, residential programs and individual's homes. Elwyn's administration and some of its services are located on a 420-acre campus in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Elwyn employs more than 2700 individuals and is located in Delaware, Philadelphia, Lehigh, Northampton, Dauphin and Berks Counties and in the states of Delaware, New Jersey and California.

Elwyn offers comprehensive services for children, adolescents, and adults at campus sites and community based locations. Services are offered through a continuum of care including assessment, diagnosis, therapeutic treatment, medication management, vocational support, independent living skills, and case management.

As the human service field has evolved through the years, Elwyn remains committed to serving people in new and innovative ways, maximizing their potential for participating in, and contributing to their communities. Elwyn's mission statement reads:

***Maximizing potential through personal commitment, collective talents and innovation, Elwyn supports individuals with diverse challenges in shaping distinctive, meaningful lives.***

**4. ARCH of LV Mission** – The Mission of the ARCH of Lehigh Valley is to provide a safe, therapeutic and educational environment for people with autism – regardless of age or ability – and their families by offering a range of clinical and community supports, resources and educational materials and training. These services will take place in an inviting and user-friendly service center, through a network of providers who are trained in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

### 5. Where is ARCH of LV going to be located?

- 1347 Hausman Road, Allentown, PA 18104 (just off 309 in the South Whitehall Township) *Building currently under construction-scheduled to be completed early 2009.*

### 6. How can I contact someone at ARCH of LV?

610-573-2500 or 1-866-670-ARCH (2724)

**Please contact us with any questions. :**

- Ellen Hunt, Administrative Director [hunte@elwyn.org](mailto:hunte@elwyn.org)
- Krista Malone, Summer Camp/BHRSDirector [malonek@elwyn.org](mailto:malonek@elwyn.org)
- You can also access information at:  
[http://www.elwyn.org/BHS/ARCH\\_of\\_Lehigh\\_Valley/ARCH.html](http://www.elwyn.org/BHS/ARCH_of_Lehigh_Valley/ARCH.html)

### 7. Who is eligible for services at ARCH of LV?

- The Community Resource Room will serve all individuals touched by
- Autism, their families and community supports.
- While the initial programs will focus on children up to 21 years of age –this does not preclude the ARCH of LV from responding to opportunities that will serve transitional age individuals or an older population. (Adult programs are currently scheduled to be developed in subsequent years).
- While Lehigh County residents will be the first priority, the *ARCH of Lehigh Valley* will serve eligible individuals throughout the Lehigh Valley.
- It has not been determined how individuals will be selected to receive services. More information to follow.

**8. What types of programs and services will be offered at ARCH of LV?**

Initially we will offer:

- Diagnosis and Assessment
- Individual, Group and Family Sessions
- Behavior Focused After School Program
- Socialization After School Program
- Summer Camp (summer following opening – location to be determined)
- Mobile Therapy, Behavior Specialist, and Therapeutic Staff Support
- Case Management
- Access to Resource Room and Resources
- Access to the Community Rooms
- Training
- Sibling, Teen, Play, and Support Groups
- Other to be determined

**9. When will ARCH of LV Open?**

- The official opening date has not been determined but it is expected to be early 2009

**10. Hours of Operation.**

- Currently the building is under construction and is not open except for planned meetings.
- Once open - ARCH of LV will have day and some evening and weekend hours of operation.
- Initial hours of operation will be determined.

**11. Does ARCH of LV accept Medical Assistance and other insurances?**

- **Yes.** Most major insurances and Medical Assistance (ACCESS) including Magellan Behavioral Health (HealthChoices), HIPP (Health Insurance Payment Program) coverage as well.

**12. Is there Medical or Nursing staff on site?**

- There will be a psychiatrist as part of the outpatient clinic. The need for further medical staff is being explored.

**13. What types of security do you have at ARCH of LV?**

- There will be a single set of doors for access. These doors can limit access by requiring individuals to be 'buzzed' in. All egress doors will be alarmed and have a short delay before opening.

**14. Do you require an aide or someone to be with the child at the facility?**

- Your child maybe enrolled in a program that does not require family or responsible adult supervision. Supervision may be provided in the program.
- If your child is at ARCH for open hour playtime then a responsible adult would be required to provide supervision.
- There is an expectation that parents/guardians will participate in services

**15. Is food available or allowed at the facility?**

- Food will be allowed at ARCH in designated areas. We recognize that there will be many individual dietary needs so most food items will be brought in by the individual. There will be a kitchen with a refrigerator for storing food.

**16. What if an individual needs medication while at the facility?**

- Staff in the ARCH will be trained to assist your child with taking their medications as long as it does not require an injection. We will need to verify the prescription with the prescribing doctor and ensure we maintain the required dose on hand.

**17. How can I help?**

- The ARCH will be administered by Elwyn, a provider agency, and advised by a community boards comprised of all stakeholders including a strong family presence.
- **ARCH needs lots and lots of volunteers** to serve on workgroups such as fundraising, programming, training and an ongoing Advisory Committee.
- Elwyn is a non-profit organization that administers the ARCH Program. Donations of your time, materials and money are always great appreciated.

**18. Does ARCH of LV have family restroom facilities?**

- Absolutely, once construction is completed ARCH will have a family restroom with shower and changing areas in other restrooms.

**19. How does ARCH of LV determine if someone is eligible for services? Does my child need a diagnosis on the autism spectrum to be eligible for services at the ARCH?**

- If you suspect that your child may have autism or if you have been advised to have an assessment completed, this service can be done at ARCH.
- To receive services at ARCH, your child will have to have a diagnosis on the autism spectrum

**20. What if someone is already receiving services?**

- Not a problem. The ARCH of LV is designed to help coordinate services with different community providers.
- They may receive different services from different providers.
- The staff at the ARCH will work with the family and other providers to determine the best course of treatment.

**21. Will the ARCH be able to diagnose my child with Autism?**

- Yes. Staff will be trained to complete autism specific assessments and provide the correct diagnoses for your child.

**22. Will there be supports for the siblings affected by autism?**

- Yes. We will be offering sibling support groups to be facilitated by ‘experienced’ siblings and possibly older children with autism. These groups are planned to be offered in 2009.

**23. Are you hiring?**

- Yes we are. We are currently in the process of reviewing resumes and interviewing. We are looking to hire individuals experienced in working with children and adult with a diagnosis on the spectrum. These positions are for case managers, after school counselors and master’s level, licensed therapist.

**Please check back...we will be adding new information as new questions arise and as new information becomes available.**