



Reframe, Refresh & Resilience: Adjusting Our Caregiver Lens

Wednesday, April 29th 9:15 - 11:00 am | Kris Burbank

Caregiving can be demanding, isolating, and deeply meaningful — but only when we have enough energy for all it requires of us. In Reframe, Refresh, Resilience: Adjusting Our Caregiver Lens, resilience coach and author Kris Burbank invites parents, caregivers, and advocates into a dynamic, interactive experience that blends powerful storytelling, research insights, and real-life learnings from her book *Embracing Another Normal: Stories & Strategies for Raising Children with Disabilities*. Through lively discussion and small group exercises, participants will explore shared challenges and learn a practical framework to help build resilience, restore perspective, and strengthen their capacity to thrive, both personally and professionally.

Joyful Grit: How Embracing Obstacles Unlocks Optimism

Thursday, April 30th 9:15 - 10:15 am | Zach Anner

Author and comedian Zach Anner blends laugh-out-loud stories with the legacy of disability rights activism. He highlights how progress comes from both trailblazers and everyday acts of kindness, urging us to face obstacles with humor, resilience, and joy as our constant companion.



Event Details

Virtual Attendees: You will receive your Zoom link and reminders starting one week before the Convention. Only the presentations marked “Live Streamed” will be available for virtual attendees. This includes the keynote speakers, plenary sessions, and only one breakout session per time slot. The rest of the breakout sessions will be recorded and shared **after** the Convention.

In Person Attendees: The Convention is located at the Marriott Hotel (201 Broadway Ave, Normal, IL 61761). There is a block of rooms reserved at the conference rate of \$159/night (plus tax). Room reservations can be made directly by calling 309.862.9000. **The hotel group rate is available through April 3rd.**

Parking: Parking is available at the garage on Beaufort Street. Parking is included for Marriott Hotel Guests or a maximum of \$6/day and \$8/overnight. Street parking is available around the hotel.

Travel: There is an Amtrak train station located across the street from the hotel. Visit www.amtrak.com or call 1.800.USA.RAIL.

Visit the Convention website for more information - <https://www.thearcofil.org/76th-annual-convention/>

8:00 - 9:00 am	Registration, Continental Breakfast Visit with Exhibitors, View Art Exhibit			
9:00 - 9:15 am	Welcome, Kimberly Johnson, Board President, The Arc of Illinois Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees			
9:15 - 11:00 am	Keynote Presentation: “Reframe, Refresh & Resilience: Adjusting Our Caregiver Lens” presented by Kris Burbank Caregiving can be demanding, isolating, and deeply meaningful — but only when we have enough energy for all it requires of us. In Reframe, Refresh, Resilience: Adjusting Our Caregiver Lens, resilience coach and author Kris Burbank invites parents, caregivers, and advocates into a dynamic, interactive experience that blends powerful storytelling, research insights, and real-life learnings from her book Embracing Another Normal: Stories & Strategies for Raising Children with Disabilities. Through lively discussion and small group exercises, participants will explore shared challenges and learn a practical framework to help build resilience, restore perspective, and strengthen their capacity to thrive, both personally and professionally. Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees			
11:00 - 11:30 am	Break			
11:30 am - 12:15 pm Breakout Sessions	<p>Session #1: “My Health, My Future: Encouraging Self-Determination in Healthcare Transitions” Claire Cook Courtney Kerfoot Division of Specialized Care for Children</p> <p>This session helps youth with I/DD and their families learn about health care transition, build confidence, strengthen communication, and actively participate in managing health and future care decisions.</p> <p>Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</p>	<p>Session #2: “Special Needs Legal & Future Planning...The who, what, where, why, and how of Special Needs Trusts, ABLE Accounts, and related topics” Brian Rubin, JD Benji Rubin, JD Rubin Law</p> <p>Brian Rubin, a parent, and Benji Rubin, a sibling, of Mitchell Rubin who has Autism, will present the basics of special needs’ planning, including special needs trusts, ABLE accounts, selecting the future team of trustees and guardians, impact of divorce and law-suit settlements, educating the extended family, letters of intent, and many related topics.</p>	<p>Session #3: “Beyond Traditional Staffing: Remote Support that Transforms Lives” Donna Ennis Jesse Brian McMorris Dr. Kristen Salkas Jacqueline Steward Envision Unlimited</p> <p>Envision Unlimited members and staff will share their experiences developing remote supports in a CILA setting, including a self advocates perspective on his experience in his new home, lessons learned and post placement outcome data.</p>	<p>Session #4: “Classroom to Community: Empowering Transitions Through Aspire’s Employment Train” Amanda Hedberg Garrett Reynolds Aspire</p> <p>“From Classroom to Community” demonstrates how Aspire’s ETP is a critical stepping stone for students leaving high-school transition services — opening pathways to competitive employment, connections, and a thriving life.</p>
<p>Session #5: “From Challenges to Opportunities” Daniel Smrokowski Special Chronicles</p> <p>Join Daniel as he shares how turning challenges into opportunities shaped his leadership journey—empowering others to overcome adversity, embrace their strengths, and lead with purpose and possibility.</p>				

Visit the Art Exhibit and Silent Auction! The Silent Auction and Art Exhibit will open Wednesday, April 22nd at 12 pm noon and remain open until Thursday, April 30th at 1 pm.

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<p>12:15 - 1:45 pm</p>	<p>Lunch 12:45 - 1:30 pm Plenary Session: System Redesign Coalition Panel Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</p>			
<p>2:00 - 2:45 pm</p> <p>Breakout Sessions</p>	<p>Session #6: “Shared Care: Building Support Networks” Christine Escobar-Sawicki Sean Sawicki University of Illinois, School of Social Work A self-advocate and his mom share real-life strategies for building support networks. This interactive presentation will provide strategies for identifying, inviting, and sustaining support relationships, emphasizing the benefits of interdependence. Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</p>	<p>Session #7: “Guardianship & the Many Alternatives to Guardianship” Brian Rubin, JD Benji Rubin, JD Rubin Law Brian Rubin, a parent, and Benji Rubin, a sibling, of Mitchell Rubin who has Autism, will explain Guardianship (Limited and Plenary), and the alternatives, including Supported Decision Making (new law), Powers of Attorney, and related matters.</p>	<p>Session #8: “Inclusion In Action” Christopher Landis Amy Newell The Arc of Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties Discover how meaningful inclusion transforms lives. Learn how the Arc of WBO Counties develops responsive, client-driven programs that expand access, foster connection, and ensure people with ID/DD participate fully alongside their peers.</p>	<p>Session #9: “Practical Strategies to Build Independence for Students with Significant Needs” Sherill Mae Flowers Chicago Public Schools Learn simple, practical strategies that help students with significant needs build independence through visuals, routines, task systems, and teamwork. Easy tools for teachers, paraprofessionals, and families to use immediately.</p>
<p>Session #10: “Putting AI to Work: Tips from Self-Advocates” Sydney Badeau, Vincent Smith, Jada Thompson, Gary Arnold ICDD In this presentation, a panel of self-advocates will share useful tips about a few Artificial Intelligence platforms and how community members can use Artificial Intelligence in their own lives.</p>				
<p>2:45 - 3:15 pm</p>	<p>Break</p>			
<p>3:15 - 4:00 pm</p> <p>Breakout Sessions</p>	<p>Session #11: “Redefining Strong: Masculinity, Resiliency, and Fatherhood in the Disability World” Kirby Rabalais Got4titude Explore how redefining masculinity and resiliency helps fathers raising children with disabilities move from silent burnout to supported strength, through vulnerability, community, and father-focused practices organizations can integrate into their work. Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</p>	<p>Session #12: “Get Hands-on with IL ABLE” JJ Hanley Stephanie Kanter Office of the Illinois State Treasurer Bring your questions, and your curiosity for some essential learning and hands-on practice about opening and managing ABLE Savings and Investment Accounts.</p>	<p>Session #13: “From Vision to Action: Self Advocates Leading Change” Sharon Anderson Ray Graham Association Be inspired by RGA’s Self Advocacy Council’s journey in launching a Wellness Committee and Peer Mentor team and explore the opportunity to create a statewide network of Peer Mentors.</p>	<p>Session #14: “Who’s Knocking at your Door?” Robyn L Lewis Illinois Institute for Rehabilitation and Employment Research The session discusses how leadership and direct service professionals can understand and assess a customer’s situation and needs. Participants learn to use a decision matrix to help determine services and referrals for clients.</p>
<p>Session #15: “We’re All Connected” Sam Miller Dreaming Made Simple If you’re like me, one of the last things you want is to be dependent on anyone. However, life has taught me we are set up to help others and others are set up to help us.</p>				

4:00 - 4:15 pm	Break			
4:15 - 5:00 pm Breakout Sessions	<p>Session #16: “Families Leading the Way: Transforming Supports for Adults with Complex Disabilities” Shirley Sains Illinois Partners for Adults with Complex Disabilities Discover how Community Supported Living and proposed Illinois Medicaid waiver legislation can expand real community-based options, 24-hour supports, and housing choice to address long-standing gaps for adults with developmental disabilities and intense support needs. Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</p>	<p>Session #17: “Navigating the Maze: Understanding Agencies and Acronyms” Suzanne Aaron Vicki Borlin Tiffany Steinhauser The Arc of Illinois - ILS Ever seen a list of acronyms in the DD world? The Illinois Life Span team will introduce agencies, define their acronyms, and describe the services you need to know.</p>	<p>Session #18: “Creating and Establishing a SAFE Workplace” Meaghan South Jordyn Klingbeil Trinity Services, Inc Discover the SAFE model for building trauma-informed teams, enhancing communication, and boosting morale through creative strategies that strengthen team meetings and foster a supportive, resilient workplace culture.</p>	<p>Session #19: “People with Disabilities Thriving in Nature” Cat Principe David Pufundt Envision Unlimited Attendees will hear about a new initiative that is expanding the world for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by welcoming them into nature and transforming them into community stewards.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Session #20: “Boosting your Ability to Make Decisions - Self Advocacy” Kari Jones Epilepsy Advocacy Network This session guides individuals with disabilities and comorbidities to strengthen self-advocacy skills, builds supportive relationships, and confidently participate in decisions affecting their healthcare, community, and daily life.</p>				
6:00 - 9:00 pm	<p>Awards Reception Celebrate our Award Winners! Join us for cocktails and appetizers as we announce the 76th Annual Convention Award Winners.</p>			

Thank you to our Sponsors!

Visit the online Exhibitor Hall for more information -
<https://www.thearcofil.org/76th-annual-convention/>



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9:00 - 9:15 am	Welcome, Samantha Alloway, Executive Director, The Arc of Illinois <i>Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</i>			
9:15 - 10:15 am	Keynote Presentation: “Joyful Grit: How Embracing Obstacles Unlocks Optimism” Presented by Zach Anner Author and comedian Zach Anner blends laugh-out-loud stories with the legacy of disability rights activism. He highlights how progress comes from both trailblazers and everyday acts of kindness, urging us to face obstacles with humor, resilience, and joy as our constant companion. <i>Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</i>			
10:15 - 10:45 am	Break			
10:45 - 11:30 am Breakout Sessions	Session #21: “BHC’s and CTP’s: Unique service models outside of the waiver” Kathy Carmody Rebecca Clark The Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities This session will focus on 2 service models that don't require Medicaid Waiver funding that people with IDD can consider: Behavioral Health Clinics (BHCs) and Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs (CTPs) at colleges. <i>Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</i>	Session #22: “Home Based Boot Camp” Ruth Aguilar Shakari Asbury Annie Bruno Jerin Olson Veronica Salazar The Arc of Illinois - Family Advocate Program Join us to learn more about the in's and out's of the Home Based program within the Adults with Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver.	Session #23: “A Nonprofit’s Practical, Person-Centered Transition Toolkit for Life After 22” Marney Orchard Center for Independent Futures Learn how a direct service non-profit developed My Full Life, a digital, person-centered life skills toolkit that supports transition planning and real-world readiness for young adults with IDD, featuring self-advocate insights.	Session #24: “Menstruation Management: Practical Ways to Support Girls and Women with Intellectual Disabilities” Jennifer Summers University of Illinois Chicago This session helps caregivers learn simple, practical ways to support girls and women with IDD during their periods, focusing on everyday skills, comfort, safety, and respectful, person-centered care.
	Session #25: “See a Seizure: Seizure Recognition for Adults with I/DD and Epilepsy” Brandon Eddy Jazz Pharmaceuticals A practical training using CGI seizure videos to help DSPs, nurses, and caregivers accurately recognize, differentiate, and document seizure types commonly seen in individuals with I/DD and epilepsy.			
11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Lunch 12:00 - 12:45 pm Plenary Session: DHS/DDD Panel <i>Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</i>			

Visit the Annual Convention Sponsor & Exhibitor Hall

<https://www.thearcofil.org/76th-annual-convention/>



<p>1:15 - 2:00 pm</p> <p>Breakout Sessions</p>	<p>Session #26: “Anticipatory Grief: Understanding, Supporting, and Living Through Ongoing Loss” Sara Buttita Michelle Halm <i>Grief Connection Space</i> This session explores anticipatory grief and its impact on our community. Participants will learn practical tools for supporting individuals, families, and staff through ongoing loss with collective compassion and resilience. Live Streamed for Virtual Attendees</p>	<p>Session #27: “Virtual Future is Now (VFIN) Train the Trainer Project” Randa Abdelrahim Piyush Mishra Jae Jin Pak UIC IDHD Attendees will gain an understanding of the Virtual Future is Now train-the-trainer (TTT) program, resources on future planning, and possible ways to be involved in the TTT program.</p>	<p>Session #28: “Understanding Behavior & Supporting People on Tough Days” Scott Sanders Elana Sickman ICPN Understand reasons behind behavior, recognize signs of escalation, and learn to apply strategies that support individuals while promoting safety, regulation, and improved outcomes for all involved.</p>	<p>Session #29: “Getting from A to B - Starting and running a successful Transportation Program” Adam Herges Becca Obuchowski Hannah Sheets <i>Community Choices</i> Learn the nuts and bolts of how one organization developed and implemented a transportation program addressing one pervasive barriers to those with I/DD - leave understanding the whys and how-tos.</p>
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Thank you to all our Sponsors!

VIP



Keynote



Champion



Inclusion ACES\$ Byline Bank Meridian Health

CEUs

9 CEUs are available for Clinical Professional Counselor, Clinical Social Worker, Nursing Home Administrator, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Social Worker, and QIDPs.

If attending in person, please use the CEU form located at the registration table.

If attending virtually, please submit a request form using the form available on the website.

Questions? Contact Kim Swanson, kim@thearcofil.org, 815.464.1832 x1024

Silent Auction and Art Exhibit

The Silent Auction and Art Exhibit will open Wednesday, April 22nd at 12 pm noon and remain open until Thursday, April 30th at 1 pm.

The Silent Auction will be available online, with items on display during the Convention. The auction is open to all, regardless if you are attending the convention.

You can either pick up your winning item(s) at the Convention or at the office in Tinley Park. If you are unable to pick up your items, they will be shipped to you - shipping fees apply.

Exhibitors

Visit the Online Exhibitor Hall for more information on our Sponsors and Exhibitors, <https://www.thearcofil.org/76th-annual-convention/>

Cancellations and Refunds

Participants cancelling their registration 72 hours in advance will be entitled to a credit or refund, minus a \$50 fee. No refund or credit will be given for cancellations less than 72 hours before the convention.



Registration

76th Annual Convention

INSTRUCTIONS: One form per person, please print legibly. Your name and agency will appear on your name tag as it appears on this form. Check your registration options. Return your completed form to: 7550 183rd Street, Tinley Park, IL 60477; fax 815.464.5292; or email kim@thearcofil.org. Make checks payable to The Arc of Illinois. Or you may also register online at www.thearcofil.org/events.

In Person Registration

Both Days:

- Professional Member - \$325.00
- Professional Non-Member - \$385.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Member - \$200.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Non-Member - \$240.00

One Day:

- Professional Member - \$240.00
- Professional Non-Member - \$300.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Member - \$145.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Non-Member - \$185.00

Indicate which day you will attend:

- Wednesday
- Thursday

Yes, I will be attending the Awards Reception on Wednesday, April 29th

Virtual Registration

Both Days:

- Professional Member - \$200.00
- Professional Non-Member - \$260.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Member - \$130.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Non-Member - \$160.00

One Day:

- Professional Member - \$140.00
- Professional Non-Member - \$190.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Member - \$95.00
- Family Member or Self-Advocate, Non-Member - \$125.00

Indicate which day you will attend:

- Wednesday
- Thursday

Attendee Information

Name: _____

Agency: _____ Job Title: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Note: We must know of any accommodation requests at least two weeks prior to the convention.

Please tell us your accommodation requests here: _____

Any dietary restrictions: _____

Not a member? Introductory Annual Membership discount for when you register for the Convention.

Yes, sign me up!

- New Family/Individual Membership for \$20
- New Professional Membership for \$40

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____ METHOD OF PAYMENT:

- _____ Check enclosed payable to The Arc of Illinois
- _____ PO or State Voucher #
- _____ Credit Card

Name as it appears on credit card: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiration date: _____ CVV Code: _____

Card holder's signature: _____