

Book Club, Public Speaking Forum and Art Classes
Create Social Opportunities and More for Adults with Disabilities in Loudoun!

LEESBURG, Virginia – July 1, 2014 – “A Life Like Yours” is the motto that Paxton Campus uses as the motivation to create opportunities for people with disabilities to have social opportunities, make friends, and have positive life experiences. Over the last six months we have partnered with various organizations to introduce three new programs in Loudoun: the *Next Chapter Book Club*, a book club for people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities; *Speak Up!*, a public speaking and advocacy group for adults with disabilities; and *Expression Through Art*, an adaptive art class for adults with disabilities. All three of these new programs have opened up new avenues for adults with disabilities to get out into our community, make friends and engage in creative events.

The book club started in February and has a core group of 10 adults who are reading a series of short stories together; discussing the stories; and sharing thoughts, ideas and experiences related to the stories. Many of the discussions are thought-provoking and poignant. The club meets twice a month on the first and third Mondays, usually at the Rust Library, though the venue sometimes changes led by the interests of the group. The *Next Chapter Book Club* was created through a joint partnership with *Loudoun County Public Library*, and with financial support from *100 Women Strong*.

The public speaking program is Loudoun’s first public speaking group for people with disabilities. It has started in June and we hope it will continue to grow in numbers as the school year starts. The idea is to empower adults with disabilities through helping them share their stories, increase social opportunities, effectively communicate and advocate for systems change. *Speak Up!* was created through a joint collaboration with *Loudoun ENDependence*.

The art classes started in May and are taught by skilled art instructors and therapists. Each class provides new opportunities to try different mediums of art. *Expression Through Art* was created through a joint collaboration with *Birds of a Feather Art School*.

Paxton Campus offers other social opportunities for adults with disabilities monthly on our campus, such as dances, karaoke and bingo. If you or anyone you know may be interested in joining the *Next Chapter Book Club*, the *Speak Up!* program or *Expression Through Art* classes or learning more about our other activities and events, please contact Rachel Roseberry, her contact details are below.

In 1922, Rachel Paxton had a vision to turn her home and property into a safe and welcoming environment for underprivileged families. In 1967, a group of parents whose children had special needs formed The Arc of Loudoun, a non-profit to start a school for their children when no one else would. In 2010, those two visions combined when The Arc of Loudoun moved to the Paxton Campus. Since then, the Campus has grown into a full-service organization to provide an integrated and innovative learning

environment for all ages and abilities. Programs include The Aurora School, Open Door Learning Center preschool, STEP Up vocational training program for adults, and ALLY (“A Life Like Yours”) Advocacy Center, all devoted to serving people with disabilities and their families, as well as helping children of all abilities thrive in our community.

For more information, contact Rachel Roseberry, Communications Coordinator of Paxton Campus, at roseberry@paxtoncampus.org or by phone at 703-777-1939.

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