



# The Arc<sup>®</sup>

## Kent County

*Achieve with us.*

### TO FACILITATE IS TO MAKE EASIER



Hello! Debbie here. I am a good Person Centered Planning facilitator because I care about your choices and I want to do a good job for you. My favorite part of planning with you is listening to you and the people you chose to attend your meeting on how we can get you the support and services you need to achieve your goals.

It's kinda like my gardening! In this picture I am tending to my vegetable garden. This is the place I love because it's quiet and peaceful. I feel free outside in my garden where I plant seeds in the ground and watch them slowly sprout. You could say I am a nurturer.

I retired from Weiner Associates after 14 years of service as their receptionist, scheduler, and network administrator. After receiving my certificate of completion, I went to work at Portland High School as a Teacher Paraprofessional where I worked collaboratively with staff and special education students. In November 2014, I graduated from the Leaders in Policy Advocacy training program where I was supported to become a leader in the disability rights movement. I am a member of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, appointed by the Governor until September, 2017 and am currently pursuing a general associate's degree at Lansing Community College.

I met my husband on a blind date and have been married for 30 years. Together we have four children (3 girls and a boy). My son is on the autism spectrum with Asperger's Syndrome and was also diagnosed with non-verbal learning disorder and is A.D.D.-inattentive. He loves taking an average garden tractor and turning it into an articulated, 4-wheel-drive, ground crawling machine.

I have endured many challenges navigating the special education process for my son. My personal experiences have ignited a passion for promoting positive changes in this process and finding a way to help parents become inspired to be pro-active in their child's educational experience. For years I have admired the strides Dohn Hoyle has made for people with disabilities and believe that through his efforts and working with the staff at The Arc I can assist people with intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to have a voice.

What excites me the most about working for The Arc Kent County is promoting healthy relationships between school staff and parents. Attending meetings that will connect what we do with parents in the local communities. Hosting workshops and learning opportunities for parents to better understand their child's Individual Education Program, helping to empower parents to become strong advocates for their child. I also enjoy visiting with Intermediate School District staff in the five counties I serve as often as I can.

On the weekends I may be found cleaning the house, tending my gardens, playing with my 110lb St. Bernard, "Big Bernice" and three cats, "Mika", "Suki" and "Oreo" or sitting on my backyard patio sipping a hot cup of French vanilla coffee with a splash of almond milk. If you would like have me facilitate your Person Centered Plan contact me at 616-855-1988 or by email [Debbie@arckent.org](mailto:Debbie@arckent.org).

**The Arc Kent County**

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