



The possibilities are endless...

Meet Joe

While Joe was still a young child his parents Rita and Joseph sought help from The United Arc for Joe, who needed some extra support. With encouragement from his grandmother, Joe became a Cub Scout and later a Boy Scout. Today, Joe describes himself as a *“Jack of all trades and a scholar of all studies”*. He is a photographer, activist, scholar, and historian. Joe also works several days a week at Riff’s North in Turners Falls. He mops the floors and helps prepare the restaurant for the day. Joe and his family are a vibrant part of The United Arc and their community.



Photo Credit: Joe Parzych, 2018

He is a photographer

When Joe was six years old, he began learning photography from his grandfather. Watching his grandfather’s construction company, J.A. Parzych Excavating demolish an old building in Northampton inspired Joe to start his own photography career. He soon introduced himself to The Montague Reporter, starting a professional relationship that continues today.

Joe enjoys developing computer enhanced photography and drawing comic strips. He displayed his art at The United Arc Athol Open House in June 2017, and donated two of his photos to The United Arc 2017 Annual Gala & Auction!

He is an activist

In 2008, The Greenfield High School held a forum introducing a new state law to address bullying. Governor Baker and other state officials attended. Many parents stood up and spoke but Joe was the only student who did. He stood up in front of a full auditorium, and said, *“Finally, we have passed a law and we have freedom to speak about bullying...”*

Joe has been bullied himself. He says *“A lot of people get bullied and it increases dropping out of school and getting into trouble, and I encourage people not to let it get you down. I feel pretty good about the change around bullying and that it helps the self-esteem and encouragement for a face to keep smiling.”* Joe still has the best friends who helped him get through those experiences.



Photo Credit: Joe Parzych, 2018



The United Arc

The United Arc supports people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities in achieving the universal goals of inclusion, choice, and independence.

We provide services to individuals and families in Franklin, Hampshire, Hampden, and Worcester Counties of Massachusetts.

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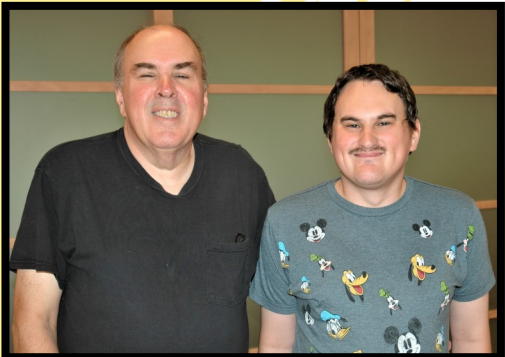


He is a scholar and historian

Joe loves to learn and he reads all genres of books. Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and Nicolas Tesla are among his heroes. After high school, Joe’s passion for learning led him to take classes in liberal arts and computer science at Greenfield Community College. He also completed a six week course at Greenfield and Montague Community TV, where he made a historical video about local senior citizens.

He is active in the community

Joe enjoys a wide variety of hobbies such as Legos and drafting. He plays the blues on his guitar and his record collection dates back to the 1940s. Joe is also very active in Friends in Common, a group sponsored by The United Arc for young people that holds dances and participates in community activities. As he stretches to continually redefine his full potential, Joe guides his life with a quote from the film Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. “I don’t believe in the no-win scenario,” the character Captain Kirk says, facing the supposedly impossible. “Risk is a business,” Joe observes.



Family

Joe’s mother, Rita was one of the original parents in The United Arc’s Positive Parenting Program. It began in 1985 and remains the only one of its kind in Massachusetts. One of the first activities was swimming at the YMCA. Rita, Joseph and their children Katie and Joe continue to participate in The United Arc activities such as the Annual Picnic and The United Arc Open Houses. Rita is still part of our lively Chat & Knit group.



Find Joe on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Jrparzych/>

Be part of the “us” that makes these achievements and so much more possible...

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