

Dear Friend,

My name is Rose and I hope you will help me to help others.

I am a self-advocate. This means that I speak on behalf of people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in helping to educate other people about our experiences, our wishes and our need to live full, productive lives. I speak at orientation for new employees at the Schoharie County ARC, at schools and churches.

Self Advocacy is very important to me. It gives me an opportunity to share my story and the story of people just like me.

I was born in March of 1948 in Woodstock, NY to a large family, in which I was one of 15 children. At that time, there were no educational opportunities for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. In 1949, at the age of 11 years old, I was sent to live at Rome State School (better known as the Rome State Custodial Asylum). People were treated terribly there. We were institutionalized. We were not given opportunities to learn to read or write. Our belongings were taken from us. We were not treated with respect or dignity. I was deinstitutionalized in 1974, after President Kennedy shut down Rome State School after visiting his sister Rosemary (who was also institutionalized at Rome State School) and being upset with the type of care we received.

In my lifetime, I have seen tremendous changes in the way people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities live and work in our communities. Today, I am able to do lots of things on my own. I have a job. I have worked at the Label Shopper for 13 years. I am learning to cook. I volunteer at the Everything Shoppe and help deliver meals to senior citizens with Meals on Wheels. I think my life has finally turned around. If I didn't have opportunities to come to the (Schoharie County) ARC, I would not have help to do these types of things.

Please help me speak out for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities by joining as a member of the Schoharie County ARC. Your membership helps us to have a stronger voice with our State Legislators, Governor Cuomo and national policy makers. Your membership demonstrates a community of interest that supports the rights and needs of people just like me.

Thank You,

Rose Astorville



Rose & Lydia Kulbida at the 'Legacy of Love' Gala to benefit the Schoharie County ARC.

**EVERY MEMBER COUNTS.
HELP US...
*Support. Educate. Advocate.***