

# The Arc NM Annual Awards Ceremony

## June 16, 2023



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Agency of Distinction (2)

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Community Service (2)

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Exemplary Educator

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Inclusive Employer

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Work Initiative

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Public Awareness Award (2)

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Tenacious Tommy Award

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Robert LeCompt, Jr Leadership Award

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The Bob Thomas Achievement Award

# AGENCY OF DISTINCTION

## Elevate the Spectrum Rio Rancho



Nominated by Jennifer Sanchez who says “ETS has been active in the community, advocating for people with autism and their families, while creating fun and inclusive events. They are always at the front lines for change and participate in policy making. Their Hero Bag program ensures first responders receive the tools and training to support individuals on the spectrum.”

## AGENCY OF DISTINCTION

### Every Ability Plays Project, Albuquerque

Nominated by Martina Rivera, EAPP feels that every child deserves a playful life, and the goal of the organization is to place accessible playground equipment for children of all abilities at every park in Albuquerque. Executive Director, Tonya Rivera, is a strong advocate for herself and others who have cerebral palsy, as well as other intellectual and physical disabilities. Mr. Rivera and her Board of Directors consistently demonstrate a commitment to inclusion for persons with disabilities.



**Every Ability Plays Project**

# COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Fabian Cordova, Albuquerque

Shana Heath has nominated Mr. Cordova and says that he is a good caregiver and does an amazing job of taking care of persons with disabilities in his home. Shana has been with Mr. Cordova for six years and has enjoyed her time with him. She feels that he deserves this award because “he is a great caregiver!”



# Community Service

Wendy Corry, Albuquerque

Jenny Bartos nominated Ms. Corry who has been an active leader for years, in many communities, but has focused her work and advocacy with the disability community. She has been a tremendous resource for individuals, families, support providers, and self-advocates, and her involvement spreads throughout New Mexico. She's been a huge part of NM Allies, People First, Las Cruces Advocates Friends Forever, and many more. We will miss her when she retires!



# EXEMPLARY EDUCATOR

Rep. Liz Thomson, Albuquerque

Nominated by Chris Leroi, Representative Thomson served as a physical therapist for children for over 20 years. As a legislator and mother of a child with autism, she has championed the rights of people with disabilities, working on improving education and advocating for other educators, especially for special education.



# INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER

Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), Albuquerque

The purpose of the DDC is to improve the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities and their families. Through their programs—Center for Self-Advocacy, Office of Guardianship, and the Federal Program—they promote advocacy, capacity building, and work to create systemic change.



NEW MEXICO  
Developmental  
Disabilities  
Council

# WORK INITIATIVE



Jacquie Mader, Albuquerque

Nominated by Rebecca Montoya, Ms. Mader is the Director of Guardianship at The Arc of New Mexico. Rebecca states “I am a general advocate and new to my position. Jacquie allowed me to shadow a day in the life of a guardian. I went with her to various appointment for our clients with disabilities. Jacquie is very knowledgeable, passionate, and on point!” She also mentions that her clients are very fond of her.



# PUBLIC AWARENESS AWARD

## Spirit & Nature Productions, Las Cruces

Nominated by Thea Kavanaugh, the Warrior League is a new, adapted T-ball league to meet the needs of children with disabilities. It's the first program of its kind in Las Cruces and required publicity, and Spirit & Nature Productions created a wonderful video that increased awareness and educated the public. The video showcased the incredible amount of community support generated by the league and Thea hopes it will change the narrative around disability and encourage others to increase access and reduce barriers.



# PUBLIC AWARENESS AWARD

Raul Turrieta, Silver City

Nominated by Vicki Galindo, Mr. Turrieta is an amazing MC, has never missed a Buddy Walk, he promotes inclusion on his radio show and serves as the Grant County Assessor Chief Deputy. His love for appearing in costumes and doing impressions pales in comparison for the love he has for his community. He is a U.S. Navy veteran, a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation New Mexican, father, and all-around wonderful human!



# TENACIOUS TOMMY AWARD

Laura Matthews, Albuquerque

Nominated by Chris Leroi, Laura is the epitome of the word “tenacious”! She consistently volunteers her time and effort to serve as a presenter, representing multiple groups, at every Arc of NM conference. She served on The Arc’s Board of Directors for several years, helped organize pizza parties, movie nights, and other special events for Arc staff, and is an amazing self-advocate!

Laura never stops fighting for the rights of people with disabilities, and works to ensure they’re seen, heard, respected, and appreciated.

*This award honors a self-advocate who tenaciously pursues goals outside of others’ expectations. He/she truly breaks the mold and defies the label of ‘disabled.’ This person is an individual who dares to be different and is not influenced by others’ opinions of what is possible and what is not. We award you for having the courage to be yourself and pursue your own lifestyle.*



# ROBERT LECOMPT, JR LEADERSHIP AWARD

Daniel Ekman, Albuquerque

Nominated by Rosalie DesAutel, Daniel has been an amazing leader serving as the Program Manager and IT Liaison in the DDC's Center for Self-Advocacy.

“**The New Mexico Center for Self Advocacy** is a place where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities go to meet, organize, work and train others on how to improve their quality of life. Our goal is to help and support people with developmental disabilities in becoming empowered, making their own decisions, speaking up for themselves and others, taking control of their own lives, creating awareness about disability issues and achieving maximum independence and quality of life.”

Daniel is an intelligent and helpful human, and kind to all he meets. He has consistently shown exceptional leadership in the community through activism and public policy work.

*This award honors an individual with an intellectual or developmental disability that has shown exceptional leadership in their community through community activism and/or public policy.*




# THE BOB THOMAS ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Vashad Frink, Albuquerque

Nominated by Clare Gallegos who has worked closely with Vashad to create a wellness presentation for the DDC and affiliated agencies. They have collaborated on writing a poem about advocacy and the importance of what it means to them. Vashad has demonstrated much creativity and leadership and he is a determined young person who cares deeply about people. He lends a hand to anyone in need and has exhibited

*The Award is given in memory of Bob Thomas and honors an individual with intellectual or developmental disability that has achieved much in their life despite their disability and other challenges.*





Congratulations to our  
award recipients!