



HARC, Inc.
Serving People with Intellectual
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 2010

Carlos Colon of Manchester, CT HARC's 2010 Advocate of the Year

Hartford, CT HARC, Inc. is very pleased to announce Carlos Colon of Manchester, CT as the recipient of its **2010 Advocate of the Year Award**. The award, which will be presented at HARC's 59th Annual Meeting on June 24, at Tumble Brook Country Club in Bloomfield, CT recognizes outstanding achievement in the areas of individual or systems advocacy. The award is open to any individual who has made special advocacy efforts resulting in the advancement of one of HARC's participants or the organization as a whole. Nominees involved in systems advocacy will have created change in one or more of the following areas: education, residential, recreation, employment, social or health services.

Carlos Colon, a former HARC participant and HARC board member from 2004-2009, is now employed by the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) as a Self Advocate Coordinator, to implement a variety of Self Advocate Leadership activities. The activities include: the coordination of regional self advocacy activities, the development and dissemination of materials written by and for self advocates, participation as a co-trainer in regional and statewide training activities, and participation on statewide and regional committees such as the Governor's DDS Advisory Committee, the North Region Advisory Committee and on a number

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of Connect-Ability Task Force Committees. In addition to those duties, Carlos is also a board member of the Youth Leadership Partnership, Inc.

John Houchin, Sr., DDS Regional Director for Connecticut's North Region adds, "Carlos also assists individual consumers in problem solving, and has been asked to speak with families, consumers, community members and private and public staff about self-determination and self advocacy initiatives in Connecticut."

Carlos initiated the development of and continues to lead HARC's Self Advocacy group, which just celebrated its one-year anniversary. The group meets one to two times a month and the meetings are attended by up to ten people. Carlos has invited several guest speakers, and the group has discussed such issues as healthy relationships, how to vote, and how to access ADA transportation.

According to Dory Michael, HARC's Director of Community Supports, "Carlos is the quintessential self advocate, a terrific role model for HARC's consumers, and a great choice for HARC's Advocate of the Year Award. He takes his job very seriously, and has been quite creative in the way he carries out his work. He even developed his own power point presentation on healthy relationships as the basis of one of our meetings. He is now brain-storming new ways to use that presentation to benefit other individuals and groups."

In addition to his work responsibilities, Carlos still volunteers in HARC's Elderly Enrichment Program, occasionally.

About HARC, Inc.

HARC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of people with intellectual disability and their families. It was founded in 1951 by families, long before community services were available and institutionalization was the only option. HARC is now a strong advocate for civil rights and opportunities, and a major provider of clinical and supportive services which span the entire lifetime: early intervention, respite care, family support, recreation, advocacy, employment and day programs, residential, elderly services and behavioral health and social services.

HARC currently operates 11 group homes and condominiums and 28 supported employment sites throughout Greater Hartford. HARC is a Community Investment Partner of United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut and serves Greater Hartford.

For further information about HARC or to purchase tickets to HARC's 59th Annual Meeting, June 24, 2010, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, Tumble Brook Country Club, Bloomfield, CT; \$35/ person; go to HARC's website: www.harc-ct.org <<http://www.harc-ct.org>> or call Jenna Rompelman at (860)218-6089.

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