



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Arc San Francisco Hosts Learning Lab Open House with Comcast NBCUniversal**

**The Arc San Francisco Learning Lab provides technology and computer literacy to adults with autism and developmental disabilities.**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – December 14, 2016 - The Arc San Francisco hosted an open house event today to spotlight a new Learning Lab that provides computers, instruction and support for adults with developmental disabilities. Sponsored by The Arc U.S. and Comcast NBCUniversal, the Learning Lab offers participants a semester-based program including instruction in basic computer skills, web-based job search, civic engagement, internet safety, social media and blogging.

The event included a tour conducted by lab students with participation by program sponsors, civic, education, corporate and community partners including representatives from Comcast NBCUniversal the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Human Resources and City College SF. Also attending were representatives from PG&E and the California Academy of Sciences, both Arc internship program sites.

Said The Arc SF Director of Education and Employment Kristen Pedersen, "Adults with developmental disabilities lack computer literacy and access to computers and online tools to navigate and succeed in today's world both personally and professionally. The Learning Lab fills a gap in that disparity. Our participants are learning to leverage technology to fight isolation, express themselves creatively, build life and career skills and grow their personal and professional networks. Having access to technology and technology education is the key to growing independence and inclusion. We are proud to be partnering with Comcast NBCUniversal to make this possible for our clients."

From employment and education to health and having fun, the Learning Lab at The Arc SF is helping to break barriers to online inclusion for people with disabilities through a centralized, supported resource.

#### **Goals for 2016 Learning Lab include:**

To provide meaningful access to technology for participants, focusing on both general computer literacy skills-building and leveraging technology for employment and job search. In addition, class content will continue to develop based on the feedback received from participants and instructors.

Data points:

- Number of learning labs sessions: 55
- Number of total unique participants for all of the Learning Labs combined :28
- Topics covered (all): Internet Safety, Microsoft Basics, Creative Writing/Blogging, LinkedIn and Online Job Search, Email Basics, Civic Engagement and Voter Rights
- Since the Lab opened, learners have been very engaged, and having the opportunity to provide feedback at the end of each session has allowed for Arc instructors to make enhancements in real time. The Learning Lab model has also allowed for flexible engagement for individuals who may only want to take one class rather than commit to a full semester. The Arc has benefited greatly from the improvement of our technical equipment, making our computer based classes more accessible to individuals with a variety of support needs.

### **2017 Goals**

- Create laptop lending library to support student participants
- Offer client-led basic computer skill classes during after-hours programs
- Establish small group instruction for clients using assistive technology

### **About The Arc San Francisco**

The Arc San Francisco is a nonprofit education and workforce development center for adults with developmental disabilities (DD) serving adults in San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties. For over 60 years, The Arc has been widely recognized for its innovation in education and career programs as well as independent living services, health advocacy and a broad range of arts and recreation opportunities. The Arc SF supports individuals with autism, Down syndrome and other disabilities to meet the challenges of adulthood while achieving personal goals and lifelong success. The Arc SF's affiliations with over 200 business, education, technology and health partners enables the organization to provide successful internships and employment opportunities while offering a more diverse, enriching life experience for those served.

For more information, visit [www.thearcsf.org](http://www.thearcsf.org)

### **About Comcast NBCUniversal and The Comcast Foundation**

By concentrating investment in the areas of digital literacy, community service and building tomorrow's leaders, the Comcast Foundation strives to empower communities nationwide. Since 1999, The Comcast Foundation has contributed more than \$190 million to help strengthen the communities it serves.

[Philanthropy & Partnerships](#)

### **The Arc U.S.**

The Arc, or The Arc U.S., advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, Autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Cerebral Palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc has a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis. Info at:

[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)



The Arc SF Learning Lab: Building a LinkedIn profile



The Arc SF Learning Lab: a full house all day long