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**CONTACT:** Ray Weiss  
410-727-6855 or  
rweiss@stantoncomm.com

**PARENTS GET A BREAK FROM THE KIDS WITH  
THE ARC OF BALTIMORE'S PARENTS DAY OUT**

**BALTIMORE, MD (2/28/08) ---** What do most parents want more than anything? If you answered a break from the kids (especially on a Saturday), a lot of parents would probably nod their heads in agreement.

Well a break from the kids is exactly what The Arc of Baltimore had in mind when it developed "Parents Day Out." Held in conjunction with St. Matthew Catholic Church, Parents Day Out offers parents with special needs children a chance to take their youngsters to a safe, supported environment where they can interact with children who are not disabled.

Staffed by volunteers who have been trained to ensure the safety of children with developmental disabilities, Parents Day Out is a win-win for both parents and their children, according to Joseph Anastasio, Assistant Executive Director of The Arc of Baltimore's Family and Children's Services.

"Parents Day Out allows parents to run errands or just take a breather from the kids, while for children, it means a chance to enjoy age-appropriate activities shoulder-to-shoulder with children who don't have disabilities," explains Anastasio.

Activities conducted for the children include art, mat time, parachute and tunnel games, running, reading, movies, manipulative toys, and, of course, snack time.

Anastasio notes that The Arc of Baltimore's underlying goal in creating Parents Day Out was "to establish a sustainable, ongoing program that can be a model for other faith-based and community groups. We want to make a special effort to reach out to underserved or minority families, as well as families with limited English language proficiency."

Based on the community reaction to date, Parents Day Out is a hit. When it debuted in June 2007, seven children and 11 volunteers participated. Attendance at the next session in October jumped to 17 children and 13 volunteers. Even more children and volunteers are expected when the next Parents Day Out is held at St. Matthew Catholic Church, 5401 Loch Raven Boulevard in northeast Baltimore, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. next Saturday, March 8.

"We had a great time, unencumbered for once," remarked one Mom whose family participated in the last Parents Day Out. "Usually we do things solo so that one of us can stay home with (our daughter). It was so nice for us to spend some time together."

Media interested in more information about Parents Day Out or reporting on the activities live on Saturday, March 8, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. should contact: Ray Weiss, 410-727-6855 or [rweiss@stantoncomm.com](mailto:rweiss@stantoncomm.com).

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