

DESERT ARC WELCOMES NEW PRESIDENT/CEO, MICHELLE PETERS

Desert Arc's Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Michelle Peters will be stepping into the role of President/CEO, effective April 1, 2025. She will succeed Richard Balocco, who is retiring after 17 years of dedicated leadership.

Michelle brings over 30 years of experience working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Most recently, she served as Chief Operating Officer for Emmaus Homes in Missouri, where her leadership enhanced service delivery, improved operations, and strengthened team productivity.

Her career also includes leadership roles within the Missouri Department of Mental Health, as well as board positions with organizations advocating for individuals with disabilities. Her deep commitment to empowering people with disabilities aligns seamlessly with Desert Arc's mission, ensuring continued growth and excellence in service.

We look forward to the positive impact Michelle will bring to Desert Arc and invite you to join us in welcoming her to our community!



DESERT ARC HOSTS EXCLUSIVE PRE-RELEASE SCREENING OF THE 17%

On March 27, Desert Arc hosted an exclusive pre-release screening of *The 17%*, a powerful documentary about Collette Divitto, an entrepreneur with Down Syndrome who founded Colletty's Cookies in Boston after facing repeated job rejections. The film's title reflects the harsh reality that only 17% of individuals with disabilities who are willing and able to work are actually hired.

The screenings took place at Desert Arc's Palm Desert Campus, with two sessions at 10:30 AM and 12:30 PM. Attendees, including clients, families, staff, and board members, had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A with *The 17%* director Aaron Johnson, a Chapman University film student. One of the sessions also featured a special virtual appearance by Collette, where she shared insights into her journey and mission.

Desert Arc was honored to share this inspiring story with the community, reinforcing its commitment to advocating for people with disabilities and expanding employment opportunities. Attendees enjoyed the film while engaging in meaningful discussions about inclusion, resilience, and the power of self-determination.

Following the pre-release at Desert Arc, *The 17%* had its official premiere at the American Documentary and Animation Film Festival (AmDocs) in Palm Springs on March 28.

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported this incredible event!

SAVE THE DATE **MONDAY**
APRIL 7, 2025



**Eagle Falls Golf Course
at Fantasy Springs Resort Casino**

Monday, April 7, 2025

11 am - BBQ Lunch/Player Check-In

12:30 pm - Shotgun Scramble Format

5 pm - Buffet Dinner

Reservations

760.404.1368 or DesertArc.org



MORONGO BASIN

Hi Desert Star
56-445 29Palms Hwy

2nd Monday / Month

April 14



SHRED IT
AND FORGET IT

COACHELLA VALLEY

PD Campus
73255 Country Club Dr

3rd Friday / Month

April 18



Mon

Tues

Wed

Thurs

Fri

April 20th
is Easter
Sunday

Easter Sunday, celebrated on April 20 in 2025, marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a cornerstone of Christian faith. It's a time of renewal, representing hope, rebirth, and new beginnings. Families come together to celebrate with church services, festive meals, and traditions like Easter egg hunts. This holiday serves as a reminder of faith, love, and the importance of spending meaningful moments with those we care about.



¼ cup of fruit ½ cups of vegetables *1 oz. Grain 2 oz. cheese	1 Mashed Potato Chicken Bowl with gravy, corn and cheese. Served with Fruit.	2 Chicken Salad Sandwich with shredded chicken, red onion, celery, lettuce, tomato on a croissant. Served with Sun Chips and fruit.	3 Chicken Cesar Pasta Salad with lettuce, cherry tomatoes, croutons, parmesan cheese and Cesar dressing. Served with fruit.	4 Pizza Party Sponsored by: 
7 Italian Salad with pepperoni, salami, mozzarella cheese, cucumbers and Italian dressing. Served with garlic bread and fruit.	8 Ground Beef Taco Salad with shredded lettuce, sauce, cheddar cheese, black beans and tortilla chips. Served with fruit.	9 Chicken Alfredo Pasta with grilled chicken and broccoli. Served with garlic bread and fruit.	10 Cheeseburger Sliders with ground beef, American cheese and coleslaw. Served with pretzels and fruit.	11 Turkey and cheese sandwich with lettuce, tomato, mayo, and mustard. Served with Sun Chips and fruit.
14 Ham and Provolone Cheese Croissant. Served with a side salad and fruit.	15 Mashed Potato Chicken Bowl with gravy, corn and cheese. Served with Fruit.	16 Chicken Salad Sandwich with shredded chicken, red onion, celery, lettuce, tomato on a croissant. Served with Sun Chips and fruit.	17 Chicken Cesar Pasta Salad with lettuce, cherry tomatoes, croutons, parmesan cheese and Cesar dressing. Served with fruit.	18 Honey Mustard Chicken Mixed Salad with bacon, tomatoes, corn, cucumber, onion, avocados and honey mustard dressing. Served with bread & fruit.
21 Italian Salad with pepperoni, salami, mozzarella cheese, cucumbers and Italian dressing. Served with garlic bread and fruit.	22 Ground Beef Taco Salad with shredded lettuce, sauce, cheddar cheese, black beans and tortilla chips. Served with fruit.	23 Chicken Alfredo Pasta with grilled chicken and broccoli. Served with garlic bread and fruit.	24 Cheeseburger Sliders with ground beef, American cheese and coleslaw. Served with pretzels and fruit.	25 Turkey and cheese sandwich with lettuce, tomato, mayo, and mustard. Served with Sun Chips and fruit.
28 Ham and Provolone Cheese Croissant. Served with a side salad and fruit.	29 Mashed Potato Chicken Bowl with gravy, corn and cheese. Served with Fruit.	30 Chicken Salad Sandwich with shredded chicken, red onion, celery, lettuce, tomato on a croissant. Served with Sun Chips and fruit.	Did You Know? Mushrooms are packed with antioxidants, vitamins D and B, and minerals like selenium, supporting immune and heart health. They're one of the few plant-based sources of vitamin D, which is essential for bone health and immunity.	

SHINING STAR

For the past ten years, Naomie has been a valued member of the Desert Arc community, where she has built lasting friendships and embraced new opportunities that have helped her grow both personally and professionally. Her journey is one of determination, kindness, and a willingness to take on new challenges.

One of the things Naomie loves most about Desert Arc is the opportunity to meet new people. "It means a lot because Desert Arc gives me opportunities and allows me to be myself," she shares. With the support of staff members like Karri, who has played a significant role in guiding her, Naomie has gained confidence in her abilities and continues to reach for new goals.

Recently, Naomie took an exciting step forward in her career by starting a paid internship at Acrisure Arena. Her hard work and dedication quickly stood out, earning her a Stellar Performance certificate for both February and March 2025. This recognition is a testament to her strong work ethic and commitment to success.

Outside of work, Naomie enjoys spending time with friends, selling Avon products, watching movies, and playing video games. A talented singer and dancer, she dreams of visiting Hawaii one day to experience its music, dance, and delicious food. She also has a long-term goal of attending college, furthering her education, and expanding her opportunities.

When asked about the most important lesson she has learned, Naomie keeps it simple yet meaningful: "To be fun and kind to others." Her positive spirit and determination continue to inspire those around her, making her a shining example of what Desert Arc is all about.



Naomie (left) proudly displays her "Stellar Performance" certificate with Yvonne Davis from Acrisure Arena.



Tip of the Month

A quick 5-minute walk outside each day can boost your mood and energy for hours. Take a break and enjoy the fresh air!



DESERT ARC AND PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LAUNCH LANDMARK EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP

Last month, Desert Arc and Palm Springs International Airport (PSP) officially announced an exciting new partnership to promote inclusive community employment. The announcement was made at a press conference held at PSP, highlighting a groundbreaking five-year, \$1.6 million contract that provides employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through Desert Arc's Landscape Maintenance division.

Under this agreement, Desert Arc's team is responsible for ground maintenance, landscaping, and trash removal in the post-security courtyard area of the airport. With an annual allocation of \$320,000 for labor and materials, this partnership funds wages for employees who work seven days a week to ensure that PSP remains a beautiful and welcoming space for millions of travelers.

Desert Arc extends its sincere gratitude to Ariel Rubio, Manager of the Landscape Maintenance Division, and his hardworking team—Raul, Rudy, Kyle, Ronald, and Adam—who have embraced this opportunity with skill and dedication.

The press conference featured remarks from PSP Executive Director of Aviation Harry Barrett, Jr.; City of Palm Springs Mayor Ron deHarte; Councilmember Jeffrey Bernstein; and Desert Arc President/CEO Richard Balocco. Also in attendance were Desert Arc Board Chair Doug Watson and Angelique Ontiveros. The event attracted significant media attention, with coverage from KESQ, NBC, The Desert Sun, Univision, and The Palm Springs Post.

This partnership underscores Desert Arc's commitment to expanding employment opportunities for people with disabilities while contributing to the local community in a meaningful way. We look forward to the continued success of this collaboration!