



# ARC Lights the Way for Autism

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This year's National Service Project for HOSA is Autism Speaks. Autism, which affects 1 in 166 individuals, is a developmental disorder that impairs social skills. The disorder, which can be mild or very severe, makes it difficult for a person to communicate and relate to others. It is also associated with repetitive behaviors and the need to follow strict routines. Autism is the nation's fastest-growing developmental disability but receives less than 5% of the research funding for less widespread childhood disorders.



The ARC Light of Sedgwick County, located in Wichita, Kansas, is a non-profit organization that provides services and support for individuals with developmental disorders (autism, Down syndrome, epilepsy, mental retardation, cerebral palsy) and their families. The ARC (formerly the Association of Retarded Citizens) provides services including Youth Education & Summer Socialization Program (Y.E.S.S.), a ten-week summer program for children with developmental disorders, and various education presentations to create awareness of developmental diseases. The ARC is funded by United Way of the Plains, Sedgwick County, and donations from the community.

A popular fundraiser held annually is the "Lights on St. Paul." The ARC creates a Christmas lights display consisting of over 700,000 lights and more than 100 displays spanning three blocks to benefit their programs. It's free to the community, but donations are greatly appreciated. One cold winter night in December, 2006, the HOSA chapter of Wichita West High School volunteered to help collect donations from the dozens of cars filled with families driving through the three block exhibition

At this time, there is no way to detect autism and there is no cure. More research funding and community awareness to the prevalence of autism is needed to lead to a cure. For more information visit [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org) and [www.arc-sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.arc-sedgwickcounty.org).

