

'CELEBRATING THE PROMISE'



The Arc of the Ozarks' Autism and Neurodevelopmental Center at 2648 S. Nettleton Ave. celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting on Friday. PHOTOS BY NATHAN PAPES/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

Arc of the Ozarks, Springfield community cuts ribbon on autism center

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Missouri legislators, Springfield council members and Missouri's First Lady Teresa Parson gathered Friday morning to celebrate the opening of Arc of the Ozarks' Autism and Neurodevelopmental Center, 2648 S. Nettleton Ave.

"We're celebrating the promise that this facility holds for enhancing the lives of individuals and families touched by autism and by neurodevelopmental challenges," said Matt Morrow, Springfield Chamber of Commerce president and CEO.

The center will serve children and families through diagnostic evaluations, behavioral analysis, psychological/psychiatric services and speech, occupational, physical and specialty



Angie Brenner, deputy division director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities at The Missouri Department of Mental Health, crawls through a tunnel used for physical therapy while on a tour of the new Arc of the Ozarks' Autism and Neurodevelopmental Center at 2648 S. Nettleton Ave. on Friday.

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Missouri First Lady Teresa Parson speaks before the ribbon cutting for the new Arc of the Ozarks' Autism and Neurodevelopmental Center at 2648 S. Nettleton Ave. on Friday. PHOTOS BY NATHAN PAPES/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

Center

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therapy services. Morrow said that the center aims to provide “multi-disciplinary assessments” for more than 500 individuals this year. Patients can work with the center from 12 months old through adulthood.

In addition to the health care impact, Mayor Ken McClure noted, the center also creates jobs for Springfield.

The center is a collaboration between Arc of the Ozarks, Mercy Hospital and Missouri State University. Support from local organizations and government, legislative representatives, the Missou-

ri Department of Mental Health and the Governor’s Office was crucial for ensuring the success of the center, said Mike Powers, president of Arc of the Ozarks.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints made a \$46,000 donation on behalf of Teresa Parson’s non-profit, the Moving Missouri Forward Foundation, which funded chairs and cabinets for two exam rooms as well as equipment for the occupational therapy/physical therapy gymnasium, Parson said.

Susan Szuch reports on health and food for the Springfield News-Leader. Follow her on X, formerly known as Twitter, at @szuchsm. Story idea? Email her at sszuch@gannett.com.



State Representatives Alex Riley and Melanie Stinnett present a proclamation to Tim Dygon, executive vice president at The Arc of the Ozarks, before the ribbon cutting for the new Ark of the Ozarks' Autism and Neurodevelopmental Center at 2648 S. Nettleton Ave. on Friday.