

Winter 2018



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM DAY ONE

On September 9, 1958, the Montgomery County Association for Retarded Children was incorporated. That same month, the organization launched a nursery school for children with disabilities, the first of its kind in Montgomery County. The people leading this drive for children with disabilities to have equal opportunities included the first Executive Director, G.J. Thompson, Jr. and the second Board President and later Executive Director Idabelle Riblet (top).

Children ages 3-6 enrolled in MCARC's cooperative school, where parents assisted in the classrooms and were given opportunities to participate in family enrichment sessions. Enrollment quickly expanded from the original class of seven children at Cedar Lane church to 50 children in four classes at two locations. The children participated in a variety of activities designed to expose them to new experiences and to prepare them for success (middle).



On August 20, 1960, MCARC Day Center opened for teens and young adults, and with funds raised by Jaycees and others, a building was purchased on Norris Drive to house this initiative in 1963 (bottom). The program was heavily oriented toward activities designed to improve physical coordination and to make each individual more self-reliant. The "school day" included art, shop work, music, math, physical education, self-care, personal hygiene, speech therapy and daily chores.

It wasn't until November 29, 1975 that Congress passed the Education of Handicapped Children Act guaranteeing a "free and appropriate education" to all children. Prior to this time, only segregated special education classes were available to limited numbers of students.

Since its inception, The Arc Montgomery County has been leading the way toward independence and inclusion for children and youth of all ages.



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