

RESPIRE COORDINATION—*Extra Support When Caregivers Need It*

Caregiving is a labor of love, but it is a demanding job. Many families who care for loved ones at home need occasional breaks, and these breaks are called “respite.” If you reside in Montgomery County and are the unpaid, primary caregiver for an adult or child with disabilities, a child with challenging behaviors, or a frail senior citizen, you may apply for respite coordination from The Arc Montgomery County. Disabilities includes intellectual/developmental disabilities and functional disabilities which limit activities of daily living and require ongoing support, like cancer, MS, and traumatic brain injury.

Respite coordination provides a subsidy to offset the cost of respite care, allowing the caregiver to take a short break. Respite care can be provided for a few hours, a day, a weekend, or sometimes longer. However, respite care is not a substitute for ongoing child/adult care, school, or any other funded program. If a family qualifies for respite hours, those hours can be used in the home, or for therapeutic programs, camps, adult medical day programs, or overnight stays at a respite facility.

In order to qualify for respite coordination, you must live in the same household as the person you support. Income restrictions have been lifted for children and adults using respite care through June 30, 2021, and there are never income restrictions for seniors. However, families receiving county, state, or federal funding for in-home supports/services, DDA personal supports, or other Medicaid-waiver funding are not eligible for respite.

The Arc Montgomery County’s Respite team does not provide respite care directly, but instead connects families to providers who can meet their needs. Julia Abate, Respite Administrator, explains, “We understand that every respite client has individual needs. Although people think of respite as a service for seniors only, it serves people of all ages. The Arc works with a large consortium of agencies that can meet a broad spectrum of support needs for seniors, adults, and children.”

In recent months, the COVID-19 crisis has impacted individual families in different ways. For example, 650 families are enrolled in The Arc Montgomery County’s Respite program, but this year only 300 are using their hours because they are concerned about having people in their homes. Of those 300 families, 125 have requested *more* hours because they are isolated and supporting people with significant needs.

Continued on page 2



Achieve with us.®

Connecting people of all ages
and abilities with their communities
to build inclusive and fulfilling lives.

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The Arc Montgomery County

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From Our NEW Chief Executive Officer



I am so appreciative of all the well wishes I have received as I begin a new journey as Chief Executive Officer for The Arc Montgomery County. It's really not my journey, though. It's The Arc's journey and we have a long road ahead of us.

As we emerge from the pandemic, we must redesign supports to adapt to the changes that have taken place in the last year. The children we support are once again adapting to in-person learning but school is very different than it used to be. Many of the adults we support have not left their homes in over a year and may be reluctant to resume their pre-pandemic routines. Many of the strides toward inclusion that were made over the last decade have unfortunately been lost as people isolated out of necessity.

In the upcoming year, we will embark on a new strategic plan. Many components of the strategic plan will focus on what is important to and for the people we support and their families. We will continue to create additional opportunities for our employees to grow professionally, and we must also examine racial inequities to ensure we are inclusive in every way.

Some of the journey has already begun as we have redesigned our infrastructure. We have developed a road map so we can better utilize technology to make our employees' work more efficient. We are creating a new department to develop opportunities for new partnerships and revenue sources. We have outsourced nursing services to enhance the health of the people we support.

The journey will be challenging and we may hit a few bumps along the way. But as we have seen in the past year, The Arc Montgomery County is resilient. We will persevere and together will move forward.

-Daria Cervantes, CEO

RESPIRE COORDINATION

Continued from page 1

Respite's small, hardworking team of three people helps these families find solutions tailored to their changing needs. As Abate notes, "It takes a village to thrive in challenging times. Respite Coordination and its consortium can be that village."



Abate is quick to praise our consortium members as wonderful community partners during the pandemic. These organizations have helped The Arc by providing PPE, training staff on its proper use, and consulting on vaccination issues.

To apply or learn more about Respite Coordination, visit the Respite page of our website under **What We Do**, or email Respite@arcmontmd.org. Completed applications may be submitted by mail or secure (password protected) email. Please include all supporting documents as required. Hand-delivered applications cannot be accepted.

All FY21 Respite Coordination applications must be submitted no later than April 30, 2021. The months of May and June will be dedicated to renewing respite applications for currently-enrolled families. Applications for FY22 will be available beginning July 1. ■

Coffee & Conversation

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS NETWORKING

TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2021 | 8-9 AM | VIRTUAL



Workshops to expand your knowledge. Connections to expand your network.

Build your own network alongside Montgomery County business leaders while making a difference in the lives of nearly 1,100 children, youth, adults and seniors supported by The Arc Montgomery County.

Tickets \$20

Includes participation in one workshop and one networking breakout group, which you will select approximately a week in advance. Purchase a ticket by May 14 and receive a customized swag box to enhance your experience!

Benefitting The Arc Montgomery County

Learn how we connect people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities to their community, to build inclusive and fulfilling lives.

**Sponsorships & Tickets available online at
www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org**

Contact Deborah Mark, DeborahM@arcmontmd.org, 301.984.5777 x1245, for more information.



Presented by  HUB

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Profiles of Exceptional Staff

Divine Metuge
Direct Support Professional
Inclusive Living Services



Zahra Saramat
Associate Teacher
Children & Youth Services



Brenda Powers
Direct Support Professional
Employment & Meaningful Day Services



Flor Will
Support Services Counselor
Inclusive Living Services



How long have you worked at The Arc Montgomery County?

For 9 months.

Since October 2015.

For fourteen years.

Five years.

What inspired you to work in the field of developmental disabilities?

I love to help people with special needs conquer the daily challenges life can throw their way.

My niece has autism and I wanted to understand her and learn more ways to interact with her.

I was inspired by the idea of providing care and support for those who need care the most.

I find it rewarding. It's a privilege to provide support to someone who needs it the most and inspiring to know you can make a difference.

What has been your greatest challenge at The Arc Montgomery County?

Working by myself with three individuals has been my greatest challenge and kept me busy.

This was my first job experience in the US, so everything was new. All it took for me to feel comfortable and confident was time and dedication in the classroom at KFICCC.

My greatest challenge has probably been adapting to different personalities and behaviors.

Handling the physical demands. Extending patience and understanding, as well as being physically fit, helps me cope with this challenge.

What has been your greatest success at The Arc Montgomery County?

Seeing individuals reach their goals, improve self-confidence, and address any internal struggles that hold them back has been my greatest success.

That I have a profound impact on someone's life. That I am providing care and support to someone who needs it most.

I love my work, but also find great accomplishment in the professional certifications I attain through The Arc.

Caring for people with special needs is so fulfilling. It reminds me to appreciate the simple things in life and realize what matters the most.

What have you learned since starting work with The Arc Montgomery County?

I have learned people with disabilities need help from professionals to overcome physical and psychological difficulties and develop their capacities in various fields.

That each day is different from the next. I'm constantly being challenged to learn something new about myself and children in my care.

I've learned how important people with disabilities are. They require lots of support and attention but want the same things out of life as you and me.

I have learned to focus on people's ability more than their disability. They are able to cheer me up in their own special ways.

What advice would you give to a new staff member?

There will be days that challenge you, but many more when you know you have made a real difference in someone's life. It's a wonderful job!

Always stay positive. Also, be open to new opportunities.

Be strong! You have an important job caring for people with special needs.

Enjoy your work. Love your job!

What would other people be surprised to learn about you?

I believe working in support is a privilege, not just a job.

That I bungee jump! (Even I am surprised by that!)

Just that I'm a very responsible individual who cares deeply for others.

I keep memorabilia and keepsakes for decades.

Thank You for Supporting The Arc Montgomery County!

These individuals and organizations generously, donated from July 1–December 31, 2020

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Tributes

In Memory Of Carrol Cline, Janet Collins, Leah Collins, Edward Thomas Gardner, Frank & Geraldine Lee, Francis Obi Obioha, Mark Pickens, Johnny Slavcoff, David Ventura ■

In Honor Of Sandy & Julius Gaal, Thomas Hwang, Tracy & Margaret Mulligan, Zach & Toby Pond ■

INCLUSIVE LIVING SERVICES

Inclusive Living Services continues to support 115 people in Community Living (residential) and 108 people in Personal Supports, although only 55 are currently using services. The holidays were celebrated safely at home (bottom, right). Silver Spring Cares provided a large number of meals for our homes through their Casseroles for a Cause program (top, right). This is an opportunity for the community to show support for our work.

Although Community Living homes continue to be closed to visitors, discussions are occurring on how to safely resume family visits. Nearly all people supported in Community Living have been vaccinated for COVID-19, as have nearly 1/3 of employees who provide direct support services. Nursing services have been transitioned to Dimensional Health Care and has already proven beneficial to the quality of support being provided.

Personal Supports are being providing in people's homes and virtually. Because some people are not using services, those employees are covering shifts in our homes. Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) continues to be monitored as issues are present within the state's LTSS system. ■



Want to make a difference?
Help us change lives.

Join our Board or a Board Committee!

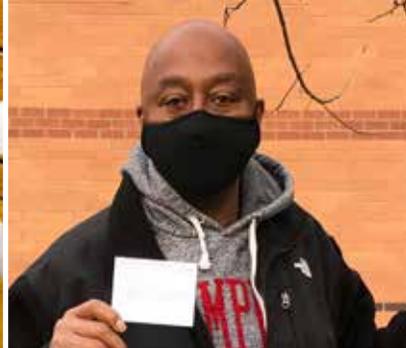
The Arc Montgomery County needs passionate, diverse, and experienced Board and Board Committee members to help us fulfill our mission of connecting people of all ages and abilities with their communities to build inclusive and fulfilling lives.

We're looking for community members, neighbors, siblings of people with disabilities, self-advocates, and professionals who will work together to make policies and provide strategic direction and oversight. We specifically seek individuals with successful fundraising and marketing backgrounds, or who would make our board and board committees more diverse.

The time commitment is 2-6 hours per month, spent attending meetings, participating in committee work, and being an ambassador for The Arc.

Interested candidates will complete an application and be vetted by our Governance Committee. Board and Board Committee members serve without pay. Applications are accepted at any time.

Interested in learning more? Email us at GovernanceCommittee@arcmontmd.org



I'm Vaccinated...

*to protect myself and my family
to protect the people we support
to follow the science and safety protocols
to lead the way into a healthier new year!*

A year has passed since the nation's first recorded COVID-19 cases. It's been a hard year for the I/DD community, and we've welcomed the nationwide push to provide COVID-19 vaccinations. In January and February, Governor Hogan moved Maryland through Phases 1A and 1B of vaccine roll out, meaning that The Arc Montgomery County's employees and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were eligible for the vaccine. In the early weeks, however, demand for the vaccine outpaced supply. With time, more vaccination sites opened in the county and state, and the government contracted with pharmacy chains like CVS to administer vaccines.

The Arc Montgomery County's staff are frontline, essential workers. Every day, they enter our homes and childcare center and work with a vulnerable population. Ensuring their access to the vaccine has been a top priority. Our Human Resources Department facilitated the process of accessing Montgomery County vaccination appointments for our employees. Today, we are happy to report that a large number of our employees and the people we support have received the vaccine.

When asked why they chose to be vaccinated, many employees noted family members who have struggled with the virus and its aftermath, some cited their own health concerns, and all mentioned the need to protect the individuals we support. Overwhelmingly, our staff see vaccinations as the best way forward into a year of greater hope and healing.

In recent weeks, CVS pharmacy came to our homes and offered the vaccine to residents. Today, nearly all of our residents have had at least one dose of the vaccine, and most have had two. We cannot overstate how important this is. People with developmental disabilities often have comorbidities and complex health concerns, so they are especially vulnerable to poor outcomes from COVID-19. During the pandemic, the people we support have stayed in their homes as much as possible. While this has provided some measure of safety, the upending of normal routines and interactions has been hard on everyone. The vaccine will not only protect the people we support, but it may allow them some freedom to go back into the community in the months ahead, to see family members, and to share hugs.

The Arc Montgomery County has done everything in its power to expedite vaccinations for all employees and people supported. Science tells us that this is the surest way out of the pandemic and into a brighter future, so we are eager to do our part. We urge everyone to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as they become eligible. ■

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

KFICCC continues to support 101 children and has just been cleared to move to full capacity. On St. Patrick's Day, some leprechauns made a mess in Room 2 overnight (right), pulling out all of the green tools, markers and puzzle pieces. They left shamrock glitter everywhere and a note with clues to a puzzle. The children worked together to solve the puzzle and found the leprechauns had left them new play power tools for their woodshop, plus shamrock napkins, cookies and more glitter! The children were thoroughly enchanted.



Due to under-enrollment of students in Pre-K as a result of the pandemic, MSDE is giving grantees like The Arc the opportunity to provide a summer Pre-K program. The accreditation with MSDE continues to move slowly forward, but no guidance has been provided on when



accreditation visits will occur. After All is supporting six students, but that will hopefully increase as students return to school. ■



EMPLOYMENT & DAY SERVICES

The Meaningful Day program continues to be closed due to pandemic restrictions. Virtual supports and limited in-home supports continue to occur. Discussions are ongoing with regard to phased-in program reopening guidelines.

Most Employment sites have reopened and many people supported have returned to work, but some people have chosen not to return at this time.

Direct Support Professionals from the Meaningful Day program continue to cover daytime shifts in the homes. Some are also covering evening or weekend shifts.

Lawncare has resumed operations after the winter hiatus, and a partnership with Easter Seals is being discussed, to increase the scale of these operations. ■

STAFF TENURE RECOGNITION

On Wednesday, February 3, 2021, we recognized 37 employees for their dedicated service for individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, in five-year benchmark periods for the calendar year of 2020. This year's ceremony was held virtually due to pandemic safety restrictions. Each employee received a commemorative certificate and program, a custom-designed t-shirt, and a DoorDash gift card since we could not host our usual banquet.



40
YEARS
Joyce Taylor

Joyce Taylor's tenure at The Arc Montgomery County spans 40 years and numerous roles. From transportation manager to Director of V&D to Executive Director, Joyce has worn many hats and embraced each role as an opportunity to further The Arc's mission of inclusion and community building.



25
YEARS
Justina Nelson

A DSP for 25 years, Justina Nelson puts the best interests of the people she supports at the forefront of all decisions. She believes elevating the strengths of people we support, so the larger community can see the value of their contributions, is essential.



20
YEARS
Constance Ude

After 20 years, Constance Ude still loves her work as a DSP. She views the people she supports as family—and for some of them, she is the only family they have. She loves being an advocate, ensuring that people are comfortable and fulfilled in the lives they are living.

15
YEARS

Elizabeth Baker
Dorothy Bruce
Patricia John
Gregory Jones
Mary Kouko
Rose Ogiata
Shelda Phillip
Carl Simpson
Modinat Solomon

10
YEARS

Lashawn Bell
Douglas Clarke
Ndeye Dieng
Alimamy Jabbie
Deborah Mark
Cynthia Marwolo
Gabriel Mensah
Chidinma Nwosu
Chinwe Umezurike
Jude Williamson

5
YEARS

Rachel Dawo
Bernadette Fontem
Kelli Hunter-Bennett
Leslie Lopez
Gladys Mack
Roderick Mostacho
Melicia Nero
Victoria Nkrumah
James O'Donnell
Eunice Ofori
Dominic Pelegrin
Zahra Saramat
Kodjo Tchamegni
Karen Thompson
Alvaro Torrez Nogales



Kensington's Best Kept Secret

URBAN THRIFT

Open Daily 11 am to 6 pm!

**10730 Connecticut Avenue in Kensington
301.933.5666**

Urban Thrift just got a face lift! Or should we say a truck lift? If you see this colorful lady on the side of a truck, it's sure to be Urban Thrift supporting The Arc Montgomery County's mission.

What makes Urban Thrift so special? Well—the specials, of course. Every Monday is Senior Discount day with 40% off for seniors. Every Wednesday shoppers can take 30% off a purchase of \$50 or more. And there are great deals every weekend too!

It's Retail—Reimagined



*Our profit supports The Arc
Montgomery County.*

Follow Us



NEW CEO APPOINTED

The Arc Montgomery County Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment Daria Cervantes as Chief Executive Officer, effective April 1. Cervantes was selected after a nationwide search, from a field of over 130 candidates. She graduated from The George Washington University and has worked for The Arc Montgomery County for over 30 years. Cervantes started as a Direct Support Professional and ascended to Director of Vocational & Day Services, and then Chief Operating Officer. During her tenure, she facilitated the process of integrating people receiving support services into inclusive community-based activities and ensured county contracts held by The Arc paid minimum wage to people with disabilities.

Cervantes is driven by her unshakable belief that people with disabilities deserve the same opportunities and the same respect as people without disabilities. She stated, “I look forward to working closely with our talented employees, the people we support, and their families to build on The Arc’s legacy of inclusion, innovation and integrity. Together, we will create new opportunities for people with and without disabilities to enjoy fulfilling lives.” ■

AMENDED AND RESTATED BYLAWS RATIFIED

The original Bylaws of The Arc Montgomery County were created in 1958. Tweaks and adjustments have been made during the subsequent 60 years, but a true “overhaul” to reflect currently established best practices has not been undertaken in some time. This year, Board Secretary Phil Golrick, with advice from an attorney experienced in this field, prepared draft Amended and Restated Bylaws which were approved by the Board of Directors and ratified by the membership in a mail-in vote campaign. Exactly 100 ballots were received by the March 17 deadline, 82 in hard copy format and 18 by email. All 100 ballots received were cast in favor of the adoption.

Many of the changes adopted reflect simplified language, recommendations from legal counsel, or streamlined content to prevent duplication. New provisions include deleting household membership; allowing proxy voting and participation in membership meetings by phone; strengthening and streamlining Board structure and operations; allowing staggered Board terms; revising Board committee descriptions; and adding a standing Information Technology Committee. We are confident that these adjustments will make The Arc Montgomery County stronger and more agile as it meets the challenges of the next 60 years. ■

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

In a challenging year, the 2021 Legislative Session has produced funding and economic impact relief that provides hope. From the outset, Governor Hogan’s budget included the mandated 4% funding increase for DD Community Services, LTSS funding, and extra funding to serve people from the Waiting List. In addition, state and federal emergency protections were put in place to support Marylanders and provide relief from the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Those protections include the federal government’s Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

The Maryland RELIEF Act has several provisions intended to provide immediate economic relief to eligible Maryland residents, including state-issued stimulus payments for low and moderate-income taxpayers. To learn more about the RELIEF Act, including how to find out if you are eligible for a direct payment, visit www.marylandtaxes.gov/RELIEFAct. ■



The Arc
Montgomery County

Calendar of Events

April 1 - September 30, 2021

Holidays - Offices Closed

Monday, May 31

Monday, July 5

Monday, September 6

Discussions with Daria

For Family Members of

Adults Supported Only

Friday, April 30

Discussion with Daria

For Adults Receiving

Services Only

Friday, May 7

Coffee & Conversation

Virtual Networking Event

Tuesday, May 25

Detailed information
for all events including
location and registration
is available at

TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org

Coffee & Conversation

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS VIRTUAL NETWORKING EVENT

*Workshops to expand
your knowledge.*

*Connections to expand
your network.*

For more information,
contact Deborah Mark,
DeborahM@arcmontmd.org
or 301.984.5777 x1245.

Presented by:



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Coffee & Conversation

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS NETWORKING

TUESDAY, MAY 25, 2021 | 8-9 AM | VIRTUAL

Workshops to expand your knowledge.
Connections to expand your network.

Details at
TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org

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