



# @The Arc

Fall 2022



## NEW STRATEGIC PLAN APPROVED

*How will we boldly reimagine the way in which The Arc Montgomery County connects people with their communities to support creation of the most meaningful, inclusive, and fulfilling lives?*

This question was at the center of our recently-concluded strategic planning process, the outcomes of which will begin implementation in October with building metrics and establishing work groups. Our new strategic plan was developed over 10 months with guidance from The University of Maryland Center for Leadership and Innovation (CLI) and is intended to guide the organization for at least the next three years.

CLI utilizes a strengths-based process and approach with six distinct steps: Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Deliver, Drive. This framework is specifically designed to lead any team, organization, or community toward effective and efficient strategic decision making. Nearly 300 stakeholders participated in the development process, through surveys, 1:1 interviews, listening sessions, focus groups, and micro-retreats. In addition, open forum updates were provided to all interested stakeholders throughout the process. Through carefully designed, choreographed, and facilitated conversations, CLI was able to unlock and amplify the collective wisdom and voices of the system (stakeholders).

Six opportunity areas emerged through the planning discussions, and the plan goals support each of these areas. Keep reading for more details!

*Achieve with us.®*

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

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**FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



The word **transparency** is getting a lot of airtime these days. It implies clarity, honesty, and openness. The Arc Montgomery County has been thoughtfully working over the last year to increase transparency with our stakeholders and employees.

During the development of our new strategic plan, several people described it as the most transparent process they have seen during their long affiliations with The Arc. We have developed better communication strategies that allow people supported, families, and employees to receive information in a faster, more

accurate manner. *Discussions with Daria* provides an easy way for stakeholders to hear organization updates, give feedback, and ask questions from *wherever* they are in the world!

We have worked especially hard to create greater transparency for our employees and to demonstrate our appreciation for their dedication and hard work. Since December 2021, most employees have received a 12.5% pay increase, and all employees will have an opportunity this fiscal year to earn a performance-based bonus. Additionally, we are launching an employee intranet which includes job descriptions and minimum qualifications for every position in the organization. Employees now have easy access to the information they need if they have a question about their supervisor's responsibilities or what skills and training they need to advance their careers.

By creating greater transparency with people supported and their families, we open pathways for them to build stronger relationships with our employees. Greater transparency with our employees leads to improved support services and employees who will grow their careers within The Arc.

—Daria Cervantes, CEO



**CELEBRATING OUR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS!**

Every day, at all hours, they arrive at work ready to make a difference in their community. They are the backbone of our organization, providing hands-on support which makes it possible for people with disabilities to live, work, and thrive in their communities. They are called many things—friend, teacher, counselor, caregiver—but their title is Direct Support Professional.

Over 250 DSPs are employed by The Arc Montgomery County, and every autumn we celebrate them and their work. From September 11-17, 2022, we delivered gift bags to DSPs at worksites across Montgomery County. Each gift included a branded lunch box, some small treats, and a gift card, and was delivered with a hearty "Thank you!" for jobs well done. We are truly grateful for their dedication and support.



## 2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES



The entire disability services field is experiencing an unprecedented **WORKFORCE CRISIS**, with vacancy rates upwards of 30%. To combat this problem, we plan to create a robust pipeline of passionate people who may be interested in or curious about working with people who have IDD. We will also reimagine our behaviors, practices, and policies to intentionally foster a thriving workforce. Some specific strategies include broadening our outreach, creating new ways for people to be employed, and implementing a new manager training program.



We know that intentionally focusing on **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING** will reap long-term benefits for our employees, our organization, and our community. We plan to cultivate, sustain, celebrate and appreciate a dynamic and diverse workforce. We also want to demonstrate workforce equity, nurturing diversity, inclusion, and sense of belonging among employees. To start, we will launch a DEIB steering committee guided by a professional consultant, and create opportunities for employees to share their culture and self-identity with others.



For us to think and act differently, we need to focus on **EXTERNAL FUNDING SECURITY** beyond income generated from our current programs. We plan to leverage a social entrepreneurial mindset and approach to create new funding streams which will support strategic initiatives. We also plan to increase overall financial support for the organization to a sustained level of \$3 million annually. Some specific strategies include developing new pathways to generate revenue using existing expertise and resources, creating new financial partnerships, and researching new business opportunities.



**FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION** must be a priority. Families often struggle to secure the information they need and want, and departments need more effective communication pathways. We plan to enhance communication between and among people supported, their families and our team, and reimagine the use of technology to support better connections. We will start by creating a customer service department, work on building connections and common ground, and pilot small groups of people to enhance their use of technology.



We were encouraged to learn that **SUPPORT BEYOND CAREGIVING** was a priority for our stakeholders, and that they are hungry for new opportunities. We plan to intentionally focus on people instead of programs, expanding opportunities for people supported to live meaningful and fulfilling lives. We will push ourselves and our communities to challenge traditional paradigms and change the way we view and interact with people supported. Some specific strategies include thinking outside the disability box when providing choices, engaging with new community organizations, and generating excitement about The Arc's invaluable work.



At the core of our work is the people we support. It is only by listening to the **VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER** that we can truly meet our mission. We must empower people to have more input into and influence on making decisions which impact their lives. We also need to cultivate deeper appreciation for the strengths, capabilities, hopes and dreams of people supported. We will start by educating our employees and our community, support people in establishing and maintaining 1:1 connections, and ensure that people supported are trained to advocate for themselves.

We invite you to join us on this journey, and to find your place at The Arc Montgomery County. There is room for everyone who is interested in making our community more welcoming and more inclusive!

## CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

KFICCC has earned Maryland Accreditation! This voluntary evaluation process required self-appraisal, program improvement goals, and an external review to ensure the program met high-quality state standards. The accreditation distinction reflects the exceptional quality care and education policies and practices that the KFICCC team has worked diligently to develop and implement.

We are safely returning to community event participation, including the Montgomery County Parks Shine Brighter Together event for Autism Acceptance Month at Wheaton Regional Park. We hope that by continuing to join events like this, we will not only boost enrollment in our programs, but keep our inclusion mission top of mind in Montgomery County.



## ENGAGEMENT

The Engagement department has been hard at work planning events, fundraising campaigns, and new initiatives for The Arc, including a supported internship developed for people supported. Katherine O'Connell, who is supported by Employment & Meaningful Day Services, is the first to hold the position, beginning her work in July 2022.

The internship role is dedicated to donor communications, stewardship, and major gift fundraising. Katherine's day-to-day work includes connecting with donors to thank them for their donations.



## INCLUSIVE LIVING SERVICES

As we all navigate the post-pandemic world, we are finding new ways to safely enjoy previously-loved activities and those who are supported by Inclusive Living Services are embracing the changes. Mikal, who is supported by Community Living, celebrated his birthday with a party surrounded by family and friends. Bill, also supported by Community Living, traveled to the Delaware beaches for a sun and fun filled vacation.

Internally, this department has seen positive employment changes with five promotions! Solomon Merugu to Assistant Director, Community Living; Donald Davies to House Manager; Lydiene Kadji to House Manager; Michael Fortson to Coordinator; Rashida Kingsbury to Coordinator.

## EMPLOYMENT & MEANINGFUL DAY SERVICES

It's been a busy spring and summer for E&MDS! Employment programs are going strong, including at Red Wiggler Community Farm (right). Meaningful Day programs have successfully reopened with nearly 90% of people supported returning to in-person activities. Virtual supports continue to be provided for people who prefer that model.

NEXT for Autism has written a book that helps programs like our Employment & Meaningful Day Services to create curriculums which assist with creating engaging community activities and experiences. In July, we partnered to utilize this curriculum for a group of people supported, while visiting the Hirshorn Museum (bottom).

A NEON grant opportunity is underway, to support our efforts to develop competitive integrated employment for people supported, including those with significant disabilities and those who have faced barriers to employment.

Our team gained knowledge in what to look for in a Community Employment Specialist and received hands-on experience and training on the discovery process in and out of the homes of the people we support. This has equipped us to revamp the Employment & Meaningful Day program to be employment focused. We are now in the process of hiring a Community Employment Specialist who will take the lead on working with people supported by Employment to build their resumes.



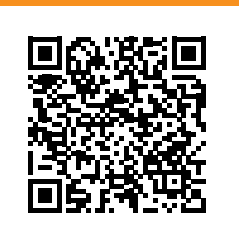
# Thank You for Supporting The Arc Montgomery County!

*These individuals and organizations generously donated from January 1—June 30, 2022*

Julia Abate, Srimal Abeyesundere, Rohan Abeyesundere & Diana Alegre, AE Cleaning, ALCO Pharmacy, Douglas Alexander, Richard Allen, Jaime & Aimee Amaya, Amazon Smile Foundation, American Legion Auxiliary Department of Maryland-Wheaton Unit 268, AMR Commercial, LLC, Bruce Andersen, Anonymous, Ashley Antognoni, Mark Asch, Robert & Lyda Astrove, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Katharine Barrett, William Battle, Antoinette Battle, Constance Battle, Leslie Bauer, Fred & Barbara Baughman, Darline Bell-Zuccarelli, Dennis & Sanqing Bennaman, Tatum Birdsall, Theresa Blandon, Steve Blanks, Mecye Boddie, Paloma Boerjigen, Sarah Bookbinder, Mary Boylen, Michael Bradley & Ginny Colten-Bradley, Barbara Braun, Luke Bretscher, Breani Bridges, Eleanor Brown, Martin Brown, Marcia Buehner, Waldo & Jean Burnside, Michael Burnside, Chris Burnside, T. J. Burnside-Clapp, Meng Cai, Margaret Campbell, Elisa Canete, Capitol Office Solutions, Margot Carleton, Megan Carnell, Adolfo Carpio-Escobar, Centers of Behavioral Health, LLC, Daria Cervantes, CETA Benefit Consulting Group, LLC, Massoud Charbashi, Jennifer Christiano, Karin Clark, Lanay Coleman, Jillian Copeland, Costco Wholesale Corporation, Paul Cox, Jr., Spyros & Drena Damascos, Maureen Danzot, Raymond Davidson, Roland Dawes, Jose De Buerba, Hannah Dibonge, John & Eileen Dillon, Dimensional Health Care Associates, Inc., Nicholas & Bernice DiMichael, Mary Dingwall, Kevin & Rebecca Doran, Dawn Draayer, Patricia Dubroof, Bruce & Mary Ellen Eddy, Hilda Ederer, Seanicaa Edwards Herron, Charles Eggleton, David Eisenmann, Kim Engstrom, Augustina Enweze, Christa Erml-Martinez, Michelle Eshow, Emmanuel & Roselyn Estampador, Expense Reduction Analysts, Inc., Facebook, Inc., Peter & Karla Farrell, Michael & Gabrielle Farrell, Flavia Favali, Ed & Beryl Feinberg, John Fitzgerald, Keith & Marta Flohr, Cynthia Forbes, Rosalie Friend, Chris Georgakopoulos, Linda Gerson, Cheryl Geske, Cynthia Gill, Philip & Janet Golrick, Gorfine, Schiller & Gardyn, P.A., James Graham, Jr., Lisa Gray, Alexandria Gray, Neil Greenberger, Martha Anne Greenleaf, Elliott & Rosa Greher, Barbara Hackett Margaret Hackett, Jean Hamilton, Hamilton Insurance Agency, Rick & Barbara Hansen, Allen & Pamela Harp, Mary Harrill, Hartman Executive Advisors, LLC, Kevin & Maureen Hassett, Gregory Heckler & Sara Minges, Catherine Hellerman, Carol Hessler, Jeffrey & Kathleen Hirsch, Hsinyu Ho & Yealing Tsai, Flor de Amelia Hoffman, Home Health Connection, Inc., Mike & Kim Hope, Jon Howard, Howard County Autism Society, Robert Howe & Tamara Baker, Min Hu, Lin Hu, Shannon Hu, HUB International Limited, Karen Hutchison, Robert & Carla Johnson, Christina Jones, Terrence Judge, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States, Inc., Kamis Professional Staffing, LLC, Peter Kaplan, Stan Kaplan, Gail Kaplan-Wassell, Eunice Kaptuya Cheron, Alex Kashanchi, Richard & Peggy Kent, Dennis & Mary Keyser, Knights of Columbus, Rock Creek Council #2797, Ande Kolp, Tammy Kramer, Robert & Lori Krolikowski, David & Margaret Kuhlrow, Jeffrey & Mary Laizure, Stephanie Lamassa, Heather Lambert, Joshua & Angela Lapier, Sovern & Elizabeth Larkins, Judy Laufman, Law Office of Eugene J. Mark, Jr., Alfred & Helen Lawson, Danette Le, Jennifer Leach, Eric Lee, Lester Poretsky Family Foundation, Mark & Elizabeth Levy, Netanya Lichterman, Steve Lorberbaum, Robert Love, Stephen Lowe, Rhoda MacFarlane, Judy Mael, Christine Marchand, Neal & Mary Anne Marcot, Roger & Carol Marcotte, Kelly Margolis, Sandra Marquardt, Maryland Charity Campaign, Maryland State Department of Education, Mark Mazur, Betsey McCoy, John McDaid, Douglas & Marybeth McDaniel,

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**Join this list of generous donors and make a difference in Montgomery County!**



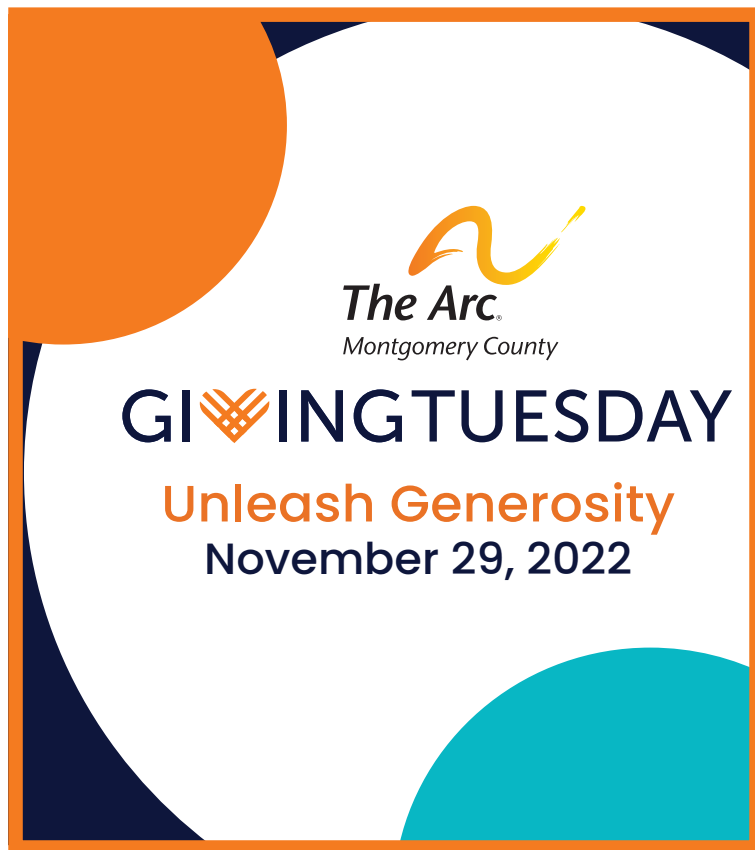
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### Tributes

**In Honor Of** Ursula Battle, Mark Cloherty, Judy Christensen's Birthday from the Mahj Ladies!, Hilda Ederer, Margaret L. Kuhlow's Birthday, Dana Simpler ■

**In Memory Of** Phyllis Brown, Lora Marie Burnside, John Estampador, John & Eileen Flood, Genevieve Gerbino, John Gould, Joan Karasik, Raymond Marcotte, Gloria Ann Rogers, Andrew J. Roth ■



**BE AN INCLUSION LEADER!**

## 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 year round.

**Interested in learning more?**  
**Email us at [GovernanceCommittee@arcmontmd.org](mailto:GovernanceCommittee@arcmontmd.org)**

# PROFILES OF EXCEPTIONAL STAFF

**Guy Ngomo**  
Direct Support Professional

*Inclusive Living Services*



**Susan Anderson**  
Lead Teacher

*Children & Youth Services*



**Loretta Howell**  
Direct Support Professional

*Employment & Meaningful Day Services*



**Jennifer Chhakchuak**  
Direct Support Professional

*Inclusive Living Services*



## How long have you worked at The Arc Montgomery County?

16 years.

Since March 2021.

A total of 12 years.

8 months.

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

I'm a caring compassionate person who understands challenges in life.

I have family that have some disabilities and that drove me to teach in an atmosphere where I could do more for children with disabilities and working closely with their parents.

A long time employee suggested I apply. She thought I would be a good fit. It worked in my favor. The tools I gained helped me in other areas of my life.

I was inspired by learning new things, coming up with creative ideas to improve my work.

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

The challenges to adapt to various personalities and behaviors with the people we support.

Helping the various children in the class understand that we give to each child what they need and it may not always appear equal, but it is always fair.

The people I support are not children, they are adults. I am here to make their lives meaningful. It takes some tweaking in many cases, but it is worth the time and effort to make it happen.

The greatest challenge is working with two different individuals and their personalities and how to best work with them.

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

Addressing the Individual and their needs. Advocate and help them accomplish their goals and put smiles on faces.

I have been making the time to be inclusive of the parents. Being in the role of caregiver is demanding and I want them to feel in partnership with their child's classroom.

Seeing the faces of the people I support, when they are happy to see me. They believe I care about them. I try to make sure they know I'm present with them.

Being able to see the individuals are happy and being there for them to achieve their goals and needs.

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

The people we support are friendly, loving and fun. They are eager to be independent to own their space to do things their own way. To be free.

All of the children are so welcoming. The small amount of effort it takes for the children to be accepting of all.

I have learned to have more patience. Focusing on what they can do, instead of what they cannot is helpful. Have a personal connection.

Each individual has their own rights to do what they want. I must be patient, be specific to communicate with them the best. Each individual is unique.

## What advice would you give to a new staff member?

Do your best, work with heart. Be an advocate be their voice and their eyes. Pay attention, be patient and respect them, encourage and be fun. Ask if you don't understand.

Active listening – to your students, their parents and your coworkers. You will always learn something helpful.

This is more than a job. This is our way to help someone live their best life. It is not about you, but the people we support.

Be prepared, be responsible, stay positive and love them. Treat others the same way you want others to treat you.

## What would other people be surprised to learn about you?

Loving, caring, realistic and confident.

I almost knocked out Jean-Claude Van Damme.

I am very shy.

When you get to know me I'm hyper and loud.



## VOLUNTEER SLOW ROLLOUT

The Arc Montgomery County's volunteer program is slowly moving forward again, after nearly three years of dormancy due to the pandemic. A few groups have participated in outdoor clean-ups, and more opportunities are being added to our calendar. We are still restricted in terms of indoor opportunities and are focused on volunteers who can make a recurring commitment.

In October, we will once again welcome students from Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart back into KFICCC. Eight high school juniors and seniors will provide recurring support in our childcare classrooms two days each month. This win-win partnership provides the students with opportunities to see inclusion in action, and the children in our program benefit from additional attention and support. To learn more, please email [Volunteer@arcmontmd.org](mailto:Volunteer@arcmontmd.org).



Our Kensington thrift store, Urban Thrift, is also welcoming back volunteers to support operations. Volunteers help with sorting and tagging donations, stocking shelves, and assisting customers.



It's Retail Reimagined!

# URBAN THRIFT

Store Hours

**Monday-Saturday 11 am-6 pm  
& Sunday 11 am-5 pm**

10730 Connecticut Ave. in Kensington  
301.933.5666



## YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

Your membership creates positive change in your community, and helps The Arc stand beside children, neighbors, friends, and colleagues as they strive for complete inclusion in every aspect of community life. Because of your membership, we are able to provide support services for nearly 1,100 children, youth, adults, seniors, and their families every day.

- Fully-inclusive child care with preschool, special education, and nursing support
- Youth after-school and summer programming
- Work skills training and other employment services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)
- Community living support for adults with IDD, in the family home or at 30+ residential locations
- Disability benefits counseling
- Coordination of respite care for unpaid, live-in caregivers of children/adults with disabilities and frail senior citizens
- Memberships are for one fiscal year, July 1-June 30

Join online today by visiting  
[www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org](http://www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org)



*At The Arc, everyone's talents and abilities are appreciated and celebrated!*

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The annual membership meeting was held in person, outside, on June 29, 2022. The results of electronic voting for incoming Board members were announced, and County Councilmember Will Jawando (right, top) helped to install the incoming Board of Directors. Newly-installed Board President Constance Battle (right, below) shared her inspirational message of coming together to support continued growth and improvement for The Arc Montgomery County.

Two half-day Board orientations were held over the summer, providing new Board members with opportunities to meet people supported and employees, and to see our programs in action.

**New** Board members: Seanica Edwards Herron, Kimberly Hope, Julie Yang, and Christina Young.

**Returning** Board members: Constance Battle (President), Raymond Davidson (Vice President), Philip Golrick (Secretary), Sarah Cato (Treasurer), Stephanie Katz (Past President), Flavia Favali, Kathy Ghiladi, Flor De Amelia Hoffman, Ben Lopez, Kate O'Connell, Aileen O'Hare, John Olenick, Mark Rittenberg, and Jim Seaton.



## Save the Date

### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE: FEBRUARY 22, 2023

Join us in Annapolis for an opportunity to advance the grassroots movement for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). Every day tens of thousands of Marylanders with IDD are impacted by the public policy decisions made by the Legislature— the amount of funding for services, civil rights, education, early intervention and employment are some of the issue areas.

Development Disabilities Day (DD Day) provides an opportunity for you to help your Legislators understand the real-life impact of their decisions! At DD Day, you will learn about the 2023 hot topics in disability policy, then go to the House and Senate Office buildings to meet with your elected officials to share your views and your real-life experiences.

Visit <http://www.thearcmd.org/dd-day/> to learn more.



# THE ARC MARYLAND 2022 STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY AWARDS

Please join us in congratulating award recipients from The Arc Montgomery County! All awardees were recognized during the State Convention and Awards Banquet on May 17, 2022.



**James O'Donnell IV** *Outstanding Employee of the Year. Gilbert John Zucchi Direct Support Professional Award*

Presented to those engaged in direct supports to people with IDD who exemplify the qualities of Gil Zucchi: superior moral strength and integrity, devotion to individuals with developmental disabilities beyond the call of duty.



**Ginny Colten-Bradley** *Chapter Volunteers of the Year award*

Presented for outstanding service and dedication to The Arc's mission: to create a world where children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have and enjoy equal rights and opportunities.



**Aileen O'Hare** *Stanley S. Sidle/William Ohge, Jr. Memorial Citizenship Award*

Presented for outstanding leadership, inspiration, and contributions to the community.



**The Arc**  
Montgomery County

## Calendar of Events

October 1, 2022– March 31, 2023

### Holidays–Offices Closed

- Thursday, November 24
- Friday, November 25
- Friday, December 23
- Monday, December 26
- Monday, January 2



### Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, November 29

### Tenure Recognition Ceremony

Sunday, February 5

### DD Day

Wednesday, February 22

Detailed information for all events including location and registration is available at [TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org](http://TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org)

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