

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

On March 13, our lives changed dramatically as the State of Maryland shut down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Overnight we were no longer providing child care, youth after-school services, day services in the community, or employment support. Our thrift store closed and headquarters was silenced as employees shifted to remote access. All of this was to protect the people we support and our employees as the outbreak grew exponentially.

Inversely, our community living program workload *doubled* as we began supporting 119 people around the clock. The respite team increased processing of applications to support seniors and people with disabilities who were now at home, as schools, child care facilities, and adult medical day programs all closed. Our teachers provided daily electronic lessons, while employment/day staff began supporting people who were sheltering in place. Administrative staff worked to secure personal protective equipment, groceries, and other supplies for our homes. Volunteers made and delivered meals, and many generous people donated supplies and financial support (see pages 8, 9, 11).



We instituted policies and procedures related to wearing PPE and cleaning/sanitizing high touch surfaces, in addition to isolation for people who tested positive or came into contact with someone who tested positive. But this virus is relentless and opportunistic. We have learned that people with disabilities are more likely to succumb due to underlying health conditions, and that they are more likely to be diagnosed later.

Our terrific DSPs are usually the first to notice when someone is “off” and we have learned to take swift action and to push back when first responders or other medical professionals feel the person’s symptoms are not yet critical. Despite our best efforts, COVID-19 found its way into about half of our residential homes. Several people supported and some employees were hospitalized, and tragically, four lives were lost. **We continue to hold them in our hearts.**



The pandemic has intensified the need for qualified, dedicated DSPs—they are the backbone of provider agencies like The Arc. These employees risk their own lives to make sure that the people we support stay safe and healthy, while also trying to maintain some semblance of normalcy. Despite the fact that their work requires complex skills, thoughtful compassion, diverse care, and deep medical knowledge, there is a systemic failure to recognize this position appropriately. And yet, these amazing people come to work every day and do their best to provide comfort, support, and encouragement—even in the middle of a pandemic.

We do our best to provide a living wage and demonstrate appreciation for their work (see page 6), but there is still a nationwide shortage, compounded by low pay rates. Only

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From Our Leader



Have you ever found yourself in a situation you weren't expecting? I think all of us have, especially in 2020. A year ago, none of us could have imagined living through a pandemic. For some of us, even the social justice issues we now read about daily weren't on our radar. This has been a year unlike anything we have previously experienced.

This year, I found myself in another unexpected situation when I assumed the role of interim CEO for The Arc Montgomery County.

There are many challenges ahead of us as an organization and my priority during this time of transition is to focus on what is most important: keeping the people we support and our staff safe during the pandemic, maintaining financial stability, and providing quality support services. At the same time, planning for the future must continue. The Leadership Team continues to plan for the upcoming changes to DDA funding, streamlining operations for greater efficiency, and developing plans for post-pandemic supports.

Unexpected challenges can also lead to unexpected opportunities. During this time, the people we support have benefitted from technology to stay connected, our staff has broken through silos by working in different programs where the need was the greatest and we have received overwhelming support from both old and new friends.

A year from now, I hope we will look back and say The Arc Montgomery County faced the unexpected and is stronger and better than ever. ■

—Daria Cervantes, Interim CEO

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

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continued advocacy at the national and state levels can effectuate the necessary changes to recognize DSPs as a true professionals.

Seven months later, some of our services have returned. Our child care center and youth program are open at 50% enrollment and our thrift store is open with modified hours. Some employment supports are being provided, but we lack the opportunity to provide community-based day supports, as senior centers and rec centers remained closed. We are allowing 1:1, socially-distanced, outdoor visits for people at our homes, but headquarters remains closed.

Pandemic fatigue is real and everyone is tired of living in a locked-down community. But we know that lives are still in danger, and so we continue to push our employees to take personal responsibility in their own lives, as every interaction can be an opportunity for the virus to spread, with potentially deadly consequences.

We encourage you to make a donation to support our critical work using the enclosed envelope. You can help us beat this virus and every penny will go directly into supporting our programs! ■



We Connect People!

Your membership counts!

Now more than ever

individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities need to be heard. Public funds are being squeezed just as people are making wonderful strides toward becoming fully included, valued, engaged members of their communities. There's never been a better time to make a difference!

Your membership

creates positive change in your community and helps The Arc stand beside your 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 over 1,100 children, youth, adults, seniors and their families every day. Among the services we provide are inclusive childcare, work skills training, employment, community living support, advocacy and coordination of respite care.



Membership benefits include:

- Bi-annual newsletter
- Monthly electronic newsletter
- Annual report
- Voting rights at chapter annual elections
- Voting rights at membership meetings
- Membership in The Arc Maryland
- Membership in The Arc of the United States

The Arc Maryland is a membership organization of ten local chapters of The Arc serving 19 counties and Baltimore City, with a primary focus on state-wide advocacy and programming.

The Arc of the United States is the largest national community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Additional benefits include discounted registration to annual national events and access to exclusive insurance coverage rates.

**Join online today by visiting
TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org**

FY20 Community Staff and Volunteer Awards

Going beyond expectations. Rising above obstacles.

On October 15, 2020 we presented special awards to 17 community partners, volunteers and staff who demonstrated their commitment to supporting individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are many more unsung heroes making a real difference in people's lives and we extend our thanks to each of them also! [View more photos from this event online at *www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org/connect/photo-gallery*.](http://www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org/connect/photo-gallery)

SELF-ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Katie O'Connell

When Katie sets her mind to make something happen, she is relentless, making certain her voice is heard and her concerns are communicated. She is all about improving herself and her opportunities—the definition of a self-advocate.



YOUTH VOLUNTEERS THE YEAR

The Nchinda Family

For six years, the Nchinda brothers have volunteered enthusiastically at KFICCC, bringing energy into the classrooms. Cumulatively, these brothers have 1,235 hours of volunteer service! Through their dedication, they have become an integral part of The Arc family.



PUBLIC SERVICE

Dr. Kenneth Feder

Dr. Feder provides practical guidance on testing, staff training, and minimizing spread, all with a personal touch. He not only understands the science behind the virus, he understands its human toll, and works tirelessly to protect Marylanders with and without disabilities.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Josie Mark

During the lockdown, Josie coordinated a meal delivery initiative. With careful communication and tracking, she matched volunteers with our residential homes. The deliveries provided staff with a break from meal prep and volunteers with a way to take action: a win-win!



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Elma Galimba

Program closures negatively impacted people with disabilities, so Elma created ways for people of all abilities to come together and feel less isolated. Through Sunshine Projects, she connects people through music, art, dance and expressive communications.



BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Philip Golrick

As Board Secretary, Phil has been an impactful and effective leader, providing critical guidance during key discussions and taking the lead in revising The Arc's bylaws. His work ethic and output clearly demonstrates a passion for The Arc's mission of inclusion.



COMMUNITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Mask Makers & Helpers – Greenbelt and Surrounding Areas

When need for PPE outpaced supply, Sarah Liska and Jenny Meetre created Mask Makers to provide handmade masks. They supplied The Arc at this critical time, even making clear masks to facilitate lip reading for people with hearing impairments.



PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR

Timothy Dennis

When the pandemic hit and procurement of PPE was critical, Tim asked, "What can I do to help?" He sprang to action and secured hand sanitizer, gloves and masks, most of which he donated or asked the vendor donate. His selfless actions literally saved lives.



President's Volunteer Service Award's

The President's Volunteer Service Award is a national honor which recognizes individuals who have achieved certain levels of volunteer service over a 12-month period, based on their age.

Bronze Level

Evan Daneker, Calla Doh, Irene Figueroa, Isoko Motoma, Harrison Nchinda, Shelsey Vasquez, Natalie Wermers, Donald Wertz, Alex Yang

Silver Level

Harold Wertz

Gold Level

Robert Tievsky, Merlin Vasquez

Employees of the Year

INCLUSIVE LIVING SERVICES

Alice Bannerman

Alice combines excellence in care giving with effective mentoring of other staff. She makes everyone feel welcome and brings a sense of unity to the work environment. She exudes dedication to The Arc's mission and love for the people she supports.



CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

Elizabeth Edwards

Elizabeth is a dedicated lead teacher who always works tirelessly to ensure that KFICCC thrives. This year, she shouldered many of the tasks required for KFICCC's smooth and safe reopening plan.



INCLUSIVE LIVING SERVICES

Muna Mansaray

Muna consistently demonstrates respect and patience as a Direct Support Professional. Her calm friendship and steady guidance have enabled the person she supports to learn to manage problems and participate more fully in the larger community.



EMPLOYMENT & DAY SERVICES

William Mfotieg

Throughout the pandemic, William has done an exceptional job ensuring work at The Rockville Library is completed despite staffing shortages. He takes a personal interest in the people he supports, fostering their independence and positively impacting their lives.



ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT

Carlos Barrios

Carlos holds a critical position as Maintenance Engineer. He works to high standards and researches options to save money. He also embodies our mission in his interactions with the people we support-interacting with respect, patience, and kindness.



RISING STAR

Lynne Raden

Lynne has maintained a calm presence and laser focus during tumultuous times. Her steady hand, kindness, and deep respect for staff, children, and families ensures the strength of our programs for children and youth, and our greater mission of inclusion.



PANDEMIC CHAMPIONS

Presented to an individual, business or community group which has clearly demonstrated extraordinary support for the organization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PANDEMIC CHAMPION

Loida Prophet

During the pandemic, Loida shouldered the task of securing critical supplies for 37 locations, 119 people supported, and 500+ employees. PPE, cleaning supplies, and even food were difficult to procure, but Loida never failed. Her resolute efforts benefited our entire community.



PANDEMIC CHAMPION

Maxine Reger

Maxine is an attentive landlord who became a true hero when she notified The Arc that a rental increase would be put on hold during the pandemic. She even offered extra help, should the residents of that home need it. Her community spirit embodies The Arc's values!



PANDEMIC CHAMPION

Jaya Musa

Jaya has stepped in every time he's needed during the pandemic, leading by example. He covered shifts others wouldn't cover in COVID positive homes, modeled proper safety protocols, and always kept a positive attitude. Jaya embodies a leader's character and The Arc's community values.



TRANSITIONING YOUTH VIRTUAL RESOURCE FAIR

Open to Students and Young Adults with Disabilities and their Families

10AM Transition Process
11:15AM Self-Advocacy Boot Camp
11:30AM Self-Directed Services
12PM DORS
1PM Resilience
1:30PM Mental Health Resources
2PM Work with your CCS Provider
2:45PM Social Security

Register at bit.ly/TransitionWorkGroup

SAT, NOVEMBER 14, 2020
10AM - 3:30PM on ZOOM

Webinars + YouTube Exhibit Hall

QUESTIONS? transitioningsuccess@gmail.com

CELEBRATING OUR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

DSPs are truly the backbone of our organization, with the power to positively influence the lives of others. September 13-19 was Direct Support Professional Recognition week and volunteers delivered 375 meals over five days to 77 locations in Montgomery County, ensuring every DSP was honored. We also mailed gift cards with our sincere thanks for "being more than family" to the people they support. ■



Kensington's Best Kept Secret! URBAN THRIFT

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10730 Connecticut Avenue in Kensington

GREAT STYLES! GREAT FINDS!
GREAT DEALS! GREAT CAUSE!



Follow us on




The Arc
Montgomery County

Our profit supports The Arc Montgomery County, helping people of all ages and abilities build inclusive lives in their communities.

Profiles of Exceptional Staff

Rogathe Alilio

Support Counselor

Inclusive Living Services



Sherry Ruiz

Family Coordinator

Children & Youth Services



William Mfotieg

Asima

Job Coach

Employment /Meaningful Day Services



Jonathan Mulbah

Direct Support Professional

Inclusive Living Services



How long have you worked at The Arc Montgomery County?

More than 5 years now.

It will be 23 years in February.

Since June 2007.

For 4 years.

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

I like helping people. Before joining the Arc, I worked with senior citizens.

I applied to the children's medical child care center with no experience working with medically fragile children and fell in love with them from the very first minute.

Working with disabled individuals is satisfying because I am helping someone conquer the daily challenges of life. It is rewarding and fulfilling to help someone achieve a set goal.

My inspiration was to have a profound impact on someone's life and to help them become more independent and confident in their abilities.

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

The great challenge so far came last summer when the individual I worked with since the beginning passed suddenly. I realized this job doesn't just involve helping individuals but also making friendships.

Learning new technology has been a challenge. As my position has changed over the years, my technical skills have had to improve. I still love paper and pencils though!

Many of the challenges I have encountered in the job are with the people I support. Sometimes I have to encourage them to follow the rules.

My greatest challenge has been learning new things every day which is necessary for working in the developmental disabilities field.

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

My greatest success has been finding a common ground with people we help and building a bridge between individuals, families, and the agency.

Touching the lives of hundreds of children and families. Understanding how those families feel because I have one grandchild who is medically fragile and one grandchild with a developmental disability.

Over the years, I have helped many of the people I support grow and become more independent or require less prompting in performing their daily tasks.

My greatest success has been watching the individuals I work with achieve their goals and create an effective circle of support.

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

I have learned that to enjoy the work we do you need to study what the individual likes and dislikes. Put your own interests aside and try to accommodate theirs.

I have been blessed the last 23 years with a wonderful group of people to work alongside. You have to have that connection with others to put your best self forward everyday.

I have developed many skills working here. I am more patient and tolerant now. I also communicate more effectively with the people I serve.

I have learned a lot. Working with The Arc Montgomery County has made me appreciate the importance of respecting people of all abilities.

What advice would you give to a new staff member?

You should be patient, take time to study and understand the individual you work with, and just love them.

Never be afraid to leave your comfort zone. Always be open to new experiences.

Regardless of the experience one may have in the field, people with special needs are each individuals. Working with them requires patience, tolerance and compassion.

Be patient working with individuals with developmental disabilities: respect them, understand their feelings, try to get to know their likes and dislikes, and also listen to them.

What would other people be surprised to learn about you?

Resilience is one of my character traits. I don't give up easily.

I got my motorcycle license when I was 50.

I can cook a variety of meals—particularly French cuisine.

I'm deeply dedicated to the people I support and to my organization.

Thank You for Supporting The Arc Montgomery County!

These individuals and organizations generously, donated from January 1–June 30, 2020

Julia Abate, Jessica Abeshouse, Rohan Abeyesundere & Diana Alegre, Simal Abeyesundere, Nick Abseck, Sharon Abu, AE Cleaning, Clyde Agnew Jr., Shoaleh Alai, Jose Alfaro & Jessica Rosenberg, Nausher Ali & Dana Smith, Richmond & Seulhee Allan, David & Julie Allan, David Allen, Allied Pharmaceutical Services, Inc., Amazon Smile Foundation, AMR Commercial, LLC, Tamara Anderson, Black Angel, Anonymous, Nita Armstrong, Mark Arnold, Assisting Hands of Potomac, Richard Astor, Billy Astrove, Robert & Lyda Astrove, Michael Audet, Marguerite & Hallie Autry, Rashida Bah, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers International Union, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Kenneth & Laura Barna, David Barnard, Olivier Barnouin & Carolyn Ernst, Dawn Barret Minnick, Daniel Bates & Sheila Kragie, Constance Battle, Paul & Janis Bauer, Fred & Barbara Baughman, Kounabe Benin, Harry Benoit, Michael Bertol, Philip & Nanette Bevan, Paul & Elizabeth Bizot, Justin Black & Elizabeth Angerman, Amber 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Memorial Gifts

John Fegan, Joan Feldberg, Mary Etta Gerardi, Elmer Greenleaf, Maxine and Bill Hamilton, William G. Hamilton, Chan Meng Kuan, Kathryn Rita Mercadante, Daniel "Danny" John Russell, Bart Stringham ■

Honorary Gifts

After All Staff, Alan Timothy Bradshaw, Connie Farrell, Kamilah Franklin, Mitchell Gildenhorn, Tom Greene, Laurie Paul and Neil Horlick, Room 12 & Room 15 Teachers, Paul Rosenfield, Chrissy Shawver, Staff and Teachers at KFICCC ■

THANK YOU!

*These generous Networking Breakfast sponsors helped us
"keep the doors open" during the pandemic!*

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INCLUSIVE LIVING SERVICES

Community Living has provided 24/7 support since mid-March, and residents are definitely tired of staying at home! The staff do their best to take people outside as much as possible, including socially-distanced neighborhood walks. Visits with family are now allowed outdoors, by appointment, with everyone wearing a mask and keeping social distance. Personal Supports are being provided in people's homes and virtually, and EVV (Electronic Visit Verification) is scheduled to begin on November 1, after training in October. ■



EMPLOYMENT & DAY SERVICES

Due to the pandemic, the day program remains closed, but some people are receiving virtual supports. Many employment sites have reopened and some people have returned to work; others have decided not to work during the pandemic. E&MDS staff continue to cover shifts in the homes during the day, and sometimes on weekends or in the evening. Two landscaping contracts were finalized in partnership with Maryland Works, one at Gaithersburg MVA and another at the Adelphi Armory. These both started September 1. ■

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES

C&YS programs were closed until mid-July, but now both KFICCC and After All are now operating at 50% capacity. Employees wear masks at all times, as do many of the students, and everyone is encouraged to keep an appropriate social distance. Lots of time is spent outside, and everyone is looking forward to a time when the entire building can safely come together. Staff who were not needed at KFICCC due to smaller class sizes were offered the opportunity to apply for other positions. ■



THE ARC MARYLAND 2020 AWARD WINNERS



Justina Nelson—*The Arc Outstanding Employee of the Year: Gilbert John Zucchi Direct Support Professionals Award*

Justina Nelson has faithfully supported people with I/DD in meaningful and redemptive ways for over 25 years. She went above and beyond by volunteering to work in a COVID-positive home.

Natalie Wermers—*Chapter Volunteer of the Year*

Natalie volunteered with the Communications & Outreach team as a social media intern in the summer of 2019, when she designed and implemented a social media blitz called #ADayintheLife.





A LEGACY OF SERVICE

Chrissy Shawver began her career at The Arc Montgomery County in 1990, when she designed the first fully-inclusive child care program in Maryland. This provided an opportunity for children *with and without disabilities* to play and learn together, before implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. While helping to raise her nieces and nephews, Chrissy worked part-time as the facilitator for STAND Together, The Arc's self-advocacy group. In this role, she supported adults with disabilities as they participated in legislative engagement throughout Maryland.

Chrissy returned to The Arc full-time in 2010, as Director of Children & Youth Services. The following year, she merged the children's programs to create a seamless delivery of services for families, providing child care, nursing support, special education, therapies, and case management at one location. In 2017, Chrissy was promoted to Chief Executive Officer, where she assumed responsibility for the entire organization, with a focus on administrative duties, including advocacy and community outreach.

Although Chrissy's thirty years of service to The Arc Montgomery County ended on August 30, 2020, her legacy of support for people with disabilities continues to thrive. ■



Thankful for the Donations!

Grateful to the individuals, families, businesses and organizations who generously donated masks, food, cleaning supplies and more.



Calendar of Events

October 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021

Holidays - Offices Closed

Thursday, November 26

Friday, November 27

Thursday, December 24

Friday, December 25

Friday, January 1

Monday, January 18

Monday, February 15



MOVE Maryland

Saturday, November 7

Transitioning Youth
Resource Fair

Saturday, November 14



Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, December 1

Tenure Recognition
Ceremony

Wednesday, February 3

Breakfast Fundraiser

Thursday, March 25

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

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MOVE MARYLAND

Saturday November 7

*Move Maryland is a virtual day of wellness
to move Maryland's nonprofits FORWARD.*

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT
FORM A TEAM!**

www.Movemaryland.org

