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- The Arc Gala

Celebrate Joyce!

For over 40 years, Joyce Taylor has been a champion for people with disabilities and their families. She started her career at The Arc Montgomery County in 1980, when she was hired as the transportation manager. At that time, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were “special.” Children spent their school days in “special classrooms,” adults worked in “special workshops,” and many lived in “special homes” with beautiful names like Rosewood and Great Oaks. “Special” meant different, segregated and hidden away.

As Joyce worked her way up to leading the entire Vocational & Day Services division, she also worked tirelessly to move people from behind closed doors into the community where they belong. On the buses and vans she once drove, she stripped away signs which proclaimed in big letters that the people inside were somehow different or less valuable. She launched new business initiatives, like recycling and a thrift store, to demonstrate to the community how people with disabilities could work productively.

Joyce’s commitment to seeing similarities instead of differences in people has only grown stronger since she assumed the Executive Director position in 2008. Today, her focus is on inclusion for every person The Arc supports—doing the same thing, in the same place, at the same time, and personally engaging with people who don’t have disabilities.

Joyce would be the first to say that The Arc’s work is not done. It won’t be finished until each person with disabilities has all the same opportunities and can make all the same choices as their peers without disabilities. This takes money...which is why she has requested that instead of a traditional retirement gift, donors celebrate her inclusive leadership and vision by investing in the future of the people we support. She wants to raise \$36,000, a thousand dollars for each year she has dedicated to The Arc.

You can help! Make a donation to the Joyce Taylor Fund for Inclusion to ensure future executive directors can keep opening doors to new inclusive possibilities every day. Every gift matters and will make a real difference in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in Montgomery County, and their families.

Make your donation today at www.CelebrateJoyce.org!



Identifying, creating and sustaining inclusive communities that embrace and engage individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Achieve with us.

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Agency Updates

Residential Services received welcome assistance when a group of adult volunteers from Aronson LLC spent an afternoon raking leaves and picking up downed tree limbs and branches in the yard at two locations (*below left*). Funds from the gala earmarked for inclusive opportunities were used to purchase a pair of season tickets to University of Maryland basketball games, and several individuals have enjoyed these sporting experiences (*below right*). Grants have been submitted to assist with making more homes fully accessible, which is critical for allowing people to age in place.



The Arc since inception, and provides short-term relief to unpaid, live-in, primary caregivers of adults and children with disabilities and senior citizens. The HSC Foundation renewed a Life Enrichment Awards Program (LEAP) grant intended to enrich the lives of youth and young adults with disabilities and chronic illnesses who are actively engaged in a transition process to adulthood. STAND Together, The Arc's self-advocacy group, meets on Thursday evenings and is actively recruiting new members.

Candidates are being interviewed for a new Community Connector position, which will support people 1:1 as they engage in inclusive experiences in the community.

Family & Community Services submitted a proposal to Montgomery County for a new respite services contract. The current contact has been held by



Vocational & Day Services renewed contracts for county custodial services and at Georgetown Paper Stock, which provide employment to 23 people. The staff continues to focus on closing the Southlawn building by transitioning people from the center-based program to community-based recreational and other activities. Vocational sites hosted state elected officials like Marc Korman (*left*) as part of The Arc's LEARN series (Legislators

Experiencing The Arc Right Now). These opportunities give state delegates and senators a chance to see people with disabilities working in their communities.

Children & Youth Services' partnership with Montgomery College School of Nursing continues, with 28 nursing students completing their pediatric rotation at KFICCC in the winter of 2015. A \$20,000 grant was received through the Weinburg Foundation to assist families with tuition costs, and additional grants have been submitted requesting support for families who

need temporary assistance meeting their child care costs. Ninth grade students from Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart are completing a day of service at KFICCC monthly, as part of their social action program's focus on disabilities.

Developmental Disabilities Day in Annapolis (*right top*) was well attended, with staff and self-advocates representing The Arc Montgomery County. This event, in addition to Calendar Delivery Day (*right bottom*), provided important opportunities for connecting with elected officials to share stories about how their votes on key issues directly impact people with disabilities and their families.

Urban Thrift continues to implement its marketing plan and participated in the Kensington Day of the Book Festival (*right*) and the Montgomery County GreenFest in April. The store will celebrate its third anniversary over Labor Day weekend.

The **Transitioning Youth Retail Project** continues to receive excellent feedback and maintains an approximately 60% employment rate for graduates. The next class will begin in mid-July. There is always a need for new retail partners to host interns for a five-week period.



Legislative Highlights from MACS (Maryland Association of Community Services)

After the bruising budget battles that marked the 2015 legislative session, it was with great relief that MACS reviewed Governor Hogan's FY 17 budget proposal which included a strong budget for DDA without cuts to programmatic funding. Included in the DDA budget was full funding of the 3.5% rate increase for community services that was mandated in 2014 in response to the minimum wage increase in Maryland. MACS worked closely with the Developmental Disabilities Coalition in meeting with members of the budget committees to advocate for full funding of the Governor's budget. In addition to the budget, MACS worked on bills affecting people with developmental disabilities, their families and agencies providing supports.

Fiscal Year 2017 DDA Budget. The Maryland General Assembly passed the FY 2017 State budget with no cuts to the Developmental Disabilities Administration's program budget. Specific budget items that were adopted included \$35.7 million to fully fund a 3.5% rate increase for DDA community services as mandated in the Minimum Wage Act of 2014; \$8.9 million to support 602 transitioning youth who will exit Maryland schools in 2016; \$6.67 million in emergency funds to provide services to approximately 161 people with emergency placements; \$5.5 million to support 113 people on the Crisis Resolution Waiting List; and \$727,770 for the Waiting List Equity Fund to fund 24 people with the oldest caregivers.

HB 431/SB 355 Maryland Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE). Establishes the MD ABLE Program to encourage individuals and families to save funds to support individuals with disabilities to maintain independence, health and quality of life. The ABLE Act permits savings of up to \$14,000 per account per year to an ABLE account for support-related expenses without loss of Medicaid or SSI eligibility. In Maryland, people can save up to \$100,000 without losing SSI eligibility and up to \$350,000 over the course of their lifetime.

HB 928/SB 818 State Personnel—Individuals with Disabilities—Hiring Preferences. Creates a hiring preference for individuals with disabilities applying for positions within the executive branch of state government.

HB 420/SB 417 Individuals with Disabilities—Minimum Wage and Community Integration (Ken Capone Equal Employment Act). Prohibits work activities centers and sheltered workshops from paying less than minimum wage to an employee with a disability after October 1, 2020. The legislation also requires the state to develop a phase-out plan, with input from advocates and providers, that includes benchmarks, outcomes, tracking of outcomes, and a list of resources needed to support individuals in integrated employment. People earning less than the minimum wage over the next four years will need to have a supplemental plan that identifies any barriers to working in a more integrated setting.

2015 Community, Staff and Volunteer Awards

Each year, we set aside time to express our appreciation to people in the community, volunteers and staff who demonstrate the depth and breadth of our commitment to supporting individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities. These 17 individuals were specially recognized, but there are many more unsung heroes who are making a real difference in people's lives and to them we also extend our sincere thanks and appreciation!

Photos ©Ann Maas Photography

Awards Presented to Members of Our Community

ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Mary Blanken, CRNP

By focusing on the wellbeing of each individual, Mary ensures that all expectations and desires related to medical treatment are met, including emergency and end-of-life treatments as expressed by the person and their family.



SELF-ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Frank Lee

Frank shares his perspective and offers eye-opening insights based on personal experiences while serving on several committees for The Arc. His feedback is key to improved inclusive experiences for people with disabilities.



PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

George Leventhal

As chair of the Health & Human Services Committee, Councilmember Leventhal protected critical funding for people with disabilities living in Montgomery County, finding other ways to balance the county budget.



DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYER

Ben Lewis Plumbing

Ben Lewis Plumbing encourages their staff to learn new strategies for engaging people with disabilities. They are committed to bridging gaps in the community which keep people with disabilities segregated from other workers.



COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

Jack Wooden

Jack is helping *all* children succeed by fully including children with disabilities in his classroom, providing cues and videos to help demonstrate concepts and creating content scaffolding to allow the entire class to master the material.



PHILANTHROPIST OF THE YEAR

Carol Trawick

Carol understands the importance of creating genuine partnerships between donors and non-profits. She values creativity and accepts that innovation sometimes leads to failure, which can then spark creativity and future success.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

ArtStream

ArtStream produces original plays in which actors with and without disabilities participate as equals. Their programs are designed to nurture communication, improve social connectivity and foster appropriate self-expression.



LIFETIME VOLUNTEER ACHIEVEMENT

Eugene Mark, Jr.

Gene has logged over 4,000 hours of service as an active volunteer on the Board of Directors since 2001, participating in events and chairing search committees. In addition, he has served for several years on the Board of The Arc Maryland.



Awards Presented to Our Volunteers

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Devin Reilly

The youth at After All see Devin as their friend, not as a volunteer. From the moment he walks in the door, he quickly engages them, playing basketball, cooking swimming, and joining them on community outings.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Linda Wingo

Linda has volunteered since 2000 as the inspiration and perspiration behind the wonderful decorations at The Arc's fundraising events, from the fashion shows to the current Gala. She has been a tireless source of creative ideas and hard work.



Awards Presented to Our Staff

COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

Lorie Hossein

Lorie helps TYRP students get hired during and after their internships. She's great at researching jobs and matching them to students' skill sets, and plays an integral part in obtaining partnerships with local retailers.



RISING STAR

Al Torrez

Managing vans which transport 88 people throughout the county is challenging, and people get upset when things don't go as planned. Al stays calm and helps people work through their disagreements, setting an example for all staff.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Asha Clark

Asha has a family-centered approach to providing services, offering support and making suggestions about resources and approaches to resolving concerns. She keeps her door open and greets people with a smile on her face and a listening ear.



CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Laura Nogales

Laura works in two classrooms and often questions therapists so that she has a deeper understanding of how to support every child. She also partners with parents to support their children's transitions.



FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Edna Jones

Edna is focused on abilities, not disabilities. She and the person she supports are on a journey toward full inclusion. They don't let obstacles get in their way; they simply keep moving forward together.



RESIDENTIAL SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Dominic Pelegrin

Dominic's consistent, respectful interactions with the person he supports have helped the individual stop undesirable behaviors and move toward successful inclusive experiences in the community.



VOCATIONAL & DAY SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Rosemary Restaine

Nominated by the person she supports, Rosemary was described as "the best job coach I have ever had. She helps me when I need support and she works hard."



ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Marvin Silva

Marvin shines by taking the time to show, mentor, shadow and explain on-the-job tasks to the staff he supervises on a regular basis. He sets high standards and expects them to be met, and he leads by example.



2015 Community, Staff and Volunteer Awards

President's Volunteer Service Awards

The President's Volunteer Service award is a national honor which recognizes individuals who have achieved certain hours of volunteer service over a 12-month period. The level is based upon the recipient's age and the total number of hours served.

BRONZE LEVEL

Breatney Charles
Patricia De Poel Wilberg
Natalie Glasser
Brandon Louis
Nadine Mandevu
Lee-Roy Nchinda
Ishan Neupane
Magali Ngouabou
Devin Reilly
Yolanda Shelton
Dorothy Slavcoff
Noel Thompson

SILVER LEVEL

Shanelle Diggs
Tracey Joppy
Robert Tievsky
Michael Veach
Donald Wertz
Harold Wertz

GOLD LEVEL

Enomeris Fanwar
Tawanda Makoni
Wesley Nchinda



Staff Tenure Awards

These awards are presented to The Arc Montgomery County staff to recognize dedicated service to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in benchmark periods of five years.

FIVE YEARS

Cheryl Andries
Lashawn Bell
Douglas Clarke
Ndeye Dieng
Katiana Dieujuste
Reginald Fowler
Kathleen Kaufman
Deborah Mark
Cynthia Marwolo
Gabriel Mensah
Christine Moore
Chidinma Nwosu
George Philips
Jean-Claud Tadontsop Tonle
Alimamy Tommy
Chinwe Umezurike
Jude Williamson

ROSE HAPPY

Mercy Itoka
Lenet James
Patricia John
Gregory Jones
Mary Kuoko
Rose Ogiata
Shelda Phillip
Marian K. Salahuddin
Carl Simpson
Modinat Solomon

FIFTEEN YEARS

Douglas Gaddis
Djibril Kamara
Allen Timothy
Constance Ude

TWENTY YEARS

Haydee De Paula
Justina Nelson
Gloria Rogers

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

Christina Shawver
Juan Velasco

THIRTY YEARS

Joyce Palmer

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS

Joyce Taylor

Staff like Juan Velasco (right) and Joyce Palmer (below) who reach 20 or more years of service receive a bonus check in addition to their other recognitions.



Photos ©Ann Maas Photography

Futures Planning Workshops

The Arc of Northern Virginia is hosting a series of workshops related to futures planning and special needs trusts.

- Guardianship and Alternative to Guardianship
Thursday, June 2, 2016, 7-9 pm
- Divorce and the Child with Disabilities
Tuesday, September 6, 2016, 7-9 pm
- Next Steps for Parents and Siblings
Wednesday, December 7, 2016, 5-7 pm

All workshops will be held at The Arc Montgomery County, 11600 Nebel Street, Rockville, MD 20852. Everyone is invited to participate, but advance registration is required. Register at www.thearcmontgomerycounty.org.

The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust (SNT) Program serves Maryland, Virginia and DC to support families and individuals with any type of disability in planning for today and the future. The workshops will be presented by staff from The Arc of Northern Virginia and community specialists. Anyone who attends a presentation may also receive a free, one-hour consultation with Tia Marsili, Director of Trust at The Arc of Northern Virginia. To schedule a consultation, email Beneficiary.Advocate@TheArcofNoVA.org or call 703.208.1119 x120.

This series is sponsored by The Abell Foundation.



Swim, Duckies Swim!

Although the weather on October 3 was so bad that even ducks wouldn't venture out, we still dumped ducks and pulled winners!

Thanks to the generosity of more than 420 donors, we raised \$36,958 to support our Children & Youth Services programs.

We especially thank our generous sponsors!

Quackers (\$2,500)
Five Stones Media, LLC
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Paddlers (\$500)
Eugene & Deborah Mark
Practical Alternatives, LLC
Melissa Rhea
Seneca Glass Company, Inc.

Waders (\$250)
Joyce Taylor
The Insurance Exchange, Inc.
The Pediatric Development Center

**Look for the Duck Splash Festival
to return in the spring of 2017!**

Futures Planning and Special Needs Trusts	
<p><i>Four important workshops sponsored by The Abell Foundation in collaboration with The Arc Montgomery County, presented by The Arc of Northern Virginia and community specialists.</i></p>	
<p>All workshops will be held at: The Arc Montgomery County Baughman Conference Room 11600 Nebel Street Rockville MD 20852 <i>Light refreshments will be served</i></p> <p>Space is Limited... Register Today http://bit.ly/1Q4Xpyw</p> <p>Free one-hour consultation with Tia Marsili, Director of Trusts, available on the day of the presentation. You must have attended a presentation to schedule a consultation.</p> <p>To schedule a free consultation contact Megan Rusciano, Beneficiary Advocate The Arc of Northern Virginia Special Needs Trust Program Beneficiary.Advocate@TheArcofNoVA.org 703-208-1119 x120</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 9, 2016 5:00pm - 7:00pm Special Needs Trusts Joseph Mathis, Offit Kurfman Attorneys at Law</p> <p>Thursday, June 2, 2016 7:00pm - 9:00pm Guardianship and Alternatives to Guardianship</p> <p>Tuesday, September 6, 2016 7:00pm - 9:00pm Divorce and the Child with Disabilities</p> <p>Wednesday, December 7, 2016 5:00pm - 7:00pm Futures Planning: Next Steps for Parents and Siblings</p>
<p>The Arc Montgomery County identifies, creates and sustains inclusive communities that embrace and engage individuals and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities.</p> <p>Every day we directly support over 600 children, youth, adults and families by providing inclusive child care, work skills training, employment opportunities, community living services, resources, respite care and advocacy.</p> <p> www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org</p>	<p>The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust (SNT) Program serves Maryland, Virginia, and DC. We work with families and individuals with any type of disability on planning for the 'now' as well as the future.</p> <p>As long-standing experts in the disability field, The Arc of Northern Virginia's Special Needs Trust Program remains current on developments regarding government benefits, trust administration, and managing financial resources for people with disabilities.</p> <p> Special Needs Trust Program Serving MD, DC & VA www.TheArcofNoVATrusts.org</p>
<p>THE ABELL FOUNDATION</p> <p>Working to enhance the quality of life in Baltimore and in Maryland – The Abell Foundation believes that a community faced with complicated and seemingly intractable challenges is well served by research-based information. www.abell.org</p>	

Thank You for Supporting The Arc Montgomery County!

These individuals and organizations generously donated from July 1, 2015-March 31, 2016.

Julia Abate, Shep & Kathryn Abell, Rohan Abeyesundere & Diana Alegre, Marguerite Adams, Clyde Agnew & DeLando Haywood, Kenyatta Albeny, Douglas & Mary Alexander, Maria Alfonzo, Fahad & Laila Alhussain, Rosemarie Allan, Allied Pharmaceutical Services, Inc., Paul & Barbara Altman, Alexander Amado, Amazon Smile Foundation, Kathleen Ambach, America's Charities, Henry & Gail Anderson, Jean Anderson, Phil Andrews, Anonymous, Terry & Rhona Arbit, The Arc Carroll County, Nita Armstrong, Janet Astner, Billy Astrove, Robert & Lyda Astrove, At Home Care, Inc., Nadia Atcha, Terry & Suzette Atkinson-Kern, Lucas & Mandie Aubrey, Marguerite & Hallie Autry, William & Rebecca Baber, Bahadori Accounting & Tax Services, Inc., Elizabeth Baker, Martin Baker & Kathleen Woody, Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers International Union, Lissa Bales, Baltimore Museum of Industry, Troi Bandy, Kristen Bang, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, Virginia Brian, Ben Barbour & Jhenileen Libongco, Betty Barnes, Barrel Oak Winery, Simon Barrett, Carlos Barrios, Michael Barron, Alissa Barron-Menza, Daniel & Klara Baryshev, Joshua & Helen Bass, Constance Battle, Fred & Barbara Baughman, Mary Baxter & Russell Lefurgy, John Bay, Colleen Beaty, Lynne Beauregard, Alan & Laurie Beck, Biodun & Titilola Bello, Darline Bell-Zuccarelli, Jane Belt, Benefits Provider Network, LLC, The Benevity Community Impact Fund, Kerry Benny, Harry Benoit, Abigail Bensimhon, Alex Berman & Lisa Wald, Joel & Heather Berry, Philip & Nanette Bevan, David Bilker, Justin Black & Elizabeth Angerman, William & Shirlee Blanken, Michael Bledsoe, Blue Region Aquaria, Theodore Blum, Steve Boehm, Suresh Bondugula, Darlene Bonior, Elaine Bonner-Tompkins, David & Carrie Booth, Laurie Borman, Nancy Botting, Mary Boylen, Nina Boylen, Michael Bradley & Ginny Colten-Bradley, Sarah Bradley, Joseph & Lisa Brady, Nicholas & Tammy Brady, Ross Brady, Christopher Branch & Caron Cox-Branch, Adam Brazier, Tamytha Brevard, Stephen & Mary Brogan, Charles & Susan Brome, Stacy Brooks, Andrea Brown, Jessie Brown, Tracy Colliton, Brooke Bruthers, James Burgard, Donald Burkins & Brigitte Krause, Jennifer Burrell, Terence & Sarah Byrne, Timothy & Michele Cadigan, Cheryl Callahan, William & Mary Callanan, Rodrigo Calloni, CALMRA, Inc., Ann Campbell, Gary & Margaret Campbell, Richard Campbell, Elisa Canete, Ida Capehart, Nancy Caporaso, Carl G. Lebo, D.D.S., P.C., Steven Carpenter & Lauren Hyland, Debra Carter, Michael & Lia Carter, Roy & Carol Carter, Shakite Carter, Case Management, Cindy Cenname, Daria Cervantes, CETA Benefit Consulting Group, LLC, Cindy Chammpion, John Chamoun, Chooi Chan, Jason Chappie, Radhika Chari, Rich Charnovich, Judith Chetelat & Susan Wooden, Chick-fil-A Montrose Crossing, Melissa Childress, Elizabeth Christenson, Sambath & Rachel Chung, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Robert & Asha Clark, Tamara Clark, Christine Clarke, Doug Clarke, Lance Clawson & Michelle Marks, Kathleen Coates, Karen Cohen, Michael & Karen Cohen, Ben & Anna Colandreo, Biagio Colandreo, Joseph & Karen Colandreo, Karen Colandreo, Lauren Colandreo, Josh & Diane Cole, Color Me Mine, Jacqueline Combs, Commonwealth Digital Office Solutions, Community Bridges, The Community Foundation of the National Capital Region, Tobin & Susan Conley, Edgar & Nancy Corr, Julie Costa-Malcolm, Olga Cotton, Randy Covert & Tamara Laird, David & Ellen Crandall, Barbara Crowley, Rosa Cruz, CTS, James Cudjoe, Matthew & Lisa Cunniff, Jo-Ann Cyr, Linda Cyr, Sharon Cyr, Zainab Arinze, Spyros & Drena Damascos, Thomas & Becky D'Amour, Dance Place, Caren Daughtridge, Darrellene Davis, Jackie Davis, Treva Davis, Roland Dawes, Andre De Fontaine & Andrea Thomas, Joan Deffinbaugh, Victoria Del Balzo, Angelica Delgado, Pedro & Maria Delgado, Timothy & Maureen Dell, Rachel Dempsey, Kristin DeMuro, Dental Office of Gary D. Begin, DDS, Dennis Deutsch, Vikram & Nisha Devgan, Nestor DiNegro & Jillian Diesner, Jeffrey & Sonja Dietrich, Diggerland USA, Jack & Eileen Dillon, Nicholas &

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Photos from the 2015 Community, Staff & Volunteer Awards ceremony on March 20, 2016.

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Thank You for Supporting The Arc Montgomery County!

These individuals and organizations generously donated from July 1, 2015-March 31, 2016.

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KFICCC students enjoy their field trip to a local farm, capitalizing on the warm weather (above).



John proudly displays his "I voted!" sticker when exiting the polls during the April election primary (left).



Board President Karen O'Connor enjoys the Vocational & Day Services picnic with Dia, Danny, Clara and Andrea (above).



Cheng practices her Zumba moves during a lunchtime workout group on the plaza in Silver Spring (right).

Connections by Joyce Taylor, Executive Director

I started in this field in 1976—20 years old and still in college—driving a “little yellow school bus.” I worked 2-3 jobs at the same time plus going to school. I worked for some of our sister agencies in residential services, like CSAAC and The Arc Prince Georges County. I went to Disneyland twice as part of a vacation-travel program. It was before ADA so we did a lot of lifting and taking detours to avoid steps, but I was 21 years old and I loved every minute of it.



Looking back, I'm not sure why I stayed in this field for 40 years, 36 with The Arc. I've always had a strong sense of justice and fairness, of knowing right from wrong, so I think that was a factor. But, at the end of the day, I think it was the people who surrounded me...and that I was “needed.” In early 1980, while working for CHI Centers, I got a call from Bill Baber, then Executive Director of what is now The Arc, but was called MCARC in those days. *The Arc Transportation Manager has resigned—can you come to help us out?* So I went and really enjoyed my work.

Then, 10 years later in 1990, I got another call, also from the Executive Director, but this time it was Fred Baughman on the phone. *The Director of the Vocational & Day Services is going out on maternity leave for 3 months. Can you be the Acting Director?* So, I went and when the previous director did not come back from her leave, I stayed for 18 years until 2008. This time the call came from the Board of Directors President, Gene Mark, via my HR Director, Clyde Agnew. *Can you be the Acting Executive Director while we engage in a search?* So, of course, I went and here I am almost 8 years later.

So, I felt “needed.” But not just needed, I felt supported—by staff, supervisors, families, board members, volunteers, community partners, but most importantly, by the people we were being paid to support. That's my first take-away: we all want to feel needed and supported—maybe in varying degrees, but all of us want this, regardless of our abilities and differences.

My second take-away is that it feels like, over the past 40 years, we've lost the value of human connections. We've drifted into this wild, crazy world of objects that, upon a simple touch or light stroke, become your best friend. We have symbiotic relationships with our iPhones. The definition of symbiosis, as I researched, is “the intimate living together of two kinds of organisms, especially where such association is of mutual advantage and interdependence.” Think about it—our smart phones can't exist without humans, and we've evolved to where we can't live without our smart phones.

Now don't get me wrong, I love my technology—my iPhone is attached to my hip at all times. I love my Kindle and the fancy bells and whistles on my new car that I haven't figure out yet. I love Facebook. The most exciting thing that has happened to me in the last month is that I learned how to use Google Docs—I bragged about that for a week! But here's my conclusion.

We need a balance between interfacing and interacting with technology and interfacing and interacting with real people. Technology can't be a substitute for human connections. If it does, human life becomes de-valued. If we don't find the balance between managing our dependence and the value we place on technology vs. the value we place on human connections, our field will suffer, as I believe it already has because we don't have enough “humans” going into human services. We must encourage and support our young people to experience the field and to stay in the field for the sake of valuing, appreciating and celebrating our human differences and connections with one another. We must encourage them to engage ALL of their senses at the same time—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and speaking. Only then will they value human life. And only then will doors open to the joy of connecting with people with disabilities.

Calendar of Events May-October, 2016

Annual Membership Meeting
Board of Directors
Election & Installation
Wednesday, June 22



The Arc Gala
Friday, June 3

Holidays-Offices Closed
Monday, May 30
Monday, July 4
Monday, September 5

Futures Planning and
Special Needs Trusts Workshops
(pre-registration required)
Thursday, June 2
Tuesday, September 6

STAND Together Meetings
Thursday, May 26
Thursday, June 23
Thursday, July 28
Thursday, August 25
Thursday, September 22

Transitioning Youth Resource Fair
Saturday, October 15

Urban Thrift Sales
Mother's Day Sale, May 6-8
Memorial Day Sale, May 28-30
Independence Day Sale, July 2-4
Anniversary Sale, September 3-5

Volunteer Orientation
Friday, May 6
Wednesday, May 11
Sunday, May 22
Friday, June 10
Saturday, June 18
Friday, July 9
Friday, August 6
Friday, September 3

Detailed information for all events,
including location, is available at
www.thearcmontgomerycounty.org



Montgomery County

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What's Inside?

- Agency Updates
- Community, Staff & Volunteer Awards Photos
- Legislative Highlights

Time: Friday, June 3, 2016 ~ 6-11 pm
Place: Universities at Shady Grove Conference Center
9630 Gudelsky Drive, Building 2
Rockville, Maryland 20850
Ticket: \$150 per person

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Step right up for an Open Bar Cocktail Party, Silent Auction, Seated Dinner, Signature "Paddles Up" Auction and more... all for a great cause!

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