

BUILDING FUTURE LEADERS

"I've grown as a person...I've just become more professional."



17-year-old Victoria aka "Biki" says she's grateful to The Arc Montgomery County. At just 15, she started as an educational student volunteer for the organization through a partnership with her then school Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School. While The Arc doesn't lead its own internship program, it often partners with those that do.

Biki began her journey at headquarters in Rockville, but very quickly her creativity stood out, and it was clear she would be an asset to the children at KFICCC and the teens at After All.

"I love art... I like coloring with them... I like hearing what they have to say."

"Victoria (Biki) is a very creative artist," says Niambi Heyward, Childcare Center Director, "Victoria enthusiastically interacts with children...She has created lifelong friendships with the teaching and administration staff."



Biki with the children at KFICCC

Biki started at KFICCC in the infant room and branched out working with school-age children. She also spends time at After All, and says she enjoys all three! Biki says The Arc really gets high school students like herself involved in the day to day. You don't just stand around and watch.

"I feel like it's getting me ready by the skills that I've learned."

Getting her ready for the future! Biki is now a senior in high school, and she splits her day between going to school, and working at The Arc. "I'm very grateful for The Arc letting me have this experience at such a young age."

Biki says she plans on going to college to study nursing and become a pediatric oncology nurse. "I want to help kids while they're at their lowest points in life."

Biki says when she started at The Arc, she wanted to become a homicide detective, but working with children changed that. "Knowing that I've made an impact on their lives and just, like, them coming to me... and just giving me a hug... I like seeing kids happy."

"It's not an experience that you will get any other place...it's pretty unique." -Tony, Educational Student Volunteer



Tony (far right) playing a game with students at After All

Like Biki, 16-year-old Clayton aka "Tony" was an educational student volunteer with The Arc, as it partnered with the MCPS Summer RISE program, which is for rising MCPS juniors and seniors who wish to participate in a career-based learning opportunity during the summer. Tony gained valuable experience at KFICCC and After All.

"You really need to step up and be more of an authority figure, which I think is something that I struggled with before...but I think I learned a lot of great strategies."

Tony says his time with The Arc helped him decide he wants to become a pediatric nurse practitioner. Reflecting on his experience, he says, "It's something that I had never done before, and also I really enjoyed learning about the people because I think that sometimes what people tend to do is not look past the disability."

"Hosting student volunteers is a win for everyone!," says The Arc Montgomery County CEO Daria Cervantes, "Getting young people involved with the mission of The Arc helps develop our next generation of leaders who are passionate about building inclusive communities."

Learn more about how you can get involved with The Arc by visiting our website www.TheArcMontgomeryCounty.org.

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



I'm proud to share the strides we've made toward our strategic goals—both the visible progress on our website and the significant day-to-day efforts happening behind the scenes. Human Resources & Staff Development has expanded, adding a Recruiter, Onboarding Manager, and Generalist, all focused on addressing our workforce needs. Thanks to their dedication, our vacancy numbers have reached their lowest levels in years, averaging just 30 between June and August. We're not just filling positions; we're bringing on the right people who fit our mission. A special thank you to the entire HR team for their hard work—it's truly paying off!

Since our last update, I'm pleased to report that all regular employees received a 2.5% pay increase. The starting pay for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) in Community Living Services is now between \$22.08 and \$23.19 per hour, while DSPs in Employment & Meaningful Day Services start at \$20.00 to \$21.01 per hour. Job Coaches are now earning between \$21.54 and \$22.63 per hour. Current employees in these roles have also received corresponding increases.

There's even more groundwork being laid right now, and I look forward to sharing our continued progress in the spring newsletter!

—Daria Cervantes, CEO

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Thursday, Friday & Saturday
November 7-9

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DSP WEEK

DSP Week 2024 was a resounding success! We love showing appreciation for our dedicated team of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).

One of the week's highlights was a lively party at headquarters, where DSPs enjoyed snacks, gifts, and fun activities with coworkers, those we support, and The Arc's Board of Directors. Daily gift drawings added excitement, featuring prizes like Six Flags tickets and a 75" TV. Each DSP received a gift card as a token of our gratitude.

Families joined in with heartfelt cards and messages. One family member wrote, "We appreciate all the hard work and love you bring to your role every day. Our family feels so lucky to have someone so dedicated to our brother."

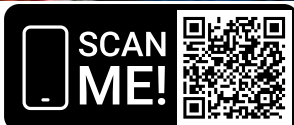


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Save the Date!

The Arc Montgomery County Respite, Resource & Health Fair

Open to Public • Free Admission

*Join us for a day of care,
support and health!*

Saturday, March 22, 2025

10 am–2 pm

7362 Calhoun Place • Rockville, MD 20855

- **Discover Resources for Respite Care**
home health care agencies, respite facilities, adult medical day programs, camps and therapeutic programs for seniors and people with disabilities
- **Health Screenings**
- **Montgomery County Aging & Disability Resources**
- **Interactive Activities and Much More!**

PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES



It starts from within! The Personal Supports team is growing and laying the groundwork for positive change. DSPs expressed a desire to connect with colleagues and share information about activities throughout the county to make time spent with the people they support more meaningful. This led to the launch of monthly meetings focused on these connections. As a result, people supported are engaging with their community in new ways. For example, one person, a big fan of dogs, enjoyed an unforgettable visit to Bark Social—a hybrid bar, restaurant, and dog park—after their DSP learned about it in a meeting.

Recognizing the need for increased service hours, we've adjusted our plans and hired a new Team Coordinator to improve response times and provide more proactive, person-centered support. These changes align with the division's goal of better connecting with families and enhancing the quality of care.

EMPLOYMENT & MEANINGFUL DAY SERVICES



It's been a busy and rewarding season for Employment & Meaningful Day Services (E&MDS)! From career advancements to fun outings, there's plenty to celebrate. We launched our first career fair, focused on helping the people we support transition successfully from Meaningful Day services to Employment opportunities. Several people made this exciting shift, marking a significant milestone in their personal and professional growth. Additionally, 3 people supported through a contract with a local company have now been directly hired by the company. Three people we support are now employed by a long-time partner organization. Crews have enjoyed activities, including baseball games, visits to the Capitol and firehouses, catching movies, and having fun at Dave & Buster's, there's always something on the calendar. We even had a great time at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair! Stay tuned as activities expand over the next few months!

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES



Three members of the KFICCC team are part of an exciting new pilot program. Whitney Howell, Zhara Samarat and Meaza Gebregiorgis are participating in an assistantship program at Howard Community College. As members of the program, assistants take college courses toward their associate's degree. They also receive credit for their degree based on childcare work that they do at the center. This allows them to complete their associate's degree in 18 months, or less.

Their tuition, books and materials are covered by the assistantship. Eventually, The Arc may have to pay a small amount toward their tuition, but to date their entire tuition has been covered. Participants were chosen based on interest and seniority.

COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES

Community Living Services, along with Human Resources, have been busy welcoming in many new Direct Support Professionals and filling other positions within the division as well! The goal is to have as few vacancies as possible and decreasing the use of staffing agencies to provide support.

Speaking of the homes, some of them got a refresh in the way of new washing machines, dryers, refrigerators, and furniture!

In other news, there has been a lot to celebrate in the way of milestones. Sybil Paul, Direct Support Professional, hit her 30-year mark with The Arc. She works at one of our homes in Silver Spring where three women live and are supported. In fact, one of those women - Mary (Renee) - celebrated her 60th birthday and they all had a party, decorated with a purple theme since that was Renee's wish.

Renee and Schelta had been living together for years, and four years ago, Kimberly moved in. Community Living Services Director Kari Borgealt says the women "look out for one another."

That is obvious when you visit. Renee uses a walker, and Kimberly lets her go first when walking around their house. The DSPs make sure Renee does daily walks all around the home for exercise. Renee also enjoys looking through magazines and clothing catalogues.

Schelta likes to do crossword puzzles and read. In fact, when she comes across a word she doesn't know, she writes it down and looks it up in the dictionary. Recently, she learned the meaning of "abrupt" and "murmured." Sybil says Schelta "really uses her time very creatively."

Kimberly has a part-time job. She also makes friendship bracelets she hopes to sell for \$5 a piece. She saves her money so she can travel and has plans to go to Disney World! Kimberly also cooks, and recently made a breakfast fit for a king for her and her housemates.

As for the future, the women of this home want to continue to celebrate. Kimberly was already talking about the menu for Thanksgiving and says she's looking forward to sitting down with everyone and enjoying some good ol' mac-n-cheese.



RESPIRE COORDINATION

The Department of Health and Human Services has permanently suspended income guidelines for primary caregivers of children with disabilities. This change allows Respite Coordination to support more families, expanding the options beyond in-home care to include camps and therapeutic programs. These programs not only provide essential respite for parents and caregivers, but also give children opportunities to build friendships, develop social skills, and engage in enriching recreational settings. Access to diverse programs can have a lasting impact on the lives of children with disabilities, while giving families a well-deserved break. Visit The Arc's website for a full list of available options.



DIGITAL LITERACY CAMP

This past July, The Arc Montgomery County's After All teen summer program hosted a weeklong Digital Literacy Camp. The goal of the week was teaching teens with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) essential digital skills necessary to navigate today's technology-driven world effectively and safely.

Dr. Maryjo Krile, a professor from Eastern Kentucky University who specializes in strategies for teaching digital literacy skills to young adults with IDD, brought her expertise and engaging teaching style to the week. The program covered a wide range of digital literacy topics, including the responsible use of technology, online safety, and the development of teens' technical skills like sending emails. Doreen Engel, The Arc's Director of Children and Youth Programs, shared, "We have benefited so much from watching a master teacher at work. Setting high expectations and watching the teens meet and exceed them is always such a joy."

The camp offered more than just an educational experience; it was a fun and interactive environment for the teens to engage with technology and each other. The enthusiastic feedback from participants highlighted the camp's success in making learning enjoyable and impactful.

This project was funded in part through a SpArc Tank Innovations grant from The Arc Maryland. The Arc Montgomery County is proud to be able to offer digital literacy training through the generosity of these grant funds.



PARTNERING WITH THE ARC FOR A DECADE AND GROWING!

HUB International has been a valued Corporate Partner of The Arc Montgomery County for over 12 years. What began as a business partnership has grown into a collaborative effort focused on social impact for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Through our partnership with HUB, The Arc has been able to offer a wide range of employee benefits that extend beyond standard health insurance. HUB has connected The Arc with cost-effective benefits such as life insurance, disability insurance, and vision and dental plans. The team at HUB works diligently with insurers to negotiate better rates, which is crucial for The Arc and demonstrates our commitment to our employees.

HUB's dedication to corporate social responsibility aligns with The Arc's mission. Jody Buyalos, Executive Vice President at HUB, along with his team, has actively participated in countless events over the past decade, lending their voices to advocate for disability rights.

"Each of us has something to give—and at HUB, we believe in giving back to the communities in which we live and work, making them stronger now and in the future," says Buyalos. "Our HUB Gives program is our way of donating our time, creativity, passion, and connections to The Arc Montgomery County and community projects that make a difference."

HUB has also been instrumental in encouraging other businesses to support The Arc Montgomery County. Thank you, HUB International!

To learn more about our Corporate Partner Program, contact Adrienne Gude at Adrienne.Gude@arcmontmd.org or 301.984.5777 x2218.



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COMMUNITY, VOLUNTEER & EMPLOYEE AWARDS

Going beyond expectations. Rising above obstacles.

On June 8, 2024, special awards were presented to community partners, volunteers, and employees who demonstrated their commitment to supporting people and families affected by intellectual and developmental disabilities. These unsung heroes are making a difference in people's lives and we extend our thanks to each of them!

SELF-ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Kamryn Holley

Kamryn is a new board member of The Arc and has done an excellent job balancing her work and personal life and volunteer assignments. She also represented The Arc on the news during our Holiday Giving Program.



BOARD MEMBER

Chris Young

After serving only one year on the Board of Directors, Chris stepped up to be the Vice President, and has been a right hand to our Board President. She has served on our Finance and Executive Committees, has led our IT committee, and has become our bylaw expert.



COMMUNITY PARTNER

Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School

Don Bosco Cristo Rey's Corporate Work Study Program prepares dedicated students for college and careers while also fulfilling real work responsibilities. The Arc has partnered with them since 2022, and this year had three students from the program join us at KFICCC, our inclusive childcare center, and our administrative headquarters.



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Isabelle Franklin

Isabelle, daughter of board member Charles Franklin, volunteered at KFICCC this past year. She also volunteered in our former store, Urban Thrift. Isabelle recently was admitted to the Project Search job program.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

ADAPT Business Resource Group

Prudential's employee contributions totaled nearly \$3,000 in toys, games, supplies, and more for KFICCC and After All. ADAPT has stepped forward again and offered to fund a summer backpack drive for KFICCC students.



PRESIDENT'S CUP AWARD

Compass Pro Bono

This volunteer team of consulting experts has been with our organization over the last nine months, providing support to help us understand the financial operations of our inclusive childcare center, model financial scenarios for growth, and perform analysis of our operations. The team includes Jeff Kass, Martin Lespada, Barbara Wooton, Amrita Lakanpal, Kathleen Coney, Barbara Kafka, Vicki Burns, Peter Jacobstein, Hassan Zaheer, and DC Program Director, Beverley Ross.



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
PERSONAL SUPPORTS**

Renee McCullough

Renee has worked as a partner with the person she supports to achieve his annual goals, which have increased his independence. She has provided many opportunities for him to succeed, while having fun!



RISING STAR

Linda Kosiorowski

Linda was hired as the Assistant Director of QA, and quickly picked up the job. Within a short time, there was a vacancy, causing her to pivot, and pick up the caseload! She also made time to take a class, becoming one of The Arc's investigators.



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVICES**

Ann Campbell

As a teacher at KFICCC, Ann is known for her warmth, support, and her calm in the storm. She demonstrates her care for the entire center, and assists with school wide activities. Ann is known for her smile, humor, and generosity.



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT**

Carrie Barrett

Carrie excels in her role in HR, and is always helping with employee requests, problems, and she thinks outside the box. She even hosts the Wellness Committee, encouraging staff to stay healthy!



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR INCLUSIVE
LIVING SERVICES**

Irene F Djidjou Ngeyoun

Irene has risen above expectations in her work and dedication as a DSP through hard work and willingness to help. As a Team Coordinator, she was dedicated to supporting people to reach their goals, and encouraged independence.



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT**

Stephanie Benedetti

Stephanie is powerhouse who has brought a fresh vision to Engagement. Through her leadership, giving to The Arc through grants, individual donations, and corporate partnerships have increased by 191% in her first year alone!



**EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR
EMPLOYMENT & DAY SERVICES**

Gorvergo Kollie

As a Job Coach in Employment & Meaningful Day, Gorvergo is described as a reliable mentor, supporting a crew of workers. He is known for his positive attitude even in the face of challenges, patience and "can do" spirit.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Deborah Mark

Deborah exemplifies professionalism at its highest level. She shows qualities of leadership which significantly contribute to the field of IDD, demonstrates the organization's mission and excellence, and sets a standard for others to follow. She is a champion for the organization.



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE ARC MONTGOMERY COUNTY!

THESE PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS GENEROUSLY DONATED FROM JANUARY 1–JUNE 30, 2024

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TRIBUTES

In Memory of: Alfred Knapp, Raymond Marcotte, Eric Marcoux, John A. Slavcoff, Jr., Mel Stokols, Will Veerhoff ■

In Honor of: Julia Abate, Mark Cloherty, Marcia Pruzan ■

Every Gift Counts

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



AWARDS & HONORS

Teresa Morgan

Earned her ACRE certification

Essivi Messan

Received a supervisor award at the MACS DSP & Frontline Supervision Conference in Ocean City

Jill Berry, Laquoia Brown, Julie Croker, Dwayne Johnson, Irene Djidjou Ngueyon, and Tumu Weeks

Graduated from MCE Leadership

Maria Caro

Received an award as Outstanding Direct Support Professional from The Montgomery County Inter-Agency Coordinating Council for People with Developmental Disabilities

The Arc Maryland's Executive Director

Ande Kolp

was selected to receive The Arc of the United States' Executive Excellence Award (nominated by The Arc Montgomery County).

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For questions about the impact of your partnership or your benefits as a member of this program, please contact Adrienne Gude, Associate Director of Engagement, at Adrienne.Gude@arcmontmd.org or 301.984.5777, ext. 2218.

SCAN ME



BETHESDA BIG TRAIN'S COMMUNITY HERO



On July 6, 2024, The Arc Montgomery County was honored as a Community Hero at the Bethesda Big Train baseball game. The energy in the stadium was electric as the crowd cheered the team on to an exciting victory. It was fantastic to see so many familiar faces and new friends come together to celebrate The Arc!

Julian Gonzalez, a baseball fan, and person supported by The Arc Montgomery County, threw out the first pitch of the game and The Arc's CEO Daria Cervantes shared with the crowd The Arc's commitment to Montgomery County and detailed the programs and services we offer.

Bethesda Big Train provided complimentary tickets and a meal to more than 25 attendees representing The Arc, making up quite the cheering section right near the home plate!



Seeing our supporters fill the stands and rally behind both The Arc and Big Train was a powerful reminder of the impact we can make when we come together. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the Bethesda Big Train team for their generosity and their recognition to The Arc as a Community Hero. Thank you for celebrating and promoting the work of nonprofit organizations making a difference in Montgomery County.

NEW GRANT FUNDING HELPS TEENS, ADULTS, AND SENIORS

We are proud to announce that we are recipients of three Montgomery County Community Grants! The grant funding will support the development of new programs at The Arc that benefit Montgomery County residents. Awarded project funds will go towards these new initiatives:

1. Exploration of an after-school program for teens with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) for residents in the county, building on the success of After All, our teen program in Kensington.
2. Development of a training program for adults with IDD to become Direct Support Professionals.
3. Creating practices and policies that enhance end of life care for seniors with IDD.

These initiatives reflect The Arc's commitment to enhancing the lives of people with IDD across their lifespan. We are grateful for the support from Montgomery County and look forward to the positive impact of these programs. Be sure to follow along in future editions of the newsletter as we share more information and highlight our progress.



Your Membership Counts!

- Fully-inclusive child care
- Youth after-school and summer programming
- Work skills training
- Community living support
- Family workshops with resource sharing
- Disability benefits counseling
- Coordination of respite care

SCAN ME



MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Bi-annual newsletter
- Monthly e-newsletter
- Annual report
- Voting rights
- Membership in The Arc Maryland & The Arc of the United States

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TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK

On Thursday, April 25, The Arc Montgomery County hosted Take Your Child to Work Day. It was a success! Several employees brought their children and families to HQ for the day—where the Leadership Team and colleagues introduced themselves, their work, and answered some great questions from the children in attendance. After, our friends from The Arc Maryland and Montgomery Parks Program Access led fun and informative activities for the kids. Special shoutout to our student volunteers who participated this year, guiding the younger kids in attendance and sitting in on a meeting, providing key input on an upcoming initiative. We're looking forward to next year!



Volunteers Needed

The Arc Montgomery County provides inclusive childcare, summer camp, work skills training, employment opportunities, respite care resources, and advocacy for people with and without disabilities and their families.

FILL OUT AN INTEREST FORM TODAY!



OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

- Supporting classrooms in our 0-5 preschool
- Assisting in our youth after-school and summer camp programs
- Group volunteer experiences tailored to your group's skill set and availability
- Special event help during our events schedule throughout the year.



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The Arc
Montgomery County

Calendar of Events

Oct. 1, 2024–Mar. 30, 2025

KFICCC, After All, Employment & Meaningful Day Services, Headquarters Building–Closed*

Thursday, November 28

Friday, November 29

Tuesday, December 24

Wednesday, December 25

Wednesday, January 1

Monday, January 20

Monday, February 17

**The Arc does not designate holidays for employees, however select programs and locations are closed on certain holidays.*



Giving Tuesday

Tuesday, December 3

Calendar Day

Thursday, January 9

DD Day at the Legislature

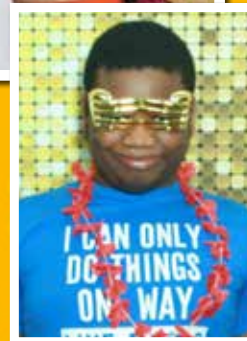
Thursday, February 13

The Respite Resource & Health Fair

Saturday, March 22

ANNUAL PICNIC & CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2024



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KINDNESS

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**SCAN
ME!**



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