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COVID-19 Update from the CEO



Dear Members of The Arc Family:

As we begin the month of May, The Arc of Essex County's comprehensive COVID-19 service and operations response and prevention plan remains in place as we move forward in response to the evolving Coronavirus situation. Our plans and strategies are reviewed daily based on the information from federal and state authorities and with hope for modifications to safely adjust to the guidance for lessening restrictions.

New Measures:

- Virtual Clubs, events and activities were rolled out to at-home consumers
- DSP appreciation lawn signs were deployed for display throughout Essex County

Current Closures:

- Shapiro Center for Early Intervention: Suspended; modified teleservices began 4/1
- Stepping Stones School: Suspended through May 15; remote learning plan activated
- Stepping Stones Early Intervention: Suspended until further notice
- Children and Adult Group Respite and Recreation Programs: Suspended for consumers until

DDD/DCF authorize return

- Adult Day Programs: Suspended for consumers until DDD authorizes return

Ongoing Services:

- Deployment of iPhones to consumers and programs for remote monitoring (Facetime)
- Increased use of telemedicine services with Station MD, the DDC and other medical providers
- Residential Services: No outside visitors; staff only engaged in essential community activities
- Administrative Support: The main office is open with limited hours, staggered and remote staffing; only essential visitors
- Increased screening, including infrared temperature checks, for everyone entering residences
- Program Administration: Staff deployed to Arc locations to support residential services
- Support staff shopping teams continue to pick up and deliver items including groceries to group homes as needed.
- Containment scheduling implemented which assigns staff to work in specific programs only in order to minimize the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19
- Masks distributed to all locations for staff to utilize during shifts in program and when engaged in essential community activities
- Increased use of video and audio teleservices to assist with social isolation, engagement with families, and other Stay-At-Home challenges
- Additional supplies of N95 and KN95 masks and isolation gowns have been secured and deployed including donated PPE from United way and DDD.
- Increased and expanded COVID-19 stipends for staff working residential shifts
- Expanded opportunities to spread awareness and appreciation of our DSP's (Jersey 4 Jersey, local and state news articles)

As we move into the 3rd month of the COVID-19 crisis, we continue to be grateful for our direct care, operations, and support staff and teachers who move us forward each day by their commitment to each other, The Arc of Essex County, and the individuals and families we serve. From The Arc Family to your family.....

Stay safe and be well.



Linda C. Lucas
Chief Executive Officer

Nature Themed Arts & Crafts and Outdoor Activities

Popular as Residents Continue to Stay at Home

Residents of The Arc of Essex County continue to have fun while staying at home. On Tuesday, April 7th the residents of the Seven Oaks group home took advantage of the nearly 70 degree weather by decorating kites, then flying them outside and playing yard bowling.



A few days later, on April 10th, the residents of the Marmon supervised apartments tried out some new hair styles thanks to creative members of their staff. On Tuesday, April 14th, the residents of the Nutley group home used their leftover plastic Easter eggs to create peanut butter and bird seed bird feeders. Popular activities across all group homes, including virtual fitness classes, cooking and baking, music, as well as puzzles and arts and crafts continue to entertain and engage residents as they stay at home and help fight against the spread of Coronavirus.

If you or a loved one are interested in pursuing an independent living placement with The Arc of Essex County once stay-at-home restrictions are lifted, please contact The Arc's Director of Residential Service, Rebecca Lorusso via email at rlorusso@arcessex.org or by calling (973) 535-1181 ext. 1270. For additional information about The Arc of Essex County's residential services, [click here](#).

First-Ever Virtual Building Tomorrows Run and Walk

a Success

Thanks to the participation and support of more than 300 runners, walkers, sponsors, and donors, the 22nd Annual (and first-ever virtual) Building Tomorrows Run and Walk raised nearly \$43,000 which will directly benefit children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families served by The Arc of Essex County.

Proceeds from the event will enable The Arc to remain agile, responsive, and innovative. If you or your friends and family didn't have the chance to contribute prior to the event, fundraising pages will remain active for a few more weeks.

Pictures from the 2020 Building Tomorrows Run and Walk, including the winners of our photo contest, are now posted on [The Arc's Facebook page](#). Winners include:

- Best Virtual Team Photo: We Thought They Said Run..., Flanders, NJ, Distance: 5K
- Most Creative Cheer Sign: Kelly Ermolowich, Little Falls, NJ, Distance: 1-Mile Walk
- Best Motivational Photo: Lizeth Diaz, Rutherford, NJ, Distance: Half Marathon
- Most Scenic Route: Paul Whitman, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Distance: 10K

A complete list of 5K, 10K, and half marathon times is posted on www.runorwalk.org.

The Arc would like to extend our utmost appreciation to the 2020 sponsors: PSE&G, Bogush, William H. Connolly, Bird Pharma Consulting LLC, NJM Insurance, Group, Sax LLC, StationMD, Wakefern, and Walsh, Pizzi, O'Reilly, Falanga.



Help The Arc Fight



Against the Spread of Coronavirus

While the country is staying home and practicing social distancing due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, The Arc of Essex County continues to provide vital services and supports to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. Over 135 adults in our residential services receive round-the-clock supervision and care and the students in our Stepping Stones School utilize a comprehensive remote learning plan to continue their studies and therapies.

While this situation is unprecedented, our team is taking all of the necessary safety precautions as we are certain are all of you. The Arc is furnishing our residential properties with a robust supply of critical products including hand sanitizer, gloves, and disinfecting products. In the past two weeks alone, we've spent nearly \$150,000 to ensure the safety and well being of our residents and staff. As quickly as we procure these products, they are used as we aggressively follow Centers for Disease Control guidance to minimize risk of exposure and maintain healthy, clean homes.

With the end of this pandemic likely weeks or months away and the ongoing need for these products, now, more than ever before, we need your help. Will you donate today and enable us to continue to protect the individuals we serve and the staff providing care?

To make a donation to The Arc of Essex County's COVID-19 Relief Fund, please visit www.arcessex.org/covid19relief or mail your donation to 123 Naylon Avenue, Livingston, NJ 07039.



we need you.

Your donation will provide a 2 week supply of:

 \$25 Toilet paper for 1 home	 \$50 Disinfecting products for 4 homes	 \$100 Paper towels for 4 homes	 \$250 Gloves for 10 homes	 \$500 All previous products + hand sanitizer & soap for 3 homes
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The Arc Continues to Leverage Technology to Provide Supports

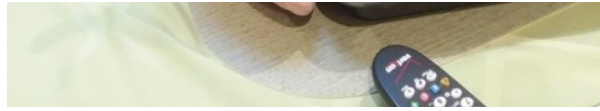
while Social Distancing

Leveraging video conferencing technology already used by the Stepping Stones School and Shapiro Center for Early Intervention, The Arc of Essex County rolled out additional tele-services for its life management, day, and adult recreation programs.

For community based supports (CBS) program participant Dyan, this means meeting with her CBS worker Cecilia several times a week via Zoom. This week, Dyan and Cecelia baked brownies! Together, they reviewed the recipe, then Cecelia guided Dyan showing her how to follow the directions, and mix and bake the brownies. Before enjoying their treat, they were able to catch up, discussing current events and things happening in their lives.

The Arc's Day Programs also began offering various





classes including music and fitness via Zoom.

Beginning Friday, May 1st adult recreation and respite program participants can join Assistant Director of Community Services Candes Reid for Friday night dance parties. Meanwhile, participants in The Arc's life management program can now video conference with staff to continue to receive individualized behavioral supports for their children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

The Arc of Essex County is committed to providing services and supports to those we serve by leveraging technology and practicing social distancing. If your loved one is interested in joining our Day Programs classes, contact Director of Adult Day Services Angela LoSapio at alosapio@arcsex.org. If your loved one is interested in joining our Adult Recreation & Respite virtual gatherings, contact Director of Community Services, Maureen Murray at mmurray@arcsex.org.

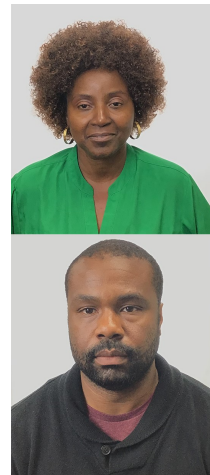
If you would like to make a donation to The Arc of Essex County to ensure we can continue to be agile, responsive, and innovative, especially during difficult times like these, please visit www.arcsex.org/covid19relief.

Staff Highlight:

Noel Michaels and Martha Nelson

On Wednesday, April 1st staff members Noel Michaels and Martha Nelson checked in for exceptionally long shifts at the Verona Supervised Apartments as the home began self-quarantining to fight against the spread of Coronavirus. During their time in the home, Noel and Martha ensured everyone was well taken care of by leading engaging activities, planning and, collectively with the residents, cooking delicious home cooked meals, and ensuring the practice of good hygiene and cleanliness within the home.

Noel and Martha embody the mission of The Arc of Essex County. We extend our utmost appreciation to these amazing staff and recognize their unwavering dedication to those we serve.



#GivingTuesdayNow

Happening May 5th

#GivingTuesday, a global day of giving traditionally held the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, will soon launch #GivingTuesdayNow which will take place on Tuesday, May 5th. It will be a day to not only give back, but unify and respond to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. This event is set to spark an increase in grassroots generosity, citizen engagement, business and philanthropy activation, and support for communities and nonprofits around the world.



Since the onset of COVID-19, The Arc of Essex County has spent nearly \$150,000 to ensure the safety and

well being of our residents and staff. As quickly as we procure these products, they are used as we aggressively follow Centers for Disease Control guidance to minimize risk of exposure and maintain healthy, clean homes.

With the end of this pandemic likely weeks or months away and the ongoing need for these products, now, more than ever before, we need your help. Make a donation to The Arc of Essex County's COVID-19 relief efforts through Facebook on #GivingTuesdayNow or through The Arc's website:

www.arcessex.org/covid19relief.

Livingston's Little Learners Brighten Residents' Days

with Artwork

The Arc of Essex County would like to thank our new friends at Livingston's Little Learners. While their school is closed due to the Coronavirus outbreak, the students spent some time at home spreading joy and coloring pictures for our group home residents. In total, more than 80 residents of The Arc received pictures from the preschoolers and their siblings.

Would your school, business, or civic organization like to spread cheer to The Arc's residents and frontline staff during this unprecedented time? Email The Arc's Senior Director of Development and Communication, Heather Comstock, at hcomstock@arcessex.org to express your interest in getting involved and discuss ideas and agency needs.



The Arc of Essex County Featured

in the Jersey 4 Jersey COVID-19 Relief Benefit



Thanks to a tip from Board Member Brian Lowe, The Arc of Essex County and our Nutley Group Home manager Tia were recently featured on the Jersey 4 Jersey COVID-19 Relief Benefit. You can view the brief clip above which highlights the impact of Direct Support Professionals on the front lines who continue to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Want to donate to help The Arc fight against the spread of COVID-19? Visit www.arcessex.org/covid19relief.

Supportive Choices Treats Arc Staff and Residents

to Lunch

On Tuesday, April 28, Supportive Choices, a support coordination agency who represents several individuals served by The Arc of Essex County, sent lunch for residents and staff at a number of The Arc's group homes to recognize the tremendous contributions of Direct Support Professionals and treat residents as they continue to follow state mandated stay-at-home orders.

The Arc of Essex County would like to thank Supportive Choices for thinking of our staff and residents during this time. Would your school, business, or civic organization like to spread cheer to The Arc's residents and frontline staff during this unprecedented time? Email The Arc's Senior Director of Development and Communication, Heather Comstock, at hcomstock@arcsex.org to express your interest in getting involved and discuss ideas and agency needs.



Looking to Make a Difference

While Social Distancing?

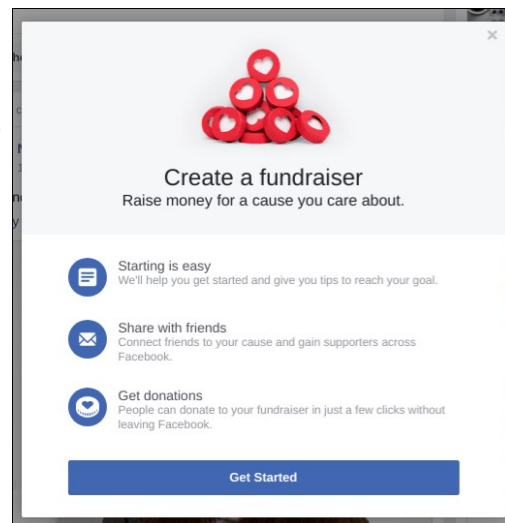
Have a birthday coming up? Perhaps a milestone anniversary on the horizon? Celebrate your special occasion with your friends and loved ones while making a difference and practicing social distancing. Leverage Facebook to host a personalized event on its social platform that will enable you to raise funds for The Arc of Essex County. In the past three years, supporters like you have raised nearly \$9,000 by hosting Facebook fundraisers!

Are you ready to create your own birthday/celebration Facebook fundraiser? Here's how...

In a few, easy steps, you could help raise significant funds for The Arc of Essex County.

1. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/fundraisers/>
2. Click "Raise Money for a Nonprofit Organization"
3. Select "The Arc of Essex County" as the organization of your choice
4. Create a goal and timeline for your fundraiser
5. Customize your fundraiser page with a personal message about why you are raising money for The Arc of Essex County
6. Create and Share with friends

Payments are processed through Facebook and will be deposited directly to The Arc of Essex County. Please note, Facebook has generously waived all processing fees for online donations processed through Facebook Fundraisers which means donations will have an even bigger impact!



To learn more about Facebook Fundraisers, [click here](#).

Have a question? Need Help? Please contact Heather Comstock, Senior Director of Development and Communication at 973-535-1181 x1224 or hcomstock@arcsex.org.

Make a Difference

While You Shop!

Shopping for all of life's celebrations and needs looks a bit different in light of Coronavirus. Planning to buy the mother figure in your life a gift online for Mother's Day or picking up something you need from Amazon? If so, be sure to use Amazon Smile and make a difference while you shop!



Visit www.smile.amazon.com and select The Arc of Essex County as your preferred charity*. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to The Arc of Essex County. It's that simple and there is no added cost to you! Every little bit counts when it comes to helping your charitable organization.

*Please remember to go through the smile.amazon.com site each time you shop online all year long. While your account will be linked to The Arc's fundraising efforts after you first select The Arc of Essex County as your charity of choice, your shopping purchases will only be tracked by Amazon if you begin each transaction in the smile.amazon.com site.

The Arc Remembers.....

a Former Board Member, an Employee, and a Stepping Stones Alum

Jacqueline Juster was a member of The Arc of Essex County's Board of Directors for more than 30 years. During her tenure on the board, she served as the chair of the nominating, government affairs, and finance and budget committees. She also served as a two-time delegate to The Arc of New Jersey from 1988-1990 and 1999-2002.

Carolyn Martins-Reitz was a parent of Stepping Stones alum Thomas Martins and former employee at The Arc of Essex County's Community Link Day Program. Kind and compassionate, Carolyn was loved by Day Program attendees and staff alike. She was a devoted mother, wife, and advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Thomas Martins graduated from the Stepping Stones School 20 years ago. An outgoing student, Martins loved birthdays and was able to celebrate his 30th birthday virtually with friends before his passing. He was exceptionally close with his mother as well as his step-father and sister.

The Arc of Essex County conveys its condolences to the Juster and Martins-Reitz families during this difficult time. If you would like to make a donation to The Arc of Essex County in their memory, please visit www.arcsex.org/donate and note that your donation is in memory of Jackie, Carolyn, or Thomas – an acknowledgement of your tribute will be sent to family members.

Stay Connected!



 **Donate Now**