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Camp Hope Opens for the *2020 Season*

The Arc of Essex County's Camp Hope program opened for the 2020 season on Monday, July 13. Although modified from previous summers, the 2020 camp focus remains the same with an emphasis on fun, friendship, safety and learning.

Week 1 kicked off with water fun and featured activities including water relay races, water balloon baseball, boat making and racing, and the always anticipated camp car wash. Campers celebrated "Spirit Week" during the second week of camp which included crazy hair and mismatch days, the annual camp Olympics, and tie dye activities.



To end the month of July, the theme of week 3 was "Fitness is Fun". Campers enjoyed participating in a number of sports activities including kickball, wiffle ball and the annual color run. All activities throughout the week focused on building teamwork and camaraderie.

Camp Hope is, traditionally, a seven week summer day camp for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities located in East Hanover (modified to 5 weeks due to the ongoing pandemic). Operating since 1956, Camp Hope provides campers with traditional camp activities including supervised swimming and outdoor fun with modified sports, arts & crafts, and music. While enjoying these activities, attention is also given to daily living skills, peer interaction, socialization skills, and developing appropriate behaviors.

For more information, visit www.arccamphope.com. For questions regarding the application process, contact Laurie Best, Senior Director of Children & Adult Day Services at (973) 535-1181 x1264 or lb@arcessex.org.

Elmo Visits the Oakwood Group Home for Backyard Sing-a-long;

Virtual Activities Continue

On Sunday, July 5th, Sesame Street star, Elmo, visited the Oakwood Group Home for a special, socially distanced backyard sing-a-long. A treat for the residents sponsored by one of their siblings, everyone thoroughly enjoyed the 40 minute show complete with music, dancing, and balloon animals.



Additionally, virtual programming continued throughout the month of July. Virtual community inclusion and recreational programming continues to gain popularity, especially weekly game days, dance parties, and cooking classes.

"It [virtual programming] helps Qasim stay connected to his community of respite friends and instructors. During these times of uncertainty, the Zoom sessions have been a constant in our lives and a blessing to Qas," said Wanda Carswell-Harrell, Qasim's mother. "I love the fact that Qasim is at home and safe; and through the Zoom platform he is fully engaged and still has a lot of fun! Outside of his room I can hear his laughter and participation in the groups -- thank you so much for creating this platform!"

If your loved one is interested in joining our Day Program classes, contact Director of Adult Day Services Angela LoSapio at alosapio@arcsex.org. For Adult Recreation & Respite virtual gatherings, contact Director of Community Services, Maureen Murray at mmurray@arcsex.org, and for more information about Children's Services, contact Director of Children's Services, Erika Zupkus at ezupkus@arcsex.org.

Would you or 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.

Arc Branded Masks Now For Sale

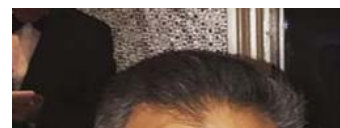
Are you in need of reusable face masks? If so, visit The Arc of Essex County's online store to purchase Arc branded masks and support the agency's mission. Arc face masks are 3-layer, high quality masks made of a nano micro fiber outer shell, 100% cotton muslin inner lining, and include a filter pocket. The layers are breathable and soft and the masks are sized for adults.



To purchase your masks, visit The Arc's online store front: <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/shop-arcsex/store>.

Staff Highlight:

Joe Rullis



Joe Rullis, a member of The Arc's Life Management respite team, recently celebrated two major milestones – his 10-year anniversary with The Arc and the high school graduation of his Life Management participant, Zach.

Joe has spent the majority of his 10 years working directly with Zach and his family. When COVID forced programs and in-person visits to shut down, Joe and Zach were quick to embrace meeting on Zoom for virtual workouts. "I have to tell you how great it is to have found a rhythm for this new way of things! Zach is loving 'virtual workouts' [with Joe] so much! He gets his clothes and water ready and everything!" said Kristy Gray.



In a post dedicated to Zach, Joe said, "I met this unbelievable, intelligent, and amazing young man when he was 12 years old. Today, he is a graduate of Spectrum 360 in Livingston. Words cannot describe how proud of you I am. I never knew The Arc [of] Essex [County] would bring us together... Today, I do not consider it work; I consider our relationship an amazing brotherhood. You are truly an amazing young man, Zach, and I am honored to be by your side today, tomorrow, and forever. Congratulations buddy!!"

Joe embodies the passion and dedication that drives the mission of The Arc of Essex County. We extend our utmost appreciation to Joe and recognize his unwavering dedication to those we serve.

Virtual Therapy Milestone

for Stepping Stones Early Intervention Student

Shortly after stay-at-home orders were put in place in mid-March, The Arc of Essex County's early intervention programs began offering therapies virtually. With the ongoing, virtual support, one Stepping Stones EI participant recently learned how to climb, a major accomplishment that she and her family have been working towards for some time. "Now she (Vera) climbs all day, every day," reported Vera's mom Francesca. As any parent can relate, "Part of me is super excited...and part of me is super terrified." Congratulations to Vera on her new-found mobility!



Early intervention services are uniquely specialized for families of children ages birth to three. The Arc's team of early childhood specialists works together with parents and other family members to maximize the growth and development of children by supporting the advancement of motor, communication, and social skills. A Department of Health supported early intervention program, The Shapiro Center provides early intervention services in the child's natural setting. Stepping Stones EI is a private, center-based, therapeutic, supportive, and educational opportunity for families with children who have an intellectual and/or developmental disability, ages birth to three which is especially important for children with Down syndrome.

If you have a loved one who may be in need of early intervention services, contact the New Jersey early-intervention system to learn more by calling (888) 653-4463. If you are interested in information regarding Stepping Stones EI, contact Judy Bellina at jbellina@arcessex.org.

Family Visits Resume

for Group Home Residents

As statewide Coronavirus cases continue to decline and New Jersey eased restrictions placed on community living programs, The Arc of Essex County began allowing families to visit their loved ones living in its residential programs. The visits began in early July and exclusively took place outside where all parties wore masks and practiced safe social distancing. Group home residents welcomed this latest development with excitement as family members scheduled their half-hour visits to catch up and celebrate milestones including birthdays.

“Due to appropriate safety measures during the pandemic, I haven't been able to visit my brother who lives in a group home,” said Meredith Whitaker. “Just got word we can now have 30 min outdoor visits!! I thank you for the evidence-based safety measures & great care my brother receives.”



If you are interested in scheduling a 30-minute outdoor visit with your loved one, please contact your program manager. If you or a loved one are interested in pursuing an independent living placement with The Arc of Essex County, 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](#).

Long-Time Arc and Candle Lighters Donor

Leaves a Lasting Legacy

In early July, The Arc of Essex County received a bequest from the estate of long-time donor and Candle Lighters supporter, George Sodowick. Sodowick, who donated to The Arc's Camp Hope and Stepping Stones programs since the late 1990's, wanted to ensure a lasting legacy for a cause he so generously supported throughout his life. The Arc of Essex County is so grateful for this final act of generosity and celebrates the memory of Mr. Sodowick.



If you are interested in learning more about planned giving opportunities with The Arc of Essex County, please contact Senior Director of Development and Communication, Heather Comstock at hcomstock@arcessex.org or (973) 535-1181 ext. 1224.

The Arc of Essex County's Residential Corner

August Openings

For individuals seeking a community living placement, The Arc of Essex County has the following August 2020 openings:



Roseland Group Home (1 Female Vacancy)

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 5-Bedroom Group Home
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large, Ranch-Style, Single-Family Home on a Quiet Suburban Street
- ADA compliant/barrier-free home within walking distance of community parks
- Current roommates are females ranging in age from mid 30's to late 70's. They enjoy shopping with one another, having spa nights, and watching Thursday night wrestling on TV together.



Verona Supervised Apartment (1 Male Vacancy)

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 3-Bedroom Supervised Apartment
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large 2 Family Home with Great Front Porch
- Located near public transportation and within walking distance of Verona's downtown shopping & restaurants and the beautiful Verona Park
- Current roommates are males ranging in age from early 20's to late 40's. They enjoy spending time pursuing their own interests such as reading, watching TV, being active, socializing with friends, and occasionally participating in community activities as a group.



Bloomfield Supervised Apartment (1 Vacancy)

- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Apartment-style living in a multi-family, Arc of Essex County, owned home
- Single bedroom on 1st floor in shared apartment with opportunities to mingle with fellow residents
- Within walking distance to Bloomfield's downtown shopping & restaurants



**South Orange 2 Bedroom / 2 Bathroom
Supportive Living Apartment**

South Orange Supportive Living Apartment (1 Female Vacancy)

- 1 bedroom available in a 2 bedroom apartment
- Minimal community living support needs
- Access to an emergency on-call system for added safety 24 hours a day
- Apartment-style living in 5-floor building with elevator
- Located steps from public transportation and South Orange's vibrant downtown



Respite Group Home

Are you heading out of town for an upcoming business trip or planning a medical procedure that requires overnight or rehab recovery? Do you need coverage for your loved one with an intellectual or developmental disability? The Arc of Essex County's Respite Group Home can help. Accommodating up to 6 residents, the home is designed to provide a caring and supportive stay during planned or unplanned respite events with every safety precaution in place. The home features:

- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large, 2-Story, Single Family, Colonial-style Home
- Designed to create a family-like setting in which consumers can feel comfortable until they transition into permanent housing or return home
- Staff is prepared to manage behavioral issues and additional supports based on the needs of the individual

For additional information about The Arc of Essex County's residential services, [click here](#). If you are interested in pursuing independent living at one of the above properties, please contact The Arc's Senior Director of Residential Services, Rebecca Lorusso via email at rlorusso@arcessex.org or by calling (973) 535-1181 ext. 1270.

Stay Connected!



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