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Coronavirus Update from the CEO

Dear Members of The Arc Family:

The State of NJ has moved quickly in recent weeks, advancing new phases of its reopening plan, especially as it relates to the Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities. This pace has allowed The Arc of Essex County to also move more quickly, albeit deliberately and consistently, to develop and implement plans for programs and services to re-open or to be reinvented. Although always ready to pivot as changes to guidelines from federal and state authorities come out each week, we are working hard and pushing ahead. As I have stated many times, The Arc of Essex County is focused on ensuring that every plan fundamentally addresses the health and safety guidelines and protocols to mitigate and manage the health risk this pandemic presents for all staff and program participants.

We remain committed to moving forward and taking steps to create opportunities to support our children and adults and their families. We continue to implement our comprehensive COVID-19 service and operations response and prevention plan and develop new plans as we address the many strategies for re-opening, re-imagining and reinventing programs, services and supports.

Updates:

- Adult Day Programs will begin opening on October 5th using a limited capacity, phased-in plan

starting with consumers living in their own homes.

- Stepping Stones School opened the school year with 24 students in-person and 5 students 100% remote
- The Arc Essex Board of Directors continue their outreach and support of Residential consumers and staff with an October delivery of Philly Pretzels just in time for Thursday night football

Current Status of Programs and Services:

- Shapiro Center for Early Intervention: Teleservices continue; small center-based service option and limited in-home service option began in September
- Stepping Stones School: In-person classes began for the school year on 9/8/2020; 100% remote option continues
- Stepping Stones Early Intervention: Virtual sessions continue through October
- Children and Adult Group Respite and Recreation Programs: In-person activities suspended for consumers until DDD/DCF authorize return; virtual activities continue and expand
- Adult Day Programs: DDD authorized re-opening with COVID health and safety protocols and capacity limits; virtual activities continue
- Community Based Supports and Individual Respite: Limited options available

Ongoing Activities:

- iPhones, iPads, Chromebooks and other technology equipment distributed to consumers and programs for multiple remote uses continues and expands
- Expanded use of telemedicine and at-home medical services with Station MD, the DDC and other medical providers
- Residential Services: Family outside and inside visits occurring; approved community activities for staff and residential consumers in a cohort
- Administrative Support: The main office is open 9am-4:30pm with staggered and remote staffing; only expected and scheduled visitors are permitted
- Continued Health/Exposure screening, including temperature checks, for everyone entering any Arc location
- Program Administration: Staff deployed to Arc locations to support residential services, conduct virtual activities and manage changing administrative functions
- Containment scheduling continues which assigns staff to work in specific programs and with assigned groups to minimize the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19, including Stepping Stones School and re-opened Adult Day Programs
- Universal masking is required for all staff at all times in program and when engaged in community activities
- Increased use of video and audio teleservices to assist with social isolation, engagement with families and other Stay-At-Home challenges
- Supplies of PPE are secured, inventoried and deployed regularly, as needed
- COVID-19 stipends applied for staff working in residential continue and extended to in-person day program staff
- New and continuing opportunities to spread awareness and appreciation of our DSP's through news articles, social media, lawn signs and branded masks
- Virtual activities calendars continue to increase and expand for at-home and residential home consumers on www.arcessex.org; virtual billing continues

Fall has arrived full of plans for re-opening programs and services and The Arc of Essex County family members are thrilled! What a difference a few weeks make! As our communities begin slowly but surely opening their doors, The Arc has been busy with plans and strategies to get right on board, starting with day programs. While we were all staying home, The Arc figured out how to stay connected and engaged while remaining safe and well. Now, we are figuring out how to safely re-connect and re-engage in-person. We kept a positive outlook then and looked forward to each day and that positivity got us all to this point – ready to go back out into the new world, hopeful, happy and safe.

The Arc of Essex County could not imagine a successful future without the amazing work of our staff and enduring support of our friends and families.

Thank you, all.

Stay safe and be well.



Linda C. Lucas
Chief Executive Officer
The Arc of Essex County

Stepping Stones Welcomes Students Back

with Fall Fun

For the first time since mid-March, Stepping Stones students are back in the classroom, resuming in-person learning. Since returning to the classroom on September 8, the students have been busy learning through regular, indoor lessons and via interactive, seasonal activities which take advantage of warmer temperatures, clear skies, and the outdoors.



In mid-September, the students and teachers headed outdoors for a seasonal nature walk complete with a lesson about apples. The students enjoyed spotting different types of paper apples hidden in the trees, harvesting their finds, then tasting apples dipped in chocolate, caramel and peanut butter!

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School is a Department of Education approved private school for students with disabilities serving children ages 3-10. Located in Roseland, NJ, the school is designed to meet the developmental and educational needs of children with cognitive impairments such as Down syndrome and other students with similar educational and developmental needs. For more information, or to request a virtual tour and assistance with an out-of-district placement, contact Sue Brand, Director of Early Childhood and Education at (862) 210-8781 or sbrand@arcessex.org.

Project Sunshine Cards Distributed

to 80 Residents

Thanks to friends of The Arc, more than half of all adults in the agency's residential program received notes of encouragement and support during the summer. These notes, submitted by members of the community in response to #ProjectSunshine, aimed to spread cheer during the self-quarantine and social distancing period resulting from COVID-19. With in-person programming still halted for recreation and respite programs and Day Programs operating at a reduced capacity, these notes offered residents a lifeline to their community.



There's still time to get involved! Help spread encouragement and cheer to the remainder of The Arc's residents by sending a note or picture of encouragement.

How to get involved:

Write a note, letter, or card, or draw or paint a picture and send it to:

- By mail:
Project Sunshine
c/o Friends at The Arc of Essex County
123 Naylor Avenue
Livingston, NJ 07039
- Send an email to hcomstock@arcessex.org
- Post a photo or record a video and share to The Arc of Essex County's Facebook page and use #ArcofEssexNJ and #ProjectSunshine

Inspire others to help:

- Enlist help from your friends and family
- Ask your volunteer or community groups to participate

This is a great project for children, teens, adults, and seniors! Thank you for helping to spread kindness to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities during this time of uncertainty!

Employees Recognized for Milestone Anniversaries

Each Fall, The Arc of Essex County hosts a recognition luncheon to honor the employees whose long-standing commitment and dedication have helped shape the agency into what it is today. While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic halted the agency's 2020 luncheon plans, the contributions made to the The Arc and milestone achievements are valued and celebrated, now more than ever. The Arc would like to recognize the following individuals for their tremendous service to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities:

45 Years:

Anitra Wilson

35 Years:

James Paden, Jr.

30 Years:

Elmira Edgar
Lisa Stefanelli-Diamond

25 Years:

Anabela Da Silva Kring
Kathleen Hinnigan Cohen



Each Fall, The Arc of Essex County honors the employees whose long-standing commitment and dedication have helped shape the agency into what it is today.

James Jones

20 Years:

Charlene Armstrong
Phthya Austin
Christy Campbell
Sylvia Cummings
Patricia Hoerner
Gale James
Dina Jean
Dametralius Moon
Gauthie Pierre
Cheryl Walcott
Sherl Williams
Dora Young

15 Years:

Maria Donaleski
Ginette Moraud
Dorinda Owoo
Lolita Rodriguez

10 Years:

Graig Berkowitz
Yarona Boster
Elice Fitz
Angelo Marshall
Shareem McElhaney
Emmanuela Noel
Eric Sutherland

5 Years:

Rochelle Alford
Cynthia Arroyo
Brenda Bennett
Alan Binstein
Nancy Byrne
Andrew Casallas
Heather Comstock
Dominique Ford
Dezarae Goode
Debra Goode
Jessica Kahl
Jasmin Medina
Vladimir Moraud
Diana Nwabudo
Arocha Pittman
Wilfred Quaye
Dorea Ramey
Michael Resotka
Jacqueline Vaughn

Congratulations to all employees celebrating a milestone year with The Arc of Essex County!

Science Experiments All the Rage

During September Virtual Programming

The Arc of Essex County's virtual recreation participants embraced Wacky Science Thursday programming throughout the month of September. The group enjoyed making M&M swirl art, identifying where their slime experiment went wrong, and even inserted toothpicks through a hole in a water bottle without making it leak. The group's new motto, after their fearless leader Candes turned her hands blue mixing the failed slime, is "all in the name of science!"



The Arc of Essex County is committed to providing dynamic services and supports by leveraging technology and practicing social distancing. Our full virtual programming calendars are available online at www.arcessex.org/virtual.

If your loved one is interested in joining our Day Programs classes, contact Director of Adult Day Services Angela LoSapio at alosapio@arcessex.org. For Adult Recreation & Respite virtual gatherings, contact Director of Community Services, Maureen Murray at mmurray@arcessex.org, and for more information about Children's Services, contact Director of Children's Services, Erika Zupkus at ezupkus@arcessex.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.arcessex.org/covid19relief.

Bathroom and Kitchen Renovations

for 4 Residential Properties

The Arc of Essex County's asset management department is continuing its multi-year renovation and modernization plan for select residential properties. The Belmont group home recently completed renovations to add a new bathroom while the Green Ave. and Cedar Grove group homes as well as the Bloomfield supervised apartments are slated to receive kitchen upgrades in the coming months.



The Belmont group home renovations increased the level of accessibility by converting an existing half bathroom into a full, accessible bathroom and expanded the footprint of an existing full bathroom to also improve accessibility. The Green Ave., Cedar Grove, and Bloomfield properties will all receive new kitchens (4 total).

Are you or a family member interested in pursuing community living options with The Arc of Essex

County? Check out The Arc's residential services brochure, [here](#). For questions or specific enrollment requirements, 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.

The Arc Receives Nearly \$8,000 Donation

from the New Jersey State Golf Association Youth Foundation

The New Jersey State Golf Association (NJSGA) Youth Foundation recently contributed the final installment of a three-year grant in support of The Arc of Essex County's Camp Hope. The nearly \$8,000 donation funded a camp adaptive sports specialist who crafted and implemented a sports program that engaged campers of all abilities in varied sports activities helping them realize their athletic potential, and provided general camp support. During the three-year grant period, campers embraced a variety of new and adapted sports including mini golf and driving range activities, water balloon baseball, and soccer programming. The Arc of Essex County extends its upmost appreciation to the NJSGA Youth Foundation for their multi-year support and dedication to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Camp Hope is a seven-week summer day camp for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities located in East Hanover. Operating since 1956, camp runs Monday through Friday, 9 am to 3 pm, starting in late June and ending in August, with transportation provided for campers living in Essex County and surrounding areas. 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. Applications for the 2021 camp season will be available in early 2021. For questions about Camp Hope, contact Laurie Best, Senior Director of Children & Adult Day Services at (973) 535-1181 x1264 or lb主@arcessex.org.



The Arc of Essex County's Residential Corner

October Openings

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





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.



**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.


Donate Your Unwanted Used Vehicle

to The Arc of Essex County

Rather than selling or trading in your used car, truck, SUV, motorcycle, RV, or boat on a trailer, consider donating it through The Arc of Essex County's vehicle donation program. Proceeds from the sale of your donated vehicle will fund innovative and essential programs for children and adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The car donation program is an excellent way to support the largest service provider for children and adults living with developmental disabilities in Essex County. Donors can rest assured that vehicle donations to The Arc of Essex County will directly aid in these efforts. We work hard to maximize the proceeds of every car donation. Car donation is not only free and easy, but is also tax deductible (please see your tax accountant for further information). Towing is free of charge.


To donate today please call 877-272-2270.



Achieve with us.

Car Donation Program

Easy, Convenient and Tax Deductible!



Donate today and give someone with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) the key to their independence. The Arc works through a national network of nearly 700 chapters to advocate for and support people with I/DD. Proceeds from your donation will benefit your local chapter. We accept any vehicle with a title and will arrange free, convenient pick up or towing. Plus, we'll take care of all of the paperwork you need to take advantage of a tax break for your donation!

Thank you!

Call Toll Free 1-877-ARC-CAR-0
Or Donate Online at
www.thearc.org/donate-my-vehicle
Note "NJ The Arc of Essex County" as your beneficiary.

Tributes from Summer 2020

Tributes are a beautiful way to acknowledge those you care for, and at the same time, help further The Arc's mission. To purchase a tribute, please call Minerva Delgado at (973) 535-1181 ext. 1237 or visit The Arc of Essex County's website [here](#).

Special Occasions:

In honor of Brad Hopton:
Alicia Hing

In honor of Kelly Starrett:
Sheree Starrett Bennett

Memorials:

In memory of Kathleen Bissell:
Josephine Zappia

thank
YOU

In memory of Ann Chieppa:

Stephen Rinaldi
Helen Statz
Meredith Whitaker

In memory of Jack Daudt:

Camille Tedesco

In memory of Felipe Gorostiza:

Juan Arroyo

In memory of Claire Massey:

Louis DellaPia

In memory of Mickey McNany:

Beth Johnson

Supporters can host Facebook Fundraisers for birthdays and celebrations to raise money on behalf of The Arc of Essex County. We are very grateful for the following individuals who fundraised July – September 2020.

Zakia Benyard's Birthday Fundraiser

Zakia Benyard
Rhoda Capers
Wilel Fanfan
Angela Laurene
Tanya Matthews
Kelli Mickens
Zanetta Robinson-Sargent
Silento Thomas
Princess Tillis-Haskins
Rose Tyler

Stay Connected!



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