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Coronavirus Update from the CEO

Dear Members of The Arc Family:

Well, it seems that the State continues to take two steps forward and one step back as we march through our statewide COVID response. And, of course, here at The Arc of Essex County, we are marching to that same beat! While we opened day programs in October on a limited basis, DDD has required them to close once again. Community activities and congregate programs are once again subject to the reinstatement of the State's COVID restrictions. All of us are feeling the pinch! But of course, The Arc of Essex County will make it work.....for our consumers, their families and our staff. Nothing would be possible without the tremendous effort of staff and the support of our Arc Essex family. From being flexible and pivoting regarding the strategies and plans to mitigate risk that have been changing weekly, to ensuring compliance with increased COVID related protocols for themselves, service participants and family members, to the extraordinary work of safely engaging in interesting and productive community activities, especially during this holiday season, the Arc Essex family is truly amazing.

Although the State of NJ continues to see an increase in COVID positivity rates, The Arc of Essex County remains committed to ensuring that the development and implementation of plans for services and supports meet all compliance guidelines from federal, state and local authorities. The health and safety of our service participants, their families and our staff are the foundation for any of our plans as we continue our march. We remain steadfast in our efforts to move forward, creating opportunities that support our Arc family, now

and for the future.

Thank you, all. Stay safe and be well.

Happy holidays!



Linda C. Lucas
Chief Executive Officer

Updates:

- Adult Day Programs closed as per DDD through at least January 19, 2021.
- Community Based Supports and HAP continue with in-person services supporting a few individuals (CBS) and families (HAP) to engage in community activities.
- DHS/DDD roll-out of a COVID testing program for residential consumers and staff to begin December, 2020.

Current Status of Programs and Services:

- Shapiro Center for Early Intervention: In-person and telehealth services continue
- Stepping Stones School: In-person classes continue; 100% remote option continues
- Stepping Stones Early Intervention: Virtual sessions continue into spring
- Children Group Respite and Recreation Programs: In-person activities authorized to resume with restrictions; plans in development
- Adult Day Programs: Closed through January 19, 2021; virtual activities continue
- Community Based Supports and Individual Respite: Limited options available
- Virtual activities calendars continue to increase and expand for at-home and residential home consumers on www.arcessex.org; virtual billing continues

Record Breaking

#GivingTuesday Success

On Tuesday, December 1, The Arc of Essex County celebrated #GivingTuesday, a global movement that unleashes the power of people and organizations to transform their communities. Thanks to nearly 150 donors, The Arc raised an astounding **\$19,190.80** and fully funded technology upgrades for **19 programs**.

The intellectual and developmental disabilities community has been disproportionately affected by the ongoing pandemic. Residents and Day Program attendees have been staying at home to limit their exposure and remain healthy. The past 9 months have not been easy, but The Arc of Essex County is committed to maintaining a sense of normalcy for the children and adults we serve, including rolling out virtual services.

The upgrades funded by #GivingTuesday and Annual Appeal donations will ensure each group home has the technology it needs for residents to better engage with family and friends while participating in virtual activities from home. Day Program upgrades will enable staff to better produce and facilitate virtual programming enabling all attendees to remain connected with their peers.



With your help, in just one day,
we raised **\$19,190** and fully
funded tech upgrades for
19 programs.

THANK YOU!

The Arc of Essex County would like to extend our upmost appreciation to everyone who's donated thus far. Still want to contribute? There are a few remaining programs working towards their funding goals. [Click here](#) to make your donation and ensure each group home and Day Program has the technology they need to remain connected to their communities this holiday season.

Holiday Express Treats The Arc's Residents

to a Virtual Holiday Show

On Wednesday, November 18, residents of The Arc of Essex County's group homes were treated to a special lunch and virtual holiday show featuring live music by Holiday Express and dessert thanks to Quick Check! In addition, each resident received a gift bag complete with Holiday Express swag, a plush winter pal, and warm weather items including a new hat, scarf, gloves, socks, and a blanket.

The Holiday Express mission is to deliver music, food, gifts, financial support and friendship to those with the greatest need for the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year. This year marked the third year that Holiday Express selected The Arc of Essex County as a benefactor and both organizations are already looking forward to the 2021 celebration.



Stepping Stones Celebrates

Thanksgiving

While this year's Stepping Stones Thanksgiving celebration looked a bit different, fun was still had by all. To mark the holiday, the students spent the week leading up to Thanksgiving learning about pilgrims and Native Americans, turkeys, and more. On Wednesday, November 25 the students even had a modified Thanksgiving feast with their respective class including rotisserie chicken and traditional sides!

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.



The Arc of Essex County Leads Telehealth Session



at Annual SHA Conference

The Arc of Essex County's Chief Operating Officer Kathy Hinnigan-Cohen and Senior Director of Residential Services Rebecca Lorusso recently led a breakout session about telehealth alongside StationMD during the Supporting Housing Association of New Jersey's annual conference. During the virtual workshop session, they discussed how The Arc continues to provide quality medical care to vulnerable populations using telemedicine services.



In discussing The Arc's use of Station MD services, Hinnigan-Cohen and Lorusso highlighted how the agency continues to minimize risk and improve health outcomes during the health crisis and beyond. They highlighted how the immediate access to physicians 24/7, has created a safer, often superior, and far less disruptive medical solution than a traumatic trip to the ER, urgent care or doctor's office and enhanced the value of care provided by an organization.

To register to view the archived session, please visit the [SHA website here](#).

Residents Celebrate Thanksgiving

with New Traditions

While most residents of The Arc of Essex County stayed home amidst rising COVID numbers, everyone made the most of the holiday celebrating with their roommates and staff. For some residents, the occasion sparked new traditions. Residents of the Branchbrook supervised apartments applied their new-found baking skills making pumpkin pies from scratch. While the Belleville group home created nature-inspired turkey crafts using fall leaves from their yard. Residents across all programs leveraged technology to virtually visit with loved ones near and far.



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 Senior 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](#).

Decking the Halls

at The Arc of Essex County

With fall festivities behind them, residents of The Arc of Essex County are excitedly getting ready for the holidays. They kicked off the season by cranking up the holiday tunes and decorating their rooms and homes.

The Roseland group home threw timing to the wind and decorated their house and put up their Christmas tree well before Thanksgiving and continue to perfect their holiday cookie recipes. The residents of the West Caldwell group home not only made sure the inside of their



home was festive, but also decorated the outside of their home to spread cheer to their neighbors and community. Meanwhile, all residents of The Arc of Essex County are busy planning their best ugly holiday sweater design in preparation for this month's ugly sweater decorating contest.

As the holidays approach, The Arc's Board is ready to join in on the fun. On Sunday, December 6th, members of The Arc of Essex County's Board of Directors will virtually carol during their annual Board Caroling event. While celebrations look a bit different this year, happiness and joy continues to flourish.



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The Arc of Essex County's Residential Corner

December Openings

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



NEW! Belmont Group Home (1 Male Vacancy)

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 5-Bedroom Group Home
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large Single Family Home in a Great Livingston Neighborhood
- Can accommodate residents with additional medical supports and aging needs
- Current roommates are males ranging in age from early 50's to early 60's. They enjoy spending time as a group watching movies and vintage TV shows, hosting backyard barbeques, and exploring new interests and hobbies





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 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

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.

Support The Arc While You Shop

with Amazon this Holiday Season!

The holiday shopping season is officially here, and this year, you can give back to The Arc of Essex County while you shop. Did you know that when you shop using AmazonSmile, the company will donate a half-percent of each purchase to a charity you choose? Remember to start your holiday shopping by navigating to The Arc's [custom link](#) before making a purchase.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support The Arc of Essex County every time you shop – and it comes at zero cost to you. It's a donation made by Amazon in your honor. You just have to select us at [smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and use smile.Amazon.com whenever you shop.

At smile.Amazon.com, you will find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping



experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to the work we do.

Here's how to get started:

- Visit [smile.Amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com). It's just like shopping on the regular site.
- Sign in. You can use your existing Amazon credentials. If you don't have an account, you can create a new one.
- Start shopping. After you've chosen us as your charity -- (The Arc of Essex County) -- your shopping experience will be the same as it is on the Amazon website. Remember, purchases on the main Amazon.com site do not support us so please bookmark smile.Amazon.com for the future.
- Spread the word. Once you've checked out, Amazon makes it easy to spread the news to your friends through Facebook and Twitter. Please be sure to let everyone know you've supported The Arc of Essex County.

[Click here to sign up and start shopping!](#)

Oakwood's Marie Joseph & Rachel Morrieson Recognized *as Heroes of 2020 by The Arc of New Jersey*

The Arc of New Jersey recently recognized two additional employees of The Arc of Essex County as Heroes of 2020. Nominated by Richard and Eileen Stuart, Marie Joseph and Rachel Morrieson lead the Oakwood Group Home, taking exceptional care of the residents day-in and day-out especially amidst the ongoing pandemic.



"Our daughter Laurie Stuart resides in this home with four other consumers who are fortunate to receive outstanding care, love and programming during these difficult times," said the Stuarts. "They have provided communication to family members on a timely basis enabling them to be involved with loved ones even though there is minimal visitation."

To read more about our Heroes of 2020, visit The Arc of New Jersey website [here](#). The Arc of Essex County would like to commend all employees, especially Marie and Rachel, for their ongoing dedication and commitment to those we serve during this unprecedented time.

Stay Connected!



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