

[➔ Donate Now](#)

Coronavirus Update from the CEO

Dear Members of The Arc Family:

Happy New Year! So much progress has occurred over the last month, we are excited to leave 2020 behind and get started with the new year. Two vaccines became available and the State has rolled out a vaccine eligibility and distribution plan; the DHS/DDD COVID testing program has been initiated; supplemental funding for DSP COVID stipends continues, and; additional funding for DSPs' and supervisors' wages became effective 1/1/21. At The Arc of Essex County, we have been working hard to provide communication about resources and implementing all opportunities for staff, consumers, and families. Over the holidays, virtual activities and communication increased to assure that no one was left out as we stayed home and stayed safe. Although the State's COVID restrictions remain in place, we stand ready to pivot back to in-person services whenever possible, wherever possible. For now, we are focusing on managing vaccine eligibility and distribution for staff and consumers while keeping everyone happy, healthy, and safe.

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. This would not be possible without the tremendous effort of staff and the amazing support of our entire Arc Essex family. The health and safety of our service participants, their families, and our staff are of paramount importance. The Arc of Essex County remains committed to forward progress by creating opportunities that support our Arc family, for today and for

many tomorrows.

Thank you, all. Stay safe and be well.



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 COVID testing program for residential consumers and staff to begin 1/2021.
- Group Home consumers and DSP staff are eligible in 1A category for COVID vaccine.
- Please see important information from the DDD and the Department of Health below:

CLICK HERE

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

Gourmet Virtual Chocolate Tasting

Event on Feb. 12

While the ongoing pandemic prevented us from throwing our annual Uncorked & Uncapped: Wine, Beer, and Food Tasting Experience, The Arc of Essex County is pleased to bring to you a virtual gourmet chocolate tasting event in time for Valentine's Day! Taking place on Friday, February 12th at 8:30 p.m., this virtual couples tasting event is a delicious opportunity to relax, connect with a special someone, and enjoy tasting exquisite chocolate all to benefit a great cause.

Tune into your senses and immerse yourself in the aromas, textures, tastes, colors and intricacies of fine flavor cacao by sampling award-winning craft chocolate bars from all over the world. Join Nadine Kerstan, certified Chocolate Sommelier, judge for the International Chocolate Awards and owner of the online boutique, Barometer Chocolate, as she guides you through tasting 4 award-winning bean-to-bar chocolates. You'll learn about the art of savoring chocolate and increase your enjoyment and knowledge



about this “food of the gods” in a 60-minute, delightful and celebratory workshop. Wine and spirit suggestions will be offered for those who care to pair!

Space is limited. To register, [click here](#).

Residents Prepare

for the Holidays

Throughout the month of December, residents of The Arc of Essex County excitedly prepared for the holidays. In addition to participating in the virtual Board Caroling event, residents made gingerbread houses, decorated their own ugly holiday sweaters, and even spotted Santa!

On Saturday, December 19th, Santa stopped by the Oakwood group home to drop off some early presents for the residents and visit through the window. He made sure to let the residents know that he would visit all of their friends in other homes during his rounds on Christmas Eve!

Then, on Monday, December 21st The Arc's virtual Day Programs arranged for each resident to receive their own gingerbread house kit. Residents enjoyed piecing together the walls and roof with icing, then decorating (and snacking on) their structures with candy. Finally, on Wednesday, December 23rd, each resident received their own sweater and a decoration kit complete with puff paint, appliques, gems and more to make an Ugly Christmas sweater. Both activities were facilitated by The Arc's Virtual Day Program team via Zoom. In addition to the activities, participants enjoyed catching up with their favorite staff and friends from other programs.

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 activities, 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.



Stepping Stones Celebrates

the Holidays

Throughout the month of December, the students of the Stepping Stones School learned about and celebrated the holidays. Beginning on December 10th and concluding on December 18th, each classroom learned about Hanukkah and helped light the school's menorah. To celebrate, the children enjoyed a special snack of potato latkes and jelly donuts, danced to music, and took home chocolate gelt.

That same week, thanks to the Roseland Department



of Recreation, the students wrote letters to Santa and walked to Santa's special red mailbox located in front of Borough Hall. They took turns creating wish lists using pictures from store circulars and placing their letters in the box.

Finally, on Friday, December 18th, each classroom hosted their own holiday party which included a surprise guest... Santa! Each student received a gift from the man in red, played pin the gift bow on the tree, danced to holiday music, and enjoyed a pizza lunch.

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@arcsex.org.

COO Kathy Hinnigan-Cohen

Appointed to Statewide Council



Chief Operating Officer Kathy Hinnigan-Cohen was recently appointed to the New Jersey Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council. In her role on the council, Hinnigan-Cohen will provide advice and assistance to the Department of Health and the New Jersey Early Intervention System to enhance and improve coordinated services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The Arc would like to congratulate Kathy on this well-deserved appointment and willingness to share her experience, expertise, and knowledge of early intervention with the state.

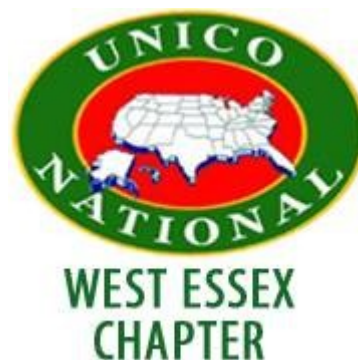
Early intervention (EI) services are uniquely specialized for families of children ages birth to three. The Arc's team of early childhood specialists works together with parents and other family members to maximize the growth and development of children by supporting the advancement of motor, communication and social skills. The Arc of Essex County offers two early intervention programs. The Shapiro Center, a Department of Health funded early intervention program, provides therapeutic and other 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 need 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@arcsex.org.

West Essex UNICO Treats Four Group Homes

to a Holiday Meal

While the West Essex UNICO was unable to host its annual holiday party for members of The Arc of Essex County due to the ongoing pandemic, the civic group continued its annual tradition of providing a tasty meal for 4 group homes. On Wednesday, December 23, the group arranged for Forte's of West Caldwell to deliver an Italian feast complete with pasta, meatballs, salad and homemade bread to the West Caldwell, Verona, Roseland and Cedar Grove group homes in an effort to spread holiday cheer.



The Arc of Essex County and those we serve would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the West Essex

UNICO for their continued generosity and going above and beyond this holiday season!

Home Assistance Program Holiday Drive

A Community Collaboration

Throughout the months of November and December The Arc of Essex County accepted holiday drive donations for members of its Home Assistance Program (HAP). Due to ongoing COVID concerns, the annual holiday celebration was reimagined, and instead donations of toys, warm winter coats, and a holiday meal were delivered directly to The Arc's neediest families

The Arc of Essex County would like to thank the community for their tremendous contributions.

ShopRite/Wakefern graciously donated turkeys and gift cards while Sax, LLC and the United Way donated toys. Members of community and The Arc of Essex County's staff and Board ensured each HAP family in need received new winter coats.

The HAP program provides services in the areas of transportation, community resources, housing, navigating school systems, recreation, and at times skill trainings to low income families whose child and/or parent has an intellectual or developmental disability. The goal is to maintain the family unit, attain independence, and assist parents and families in becoming more self-sufficient both economically and personally.

If you or a loved one is interested in joining the HAP program, please contact Laurie Best, Senior Director of Children & Adult Day Services, to see if you qualify. Laurie can be reached at (973) 535-1181 ext. 1264 or lbest@arcessex.org.



The Arc of Essex County's Residential Corner

January Openings

For individuals seeking a community living placement, The Arc of Essex County has the following January 2021 openings:



NEW! Millburn Group Home (1 Female Vacancy)

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 4-Bedroom Group Home
- 24/7 Staff Supervision

- Large Single Family, Ranch-Style Home Located a Few Blocks from Millburn's Vibrant Downtown
- Can accommodate residents with additional medical supports and aging needs
- Current roommates are females ranging in age from late 40's to early 70's. They enjoy spending time as a group playing cards and Wii tennis, completing puzzles, hosting movie nights, and making crafts. They also enjoy all their community has to offer including trips to the Paper Mill Playhouse and concerts in the local parks (pre-covid).



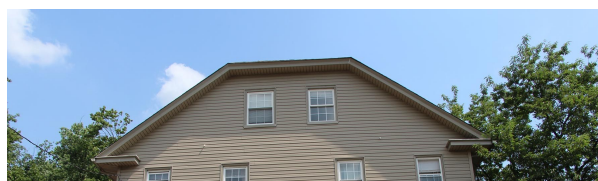
NEW! Bloomfield Group Home

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 6-Bedroom Group Home
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large Single-Family Home in a Great Bloomfield Neighborhood
- Can accommodate residents with additional medical supports and aging needs
- Current roommates range in age from late 30's to late 60's. They enjoy spending time as a group celebrating birthdays and holidays, taking trips to Atlantic City, the bowling alley, and movie theater (pre-covid), and pursuing individual hobbies.



NEW! Branchbrook Supervised Apartments (1 Male Vacancy)

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 3-Bedroom Supervised Apartment
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large Single-Family Home with a Great Backyard and Walking Distance to Branch Brook Park
- Current roommates are males ranging in age from late 30's to late 60's. They enjoy spending time participating in community activities like the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, motor bike shows, and more. They continue to learn new skills with an emphasis on self-advocacy and communication abilities to identify and work towards their dreams.





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@arcsex.org or by calling (973) 535-1181 ext. 1270.

Arc Branded Travel Mugs

Now Available

The Arc of Essex County recently added insulated, Arc-branded travel mugs to its online store. Featuring a double wall design, Arc travel mugs hold 16 ounces of hot or cold liquid, keeping your beverages at the desired temperature. The no-skid bottom padding and screw-on lid and slider helps secure your drink for on-the-go use. Limited quantities available.

To purchase your travel mug, visit The Arc's online store front:

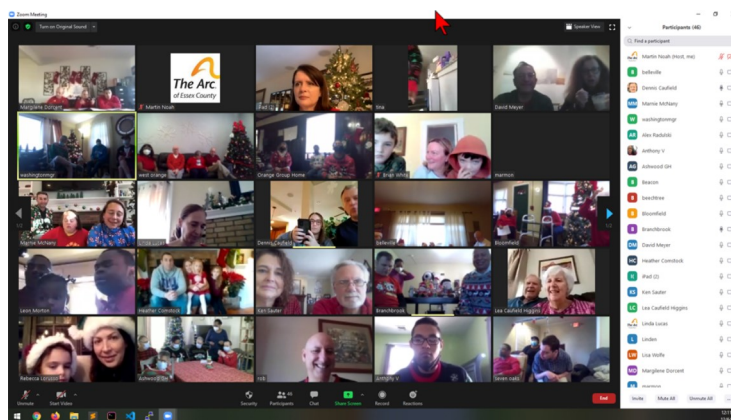
<https://secure.qgiv.com/event/shop-arcessex/store>.



The Arc's Board of Directors

Spread Holiday Cheer

On Sunday, December 6th, members of The Arc of Essex County's Board of Directors hosted a virtual caroling party in lieu of their annual Board Caroling event. Every residential program tuned in to sing along to their favorite holiday songs and spread happiness and joy. It was the perfect event to kick-off the holiday season.



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@arcessex.org to express your interest in getting involved and discuss ideas and agency needs.

Tributes from Fall 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](https://www.arcessex.org).

Special Occasions:

In Honor of BML Public Relations

Ken Jacobs

In Honor of Kevin Ghanz

Morgan Burklow

In Honor of Marian Sroka

David Gortz

Memorials:



In Memory of Kathleen Bissell

Elizabeth Reichard

In Memory of Tommy Caruso

Joseph Caruso

Michael Caruso

Marie Michele Darcy

Mary Anne Paventa

Carolyn Pecoraro

In Memory of Ann Chieppa

Jane DiCola

In Memory of Angela DellaPia

Ann Marie Buonopane

Angela Caruso

Christine O'Neill

Michael Masiello

Kimberly and C. Michael Morreale

RD Parisi Associates

In Memory of Gregory De Lorenzi

De Lorenzi Family Fund

In Memory of Mickey McNany

Elizabeth Johnson

In Memory of Elijah Peralta

Rosa Betances

Elizabeth Blomenkamp

Shanie Bordes

Christine Bridge

Anne Marie Denson

Marcia Frazier

Chantal & Harold Hinds

Althea Hoard

Esther Hong

Berenise Jean

Elizabeth McGlynn

Yolande Morris

Justina Rivera

Arianna Sanchez

Kate Santana

Karen Scott

Jennifer Taylor

John Ward

Ulanie Wilson

In Memory of Stephen Springer

Samantha Sugar

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 October – December 2020.

Eileen Stuart's #GivingTuesday Fundraiser

Michael Abramowitz

Betsy Bergman

Daryl Hughes Berman

Janice Lynn Druckman

Meredith Jespersen

Joan Ratner
Homer Schauben
Howie Stuart

Nancy Fass' #GivingTuesday Fundraiser

Steven J Glass
Laura Haug
Alice Schulman

Lila Padilla Droz's Birthday Fundraiser

Brenda A. Beavers Simpson
Patricia Collier Wood
Maria Del Carmen
Linda D. Johnson

Teaneck Church Donates

More Than 100 New Clothing Items

Facilitated by former Executive Director of The Arc of Essex County, Al Ianacone, the St. John's Church in Teaneck recently donated more than 100 new clothing items including shirts, socks, scarves, pants, and more. The generous contributions were disseminated to residents of The Arc of Essex County who enthusiastically received them just prior to the holidays.

The Arc of Essex County would like to extend its upmost appreciation to Al and the St. John's Church for thinking of those we serve this holiday season.



Stay Connected!



[➔ Donate Now](#)