



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families since 1948.

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Coronavirus Update from the CEO

Dear Members of The Arc Family:

Well, it has been a year.....both in time passed and challenges endured! The vaccine progress continues statewide and that progress has positively impacted our Arc family as we quickly move into Spring. The feeling of hope is very real and smiles behind the masks are increasing every day! The expanded vaccine eligibility categories have greatly improved access, and the state's partnerships with Walmart and Walgreens have been very successful for our Arc Essex family. All but 11 of the 136 individuals in our residential services have received first and second vaccine doses through the Walmart Pod Program. On March 10, through the Arc Essex/Walgreens program, we will complete distribution of 226 first and second vaccine doses to consumers, staff, volunteers, and family caregivers at our West Caldwell day program facility clinics. We are hearing rave reviews of the clinics' organization and the Arc Essex staff who manned the events! We are just so pleased that Arc Essex was able to offer this opportunity to so many. The DDD/DHS Quest COVID testing program also remains in use for surveillance and response as we make every effort to stay ahead of any COVID activity to keep our residents and staff safe and healthy.

At this time, there are no substantial changes to the policies, procedures, or protocols from our state partners. We are hopeful that as the state COVID restrictions are relaxed to address the improved environment, DOH, DHS, and DDD will also adjust current COVID protocols to allow for more in-person opportunities and services. We are committed to providing timely and relevant communication about

services, resources, and opportunities for staff, consumers, and families. Although information changes almost daily, we are focused on keeping up with the most recent guidance from all partners in order to implement the best strategies that provide needed services while mitigating risk and protecting health and safety for all.

Our service participants, their families, and our staff are of paramount importance. Their health, safety, and happiness are the primary focus of The Arc of Essex County. We can commit our efforts to this focus thanks to the hard work and dedication of the entire Arc Essex family. We remain dedicated to all opportunities that support our Arc family, now and in the future.

Thank you, all. Stay safe and be well.



Linda C. Lucas
Chief Executive Officer

Updates:

- Adult Day Programs remain closed as per DDD; no opening date is available.
- Community Based Supports and HAP continue with in-person services supporting a few individuals (CBS) and families (HAP) to engage in community activities.
- Camp Hope general registration for summer 2021 opened on February 15, 2021.
- DHS/DDD COVID testing program for residential consumers and staff continues to 5/28/2021.
- DDD/DHS and the Department of Health partnered with Walmart to distribute vaccines to group home residents. All but 11 of individuals in our residential services have received the both doses of the vaccine through this program
- Arc Essex, in partnership with Walgreens, will complete distribution of 226 first and second vaccine doses to eligible participants at our West Caldwell "clinics" on 3/10/21.

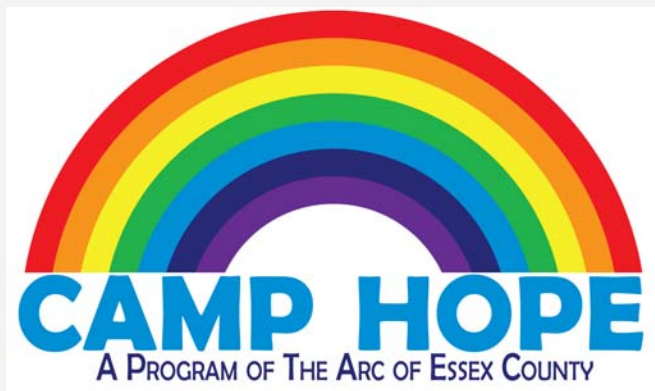
Current Status of Programs and Services:

- 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; no opening date available; 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

DCF Funding Applications Available

for 2021 Camp Season

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families, which serves children up to age 21, is currently accepting requests from families for financial assistance toward the 2021 summer camp season. Completed applications for both financial support toward summer camp tuition and one-to-one aide services for summer camp must be



postmarked or received by PerformCare no later than Friday, April 30, 2021. For additional information and to download DCF's Financial Assistance Application, [click here](#).

Camp Hope is an approved service through the Supports Waiver for individuals over the age of 21. If your loved one is interested in attending Camp Hope this summer, contact your family member's Support Coordinator to have camp added to their service plan.

Please note, if you feel your camper requires 1-to-1 support to attend our summer camp, please e-mail us at camphope@arcessex.org to discuss availability. Many of our 1-to1 slots are filled at this time.

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 and to apply for the 2021 camp season, visit www.arccamphope.com. For questions regarding the application process, contact Laurie Best, Senior Director of Children and Adult Day Services at (973) 535-1181 x1292 or camphope@arcessex.org.

Local Author Leads Writing Seminar

for Virtual Day Program Attendees

On Thursday, February 18th local author and former Camp Hope counselor Melissa Brady-Petrillo shared her newest book, *Sometimes*, and led an interactive creative writing workshop with virtual Day Program participants.

Sometimes shares main character, Samantha's, perspective of her world. Within this text, readers learn that Samantha sometimes feels differently every day. She describes her interactions with other people and how she communicates her feelings with others. By reading this book, children and adults learn ways to understand and best support their peers, including individuals with autism.

Drawing inspiration from Melissa's book, Day Program attendees then explored their own story-telling and illustration talents while learning tips and tricks from this distinguished author. Like *Sometimes*, each participants creation highlighted the importance of friendship, empathy, and inclusivity.

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, including self-advocacy offerings, 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.



Go the Distance



for The Arc of Essex County

The Arc of Essex County's 23rd Annual Building Tomorrows event returns this spring with a NEW look and feel! Join us from the comfort of your community as we go the distance to support children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). With race lengths including a 1-mile walk, 5K, 10K, and half marathon as well as creative photo contest categories, there are endless ways to get involved and have fun!



All 5K, 10K, and half marathon finishers, as well as walkers who donated or raise \$30 or more, will receive redesigned 2021 swag including a custom finisher medal and completion certificate. Runners and walkers who donate or raise \$100 or more will also receive a commemorative 2021 event t-shirt. Registration for all run distances is \$30 (\$25 with code "EARLY" before March 15) while registration to participate in the 1-mile walk is \$10 (save 10% with code "BIRD" before March 15). All proceeds will benefit individuals with I/DD served by The Arc of Essex County.

Get dressed in your race day gear, stretch, bring your water bottle, and hit the treadmill, streets, or trails. Celebrate your finish by uploading your time and photos then share your success on social media! Use the hashtag: #BuildingTomorrowsNJ. Contest categories include:

- Best Virtual Team Photo
- Most Creative Cheer Sign
- Best Essex County Landmark Selfie
- Most Scenic Route

Now, more than ever, The Arc of Essex County needs your support. Visit www.runorwalk.org today to sign up and begin fundraising! We'll provide you with all the tools you need to succeed in your efforts, including sample team recruitment and fundraising emails, training tips, and more. Every step you log, from the convenience of your community, will help spread awareness about I/DD and support the more than 1,500 individuals and families served annually by The Arc of Essex County.

February Fun at Stepping Stones

Students at The Arc's Stepping Stones School were busy throughout the month of February. To mark their 100th day of school, each class created 100-themed crafts and practiced counting to 100 in various intervals. The Transitional Kindergarten class celebrated by tie dying t-shirts, making "100" glasses, and designing a cupcake with 100 sprinkles (stickers) while the primary class themed their 100 day celebration around the movie "Up."

Then, students learned about Lunar New Year and Chinese traditions. Each student wore red, and learned about traditional activities and symbols including lion dances, parades, lanterns, and exchanging red envelopes. To cap off their celebrations, the students enjoyed a themed-lunch featuring chicken lo mein, vegetable dumplings, and ice cream for dessert.

Finally, each class celebrated love and friendship during Valentine's Day celebrations. The children had fun stringing plastic heart rings on a paper straw and bringing in valentine cards, candy and treats to share with all their friends.



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.

Virtual Reality Technology Upgrades

Made Possible Thanks to Generous Donor

Thanks to a generous donation facilitated by Gus Penaranda, The Arc of Essex County recently received 20 virtual reality headsets from North American Wireless Services of New York. The headsets, coupled with virtual reality software aimed at improving life skills, will be distributed amongst The Arc's five day program hubs for use when the state authorizes their reopening.



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The Arc to Host Craft Beer Open

on September 27

Save the date for The Arc of Essex County's first ever Craft Beer Open on September 27, 2021. Taking place at the prestigious Crestmont Country Club in West Orange, New Jersey, this event will feature 18 holes of golf with local, on-course craft beer tastings. A post event cocktail hour reception and awards ceremony will follow.

The Arc is currently seeking individuals interested in joining our Craft Beer Open planning committee. Individuals interested in joining the committee should contact Senior Director of Development and Communication, Heather Comstock at hcomstock@arcessex.org or (973) 535-1181 ext. 1224. Additional event details, including online registration, will be available in the coming weeks.



The Arc of Essex County's Residential Corner

March Openings

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



Cedar Grove Group Home

- 1 Bedroom Available in a 5-Bedroom Group Home
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Large Single Family Home Located a in a Quiet Cedar Grove Neighborhood
- Current roommates are males ranging in age from early 30's to early 60's. They enjoy spending time as a group playing board games and pursuing individual interests including playing with their Wii gaming system and watching DVDs. They also enjoy all their community has to offer including going to the movies, dining out, bowling, carnivals, parties, and more (pre-covid).



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.





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.



**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

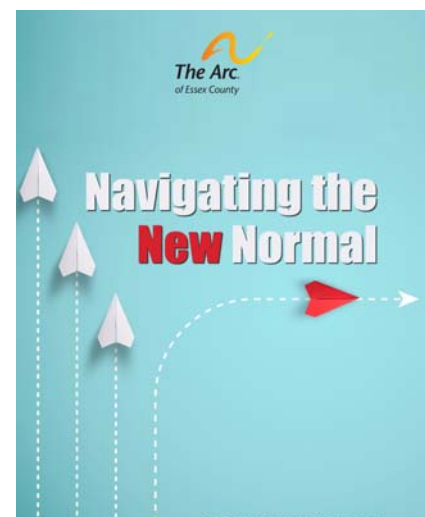
For additional information about The Arc of Essex County's residential services, [click here](#). If you are interested in pursuing independent living at one of the above properties, please contact The Arc's Senior Director of Residential Services, Rebecca Lorusso via email at rlorusso@arcessex.org or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

Navigating the New Normal

Read the 2019-2020 Annual Report Today

The onset of Coronavirus this past year brought about unprecedented changes and challenges for individuals and businesses alike. While the pandemic's impact was vast, the effects felt by children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and the organizations who provide them support and services were unparalleled. Here at The Arc of Essex County, we relied on our history of unwavering dedication, endurance, and resilience to tackle the challenges associated with the outbreak.

While a pandemic does change our processes, it never changes our mission. Years of organizational and fiscal planning and responsibility have positioned The Arc of Essex County well to weather this storm.



Reflecting on all that we have learned through this past year, we look to the future with the same optimism and hope as ever before. Read the [2019-2020 Annual Report](#) today to learn how The Arc is navigating the new normal while continuing to provide services despite the pandemic. Then, renew your financial commitment so The Arc can continue adapt, innovate, and plan for all of what is in store.

Remembering Matt Long

Matt Long joined The Arc of Essex County family more than 20 years ago when he began attending the Livingston Community Resource Center (would later merge with other programs to become part of the West Caldwell Hub). An easy-going person, Matt had a great relationship with his peers and staff. He could often be found in his favorite staff member's activity room, happily drinking his coffee, eating his favorite snacks including chocolate cake, and reading his magazine or newspaper. He will be missed by all who had the honor of knowing him.

The Arc of Essex County conveys its condolences to the Long family and Matt's extended Arc family during this difficult time. If you would like to make a donation to The Arc of Essex County in Matt's memory, please visit www.arcessex.org/donate – an acknowledgement of your tribute will be sent to family members.

Stay Connected!



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