



The Guardian

Serving the IDD community since 1948

September 2021

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COVID UPDATE: "THANX FOR THE VAX" VACCINATION APPRECIATION; REQUIRED VACCINE OR TESTING FOR DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

As COVID-19 cases are rising once again, the importance of keeping everyone safe and healthy remains high on The Arc of Essex County's priority list, with vaccines being the strongest weapon against the virus. With that in mind, The Arc of Essex County is showing appreciation to its staff members who are fully vaccinated by giving them a \$100 gift card and a thank you note from CEO Linda Lucas. Staff who have not yet obtained their vaccination, upon receipt of the completed vaccination card to human resources, will also receive a \$100 gift card and thank you from The Arc.

The Arc of Essex County is also following Gov. Phil Murphy's Executive Orders with regard to vaccine and testing mandates. All staff at our day programs, residential homes, early-intervention program at the Shapiro Center, and Stepping Stones School are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or must adhere to a weekly testing requirement.

THANX FOR THE VAX!

\$100 gift cards

Thank you for taking the courageous step of getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19!

To show our appreciation, staff who have submitted a vaccination card to HR will receive a \$100 gift card.

Going forward, any unvaccinated employee who obtains the vaccine will receive the \$100 gift upon submitting their vaccination card to HR.



Let's keep everyone
safe and healthy!

BELLEVILLE GROUP HOME RECEIVES DONATION

The residents of The Arc of Essex County's Belleville group home were thrilled to receive a \$2,000 donation to fund the purchase of a new outdoor grill and two outdoor lounge chairs. The donation, made by a trusted community

partner, will be thoroughly enjoyed by the four men and two women who live in this residence. With the addition of this stainless-steel propane grill and adjustable chaise lounges, the spacious deck will certainly be the location of many more barbecues and outdoor dining sessions for this sociable group. The Arc of Essex County is grateful for the community support.



GROUP RESPITE ACTIVITIES REUNITE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH SUMMER MONTHS

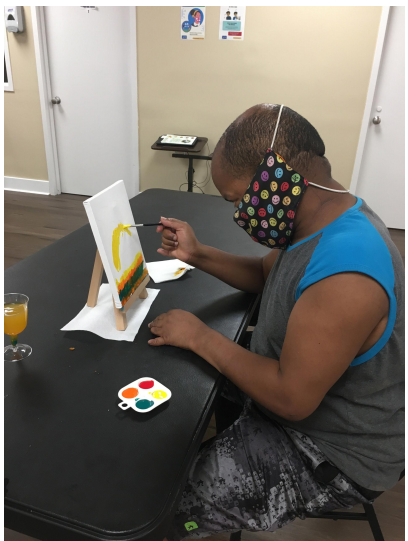
The Arc of Essex County was delighted to welcome back participants to in-person Group Respite programs through the summer months, following a 16-month hiatus due to Covid-19.

After a successful kickoff with events in July, the Community Support Services Department hosted a Paint & Sip and a Karaoke Talent Show in August, each drawing nine adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, who came together to make art, music, and memories.

The Paint & Sip event allowed participants to paint their own one-of-a-kind masterpiece, and the Karaoke night featured participants singing their favorite songs and dancing together, while wearing fun hats and jamming out on inflatable instruments.

Both events were held at the Opportunity Zone Day Program center in Maplewood, with participants socializing and eating lunch together in addition to enjoying the activities.

If your loved one with intellectual or developmental disabilities is interested in educational programming, community experiences, seasonally themed events, or weekend group respite programs, the offerings for individuals 18 and older can be viewed in our [Community Inclusion, Recreation, & Respite Fall Calendar](#). For any questions, contact Manager of Community Supports Services Dacia King-Sarkodie at (973) 535-1181 ext 1272 or dking@arcessex.org.



CRAFT BEER OPEN TO WELCOME GOLFERS ON SEPTEMBER 27

The Arc of Essex County is excited to host the first-ever Craft Beer Open on Monday, September 27 at the Crestmont Country Club in West Orange. The fundraising event will feature 18 holes of golf as well as on-course craft beer and hard seltzer tastings, a barbecue lunch, cigar rolling, and a post-event cocktail and awards reception with wine and spirits tastings.

Check in will begin at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch and a 1 p.m. shotgun start. Golfers will follow the shamble format. Registration is \$450 per golfer and \$1700 for a foursome. Tickets to the reception only are \$125.

Featured breweries will include Allagash, Troegs, and Weyerbacher, as well as Spiked Sparkling Ice. Wines and spirits will be available from Organic Vintages and Jersey Spirits Distilling Company, and Suero Cigar Services will offer a live cigar-rolling station and cigar samples.

The Arc is grateful for PSE&G, Primepoint, William H. Connolly & Co. Insurance, StationMD, Benefit Management Solutions, City Fire Equipment Co., and Franchino Delargy, LLP for sponsoring the event, as well as Prestige Volvo for providing a car for a hole-in-one prize.

Registration and sponsorships are available at [CraftBeerOpen.com](https://craftbeeropen.com). All proceeds support The Arc of Essex County's efforts to provide comprehensive services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.



ADULT RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES AROUND THIS FALL

Once again, The Arc of Essex County's Community Inclusion, Recreation, and Respite Catalog is full of fun activities for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enjoy this September through December.

Bowling returns on Saturdays through the fall, with an expanded time and the addition of pizza to the menu. Community Inclusion activities also include special trips to the Point Pleasant Boardwalk, Terhune Orchards, Bear Mountain Inn, the Mount Airy Casino, and the mall for holiday shopping. Group Respite activities feature a Halloween Bash, Friendsgiving, a Jolly Jamboree, and a Gingerbread Extravaganza.

All activities will closely follow Covid-19 protocols, and The Arc staff will make sure participants are partaking in the fun while also being safe.

The Arc's programs and services are designed to help participants learn and enhance skills through socialization and fun. If your loved one with intellectual or developmental disabilities is interested in joining the fun, the fall/winter catalog can be viewed [here](#). For any questions, contact Manager of Community Supports Services Dacia King-Sarkodie at (973) 535-1181 ext 1272 or dking@arcessex.org.



Community Inclusion, Recreation, & Respite Catalog

September-December 2021



CAMP HOPE WRAPS ANOTHER SAFE AND FUN SUMMER SEASON

Camp Hope welcomed 165 campers to enjoy safe summer fun this summer, with theme weeks that included pirates, superheroes, and more.

Highlights of the seven-week 2021 season included a 65th birthday party for Camp Hope, the annual Camp Car Wash, the Camp Olympics (complete with traffic-cone hurdles, frisbee discus throws, and pool-noodle javelins!), and the end-of-summer Camp Hope Luau.

The final two weeks of camp in early August, which featured our youngest campers, included Superhero Week, showcasing feats of strength, capes, and a superpower contest, as well as an Around the World theme that took campers to Mexico, Australia, Africa, and Japan.

Each day included activities such as arts and crafts, games, and music, along with swimming, sports, and other traditional camp events. COVID-19 restrictions limited some things, including the number of volunteers and visitors who could come on site. But overall, it felt like a normal Camp Hope summer, and The Arc of Essex County was thrilled to host so many smiling faces. The Arc is proud to report that once again there were ZERO cases of COVID-19 this summer for campers and staff. We're already looking forward to the 2022 season!

Camp Hope is a 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 a.m. to 3 p.m., starting in late June and ending in August, with transportation provided for campers living in Essex County and surrounding areas. For more information, visit www.arccamphope.com. To request a tour and for questions regarding the application process, contact Laurie Best, Senior Director of Children & Adult Day Services, at (973) 535-1181 x1264 or lb主@arcessex.org.



THE ARC OF NEW JERSEY OFFERS RESOURCES ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR THOSE WITH IDD

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provide crucial income supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), but the COVID pandemic has resulted in major changes to how the Social

Security Administration (SSA) functions and it created additional problems for some people with IDD. Additional forms of income supports, such as stimulus payments, unemployment insurance, and revisions to tax credits benefiting low-income individuals, were passed as part of COVID relief. Although many changes have been helpful, some have also had unintended consequences.

The Arc of the U.S. prepared this [**fact sheet**](#) to summarize information for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who have received Unemployment Insurance (UI) during the COVID pandemic. Some of the Unemployment Insurance policies passed by Congress resulted in unintended problems for certain individuals with IDD who received a high amount of UI -- often an additional \$600 per week -- which resulted in the termination of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid benefits.

In addition, at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, September 14, The Arc of New Jersey will offer a free webinar, featuring The Arc of the US Senior Director of Income Policy Bethany Lilly and The Arc of New Jersey Director of Mainstreaming Medical Care Program Beverly Roberts. This webinar will explain these changes and discuss the good news about a recent decision from the SSA that is very helpful for individuals with IDD who lost benefits because they received a high amount of unemployment insurance (UI) during the pandemic. To register, [**click here**](#).



August 3, 2021

COVID-19, Unemployment Insurance, and People with Disabilities

This fact sheet details common questions that we have received about Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and Unemployment Insurance.

What is Unemployment Insurance?

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a joint federal-state program that temporarily pays people who have lost their job through no fault of their own (i.e., not for grounds that constitute misconduct and not voluntarily quitting) while they look for a new job. Many UI programs require that people are looking for full-time work to be eligible for UI.

Who is eligible for UI benefits?

State UI eligibility varies. We would recommend reviewing materials from the state UI agency to learn more. Generally, an individual needs to have been laid off from his or her job (or have quit for good cause connected to the job) and be available for and actively seeking work. Many states require even part-time workers to seek full-time work, meaning many people with disabilities who can only work part time are not eligible. However, in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Congress made policy changes that broadened the UI eligibility criteria and more people with disabilities may be eligible for UI.

What are the new UI policies that Congress passed?

The CARES Act (the third Coronavirus response bill) included three major UI policy changes.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

The new PUA program provides emergency unemployment assistance to workers who usually are not covered by state UI, including part-time workers. Applicants will need to provide self-certification that they are (1) partially or fully unemployed, or (2) unable and unavailable to work because of a particular circumstance related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most importantly, this new program includes many part-time workers, so people with disabilities on SSI or Social Security benefits may be eligible if they have lost their jobs due to COVID-19.

Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC)

PUC increases both the state UI benefit and the PUA benefit by an additional \$600 per week.

THE ARC OF ESSEX COUNTY RESIDENTIAL CORNER

September Openings

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



Marmon Group Home (1 Male OR Female vacancy) – New!

- 1 bedroom available in this 6-bedroom co-ed group home (3 bedrooms in each apartment)
- 24/7 staff supervision
- Two-family home in West Orange with spacious living room and dining room, an eat-in kitchen, and large backyard with deck
- Off street parking

- The residents of this group enjoy socializing, hosting parties, and going on local trips to restaurants, movies, bowling, festivals, and concerts together (pre-COVID)



Terrace Group Home (1 Male Vacancy)

- 1 Bedroom Available in 4-Bedroom Group Home
- 24/7 Staff Supervision
- Recently Renovated, Single Family, Ranch-Style Home on a Quiet, Residential Street in West Orange
- Minutes from Eagle Rock Reservation, Shopping, and Recreation
- The residents of this all-male group home enjoy picnics at Liberty State Park, bowling, going to the mall to shop, and weekly restaurant nights (pre-COVID)



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

THE ARC REMEMBERS ANNE ROTUNDA

The Arc of Essex County remembers Anne Rotunda, who passed away in August after a long illness. Anne was Director of the Special Young Adults (SYA) program for nearly 40 years, dedicating her career to supporting and advocating for the men and women in the program. She first joined The Arc in 1980 and was known for her steadfast commitment to her job, as well as her ability to cultivate a warm and vibrant community among the SYA consumers and their families.

In reflecting on Anne's decades at The Arc, staff members shared that Anne's "voice made you smile," and that "her eyes sparkled when she smiled, and it didn't matter if you worked with her for years or if you met her that day, her genuine spirit made everyone's day brighter."

Anne will be missed by all who knew her, but the heartfelt enthusiasm she shared will always be remembered by staff, consumers, and their families.



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