

Optimism for 2021

The Arc is entering 2021 with optimism and bold plans for the future. The year 2020 was difficult for The Arc, our team members, the amazing children, families, and clients that we are privileged to serve, and our community. Yet Team Arc led with innovation and determination, creating opportunities for our agency not only to continue to provide stellar services, but also to position ourselves for future growth and success.

The Arc continues to invest in its future by supporting team members through the novel Champions of Change Learning Series. We are pushing forward with plans to expand the Courim Center, replace its roof, and build an accessible, barrier-free playground. We continue to build community partnerships and create linkages that foster greater inclusion for our clients. And, we are constantly brainstorming, developing, seeking funding, and implementing initiatives that will serve our mission to change the conversation around disabilities through provocative and meaningful advocacy and programming.

The challenges of the coronavirus are still with us, but our team is poised to meet those challenges. We continue to plan for the upcoming year, while paying close attention to the course of the pandemic and the needs of those we serve. Health and safety continue to be our top priorities as we navigate the changing landscape of the pandemic. With this in mind, The Arc is moving forward together with our team, clients, community partners, funders, and supporters, to continue the hard work that will lead to a truly inclusive community for all.



Arc Family Events & Respite – A 6-month Update

To keep our families connected and engaged throughout the pandemic, Team Arc planned and hosted several Family Fun Drive-Thru and virtual events over the summer. This fall, our team, clients, and families enjoyed on-site, outdoors, and socially distanced events. **On average, 85 students, adults, and family members participated at each community event**, with the Fall Festival bringing together 114 clients and friends for safe, fun social interaction.

We kicked off our Drive-Thru series with “Under the Sea,” held on Wednesday, July 15. Families enjoyed taking pictures with the “Arc Shark” and received blue canvas bags that included activity booklets, a sand pail, Swedish Fish, sunglasses, an under-the-sea stamper, bubbles, make-a-face sea stickers, goldfish crackers, Pull ‘n’ Peel Twizzlers, a sun visor, and an Arc beach towel for use during their scheduled virtual events.

The “Jingle in July” Drive-Thru party was held on Wednesday, July 29. Families and team members enjoyed gourmet shaved ice from Kona Ice to cool everyone down during the heat of summer. Families opened wrapped presents that included wrist jingle bells, a pom-pom beanie, a mug for their pre-portioned hot cocoa mix with mini marshmallows, and a candy cane to enjoy during the accompanying virtual event.



On Wednesday, August 26, we hosted the roaring “Safari Adventure.” For the virtual event, families received a drawstring canvas bag with temporary animal tattoos, Zebra Cakes, safari stampers, a wild animal face mask, animal crackers, a safari puzzle, a notebook and pencil, a compass keychain, animal stickers, and toy binoculars. An adventurer riding a lion and a 7 1/2-foot giraffe were spotted roaming the event.

The Arc’s Fall Festival, an outdoor parking lot trunk-or-treat event, took place on Thursday, October 29. Families picked and painted pumpkins from the pumpkin patch, gathered candy from the 11 trunk-or-treat cars, and played cornhole.



For our last event of the year on Thursday, December 3, we created a big-screen drive-in in our parking lot to show the movie *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Families took advantage of the perfect weather that day and enjoyed the movie from the comfort of their own vehicles. They also munched on popcorn and candy, and drank soda from their Grinch goodie bags. While waiting for their snacks and for the movie to begin, families completed Grinch-themed word searches, and played Mad Libs and Jeopardy games. After the movie, families honked their horns and made some noise to show their appreciation for the event.



RESPITE

The Respite team is currently providing in-home care for families requesting assistance. These families have used the free time to run errands, spend time with their significant others, or just take a break to de-stress. Our team has been happy to provide these services while maintaining safety protocols. All team members are equipped with masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer for each home visit.



Early Intervention

In March 2020, all Early Intervention Programs fully transitioned to virtual service models. Throughout the pandemic, our dedicated team of Developmental Specialists worked arduously to ensure that every child and family received the best services possible, so that each child's individual outcomes and overall program goals were met. Our team worked hard to expand the scope of their knowledge and creativity to develop various means of engagement to teach, evaluate, and support every family virtually.

Despite the unprecedented circumstances and countless unpredictable variables, we persevered. **In 2020, EI Programs served 1,489 children and completed 15,186 activities overall** with children and their families.

Our team delivered developmental intervention packages to all families in First Step to Success and ForwardLeaps to ensure that every child had the intervention items they required. These packages included resources and educational materials for use during virtual sessions. We also shipped specific developmental items to children in HealthySteps, including books provided by the Reach Out and Read program, to foster and encourage appropriate child development and learning.

As a result of a Needs Assessment conducted at the start of the pandemic, we were able to leverage resources and engage with various community partners to best assist and support our families in a meaningful way. **These efforts and collaborations allowed our team to distribute \$100 gift cards to 37 families, diapers to 332 families, and car seats to 90 families.** Thanks to The Arc's Pantry Project, we also distributed pantry bags to countless families struggling with food insecurity. Throughout the holiday season, our community came together **to provide 110 families with Thanksgiving turkeys, along with a pantry bag.**



At Christmas, we received and **distributed 500 toys from Toys for Tots and 490 toys from Spirit of Giving to families** who were most in need.

The year 2020 was also a year of tremendous highs and lows for our team. We welcomed two new babies into the Early Intervention family, Gianni Spadafora and Luca Solis, and helped Heidi Escobar and Melianna Lorissaint to celebrate their respective nuptials. Sadly, we also experienced the loss of a wonderful woman and team member, Beth Eyestone. We miss Beth dearly and continue to hold her in our thoughts each day.

We look forward to 2021 with optimism for what the future holds. We continue to provide virtual services for our home visiting programs, and we are preparing the first round of intervention packages of the year. Our HealthySteps pediatric team has returned to community practices and resumed in-person family engagement. The Arc's Early Intervention department is committed to ensuring that all families receive the highest quality of services, and that we continue to exemplify the greatness and commitment that The Arc displays for each and every one of its clients. We will make the **BEST** of 2021 – regardless of the circumstances!

Potentials School

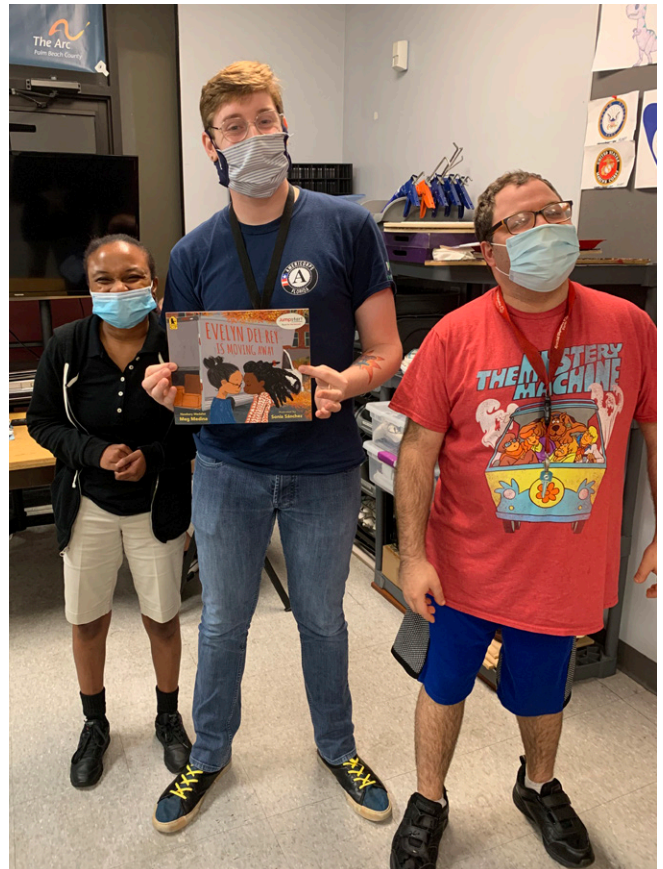
Potentials School may look different this year, but it is still a bustling and exciting place to learn! Our hybrid system of virtual and in-person learning is going strong, and students continue to make progress on their individual goals. Students learning in person are enjoying spending time with their peers and therapists. Each week, students in virtual classrooms enjoy one-on-one lessons, group science and social studies, and enrichment activities on the "Schoolology" learning platform. Our therapists have been working hard to engage all of our students, both virtual and in person. Students spent the first two quarters learning about literature, informational texts, measurements, shapes, animal habitats, states of matter, civics, and history.



The Potentials family has had a LOT of fun this school year! In September, we learned about bees and enjoyed an immersive art experience painting with honey. We also had a friendly pizza delivery relay competition during "Pizza Week." In October, students had a blast exploring pumpkins and dressing up in costumes for Halloween. In November, we learned about turkeys and named all the things we were thankful for. In December, students studied different cultures from around the world and how they celebrate special holidays. Finally, Santa came to visit Potentials on the last day of school before winter break, bringing smiles and holiday joy to our students!

AmeriCorps

In August, The Arc's AmeriCorps Program did an **onboarding of 12 new AmeriCorps members**. Our new cohorts have been engaging and mentoring clients from our adult day programs, group homes, Potentials School, and First Step to Success, both virtually and in person. Members connect with clients virtually for Art Club, Book Club, and Social Club, and lead presentations on vocational and healthy living skills. AmeriCorps members have also been serving Arc families at our Family Fun Drive-Thru events. On October 29, AmeriCorps members partnered with the Literacy Coalition of Palm Beach County for "Read for the Record." **Mentors read the book *Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away* to more than 70 Arc participants.**



Stand Up

Stand Up members have continued their volunteer activities both in person and virtually. Stand Up mentors volunteered at each Family Fun Drive-Thru event, completed leadership trainings, and organized virtual team building experiences such as "Painting with Friends." **Two Stand Up volunteers hit the virtual runway for The Arc's Wild Pants Party, raising more than \$2,000 for our families.**



In November, Stand Up members hosted a Food Drive for families in need during the holiday season, collecting more than 300 nonperishable items. Members also wrote letters to Potentials School students to spread positivity, encouragement, and holiday cheer.

Community Inclusion

The Community Inclusion Program continues to offer inclusion training for out-of-school-time staff through Zoom. Since October 1, The Arc's Inclusion Specialist has conducted six trainings for a total of 53 practitioners. Due to the shift to virtual services, any practitioner who participates in inclusion training is provided with sensory items for the youth enrolled in their programs. Practitioners may choose two sensory items for after-school activities, including glitter bottles, water bead bags, putty, and find-and-see bottles.

Adult Education

The Adult Education Program has been providing in-person services since the summer. Team members and participants continue to adhere to safety protocols, including mask wearing, social distancing, sanitization, and other measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. The Adult Education Program is currently serving 29 participants in person at the Courim Center. We continue to offer distance-learning options for individuals who are unable to attend in person. Throughout each month, virtual participants receive education curriculum packets containing activity sheets, crafts, games, and art projects to accompany their Zoom virtual learning sessions.



Our team designed the in-person activity schedule so that participants learning from home are able to connect with their peers and friends at the Courim Center, and work on activities together via classroom streaming.

The holidays are always a special time for our adult programs. Even though this year was different, our team ensured our clients' holiday experiences were just as amazing as ever. We ushered in the holiday season by hosting a virtual Halloween party. Attendees had a blast dancing to Halloween hits, showing off their Halloween trivia knowledge, competing in a costume contest, and solving their way through a virtual escape room! We celebrated Christmas all month long with activities, including crafts, games, holiday movies, and, of course, decorating. Everyone was surprised and full of excitement when Santa came for a visit to spend time with everyone and take pictures.



Residential Services

In 2020, our Residential team went above and beyond for our residents, despite the risks posed by their essential, front-line work. Their perseverance and determination in the face of this pandemic has been extraordinary, and has helped to keep our residents safe and engaged. Our Residential team continues to provide creative, fun, and educational, home-based activities for residents who remain at home due to the rising cases of COVID-19 in our community and nationwide. Residents receive adult day training and education services, participate in crafts and games, work on their cooking skills, complete activity sheets, and participate in virtual activities each week.

Thankfully, families and loved ones are now permitted to visit residents, and residents may also go home for a visit now that some of the restrictions from the governor's mandate have been lifted. Our group homes experienced a day of happiness, laughter, and joy when they received their first visits from loved ones since March. The overwhelming emotions of this momentous occasion, and seeing residents get to hug their family members, brought tears to everyone's eyes.

Capital Projects & Expansions

Despite the pandemic, The Arc has made incredible progress on capital projects over the past year to improve our facilities. We completed first-floor renovations to the Eleanor Trachtenberg Residence, finished the rebuild of the Poney Martin Group Home, and are now looking forward to commencing work on three major construction efforts in 2021.

We are replacing the roof of The Arc's headquarters, the Courim Center, building two new classrooms, updating the building's front facade, and installing an accessible, barrier-free playground for children with mobility challenges. We have secured funding for the roof replacement thanks to a generous donation from The Mary Alice Fortin Foundation, and are set to begin the first stage of reroofing in late spring 2021.

Thanks to a grant from the Florida Housing Corporation and a land donation from the City of West Palm Beach, we are in the planning and design phases for a fifth group home located in the Northend RISE neighborhood of West Palm Beach. We are currently looking for community partners* to help sponsor the new Manning Avenue Residence, including in-kind contributions for materials and labor.

The Arc is also moving forward with its plans for the novel ArtWorks Incubator and Research Center at the FAU Research Park in Boca Raton. Our partners are currently working on the architectural designs, and we have scheduled zoning and planning review meetings for early summer 2021.

*Contact Ellie Marshall, The Arc's chief operating officer, at emarshall@arcpcb.org if you are interested in playing a role in the construction of this magnificent new group home for our adult clients.



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Operations team is implementing a new Preventative Maintenance Plan for each of its facilities and fleet vehicles. This plan outlines weekly inspection tasks, including early water intrusion maintenance, painting needs, landscaping management, basic appliance repairs, etc. The Fleet Maintenance Plan adheres to an even stricter process imposed by the Florida Department of Transportation, and team members must maintain and document a wide range of data, including tire pressure and regular spraying for coronavirus disinfection.



Richard Gaff, Kimberly McCarten, and Kurt Gehring, Board Chair

Our Management team is working hard to review, edit, and publish a complete update to The Arc's Management Manual. We are reviewing departmental and programmatic policies and procedures for all aspects of The Arc's administrative, operational, employment, and financial management. We are also implementing a new Safety and Health Task Force to oversee the many moving parts of emergency response, hurricane preparedness, pandemic protocols, health and safety training, and general visitation.

THE ARC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Kimberly McCarten, President & CEO

Russell Greene, Chief Financial Officer

Ellie Marshall, Chief Operating Officer

Anthony Robinson, Chief Development Officer

Ruth Acosta, Senior Director of Early Intervention

Bairbre Flood, Senior Director of Children & Family Services

Kristie Giles, Senior Director of Adult & Residential Services

This task force will meet monthly to review and rewrite protocols as necessary, and to assess compliance needs and opportunities for improvement.

Our Residential Management is also working on a Residential Guide to Excellence to outline the best practices and procedures in providing high-quality residential services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We intend to make the final document available for use by providers statewide to promote high standards of care for all, regardless of their geographic location.

Together, we can change the conversation around disabilities, inspire possibilities, and create an inclusive community for all.

Contact **Anthony Robinson** at arobinson@arcpsc.org or visit arcpsc.org to donate, volunteer, tour our headquarters, or learn more about our amazing clients, team members, programs, and partnerships.