

2019 Annual Report




The Arc
Northeastern Pennsylvania
Achieve with us.



Annual Report 2019

The mission of The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania is to promote and protect the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and to actively support their full inclusion and participation in their communities throughout their lifetimes. The Arc of NEPA advanced this mission in 2019 in all areas of services, supports, and planning.

The Arc of NEPA Executive Director, Maryclaire Kretsch, completed her first year in her new role and, through her leadership, The Arc began a two-year strategic planning initiative representative of all departments that includes Customer Perspective, Financial Perspective, Learning and Growth Perspective, and Business Process Perspective. All domains challenge The Arc department heads to optimize best practices in all areas of The Arc service delivery and planning.

Once again, The Arc increased high level Advocacy through a trained Educational Advocate. Aside from a steady work load of IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings, the Advocate helped to develop a curriculum of community education presentations for schools, agencies, parent groups, and community groups. Two special initiatives also highlighted The Arc Advocacy efforts this past year: First, the purchase of the rights to “Intelligent Lives”, an award winning film and learning documentary that challenges old thinking related to “IQ”, and the place in society for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).



Several screenings were held throughout the area with structured discussions following. Secondly, The Arc Advocacy organized a major event trademarked by The Arc of The United States entitled “Wings for All”, held at the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport. The program enables persons of all ages with IDD or Autism to experience all aspects of commercial flight; from ticketing, TSA, baggage handling and checking, to physically boarding an airliner and taxiing on the airport runway. An educational component begins the process for all airport personnel involved. The Arc, in addition, continues to provide individual, family, and systems advocacy through trained administrative personnel on an ongoing basis. The Arc continues to lead the way in matters related to employment, education, funding, individual rights, and regulatory reform.

The Arc also provides Residential service options and in this past year increased the number of Arc Community-based homes from eleven to twelve and also filled a vacancy via an emergency referral. Other Residential service and support options include Lifesharing, Supported Living, and Home and Community-Based services. Adult Day services provided at The Arc include a large Community Participation Supports (CPS) program, which enjoyed an increase in the percentage threshold of those participating in real community supports, while also increasing the number of quality activities for those individuals with IDD who prefer facility based supports. A CPS Coordinator position was created and filled to manage these initiatives. More of The Arc's staff members were certified in the state-required ACRE job coaching certification, and a television commercial highlighting an individual served in Supported Employment was produced and is airing locally. Once again this year, The Arc increased the number of vending machines and gumball machines placed at local business and maintained by The Arc consumers with staff assistance.



Although the threshold for Community Participation Supports had once again increased, The Arc services were flat-funded in the past year. Therefore, a cost-of-living adjustment was not feasible to increase staff wages across the board and to remain competitive with other local providers. However, a prorated holiday bonus was provided to staff. The Arc is heavily engaged with The Arc of Pennsylvania and PAR (Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability) to address the Direct Support Professional (DSP) crisis state-wide, participating in weekly phone conferences as well as general membership meetings to discuss statewide strategy on ensuring a living wage for DSP's who carry out such a critical mission in caring and supporting for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens.



The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania continues to serve approximately 500 individuals through several Residential living options, Adult Day Services, Community Participation, Employment, Seniors programming, and Recreation programs. The main charge of The Arc of NEPA, however, is Advocacy, and The Arc is proud to set itself apart from other provider agencies in this role to help individuals with IDD and their families receive the services and supports they need.

Maryclaire Kretsch, *Executive Director*

Welcome 2020!

This year, The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania is celebrating 65 years of leadership and advocacy in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities and Autism (IDD/A). We continue to serve over 500 children and adults with IDD/A and their families per week in various programs and services including residential, day support, community options, supported employment, advocacy and recreation and employ over 170 staff. We have accomplished several major objectives in the last 64 years but there is so much more to do. We want to move more people from state institutions to communities; we want greater opportunities in employment for all with IDD/A who want to work; we want to stop the bullying of people with IDD and Autism; we want to provide better community education in prevention such as: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Shaken Baby Syndrome; we want more input from our consumers and self-advocates in decision making; we want to expand inclusive practices in our educational system; we want full integration in society in all facets of life and work; we want people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live full, self-determined and respected lives.

The Arc of Northeastern Pennsylvania is committed



to forward its mission... The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

We are looking forward to celebrating with all of you!



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