

# Achieve

Summer 2020



**The Arc**  
Bristol County

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.  
LIVE UNITED** 



## Message from President & CEO

On behalf of our board of directors and leadership team, we are delighted to share some of our agency highlights throughout this pandemic.

Please take a moment to review the amazing work of our staff, volunteers, and families. We are so thankful for the outpouring of support, grants, and contributions towards keeping everyone safe and connected.

Sincerely,



Michael Andrade  
President & CEO



## Thank You For Your Kindness

The past three months have been an unbelievable time for all of us. Let me first say that if you have lost someone during this time whether due to pandemic or not, I send you my sincere sympathy. I don't think anyone would disagree that the past months have come with many ups and downs. I want to share some positives that The Arc has experienced and the acts of kindness shown to us.

To all the individuals, families, caregivers that we know through The Arc, you have shown incredible strength during this time. When programs needed to close and services were stopped due to keeping everyone as safe as possible, you worked with us and made it happen; your resilience is commended. Thank you also for your many kind words; your calls and emails have helped us in more ways than can ever be stated.

To all The Arc's front line workers, you continue to amaze me each and every day. For The Arc to have such committed and dedicated workers to keeping the individuals we support not only safe but ensuring high standards of well being is applauded. To know that individuals in our services were well cared for brought all of us peace of mind. Well done.



To everyone who has been able and willing to participate in our virtual offerings for activities and visits or has connected with us through email or phone calls, we truly appreciate having those connections. To anyone (staff and self advocate) who has created these outstanding virtual events and activities and have worked together to create a full schedule for those we support; a resounding THANKS! Who knew this would become such a fun and interesting way to connect during this time of physical distancing.

To every single staff person in all our various departments, thank you for being there, for doing your jobs and allowing for new ways to do business, for listening to those we support and

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**Achieve with us.**

## Residential Team during Covid 19 pandemic

The Residential team has stepped up immensely to support the individuals' that live in our group residences during the Covid 19 pandemic. A variety of different efforts were put into place to keep the individuals safe. In both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, we had 3 staff open their homes to the individuals to provide Respite Care . During this time, they were welcomed into the staff's family and provided extraordinary care and support. This made the individuals feel at home, supported and safe during a time of crisis.

In the Residences a variety of different activities were offered to keep the individuals active and engaged. Staff came up with creative ways to make activities fun and exciting. There were several birthday parades and virtual celebrations, weekly bingo nights,

bake offs, Mask Making, pajama day, and an in home memorial held. Staff also assisted the individuals with virtual visits with their doctors and family members. None of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of all of the staff members and management. We can't thank them enough.

### Shared Living

Shared Living providers have continued to provide excellent supports to the individuals living with them, during this crisis. Due to Covid 19, day programs have been closed, Providers have been faced with a new norm of providing around the clock care. They have done this with ease and the individuals have continued to thrive. Providers have offered a variety of different activities from dying Easter eggs, to virtual birthday celebrations, to Camping while practicing social distancing. The



Shared Living Coordinator checked in with them regularly providing supplies from arts and crafts to personal protective equipment. We can't thank the team enough for their dedication!

## Thank You For Your Kindness continued from page 1

being creative, to responding to someone in need, for supporting someone who was sick and afraid, for keeping our agency going (that's right it was also doing your jobs that you always do) and so much more. You are an incredible group of staff that have kept The Arc running. Hats off to you all. Well done!!

A special thank you to our President & CEO, Michael Andrade, who has led us through this storm and has been there for us. Thank you also to the Board of Directors who have believed in us and supported our efforts.

Thank you to the many community partners who have given to our agency. Your time and donations are most appreciated. To our funders, thank you for the flexibilities shown to us as we continue to provide supports and think out what are the next steps and how we can work together.

Thank you to all in advance for your thoughts and ideas as we continue to re-envision how we best provide supports. We all have heard this often but it is true; together we can do it. Please know your opinions matter to us.

Thank you to all for all the kindness you have shown to us and others. I am deeply grateful to you all. Be well and safe.

Donna Brown, Vice President



## Justin vs. Covid-19

**A young adult that would not let the pandemic ruin his dreams**

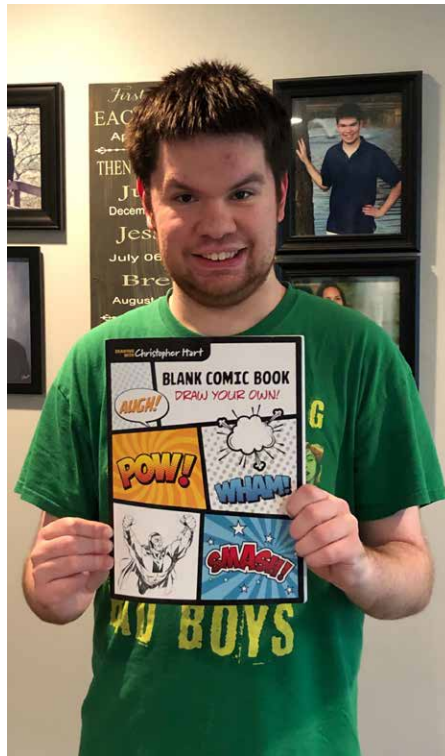
Before Covid-19 pandemic happened, Justin hosted a radio show on Attleboro public access channel every Saturday from 11am-1pm. Sadly, he cannot run the group anymore because the radio station is closed due to the pandemic.

In talking with Justin and his mother, Angela, to see how they were doing during the crisis, it became clear that the pandemic was really affecting Justin's life in a negative way. He was very upset that the radio station was closed.

Justin has a love for comic books and characters. Prior to Covid-19, Justin had started working on the Charting of the Life Course for his life. Justin's goal is to be able to run a radio or TV show, or a podcast by himself about comic book characters. He wants to be able to interview different people that love comics and get different people's views on comics. Justin attends the GAP program at BCC where he majors in theater/ radio show hosting/art.

I asked Justin if he would be interested in running his own zoom event featuring drawing your own comic book. Justin's Zoom Event was advertised and materials for participants were bought. Justin is the host of this group every Tuesday from 3-430 p.m. Justin's first group had 8 people but three weeks later there were 20 people that attended this group. The ages are 22- plus.

Justin teaches the group something new every week. It might be how to draw different characters or different backgrounds for the comic strips. Last week Justin asked the group to draw a comic strip of their favorite comic book character and to create a story line of each person saving the world.



Justin asked participants who would the villain be and what superpowers would they have. He also asked the group why each person picked their favorite character. The interaction with the group is amazing. There is never a dull moment. Justin even has trivia questions for the group. He does a lot of prep work prior to the group.

Seeing Justin smile and be so confident in hosting the group is very amazing. Justin has created a positive moment during the Covid-19 pandemic. Justin is working on his goals that he created and has not let the pandemic stop him from achieving his goal. Justin has also made new friends. His group never has to end; he can continue this for as long as he wants.

This is one of my favorite zoom events that The Arc has running. Thank you Justin. Well done!

## RI Day Program

The abrupt spread of COVID pandemic and closing of RI Day Program services was an



unprecedented crisis the world, our agency, and the people we support have never experienced before. To be off schedule from our daily lives can be stressful and the unknown of a virus scary. What we noticed however, was that the most important thing needed was the social connection between people. In less than a weeks time the RI Day and Community Supports staff and supervisors developed tele-day services. Tele-day includes, phone, emails and individual, small and larger group Zoom meetings.

In the last three months, tele-day services have evolved to weekly and monthly scheduled program ZOOM meets. Individuals have the option of daytime and afternoon hour meet up times. Initially staff was helping implement topics, discussion and agendas. Now proAbility folks have been able to personally decide, suggest and choose various break out rooms and activities. Chair yoga, current events, solar system and mythology trivia are recent favorite request themes. Tele-day participants also facilitate meetings. This has been a great opportunity for everyone to develop technology skills, and social skills while connecting with peers. At the same time it allows for individual choice which remains extremely important during such times when so many restrictions have been mandated upon all of us.



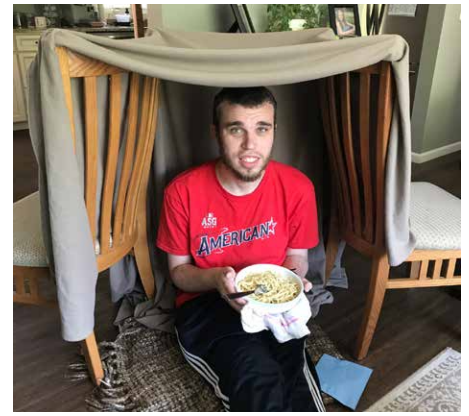
# Project Rec-Connect

Since the very unexpected closure of all of our programs at The Arc, Project Rec-Connect has worked hand in hand with the Family Supports team to create new programming. As a team, staff put together many various Zoom meetings and activities for our Arc participants. As the number and types of programs grew, the team created a monthly calendar to send out to all interested participants. Activities were color coded by the age group that would most benefit from it. One of the favorite groups that has come out of this is the 'bingo challenge' that is done over the course of several days. Participants are given a bingo card listing out different activities to complete. As you can see from the pictures below these

ranged from 'create a fort in your home' to 'design something with only marshmallows and toothpicks.' Other favorites included wacky hats, a magic show for families and Thursday Rec-Connect meetings. Also, due to our relationship with Shri Yoga, virtual yoga classes are now offered to any who join on Thursday mornings. Finally, Saturday mornings have brought new classes in which participants sign up for the activity and a kit is dropped off to their home



so that they can participate in whatever the class is making. None of this



would have been possible without the hard work of Danielle Martin, Kelly Ledoux, Kristin Bosclair, April Lamb, Allison Dulak, Ida Linquist, Kaitlynn Mello and Deloris Joseph. Thank you to everyone who has joined in on the fun, we can't wait to see you all again face to face!



## HR Happenings

Unprecedented, historical, challenging, "The New Normal", these are just a few adjectives that have been used to describe the COVID-19 situation that has been placed upon all of us. Within the Human Resources office here at The Arc of Bristol County/proAbility our utmost objective has been implementing new procedures under the guidance of state and federal governments to ensure the health and wellbeing of our employees and individuals. This has been accomplished through implementation of the Family First Corona Virus Response Act (FFCRA). Immediately upon implementation of the FFCRA the HR department ensured that employees affected by school closures and the need to stay home and home school their children, were able to receive payment under this act. Moving forward the HR department provided unemployment application information for workers in the states of MA and RI so that

furloughed employees could obtain unemployment benefits as quickly as possible. The HR department has overseen and processed the respective employee incentives offered by the states of MA and RI as well as the employee appreciation incentive offered by our own board. Along with the Vice President, the HR department has worked diligently to develop safe return to work practices and training for our employees. The HR department has also been involved in some heart warming and encouraging acts of generosity during these difficult times. The tremendous donation by our employees of over \$20,000 worth of accrued time to the Employee Assistance Fund is a testimony to this act. This act alone defines the spirit of humanity and the unselfishness among our employees to reach out to coworkers in need during this national crisis. The HR department is proud to be a part of this team and we look forward to seeing you all very soon!!!

## Trust Management Services

The Arc of Bristol County in its further commitment to making a difference in the lives of elders, individuals with disabilities and their families, is proud to announce that Trust Management Services has continued uninterrupted through these uncertain times.

As most of us are familiar with the conventional life-planning strategy of a health care proxy, will, or power of attorney, you may not be aware of the possibility of providing your loved one with alternatives with various trust options. A trust is a legal plan for placing funds and other assets in the control of a trustee for the benefits of an individual without having the individual declared incompetent.

With several estate planning options available, there is no “one size fits

all” in assessing the needs for your own and the future of your loved one. The Arc of Bristol County will continue to provide a comprehensive personalized plan by working directly with individuals and families in a caring and contactless environment, to develop options that maximize wealth preservation, maintain funding and eligibility requirements for government programs and public benefits, and prepare for long-term care.

To schedule an appointment or for additional information, contact Jennifer Sweet at our main office (508) 226-1445 Ext. 3102 or [jsweet@arcnbc.org](mailto:jsweet@arcnbc.org).

## Staying Connected During COVID

Throughout the state of emergency, Sean M. McDermott has been enjoying window visits and phone calls from his direct support professional, Amanda Ayre. Sean and Amanda typically spend their time together in the community participating in different outings. Sean has expressed how his participation with The Arc has opened up his opportunities and access to the community. Unfortunately, the pandemic has brought feelings of isolation because of the safety limits implemented. Due to COVID-19, Sean has been unable to leave his residence for the safety of himself and others. Sean and Amanda have worked together on breaking the barriers that the coronavirus has presented with creativity and support for one another. The two of them check-in on the phone multiple times per week. They have begun to play “phone DJ”. Amanda stated “Sean is hugely into music and we always

have jam sessions while on outings. To adapt, we have played, “phone DJ”. Sean will request songs and I will play them on my speaker from home so that he can hear.” They have also spent time visiting with one another through the window. They have spent this time during the window visits to reminisce on the adventures they have shared by reminding one another of the many anecdotes from the trips.

“Keeping things light with fun stories, music, and laughing during this time is critical to offset the situation we are dealing with. At the same time, it has also been important to allow Sean the space to discuss his feelings about what he has lost during this time. He has enjoyed community trips and creating new relationships immensely this past year. This has been a big change to his life to not be out in the community” said Amanda. Some of the barriers associated

## Mask Donations

The Arc of Bristol County is so appreciative for all of the cloth masks that have been donated. The masks have been helpful in keeping both the staff & our participants protected during this time.

A big thank you goes out to the people listed below who contributed:

### Bristol County Savings Bank

Beth Sullivan  
Sarah Begg  
Amy Siddiqui  
Michelle Reager  
Sarah Michangelo  
Linda McHugh  
Kate Jackson  
Kimberly DeFlurin  
Ellen Beauvais  
Sam Gomes



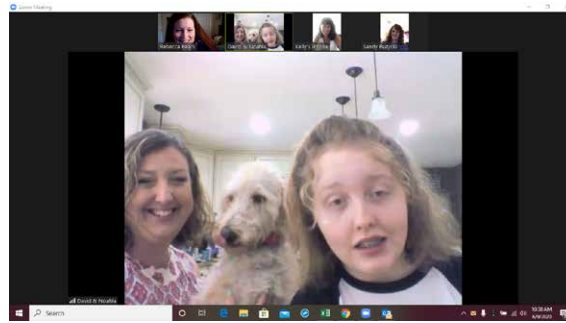
Amanda Ayre and Sean M. McDermott enjoy an outdoor visit together.

with COVID-19 are starting to lift. Sean and Amanda were able to visit with one another outside at Sean’s residence while maintaining social distancing. They are looking forward to the time where they can partake in more community adventures together.



## AFC

Our AFC team has been encouraging our AFC families to engage in social connections in this time of physical distancing. Home Visits are being conducted via telehealth calls, Zoom and FaceTime videos. Our AFC members have really risen to the occasion in building their independence and communication skills by partaking in calls, texts and video chats with their friends on a more frequent basis due to program closures. Our caregivers are commended for their creativity and resourcefulness in engaging the members in meaningful activities. Although we went into the crisis with concerns for the members' health and wellbeing, many of the members have demonstrated resilience and flexibility beyond expectations. The Purdy family is new to AFC services



and despite starting their services through zoom conferencing during the pandemic, caregiver Noahla Purdy stated it was "surprisingly smooth, easy and actually quite convenient. The AFC team is pleasant, friendly, positive and great to work with!". AFC member Molly Purdy has been able to show off her beautiful art work that she creates while the AFC meetings are occurring. We are thankful to the 113 AFC families that invite us into their homes and lives each month, we appreciate all of you and thank you for your commitment.

**Arc Strong:**  
*Achieving Dreams*  
RUN, WALK & ROLL

### Virtual Event Being Held!

Join us on Saturday, September 12th online for our Annual Arc Strong: Achieving Dreams 5k Run Walk & Roll. To register and for more information, visit [www.arcnbc.org](http://www.arcnbc.org) and once again celebrate the hope and dreams of thousands of individuals and families we serve.

## One individual's journey with Covid -19

The Guardianship team had several individuals test positive for Covid. I would like to share a story about one such individual.

On 4/8/20 - he was sent to the hospital complaining of vomiting and a high fever. He was tested for Covid and sent back home on 4/11.

4/15/20 - He was again sent to the ER with an O2 sat of 80%.

4/17/20 - He was intubated, his outlook was not good.

4/22/20 - Guardian Representative (Clare) called DDS legal to see if they had contact information for his mother. She received the number and called. Mom had given the state custody of him.

Clare did finally receive a call from Mom who wanted to see him. Due to the no visiting policy at the hospital this was not possible.

Clare then received a call from the individual's aunt and uncle, who were happy to assist Clare by giving her information about how he was placed. Mom did not want anyone from the family to take him. This couple had wondered what happened to him.

Clare explained that the individual was not doing well and the aunt realized that she knew Clare. At this point, Clare asked the team to put her on update emails to keep her informed.

4/27/20 - He gets off the ventilator, unable to ambulate and positive for Covid.

5/7/20 - His residential company sends him to one of their recovery units.

He is then sent back to the hospital, (due to a behavior) and a change in mental status. The recovery center was unable to work with him. Now he was back at the hospital and

residential did not want him back at the house.

Clare and I began to encourage the house to take him back. They were concerned about him being unable to evacuate in 2.5 mins. We requested that they move him to the first floor bedroom; however residential refused to move the other client. They wanted him to go to a nursing home, he was Covid positive.

The guardianship team decided early on that our individuals would not be sent to nursing homes as it was too risky. We asked the hospital to provide PT and OT services.

5/18/20- The individual is released home. He has met his aunt, who brought him tons of stuff. Clare told me that he was all smiles!!!

Some people are unaware of what the Guardians do. We advocate in the best interest of our clients!!!

## Individual Supports Program

Due to the design of the Individual Supports program, staff are often not seen in our offices, and therefore the full magnitude of their jobs isn't always clear. Individual Supports is designed to assist individuals to remain living independently in the community. On a typical day, a shift could contain medical appointments, grocery shopping, cooking, banking and socialization with one individual, then going to another home and doing it all again. Once COVID-19 began to make its way to Massachusetts, individuals supported by The Arc were advised to stay home for safety. This then made already hectic staff schedules even more full. The Individual Supports staff has done more grocery shopping, cooking, technology training, creative in home activities and supporting individuals in conducting tele-health services than any one person can imagine. Our Individuals have remained safe, happy



*Chuck shows his support and gratitude for his staff.*

and health due to their hard work. The Leadership Team at The Arc extends its gratitude to the Individual Supports staff; we wouldn't be able to do it without you!

## Hillside Adult Day Health

Hillside Adult Day Health staff—Sue, Cheryl, Maggie, Karen, and Ginny—have been keeping in contact with our participants through the COVID-19 emergency. We have been making phone calls to everyone at least once per week.

We are having fun with our weekly zoom call. We are fortunate to be able to see 6 to 10 participants each week. Karen and Maggie keep the action going with the opening Pledge of Allegiance & National Anthem, some chair exercise or yoga for seniors, “show and tell” about what anyone has created or done during the week, Maggie's story for inspiration, a chat about what's going on in everyone's life, caregiver support, a word game, and end with a “blessing”.

In April, we enjoyed putting together and dropping off care packages to

our participants. Each participant received an activity packet with word puzzles, coloring pages and colored pencils or crayons, Easter crafts and eggs, homemade stress putty, a pinwheel to make them smile, caregiver support information, suggestions from our dietician, and other helpful information.

One of our entertainers was scheduled to visit us in April to help us celebrate our 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary. He put together a Youtube video in two parts “Dave Valerio and his Hillside Friends” so our participants could enjoy his performance and celebrate together. He also did two more segments for us in May.

Cheryl, Sue, and Johanna made some masks out of some fun fabric to pass on to staff, participants and families who needed them.

## Finance Department

Several weeks ago, we received approval and subsequent funding under Payroll Protection Program and we continue to monitor the ever changing guidelines issued by The Small Business Administration. The funds have proved crucial as a means to support ongoing costs related to payroll, utilities, rents and employee benefits. We are also extremely appreciative for the myriad of grants and donations that our agency has received for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE.)

PPE expenditures for sometime, were not something covered under the Payroll Protection Program, so these donated funds have been essential in allowing us to purchase essential PPE supplies that help safeguard our courageous workers and those we support!

In all, our finance team has been quite busy over the past few months trying to sift thru various changes in State billing and contracting guidelines spurred on by the Covid-19 crisis. Our staff has also been hard at work making sure crucial daily functions for billing and payables continue without interruption. Like everyone in these trying times, we truly appreciate everyone's support and patience!

We are working on plans to make our patio beautiful for our participants when they return. Last year's Octopus' Garden is coming back nicely and the flowers that wintered in the lobby are looking for some sunshine.

We are grateful that our participants are staying safe and healthy, and looking forward to return to program when it is time.

#### Administration Office & Hillside Adult Day

16 Hillside Ave  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (508) 226-1476  
Toll Free: (888) 343-3301  
Web: www.arcnbc.org

#### Day & Family Supports

141 Park Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
Tel: (508) 226-1445 • Fax: (508) 226-1476

#### Day Habilitation Services

5 Mill Street  
Middleboro, MA 02346  
Tel: (508) 946-2121 • Fax: (508) 946-2195

#### proAbility

25 Thurber Blvd.  
Smithfield, RI 02917  
Tel: (401) 233-1634 • Fax: (401) 233-1674

#### Taunton Area Resource Center

437 Bay Street  
Taunton, MA 02780  
Tel: (508) 884-2971 • Fax: (508) 884-2964

#### The Arc of Greater Fall River

182 North Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
Tel: (508) 679-0001 • Fax: (508) 679-9375

#### The Arc of Greater New Bedford

412 B County Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Tel: (508) 996-8551 • Fax: (508) 996-8553



*Achieve with us.*

## *Residential Coordinator and Homestead Announcement*

### **Kathryn Murphy, Residential Coordinator**

Katie has extensive knowledge of Residential systems. Over the past year, she has provided quality care and oversight to the individuals residing at our ABI home in Swansea. Katie will now expand her role to overseeing our Brookline home, Swansea home and will assist with the opening and oversight of our newest ABI home. Katie will work directly with her team to ensure that quality services continue to be provided, in all of the residences.

### **Homestead Ave**

The Arc of Bristol County is pleased to announce that we will be opening a new ABI home September 1, 2020. This home was built for four individuals that are currently residing in nursing homes. This home is completely handicapped accessible and will give these individuals an opportunity to live out in the community, while receiving the utmost care. We are very excited to welcome these four gentlemen into the Arc family.

