Looking Back: A History of The Arc of Delaware’s Community Group Homes

In what year did a loaf of bread cost 48 cents, a stamp 15 cents and the United States elect Ronald Reagan President? The year was 1980 and it was a momentous one for The Arc of Delaware, because it marked the publication of its Report of the Task Force on Residential Services. This report was the impetus our state desperately needed to begin providing community living arrangements to its citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The directive given to the task force was to “Review the needs of Delaware’s [citizens with I/DD] for alternate community residential services and programs and to make appropriate recommendations.” The Task Force was chaired by Bob Osgood and included Rebecca Hill, Jeanne Cross, Albert Cruciano, Patricia Shipe, Richard Ditto, Carol Kenton, Carleton Handy, Patricia Wentz, Elizabeth Hedgebeth and Ellen Williams. They began by reviewing successful community residential programs across the country. This was accomplished by inviting community integration consultants to Delaware. Additionally, several Task Force members worked for the DuPont Company and traveled frequently for work. Excellent information came back to Delaware from these generous Task Force members who added vacation days to their work trips to explore what other states were doing.

The final report focused on four basic recommendations (and many short-term goals), which included:

- Legislation to provide a continuum of housing options and the needed support services that would permit people with I/DD to live in the least restrictive environment possible;
- The creation of a state-wide community-based housing plan;
- That DHSS should assume responsibility for the coordination, administration, and program development of the plan; and,
- The expansion of Public Advocacy and guardian services specifically for people with I/DD.

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A SEASON OF THANKS!

The holidays – in particular, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year’s – are a great time to say thanks to those who have blessed our lives. As The Arc of Delaware continues to celebrate our 60 year anniversary, we have many to thank. First, I want to say thanks to all of the persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have blessed our lives. Your successes are our celebrations! Thank you for the joy you bring to so many, your friendships and the gifts you provide to all whom you have touched. Your lives are an inspiration to all of us. Secondly, I want to thank all of the families of persons with I/DD, who created The Arc both nationally and in Delaware. It is your passion that has fueled all the great accomplishments, for individuals and for nations, which The Arc can claim throughout our storied history. I want to thank all of the volunteers who have been the strength of The Arc, our mission and our work. The Arc’s volunteers are simply the most dedicated, generous and gifted volunteers I have ever known. Foremost among them have been our extraordinary board members, officers and committee members. I also want to thank the many generous contributors, funders, and partners of The Arc. Our state is also blessed with a truly rich and robust service system for persons with I/DD and related challenges. We are sincerely grateful for the many partners who have shared in our mission and our work. Finally, I want to thank the many gifted professionals who are current and past employees of The Arc of Delaware. It is your work, individually and collectively, which has woven together our mission and our legacy over the past 60 years. Having worked in the field for more than three decades, I can honestly say I’ve never worked with a more talented or productive team of professionals than those at The Arc of Delaware.

Thank you for sharing your hearts, your hands and your support. Thank you for writing our history. Thank you for fulfilling our mission. Thank you for creating, building, guiding and partnering with The Arc of Delaware. And thank you in advance for the next 60 years!

Terry Olson
Executive Director

Looking Back: A History of The Arc of Delaware’s Community
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By 1980, The Arc had been in existence for about 30 years and was a respected advocacy organization. The report was a great accomplishment for The Arc and the Task Force as Governor du Pont stated that he was making the Report of the Task Force on Residential Services Delaware’s plan to begin providing residential services. It was a time for celebration!

The year is now 2013 and The Arc is celebrating its 60th anniversary. Today a loaf of bread costs $1.97 and a stamp 46 cents. Prices have increased but so have the number of community group homes. There are now 168 group homes across the state of Delaware. The Arc owns and monitors 81 of those homes, 21 of which were built and deeded to The Arc by the Homes For Life Foundation. The Arc’s Housing Advisory Committee meets regularly with DDDS to discuss the present and future residential housing needs in Delaware. The Arc remains committed to providing affordable and accessible housing options to the people we serve and are proud of our many homes throughout the state and our partnerships with DDDS and the Homes For Life Foundation. Were the Recommendations of the Task Force met? Were the many short-term goals met? In fact, many were. Community living options have come a long way since 1980. The Arc’s history shows advocacy, leadership and initiative from 1980 through 2013.

Becky Hill
Pat Heather has spent a lifetime working to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and in 1956, was one of a handful of people who founded the Mid-Del Chapter of The Arc of Delaware.

Those who know Pat agree that she demonstrates a true connection with the people she works with and serves. Pat’s compassion and generosity highlight her sense of responsibility to make a real difference in the lives of others. George Eliot once said, “What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?”

Pat’s twin daughters, Bobbi and Becky, are fortunate to have her as their mother. They, along with many others, have been made welcome in our community and treated with respect because of Pat’s efforts to make each day as good as it can be for those living with I/DD.

The Arc’s group home monitoring program in Kent and Sussex counties has been extremely successful because of Pat’s diligence and the high caliber of the team members she recruited. Pat also coordinates the Palmer Home Fund that distributes needed money to seniors with I/DD in Kent County. She is active on The Arc’s Board of Directors, the Mid-Del Committee, the Stockley Auxiliary and DFRC. She has repeatedly served as President and Vice President of the Mid-Del Committee and was the recipient of an Outstanding Service Award for Mid-Del in 2004 and the Governor’s Award as an outstanding volunteer in 2007.

A mother, a teacher, and a role model, Pat has demonstrated to many her passion and she has inspired them to also give freely of their time, energy and skills to The Arc and those we serve. It is because of her networking and compassion that numerous individuals and groups have volunteered or sponsored Mid-Del committees and the monthly dances to promote a solid support system for The Arc community. It has been heard often that, “You don’t say no to Pat!”

Pat Heather is recognized statewide as a sincere and tenacious supporter of persons with I/DD. She possesses the passion and the smarts, plus a pinch of impatience and insistence that has made her a driving force for Mid-Del and The Arc. The gift of her time is immeasurable and her dedication is unquestionable in regard to her advocacy for the quality of life for those with I/DD. Delaware is fortunate to have Pat as a vital volunteer and we are grateful for her 57 years of inspirational service to those with I/DD.

Marge Locke

Upcoming Events

January 11  New Castle County Dance at the New Castle Moose Lodge, 7 to 9 p.m.
January 17  Mid-Del Winter Wonderland Dance at Wyoming United Methodist Church, 7 to 9 p.m., sponsored by McDonalds — Sanders Management Corporation
February 14  Mid-Del Valentine’s Dance at Wyoming United Methodist Church, 7 to 9 p.m., sponsored by Wesley Women United
March 14  Mid-Del St. Patrick’s Dance (location TBA), 7 to 9 p.m., sponsored by Silver Lake Center
May 3  14th Annual Mid-Del Run/Walk/Roll at Wild Quail Golf and Country Club, Wyoming, DE
May 14  The Arc of Delaware’s 60th Anniversary Celebration at Buena Vista Conference Center, New Castle, DE
Mid-Del Committee Gives Thanks for Success of Dances, Movie Nights

One Friday evening each month from August through May, the Cheswold Fire Hall rocks to the music of DJ Jay Pappas, as Mid-Del Committee members welcome participants from across the state to enjoy a night of recreation. Whether moving on the dance floor, socializing with friends, or enjoying refreshments, upwards of 350 people can be seen having a wonderful time in the community.

These themed dances are possible, in large part, because of the generous support by the following community organizations that donate refreshments and provide manpower to help serve them: Wyoming U.M. Church; the Mid-Del Committee; Family Court, Dover; Ladies of the Elks, Dover; Parents and Caregivers; McDonalds - Sanders Management Corporation; Wesley Women United; the Silver Lake Center; the Dover Century Club; and the Auxiliary of Stockley Center.

The Mid-Del Committee would further like to recognize the ACCESS Committee of the Wyoming U.M. Church for graciously partnering with us and hosting our first ever movie nights this past summer. A special thank you to the ladies of the Epsilon Iota Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha for supplying and serving refreshments.

Your generous donations create wonderful memories for the many individuals who attend these events every month. As the popularity of these events increases, The Arc needs your help - chaperones, donations of food or beverages, peer participants at the dances, and financial gifts are all appreciated and necessary to continue these programs. Please email or call Janice Watkins at the Mid-Del Office in Dover at jwatkins@arcdel.org or (302) 736-6140 for more information on how to get involved.

To the volunteers and community organizations who have been with us over the years, and to those who are relatively new, saying, “Thank you,” does not seem enough; but, the smiles of the participants speak volumes!

Remembering Brian Jordan

On September 15, 2013, the intellectual and developmental disabilities community lost a great friend with the passing of Brian Jordan. Brian graduated from Indian River High School and Delaware Technical and Community College and began his employment with KenCrest Services in 1988. At the time of his death, Brian was a Program Manager for The Arc’s RicLand Heights Neighborhood Home in Seaford.

Brian was known for involving the residents of RicLand Heights in many activities, including Special Olympics, Arc events, cruises and vacations. He was also known for his warm, sincere smile that he shared with everyone. Pam Cannon, KenCrest Services, said, “Brian’s passing is a great loss for KenCrest. Brian was one of those employees who put his heart into everything he did; he really cared about people, especially the men at RicLand.” The Mid-Del Committee of The Arc will miss Brian’s presence at the dances, the annual picnic, the Run, Walk & Roll and just about every activity we hold.

Remembering Margaret Gardley

Margaret Gardley, former Director of KenCrest Services, passed away on September 21, 2013. Margaret retired from KenCrest in 2012 after 28 years of dedicated employment. Originally from Middletown, Margaret was a graduate from Delaware State University and had worked as a teacher, a social worker and as a business owner.

At her memorial service, Margaret’s daughter, Teresa Hayes, said, “There were four things that we knew my mother loved: God, her family, her church, and KenCrest.” Margaret was a warm, compassionate and knowledgeable professional. She was both respected and loved by her friends, staff, colleagues and particularly those she served so faithfully throughout her career. Margaret will be remembered and missed greatly in this community for her years of dedicated service to Delawareans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Margaret Gardley
Please remember The Arc of Delaware in your year-end donations

As the year end approaches, we at The Arc of Delaware are grateful to our donors who have helped us grow into a dynamic, life-changing organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We are also reflecting on our accomplishments and planning for next year – how can we expand our mission? How can we help more people and their families? What needs are not being met? We ask for your continued support, so that we may answer these questions and continue the success of The Arc.

Josephine (seen here) is a client of our Employment Program and her pride and confidence as she displays her first pay check from a job The Arc helped her find makes us proud and confident, too; of the work we do, the people we empower and the many ways The Arc of Delaware transforms lives. We could not do this work without your support. Because of you, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are included in the community; they go to work, build relationships and make choices about the way they lead their lives. Thank you.

We thank you again for your past support and ask that you consider making a generous contribution to The Arc of Delaware’s 2013 Annual Campaign. An envelope has been inserted into this newsletter for your convenience.

Supporters of The Arc Walk the Monster Mile

Friends of The Arc of Delaware joined together on Saturday, October 19, 2013, to celebrate the organization’s 60th anniversary at Dover International Speedway. Over 50 people walked the Monster Mile to raise funds and awareness for The Arc.

This is the first year that The Arc has participated in Monster Miles for a Cause, an annual charity event held at the Speedway. Funds raised will support the Mid-Del Committee of The Arc of Delaware, located in Dover, which provides services to persons in Kent and Sussex counties.

“We wanted to do something unique as part of our 60th anniversary celebration — this event was a great opportunity to see the inside of this nationally televised venue and to bring together supporters of The Arc from throughout the state,” said Merry Jones, Vice President of the Board for The Arc of Delaware. “Everyone who participated really enjoyed themselves. We are grateful for the support shown at Monster Miles for a Cause for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

This year’s event featured seven organizations, and activities included a marathon, two 5ks, and numerous walks around the track. Live music and vendors were also available to participants in the event.
Funder Spotlight: Bank of America Foundation

Bank of America and The Arc of Delaware have a long and successful partnership that provides unique and essential services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Bank of America’s Support Services Department offers well-paying jobs with excellent benefits to persons with I/DD, a group that has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Approximately 220 people are employed in Support Services at Bank of America in Newark.

We are extremely grateful to the Bank for its dedication and forward thinking, as well as its financial support. In March of this year, we received $30,000 from the Bank of America Foundation to support our Employment Program. “Bank of America is a true partner,” said Susannah Eaton-Ryan, Director of The Arc’s Employment and Outreach Services. “They understand that to affect change, support must be systemic, not just financial.”

Recent Gifts

The Arc of Delaware is generously supported by the following corporations and agencies who have recently given gifts:

**All-State Foundation** - $1,000 in support of the Mid-Del Walk/Run & Roll

**Chimes Foundation** - $2,500 for the Necessity of Life fund

**Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council** - $5,000 in support of self-advocacy through Delaware People First

**JPMorgan Chase Foundation** - $25,000 in support of our Employment and Housing Options programs

**The Longwood Foundation** - $96,900 in capital funding for group home accessibility renovations

**Palmer Home Fund** - $8,000 to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities ages 60 and older in Kent County

We thank the above funders who partner with The Arc of Delaware to ensure that Delawareans with I/DD are provided with opportunities for enriched lives in the community. We could not do our work without their help.

Give the Gift of Your Old Car This Holiday Season

Did you know that you can turn your old car into a gift for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities? This holiday season, consider donating your old vehicle to The Arc of Delaware. This new opportunity is easy and tax-deductible. Just call (877) 272-2270 or visit www.arcde.org to complete the online form and your donated vehicle will be sold to benefit The Arc. Don’t have an old car? Donations of vans, trucks, boats with a trailer and recreational vehicles are also accepted.

The program is managed by The Arc of the United States; once you contact them, they will make arrangements to pick up or tow your vehicle and sell it at auction with cash proceeds going directly to The Arc of Delaware. They will even make sure you get the proper paperwork to take a deduction for your donation at tax time. It’s easy and best of all, it benefits The Arc and people with I/DD.

Please be sure to select The Arc of Delaware as the chapter to receive the proceeds from your donation. Thank you for your support and happy holidays!
21st Annual Golf Tournament Raises $45,000

On Monday, August 5th, The Arc of Delaware held its 21st Annual Golf Tournament and Live and Silent Auctions at Hartefeld National Golf Club in nearby Avondale, PA. Golfers enjoyed a great round of golf with Celebrity Host Tubby Raymond, the former University of Delaware Blue Hens Coach and College Football Hall of Fame Member. The event, which highlighted The Arc’s 60th anniversary, raised $45,000. Proceeds from this tournament will be used to support our mission to improve and enhance the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

We would like to thank the Golf Committee, led by Chairman Doug Johnston, for organizing this successful fundraiser. We would also like to thank our 91 golfers and our friends, sponsors, contributors and volunteers for another great tournament. This event would not be possible without their continued support.

In 2014, we will host our 22nd Annual Golf Tournament. If you are interested in serving on the Golf Committee or helping with this signature event, please contact The Arc at (302) 996-9400.

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Arc Board Members in the News

On October 2, 2013, The Lanny Edelsohn, M.D., Neuro Critical Care Unit (NCCU) was dedicated at Christiana Hospital. Dr. Edelsohn, Vice President of The Arc’s Board of Directors and a member of the Finance Committee, served as Christiana Care’s section chief of Neurology from 1987 to 2010. During his long and distinguished career, Dr. Edelsohn has been highly regarded for his dedication to his patients, as well as his commitment to improving care and educating future generations of neurology specialists.

Staff News

We are so pleased to welcome the following new staff to The Arc of Delaware:

Zakkiyyia (Keyah) French
Keyah began working at The Arc in March as a temp and was hired as the full-time Housing Assistant in November. Keyah lives in Bear with her daughter and husband and is a lifelong Delawarean.

Billy McColley
Billy was hired as the Kent County Maintenance Technician in November. Billy has been a union carpenter and a self-employed contractor for 15 years. He has lived in Delaware since 1979.

DuPont Volunteers
Thank you to Oliver and his crew from DuPont for raking leaves and cleaning up the yard at our Grubb Road group home in November. We are forever grateful for smiling, hard-working volunteers!