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FALL 2020

NEWS

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IN  
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EQUALITY

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer of The Arc ECT

*Let's keep on supporting one another!*



Kathleen Stauffer

It's been a challenging year, and The Arc ECT continues to bring podcasts and agency updates to our community, keeping our friends and neighbors connected and informed.

A special shout-out to our Direct Support Professionals, heroes all, whom we celebrated in September! The 2020 pandemic has made room for heroes, and The Arc ECT team employs many. From pivoting to virtual supports to safely serving more than 90 people in group homes to offering a full complement of in-home supports – the agency continues to thrive.

Indeed, The Arc's Redemption Center rebranded and relaunched as The Donation Station while the Emporium and Cookie Factory reopened too. Challenging times call for creative solutions, and The Arc ECT is up to the task thanks to its talented and dedicated team. Happy Thanksgiving!

*PS... You likely received our Annual Appeal in the mail. Please consider a subscription!*

## A Message from the President of the Board of Directors

*We are here for you!*



Linda Rhodes

The Arc ECT's Board of Directors remains in close contact with the agency, supporting our valued team as each member continues to step up to the unprecedented challenge of delivering services amid an international pandemic.

Despite the rollercoaster events of 2020, we accomplished so much thanks to the careful, safe and excellent work of The Arc ECT's dedicated employees. We are indeed fortunate to serve people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their families throughout Eastern Connecticut in these complicated times.

Please be sure to check out our latest Annual Report which celebrates a highly successful year of walking In Partnership for Full Equality. The Arc ECT family proves that communities can indeed thrive by working together.

## Tracking Legislative Efforts During the Pandemic

Since the initial announcements regarding the pandemic, The Arc ECT's Leadership Team has closely followed state legislative updates and participated in online meetings with the CDC and other national health organizations as well

as agency partners throughout the state. We secured one of the first PPP loans through the CARES Act and have lobbied the state legislature to overturn the ruling prohibiting agencies who've used these funds from receiving additional state-administered federal COVID relief funds.



In as early as March, we developed a special **Pandemic Updates** section on The Arc ECT's website (TheArcECT.org), which includes **community resource links** and a growing and changing list of **virtual adventures** and activities for the entire eastern Connecticut region.

CEO Kathleen Stauffer's regular podcast, "**Answers from The Arc**," hosted by Brian Scott-Smith, offers an overview of the successes the agency has had and the challenges still to come.

The pandemic did not stop our team and Community Life & Advocacy's Self-Advocacy group from creating a **2020 Voter Guide**, distributed to 9 chapters of The Arc statewide and including a customized list of regional candidates, instructions on the different ways to vote, pertinent deadlines, and a list of legislators who signed the 2020 pledge to protect the rights of people with IDD.



## Real Work for Real Pay: The Arc ECT Micro-Enterprise Update

Despite the pandemic, some participant employees are already back at work as our tenacious team members did all they could to make sure that **The Arc ECT's micro-enterprises** would be **ready to open** as soon as it was safe to do so.

Culinary Manager Kim Sandberg used all the ingredients we still had on hand to bake our famous cookies and other treats to donate to our supported residences. **Lawn/Landscape crew Job Coach Tim Bates** attended to all our commercial accounts, assuring our customers knew we'd be back as soon as possible.

In Woodstock, Director of Community Enterprise Jennifer Ricci and Employment Coordinator Marnie Hitchew oversaw the gradual re-opening of the Redemption Center, **rebranded as The Donation Station**, and **The Arc Emporium up-scale thrift store**, which began accepting donations again in May and **reopened to the public in October**.



*Ali, an Emporium employee, posing with the new inventory shelving installed courtesy of a grant from the Putnam Bank Foundation, now the Centreville Bank Foundation.*



*Project Redemption has been relaunched and rebranded as Connecticut Donation Station.*

Thanks to generous **grants from the Chelsea Groton Foundation** and the **Ledyard Rotary**, our farm stand made a pivot to an in-house community garden, allowing us to maintain the garden space throughout the season where staff and residents of the house where the garden is located grew vegetables for our other residences.



**Your favorite cookie is back!** The Arc ECT's Classic Crunch Cookies are being baked weekly and are available at [these locations](#) and online at [TheArcECT.com](https://TheArcECT.com).



## What Happens During a Nonprofit COVID Scare?

*The following article is the latest by CEO Kathleen Stauffer, whose "Healthy Living" column appears regularly in the Norwich Bulletin.*

"Everybody is working extra hard right now to keep our people safe," says Noreen Gravel, RN, head nurse of The Arc Eastern Connecticut.

Gravel leads a team of six nurses who **ensure wellness for up to 1,000 people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)** under ordinary circumstances, and about half that amid the pandemic. One primary shift for The Arc's nurses is that the people the agency serves are no longer their sole priority. Good health agency wide – for program participants and an additional 300+ employees – is of equal concern.



Noreen Gravel,  
Nurse Supervisor

"When we think an individual might be sick, or when you know a person has been exposed, Noreen is our go-to," says Yvette Horton of New London, The Arc's Director of Individual Services. "She always has great advice on how to proceed."

**"The nurses have always been fully involved in maintaining health and safety,"** says Gravel, a Norwich resident, "but COVID has added another dimension."

"Every call is different," Gravel explains. "Sometimes they just don't feel well so it's, 'Stay home for three days and give me a call'. If they've had contact, they have to isolate for 14 days. **We have protocols if you have a symptom that could be COVID.** And there are many: Gastric distress . . . could be flu, something you ate, could be COVID. Congestion . . . could be a cold, could be allergies, could even be COVID."

Gravel says The Arc's residential homes have sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to provide residents with a safe and positive quarantine experience.

**"If the people we serve come in without PPE," Horton adds, "we will give it to them.** From the very beginning, we have made sure everyone has what they need to feel safe."

"From the very beginning, we have made sure everyone has what they need to feel safe."

—Noreen Gravel

"I find it incredible that we have no shortage of PPE," Gravel says.

"We had thermometers for every staff person when you could not get them anywhere," Horton agrees. "I felt very comfortable coming back to work."

Two team members in more than 300 have, in fact, contracted COVID. Neither had been on shift at The Arc at the time of infection. Both immediately notified the agency. Others have been quick to report potential exposure.

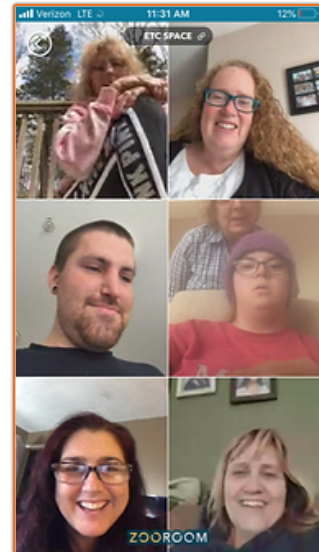
"Staff will make decisions based on what they've been taught," Gravel says, "and **if they're not sure, they reach out and ask.**" She believes that's why no participants served by The Arc have tested positive to date.

"Thank God," she says, "so far, we've been very lucky!"

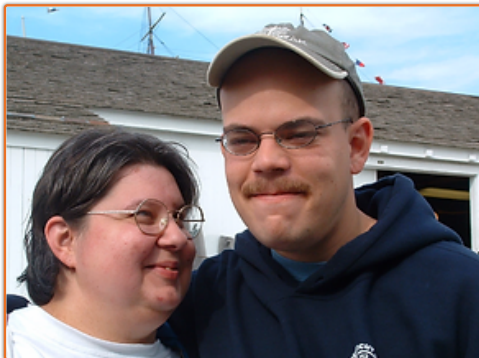
# Safe & Healthy — Responding to the Pandemic

*A pivot to safety-oriented programming offers opportunities for creativity and growth*

- We retooled programming for all our participants, keeping everyone in contact with team members and peers, and established regular, reassuring routines that **minimized disrupted services**.
- More than 60 team members who were called from other various programs to help staff our supported residences were trained in the use of the Therap case management software for residential programs.
- **Online (Zoom, ZooRoom, etc.) platforms were utilized to keep all team members and participants connected.**
- A committee comprised of managers from all programs created a **comprehensive plan for a gradual and thoughtful reopening.**
- Every day through the pandemic, The Arc ECT connected families, team members and program supports through innovative technologies.
- Food and supplies were delivered to each residence by a contracted vendor.
- **Kiosks were set up at building entrances with team member and visitor sign-in procedures and health screenings.**
- **Enhanced nursing supports** allowed supervisors to confer with nurses regarding team screenings, observations, etc.



Staying Connected through Technology



## Reaching Out to the People We Serve

In mid-summer, guidelines in Connecticut allowed us to begin to bring people **back to face-to-face services** at our Day and In-Home Support programs. For those who are still at home, we have a wide array of virtual opportunities that we're sharing, so that **everyone is receiving services in the safest possible way.**

"People were feeling very lonely and isolated, and didn't know how to access resources online," said Pat Grygorcewicz, Deputy Chief Quality Assurance Officer for Individual Services, who retired last month. "Our team made sure that both the **people we support and their families got the tools they needed**—whether it was instructions on how

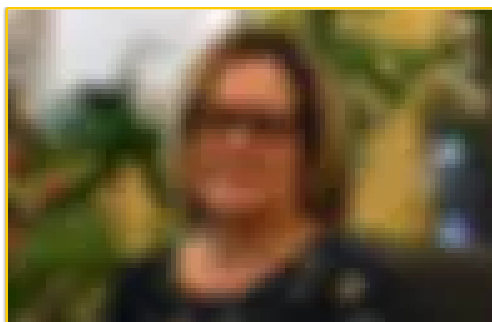
to access TeleHealth, support groups online, or their staff here at The Arc. I think it made everyone feel much more **comfortable and connected.**"

"One of the things this pandemic has shown us," notes Laurie Herring, The Arc ECT's Chief Operations Officer, "is that in all our services **there is a wonderful sense of community, and of responsibility towards each other.** It didn't just happen because of COVID-19—it was there all along. And it was good to remember—this shared concern, consideration, and fondness, as we all have looked out for each other these past months."

"In all our services there is a wonderful sense of community, and of responsibility towards each other."

—Laurie Herring, COO

## Residential Heroes



Betty-Jo Davis,  
Deputy Chief Quality Assurance Officer  
-Residential Services

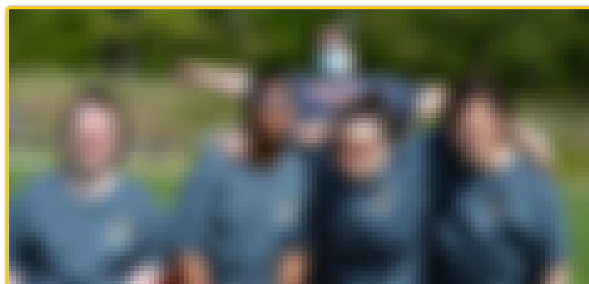
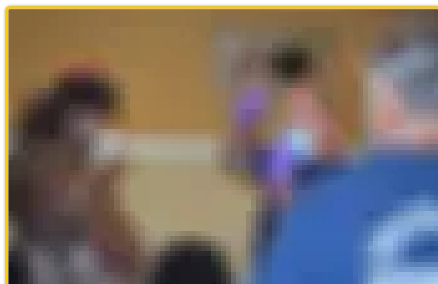


Our 22 residential programs are fully functional and as always are operating with staff 24/7 with NO positive tests to date. Many of our Day program staff have been redeployed to the residences, so those residents who also take part in our Day programs have the benefit of Day program activities right at home.

Betty-Jo Davis, Deputy Chief Quality Assurance Officer-Residential Services, reports that everyone's been doing a terrific job. "The managers and staff have been super creative. The team has found different activities and trips that keep everyone active, happy and safe."

The biggest challenge at the moment is being able to accommodate individual needs and desires while making sure that the whole residence stays safe. "We're taking advantage of the warm weather to allow outside family visits with guidelines in place, and that seems to be working really well—both families and residents really appreciate being able to finally see each other face to face."

Some residents have been able to return to work at both our micro-enterprises and group supported employment with other area agencies. "They are really happy about that," says Betty-Jo. Everyone is so eager to get back to work."



## Our Community Partners Make Dreams Come True

*Our heartfelt thanks to these organizations who since March 2020 helped us provide life-changing programs for people with IDD in eastern Connecticut.*

- The **Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut's Northeast and Southeast Women and Girls' Funds** awarded CL&A's Voices northeast and southeast CT programs for women \$2,500 and \$3,500 respectively.
- **Berkshire Bank Foundation** awarded an additional \$2,500 to the northeast Voices program.
- **CFFECT** also awarded us \$20,000 towards a potentially 3-year project for training job coaches to be certified employment support professionals, and provided us with a \$950 mini-grant to develop a [Voter Guide](#) with The Arc Connecticut for people with disabilities.
- Also, **CFFECT's Neighbors for Neighbors** program, in tandem with the **United Way of Southeastern Connecticut**, provided \$11,500 to help us purchase additional and much-needed PPE for all our programs.
- **UWSECT** also approved \$45,869 in funding for our Community Life & Advocacy program, supplemented by a \$2500 grant from the **Berkshire Bank Foundation** for the Empowerment/Enrichment component. The **Knights of Columbus Council #13** and the **Town of Old Lyme** also funded CL&A with \$541.60 and \$750 awards, respectively.
- A grant from the **Jewett City Savings Bank Foundation** allowed our Danielson programs to purchase \$500 worth of sensory items, and \$500 from the **Ledyard Rotary Foundation** helped us maintain the garden soil at our Farm



Stand during the pandemic.

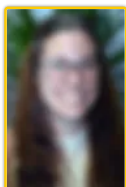
- The **Dominion Foundation**, **Dime Bank Foundation**, **Eastern Savings Bank Foundation** and the **Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut Foundation** provided combined grants that covered the costs of participant lifts and slings at our Norwich Day program.
- We received a \$2,099 **Workers Compensation Trust** grant for a Hoyer lift for our northeast day program participants and staff.
- The **AHEPA Foundation** once again presented us with a \$1,000 unrestricted award, and the **Chelsea Groton Foundation's** grant of \$2,432 allowed us to purchase and install inventory shelving in The Arc Emporium thrift store in Woodstock.
- **Pfizer Connecticut Labs** and the **Electric Boat Employees Community Service Program** each contributed \$1,995 for the purchase of electronic SmartBoards for agency training.
- We're also deeply grateful to the **friends, family members, employees and their companies' matching gifts programs, and community partners** who have **contributed over \$8,400 to our Annual Appeal since March 2020**. Your generosity, even in the face of this crisis, continues to further our mission of walking "in partnership for full equality" for people with IDD.

## The Arc Team . . . in the Spotlight



## Congratulations and Welcome

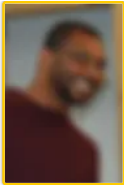
*are in order for both new additions to The Arc ECT's family  
and for team members who received promotions this year.*



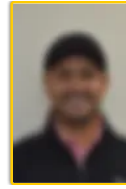
**Jennell Ricard:**  
promoted to  
Deputy Chief Quality  
Assurance Officer-Day Services



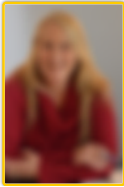
**Jennifer Ricci:**  
promoted to  
Director of  
Community Enterprise



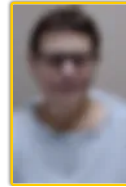
**Jason Fletcher:**  
promoted to  
Director of Residential  
Services - Northeast



**Alex Cabezas:**  
promoted to  
Director of Residential  
Services - Southeast



**Elizabeth Korineck:**  
promoted to  
Chief Talent Officer



**Terry Wilson:**  
joined the team as  
Human Resources Assistant

## Keeping Fundraisers Fun

We made the difficult decision this Spring to cancel our Golf Tournament, Film Festival, and Murder Mystery Dinner Theater event. **But the 43rd annual (Virtual) Strides Road Race still happened!**

From October 4 through October 11, runners completed the course of their choosing, or ran our traditional Camp Harkness 5k, 10k and 1 mile fun run/walk/roll. There were prizes for top finishers, social media exposure . . . and **the ability for everyone to participate with family and friends around the country.**

We're hoping to hold all our other great events next year. Many sponsors, however, **generously donated their sponsorship dollars despite the cancellations.** See who these heroes are by clicking [here](#)



**"We have enjoyed the Strides event [since 1978]—its purpose, the camaraderie, the gathering of friends and strangers alike, and, of course, the food! . . . It is rewarding and encouraging to see folks of varying abilities come together to better the lives of so many."**

**—Marjorie Daly**  
*in a thank-you letter to The Arc ECT*

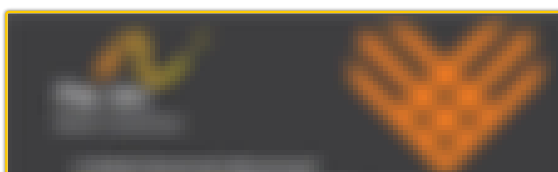
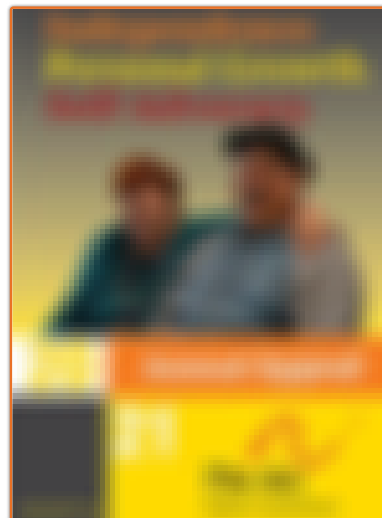
## Please Be Generous

Many of you will have already received our [Annual Appeal](#). This year's theme is "Connected to Community." These days, **working together and supporting each other is more important than ever.**

We hope you'll consider making a gift to The Arc ECT—no amount is too large.

Our [monthly subscription](#) option allows you to donate as little as \$5 a month easily and automatically (you can cancel any time).

**Your contribution goes such a long way**—providing support groups to women with IDD at-risk of sexual assault and domestic violence, bringing music and art therapy to people with autism, providing mobility, communication and sensory equipment—and **so much more that helps people with IDD live their dreams.**



And don't forget Giving Tuesday!

Be a part of this **wonderful global movement on December 1**. Celebrate the end of 2020 while walking "In

The Arc Eastern Connecticut, established by two groups of families in 1952, provides advocacy and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the entire region. Our services touch every aspect of a person's life: housing, employment/job development, vocational/micro-enterprise ventures, education, day programs, in-home supports, Senior services, health/fitness activities, and community involvement.



MY ADVOCATE



The Arc Eastern Connecticut  
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NEWSLETTER



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**Want to stay connected?**

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- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley
- Kosher Salt and Black Pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan Cheese

#### Directions

1. Pre-heat your oven to broil (or grill) settings to medium-high heat (about 200°C | 400°F).
2. Place potatoes in a large pot of salted water. Bring to the boil; cook, covered for 30-35 minutes or until just fork-tender. Drain well.
3. Lightly grease a large baking sheet or tray with cooking oil spray. Arrange potatoes onto the sheet and use a potato masher to LIGHTLY flatten the potatoes in one piece (not too hard or they will end up mashed).
4. Mix together the butter, garlic and parsley. Pour the mixture over each potato. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and lightly spray with olive oil spray.
5. Broil (or grill) until they are golden and crispy (about 10-15 minutes). Remove from oven, sprinkle over the Parmesan cheese and return to the oven until the cheese is melted.
6. To serve, season with a little extra salt and parsley, and serve immediately.



