

# Champions of Change

The Arc graduated its first team cohorts from the Champions of Change Learning Series on April 1! The Leadership Team worked with Alonzo Kelly, a nationally recognized Strategic Leadership Partner, to develop Champions of Change exclusively for The Arc to build on and sustain our culture of caring, innovation, empowerment, and acceptance.

Champions of Change was designed to help team members improve their personal and professional development and skills in cultural competency and organizational awareness, critical thinking, effective communication, strategic planning, and more. By investing in our team and fostering their skills, creativity, and passion, we advance our goal to provide the highest quality of services possible for those we serve.

The Leadership Team is so proud of the progress made by our Champions throughout the training, and we are already seeing the positive effects as team members put what they have learned into practice. Congratulations to our team cohorts!

## Difference Makers

Melissa Bahr  
Ashley Beeks  
Sara Bonhomme  
Sandra Caro  
Torika Davis  
Rose Dulcio  
Kristie Giles  
Russell Greene  
Cindy Jackson  
Melinna Lopez  
Ellie Marshall  
Thamara Mesidort  
Ashley Pfister  
Kristie Pirozzi  
Ann Richardson  
Monica Sanchez  
Sean Stickley  
Brooke Teta  
Claudia Vega

## Pando's Root

Ruth Acosta  
Jacqueline Barroso  
Andrea Bernal  
Michael Erven  
Bairbre Flood  
Juna Florestal  
Marleine Florestal  
Angela Goodlit  
Shtely Gustave  
Christin Martin  
Sony Paul  
Rossy Ricaurte  
Quinlan Stewart  
Fabiola St. Hilaire  
Sara Trovinger





## ADULT SERVICES

The Adult Services team worked hard in the first quarter of 2021 to launch the **Inspired Initiative for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) postcard campaign**.

This campaign aims to raise awareness among local and state legislators about the importance of the work provided by Direct Support Professionals and their impact on the people we serve. On March 9, The Arc held an event for families to show their appreciation and support for Direct Support Professionals, and to write postcards to their local legislators – with messages from the heart – to create personal connections to the issue. Our families reveled in the community spirit of the event, sharing their stories and experiences over scrumptious Chick-fil-A dinners. The event coincided with National Disability Awareness Month, a time to celebrate the diversity, talents, and lives of people with disabilities. At The Arc, disability awareness is about connecting people with disabilities to the greater community to build understanding and trust that leads to inclusion and acceptance. Our Inspired Initiative campaign embodies this sentiment.

More than 70 clients and family members joined the March event, and more than **100 people served by The Arc of Palm Beach County have mailed a postcard to their legislators**. Statewide, thousands of postcards have been submitted by supporters and clients of agencies serving individuals with disabilities.



## ARC CHAMPION SPOTLIGHT

Daniel, a participant in our adult day program, struck a chord with the state legislature in March – an incredible accomplishment! Daniel filled out a postcard for our Inspired Initiative campaign, which told his personal story and experience with his Direct Support Professional. State Representative Mike Caruso was so touched by Daniel's words that he brought attention to the campaign on the House Floor and wrote back to Daniel in response.

Daniel's achievement is a wonderful demonstration of what we already know here at The Arc – that people with disabilities have so much to add to our collective conversations, and they have a unique ability to affect change when their voices are heard. We congratulate Daniel and encourage all of our supporters to follow his example by telling their own stories about our vibrant community.



## ADULT CAREER & EDUCATION

Our team and clients were excited to kick off the new year and say goodbye to 2020! January brought many fun and interesting new topics to explore. While it doesn't snow in South Florida, participants had a wonderful time learning about Wilson Bentley, the man who studied snowflakes under a microscope and created photos to prove that every snowflake is different. Clients made their own snowflakes and discussed how every person is unique in their own way – just like the snowflakes! They then learned about the Chinese New Year and the various events of the 16-day celebration. Participants discovered the meaning of the symbolic red envelopes, delved into themes of the Chinese horoscope, and much more. In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, participants studied and discussed Dr. King's legacy of acceptance and tolerance for all.

February may be the shortest month, but our team and clients celebrated it to the fullest. They explored Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, and Black History Month activities. Participants showed their love and decorated cookies, created a collaborative Heart Hand Board,

and crafted cards of appreciation for their fellow peers for Valentine's Day. For Mardi Gras, they discovered how to make King Cakes and learned about the history of the Mardi Gras celebration. Participants also took a deep dive into the culture of the Jewish holiday of Purim.

In celebration of Black History Month, they made their own soul food plates and learned a new fact each day of the month from *Little Known Black History Facts*. For example, participants learned that the schooner *Clotilda*, the last known slave ship to come to America, arrived in Mobile Bay around 1860, and that the first self-made millionaire in America was a Black woman named Madame C.J. Walker who made her fortune selling her homemade line of hair products to Black women across the country.



While we covered a variety of cultural and social topics, each conversation came back to the main topic of acceptance. By learning about different cultures, religions, holidays, and more, we can better understand those around us. It is important to accept those who are different from us, and we strive to embody and spread this message every day.

We held our Virtual Career Camp, funded by Vocational Rehabilitation, from March 15 to March 19 during spring break for students ages 14 to 21 who are interested in working on social interaction, building their employment-related skills, and exploring different career options. During the weeklong program, participants practiced self-advocacy and self-determination activities, worked on job readiness, and collaborated with their peers. Activities included group discussions, role-playing, job interviews, and lectures from guest speakers. Every student learns more in a fun environment, and Career Camp is designed to engage students in interactive, entertaining activities and games that promote social skills and ensure the inclusion of all.

Our Artisans were busy in the beginning of the year putting the final touches on their Sun 'N Surf mosaic surfboard and creating colorful collages with tropical vibes. In March, the Sun 'N Surf surfboard was on



display at Josephine Alexander Collective at The Gardens Mall in Palm Beach Gardens. **The incredible, colorful surfboard sold for \$5,000 through an online auction!** We are very proud of our Artisans' accomplishments, and their sunny, beach-themed drawings and paintings keep our art room quite festive, and brighten the mood each day.

The Arc and our partners understand and highly value the importance of health and safety. Before reopening the Adult Education Program, we completed the Agency for Persons with Disabilities' monitoring requirement. Our safety procedures, prevention methods, and implementation practices were reviewed, and The Arc, once again, passed with excellence in programming.

## RESIDENTIAL

Thanks to a grant from the Town of Palm Beach United Way, the Residential Department is able to continue biweekly testing for residents and team members. These tests have been an incredible resource for The Arc in our efforts to keep our residents and team safe and healthy. So far, our team has helped 93 people get their vaccines.



An important aspect of any residential program is maintaining compliance with rules and regulations. While The Arc goes above and beyond the standard level of care, our licensing and accreditation processes are vital to ensuring confidence in our programs and services. The Residential Department recently completed its annual relicensing through the Agency for Person with Disabilities for both the Eleanor Trachtenberg and Bickel residences. Relicensing consists of a comprehensive review of all client, human resources, policy and procedure, and medical documents, and an on-site safety assessment. The Arc received its new licenses after a successful review.

## Early Intervention

The Early Intervention team kicked off 2021 with a successful first quarter. We are providing all in-home services via virtual platforms to protect the health and safety of our team members and families. Our pediatric team is back to serving families at the offices of our pediatric community partners. All of our programs continue to thrive, and **we have served more than 1,100 families so far this year!**

As we reflect on the one-year anniversary of our program's transition to virtual services, we are encouraged and heartened by our team's accomplishments in response to the adversity we all faced. The overall continued program successes are a testament to the commitment and dedication of our team. Their efforts have ensured that our families continue to receive vital child development engagement opportunities and unparalleled service delivery.

EI Leadership could not be more grateful to be supported by such a creative, diligent, and caring team. We thank each of our team members for the incredible effort, innovation, and passion they have shown throughout every event and encounter this past year!



# Children and Family Services

On Saturday, March 27, 2021, our Family Services team and 40 Arc family members from Potentials, Respite, and Adult Education, enjoyed a field trip to the Palm Beach Zoo. Families donned their Arc "Zoo Crew" T-shirts and spotted otters, flamingos, a white alligator, and other animals for our scavenger hunt, and stayed hydrated and energized with the reusable water bottle and animal crackers provided in their Arc drawstring backpacks.

**"Thank you so much for a wonderful day at the zoo!  
It was nice to see Bryan enjoy time with his friends!"**

– An Arc parent



## RESPIRE & COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Many of our team members are back to providing in-home care to help families take the breaks that they need. We are excited to welcome two new team members to The Arc family, Victoria and Cecilia. We are thrilled to have them on board, and they are off to a great start providing respite care for the families they were matched with.

In March, our Community Inclusion Specialist Christin Martin led a Respite Team meeting and training on Engagement and Choice Making to reinforce respite care best practices, and to get the team ready and excited to provide stellar care. The team met virtually to socialize, review fun and engaging activity ideas, and collaborate on how best to promote individual choice and independent skills. Christin kicked off the training with a fun icebreaker game of Zoom Bingo, and facilitated a discussion and role-play scenarios on the importance of choice, how to integrate choice into activities, and various ways to express choices.



## POTENTIALS

We are in our last quarter of school at Potentials, and it is amazing how the year has flown by! Our students just finished traveling around the world for their geography unit. They learned about different land features and cultures, the animals and plants that live on other continents, and had a blast exploring outer space! Students had fun cooking up some food, both real and pretend, during our cooking lessons. In math, we learned about equations and created some yummy addition problems. In reading, we learned about idioms through art to help us understand them better. We also learned about poetry and wrote adapted acrostic poems about winter. As spring finally shines through our classroom windows, we will be learning about plants and how they grow, and how to express wants and needs, write a paragraph, and solve equations by counting.

Happy Spring!



# Capital Projects

## MANNING RESIDENCE

Permit-ready architectural drawings are currently being prepared for the new Manning Residence, and our team is working diligently with the Florida Housing Finance Corporation to complete the credit underwriting process. The new home is part of the Northend RISE initiative, a community-driven, grassroots effort to revitalize and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty in a historically disadvantaged area of West Palm Beach. The initiative follows the Purpose Built Communities model and creates connections to uplift the entire neighborhood with a focus on mixed income housing, cradle to career education, and community wellness. The Northend RISE neighborhood will be truly transformed by this project, and we are thrilled to play a pivotal role in this community improvement initiative.



## COURIM CENTER

We are delighted to announce that the replacement of the Courim Center's flat deck roof is complete! We began the long-awaited reroofing at our main headquarters in Riviera Beach on March 12. We replaced more than 7,000 square feet of the roof and met our goal to finish the project in four weeks. This project is a testament to the strength of The Arc's community supporters, and it was made possible thanks to a generous gift from The Mary Alice Fortin Foundation, a long-standing ally of the disability community and an exemplary partner.

# Agency Improvements

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The pandemic accelerated the use of online platforms and remote Internet capabilities for many businesses, including The Arc. However, these changes also opened the door to novel IT security threats. In response, our IT Team has been evaluating and updating our cybersecurity planning and processes. With the help of IT grants, we are investing in new hardware and software to improve our IT security capacity, protect our sensitive data, and improve agency productivity.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Arc constantly strives to meet and update our strategic plans for all departments, programs, and special projects. These efforts result in: (1) long-term goal setting, (2) short-term project planning, (3) processes and procedures for regular programming, (4) measurable results, and (5) identification of budgetary controls. Applicable updates to processes and procedures are published in our "Agency Management Manual."

Currently, our team is focusing on the Safety & Health Task Force, Advancement, Human Resources, and Children & Family Services (including Recreation). We are using the RACI Method to guide these strategic planning efforts. This tool organizes actionable items based on each team member's level of responsibility for each task (responsible, accountable, consulted, and/or informed) to ensure timely, successful completion of project goals.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The Operations Team is putting the final touches on the agency's new Preventative Maintenance Plan. We implemented a seven-part evaluation process to help us understand and mitigate potential facility and vehicle issues before they become real problems. The team is finalizing procedural steps regarding:

- Fleet Service
- Facilities Monthly Punch Lists & Prevention Tasks
- Appliance Warranties
- Equipment Maintenance & Annual Inspection Schedules
- Tips of the Month
- Cleaning Service Schedules (including COVID-19 spraying)
- Daily Work Orders

# Circle of Acceptance

At The Arc, we are always open to opportunities to connect with our donors, show our appreciation for their incredible support, and encourage them to continue the hard but rewarding work of achieving acceptance for all. On Sunday, March 28, 2021, we hosted a brunch on the 9,000-square-foot Mansion Yacht at the Palm Beach International Boat Show. Our guests took in views of the Intracoastal Waterway from the three-story vessel and enjoyed an elegant brunch, champagne, and live music.

We thank Mansion Yachts, the Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County, and Informa U.S. for donating the extraordinary venue for The Arc's use at this event. Other generous sponsors included Melanie Jacobson, Mary Courim, and the Kelly Leadership Group.



**The Arc will be announcing some spectacular news in the coming month, so be sure to stay tuned and connected!**