

STAFF YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS
AS OF MAY, 1 2020

We would like to congratulate the following staff on their years of service at The Arc of Mercer County/MCAR, Inc. Staff are normally presented their awards at our Annual Dinner, but due to the Annual Dinner being canceled this year, we wanted to acknowledge them in our Newsletter.



30 Year Awards

Celeste Lewis—RJPW
Diane O'Rourke—CFB

15 Year Awards

Katie Bodien—Director of QJ
David Multari—Hab. Aide
Margaret "Peggy" Patrizi—RJPW

10 Year Awards

Karen Fabian—Hab. Aide
Michelle Mattocks—JAtA
John Pizzuti—Hab. Aide
Kelly Richardson—House Manager
Diane Snyderwine—RJPW
Rosemarie Sternthal—RJPW

5 Year Awards

Nicole Adams—Hab. Aide	Nick Fiest—RJPW
Essence Brooks—JAtA	Jayne Hollingsworth—CF
Marissa Carry—RJPW	Danen Malloy—RJPW
Lenora Carter—Hab. Aide	Dina Patterson—RJPW
Brandon Chambers—JAtA	Kamala Sham—Transitional Coordinator
Marcella Demmler—Hab. Aide	Gerald Young—Hab. Aide
Kelly Dickey—Hab. Aide	

Message from our CEO

This year as our Fiscal Year ends and summer is approaching things look quite different in our Communities and here at MCAR. The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted every one of our lives and we are all working to adjust to a new normal. To all our family and friends I want you to know we are here for you as you adjust to this new normal. The Governor did announce that Mercer County is going to Green on June 5, 2020. ODP has announced that when a county is cleared for the green phase we can begin to reopen the facility. This does not mean the facility will immediately return to full capacity as it was on March 16, 2020. This will be a very slow gradual process so that we can ensure, to the best of our ability, that we are mitigating the risks associated with this virus. We are now working to reopen our facility in accordance with ODP guidelines and the Governor's orders. We do not know if services will ever be the same, but we can guarantee that we will continue to work with you to support your needs, helping you to obtain your new normal. All services, except CPS facility have been and will continue to be available throughout red, yellow and green phases. We can always provide support in your home, in the community, at your job, in person and virtual. We can provide Trauma Informed Care supporting you with any challenges you may be facing as we navigate to a new normal. We can help you with learning to wear masks and may be able to assist in helping you obtain any necessary personal protective equipment. We do know that reopening will happen in small numbers with daily screening and continued social distancing. Masks should be worn at all times and increased infection control with handwashing and cleaning will occur. We will provide training and work with you during our reintegration phase.

As always the Governor's budget is on our radar. In February, the Governor published his initial budget, which proposed a standstill level for Base Funds, an increase of 16.5% to Community Waiver Programs and a 2% increase for Autism Intervention and Services. The challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic has created a loss in revenue for the State, which prompted a new review of the original proposed budget. The Arc of Pa and many of our Statewide Provider agencies immediately began a successful lobbying effort. The House and Senate have approved a five month budget, based on 2019/2020 levels. They have also allocated \$260 million of the Federal CARES funding to the annualized 20/21 budget. This should provide good coverage through 20/21 including increased expenses for mitigating risks associated with COVID 19. Base funding is reporting a 2.8% decrease in these proposals, which may cause support changes in some of our individual's services. We will work with you and your Supports Coordinator to have the best plan in place to meet your needs.

I encourage all individuals and families to take the time to know and understand the choices that are available to you. Remember, things may not look or feel the same, but we will get through these challenges together. Please make sure you contact our office for guidance to set up supports or to talk through any questions. We are here for you!

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you—
Diane M. O'Rourke, CEO

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2nd ANNUAL NIGHT AT THE RACES FUND RAISER

Our 2nd Annual Night at the Races Fund Raiser was scheduled to be held on Saturday, March 28, 2020 at the Shrine Club. We had initially postponed the event, but due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic we decided to cancel the event for this year. We will be holding the event next year. We had already received Race Sponsorships, and some people had purchased horses and tickets for the event.

We would like to thank the following people for donating their funds from their Race Sponsorship, purchase of horses or tickets:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Robert Black | Ryan Maurice |
| Tracey Blakeley | McGonigle Funeral Home & Crematory |
| CTR | Andrew Meager |
| Chris Culp | Brittany Novotniak |
| Richard Culp | Diane O'Rourke |
| John & Wendy Donner | Angela Palumbo |
| Laura Donner | Reed & Dailey Assoc. |
| Jim Epstein | Reinhardt's Insurance |
| Rebecca Fithian | Shirley Riffle |
| Fringe Benefit Services | Dana & Scott Butch |
| Diane Gardner | Ashley Sham |
| Mike & Judi Gay | Bill & Jane Sham |
| Arielle Harris | Lee & Kamala Sham |
| John Hether | Shenango Valley Orthodontics |
| James Jefferson | Susi Taylor |
| Joy Cone Co. | George Thomas |
| Kate Landfried | Marylou Trimboli |
| Samantha Luckett | Eric Wenger |
| Rachel Maurice | |



The Arc of Mercer County Foundation's 38th Annual Golf Scramble that was scheduled for Monday, June 22, 2020 has been canceled this year

COMPLIANCE CONNECTION

During these difficult times, remote supports have become more familiar to individuals served as well as their family members and staff. During pre-Coronavirus standards, MCAR's programs require HIPAA compliant standards while providing remote supports.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for enforcing certain regulations issued under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), as amended by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, to protect the privacy and security of protected health information, namely the HIPAA Privacy, Security and Breach Notification Rules (the HIPAA Rules). In response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) has issued guidance describing modifications to the enforcement of these requirements.

"OCR will exercise its enforcement discretion and will not impose penalties for noncompliance with the regulatory requirements under the HIPAA Rules against covered health care providers in connection with the good faith provision of telehealth during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency." In summary, this allows MCAR to use a variety of remote support tools to deliver services in a way that is convenient for the individual receiving support. However, it is still important to make sure privacy and confidentiality are prioritized when delivering remote support. Here are some suggestions to promote privacy and confidentiality:

- ◆ As much as possible, be in a room with a closed door.
- ◆ Minimize external distractions and other persons while doing remote supports.
- ◆ Do not record or save information from the remote support session.
- ◆ Do not use speakerphone- a headset is best.
- ◆ Set ground rules with your family and others in your home (e.g., provide remote supports when a spouse, significant other, and/or older child can entertain younger kids/pets to minimize noise and other distractions).
- ◆ If using video, consider what is in your background (e.g. personal documents, pictures) before engaging in support to minimize distraction but also to protect your privacy.
- ◆ If possible, use software that allows you to place a static image as your background.

Brian Engelmores—Chief Compliance Officer

HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Please Join MCAR in Welcoming the Newest Members to Our Team!

March, 2020

Marketta Jackson—RPW
Amber Myers—RPW
William Odem—HA

May, 2020

Lahtifa Barrett—RPW
Vicki Detal—HA
Michaelene O'Donnell—RPW
Rakiya Rice—HA/RPW

June, 2020

Quantiera Hooten—RPW
Marquasha Redding—RPW

Thank you all for joining the team!

Jeffrey Oprean, Human Resource Director

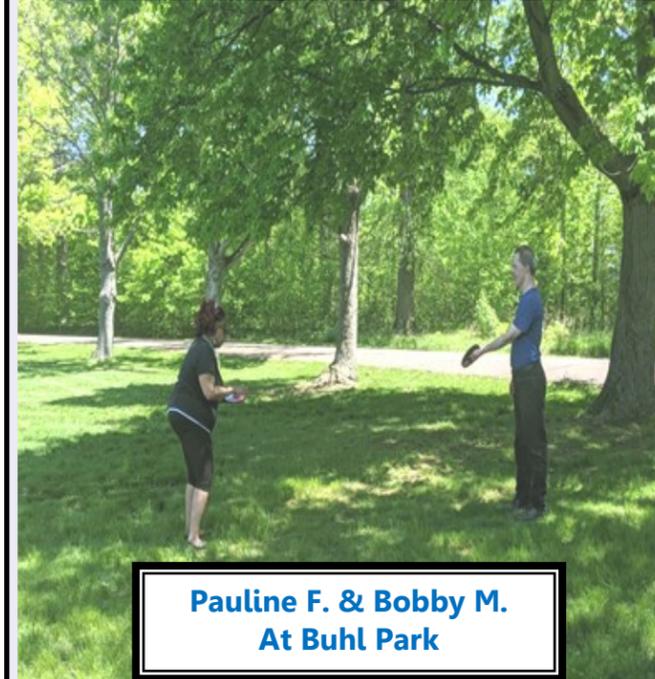
We would like to thank the following donors for their contributions to the Arc Foundation:

Betty Engstrom
Gail Martin
Glenn McKnight
Cathy Schrecengost—In Memory of
Sherry Schrecengost

*At Special Thank you to
Denise Buchanan
&
Angie Orndorff
For sewing masks for our agency*

CPS SERVICES

The Community Participation Support's Day Program here at MCAR, as you know, has been closed since March 17, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. MCAR is following all State and Federal guidelines to protect our individuals and staff. The health and safety of our individuals and staff are always first.



**Pauline F. & Bobby M.
At Buhl Park**

The MCAR CPS program has been providing in home and community supports for those individuals and families that have requested assistance during this difficult time. Staff have been very creative with our individuals, using technology based Face time to help interaction between individuals. Many outdoor activities have been utilized during this time, such as parks, hiking and picnic lunches.

We will continue to communicate new information to you via mail and automated phone calls. MCAR management is currently working on a plan for a possible reopen of the day program. MCAR foresees changes in daily operations in order to keep our individuals safe while attending the Day Program. Please stay safe and we look forward to reuniting our individuals soon.

*Darin Vadala, CPS Program
Director*

MCAR SHUT DOWN DAYS & HOLIDAY SCHEDULE—2020

SHUT DOWN DAYS:

Friday, July ? - Date to be announced at a later time

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS:

Friday, July 3—July 4th Holiday

Monday, September 7—Labor Day

Thursday & Friday, November 28 & 29, 2020—Thanksgiving Day & Day After

*Tuesday, December 24, 2019 thru Wednesday, January 1, 2020—Christmas Holiday
& New Years Day*

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

COPING WITH COVID-19 IN THE RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

First let me take a moment to express the ultimate appreciation for our Residential Direct Care Staff (RPW's) and those people who have jumped on board as a Residential Staff during this time of pandemic. I want to say that you have done an awesome job and your work with our individuals in the Group Homes does not go unrecognized and it thoroughly appreciated.

We were struck by a pandemic, now known as COVID-19 virus which caused illness and death to people across the World and Nation in late February and early March. Mid-March we were forced to close down our Day Program services and were ordered to stay at home by our Governor to slow the spread of this virus. This of course caused fear and worry not only to MCAR as an organization but to our staff who are considered essential workers and were needed to stay on board and care for our individuals during this time. Our individuals are very much integrated in the community and are used to spending multiple hours of the day outside of their Residential Habilitation homes, so it was a very daunting task to explain this order and to expect our individuals to follow it.



The RPW's at MCAR stepped up to the plate and took on the task in a very effective way. During this time our RPW's here at MCAR have had to find new ways to keep their individuals occupied, satisfied and engaged. They have had to explain and help the individuals to understand the importance of staying in the home. In addition to occupying the individuals and helping them understand why they must stay in the home, and be separated from their families, staff had taken on the huge task of making sure that the homes stayed completely sanitized and germ free throughout the day. Although our staff do a wonderful job of keeping the group homes clean in general they went and continue to go above and beyond in sanitizing door knobs counters, tables, rooms etc. to make sure the homes stayed germ free.



In order to assist our individuals in staying engaged we have been purchasing different crafts and activities to help them pass the time. Some individuals have taken on building bird feeders and stone cement crafts, some individuals have engaged in completing puzzles and coloring activities and some individuals have consumed their time with watching movies. Individuals have been permitted to do outside activities and get exercise so some of our individuals enjoy going on walks or fishing with their staff, remaining at a social distance. We are currently in the yellow phase of this Pandemic meaning restrictions are loosening, which is allowing more of our individuals the opportunity to get out in the community in small group settings and this has caused great happiness among the individuals that we service.

As restrictions continue to loosen and we begin moving further into the yellow phase we will continue with the precautionary procedures that we already have in place, but we are excited that our individuals will be getting out of the home again. We remain thankful to our staff on the front lines for holding down the fort as well as to our individuals who have handled this situation far better than expected. We hope daily for a return to everyday living but until then we will continue to cope with COVID.

Laci Matthews—Administrator of Residential Services

NURSING DEPARTMENT

In honor of June being National Safety Month, here are a few summer safety tips to keep in mind for your outdoor activities.

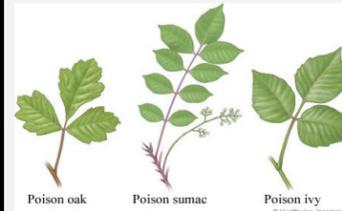


Make yourself unattractive to insects: Avoid using scented soaps, perfumes and hairsprays that can attract mosquitos, bees and other biting insects. Use an insect repellent containing 10%-30% DEET to ward-off disease-causing ticks and mosquitoes.



Use the 20-minute rule: Drink water at least every 20 minutes when outside on hot and humid day; don't wait until you are thirsty. Remember that young children and older adults are more susceptible to dehydration. If you're going to be active outside for more than an hour, replenish electrolytes with a sports drink such as Gatorade.

Play it safe: Make sure playground equipment is in good shape. Rotted or worn out woods and plastics can have sharp edges that could cause scrapes or eye injuries. Make sure slides and other surfaces are cool enough to touch comfortably.



Leaves of three let it be: Learn to recognize poison ivy, poison oak and sumac and avoid them when outdoors. If you do come in contact with the plants, immediately wash skin with rubbing alcohol, dishwashing soap or laundry detergent to remove the plant oils and flush with plenty of cool water.

Be prepared: If you're going hiking or camping, take a first aid kit with you. It should contain antibiotic ointment, bandages, anti-itch creams, an Ace bandage and emergency hydration and electrolyte replacement packs.



Protect your skin: Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 daily and re-apply every 2 hours, or immediately after swimming or sweating. Consider wearing a hat with a brim and limit sun exposure between 10am and 4pm, when UV rays are strongest.

Abby Parker, RN

CLINICAL DEPARTMENT

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF DURING COVID-19

During this difficult time, it is important that we take care of one another and the others that we are responsible for during these trying times. Studies on Mental Health effects of quarantine and isolation found that people often experience PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms, confusion, and anger. Potential stressors include fear of infection, boredom, not being able to obtain needed supplies (people hoarding items like, toilet paper, and hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes) lack of information or misinformation and financial losses. Hopefully, once the Government lifts the restrictions, society can get back to having some normalcy in our lives. With everything that is going on, we tend to become "oversaturated" with exposure from social media and the news. This often leads to individuals experiencing anxiety. Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations such as an infectious disease outbreak that requires social distancing, quarantine, or isolation. Everyone feels anxious now and then, it is a normal emotion and how one will cope to stress. With the pandemic, people may become fearful and worry about the effects of the virus related to:

- ◆ Our own health (do I have the virus or been exposed to it)
- ◆ The experience of monitoring yourself, or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of the disease
- ◆ Time taken off from work and the potential loss of income and job security
- ◆ Uncertainty or frustration about how long you will need to remain in the situation, and uncertainty about the future.
- ◆ Loneliness associated with feeling cut off from the world and loved ones
- ◆ Boredom and frustration because you may not be able to work or engage in regular day-to-day activities
- ◆ Symptoms of depression, such as feelings of hopelessness, changes in appetite, or sleep (too little or too much)

The more we are surrounded by scary information, the more fear and anxiety one can have. To protect our mental health and obtain some sense of control, while self-quarantining, isolating and practicing social distancing, below are some recommendations:

- ◆ Take a brisk walk
- ◆ Physical exercise, on-line workouts on You Tube
- ◆ Mindful activities like, coloring, painting, coloring
- ◆ Listening to music
- ◆ Watching fun movies with the family
- ◆ Connecting with others using Face Time, or Skype
- ◆ Maintain a sense of hope and remain positive; utilize Meditation Apps that can be downloaded
- ◆ Pace yourself between stressful activities, and do something fun after a hard task
- ◆ Try to keep a good routine for you and your family

It things become too overwhelming for you, or someone you know contact your PCP or one of the listed resources for assistance:

Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission has a staff person available to speak with you and provide helpful tips and resources during COVID-19:

- Mercer County MH Crisis Line – (724) 662-2227
- Mercer County Warm Line (operates Monday –Saturday (4:00 PM-10:00 PM) and Sunday (2:00 PM-10:00 PM))

Other Resources:
CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Protection)
Pennsylvania Department of Health
SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Gail Martin—Clinical Director

Social Group for
People with High Functioning Autism
and Asperger's Syndrome
The Social Group has been put on hold at this point in time due to
COVID-19.



Contact: Gail Martin, 724-981-2950, Ext. 239

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

"Through the eyes of an Employment Specialist"

Due to the quarantine, MCAR had to change the way that we provide services. Tele-support has been an overwhelming success in the community employment department. It has been used to communicate with the people I support, for job find and career assessment services due to the restrictions placed on in person interaction. The people I support are more receptive over the phone and they are anticipating my phone call. They even call me early to conduct their services.

Job find services have been very successful over the phone. We navigate the internet and use Indeed to choose jobs that interest them. We then will apply to the positions on the internet. Two of my individuals have received job interviews during this pandemic, big lots and hotheads. Both the individuals and I took the necessary safety precautions while attending the interviews in the community. The individuals I support have positively adapted to this new way of life.

Olivia Beveridge—Employment Specialist

HAB. AIDE DEPARTMENT



MCAR recently began providing support for Brianna K. who had been living in a community home. She moved to her new apartment and recently gave birth to a beautiful son. Brianna has been doing an outstanding job caring for her son with MCAR staff supporting her on a daily basis assisting her in maintaining her independence. Our Hab. Staff have been very supportive and Brianna says " I really like my staff and I really feel safe with my staff, and I am happy that I was able to keep my baby with MCAR's help"

Shirley Riffle—Hab. Aide Director



4TH OF JULY WHITE CHOCOLATE FUDGE

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 5 oz. evaporated milk
- 2 cups marshmallow cream
- 8 oz. white chocolate chips
- Red and blue food coloring*

Instructions

Line a 9x5-inch loaf pan with foil. Spray with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.

*Have everything ready to go before continuing, as the fudge will set up quickly. You will need 3 bowls, 3 spatulas, the food coloring and a knife.

In a large pot or saucepan, combine the sugar, butter, and evaporated milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently. When the mixture comes to a boil, stir constantly for 5 minutes. Add in the marshmallow cream and the white chocolate chips and stir until smooth.

Divide the mixture into 3 bowls. Add red food coloring to one, blue food coloring to one, and leave the third bowl white. Stir each color.

Pour the red fudge into the prepared loaf pan, smoothing the top as best as possible. Pour the white fudge on top of the red, then pour the blue on the top. (Stir each bowl before pouring, just in case the fudge started to set up.) Take a knife and drag it through all three layers, making the marbled effect.

Let the fudge cool completely before cutting, at least 2 hours.



850 N. Hermitage Road
Hermitage, PA 16148
P 724-981-2950
F 724-981-1877
www.mercerarc.org



The Arc of Mercer County/MCAR is affiliated with the United Way of Mercer County, The Arc of the United States, and The Arc of Pennsylvania.

Mission Statement

“To provide advocacy and comprehensive support to persons with disabilities that empower them in all aspects of life”.

Advocacy

The Arc of Mercer County is a chapter of the largest advocacy organization in the United States for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Working at the local level, we are the leading resource for individual advocacy services. Our advocacy services are free of charge to families and individuals in Mercer County. Since 2004, our advocacy efforts have focused on helping families with children maneuver the special education process to ensure a positive, quality education. We help parents understand their child's rights to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, as guaranteed by law.

Our education advocates guide parents through the special education process, from how to determine eligibility for special services to how to prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to how to file a due process complaint to how to find an attorney for legal representation. Our goal is to ensure that the school adheres to a child's IEP and makes a good faith effort to help the student achieve his defined goals. Parents are the most effective participants in developing and managing their child's education goals. Sometimes, however, they may find issues or instances when other resources are helpful. The Arc of Mercer County's advocacy program serves as their leading resource for information and support.

What our Education Advocate can do for you:

- Provide resources and information about your rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and applicable state regulations, including Early Intervention, and about how to effectively advocate for your child to resolve issues
- Provide resources to school districts and Early Intervention providers to help design and deliver supports and services that guarantee students with disabilities the opportunity to make progress on their educational goals

For more information about our advocacy efforts and how we can help you, contact Brian Engelmores at 724-981-2950, Ext. 219.