Dear Members and friends of The Arc:

I am pleased to present The Arc of Oakland County’s 2020 Annual Report. This document provides information about our organization’s history, programs, committees, and finances, and it reviews our many activities over the past calendar year. These activities included assisting with understanding guardianship and Power of Attorney documents, participating in Person-Centered Planning meetings, assisting with Individual Educational Plan issues, drafting and updating of wills and trusts, and providing expert counsel on all governmental financial benefit programs.

Our primary purpose is to provide advocacy for individuals in Oakland County who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). One of the objectives in our Strategic Plan is to “be the pre-eminent provider of inclusive services and supports for people with Intellectual Impairment and Developmental Disabilities and their families within Oakland County.” Through the hard work of our Executive Director, Tom Kendziorski, and his outstanding staff, I am proud to say that we have achieved that goal. But families of children with special needs in Oakland County still face many obstacles, both during the school years and after the yellow bus stops coming to their house. We will continue to be there for them. Amazingly, we served 2,500 new persons through our advocacy services in 2020!

Our Highlights for 2020 include:

• ZOOM conference calls became a way-of-life for all advocacy requests!
• Staff worked from home from mid-March 2020 to the end of the calendar year due to governmental restrictions.
• We applied for and received a federal COVID PPP loan for $186,500.
• We have 1,196 paid members at end of December 2020; most ever! 6 new lifetime members added in 2020 and 94 total lifetime members as of 12/31/20.
• We are the largest chapter in Michigan; 10th largest in the country out of 600.
• We supported 1300 FMS clients.
• We are switching over to new, updated healthcare database software for FMS.
• Michigan Alliance for Families (MAP) grant is now $22,000 per year through The Arc MI.
• We received $80,000 of $126,000 bequest from the Torrance Spears Etheridge Trust Fund.
• We received the Filmer Memorial Charitable Trust grant of $10,000.
• We began work on the eventual $15,000 grant from the Panasonic Automotive Group; received in 2021.
• Gorman’s Furniture holiday recliner promotion-fundraiser ($4,000) was a great success in January 2020!
• Brookside Way half-marathon fundraiser; over $15K (most ever); thanks to avid runner Kevin Knoblock!
• A “Corporate Compliance” policy, a “Code of Conduct and Ethics” policy, and a “COVID” policy was written.
• 2020 Dove Awards program and the 2020 Auction were tremendous successes, even though held virtually!
• Annual Income Tax Guide researched and written.

We now have 11 Financial Management Services (FMS) staff members. Welcome Ashley Ball, Linda Yucha, Michelle Larzelere, and Jessica Habbi.

In addition to our Executive Director and his staff, the success of our organization is also due to our Board of Directors. These wonderful individuals have made a commitment to our organization because they believe in our mission, and they understand the necessity for us to succeed. A special thanks to each one of you.

As most of you know, Tom Kendziorski is retiring after nearly 39 years with The Arc of Oakland County. I have had the honor and privilege of knowing him and working with him for 25 of those years. Being a service provider, a member of The Arc board, and most recently The Arc Board President has been a thrill for me. Tom has been an amazing and untiring advocate for the families and their loved ones in Oakland County and the state of Michigan throughout his years at The Arc. On behalf of the Board, The Arc Team, and all the families he has assisted along the way, I thank him and wish him much joy in his years of retirement.

I would also like to welcome Dawn Calnen as the next Executive Director of The Arc Oakland County. Although she has big shoes to fill, I am confident she will do so with great skill, enthusiasm and integrity. I look forward to working with her to make The Arc of Oakland County the best for all the families and individuals we serve.

Finally, I have a request for you. Many of the individuals with IDD in our county will eventually move to supported living environments. A major obstacle to maintaining the quality of these homes is the low salary paid to direct care workers. Most direct care workers in our county earn less than the starting salary at McDonald’s! This has increased the turnover rate among our provider agencies, and many of their homes are understaffed. We will continue to lobby in Lansing for higher direct care worker salaries and encourage you to educate yourself about this important matter.

Thank you for supporting The Arc of Oakland County.

Best Wishes,

Tom Quakenbush, President, Board of Directors
Mission Statement

The Arc of Oakland County is committed to securing for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and play.

The Arc of Oakland County works through education, research, and advocacy to improve the quality of life for children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in every community; and, works to prevent both the causes and effects of intellectual and other related developmental disabilities.

Through the successful pursuit of equality and justice, The Arc of Oakland County will provide leadership in the field of intellectual and other related developmental disabilities and develop the necessary human and financial resources to attain its goals.

Purpose

Our primary purpose is to provide “ADVOCACY.” Specifically, The Arc of Oakland County: supports research focusing on prevention; develops better understanding of a cognitive/intellectual disability by the general public; cooperates and enlists the support of public and private agencies; furthers the recruitment, education and training of personnel to work in the field; furthers the adoption and implementation of appropriate statutes; serves as a clearinghouse for gathering and disseminating information; fosters the development of quality programs; monitors programs and services; advises, assists, and guides persons with intellectual disabilities and their families to appropriate resolutions to their challenges; cooperates and assists The Arc of the U.S. and The Arc Michigan in the promotion of common objectives; and, obtains the funds to accomplish these objectives.

Background Information

The Arc of Oakland County was incorporated in April of 1967 through the efforts of parents and families of persons with an intellectual and/or developmental disability for the purpose of improving current services and to develop new programs by way of supportive and appropriate legislation.

Through a combined effort with other advocacy groups, significant laws were passed at state and federal levels. These laws addressed the critical areas of education, housing, civil rights, the family support subsidy, and more.

WHILE MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE.

Present

The membership of The Arc of Oakland County finished 2020 at 1,196. We also have an ancillary list of friends and supporters of approximately 75.

The Arc of Oakland County is directed by a fifteen member Board of Directors and its professional staff of sixteen: the Executive Director and Attorney at Law; Comptroller and Office Manager; Administrative Assistant and Member Services Coordinator; Director of Public Relations and Development; Senior Staff Advocate for Special Education; Director of Financial Management Services (FMS); Program Development of FMS and, nine FMS staff.

The professional staff, together with the Board of Directors, assists both individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families within the community-at-large.

Their activities include but are not limited to; helping families obtain appropriate services; addressing individual needs regardless of age or severity of handicap; monitor community living arrangements, education, and work programs; advocate for those individuals with intellectual and other related developmental disabilities whose circumstances require direct assistance; serve as fiscal intermediary for MORC, Inc. individuals enrolled in Self-Determination and, advocate for the passage of state and federal legislation that will impact the lives of all persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.
The Arc of Oakland County views increased public awareness as one of the major components to greater understanding and community acceptance of persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. To this end, The Arc of Oakland County staff provides members, families, professionals, organizations, and the community-at-large with direct and indirect information about intellectual and other related developmental disabilities. The Arc provides speakers who promote public awareness of The Arc services and activities together with an awareness of what is an intellectual and other developmental disability.

The Arc of Oakland County staff also provides families with direct information about community resources as well as referrals to schools, physicians, dentists, attorneys, CPAs and others.

Printed information is available upon request. A sample mailing packet would include: our national award-winning bi-monthly newsletter, PROFILES, a brochure explaining the programs and services of The Arc of Oakland County, a membership application, plus other information relating to a specific request. Also available free on-line is an award-winning publication authored by the Executive Director of The Arc of Oakland County: Annual Income Tax Guide.

Information regarding programs and services available through The Arc of Oakland County as well as many other professionally written articles and PowerPoint presentations may be accessed via our website at www.thearcoakland.org.

The Arc of Oakland County’s Facebook page may be accessed through the website and is a place where members, consumers and friends can stay connected with updates on fundraising events, community affairs and legislative issues. The Arc of Oakland County’s YouTube page may also be accessed through the website and houses The Arc of Oakland County’s Agency Video and 30 Second Public Service Announcement. Additional videos may also be uploaded in the future.

Systems Advocacy

The Arc of Oakland County served over 2,500 persons in an advocacy capacity within the last year. These services encompassed the following areas of expertise:

(1) Financial Assistance (SSI, SSDI, Medicaid, Adult Home Help Services, Medicare, Tax, Food Stamps, Family Support Subsidy, and Section 8 Housing); (2) Special Education (I.E.P.’s, Hearings, M.E.T.’s); (3) Legal Matters (Wills, Living Trusts, Guardianships, Estate Planning); (4) the Annual income Tax Guide; and, ABLE Act accounts.

Legal and lay advocates are available to assist new clients/families with the aforementioned services together with general advocacy and issues unique to each family situation.

Michigan Alliance for Families (M.A.F.)

Michigan Alliance for Families (M.A.F.) is a resource for families to enhance their knowledge and understanding of special education and to assist them in problem solving special education issues by providing parent mentors and educational advocates. The Arc of Oakland County serves the eastern half of Genesee County for this project. We entered into a contract with The Arc Michigan beginning October 1, 2019.
The Forever Plan

The Forever Plan, a lifetime, comprehensive advocacy program, is dedicated to program development and expansion, and the monitoring of participants. This program addresses the parents’ question, “What will happen to my child when I’m gone?” Work and planning is ongoing to further solidify the program in order that it may serve the future needs of our families.

The Forever Plan is an individualized contractual agreement that requires membership with The Arc of Oakland County. The Forever Plan is designed to meet the needs of each individual with special needs utilizing all available community resources based on the individual needs of the participant and his/her family.

The Forever Plan Informational Meetings are held periodically to assist families on matters regarding long-term planning for their family member with special needs through The Forever Plan. Additional meetings may be scheduled in the future.

- 65 total enrollees
- 15 active participants
- 11 trusts under management
- 3 served as Representative Payee
- 8 served as partial guardian
- 7 served as “standby guardian”

Financial Management Services

Contracted by MORC, Inc., The Arc of Oakland County provides Financial Management Services (FMS) to individuals who have chosen Self-Direction.

As the FMS agent, The Arc processes invoices and time sheets on behalf of each consumer, helps them monitor their individual budget, current PCP guidelines, and Medicaid law. The Arc staff works with the individual, his/her family, and their MORC, Inc. supports coordinator to help them flex their budgeted dollars to further meet their needs while staying within the guidelines of the current PCP and Medicaid.

The Arc of Oakland County acts as “Payroll Agent” for individuals who directly employ their own staff. We process payroll for the consumers employees, process all Federal and State taxes, and maintain all Medicaid required staff training certifications. The Arc of Oakland County served as the FMS agent for over 1,300 individuals in 2020.

Events & Fundraising

Fund-raising is an integral part of The Arc of Oakland County because monies must be raised to supplement agency income for existing, ongoing programs. We appreciate and thank everyone for their continued support and generosity.

Annual Run Challenge

Every year, The Arc of Oakland County presents a donation challenge to the agency’s members and friends. After running and raising money for The Arc for several years, Tom Kendziorski, The Arc of Oakland County’s Executive Director, hung up his running shoes and passed the baton to Kevin Knoblock, a Special Education Teacher, who has continued in the tradition of running and raising money for The Arc of Oakland County!

On Sunday, September 27, 2020, Kevin completed the Virtual Brooksie Way Half Marathon. Congratulations, Kevin!

The 2020 goal for the Annual Marathon Challenge was $15,000 and through pledges and donations, we are happy to announce that we raised $15,725.00 gross!
Dove Awards Presentation

The Arc of Oakland County recognizes persons who have made significant contributions on behalf of or for persons who have an intellectual impairment or other developmental disability.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we were not able to gather in-person in 2020 for the 50th Annual Dove Awards Program, but we still received several sponsorships!

The Arc of Oakland County would like to thank the following individuals, companies, and organizations for their continued support:

Oakland County Knights of Columbus Councils

PRESENTING SPONSOR ($1,800):
Patrick & Julia Heider

PLATINUM SPONSORS ($1,000):
Dan & Linda CasaSanta, MGM Grand Detroit, MORC, Inc., Rajput-Dasgupta Family Charitable Foundation, Don L. Rosenberg, Esq. of Barron, Rosenberg, Mayorais & Mayorais, P.C., John Keegan on behalf of CIBC Bank ($750), Harvey & Carole Rabinowitz ($750), and Mark & Ann Wiedelman ($750)

GOLD SPONSORS ($500):

SILVER SPONSORS ($250):
Ron & Pam Cheli, Community Homes, Inc., ExpertCare, Barbara Fischer, In Memory of A.J. Fong, Thomai & Cary Gersh, Gorman’s, Linda Knox, Tim Manning, Joseph McKe Fitz, Richard & Kristine Mitchell, New Gateways Family Group, Otlewski & Maloney, P.C., Progressive Lifestyles, Inc., Tom Quakenbush, The John Schoeffel Trust, Springhill Pooled Accounts Trust, Wm Sullivan and Son Funeral Home, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Rexin & Perry Rexin ($200), Robert & Francine Stern ($200), Genesis In-Home Care, LLC. ($150), Joe & Lisa Kowalski ($150), and Dolores Baran DDS PC ($145)

BRONZE SPONSORS ($100):
Alex & Rose Marie Adah, A. J. Desmond & Sons, David & Katie Andrea, Stacey Farmer, Tim Hatfield, Suzanne Marquardt, Nadine Milostan, Simply Good Kitchen, John Torrone, and Milton Wohl, CPA, P.C.

FRIENDS (Under $100):
Larry Cronin ($25), Mary Lou Disessa ($25), Duncan Family ($50), Marlene Glac ($15), David & Beverly Hughes ($50), Allen Kisosondi & Rosemary Rangi ($50), James Lempertius ($50), David & Sandy Loefl er ($50), Michael & Lorraine Mich ($25), Katherine Rayson ($50), James & Laura Rozell ($50), Amy Salako ($25), and Gary & Judith Tarr ($50)
We held an Online Auction in conjunction with the 50th Annual Dove Awards Program. We are pleased to announce that the auction raised $7,450.00 gross! The success of this endeavor and thanks go to everyone who graciously donated.

This year’s auction items were donated by the following:


Weight Watchers Program

The Arc of Oakland County sponsored Weight Watchers program for persons with special needs is held every Tuesday evening at the Big Beaver United Methodist Church at 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Class participants pay a reduced initiation fee and reduced rate under a Weight Watchers Scholarship Program. On average, there are about 25 people enrolled in this inclusive program. It is open to family members, and aides assisting the person(s) with special needs at the same reduced rate.

Membership

We are incredibly proud to have a strong membership base at The Arc of Oakland County. Our ultimate goal is to obtain 2,000 members and we are happy to report that we finished 2020 with 1,196 members. Our most ever!
Committee Participation

Members of The Arc of Oakland County staff are actively involved and participate on the following committees: Oakland Community Health Network (OCHN) Consumer Advisory Committee; OCHN Self-Directed Administrative Committee; Macomb-Oakland Regional Center, Inc. Behavioral Supports Committee; The Arc Michigan Conference of Executives of The Arc; The Arc Michigan Governmental Affairs Committee, and Finance Committee; and, MORC, Inc. Providers.

Board Members of The Arc of Oakland County also participate on Oakland Schools Parent Advisory Committee.

Staff

- Thomas F. Kendziorski, Esq.
  Executive Director
- Beth M. Lafata
  Comptroller / Office Manager
- Allison M. Murowany
  Director, Public Relations & Development
- Patricia D. Luker
  Senior Staff Advocate
- Kiesha D. Lawton
  Administrative Assistant
- Monica P. Goerg
  Director, FMS
- Monica M. Knoblock
  Program Development, FMS
- Megan L. Arnold
  FMS Staff
- Ashley L. Ball
  FMS Staff
- Larry W. Bizon
  FMS Staff
- Jessica S. Habbi
  FMS Staff
- Michelle S. Larzelere
  FMS Staff
- Diane M. McDaniel
  FMS Staff
- Leanne E. Mayes
  FMS Staff
- Garret C. Van Drunen
  FMS Staff
- Linda M. Yucha
  FMS Staff

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