

60 Years



Despite the growth and prosperity of post-war America in the 1950s, people with intellectual disabilities, (then referred to as mental retardation) found no place in their neighborhoods or communities. As children, they had been placed into special schools (institutions) operated by the state, with their families being told that there were no real alternatives.

Soon, however, some of these families started to gather in living rooms and church basements across the country. They drew on each other for support and looked for answers to their questions of how to get better treatment for their children. In July of 1953, several families in Morris County formed a unit of The New Jersey Parents Group for Retarded Children.

Soon after organizing, where services were not available, they developed their own. A Play Center was established, followed by a Teen Club. Several years later, the first scouting program serving boys with intellectual disabilities was added. Recognizing the critical importance of getting services to people with developmental delays at the youngest possible age, the unit established a nursery school for children with special needs. All of these services were established by the close of the organization's first decade.

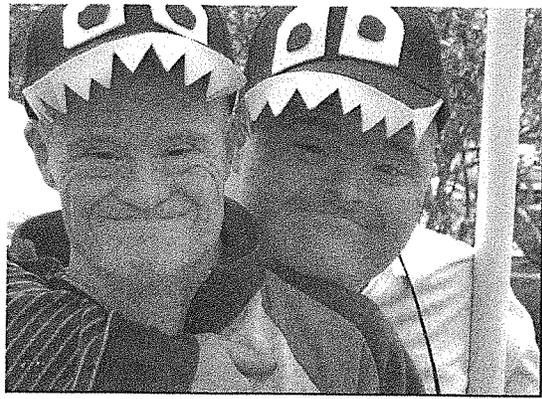
With the election of John F. Kennedy—and his public acknowledgement of having a sister with intellectual disabilities, significant public awareness and further change came. The dark years of ignorance and stigma began to fade as the public came to realize that, if intellectual disability could affect the family of the President of the United States, it could touch anyone.

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Against the backdrop of the social turbulence of the 1960s, a second nursery school was opened and a summer day camp was developed. Canteen, Bowling, and other special recreation programs were started. An executive director was hired. Meanwhile, advocacy efforts paid off in the opening of special education classes in New Jersey public schools.

In 1973, a young investigative reporter named Geraldo Rivera brought a hidden camera into the Willowbrook State School on Staten Island, NY, an institution for people with intellectual disabilities. The conditions which he found and reported on were so deplorable that the nation demanded reform, resulting in federal legislation that provided increased funding and mandated more stringent standards for institutions. And more significantly, the appropriateness of institutional care per se began to be questioned.

Despite limited public financial support, the Morris Unit continued to grow. While special instruction in public schools had begun, families knew that once the child was old enough to leave the school, there were not many vocational opportunities. So, once again, families came together to create a service to fill this need, raising the funds necessary to open the first Adult Activities Program, a forerunner of the current Adult Training and Habilitation Centers. By the end of the 1970s, the Morris County Recreation Consortium was created, and Early Childhood Enrichment programs developed, both of which would later evolve into programs which would represent a new era in community-based services.

Unfortunately, the 1970s were also a time of some distress for the Morris Unit. A well-intentioned but inadequately planned decision to purchase and develop a large former residential school led to near disaster. The acquisition saddled the unit with more debt than it could bear, and within months, bankruptcy loomed.

The board of directors was split over the responsibility for the crisis and many trustees left the board. It was only through the combined efforts of many players—including then Freeholder Rodney Frelinghuysen, Assemblyman Dean Gallo and newly appointed director Harry Wilkinson—that dissolution was averted.

The next several years witnessed a massive rebuilding effort at what had become the Association for Retarded Citizens, Morris Unit. While many of the services were lost, the recreation and early intervention programs survived, and the long road back to credibility, solvency, local trust and support began.

At the same time, there was activity at several governmental levels that would bode well for the future. Spurred by advocacy efforts across the state, the New Jersey legislature passed laws which permitted the development of group homes in residential neighborhoods—without the need for variances. And not long after, the federal government enacted regulations and legislation allowing states to re-direct federal funding of services to people with intellectual disabilities from institutional to community-based settings.

That action truly marked the beginning of the modern era, not only at the Morris Unit, but across the country. In December 1982, at the dedication of our first Adult Training Center, the Director of the state's Division of Mental Retardation, announced that funding of new and innovative programs, such as self-advocacy and supported employment, would be made available.

Despite some initial community opposition, The Arc opened one group home after another. By the close of the decade, twelve group homes had been opened across Morris County and development of an apartment program began. In 1986, another Adult Training Center was added, and plans were underway for a third. Programs for children were also expanding, with a Developmental Day Care Center and a Special Needs Preschool. The needs of families were addressed with the implementation of respite services provided in either specialized residential settings or the family home.

A community movement was clearly afoot, with The Arc, Morris Unit leading the way. Now, people with intellectual disabilities were learning and becoming productive members of their communities. Numerous people, many of whom would have been thought incapable of learning, were now holding down real jobs in local businesses.

When the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act was passed into law as the 1990s began, the organization's first barrier free Group Home opened in Randolph, along with Supported Living and a new Supervised Apartment Complex in Morris Township. Thanks to the incredible efforts of self-advocates across the country, including Bill Byrne, the organization's name changed from the Association for Retarded Citizens to simply The Arc. The action reinforced the growing power of the people we serve—and the growing respect to ensure their input on the language used to refer to them.



Giving to The Arc/Morris

2014 Annual Appeal

Check your mailboxes for our Annual Appeal and please consider a donation to help us continue the programs and services we provide for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. When you give help—you give hope! Thank you and best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season!

Car Donation Program

We are pleased to remind members and friends of The Arc/Morris that we have partnered with the Charity Car Donation Center to operate and manage our car donation program. Since the program started, we have received many generous donations of vehicles to support our programs and services. We are happy to accept donations of your used cars, vans or trucks, all of which are tax deductible.

Call 1-877-ARC-CARO

Matching Gifts

Your donation to The Arc/Morris can be matched if your company participates in a Matching Gift Program. Check with your Human Resources Department to see if your donation qualifies for a matching gift.

Online Donations

You can make online donations now through PayPal on our website (www.arcmorris.org). Just click the Donate Now tab under the How to Help section.

AmazonSmile Program

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For more information, please contact the Development Office at (973) 326-9750, Ext. 211 or by email at development@arcmorris.org.



The decade also ushered in new services. Recognizing the continued need for family support, the chapter opened After Care and Saturday Drop off Respite programs, enabling working families to economically sustain themselves by offering high quality after school care for their loved one with special needs.

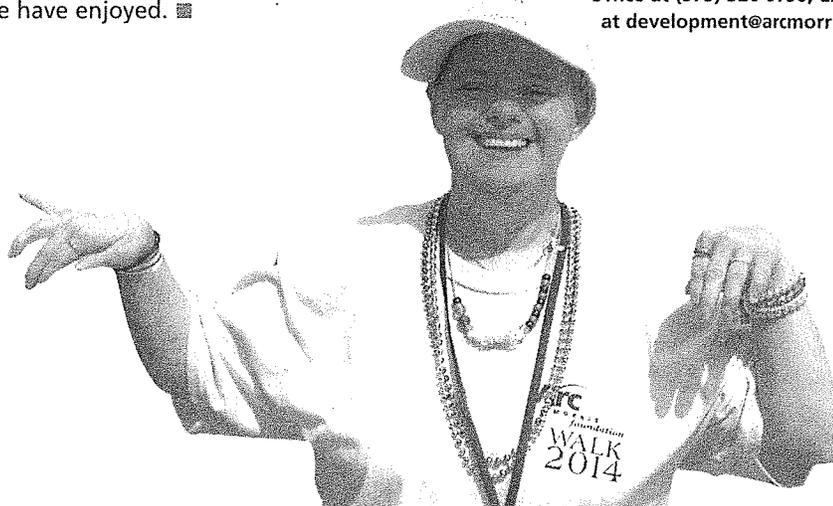
As the new millennium arrived, the organization's residential program grew to serving over 100 individuals across a wide range of housing throughout Morris County. Careful deliberations by the organization's leadership also spurred good decisions to eliminate unnecessary and costly programs and services, while growing those in highest demand. As increased numbers of families were faced with the aging of their loved ones and more and more consumers facing multiple disabilities were part of our communities, the agency responded. 2001 marked the opening of a new Medical and Senior day program in Dover that was soon followed by a capital campaign that re-affirmed the organization's commitment to those facing the most significant developmental disabilities.

A Campaign for The Arc/Morris, launched in 2007, raised three million dollars to purchase and renovate the former Flanders Elementary School, as well as the organization's central office, soon becoming the Loretta & Julius Krauklis Center and the F.M. Kirby Administrative Center. Capped off by the expansion of two other major program centers in Hanover and Dover, the effort

preserved important funding for services, by saving substantial resources formerly spent on bricks and mortar.

As this current decade began, sound business practices supporting the organization's mission continued to be the organization's hallmark. The re-location and new construction of a critically needed Respite Group Home just last year again exemplified forward thinking as a new era in services was beginning. Today, the Rubenstein Respite Home serves families never able to secure the service outside of large, congregate settings before.

Long before concepts like inclusion and family involvement became commonplace, even fashionable, The Arc/Morris encouraged and supported these ideals in all our programs and services. As we look ahead, we only hope to stand on the giants who preceded us in not accepting what was thought to be the only option for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, while preserving all that has been gained in the decades of growth we have enjoyed. ■



Walk 2014

On Sunday, September 21, the 11th Annual Arc/Morris Foundation Walk to support the programs and services of The Arc/Morris was held and was a huge success. Over 300 walkers, supporters and volunteers contributed to the event's success and helped raise over \$28,000! We are especially grateful to the following sponsors for their support:

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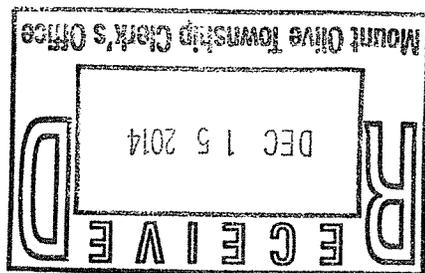
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