

Arapanoe & Douglas Counties



FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

2020 Annual Report

Staff Members

Carol Meredith
Executive Director

Pam Bailey Operations Manager

Lee Ray Director of Advocacy

Luke Wheeland Director of Community Outreach & Education

Cg La Scala Senior Advocate

Veronica Crowell *Advocate*

Tona Collins *Advocate*

Aida Abril *Advocate*

Kelly Lawler Events Coordinator

Whitley Conn Advocate

Michelle Perry Advocate

Board Members

Karen Glenn, President

Catherine O'Brien Crum, Vice President

Lynn Meyer, Secretary & The Arc of Colorado Representative

Marc Malamud, Treasurer

Tom Francen Drew Koff Hollie LaGrotta Kian Phair Helene Schmidt Michael Simms Lorie Simpson Tim Yoakum



2020 What a Year!

Our deepest sympathies go out to all of you who lost loved ones during this past year. Your lives will be forever changed by this pandemic, and we want you to know that we are here for you as you navigate this new path.

This year, your chapter of The Arc did everything we could safely do to maintain our mission for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Within a couple of weeks, we had moved all our programs online. Individual Advocacy, Education and Community Outreach, Systems Advocacy and expanded fun events to keep people socially connected all happened by phone, email, Zoom or other virtual platforms. Our board and our staff quickly adapted the budget to reflect a 25% decrease in funding from the arcThrift stores. Our most valuable asset at The Arc is our highly experienced staff, so we took every opportunity to ensure that they stayed safe and had the tools they needed to do their jobs remotely. As I look back on the year, I am pleased to say that we not only maintained our programs, but we expanded our reach. Many of our educational workshops are now recorded and on our YouTube channel for individuals and families to access whenever they have the time or the need. Our staff took time during the summer to reflect on our role in ending systemic racism. Several advocates began to reach out to communities of color and joined with other community partners to take our place at the table and be the voice of people with disabilities to ensure we are not left out of the changes that must be achieved so everyone belongs.

We said farewell to Kelie Kyser as she moved on to other opportunities and welcomed Michelle Perry and Whitley Conn to our advocacy staff.

It was a wild and crazy year, but one full of opportunities for meaningful growth and change for the betterment of people with disabilities and their families.

Carol Meredith

Executive Director

For the first quarter of 2020, our chapter was actively engaged in important public policy initiatives around topics including waiver redesign, behavioral services access, reducing the waitlist, and Community First Choice, to name a few focus areas. On the advocacy front areas of need included, educational support, mental health support and services, and criminal justice support. Educational and social activities started the year strong with many offerings for self-advocates which drew strong attendance. The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas was active and engaged through social media streams and very visible in the community as well with educational presentations to both Douglas County Schools and Cherry Creek Schools as well as health care professionals on topics including SSI/Medicaid and waivers.

As the pandemic hit, schools, day programs and many businesses, including our office, closed. That didn't stop our staff; they remained hard at work. While legislative work slowed, the advocacy needs of our constituents remained and increased in so many cases. In-person meetings were often replaced with Zoom. In some cases, this introduced new barriers, including economic and technology barriers, as well as others. The cascade of these old and new challenges continued through 2020 and they continue to this day. Our team at The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas has continued to work diligently to listen first, work to understand, and search for resources and supports to address the needs of those who turn to us.

Through the many challenges, there have been successes too. When in-person events ceased, The Arc developed and maintained a treasure trove of resources on COVID-related topics as well as a wealth of stay-at-home craft and activity ideas. The Arc also began offering a wide variety of virtual, yet highly interactive, social events including targeted family support groups, weekly trivia, a virtual haunted house, many educational offerings and more. While we would have preferred to be gathered in person for these, the virtual nature of these offerings brought attendees from countries spread all over the world in some cases!

As I look back at 2020, I see an organization that met unexpected, unprecedented, and substantial challenges head on. The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas pulled together to support each other, and to support those who turned to The Arc.

Karen Glenn

Karen Glenn Board President

Board of Directors at work!



Karen Glenn, Board President



Lynn Meyer, Secretary, at the June Membership Renewal Carwash Event

On our agenda in 2020

In 2020, the Board of Directors finalized the Policies and Procedures for The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties. They also focused on strategic planning for the succession of staff, broadening our reach in the community, and expanding our programs.

Our board takes their fiduciary responsibilities seriously by monitoring our investments and reserve accounts to ensure our sustainability.

Board meetings are open to the public and typically take place on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm. You are always welcome!

About Us

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization. We are guided by our mission, which states: The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties uses advocacy and education to include all children and adults with disabilities, and their families, in their communities.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors for The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties consists of twelve (12) individuals. A board member also represents our chapter on the Board of Directors for The Arc of Colorado. This year the board focused their work on investment strategies, program development, succession planning and updating our internal policies and procedures.

AFFILIATIONS

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties is affiliated with The Arc of Colorado and The Arc of the United States.

STAFF

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties has eleven (11) staff members who focus on children's advocacy, adult advocacy, systems advocacy, education, community outreach, fun events, communications, and operations. Due to the small number of staff, volunteers typically support our mission through office work, building and grounds beautification, and social activities, however with statewide restrictions due to COVID, our volunteer involvement was limited during 2020.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties serves people with disabilities and their family members in Arapahoe and Douglas counties, excluding the City of Aurora (which is served by The Arc of Aurora). Best estimates based on incidence ratios indicate there are 15,345 (2.3% with an IQ of 70 or under) children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) living in Arapahoe County (excluding the City of Aurora) and Douglas counties.





Systems Advocacy

Starting in Mid-March all systemic advocacy moved on to virtual platforms. Staff monitored the Weekly updates from the state Medicaid agency. We served on the committee to redesign Day Programs given that all group activities were dangerous during the pandemic. Our chapter would like to thank Health First Colorado (Medicaid) and all the staff from the Office of Community Living for working so hard to make Medicaid work as well as possible for people with disabilities and their families during this past year. We did our best to help them. The Colorado Behavioral Health Task Force also should be commended for ensuring that the stakeholder process continued under COVID restrictions. The report came out on time and when fully implemented will be a significant improvement for people with IDD and their families who need access to affordable mental health treatment from providers who understand how to work with people with cognitive disabilities. The Colorado Legislature listened to our suggestions regarding necessary budget cuts and children and adults with disabilities were valued and cuts to their services were minimized as much as possible.

Here is a partial list of activities we participated in during 2020:

- CANDO Colorado Collaborative for Autism and Neuro-Developmental
 Disabilities Opportunities This group is working to implement the strategic plan
 from the Colorado Autism Commission.
- Children's Disability Advisory Committee This collaborative works to solve systemic problems for children that access Medicaid and other services.
- Crisis Intervention and Prevention Project we attempted to expand training for START coordination for this project but had to delay due to COVID budget reductions at the legislature.
- The Family Support Council at Developmental Pathways Staff attend these meetings to cultivate the development of family support in our community.
- Disability Policy Collaborative, Washington D.C. cancelled
- Douglas County Mental Health Initiative Staff served on this committee focused on ensuring that residents in Douglas county have adequate access to high quality mental health supports.
- Colorado Consumer Health Initiative We are members and involved with the public policy group that reviews health care issues for all Coloradoans.
- Transportation Interagency Councils in Arapahoe & Douglas Counties Staff
 participates in both groups to represent the needs of people with I/DD as they
 relate to public transportation.
- Long-term Care Assessment Tool Staff participated in the development of this
 tool that allows for person-centered assessments of strengths, needs and
 preferences. In 2020 we started work on the person-centered budget algorithm
 for this project and finalized the Service Plan and personal story templates.
- Governor's Behavioral Health Committee Governor appointed intensive work group to redesign mental health and behavioral health systems of care in Colorado. Our staff served on the Children's Sub-Committee.
- Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) Staff spent many hours at stakeholder meetings to ensure that the voice of individuals with I/DD was included in systems change.

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties participates in these important initiatives to ensure that the voice of children and adults with IDD and their families are heard. We focus on practical solutions to complex problems.





Kelly Lawler, Event Coordinator

We Went Virtual...

- Bingo Night
- Hangman
- Karaoke
- Would You Rather
- Super Fight
- Show and Tell
- Name 5!
- Spaceman
- Virtual Cooking Experience

...and Trivial!

- Music Trivia
- Movie Trivia
- TV Trivia
- Sports Trivia
- Disney Trivia
- Nickelodeon Trivia
- Advertising Trivia
- Gaming Trivia
- Food Trivia
- Decade Trivia
- -4th of July Trivia
- Halloween Trivia
- AND MORE!

In the Name of FUN...

This year our organization had to get a little creative in order to bring you some fun events.





Friendly Feud



Virtual Haunted House: A Chose Your Own Adventure Experience



Where in the World is Luke Sandiego?



Membership Carwash





"Thank you so much for talking to me today. It really helped to get your input."

"I appreciate your help so much. I had no idea what I was doing or what the next steps should be. Your advice and resources have been invaluable."

"Thank you so much for all you do. I could not have picked a better person to work with and for my child."

Individual Advocacy

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas supports self-advocates and parents to access services that children and adults with disabilities may be entitled to, including educational services, residential services, vocational services, Social Security benefits, and other local, state and federal benefits.

Advocates use a person-centered approach to assist in the exploration of appropriate services and supports. We counsel by telephone, email, or in person. Advocates also attend meetings with families or individuals, review documents for accuracy, and help people understand their rights and responsibilities within government programs.

Children's Advocacy

In 2020, many students with disabilities and their families stayed home and educational services were provided over computers. Some students with disabilities found that this worked really well for them. However, most of our constituents found that being online all day everyday was extremely challenging and for some students, it was impossible. Our advocates spent many hours researching strategies and techniques that might help our students with remote learning. We answered many questions about "home-schooling, home-bound services, and compensatory education". We attended many Individualized Education Plan meetings and special education eligibility meetings over various virtual platforms. We spent a lot of time on the phone and conversing over email. It was a very difficult year for parents who may have been trying to assist multiple children to learn online, while also working from home.

Early in the pandemic, we worked with various systems to try to figure out a safe way to provide respite to families who were not only trying to manage education, but challenging behaviors and complex medical issues. Unfortunately, we didn't really come up with many solutions. Our respect and empathy for these families is beyond description. It was a difficult year.

Our advocates are prepared to address regression and recoupment, compensatory services, and other strategies to assist families in the coming year. It will take time and a lot of effort by everyone involved to ensure that our students succeed to the best of their ability. We look forward to partnering with schools, parents, and teachers to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on students that require special education supports and services.

Adult Advocacy

Triage was a high priority for our adult advocates for most of 2020. Every year we deal with emergencies. Selfadvocates may be living with parents who become unable to continue to provide the level of care needed in the family home. Some adults with disabilities are accused of committing crimes and become involved with law enforcement and the judicial system and our advocates work to assist attorneys to understand the IDD system and the supports that can assist the person with a disability. However, this year it became clear that many people in group living situations were being infected by the virus. Some were admitted to hospitals and some were dying. Our advocacy focused on keeping people as safe as possible, monitoring the excellent work that the Long-Term Care Strike Force implemented on the state level, and working with state government and hospitals to ensure that people with IDD had equal access to extraordinary care such as ventilators and intensive care units. We also worked to ensure that care givers and family members could be at the hospital with the person with IDD to ensure that those who had difficulty communicating or with behaviors would have someone that knew them well to assist on the care team.

"Although the storm scares me, I am capable of dancing in the rain. The love for my son has turned me into a warrior that even if circumstances attempt to shut me down, I will continue to be my son's voice to achieve the goals that lead him to success according to his abilities, which for me are extraordinary."







This year we assisted 176 children or adults with developmental disabilities and their families who were new to our organization. Additionally, we assisted 1,839 with individual advocacy. On average, our organization works with 262 people with disabilities and/or their family members per month.

"Our daughter thoroughly enjoys the trivia games every Friday night. She loves to participate and greatly looks forward to it. The time spent at trivia is a weekly highlight we both enjoy."

"Congratulations on a truly memorable event last night!" (The Best Seat in the House - A Virtual Concert) "Krissy and I had a great time. We enjoyed the playlists and variety of songs."

Activities

Annual Meeting

We were not able to hold an Annual Meeting in person this year, however we created a pre-recorded presentation that included information and updates by staff and board members. A link to vote was provided for the election of incoming board members.

The Arc ADventures in Fun

A group of self-advocates (ages 15+) with I/DD enjoyed bowling, mini golf, the Parker Playhouse and attended an Avalanche hockey game for IDD Awareness Night prior to COVID restrictions. Throughout the rest of the year, the group was able to enjoy virtual ADventures in Fun such as online games and weekly Pop Culture Trivia.

Resource Fairs and Presentations

We attended several resource fairs and presented to a variety of agencies and communities throughout the year. We virtually presented to three school districts, two different social clubs, and to a handful of organizations from various areas within the Arapahoe and Douglas County communities.

The Sharing Tree

This year the Sharing Tree took on a different "look" as we ordered and mailed gifts to the 12 individuals we support as their guardian and to families who needed assistance during the holidays. We hope to collaborate with King Soopers and our community once again in 2021 for this annual event.

• The Annual Picnic - The Best Seat in the House - A Virtual Concert In September, the picnic became a virtual event where participants received a Grub Hub link to order dinner. While enjoying our meal of choice, we all watched a wonderful concert, in the comfort of our homes, provided by five artists who entertained us with their talent of music and song.



Educational Programs

Building Blocks

This workshop introduces families with young children to systems of care. During the program, families learn about their rights and responsibilities in the education system, Medicaid, and commercial insurance. We also explored recreation and community experiences. This workshop was recorded in full and hosted on our YouTube channel for on demand viewing.

The Arc ADventures in Learning

This educational series was created for teenagers and young adults with I/DD and focuses on learning about relationships. The curriculum explores friendships, boyfriends/girlfriends, and community safety. We believe that this program provides a very important service to our community and look forward to continued growth in this area.

Step Up Into Life After High School

The Step-Up series is conducted by our chapter to assist parents and young adults with understanding resources and planning for life after high school. This workshop is hosted twice a year and over 100 families attended during 2020. This workshop was recorded in full and hosted on our YouTube channel for on demand viewing.

Understanding the Family Caregiver Option, CDASS and other delivery options

These workshops introduced families to how family members can be paid to provide services in certain waivers. The workshops were recorded and are hosted on our YouTube channel for on demand viewing.

Live Well, Plan Well, Leave Well

This workshop (not hosted in 2020) focuses on planning for the time when parents are no longer able to care for their children.

The Arc ADventures in Leadership

This group of self-advocates gathered once a month to give back to their community and learn leadership skills. During COVID restrictions, this group was halted but will restart once in person activities resume.

Sex-Education

We have learned through our advocacy efforts, that many of our folks get in trouble because they don't have accurate information about sexual education. This class was created for teens with I/DD and is taught by Planned Parenthood. Thirteen teens attended this workshop.

Parent/Caregiver Zoom Support Groups

We started a Parent/Caregiver Support Group weekly during 2020. Our advocates and staff focused on different topics to support each other with tips and tricks for surviving the pandemic and share stories of what is and isn't working. Families were encouraged to join in or listen to the conversation. The intent of the support groups was to reduce isolation as we are not alone in getting through the pandemic.



"The Step Up Into Life After High School has been the greatest series! I so appreciate all of the valuable information and although I couldn't make it every week, your materials made it easy to learn it all."

"I appreciated the online format. We would not have been able to attend if this were an in-person seminar only."



262 INDIVIDUALS PER MONTH

Advocacy: On average, our chapter advocates for 262 individuals with I/DD and their families a month, by protecting their civil and human rights and promoting their quality of life.



630 REFERRALS TO SERVICES

Referrals: Our chapter provided information and referrals to 630 people this year, while connecting individuals and families to supports and services that may be helpful.



680 PEOPLE

Counseling: On average, our chapter provided counseling to 680 people this year. We assisted individuals and families with education about navigating the systems and problem-solving strategies.



CHILDREN & ADULTS

Population: An estimated 15,345 children and adults with I/DD live in our service area of Arapahoe and Douglas Counties, excluding the city of Aurora (which is served by The Arc of Aurora).

Services

Supported Decision Making

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties is legal guardian or co-guardian for 11 people in our community without family or friends who are willing or able to serve in this important role. We have many resources available that provide information to families to learn about guardianship, Power of Attorney, and Conservatorship.

Information and Resources

Every day, we receive calls in our office from individuals and families looking for resources or information. All our staff members are very knowledgeable about the existing systems that support individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. We connect families to supports and services that could be helpful. In 2020, our chapter supported 630 people with information and referral.

Education and Counseling

We also assist families with communication and problem-solving strategies that can help them access various systems. Our efforts include but are not limited to extensive telephone and/or email conversations. This year we supported 680 people with education and counseling.

Communication and Networking

We recognize the importance of keeping up with trends in digital and print media and constantly strive to improve our presence and delivery. We utilize email marketing and social media to share important news, updates, and valuable resources.

Grassroots Organizing

We believe that informed parents and self-advocates are great resources to our community; accordingly, we conduct educational workshops, and keep constituents informed of legislative and public policy initiatives that affect the lives of people with disabilities through our E-Alerts, Facebook and Twitter.

Collaboration

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties works with many other organizations to reduce duplication of services and to increase supports to individuals affected by disabilities. Here is a partial list of the organizations that we collaborate with: Chapters of The Arc throughout Colorado, JFK Partners, Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, Parent to Parent of Colorado, Developmental Pathways, six school districts, The Colorado Department of Education, Disability Law Colorado, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, and PEAK Parent Center.

Funding

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties receives funding through a variety of sources including arc Thrift Stores, membership dues, contributions from individuals and businesses, fundraising activities, and grants for specific projects. We also received a loan for \$149,100 through First Bank and the Payroll Protection Program (PPP). This year we recognize donations in the following categories:

Diamond Partner

arc Thrift Stores

Silver Partner

- Clifton Pepper
- The Standard
- Anonymous

Bronze Partner

- Knights of Columbus 10937
- Auto Donations Melwood Horticultural Training Center
- Dirk & Janet Pasterkamp

An independent auditor reviews our finances every year. Our audit report for 2020 and 990 will be available for inspection in our offices and on our website.

We received \$158.00 through Amazon Smiles and \$706.50 in car donations. In April, we adapted to a 25% reduction in allocations from arc Thrift stores due to restrictions temporarily placed on their operation by the CDC for COVID-19 protocols. We are very grateful that our funding continued, and during 2020, 97% of our revenue came from the arc Thrift stores.







In 2020 our total income was \$1,066,672



\$1.0M EXPENSES

In 2020 our expenses were \$1,019,913



\$47K NET INCOM

Which gave us a net income of \$46,759



Our board continued to invest conservatively to build an annuity for the future. Our investments were slightly up at the end of the year.

Contributing Partners

Ability Specialists Albee, James Ancell, Brad & Holly Anderman, Elizabeth Armstrong, Carolyn & Tara Ashcraft, Renee Austin, William & Stephany Barenberg, Phil Barnhart, Terri Batz, Timothy & Suzanne Bengtson, Sheila Berringer, Ulla Betty, Mary Blakely, Todd & Christy Blomeyer, Paul & Sandra Burton, Diane Cagle, Linda Chakounis, Josheph & Janelle Chalfant, Lola Clouse, Jack & Carol Cohen, Eli Colamatteo, Pauline Corbett, Mary Covington, Douglass & Frances Dangremond, Hope & Richard Divine, Jeffrey Dobler, Daniel Duran, Judy Eze, Lisa Fiedler, Kirsi Fizgerald, James Forlenza, Scott & Eileen Francen, Tom Francis, Dan & Marcia French, Allen & Lorraine Frumkin, Leah Frumkin, Martin &

Glenn, John & Karen Gray, Karen Gumm, Steve & Mary Harding, Tom & Patricia Harris, Maya Head, Jamie Holscher, Dianne Howell, Andrew Huckaby, Randy & Martha Idler, Todd Johnson, Jacqueline Jones, Erin Jordan, Stephanie Kearns, John & Lori Kerchner, Peggy Kingston, Jeffrey Kirkemo, Betsey Klotzbach, Renee Koff, Drew Krieger, Vicki Kruger, Robert & Jovce Ladd, Janet LaGrotta, Hollie Larson, Rodney Larson, Theodore & Susan LaScala, Cg Lazaroff, Deborah Leaf, Karl Lehman, Betty Lewis, Andy & Collin Lewis, Johanna Malamud, Marc Malone, William & Thadene Maw, Logan Maw, Penny May, Theresa McKelvey, Sam McNamara, Heather McWilliams, Carrie McWilliams, Keith Meis, Louise & Mary Meredith, Alex Meyer, Lynn Miller, John & Enid Mondrow, Jamie Montano-Liermann,

Rose

Mooney, Susan

Nelson, Pamela O'Brien Crum, Catherine Oshel, Ilse Owen, Julie Patrick, Randall Phair, Kian Plybon, Jerry & Ruth Pollard, Lesley Proett, Michael Rael, Joshua Reder, Christine Rice, Denise Rivero, Francisco & Christine Robertson, Beverly Robinson, Christine Robinson, William & Barbara Doerr Roeske, John Rosanova, Forrest & Wendy Sabin, Eddie Schmidt, Andrew & Helene Schoonover, John Shankle, Carla Sherrill, Broutin Sietsema, JR Silbernagel, Barbara Silvestain, Michael & Carol Simms, Michael Simpson, Lorie Special Olympics Sprinkle, Stan Stahlman, Bruce & Kellv Stevens, Robert & Cindy Suhaka, Andrea Surfas, Joe & Geri Sutliff, Christopher & Mary Sword, Sara Tesfmichael, Nardos Tenure-Ibbison, Kim Thomas, Blake & Thompson, Payton Thompson, Susan Trudeau, Andrew

Valvano, Pam

Van Bruwaene, Rod & Carrie Vaughan, Barbara Walkabout Village Woody, John & Chelsea Wuest, Joseph & Liz Yoakum, Mark Yoakum, Tim & Bev

Jane

Members

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties currently has 132 active members. There are over 1,200 people on our mailing list who receive information from us throughout the year.

Volunteers

Finally, our volunteers are the greatest because they are willing to give their time and talents to make sure our organization runs smoothly. This year we documented 325 hours of volunteer time by 26 people. We truly appreciate our volunteers for their commitment to The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties.



Mark Yoakum volunteering at the carwash during our June Membership Renewal event.

Thank you to:

Bailey, Harold Jones, Erin Phair, Kian Bailey, Sean Koff, Drew Pulles, Meghan D'Lasnow, Rory LaGrotta, Hollie Rice, Rachelle De Lemos, Brittany Malamud, Marc Schmidt, Helene Francen, Tom Meredith, John Simms, Michael Frye, Tony Meyer, Lynn Simpson, Lorie Glenn, Karen O'Brien Crum, Steinke, Megan Catherine Hersch, James Yoakum, Tim

Yoakum, Bev Yoakum, Mark

In Memoriam

This year we sadly said farewell to Paul DeBaca, Steven Folk, Audrey Hallenbeck, and Barry Bandy.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Meredith
Executive Director



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Join a powerful group of people determined to make a difference!

The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas Counties is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing advocacy, information and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.





www.arc-ad.org



TheArcArapahoeDougla



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