

December 1, 2020

Dear Friend,

This year, The Arc, Ocean County Chapter celebrated 65 years of dedicated care and support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We are always proud of our accomplishments, but this year – this year was different. In 2020, we witnessed great loss but we also watched in amazement as our community banded together. For that, we will forever be grateful and proud of The Arc, Ocean County family.

On March 13, 2020 the lights were turned off at our day programs, the vehicles were parked, and our residents were socially distanced at home, but our crucial support services continued. The Arc, Ocean County Chapter did not stop services, not for one minute, due to COVID-19.

We had 187 residents who counted on us to keep them safe. We provided compassionate direct care, hot meals, fun games and engaging activities, iPads, hugs, and reassurance that we will get through this together. We asked our community for support to keep our staff and residents safe, and you delivered donating 800 handmade face masks and \$50,000 for PPE. In the early days, as positive cases were too close to home and we were scared and overwhelmed, your generosity to The Arc, Ocean County truly meant the world to us.

As the weeks turned to months and we were learning to manage our residential services amid the pandemic, we recognized the obvious gap in services for our individuals at home and so we started a virtual karaoke. Friends and staff, who missed each other dearly, were finally able to connect and have fun singing along to their favorite tunes. Our Virtual Services only grew from there, providing daily recreation games and activities to encourage social skills and new, innovative virtual vocational programs with a focus on life skills, health and wellness, pre-employment skills, arts, sciences, fitness, and more. Thanks to Zoom, we felt connected once again.

Through it all, our direct support professionals were truly our everyday heroes. Dressed in PPE armor, they left the comfort of their own home with poise and compassion, always willing to do whatever it takes to support our individuals. Words cannot express how appreciative we are.



With 2020 coming to a close, we find a gentle balance within our new normal. We will social distance, as we slowly begin to reopen our in-person vocational services and resume job training and supported employment. We will wear our masks and relish the new fashion accessory. We will embrace our virtual world, appreciating the technology available to us and grateful for supporters like you to be able to purchase the equipment for our programs.

Today, we share with you our story of this wild year, recognizing our The Arc, Ocean County community - family, friends, business partners and civic groups - all played a key role in the health, safety, and well-being of our residents and staff during this pandemic. We are grateful for you and your unwavering support of our mission.



We hope we can count on you again now, to make an end of year gift to The Arc, Ocean County Chapter. Your donation will help us continue to serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in these uncertain times. Every dollar raised in the annual appeal will support our programs: to grow our inventory of PPE and cleaning supplies, to upgrade our iPads and basic technology needs, and to compensate for lost revenue due to COVID-19.



Our goal for The Arc, Ocean County's 65th celebration 2020 Annual Appeal, is to raise \$10,000 before December 31st. **Please donate today, we greatly appreciate anything you can give.**

We wish you and your family a joyous holiday season, and healthy New Year.

Sincerely,

Laura Williams, Executive Director

Ruth Churchill, Board President

P.S. Please consider making an end of year gift to The Arc, Ocean County Chapter today.

You can return the donation card included with this letter by mail to: The Arc, Ocean County Chapter, 815 Cedar Bridge Ave, Lakewood, NJ 08701 or donate online at www.arcocean.org.