

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

I think the theme of this edition of the Challenger is perseverance and dedication. Each article focuses on how we have tried to think outside the box to get services to clients during this trying time. The Arc, in unison with many of our partners, has been able to find ways to provide services in ways previously not possible. We are grateful to advocates who believe in our mission and help us to achieve this.



I would like to give a huge thanks to our direct care staff who have continued working throughout this time and being there for our clients and their families. For some clients, The Arc is their only support and they continue to look to us for assistance. I think it would be hard to think of these direct care workers as anything other than essential workers.

Since the closing of our office building on March 18th our administrative staff have been working remotely from their homes. I commend them for their adjustment and settling into a new normal. It took some adjustment, but they have made it work, and in most cases have come to like it. They have found new tools to make them productive. They, like many of you, have also had to balance work time with personal time and are taking it one day at a time. I don't think any of us would have imagined how many online meetings we would be attending, and most certainly didn't plan to coordinate online meetings for our children for educational purposes. But regardless, their commitment has remained unchanged...staying in contact with our clients and responding to their needs as best we can.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their unwavering support. They have availed themselves to help us navigate through uncertain times and make critical decisions. Knowing most of them are also facing increased time demands with their own businesses makes me ever more thankful for their gift of time and talent.

I hope the coming weeks find us back to what we do best and that you all remain safe and healthy.

Sincerely,  
Kyle Schramp  
Acting Executive Director

---

## IN-HOME & COMMUNITY SERVICES ARE THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

We are happy to report we are still providing services to some of our clients where possible. Before staff provide services they are

required to complete a screening protocol to help mitigate any spread of the virus.

Our staff are busy thinking outside the box on how to support clients and their goals. We have created BINGO and scavenger hunt cards, rock painting, virtual yoga, art classes, bear hunts, and the list goes on and on!

Two big changes in services during COVID-19 are SCL/Habilitation services may be done over the phone if goals allow. Secondly, if parents/guardians are working from home they can use Respite. Using Respite while working from home is ONLY available during COVID-19. If you or a family member are interested in either service please reach out to your SSC!



**Whitney Alber**  
**Senior Program Manager**

## **SITE BASED PROGRAMS ARE MISSING THE NOISE**

We miss the hustle and bustle - we miss the noise! Most significantly, we miss the people we were in contact with every day, the smiling faces and day-to-day interactions we had with the individuals that we serve on site and their families. We hope you are all doing well, taking care of yourselves and are thinking of the day when we get to resume services. We know we are!



Although site based services have had to take a hiatus during this time of social distancing, the team is thinking ahead to May and summer services. We know it's difficult to predict right now what services might look like, but we are committed to staying in contact with families and communicating any changes that may occur in case our social distancing measures are extended.

At this time, we have decided to delay putting out the Service Center (Groups and Getaways) May brochure until at least mid-April. By then we are hopeful that we will have more information as to when we're able to safely return to "business as usual". Due to this delay, we will most likely have a shorter response time for families to turn in their requests for activities. Please know we will do everything in our power to get this information to clients, their families and staff to allow for planning.

The Daycare Enrichment team is taking advantage of this time away by prepping and planning for summer. We are updating client information used for new hires, updating medication procedures, and taking online classes that would typically be put on the back burner until a "less busy" day, or taken in the evening after work hours. We are looking forward to getting back on site as soon as possible. We are hoping for this to be sooner than later, but safety comes first.

We are currently planning for the Summer Day Program to start June 9th at Washington High School. However, please understand that things may change due to the school schedule for the Cedar Rapids School District and the current COVID-19 situation. There are currently openings for this program and we encourage you to register. We understand many families are unsure about changes to the Summer Day schedule and how that will affect their registration. We want you to know that if there are any schedule changes due to school district needs and summer school changes, The Arc is fully prepared to reimburse families their activity fees and prepaid private pay fees. We are still receiving mail at the office and there is a drop box by the front door if is more convenient for you to drop off your Summer Day packets. Don't delay in getting these in, so we can be sure we have

adequate staffing needs to serve your loved one this summer.

**Tara Cornelius**  
**Site Based Program Manager**

---

## **PROVIDING DAY HAB IN THE HOME HELPS EASE ANXIETY**

Like most of us, Cyndi is a gal who likes her routine. Cyndi lives independently and greatly enjoys her social outings with her family, friends and providers. As the safety risks of COVID-19 started to escalate so did Cyndi's anxiety. The Arc, along with Cyndi's team started to think outside the box on how we could still provide Day Hab services to Cyndi to help provide some normalcy in her life during this pandemic. The team got very creative in coming up with virtual community visits and exercise classes, art projects, games, and cooking as options to keep her busy. So far, Cyndi and her staff Kaitlyn have been busy with doing online yoga, going for walks, playing UNO flip, making monkey bread and Tator Tot Casserole!

Steve and Teri Craven, Cyndi's parents shared that they are very appreciative of the service Kaitlyn is providing to Cyndi. It gives Cyndi something to look forward to and has greatly reduced Cyndi's anxiety over the pandemic. The result is Cyndi is able to primarily remain in her home during this time. Thank you!

Cyndi's Case Manager Kelly Merta added, The opportunity to have personalized Day Hab will have impact far past the current moment; learning how to structure your day and keep busy to manage stress are lessons that will have value for weeks and months to come. Many thanks to The Arc for being creative with service delivery and helping people continue to meet their physical and emotional health needs during the pandemic while also helping to build self-direction and adaptable daily living skills!



**Leah Moser**  
**Community Integration Program Manager**

---

## **PROJECT SEARCH CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK IN THE ACTION**

The work that our Project SEARCH interns perform each day serve as an invaluable asset to UnityPoint - St. Luke's Hospital, and we are grateful for their ongoing commitment to the Project SEARCH program. At the start of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) situation the hospital was committed to allowing the interns to work in their internship assignments in order to help support the patients and staff during this busy time.

As things were evolving and rapidly changing the hospital ensured

that we were up-to-date with any changes and following all workplace policies (i.e. temperature checks, wearing masks, entrance restrictions, and prevention methods). The hospital also ensured that we had a large meeting space to go in the mornings and afternoons for the classroom portion of Project SEARCH so that we could spread out.



As the hospital Incident Command Center continued to monitor the evolving situation, and the cases in Linn County started to increase, we agreed to temporarily suspend the program. The hospital has agreed that when the concerns are reduced our program can reopen and our interns will be able to complete their final internship. We are grateful that the program was able to remain open as long as it did and we are looking forward to when we can resume the program and be back together again. The interns are looking forward to completing their final internships and graduation in June.

**Stephanie Beary**  
**Project SEARCH Skills Instructor**

