

# The Challenger

A newsletter that connects, engages and informs



Fall 2020 • Volume 68 • Issue 3

## Friends Helping Friends Annual Campaign

### Friends Helping Friends Challenge

Crisis management is a process, not a verdict, in which we must identify the danger and define the opportunity. We knew the immediate danger was the health and safety of our staff and clients. Within a few short days in March we quickly made the decision to close the office, coordinate remote work, suspend site based programs at the direction of the governor, develop safety protocols, and cancel all family and community events. We knew this was the right thing to do. We assumed it would be for just a short time...*but then it wasn't*.

2020 has brought us new vocabulary like COVID-19, PPE, superspreaders, and Derecho. References to pandemic, asymptomatic, social distancing, tree removal, and generators became all too familiar. Like all of you, we had to find a new normal. By partnering with local agencies and funders we redefined what it meant to meet the critical needs of those we serve.

We stepped outside of our comfort zone to find solutions that presented opportunities:

- A client was experiencing anxiety and isolation due to the closure of our Day Habilitation program, so we took the program to her home. The team was very creative in developing a plan that included exercise, art projects, cooking, and virtual tours just to name a few. Her parents shared that they were very appreciative of the flexibility that allowed their daughter to remain living independently.
- Teleservices was implemented and offered a lifeline for those who relied on The Arc's staff as their primary natural supports to assist with day to day needs. The ability to maintain regular contact with clients during a time of fear and uncertainty prevented escalating mental health issues.
- When clients were unable to leave their homes Arc staff were able to assist with critical errands and shopping on their behalf. With direction from the client, our staff shopped and shared the experience via video sessions that allowed clients to actively participate in the process.
- The Arc was allowed to provide respite services to parents who were forced to work from home and had lost their daycare, allowing them to maintain their income and protect their employment.

Even with our collaborative and creative efforts, we still have our work cut out for us. Overall we are at less than 60% of our revenue compared to last year. We know the path ahead is yet to be paved and the financial impact remains uncertain even with the receipt of grants and stimulus funds that help to offset lost revenue and unexpected expenses. We know the turnaround will take time and we respect the decision each family must make about the safety of their loved ones. **Yet we remain hopeful.**

An anonymous donor with longstanding ties to The Arc is stepping up with an incredible opportunity: **Friends Helping Friends Challenge**. Their goal is to provide a source of funding for families in need. For every dollar you donate, your gift will be tripled up to a total of \$20,000! That's right, if you act now, your gift can have triple the impact! A \$100 gift will grow to \$300, a \$500 gift becomes \$1,500...just multiply times three to see the potential. Let's end 2020 on a positive note and make this donor proud by meeting their challenge of matching up to \$20,000 in donations.

As this year comes to a close we would like to thank you for walking alongside us. From The Arc family to yours, we wish you happiness and good health in the year ahead.



**Don't wait...  
make your donation today!  
Help support the  
Friends Helping Friends Challenge.**

**Please mail your donation to:**

The Arc of East Central Iowa  
680 2nd Street SE  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401

Attn: Friends Helping Friends Annual Campaign  
or donate online at [www.arceci.org](http://www.arceci.org)

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## From the Director's Desk

Happy Holiday Season Arc Family!

This December is cause for celebration – not only for the holidays, but because it signals the end of the year 2020! But seriously, I think we all will welcome a fresh start and the possibilities a new year brings for us. The difficulties we are currently facing, however, will not magically dissolve come January 1, and we forecast more tough decisions in the coming months. There will be a new path to pave as we begin implementation of our Strategic Plan while still navigating the impact of COVID-19 and its aftermath. Regardless, The Arc of ECI is very excited to move forward to create efficiencies and deliver services in an even more effective way, all while keeping your best interest, safety, and well-being at the forefront of our decision-making. We will share specifics of our Strategic Plan in January and begin to engage you in our journey to become THE leader and visionary for empowerment and inclusion for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As I reflect on this past year, I am humbled by and grateful for the resilience in each of you. I am sure there were times we thought this year would never end, but We Made It! Though not without sacrifice, a great deal of frustration, and for some of us, grief and loss. I admire the ability of caregivers, families, and our Arc Team to put one foot in front of the other each day, uncertain of what will come their way, and address challenges head-on with grace and determination. We recognize your stress, fatigue, and anxiety, and urge you to take care of YOU. This Challenger provides tips and highlights great self-care ideas, and we encourage you to take advantage of community resources and the virtual caregivers supports we will be rolling out in the coming month.

Thank you for supporting The Arc of ECI so we can support you. I wish you, your family, and your loved ones a very Happy, Socially-Distanced, and Virtual Holiday Season. Cheers to 2021!

Stay safe,



Theresa Lewis  
Executive Director

## The Family Caregivers Center of Mercy

The Family Caregivers Center of Mercy is a resource for family caregivers who are caring for adults living with chronic conditions such as dementia, Parkinson's, cancer, arthritis, diabetes, COPD, etc.

Caregivers often feel alone, overwhelmed and are not sure where to find help. Sometimes it is difficult to even know what help is needed. Trained volunteers and staff listen to caregivers and help them identify needs, strengths, answers to questions and help caregivers get connected to existing resources.

The Center provides one-on-one meetings; educational events, a resource library, book studies, chair yoga and Transitions Out of Caregiving for those caregivers whose loved one has died, followed by an on-going support group.

### Contact the Center:

901 8th Ave SE | Cedar Rapids 52401

319-221-8866

fcmc@mercy.org



Theresa Lewis

## Mental Health

Your mental health plays a large role in your overall well-being. In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, many Americans have reported a decline in their mental health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 45% of U.S. adults have reported distress during these times.

### What is mental health?

Your mental well-being includes how you think, act and feel. It also helps you cope with stress, relate to others and make decisions. According to the WHO, there's not a specific definition of mental well-being. However, various studies agree that achieving a state of mental well-being includes being able to:

- Realize your full potential.
- Work productively.
- Cope with normal stresses of life.
- Contribute meaningfully to your community.

Mental well-being includes mental health, but goes far beyond treating mental illness. For example, you could go through a period of poor mental health but not necessarily have a diagnosable mental illness. And your mental health can change over time, depending on factors such as your workload, stress and work-life balance.

### What is mental illness?

Mental illness refers to a variety of conditions that affect your mood or behavior, feelings or thinking. Mental illnesses can occur occasionally, while others are chronic and long-lasting. Common mental illnesses include anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Mental illness is more prevalent than you might think. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 5 U.S. adults will experience a mental illness in any given year, and more than 50% will experience mental illness at some point in their life.

### Why is mental well-being important?

Your mental well-being is tied directly to your physical health. Individuals with poor mental health or untreated mental illness are at risk of developing many chronic conditions like Type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease and obesity.

Poor mental health can also cause negative effects in your work life as well as in your social life. If you have poor mental health, you may experience productivity issues at work and may experience withdrawal or feelings of loneliness.

### Common signs of poor mental health.



Feelings of anxiety, depression, irritability, restlessness or anger



Change in appetite



Trouble sleeping or fatigue



Social withdrawal



Difficulty concentrating

### How can you improve your mental well-being?

Because it's such a crucial component of your health, it's important to focus on maintaining or improving your mental health. Here are three simple ways to do so every day:

1. **Express gratitude.** Taking five minutes a day to write down the things that you are grateful for has been proven to lower stress levels and can help you change your mindset from negative to positive.
2. **Get exercise.** You probably hear all the time how beneficial exercise is to your overall health, but it's true. Exercising can improve brain function, reduce anxiety and improve your self-image.
3. **Get a good night's sleep.** Strive for seven to eight hours of sleep a night to improve your mental health.

# Your Wellness Matters

## Self-Care for Caregivers

Being a caregiver can be very stressful, now even more so with COVID-19. Common signs of caregiver stress include the following:

- Feeling sad or moody.
- Crying more often than usual.
- Having a low energy level.
- Feeling like you don't have any time to yourself.
- Having trouble sleeping or not wanting to get out of bed in the morning.
- Having trouble eating or eating too much.
- Losing interest in your hobbies or the things you used to do with friends or family.
- Feeling angry at the person for which you are providing care.



Feeling overwhelmed and stressed is natural. These feelings are not wrong or strange. Because being a caregiver is difficult, some doctors think of caregivers as "hidden patients." If you don't take care of yourself and stay well, you won't be able to help anyone else.

### Reducing Personal Stress

How we perceive and respond to an event plays a role in how we adjust and cope with it. The stress you feel is not only the result of your caregiving situation but also the result of your perception of it—whether you see the glass as half-full or half-empty. It is important to remember that you are not alone in your experiences. Your level of stress is influenced by many factors, including the following:

- Your caregiving is voluntary or involuntary. If you feel you had no choice in taking on the responsibilities, the chances are greater that you will experience strain, distress, and resentment.
- Your relationship with the care recipient. Sometimes people care for another with the hope of healing a relationship. If healing does not occur, you may feel regret and discouragement.
- Your coping abilities. How you coped with stress in the past predicts how you will cope now. Identify your current coping strengths so that you can build on them.
- Your caregiving situation. Some caregiving situations are more stressful than others. For example, caring for a person with 100% needs is often more stressful than caring for someone who needs minimal assistance.
- Your support network. If you do not have a strong support network or supports available to you, this can lead to additional stress, feeling even more overwhelmed, and further isolation.

### Steps to Managing Stress

- 1. Recognize warning signs early.** These might include irritability, sleep problems, and forgetfulness. Know your own warning signs, and act to make changes. Don't wait until you are overwhelmed.
- 2. Identify sources of stress.** Ask yourself, "What is causing stress for me?" Sources of stress might be that you have too much to do, family disagreements, feelings of inadequacy, or the inability to say no.
- 3. Identify what you can and cannot change.** Remember, we can only change ourselves; we cannot change another person. When you try to change things over which you have no control, you will only increase your sense of frustration. Ask yourself, "What do I have some control over? What can I change?" Even a small change can make a big difference. The challenge we face as caregivers is well expressed in the following words modified from the original Serenity Prayer (attributed to American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr):

*"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
and (the) wisdom to know the difference."*

- 4. Take action.** Taking some action to reduce stress gives us back a sense of control. If you have a support network, use them. Identify some stress reducers that work for you, like walking or other forms of exercise, gardening, meditation, virtual support group, or virtual coffee with a friend.

Adapted from: <https://www.caregiver.org/taking-care-you-self-care-family-caregivers>

Thank you for all of your continued generous contributions to The Arc. We will continue to recognize volunteers, donations and members in the quarterly editions of The Challenger newsletter. September - November 2020.

## Volunteers Hours - 152

Matt Baumann, Amy Belice, Jace Coberly, Jeff Corrigan, Melissa Cullum, Jody Donaldson, Cheryl Duke, Stephanie Erbe, Brian Fagan, Teresa Fisher, Teri Gibson, Nate Haas, Brad Hauge, Darrin Keller, Cheryl Kiburz, Heidi Kinder, Theresa Lewis, Vaughan Lewis, Carol Meade, Michele Means, Mark Mitchell, Ellen Mouw, Ben Mulholland, Jackie Nau, Michael Neuerburg, Meghann Pasker, Kristin Schaefer, Kyle Schramp, Philip Schramp, Cindy Smothers, Erica Smothers, Tyler Smothers, Shelly Strellner, Mary Swiderski, Catherine Swiderski, Melissa Tandy, Sue Wilber, Blake Wilkinson

## Thank You

### General Donations

Tom & Kathleen Aller, Alliant Energy, Crescent Janko Foundation, Brian Fagan, Terese Fisher, Richard & Patricia Folger, Doris Fry, Denise Grove, Lynda Heims, Kai Johnson, Danette Kremer, Michele Means, Schneider Electric North American, Jake Stigers, Gary & Nancy Strandberg, Linda Svoboda, Mary Tarbox, Veridian Credit Union, Robert "Bill" Woodward (Iowa United Methodist Foundation)

### Memorials

#### Rose Imsland

Hills Bank & Trust, Matthew & Mary Richeson

#### Jean Oxley

Quota International of Cedar Rapids, Inc.

#### Fred Russo

Stephon & Linda Chase, Nancy Collins, William & Catherine Sheka

#### Sara Smith

Ryan Smith

## Membership

### Arc Angel

Dennis & Rebecca McCollough

### Arc Builder

Teri Gibson, Jim LeMaster, Candice Murphy, Michael Neuerburg, Suzanne Revers

### Arc Friend

Terry & Johanna Abernathy, Anne Armknecht, Teri Billick, Brad & Jody Bridgewater, Jack & Nancy Evans, Dudley Fleck, Nathan Haas, Frances Hatfield, Larry & Angie Ihnen, Annette Kenney, Heidi Kinder, James Klosterbuer, Carol Meade, Mark Ogden & Iris Muchmore, Mike & Suzanne Myers, Scott & Jacki Nau, Emmett & Ann Scherrman, Albert & Marcia Simon, Sharon Wilcox

### Arc Advocate

Kelvin & Terri Bronner, Scott & Judy Carnes, Melissa & Jason Cullum, George & Sandy David, Chad Brakhahn & Stephanie Erbe, Betty Hass, Robert Jansen, Daniel & Joan Manternach, Mark & Sheryl Morgan, Ellen Mouw, William & Darlene O'Malley, Jeff & Kristin Schaefer, Loren & Lois Schmitz, Chester & Janet Sullivan, Melissa Tandy, Tom Wiegand, Blake & Angie Wilkinson, Larry & Peggy Wright, Rick & Lois Yoerger

*Everyone can  
experience the joy  
and blessing of  
generosity; because  
everyone has  
something to give.  
~ Jan Grace*



**WINTER SAFETY**

- Walk like a penguin: take short, flat-footed steps
- Free up your hands and use a backpack if carrying things
- Wear winter footwear
- Step down, not out on curbs
- Use a handrail if possible
- No short cuts! Pick the safe route!
- Non-slip soles provide good traction
- Invest in insulated footwear with a deep tread
- Consider adding cleats

**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
WADDLE  
ON**

# Achieve with us.

## Consumer Spotlight



### Carter Kirchhoff

I am 10 years old and live in Cedar Rapids. I was born with two big sisters. In September of 2019 I was adopted by my mom Amber and I gained two big brothers and lots of fish!

#### **My Favorite Hobby:**

I love playing on a tablet, taking pictures or looking at things through the camera lens, watching the fish, spinning on my spin board, bubbles, braille and car washes. I really enjoy sitting in my room with my LED lights.

#### **My Favorite Arc Activities:**

When I am at The Arc I love to play with the music light up toys, go for walks with friends, play in the kiddy pool during the summer and going to the YMCA.

#### **My Favorite Outside Activities:**

I love to go swimming. I overcame my fear this year and now I will push people away in the pool so I can float on my back with my life jacket on. I can spin myself around and will walk through the water.

My G-tube was removed in Feb. and I am growing and eating everything! I have done great with all my goals in school. I have been using a talker more to communicate and I only use my wheelchair for school bus rides and really long distances. I like to use my walker and I can go superfast now!

## Grinch Fruit Kabobs



A simple and fun Grinch-themed holiday snack made with fresh strawberries, green grapes, and marshmallows. Makes 24 grinch kabobs. Serves 12 with 2 kabobs per serving.

### Ingredients

- 8 large marshmallows
- 24 mini marshmallows
- 2 pints fresh strawberries  
24 large strawberries
- 24 green grapes rinsed and patted dry
- 24 wooden kabob skewers
- \*Optional: tube of chocolate frosting or edible marker for making faces

### Instructions

- Thread a grape onto the kabob skewer
- Cut a large marshmallow into thirds with kitchen scissors
- Slide a slice of marshmallow onto the stick
- Slice the top off a strawberry and thread onto the skewer (large side first)
- Top with mini marshmallow
- Serve plain or decorate with frosting.

## Wish List

From every day items to special requests. We are always in need of items to keep our office and programs running. Donations can be dropped off at The Arc's main office anytime or shop our Charity List on AmazonSmile. Thank you for your support!

### Kitchen Needs

Aluminum foil / Plastic Wrap  
Can opener - heavy duty  
Digital kitchen timers  
Dish soap  
Paper bowls, plates, towels  
Plastic spoons and forks  
Ziploc bags (gallon, quart, sandwich size)  
Ziploc FREEZER bags (gallon)

### Snack & Cooking Activity Items

100% juice  
Cookie sheets / Muffin tins  
Disposable cake pans (9x13 foil pans w/ lids)  
Frosting for cakes  
Fruit snacks / Granola bars  
Pan non-stick spray  
Re-usable cake pans (9 x 13)  
Snack crackers (Ritz, Graham, Club, Oyster, Saltine)

### General Supplies

Baby wipes (*unscented/sensitive*)  
Disinfectant spray/wipes  
Hand sanitizer & refills  
Hand soap & refills  
Kleenex/Tissues

### Office Supplies

Batteries (AAA, AA, C & D)  
Calculators  
Double-sided tape  
Dry erase markers/erasers  
Eraser and eraser tops  
File Folders (*regular and hanging*)  
Ink pens (*blue and black ink*)  
Masking/Duct tape  
Pocket Dictionaries  
Pocket folders (*durable*)  
Sharpies / Markers (*washable*)  
Sticky tack

### Program Needs

Adult coloring books  
Bean bag chairs or bean refills  
Board games for teens/adults (*Life, Clue, Scattergories, Pay Day, Heads Up, etc.*)  
Books on CD for kids & teens  
Bubbles  
Coloring/activity books  
Construction paper (8.5x11-various colors)  
Crayola crayons / Colored pencils  
Dice / Kinex  
DVDs (*newer G/PG*)  
Master Pieces NFL Matching Game  
Padlocks with keys  
Sensory items (*water tubes, soft plastic gel-filled shapes*)  
Transformers  
TVs (*flat screen at least 32 inches*)  
Water Bottles (*Reusable*)  
Weaving & jewelry making kits

### Clothes

Teenage-sized shorts and jogging pants and swimsuits (*boys & girls – draw strings or elastic*)  
Towels (*bath & beach*)



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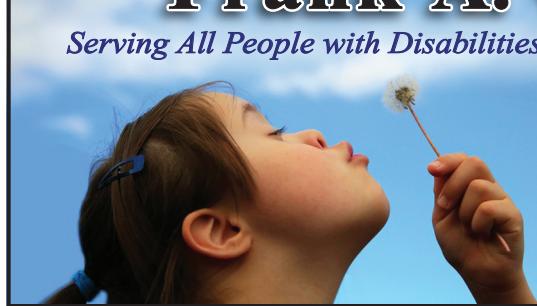
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## Mission Statement

The Arc of East Central Iowa  
empowers people with intellectual  
and related disabilities to engage  
in lifelong opportunities to live,  
learn, work and play with  
dignity, freedom and full  
inclusion in their communities.

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