

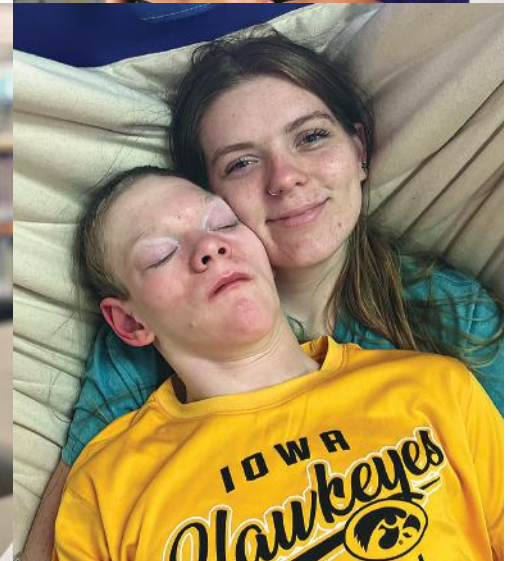
Challenger

A NEWSLETTER THAT CONNECTS, ENGAGES AND INFORMS

Registration Is Open

Summer at The Arc is full of excitement, learning, growth, and fun! We offer a unique experience during the summer focusing on social interactions and opportunities to participate in a variety of activities supporting individual's abilities. The Arc staff are specially trained to understand and meet the needs of each participant, ensuring that everyone feels included and valued. In addition to all the fun we have each summer, participants also learn important life skills like communication, cooperation, problem solving and friendship.

Excitement is in the air and we can't wait to see you this summer! If you are interested in attending this summer or working for The Arc, please visit our website at www.arceci.org.



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A partner agency of the
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From the Director's Desk

Hello Arc Friends and Family!

Happy New Year! 2025 has come in with a bang and we are moving forward with positivity and hope. Due to the changes planned at the state level and the availability of additional America Plan Rescue Act (ARPA) funding for capacity-building, The Arc had to adjust our current Strategic Plan. These changes were approved by our Board of Directors at the January meeting.



Theresa Lewis

The biggest change to the Strategic Plan was our 4th Priority.

Original:

New:

Sustain	Growth
<p>Goal: Financial balance and sustainability will be achieved.</p>	<p>Goal: Secure the finances, space, and resources to fulfill our mission and meet the needs of those we serve.</p>
<p>Key Strategies: Meet/Exceed Service Targets & Reduce Waitlist Fundraising & Grant Writing Diversification Risk & Compliance Management</p>	<p>Key Strategies: Service Line Opportunities Programming Space Donor Development & Grant Writing</p>

Originally, our goal was to maintain balance and continue to make progress for long-term sustainability. While this remains a focus, receiving the ARPA funds has allowed The Arc to revise our management structure to create the capacity for growth, as well as expand Day Hab and child and adult daycare. We are also working to improve our Group Respite program to better meet the needs of the community and serve more participants. Our work over the past several months has transformed 'Sustain' to 'Growth', and we are also hoping the state changes will bring new ways for The Arc to serve your family and community.

Next month is our largest friend- and fundraising event, The Arc March. For new families and friends to The Arc, this is such an important event. Not only does it bring participants together to dance, socialize, and reunite with friends, it also raises funds to support our critical programming. Please consider starting your own team and raising money for The Arc through your networks. It is for a great cause, and we hope to see you there on March 29th at 8:00 AM at the Lindale Mall!

With gratitude,

Theresa Lewis,
Executive Director

ARPA

In December, The Arc received state America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in the amount of \$335,976. These funds are for Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recruitment & Retention and agency Capacity-Building.

The Arc has used funds to support recruitment and retention efforts for DSPs and will continue to do so for the remainder of the fiscal year. We also hope you have seen advertisements for The Arc on city buses around all parts of Cedar Rapids. These ads have been helpful in recruiting new DSPs and creating awareness about The Arc and the work we do.

The other half of the ARPA funds are to create capacity for growth. The state is aware of the DSP shortage and the long waiting lists agencies have for those needing services. The Arc has been moving forward with expanding enrollment, beginning with Day Habilitation, and we have also added new children and adults into our daycare and CHOICE programs. The Arc engaged Vernon Research Group to help us develop and conduct a survey on Group Respite needs. The results were very informative as we look to redesign that program for growth. The indications are that most individuals who do not participate in groups do not even know the program exists, and many of those who do attend would attend more if there was not a waiting list. We continue to review cross-sections of this survey to target all potential areas of growth and expansion.

In our exploration of how to best create capacity at The Arc, we realized additional management capacity was necessary to support programs so they can continue to expand. We reviewed current positions and adjusted job titles and responsibilities to create new positions. The Arc is adding two Manager positions, each to support one of our Senior Program Managers. These positions will directly oversee specific programs, allowing the Senior Program Managers to focus on future planning and staff development. We also added a new Program Coordinator position in Day Habilitation to help manage community integration logistics with increased participants and staff. And finally, our new Program Coordinator for Group Respite will be critical in helping to design a schedule of activities that can accommodate more participation.

It is an incredible opportunity to receive these ARPA funds and we are proud to be able to invest in our DSPs – they are the heartbeat of The Arc. We will keep you posted as we move forward with additional capacity-building efforts!



Project SEARCH

St. Luke's Hospital, Iowa Vocational Rehab, and The Arc of East Central Iowa have been in partnership for the last 10 years with Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is an international employment training program for young adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities, ages 18-30, and who have graduated from high school (or the equivalent). Project SEARCH combines classroom instruction with workplace internships that better prepare individuals for competitive employment. The training program is nine months in length.

In addition to classroom instruction, the interns spend the bulk of their day in internships. Each intern will complete 3 internships within the hospital setting; each internship is 10 weeks long and the interns work 20 hours per week. The hospital offers a wide variety of internship opportunities for the interns to gain work experience. The interns can gain work experience in departments such as: Dietary Department, Linen Services, Environmental Services, Human Resources, Infusion Center, Therapy Gym, Radiology/Imaging and a variety of patient floors.

“Project SEARCH is helping me learn how to gain work skills and cope with my anxiety.”

“Project SEARCH is really important to me because I have Autism, and it is helping me to learn how to work and cope with everyday society.”

“Project SEARCH has been a positive experience, and I like learning a lot of new skills.”

“Project SEARCH is a fun experience to learn about jobs and to get out of your comfort zone.”

Want to learn more? Join us for a Project SEARCH information night on Thursday, March 6th from 5:30 - 7:00 PM at the St. Luke's Medical Office Plaza (855 A Ave NE). If you are unable to attend in person, this meeting will also be available via Teams. To register for the link or have questions, please contact Stephanie Beary at sbeary@arceci.org or 319-721-6245.

Monthly Giving Has an Impact!

Meet Tony Schwendinger.

Tony works for Northwestern Mutual in downtown Cedar Rapids where he serves as a financial advisor for families and small businesses. Tony and his wife have 2 children, a cat and a dog. Tony is not an Arc parent and has no real association with The Arc other than having a nephew with autism who lives outside of our service area. But several years ago, Tony began making scheduled monthly gifts to support the work we do here. Why did Tony and his family decide to make this dedicated type of commitment to support The Arc?

“When my nephew was growing up, my brother and his wife struggled to find help. If they had had an Arc, I think that would have had a major impact on them as a family.”

Tony's decision to support The Arc as a “Sustaining Donor” not only allows him to support a mission that means a lot to him, it also aligns with the work he does each day helping people to plan their budgets and save for the future while still having an impact on those around them. He says, “Giving smaller monthly amounts is easier to digest than one big lump sum at the end of the year. By scheduling these gifts, they go out automatically and we don't miss it. In the end, it all adds up and it helps so many.”

The Arc is grateful to Tony for his support and his example he sets for anyone who is exploring this method of support. Sustaining gifts have enormous benefits to The Arc and are a great way to have a lasting impact a little at a time.



Aktion Club

A service organization for adults with special needs.

For two years, The Arc has had the great opportunity to partner with our local Kiwanis Club chapter to create an Aktion Club. What is Aktion Club? It's a service organization for adults with special needs. The Arc's Aktion Club chapter meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 5:00 - 6:00 PM. Each month, the club picks a service project to do that helps someone or a local organization. Some of our many activities have included:

- Shamrocks for Soldiers (to hang in windows of the veterans' homes)
- Making laundry soap bags for Geneva Tower residents
- Caroling
- Painting a snowplow
- Writing notes of encouragement to be included in Horizon's food bags
- Making dog toys for the animal shelter



In addition to our service work, we spend a good amount of time enjoying each other, learning about what's going on with each person's life and we just have a great time.

Does this group sound like something you'd like to be a part of? We have room for more members. Dues are \$7 each year plus the cost of a t-shirt. You do not have to be an active Arc member to participate. If you have more questions or want to join, reach out to Jenny Bosking at jbosking@arceci.org or call her at 319-893-6935.



Participant Spotlight



Julyia Hanson-Keller

About Me.

I am 10 years old and live in Cedar Rapids. I have one younger sister and two cats. This year I participated in the Special Olympics by running the 100-meter dash and got a blue ribbon!

Favorite Arc Activities?

I love to attend group respite, especially when we get to watch movies, bake, sing and dance, and have recess!

Favorite Arc Memories?

I had a great time when I got to go to AirFX with my friends and when I got to meet Santa and sit on his lap at the CRANDIC Christmas event.

Favorite Hobbies?

I enjoy playing with my barbies, magnetic tiles, and singing.

Favorite Outdoor Activities?

Riding my bike and playing with friends on the playground.

Favorite Foods?

My favorites are chips, pizza, chicken, and I LOVE ice cream!

I am a really outgoing, bubbly, social person. I love going to Girl Scouts, swimming lessons, and Sunday School. Some say that my smile is contagious. No one is a stranger - everyone is a friend!

Thank You 2024 Annual Campaign Donors

Terry & Johanna Abernathy, Steve & Mary Agne, Tom & Kathleen Aller, Alliant Energy Foundation, Anonymous(4), Jan & Paul Aucutt, Judi & Jeff Barta, Sheryl Bass, Tom Beamish, Joshua Bean, Robert Becker, Jared Roach & Amy Belice, Kerri & Terry Benda, Katie Benedix, Bethany Lutheran Women's Guild, Thomas Blazek, Diane Bloomhall Charitable Fund, Steve & Jenny Bosking, Theresa Brandon, Brad & Jody Bridgewater, Chris Brodt, Peter & Joann Bryant, Lavern Busse & Jeff Busse (Busse Foundation Fund), June Cach, Terri Christoffersen, Laura Collett-Walsh, James Cone, Janie Dawson, Kevin & Anne Downey, Mike & Jan Drahozal, Patricia Drumbarger, Mike & Cindy Dunn, Jon & Dina Dusek, Brian Fagan, Fairfax State Savings Bank, Marjorie Fletcher, Bruce & Julie Frana, Don & Karen Frost, Steve & Judy Fuemmeler, Lisa & Andre Gallet, Brian & Sharon Gardner, Faye Gerner, Karen & Alejandro Gomez, James & Valerie Gray, Steven & Karen Greif, Troy Burckhart & Sara Griffin, Nathan Haas, Dave & Sharon Harris, Ann Hatfield, Eric & Ann Hearn, Denise Henderson, Carol Hills, James & Ann Hoffman, Colleen Holmes, Gingie Hunstad, Larry & Angie Ihnen, Terry Bergen & Liz Jacobi, Jim & Paula Jakoubek, Joseph & Ann Jeffries, Amy Johnson, Darrin Keller, Brian Kinnaird, David & Jillian Knutson, Gary & Bev Kotowske, Larry & Mary Kramer, Judy Krautbauer, Mark & Jennifer Krautbauer, Sheryl Kruse, Kyle & Patti Kunz, L Coppock Investments, Kay & James Lehman, Robert & Judith Lehman, Jim LeMaster, Delores & Eugene Lien, Scott & Kim Loggins, Doriene Loomis, Tara Ludwig, Daniel & Joan Manternach, Kevin & Bridget Maruga, Bill & Mary Lou McCartan, Dennis & Rebecca McCollough, Wanda McCready, Midco Foundation, Chris & Kristine Mihm, Clint & Gale Mote, Ellen Mouw, Catherine Mowrey, Gayla Mulnix, Candice & Ryan Murphy, Mike Myers, James & Laurie Neuhaus, Doug & Jennifer Neumann, Rose Noonan, Karen & Jim Nussle, Sheryl O'Connell, William Oliver, Scott & Penny Olson, Cynthia Paker (May G Gortner Charitable Trust), JaneAnne Parker, Michael & Mary Parrish, George & Linda Patterson, Nicole Pedron, Perry Peiffer, Melissa Pepmeyer, John & Ann Persick (Persick Family Giving Fund), Shirley Pisarik, Kathleen Poynter, Becky & Don Quijano, Tom & Linda Randklev, Jon & Joan Rasmussen, Bruce & Myra Ray, Dale & Debra Rettenmeier, Phillip & Christy Rezin, Maya & Doug Richards, John & Thelma Rife, Shelby & Walter Roth, John & Nancy Roth, Margaret Roush, Babbette Roy, Wanda Rutan, Jeff & Kristin Schaefer, Michael Schramp, Dennis & Joyce Schwebke, Robert & Patricia Sebetka, Scott & Terrie Seibert, Katie Shaull, Gary & Sharon Shea, Bill & Rocki Shepard, Ray & Gloria Short, Marilyn Sippy, Slapppy Family Foundation, Ellie & Richard Snavely, David & Mindy Sorg, Bob & Kay Spading, St Pius X Parish, Marilyn & Robert Stabenow, Kelly & Mike Stagg, Richard & Carole Swanson, Catherine Swiderski, Frank & Mary Swiderski, Richard Thier, Jeffrey & Kathy Thorsteinson, Sara & Dale Todd, Emma Trotter, Curtis & Mary Updegraff, Tina Usher, Natalia Vorobtsov, Connie & Kenneth Wagner, Dennis Walsh, Jeffrey & Julie Wenzel, Kevin & Becky Whitman, Greg & Kelly Wilkinson, Virginia & John Wilts, Larry & Joni Witzel, Judy Woods, David & Cindy Zenk

You Make a Difference

Thank you for all of your continued generous contributions to The Arc. This edition of the Challenger recognizes volunteers, donors and members who generously supported The Arc from November 2024 through January 2025.

Thank You

General Donations

Thomas Aller, Andrew Almoayyed, Anonymous Donors, Joshua Baynes, Andrew Bellagamba, Andrew Bentz, Jaja Campbell, Cargill, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust, Duane & Julie Cline, Randy & Dodie Easton, Jessica Fahey, Gazette Communications Inc, Robert, Sharon & Sean Harschnek, Meredith Harshner, Lily Humpal, Jefferson High School Leadership Club, John Deere, Justice Electric, Jeffrey Keslar, Knights of Columbus #3893, Lynette Marling, MidAmerican Aerospace, David C Neuhaus Family Foundaion, Nordstrom, Danica O'Brien, Leslie and Matthew Petersen Memorial Fund, Susan Polglaze, James Potts, Raytheon Technologies, Aaron Read, Salesforce, Amy Sauter, Anthony Schwendinger, Rachel Shaffer, Duane Smith, St. Luke's Hospital Medical Staff, Standard Insurance Company, Roger & Oline Stigers, True North, Kim Wilkerson, Blake Wilkinson

Memorials

Kendra Marie Blietz

Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Pamela Thomas, Ann Zerkel, Gretchen Zimmerman

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Karen Bachman

Bill Quinby

Mike & Karen Delaney

Mary Oberreuter

Linda Bechen (Sisters of Mercy), Margie Bradley, Kelvin & Terri Bronner, Bonnie Hancock, Albert LeBeau, Michele O'Connor, Jeremy Parker, Alfred & Rita Sommerfeld, Sawyer & Richard Stern, John Stuart

Sara Smith

Ryan Smith

Cody Whittaker

Cheri Whittaker

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Dennis & Rebecca McCollough

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Volunteers Hours - 52

Whitney Alber, Katie Beckman-Shaull, Adam Brown, Jeff Corrigan, Jessica Fahey, Terese Fisher, Maria Gaffney, Nate Haas, Brad Hauge, Chris Johnson, Shawn Knighton, Shelby Kobliska, Jeff Koffron, Sara Kruse, Cherri Lock, Carol Meade, Ben Mulholland, Candice Murphy, Jackie Nau, Micheal Neuerburg, Jessica Pleggenkuhle, Danielle Rodriguez, Kristin Schaefer, Mindy Sorg, Shelly Strellner, Nikki Wilcox, Blake Wilkinson

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 M-F 9 AM - 3:30 PM or shop our [Amazon Wish List](#).



Kitchen Needs

Cascade Dishwasher Pods
Kitchen Garbage Bags
Paper Plates & Paper Towels
Plastic Disposable Cups
Plastic Spoons & Forks
Ziploc Bags - Reg & FREEZER (Gallon, Quart)

Snack & Cooking Activity Items

Applesauce
Canned Fruit & Vegetables
Fruit Snacks
Juice - 100% Apple or Grape
Snack Crackers - Variety Packs

General Supplies

Baby Wipes - Unscented/Sensitive
Bandages - Assorted
Deodorant - Travel Size (Men & Women)
Hand Lotion - Travel Size
Hand Sanitizer Refills
Hand Wipes
Kleenex/Tissues (Cube Boxes)
Lint Rollers
Reusable Hot/Cold Packs
Shampoo/Conditioner
Tide Pods - Free & Gentle
Toothbrush & Toothpaste - Travel Size

Office Supplies

#2 Pencils
Ball Point Pens (Blue or Black Ink)
Batteries (AAA, AA, C & D)
Construction Paper (Black) 9" x 12"
Dry Erase Markers & Washable Markers
Highlighters
Post-it Notes
Sharpies

Program Needs

Coloring Books - Adult & Children
Crafts
Craft Felt Fabric Sheets & Pipe Cleaners
Digital Kitchen Timers
Fidget Toys - Pop-its, Stretchy Toys, Noodles, Dimples, Fidget Spinners, etc.
Fine Motor Skills Toys
Gift Cards - Aldi, Walmart, HyVee, Gas
Gift Cards (Community Activities) - Sky Zone, Potters Obsession, Speedeez, Fun Station, Air Fx, etc.
Googly Eyes - Various Sizes
Kinetic Sand & Sand Toys
Painting Canvases - All Sizes
Perler/Fuse Beads
Play-Doh
Playing Cards
Suncatchers

Clothes

Blankets
Clothing - Sweatpants, T-shirts, Sweatshirts, Athletic Shorts - All Sizes, Youth & Adult
Hats & Gloves - Adult
Socks - Ladies & Mens, Size 8-11
Towels - Kitchen & Bath



For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

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The Arc of East Central Iowa

680 2nd Street SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: 319-365-0487
Fax: 319-365-9938
www.arceci.org

Address Service Requested

Mission Statement

The Arc of East Central Iowa empowers individuals with disabilities and their families to engage in lifelong opportunities to live, learn, work, play, and advocate with full dignity and inclusion in their communities.

Make a Difference
Donate at www.arceci.org



Join us as we walk together to raise awareness about intellectual and developmental disabilities at the **28th Annual Arc March!**

March 29th, 2025
Lindale Mall

8:00 AM - Activities Begin | 9:30 AM - Walk Starts



Go to www.arceci.org for details on this event or to make a donation!



Register by March 9th to guarantee a t-shirt!

• **CELEBRATING THE ABILITIES IN ALL OF US!** •