



## The Arc of Pennsylvania celebrates closure of Hamburg State Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 3, 2018

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The Arc of Pennsylvania celebrates the closing of Hamburg Center in Berks County, as announced by the PA Department of Human Services. “On behalf of our membership and the thousands of Pennsylvanians living with an intellectual and developmental disability, we thank Governor Wolf, Secretary Miller, and Deputy Secretary Thaler and for their leadership and for the deliberate planning and implementation that resulted in the closing of Hamburg Center in Berks County. Not only will the 80 people living at Hamburg Center in January 2017 have the opportunity to experience an EveryDay Life, this center will no longer be available to house and segregate people with disabilities”, says Michael Marsh, President, The Arc of PA.

This closure is historic. Hamburg Center has served people with intellectual and developmental disabilities for more than a half-century and it has been more than 10 years since the last closing of a state center. The official closing date is today, Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. “Moving away from a system that relies on institutional care shows Pennsylvania’s commitment to investing in the lives of people with disabilities,” said Maureen Cronin, Executive Director of The Arc of Pennsylvania. “From the closing of these large state centers, we are reminded again and again, that people with disabilities can live in their community, and, in fact, flourish when given the supports and opportunities to do so. Individuals with disabilities deserve the opportunity to experience life in their community, just like anyone else.”

The Arc of PA and the advocacy community recognize that this was an effort that required the diligent work of many people - Department of Human Services/Office of Developmental Programs staff that led the work, Hamburg professionals that supported individuals and families through the process, as well as the many advocates, providers, and county staff who assisted in developing individual plans for each person. We also recognize that none of this would have occurred without the full leadership and support of Governor Tom Wolf. It is his belief in the abilities of people with disabilities and their right to live an EveryDay Life that led to this historic closure.

“The closing of Hamburg Center is another step in making the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania an “institution free” state and reduce the reliance on institutional care. The closure of Hamburg Center is a sign of our commitment in assuring that all persons with disabilities grow up in families, go to school alongside their peers, and as adults, have opportunities for employment and community life,” says Cronin.

For the past 69 years, The Arc of Pennsylvania has advocated for the full inclusion of persons with disabilities into Pennsylvania’s communities. We have worked to ensure that children and adults with autism and intellectual/developmental disabilities receive the services they need, are included in their community, and have control over their own lives. With over 33 local chapters across the Commonwealth, The Arc of PA strives to ensure that all Pennsylvanians with disabilities are no longer segregated and can enjoy life as a valued member of their community. The Arc of Pennsylvania was a plaintiff in the litigation to close Pennhurst and Western State Centers.

**Editor’s Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC, and never ARC.  
The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.**

**The Arc of Pennsylvania  
[www.thearcpa.org](http://www.thearcpa.org)**