

President's Report
Sarah Holland, President
The Arc of PA Quarterly Board Meeting
June 7th, 2021

I have had the pleasure of serving as President of The Arc of Pennsylvania for the past two years. As the parent of two wonderful children, one with disabilities, it has been an honor to lead an organization that has made such change in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Throughout our 70 year history, we have made significant change in where people live, work, go to school, and play. I now add my name to that very prestigious list of Past Presidents, and I am quite humbled. Service to this organization and to Pennsylvanian's with IDD is not a "solo" experience. We do this work with and alongside people with IDD, their families, a committed and experienced board of directors and staff, and very capable local chapters and volunteers. THANK YOU for the lives you change each and every day.

My term as President, which I am sure has been the same for all past President's, has been focused on the systemic changes in how services are provided to people with IDD and how communities welcome every member. Here are some highlights of the past two years:

1. We hired Sherri Landis: We had the privilege to hire Sherri Landis as our Executive Director. I have come to realize that there is no person more committed to the work that we do than Sherri. She is a person that recognizes the history of our organization and values all voices. She has brought new ways of "doing business" that are moving us forward. I love her passion and her excitement about the work that we do together. She has established a great team of staff that represent our state chapter at the local, state, and federal levels. We congratulate Shirley Keith Knox on her retirement from The Arc of PA at the end of June and we will surely miss her. But, those new grandbabies, who know her as Nonni, have her heart.
2. We have a new Strategic Plan: This strategic plan positions The Arc of Pennsylvania to remain a leader in advocating for individuals with IDD and their families. An important focus of this plan is to ensure that stories of individuals with IDD and the voices of those that are most affected are included to provide an integral voice to the development of the work of The Arc of Pennsylvania. I am so excited about our plan which outlines our direction over the next three years. Please watch for more details about the plan and how you can help.
3. We are Surviving the Pandemic: Individuals with IDD, their families, direct support professionals, and our communities have been living with the COVID-19 Pandemic. The impact on our community has been great and lives have been changed drastically, especially those who have experienced the passing of a loved one. My heart goes out to all who have experienced this level of loss. It has been over a year since many home and community based services were moved to a remote format, and for some people, services needed to cease as contracting the virus emerged as a major issue of concern. As a mother of a young man receiving home and community based services, I constantly worry that he gets the services he needs and at the same time, does not contract the virus. I have hope that we are on the other side of this virus and that we will all be experiencing a greater sense of normalcy in the coming months. The Arc of PA, like many other professional organizations, adapted to the change. Almost all of our work is completed remotely, we have increased our social media presence including the addition of a YouTube channel, E Learning Modules for Include Me, and all our employment trainings are now done remotely, to name a few. Our advocacy on the hill continues as we meet remotely with legislators and have come to realize that in some ways, this has engaged more legislators, more chapters, and more self-advocates in this necessary work.
4. Advocacy to Close State Centers Continues: Building on the history of this organization, we let it be known that we supported the closure of Polk and White Haven Centers. While the pandemic has

slowed the process, we anticipate closure and look forward to our continued advocacy to assure that each individual and their family is involved as plans emerge for a smooth transition to a home of their choosing.

5. Our state office continues to address key issues that are impacting people with disabilities and their families, and caregivers. Of continued focus are the continued provision of services, safety, and reopening/closing of schools. Much work was made on the roll out of vaccines to people with IDD, their families, and the professionals that support them. We remain vigilant to assure that the voices of people with intellectual developmental disabilities are considered as these important decisions are being made by our leaders.

I am proud to be part of an organization that has stayed at the forefront as Pennsylvanians with IDD and their families maneuver the pandemic, community services, employment, inclusive education, and many other important aspects of living with a disability. Thank you to all that have joined me in this work. To the Board - thank you for your commitment to this organization. I am honored to serve alongside you!

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Holland