

The Arc of Story County
ASSET Visit Report
October 2020
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Mission/Purpose. The Arc partners with local businesses, organizations, and community members to enrich the lives of people with disabilities, and support their families and providers. The mission of The Arc is to enrich the lives of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they learn, work, play and grow within our community. The target population comprises all Story County residents with intellectual or developmental disabilities. They consistently serve over 200 participants and their families/providers.

Programs. Participants are served through four ASSET funded programs including active lifestyles, advocacy, respite, and care coordination. Each program fulfills an important and otherwise unmet need for participants, striving for outcomes of greater independence and quality of life. Active lifestyles promotes mental health and life satisfaction through physical recreation and social interaction. Advocacy and care coordination provide support in navigating challenges unique to the population served. Respite care enables families/providers to keep participants in a home setting. Project SEARCH is another important program focused on employment training through campus-wide internships at Iowa State University, but does not receive ASSET funding.

Advocacy is especially important for The Arc in an election year. They co-host their bi-annual legislative forum (virtually) with NAMI of Central Iowa, with League of Women Voters president serving as the moderator. They also coordinated a mock caucus training in January in partnership with the League of Women Voters, receiving press coverage from the Des Moines register and TIME.

Pandemic Impact. The services of The Arc are more important now more than ever for program participants during the pandemic for reasons including mental health, advocacy, social engagement, and respite/care coordination. Participants served by The Arc are an already compromised population requiring a COVID vaccine to be able to fully participate in person-to-person programming.

While many in-person events have been cancelled (i.e. summer camps) or modified (i.e. virtual Special Olympics competitions), The Arc has worked to be innovative to deliver program offerings in alternative formats. Programs the past few months have included a drive-by ice cream social and they are planning for a drive-by trick-or-treat. Special Olympics has put into place a return to play plan. Staff anticipate that post-COVID both coaching and counseling will be needed for participants and guardians to feel safe participating in programming.

Administration. The Arc staff includes one fulltime director and one part-time program coordinator. The organization is led by an engaged and healthy board, and leverages community partnerships for volunteer, program sponsorship and other areas of support.

Financial Resources. The board had guided the organization to healthy reserves of 6-8 months operating expenses, sustaining the organization through the pandemic and allowing The Arc to finish FY20 financially solvent. However, regular revenue streams have been impacted including annual program fees (down approximately 75%), fewer/cancelled fundraising events, etc. The Arc has adjusted through strategies including pro-rated program fees. The Arc March normally occurs every fall, but pre-COVID had decided to move it to March, and they are hoping to be able to facilitate it spring 2021.

Goals/Future Initiatives. The opening of the Miracle Field inclusive playground was an aspirational goal of The Arc and partners, and was realized in 2020. The primary priority of The Arc this year is to sustain the organization through COVID, serving the 200 program participants in their programs while remaining financially healthy.