

# **The Arc of Prince George's County**

## **Strategic Plan**

**2007-2012**

**June 28, 2007**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Board of Directors and staff of The Arc of Prince George's County (The Arc) developed this strategic plan with assistance from Managance Consulting during the period of November 2006 through June 2007. This plan provides The Arc with a roadmap to guide its efforts over the next five years. During this time, The Arc will continue to expand and improve its supports and services with special emphasis on the strategic initiatives delineated by this plan.

This plan was developed with broad involvement and guidance from The Arc Board of Directors and staff. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee included four board members, the executive director, and the deputy executive director. The entire board and staff participated in two full-day work sessions to develop the core content for the plan. The Strategic Planning Committee worked on defining the goals based on the recommendations developed at the retreats. Throughout the planning process the Strategic Planning Committee helped coordinate the work and provided important support and analysis to complete this plan.

Managance Consulting facilitated the planning process drawing on the principles of the *Drucker Foundation Self-Assessment Tool*. This approach to strategic planning is based on the following five questions: What is the mission? Who is the customer? What does the customer value? What are the results? What is the plan? Managance Consulting also conducted a comprehensive environmental scan that included feedback and recommendations from internal and external stakeholders. The environmental scan helped The Arc assess both the challenges and opportunities it is likely to face over the next five years and set the context for the choices reflected in this strategic plan.

## **SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

This strategic plan is a guide for The Arc to creatively grow its supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families. The goals and objectives in this plan will guide the allocation of financial resources, the direction of leadership efforts, and focus on achieving the mission of The Arc.

Success in implementing this plan requires a consistent commitment from the Board of Directors as it relates to developing financial resources, considering the organization's

big picture, evaluating trends in the environment, providing new ideas, and monitoring overall organization performance. It also requires a consistent commitment from the executive director and staff to be open to growing and strengthening the infrastructure and systems that facilitate this work. The vitality, financial stability, and continued success of The Arc depend on the continued shared leadership between the Board of Directors and staff.

Additionally, there are a few important steps the Board of Directors and staff have agreed to take together to ensure full implementation of the strategic plan. They are as follows:

- The Board will review progress in implementation of the strategic plan quarterly by looking at the objectives that are the focus for the particular time period.
- Staff will develop an annual work plan in a report format that mirrors the framework of the strategic plan. This plan will be submitted to the Board of Directors along with the annual budget for their review and approval.
- The board will use the strategic plan as a framework for assessing the performance of the executive director.
- The strategic plan will be the reference point at annual board and staff retreats.

## **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

The Arc of Prince George's County was founded in 1952 by a group of parents of children with developmental disabilities. During its first two decades the association was an active advocacy group involved in the development of the county's special education program and the development of recreational opportunities. The Arc was also the founder of Melwood Training Center and Rehabilitation Opportunities Inc. Both of these agencies became independent of The Arc in the late 1960s.

In the 1970s, The Arc established its community based residential program by opening three group homes and a number of small, supportive apartments. The 1980s and 1990s were times of tremendous growth. New programs included individual and family supports, community supported living, supported employment, medical day care, vocational services, and infants and toddlers case management.

Today, The Arc is a \$19 million organization with a staff of 475 serving 2,200 individuals and families per year. The Arc remains a membership organization with nearly 700 members and a 23-member volunteer board of directors.

## PRIMARY CUSTOMER

*Primary customer means the group of people or things that an organization has an on-going exchange with everyday; the organization's programs and services are organized to respond to the needs, wants and aspirations of this customer group. Identifying the primary customer puts priorities in order and gives the organization a reference point for critical decisions.*

The primary customers of The Arc of Prince George's County are people with developmental disabilities and their families.

*Developmental disability* has been designated as the term to describe the disability associated with the individuals supported by The Arc. It replaces mental retardation (the formerly used term) in all of the association's communications. *Developmental disability* has been selected because it accurately portrays The Arc's current constituency.

Maryland State Law [Health General ' 7-101(e)] defines developmental disability as: A severe chronic disability that:

1. is attributable to a physical or mental impairment, other than the sole diagnosis of mental illness, or to a combination of mental and physical impairments;
2. is manifested before the individual attains the age of 22;
3. is likely to continue indefinitely;
4. results in the inability to live independently without external support or continuing and regular assistance; and
5. reflects the need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment, or other services that are planned and coordinated for that individual.

Families have been included in the definition of primary customer. The Arc is a family-centered association that believes that it is often difficult to respond to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities without responding to the needs of their immediate families. Therefore, The Arc's supports and services are directed to the needs of both sectors.

## Supporting Customers

*The supporting customers of the organization are all the people who must be satisfied in order for the organization to succeed. They are engaged with the organization because of and in order to support the accomplishment of the mission.*

The Arc recognizes that it must also respond to the needs of various other customers. The following are examples of supporting customers whose needs must also be addressed in order to ensure the success of The Arc:

- Employers
- Contributors
- Volunteers
- Community at Large
- Members of The Arc
- Funding Sources

## MISSION

*An organization's mission statement is a concise and compelling way to convey the difference the organization is aiming to make in the world.*

The Arc's current mission statement reads as follows:

*Working to make Prince George's County a great place to live, learn, work, play and worship for individuals with mental retardation and their families.*

This statement is a county-specific version of the former mission statement of The Arc of the United States. While it has enjoyed wide appeal and acceptance, it treats "Prince George's County" as the primary customers of the organization and utilizes the label "mental retardation". Therefore, the board and staff determined it was necessary to revise the statement to clarify its primary customer as people with developmental disabilities and their families. There was general consensus that the new statement be short, concise, memorable and reflective of the unique attributes of the association. The updated mission statement reads as follows:

*The Arc of Prince Georges County ... offering a lifetime of support, understanding, and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and their families.*

This revised statement offers a sharper more compelling statement about the difference The Arc is making through its efforts. The new mission statement goes beyond service provision and accentuates the broader agenda and the enduring focus of The Arc's work.

## THEORY OF ACTION

*The theory of action is a set of beliefs about the world that frames an organization's work.*

The Arc believes:

- Every person is inherently valuable and integral to the community, and can participate in making the community better.
- People with developmental disabilities must participate in defining what quality of life is for them, regardless of their level of disability.
- People with developmental disabilities have the right to receive the quality supports they need to live a full life.
- The inclusion of people with all levels of disabilities in the community creates a richer community life for everyone.
- The earlier that people with developmental disabilities begin receiving necessary support, the fuller their lives can become.
- People with developmental disabilities do best when they follow the norms and routines of everyday life with family and friends around them.

## CORE OPERATING VALUES

*Core operating values are the values or ideals at the heart of the organization. They articulate ideals that you would like to be instilled in the operations of the organization and offer guidance about how to do your work.*

The core operating values of The Arc are as follows:

**Full spectrum:** The Arc offers supports across many spectrums. It works with people in all phases of life, from birth to death. It supports individuals with differing abilities, providing the most appropriate level of support for each person.

**Connections:** The Arc provides gateways for connections. It creates, nurtures and supports connections with families, friends, communities, and other supportive agencies.

**Appreciation and Celebration:** The Arc accepts people for who they are, celebrates their individuality, and helps them create full lives. The Arc listens to the people it supports and then acts based on what they want.

**Quality services:** The Arc strives to be the best. It takes pride in knowing the people it supports and assisting them in pursuing their own choices.

**Relationships:** The Arc creates lasting relationships with individuals and their families. It promotes supportive relationships among individuals, families and members of The Arc that are independent of professional involvement.

**Advocacy:** The Arc believes that advocacy is an essential and vital service. It advocates at the individual and systems level. It advocates within the community, the school system, and at the local, state and federal levels of government. The Arc's advocacy role extends beyond the parameters of its own services. It advocates on behalf of people with developmental disabilities and their families regardless of their connection to The Arc.

## SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

*An environmental scan, called the e-scan for short, is a process for discovering and documenting facts and trends in the operating environment of an organization that are likely to affect the organization in its future work. E-scan findings are used to orient strategic planning participants on the context in which the organization's mission is carried out.*

Information for the environmental scan was collected through focus groups with families of individuals receiving supports from The Arc, surveys of Board and staff members, focus groups of individuals supported by The Arc, a work session with management staff, interviews with members, stakeholders and business leaders, and a review of organizational documents. The entire e-scan presentation is available upon request.

In summary, The Arc has experienced significant growth over the last five years in revenue and expenses. Overall, the quality of supports was perceived as good, and data shows that The Arc and its supports continue to be needed and could potentially expand. While there are other service agencies in Prince George's County, The Arc is one of the largest and most comprehensive and is the only organization established as a grassroots membership association actively engaged in systems and individual advocacy. Two areas in which The Arc seems to have less competition are adult daytime supports and family supports.

Perceived unique attributes of The Arc were identified as follows:

- Has a history of creating new initiatives and partnering with other agencies.
- Views advocacy as a central part of the association.
- Supports people regardless of their level of disability.
- Provides services for all ages and stages of life.
- Is governed by an active and vested membership.
- Has a family centered approach.
- Sees information dissemination as important.
- Is connected to a state and national movement.

Perceived strengths of The Arc include:

- Commitment to quality.
- Strong volunteer leadership and many opportunities for member participation.
- Staff with a caring attitude.
- Good information through its publications, workshops, and seminars.
- Focus on individualized supports.
- Accent on community participation.

Perceived areas in need of improvement include:

- Communications with staff, Arc members, and the community at large.
- Low salaries that contribute to staff turnover.
- Transportation of program participants.
- Use of assistive technology.
- Lack of services for children and young families.
- Inclusive practices.
- Fundraising.
- Linkages to business and faith-based communities.
- Use of volunteers to support program operations.

Perceived areas of potential growth include:

- Supports for individuals in retirement.
- Inclusive childcare.
- Expansion of employment programs.
- New partnership initiatives with the business community, faith-based community, and generic community resources.
- New revenue sources.

Perceived threats to continued success include:

- An aging executive staff and volunteer leadership.
- The challenge of continued growth.
- Limited increases in government funding.
- Staff turnover.
- Expensive and limited housing market.

Overall, The Arc is a sound and respected organization providing a needed service and has the ability to manage growth and change as it begins its new strategic direction.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

*The strategic direction is a succinct statement about the strategy or approach an organization will take to its work over a specific period of time. It is often a direct response to the strategic questions asked by an organization and tells you what will be the organization's focus and what will be different over the next 3 to 5 years.*

The years, 2007-2012 will be a dynamic time, in which The Arc is positioned as an innovative, exemplary leader supporting people with a full range of developmental disabilities with quality services and strong community connections. In addition, over the next five years The Arc will focus on:

- Innovation in creating meaningful life opportunities for the people it supports.
- Developing new services for children and their families.
- Emphasizing its visibility and engagement with the community by working to create more partnerships with a broad range of community groups, organizations and businesses.
- Enhancing its ability to fund existing supports and new opportunities for support.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*Goals and objectives set out the broad results that the organization hopes to achieve within a specific time period (goals) and statements of shorter term results and collections of activities (objectives) which if achieved will constitute the achievement of the goals.*

Goals and objectives for the years 2007-2012 are as follows:

1. Develop and expand childcare, before and after school care, and respite care opportunities for children with developmental disabilities.

Potential Objectives:

- Open and operate inclusive daycare centers for infants and toddlers with medically fragile conditions.
- Partner with like-minded organizations to provide before and after school programs for children unable to access regular programs.
- Develop a program to foster and encourage day care providers to include children with developmental disabilities
- Expand respite care options by extending days and hours of operations, opening a new home, developing creative weekend hourly opportunities, and exploring a free cooperative model for interested families.

2. Transform the association's current adult day services so participants enjoy more meaningful, creative, and inclusive opportunities.

Potential Objectives:

- Expand partnerships with MNCPPC and other related agencies in order to take advantage of their programs and facilities.
- Increase the time and frequency that participants are spending in the community.
- Obtain expertise in the arts, sports and fitness, and assistive technology and utilize this new knowledge to further expand program options.
- Develop new creative ways to assure that activities within Arc centers are adult oriented, meaningful, and resourceful.
- Decorate centers in a way that brings a sense of excitement, enhances the adult image of participants, and stimulates creativity.
- Expand the use of community groups and volunteers in order to improve the variety and quality of daily programming.

3. Build new partnerships with the business community, faith-based communities, generic community services, and individuals and groups interested in volunteer service.

Potential Objectives:

- Develop a business advisory council that will provide the association with on-going business advice.

- Participate in various business groups including the Chamber of Commerce and specific other countywide associations dealing in the fields of human resources, public relations, and workforce development.
- Develop a faith-based partnership program that will facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities within faith-based communities. Encourage joint efforts between The Arc and faith-based communities in the delivery of supports and services.
- Establish new methods to partner with generic resources including but not limited to the academic, law enforcement, first responder, and medical communities.
- Create a new volunteer program that will recruit, train, place, and reward volunteer service within The Arc. Hire a part-time professional to manage this process.

4. Increase The Arc's visibility in the county and enhance the association's communication with program participants, families, members, staff and the community at large.

Potential Objectives:

- Develop a new look for Arc publications, letterhead, signage, videos, vehicle display and the like, that actively promotes The Arc's new mission statement.
- Obtain additional professional expertise in the area of communications.
- Redesign and rewrite the website making it a comprehensive center for information and resources that easily converts into printed materials.
- Redesign the e-newsletter so that it can also be used as a printed newsletter.
- Assure that each program director of The Arc implements a systematic annual plan that communicates with the individuals and families within their program.
- Identify a list of key leaders in Prince George's County and develop a plan to assure that they are familiar with The Arc and have a positive impression of the association.
- Assure that the executive director visits and meets with the staff of each program site at least once per year.
- Establish a quarterly "town meeting" whereby Arc staff can dialogue directly with the board, executive director and key staff.
- Re-establish Arc Day - an agency wide staff retreat.
- Develop a successful process to assure that monthly press releases are included in local newspapers.
- Establish a metropolitan-wide Arc Council that ensures that The Arc is represented in the Washington DC area media and public policy arenas, and new joint efforts in public relations and fund development.

- Re-establish The Arc Countywide Awards Program.
- Develop a regularly scheduled "Meet The Arc" breakfast program.
- Produce a new "Meet The Arc" video.
- Increase the membership of The Arc by developing and implementing a comprehensive membership campaign.

5. Consider new and creative ways of raising resources while sustaining current funding from DDA.

Potential Objectives:

- Expand the current thrift store business.
- Develop a comprehensive planned giving program
- Establish an annual signature event.
- Develop a series of partnerships with businesses and civic organization whereby these organizations host events on The Arc's behalf.
- Significantly increase the number of grants written and obtained
- Create wealth by purchasing real estate utilized by Arc programs
- Expand our services to other public funding sources outside of DDA.

## **Plan Adoption**

The Arc Board of Directors adopted this strategic plan on June 28, 2007. Objectives will be quantified, prioritized and scheduled in an operational plan for each of the next five years beginning July 1, 2007.

