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## **COVID-19 Response**

March 23, 2020

As we navigate the spread of COVID-19 in the area, the health and safety of our participants and staff is our top priority. Our Senior Management Team has been monitoring updates from state, county and local officials in order to make responsible decisions. We are balancing the needs of our community, while maintaining an environment that is safe for our employees and the adults in our care.

The Arc of Butler County is and will remain steadfastly committed to protecting the people it supports and its employees. The Arc of Butler County is considered a life-sustaining business according to the list published by the Governor's Office and according to a notice from the state Office of Developmental Programs. As such, The Arc of Butler County will continue providing supports and services to people with disabilities and their families. While some of the services we offer are not considered essential (and those have been suspended), much of our operation is continuing and we are committed to providing the best and safest services possible. The Arc of Butler County's executive team is meeting daily (some remotely and some in-person to honor social distancing recommendations) to assess the most up-to-date information from local, state and federal authorities and adapt accordingly.

### **Services**

In light of recommendations from the Office of Developmental Program, on Tuesday, March 17th, we have closed the following day programs until further notice:

- PARC Productions
- Sheltered Workshop
- Adult Training Facility
- AERO After School Program

We are continuing job coaching support for our employed participants during this time. We are providing remote support to participants whose employer has closed. For participants who continue to work, we are providing onsite services as needed. Job development services are available remotely.

We have made the very difficult decision to temporarily restrict visitors to our residential group homes. We understand this may be upsetting for both families and those we care for, but we need to ensure that we are instituting the highest level of caution to contain the virus and prevent its spread. We serve individuals with complex medical and behavioral conditions throughout our organization and are in tune with their distinct healthcare needs.

### **Staff**

The Arc of Butler County relies heavily on its hard-working employees to perform our mission. We are working hard to make sure our employees are safe and that they're able to continue to be paid. We have reassigned employees impacted by suspended programs to other services where their help is needed. The Arc of Butler County feels fortunate to be able to serve our fellow citizens who have disabilities. We value the dedication of our staff and appreciate the support from the community as we deal with the day-to-day challenges presented by the COVID-19 emergency declaration.

As always, our goal is to protect the health, safety, and well-being of our employees and individuals while allowing core operations to continue as best we can. One of the highest recommendations of the CDC is to limit group contact and meetings and thus we are taking steps to heed those recommendations. We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace. Employees and clients are reminded of the following:

- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces
- Limit visitors
- Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Stay home when you are sick

The Arc of Butler County will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays and wipes will also be provided to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones, door handles and keyboards.

Any employee who has any symptoms of illness or has been in contact with any potentially infected person should stay home. In taking these steps, we hope to focus all of our efforts to support the staff in residential and community-based services, whether in direct support, providing supplies or reducing any other burdens/barriers on the staff providing direct support.

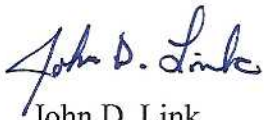
It is critical that employees do not report to work while they are experiencing respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, body aches, chills or fatigue. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that employees remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees

who are unable to work due to illness. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines.

The Arc of Butler County is working with employees who have individual concerns about themselves, someone they care for, or a member of their household. The Arc of Butler County's Human Resources Department will work with the employee on a case-by-case basis with the goal of avoiding unnecessary spread of COVID-19.

We applaud all of our employees for their dedication during this stressful time. In particular, our Direct Support Professionals continue to go above and beyond to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our residents.

Please stay safe and stay well,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John D. Link". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

John D. Link  
Executive Director