



Northern Chesapeake Region

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The Arc NCR's "Let's Get Wild" Gala Going Virtual
Funds raised to benefit organization's Family Support Services (FSS) Program



Lily and Tommy Taylor enjoyed participating in a virtual arts and crafts activity during The Arc NCR's six-week respite program in summer 2020. Like this year's gala, The Arc NCR's Family Support Services program transitioned to a virtual format to ensure the safety of all participants.

ABERDEEN, Md. (September 29, 2020)— Every year, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region (The Arc NCR) invites community partners and supporters to unite for its largest and most impactful fundraising event - the After d'Arc Gala. This year's gala, scheduled for Friday, October 30 from 6:30-7:30 pm, will be presented differently in a new, virtual format as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. With support from Title Sponsor Freedom Federal Credit

Union, the event promises to be a unique, fun-filled celebration of the organization's vital work on behalf of those with differing abilities.

This year's event offers a "Let's Get Wild" theme and will feature an inspiring program, informative videos and a silent auction. Attendees will also have the option to enjoy a gourmet boxed meal, available for pick-up and enjoyment at home on the day of the event. Meals will be provided by Water's Edge Events Center (4867 Millennium Drive in Belcamp) with menu options including a choice of tenderloin beef wellington, seafood imperial or grilled vegetable lasagna, all served with a fall-inspired harvest salad and decadent dessert.

Participants who wish to opt out of the boxed dinner will instead be given three tickets to the gala's jewelry raffle. The first place prize is an 18-carat white gold necklace, complete with a 1-carat Lorelei diamond, valued at \$4,975, courtesy of Saxon's Diamond Centers. The second place prize is a \$1,000 shopping spree at Saxon's.



Lorelei diamond floral pendant, courtesy of Saxon's Diamond Centers, "Let's Get Wild's" jewelry sponsor

Proceeds from the event's "Fund the Need" portion of the gala will benefit The Arc NCR's Family Support Services (FSS) program, a critically important resource for families in Harford and Cecil County. FSS offers informational workshops and training, support groups, referrals, and advocacy to give local families the resources they need to live, work and thrive over the "arc" of their lifetime.

The FSS program has adapted to include many virtual service offerings in accordance with CDC guidelines and restrictions related to COVID-19, while still offering quality, informative and helpful programming. For instance, in lieu of the program's six-week in-person summer camp, "Camp Sp'Arc," the organization coordinated a six-week virtual respite program that offered participating families two hours of activities, crafts, games, virtual "trips" to local attractions and more, multiple days a week.

The Taylor family of Harford County is just one of the many who tapped into FSS's virtual programs - and, for Puja Taylor, mother of six-year-old Tommy and ten-year-old Lily - the respite program was a lifesaver.

“Each week, both of my children looked forward to being part of the respite program and specifically, the arts and crafts activities,” said Taylor. “The FSS staff, including Sue Rattman and Flossie Rosser, coordinated socially-distant drop-offs to our home with all of the materials we needed. They also enjoyed virtual field trips to the National Aquarium as well as the Baltimore Zoo. Perhaps more importantly, though, all of the activities they participated in encouraged them to practice their social skills with other children in the group. With all the stress caused by COVID-19, this program was a breath of fresh air for my entire family.”



Tommy and Lily Taylor, showing off collages they made over the summer during their participation in The Arc NCR's FSS program.

“The Arc’s Family Support Services Program is the ‘missing piece of the puzzle’ for the Taylor family and so many others who simply need a place to turn,” says Rosser, a family navigator for The Arc NCR. “We are extremely proud of our ability to fill that gap and be a safe place people can come for help, even when our ability to gather in-person is limited. That is why our gala is so very important. It raises the funds we need to continue offering these incredible, life-changing programs.”

“Let’s Get Wild” aims to raise \$140,000 to support FSS and other Arc NCR programs, for years to come. A portion of this goal is already achieved, thanks to the event’s generous supporters including title sponsor Freedom Federal Credit Union. Freedom has contributed \$15,000 toward the overall fundraising goal this year, but this isn’t their first evidence of support for The Arc NCR.

Freedom’s relationship with The Arc NCR dates back to the 1990s when the Credit Union’s very own President and CEO, Michael MacPherson, provided holiday cheer while dressed as Santa Claus at one of the organization’s FSS holiday parties. Many of Freedom’s other

employees, including those in leadership positions, have continued to volunteer their time and talent to support The Arc NCR's mission. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Freedom also donated personal hand sanitizers to The Arc NCR and coordinated pizza deliveries to boost morale among those supported by its Community Living program.

"We are proud to support such a vital cause in our community and are grateful for the opportunity to help make a difference for our friends and neighbors with differing abilities," says MacPherson. "At Freedom, our mission is to be a trusted partner by creating a culture of people helping people that meets the needs of our community members, regardless of their abilities. We all look forward to getting a little 'wild' at this year's gala in support of a cause so very near and dear to our hearts."

Tickets to The Arc NCR's virtual gala are \$75 per person, or \$125 per couple. For information on sponsorship opportunities, or to make a donation and purchase tickets, visit www.afterdarc.org. The Arc NCR's development office is also available at 410-836-7177 or email development@arcncr.org.

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About The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region

For sixty-seven years, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region has empowered people with differing abilities to live, work and thrive in the community by providing support services and advocacy to adults and children and their families in Harford and Cecil Counties. For more information, call 410-836-7177 or visit www.arcncr.org.