

August 25, 2020



Addressing Emotional Health Needs of People with IDD During a Pandemic: A Model Demonstration Project to Promote Engagement and Comfort During a Crisis

Captioning Available: <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=HealthMatters>



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council
EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION



Covid-19
Webinar
Series

Presenters:



Rachel London is the Executive Director of the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, a statewide public policy and advocacy organization promoting the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life. Rachel has been with the Council for 12 years, serving as the Director of Children & Family Policy and Deputy Director prior to becoming Executive Director.

Rachel earned her Bachelor's Degree and Law Degree from the University of Maryland. After law school, she was a staff attorney at Disability Rights Maryland where she was active in many important civil rights issues for adults with developmental disabilities, including the closure of the Rosewood Center.



Ande Kolp is the executive director of The Arc Maryland. Over three decades, she has supported people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in various positions within Maryland and Iowa.

Ande holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Therapy from the University of Iowa and a Master's Degree in Special Education with a Concentration in Severe Disabilities from The Johns Hopkins University. Prior to joining The Arc Maryland, she was the executive director for Compass, Inc.; a private non-profit organization, specializing in residential and employment supports for people with co-occurring I/DD and mental health conditions.



Donna Retzlaff currently serves as the Executive Director of Spring Dell Center, a nonprofit agency that provides residential, employment and community services in Charles County. Donna is a Towson University graduate with a degree in Business Administration, and she has spent her career working to improve the health, well-being and opportunities for citizens with developmental disabilities while supporting the transformation of supports that are person-directed and integrated in the community.

Donna has served as the Board President of the Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS), the statewide provider association for agencies that provide community-based supports and services. Donna has presented at state and national conferences to promote supports and employment for people with disabilities, and advocated at the federal, state and local levels for direct support professional wages and funding for people using supports. She has served on numerous State level committees and task forces charged with the transformation of supports for people with developmental disabilities. Donna is also an active member of the Charles County Chamber of Commerce, the Southern Maryland Business Network, and MACS.



Luann Brechbill joined Star Community as the new Executive Director in October 2019. She has 20+ years of non-profit experience and two master's degrees - a Master of Science in Special Education and Teaching from Mercyhurst University, and a Master of Education in Psychology from Edinboro University. While studying at Edinburg University, she joined the staff at Barber Institute in Erie, Pennsylvania as a direct support professional. There she realized that she could have a greater impact working one-to-one with individuals in direct care rather than teaching in a classroom.

She moved into a behavioral specialist role at Marakey, a nationally based developmental, behavioral health and education non-profit provider of integrated services to individuals and communities across the country, and later joined Keystone Autism Services where she was eventually promoted to Chief Operating Officer. Under her leadership, Keystone became the first in the nation to provide a comprehensive, integrated model of service delivery for adults on the Autism Spectrum. This model was home and community-based and focused on integrating healthcare, improving social skills, and supporting leisure and vocational skills for individuals. Under Luann's direction, her team developed reporting measures and a new system that allowed for real time responses to insurance providers, resulting in better communication and efficiency.

Luann's career experience has taught her to see people first as adults - building upon their strengths and teaching them new skills that will allow them to engage in life more fully—going beyond perceived limitations and their diagnosis. She believes that as each person is treated as an adult, with strengths and the ability to learn new skills, their lives become more meaningful. Luann lives in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

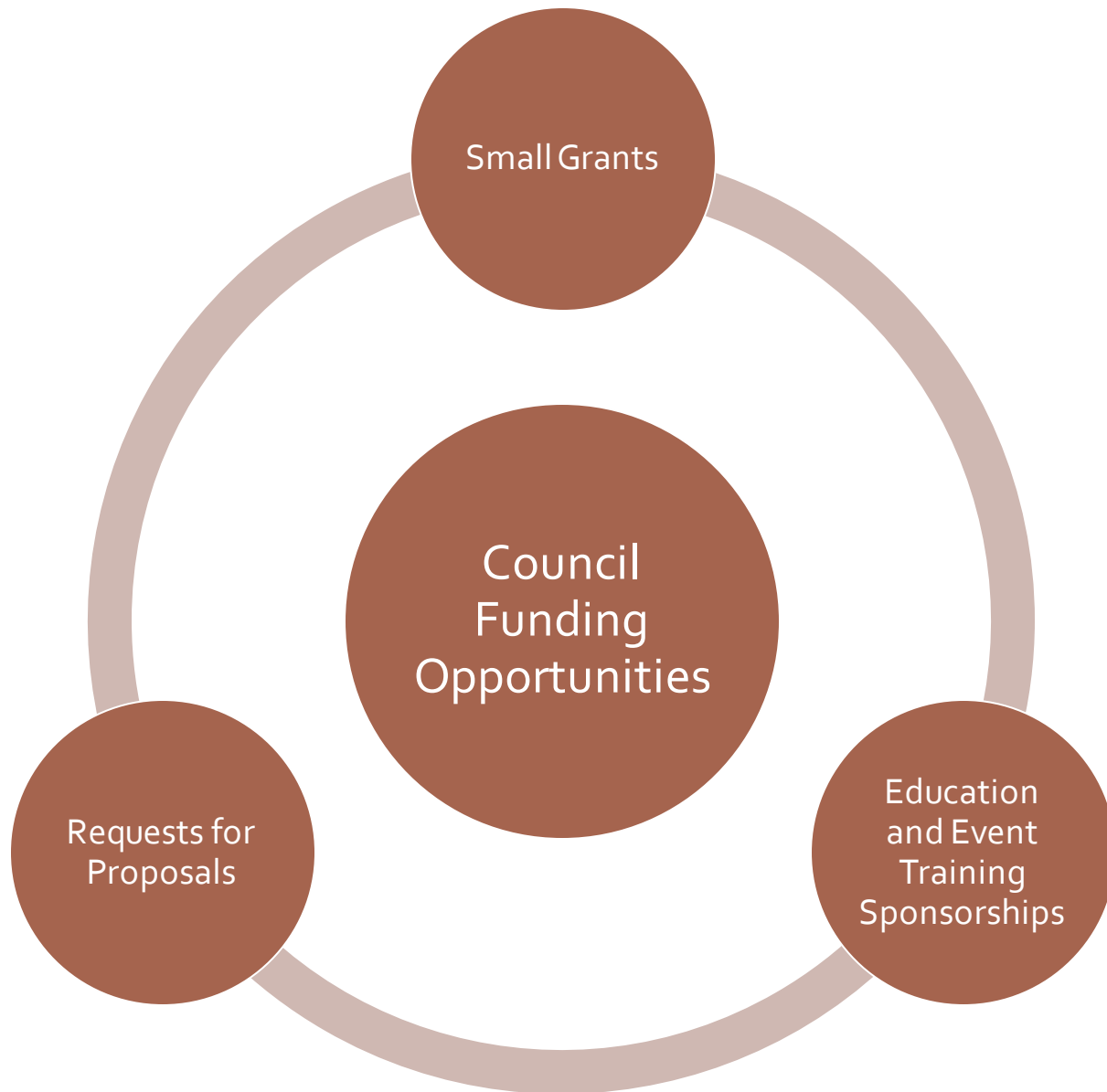
The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is to advance the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life by eliminating barriers, creating opportunities, empowering people, and promoting innovation.



5 Year State Plan: 2017 - 2021

- Goal 1: People with developmental disabilities effectively advocate for themselves and others and influence issues that are important to them.
- Goal 2: People with developmental disabilities and their families are empowered to lead the lives they want and transform communities.
- Goal 3: Children and adults with developmental disabilities meaningfully participate in all facets of community life, and are valued and supported by their communities.





- Respond to emerging needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Initiative needed to be:
 - Flexible to support people quickly
 - User-friendly and real
- Build and maintain community capacity to support the short-term and long-term needs of individuals with developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Inform systems change efforts for future disaster preparedness and emergency response in Maryland and other states.

The Arc Maryland was established in 1960 by parents who sought a better life for their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are a statewide advocacy and education organization, dedicated to advancing the rights and quality of life of individuals with I/DD and their families.

The process and framework: “Engagement and Comfort during the COVID-19 Pandemic”:

- A pre-proposal informational call: ~ 100 interested parties
- Grants of \$500 to \$2,500
- Single recipients or for use by more than one individual





- 54 organizations applied
- 46 organizations received grant funds ranging from \$750 to \$2500

Proposals evaluated based on 6 criteria:

- Plan for use of grant funds for comfort and engagement
- Budget
- Plan to interlace resource with other efforts to promote engagement and to alleviate effects of anxiety
- Use of innovation
- Commitment to collect data and report outcomes
- Evidence of organization good standing and fiscal controls

Demographics

- 2946 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities were directly impacted
 - 28 aged 1-18
 - 376 aged 19-29
 - 1057 aged 30-49
 - 1075 aged 50-65
 - 410 aged 66 and older
- 42% percent women, 58% men, 0% identified as non-binary/other
- People in 21 counties and Baltimore City



Spring Dell Center, Inc

How did we approach this amazing opportunity??

We JUMPED in!!

Identified critical need.....

We were desperate to slow the anxiety and fear of individuals supported and stafffor once we actually saw their needs were the same!





REMEMBER TO ENJOY THE
LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE...
THEY'RE WHAT MATTER THE MOST.

It was not really important what
was in the Treasure Box....

Instead it was important what
we did with the treasures.

Quotes:

"The ladies enjoyed hearing the voices of their friends and playing Bingo."

"Thanks for all the great ideas and activities that promote creativity and imagination. The gals are loving the musical instruments." Pam H

"We opened the deck of cards in our treasure box today and had a very spirited game of Rummy! Ms. Carolyn beat us two games in a row."

"Hope everyone has a great day!" Casey L

"Lou was able to use the supplies included in the scrapbook kit to make a memorial for one of our staff that passed. This has helped him work through his grief." Jennifer W

"I loved the "Under the Sea" week and the waves on the ceiling." Linda H

"The musical instruments made my day." Paula B





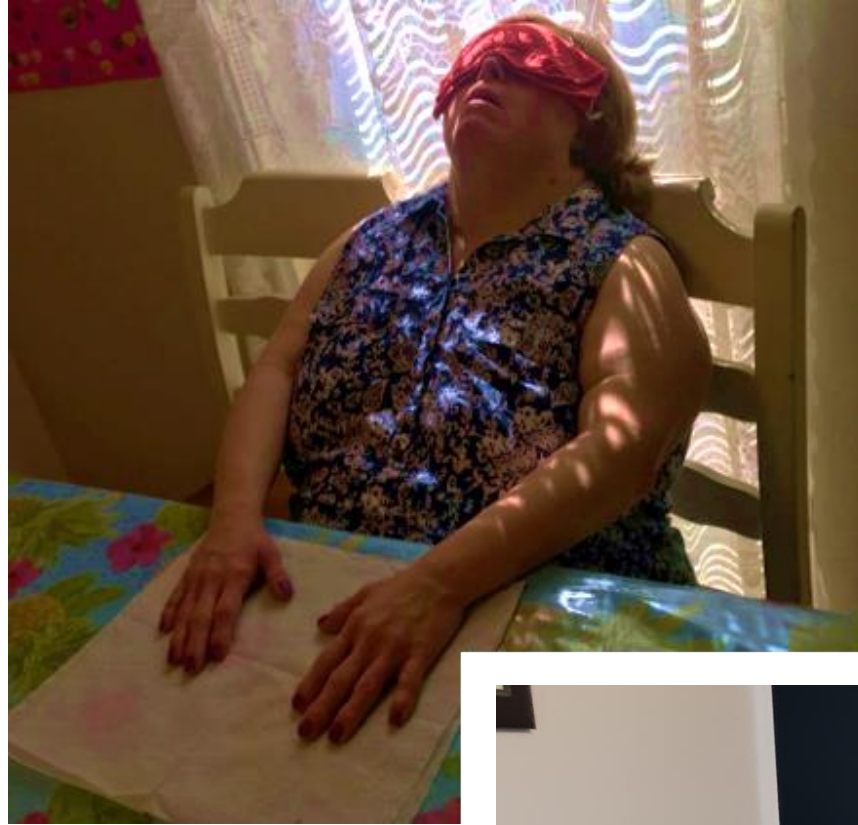
DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

OUTCOMES

- The **TREASURES** that were hidden in our boxes.....
- Relationship and Team Building
- Sharing
- Problem Solving
- Leadership
- Communication Skills
- Following Instructions
- Reducing Stress

Collectively all these treasures led to promoting meaningful engagement with housemates and staff, sharing, being supportive and creative to avoid isolation in one's room, and an increase in happiness and a calmness throughout.....

- Over 90% of all participants reported they had fun, enjoyed roommates more, remained engaged and not isolated in their rooms.
- Treasure Boxes now have an inventory sheet that participants will use to replenish!!
- This grant has given us the treasures needed to get through loneliness and isolation.
- Most importantly, we observed a 91% increase in excitement and happiness (translated...91% decrease in challenges)



Star Community

Our approach:

Ensure that the people in our care are safe, engaged and thriving during the pandemic.

The project:

Five x-box gaming systems, additional controllers, and 20 games for 5 of our homes were purchased. These gaming systems would be utilized by 50% of the people that we support in residential services.

The results:

Stabilization of incidents of aggression during the pandemic

Observed more time spent with roommates, staff, and friends in other locations

Decrease in boredom eating

Observed decrease in signs of depression due to social distancing





We will continue to explore other types of technology with the people we support to continue to discover talents and skills that will lead to personal growth and future discoveries.



Over-aching Findings and Lessons Learned (and things that surprised us!)

- Behavioral Incidents Decreased
- Technology Use Resulted in increased tech competency, reduction of anxiety, increase in comfort, and maintained/expanded social connectedness



Over-arching Findings and Lessons Learned (and things that surprised us!)

- Decreased Anxiety
and Increased
Satisfaction of Direct
Support Professionals
- Broader Community
Impact



The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region:

Overall, the individuals supported through this grant seemed happier, healthier and more engaged. The organization received a lot of positive feedback from the homes involved that the supported individuals were extremely happy with the new items they received.

Many team members commented that several homes spent most of the day outside, playing cornhole, basketball, or enjoying hula hoops. This physical activity helped ease anxiety, promoted physical fitness, and allowed housemates to safely interact with each other.

Looking ahead, the biggest concern with social isolation was a lack of technology for people we support to stay connected to friends, family and volunteers. While Community Living homes have computers, most do not have webcams, iPad, tablets, or personal cell phones for each person. This equipment would be extremely helpful in allowing individuals to stay connected socially. As a state, an emphasis on outfitting for technology would be extremely helpful moving forward.



The Arc Southern Maryland

We were able to start a photography club and have a virtual art competition. The art winner was announced recently after voting on social media concluded. There were over 1000 votes for over 30 entries!

This was the first emergency/pandemic related grant opportunity that we were aware of and it was the fastest turnaround from submission to approval to funding.

We were able to meet some immediate needs and make a difference. As the crisis has progressed and become our new normal, we have become more dependent on technology to provide virtual programs and opportunities for engagement.

Our residential and day programs were not technology-centric, and we have had to adapt and find funding to provide what is needed. I would anticipate the same is true for other providers and if we were to face this again perhaps group technology and software purchasing would be beneficial or the development of a state-wide "menu" for programs and services. Thank you again.

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TRACEYN

Additional Lessons Learned and Implications for other States

- People need to remain connected, with minimum risk.
- Other ways the Maryland DD Council helped:
 - Assistive Technology to 5 local school systems
 - Technology to people supported by 6 current grantees
- Lack of focus on technology for people with developmental disabilities –until now!
- Get rid of the red tape.



Additional Lessons Learned and Implications for other States

- How to replicate and be prepared for future pandemics
- Remember:
 - Get rid of the red tape
 - Get people what they need, when they need it
 - Guardrails to ensure responsible use of funds



Expectations Matter.

Expect Ability.

Questions and Discussion

