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The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region Shares Survey Results *Services For Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Fall Short in Maryland and Across the Nation*

Fifty years ago, President Kennedy called on the nation to bring people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) out of the shadows," to give them opportunities to lead productive, quality lives. Today The Arc U.S., the nation's largest and oldest human rights organization for the I/DD community, released the top findings of an unprecedented survey of more than 5000 individuals with I/DD, their family members and caregivers covering a host of issues from education to housing to planning for the future. The publication called *Still in the Shadows with Their Future Uncertain*, reveals the top challenges individuals with disabilities still face and outlines the steps we need to take as a movement to address these unmet needs.

The results indicate that one-third of parents and caregivers of individuals with I/DD nationwide – an estimated one million families – are on waiting lists for government funded services, with the average wait more than five years.

The *Families and Individual Needs for Disability Support (FINDS)* survey, conducted by The Arc US also found that the promise of integrated, community-based employment is not being met. Eighty-five percent of families reported that their adult family members with I/DD are not employed at all.

While acknowledging that budget cuts and economic strain have hurt all Americans, the survey indicates that 7 million individuals living with I/DD and their families are among the hardest hit, with access to needed services drastically reduced. According to the survey, 62 percent of caregivers report a decrease in services for their family member with a disability. The findings are even more troubling, according to Stephen H. Morgan, Acting Director of The Arc Maryland., when you consider that current Congressional budget proposals threaten to dismantle Medicaid and Medicare, making it even harder for people with I/DD and their families to achieve.

Among other major findings, the FINDS survey revealed:

-More than 75 percent of families report problems accessing non-institutional community care, trained reliable homecare providers, services and resources;

-1 out of 5 families (20 percent) report that someone in the family had to quit a job to stay at home and support the needs of a family member;

-More than 80 percent of families do not have enough retirement savings because they have used personal funds to compensate for the lack of available services;

-62 percent of parents and caregivers do not have a plan for where the person they support will live when the parent/caregiver gets older;

Morgan also commented, — While our local Arc organizations in Maryland provide critical services and find jobs for thousands of people with disabilities, we still have thousands waiting for services. The recent alcohol tax victory will help about 500 families, but there are more than 5,000 still waiting.

Spurred by the survey, The Arc US is launching a new effort to organize a million people to — come out of the shadows and make their needs an issue in the 2012 elections. To raise awareness, The Arc US has partnered with Lauren Potter, star of the hit FOX show — *Glee* who has Down syndrome. The Arc US and Potter will kick off a public service announcement television campaign.

The Arc US is also conducting a national contest via its Facebook fan page. From today until July 14, entrants can share stories and photos highlighting the accomplishments of individuals with I/DD for the chance to receive a trip for two to Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/thearcus.

For more information about The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region or to view the FINDS survey visit: www.arncncr.org

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The Arc offers a wide variety of services to individuals with developmental disabilities in Harford, Cecil, and Kent counties, both children and adults, to make informed choices with their lifestyles, vocations, education and recreational pursuits, and to assure stable and nurturing lives among their families and friends.