

Back to Normal.. With Kudos and Thanks!!!

Heroes were in abundance at The Arc during last week's snow storms. They included many staff persons who went above and beyond the call of duty. They did what was needed.

Preparation was intense among staff in our Community Living program ensuring that necessary medications and food were in supply for the 300+ individuals we support in homes across Baltimore. And if any supplies did run short, staff drove personal 4-wheel drive vehicles to deliver whatever was needed for those in our snowbound homes.

Many of our staff transported co-workers who don't have proper vehicles for such snow and got them to the homes where they were needed. Numerous employees stayed hours and days extra to cover for staff that could not get to a house for their shifts.

Arc directors heard repeated offers from direct support staff to go where they were needed, even if it meant walking blocks and miles to get to homes when drivable roads ran out. And of course after shoveling their own homes out, Arc staff then dug out steps and walkways for Arc supported houses, in many cases allowing the individuals to get out and enjoy some of the snowy weather themselves – but safely.

Community Employment had their hands full as well. With hundreds of Arc supported workers usually on the job every day and with contracts to fulfill, Arc staff found themselves redeployed to cover for supported workers who could not make it through the snow to get to job sites. They fulfilled contracts at hotels (housekeeping) and at companies like UniFirst & Ace (sorting and stacking in these commercial laundries), Omnicare (packaging at pharmaceutical co.), PDP (mailings for the financial company), and others. It is this spirit of getting the job done that means companies are able to rely on The Arc.

Maintenance staff kept the Arc operation moving with repeated plowing and shoveling of Arc parking lots so staff could get in and out for needed supplies – and then plowed again. And when the second storm was finally over, maintenance and landscaping joined forces to deal with the volume of snow, filling landscape trucks with snow instead of mulch and hauling it away (see attached).

Because life goes on in such times, one staff person took a child she assists to see the young girl's beloved grandmother who was dying, and some days later took her to the memorial service. At the opposite end of the life spectrum during the snows, one of our nurses, who was pregnant and within a week of her due date, had to suddenly leave a home health visit to go to the hospital for what turned out to be a false labor. She later proceeded to another house for a blood pressure check. She has since delivered a very beautiful baby girl.

In the midst of the chaos we all experienced in the historic snow of February 2010, one staff person expressed her thanks for what her job means to her. She said, "I love this job. It has taught me patience and so much more. Some people talk about what we (staff) do for the individuals we support, but they give *me* so much. I am blessed."

Lost revenues, snow removal costs, and overtime pay will leave a tough financial mark on The Arc of Baltimore as a reminder of the storms. Please express your kudos to Arc staff and consider a "snow" gift at this time. [Click here to donate.](#)

