ARC @Staples Mill is in Full Swing

For Lilli, 32, the opening of Greater Richmond ARC's first Henrico County location, ARC @Staples Mill, has been a blessing.

Lilli was formerly a client of A Grace Place for ten years, which closed its doors in March at the same location. “The closing was not only a huge disappointment, but a major concern,” said her dad Mike. “Change is difficult for her. Fortunately for us (and certainly many others), Greater Richmond ARC stepped up. The transition has been seamless and she is once again benefiting from her daytime activities.”

Located at 8030 Staples Mill Road, ARC’s newest facility is near shopping centers, parks, libraries and other points of interest, and provides a wide range of activities for adults with disabilities ages 18 and up, including field trips to Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and the Science Museum of Virginia, as well as community engagement through volunteering at Meals on Wheels.

There are social games, arts and crafts, karaoke, and physical fitness at ARC @Staples Mill, along with sewing and cooking classes, where participants recently prepared a tasty trail mix.

For Lilli and her family, ARC @Staples Mill provides care in a safe and nurturing environment. “We are most grateful for the leadership of Richmond ARC and the kind services of its staff,” her dad said.

ARC @Staples Mill is currently accepting new clients. For more information, contact intake specialist Kris Smith at kris.smith@RichmondARC.org or call (804) 665-1283.

**Coming soon:** ARC @Staples Mill will also be opening Adult Day Health that includes a Memory program to serve people with dementia and Alzheimer’s.
The Greater Richmond ARC's annual Ladybug Fundraiser on March 24, 2018, raised approximately $103,000 to benefit children who participate in ARC programs in the cost of adaptive equipment such as braces, walkers, eyeglasses, and hearing aids, as well as scholarships.

Held at the Richmond Raceway Torque Club, more than 350 guests dined on fare from Mosaic Catering, Sugar Shack Donuts and The Mixing Bowl, while listening to the John Conley Trio. Silent auction highlights included bidding on the chance to throw out the “first pitch” at a Flying Squirrels game along with complimentary tickets, a vacation stay in the Outer Banks, catered dinner parties, gift certificates to local restaurants, and fine art and jewelry. The Reinhart Foundation was the event’s headline sponsor.

“We are so thankful for the many contributions from local businesses, organizations and individuals that helped make this worthy annual event such a success,” said Alison Jones-Nassar, ARC’s volunteer engagement and events manager, adding that she is already looking forward to next year.

Everything came together perfectly last month for SummerFest 2018. This event had great food from Firehouse Bar-B-Que and Bikini Panini, delicious craft beer plus a variety of wines, and live music from TriCity Revue. More than 500 guests of all ages came out to enjoy it. Netting over $2,000, SummerFest was a success because of our volunteers’ hard work, and the Next Generations Advisory Council.

The Next Generations Advisory Council (NGAC) is comprised of dedicated volunteers who seek to help usher in the next generation of philanthropists. Their mission, “to connect with the communities of Greater Richmond by raising awareness” and to “support disabilities through philanthropic initiatives,” was met that night as everyone enjoyed an evening of dialogue about ARC and the ARCPark festivities. Interested in joining NGAC? Contact spencer.munro@RichmondARC.org for more details.

Greater Richmond ARC would like to also thank BDO (Binder Dijker Otte) for sponsoring the event. The fun will return on October 24, 2018, with FallFest so be sure to mark your calendar!
Bringing Out the Best in Brion

Seated in the ARC lobby, Kelsey and her eight-year-old son Brion look remarkably relaxed, considering that this past year included two kidney operations (Brion’s own transplant and his dad’s donation to the organ network), as well as a setback in Brion’s behavior with tantrums and “talking 90 miles a minute.”

“I’m not a medical person,” Kelsey said smiling, recalling how when Brion first came to them as a foster child years ago, he was in renal failure, needed dialysis and had a feeding tube. Along with special training for the family, there were countless visits to neurologists, cardiologists, you name it.

Things are now looking up. Brion’s adoption is final; he’s fully recovered from the operation and returned to school; and weekly visits to the ARC for speech and occupational therapy have worked wonders, too.

“I see progress at ARC. The transplant was a bump in the road and now he is slowly working back up. He’s come a long way,” Kelsey said.

“For us, everyday things that people take for granted are difficult for Brion.”

Brion clearly enjoys his time at ARC, where he’s learning how to clearly pronounce words and hone fine motor skills with hand-eye games. Seeing his speech therapist, Brion slid from his mother’s lap and made a beeline to her. “He’s like ‘the Mayor’ of everywhere we go. He’s so friendly with people,” Kelsey says.

Asked what she’d tell parents whose children face obstacles, her answer was straightforward.

“If you don’t know what to do, find out who does. It may seem like you are the only one, but chances are you are not.”

Happening Now: ARC News

Natasha has been steadily promoted over the past three years and is now a consumer counselor in ARC’s Adult Day Program. Read about her and others’ success in Greater Richmond ARC’s 2017 Annual Report, available in print and online on our website www.RichmondARC.org in the “About Us” financials section.

Art on Wheels visits ARC weekly, and its focus on creative self-expression is seen throughout the organization. In fact, the 4th Annual ARC Art Show on June 30, 2018, featured artwork including paintings, jewelry and sand art, created at ARC’s Saunders, Westwood, Staples Mill and Camp Baker locations.

ARC @Camp Baker was featured in a recent WCVE’s Virginia Currents segment focusing on how the camp provides traditional summer experiences like swimming, horseback riding, and paddle-boating to individuals of all abilities. We’re grateful to Virginia Currents for capturing the magic our campers experience. To see for yourself, visit www.ideastations.org/watch/virginia-currents.
Across Greater Richmond ARC and throughout RVA, individuals, foundations, businesses and organizations are helping us achieve our mission. Men and women who lost a trusted day support provider are returning to ARC @Staples Mill Road as the result of rapid and generous community support. (See cover story)

We are thankful for the support of our Ladybug Fund Sponsors who are helping children enrolled in ARC’s Pediatric Therapy, Youth Day, and Respite Programs achieve more. (See story on page 2)
Greater Richmond ARC was named a Neighborhood Builders® award recipient by the Bank of America and will use the award’s $200,000 grant to launch a new program to expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The bank’s Neighborhood Builders program is the nation’s largest philanthropic investment in nonprofit leadership development. “Our Neighborhood Builders program demonstrates our commitment to deploy capital in communities and build partnerships that advance economic and social progress,” said Victor Branch, Bank of America market president for Richmond. “It is part of our approach to responsible growth. By supporting programs that advance economic mobility, Bank of America is helping the communities we serve thrive. We are pleased to partner with Greater Richmond ARC and support their new employment initiative that will assist individuals with disabilities and their families.”

“Our agency supports diversity, inclusion, and providing jobs that pay well, enabling individuals and their families to grow their income today and have financial stability in their future,” added Greater Richmond ARC President & CEO John Walker. “We are thrilled to have received a Neighborhood Builders award and look forward to a continued partnership with Bank of America. The grant will allow us to launch a new Supported Employment pilot program to provide training, job application assistance, job coaching, and on-going assistance for individuals with disabilities seeking work in the community.”

With this year’s award, Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builders program has invested more than $2.6 million in grants and leadership training in Richmond-area institutions since 2008.
The Greater Richmond ARC Employment Services team at the Defense Supply Center Richmond’s Visitor Center received a “RAPIDS High Flyer Award” for providing outstanding service and receiving high marks in customer satisfaction. This is the second year that ARC has received this award. Congrats all!

Efren, a valued member of ARC’s Employment Services team, was selected as a 2018 capABLE RVA model by the nonprofit The Next Move. His photo and story, which details how he became part of the disability community after losing his hand, are part of an exhibit at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture until Sept. 13, 2018. “We were impressed by Efren’s example of perseverance,” said The Next Move’s Elizabeth Howley. “He has never given up, regardless of adversity throughout his life.” Efren plays an important part at ARC @Camp Baker’s maintenance by keeping things running smoothly. Congratulations, Efren!

Emily Lehmann, Assistant Vice President of Day and Residential Services, was a finalist this year in the 2018 Chamber RVA HYPE Icons Awards in the Innovator Nonprofit category. These awards recognize young professionals ages 35 and younger who are innovators and have made an impact on their workplace.

The ARCpark received an Honorable Mention in the Virginia by Design Awards from The Branch Museum of Architecture and Design; a competition that recognizes the best efforts of designers and visionaries throughout the state and the “transformative roles of design in shaping the built environment.”

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Making (four-legged) Strides

This summer there are new and exciting activities at Greater Richmond ARC’s Camp Baker, thanks to some four-legged friends. Making Strides of Virginia has partnered with ARC to provide equine-based therapeutic activities including adaptive riding, carriage driving and hippotherapy, which uses the natural movements of the horse to stimulate different muscle groups of its rider.

Clients can now enjoy mounted activities, in which they sit on the back of the horse, or carriage driving, where they are able to ride along in a horse-drawn carriage. Making Strides also has a wheelchair-accessible carriage, ensuring that all can take part, regardless of ability.

“This is a huge upgrade for our riding program,” said Matt Hulcher, ARC’s Director of Respite and Camp Services. “Horseback and carriage riding is now available to all of Camp Baker’s programs. We couldn’t be happier with our partnership and being back in the saddle!”


Community Partnerships Support ARC’s Success

Custom Kitchens wanted to give back to the community to commemorate its 60th anniversary, and Greater Richmond ARC was thrilled with their offer to renovate Camp Baker’s kitchen cabinets and countertop, just in time for the busy summer season.

In April, Custom Kitchens donated most of the time, labor, and materials to complete this project, as well as the highly skilled services of its business partners ARC Granite & Marble and Absolute Stone. Thanks to them, the kitchen is now open for business.

“Custom Kitchens has turned our kitchen into a work of art! I am absolutely amazed by their craftsmanship, attention to detail and, above all else, generosity. Hundreds of campers and staff will be lined up throughout the summer to enjoy this much needed upgrade,” said Matt Hulcher, Director of Respite and Camp Services.

Camp Baker also has twenty-three brand new picnic tables, thanks to the collaboration of Richmond Community Tool Bank, HandsOn Greater Richmond, and a generous anonymous corporate partner. The material cost alone for these tables and benches is equivalent to approximately $2,015, not including the labor of the 32 corporate volunteers who gave their entire morning to make this project happen.

ARC @Staples Mill was also spruced up by ARC’s community partner SunTrust, whose employees on May 8 beautified the facility’s outdoor patio, including painting garden boxes, cleaning chairs and tables, and scrubbing the outdoor fountain to ensure a pleasing place for both clients and staff to enjoy.

For more information about volunteer opportunities and community partnerships, please contact [alison.jones-nassar@RichmondARC.org](mailto:alison.jones-nassar@RichmondARC.org).
Meet Nafeesah

Seated in a semicircle of high schoolers, all of whom look casual and relaxed, is Nafeesah, 15, who has been part of Greater Richmond ARC’s Youth Program for about a year. Clearly, she enjoys it.

“She loves ARC,” says her mom Rose, adding her daughter doesn’t want to miss a day.

Coming to ARC has boosted her teen’s self-esteem and independence. Rose said she used to have to help Nafeesah (whose family nickname is “FeeFee”) with tasks like dressing, but now her daughter can prepare and iron her own clothing, as well as help with the dishes and other household tasks. She loves cooking, a skill nurtured in ARC’s own kitchen.

Overall, Rose said the year’s biggest change has been in Nafeesah’s self-esteem. For a girl who once hung her head, “FeeFee” is now thinking about her future, and holding her head high.