



"An Average Day at ARCH"

9/18/2025

First let me start off by saying there is NOTHING average or typical about ARCH. ARCH is a unique program that maintains high standards in programming yet still feels like family.

I started at ARCH at the age of 17 and at the time of writing this I have been working here for 32 years. I honestly cannot imagine my life without ARCH. I know for a fact that the people who attend here feel the same. We are a one-of-a-kind program that offers state (DDD) paid services for those who qualify as well as affordable services for those who do not.

The Drop-In Center started in 1975 and at the time was .50 cents per day. Today the program is \$3.00. Yes, you read that right ONLY \$3.00 for therapeutic/recreational/life changing programs. You will see an example of our activity calendar in the capsule. ARCH Members help select the activities they would like to see on it. They make suggestions during ARCH council meetings. Those meetings are run by individuals elected by their peers to represent them as council members.

I could gush on about how ARCH has made a dramatic difference to me, the rest of the staff, and everyone who attends, but I do not think I need to. You are here opening this in 2075 (or so) and have felt the presence ARCH has had on your life or someone you love. So, I just want to give you a few facts from today, September 18, 2025.

Our Executive Director Kip Murray was the first employee hired at ARCH and SHE IS STILL HERE 😊.

DTA (DDD) has 61 members - about 48 here daily.

Drop-In has about 35 people here daily.

ARCHKids currently has another 35 Members here daily.

We have two locations for youth programming.

We currently have 31 employees, many of whom have been employed here for decades.

Right now, our campus is under construction. It's a mess here but it's going to be amazing! We are building the Health and Wellness Center.

It should be completed in about another year (they just started). Our current campus has the main building, the ARCHKids building, a gymnasium, a small and a large kitchen, a playground, a stage, a garage with 10 vans, and a sports field with a small outbuilding for concessions/restroom.

A group from ARCH is currently visiting California for a week as part of our Major Adventure Trips. Today they are at Knotts Berry Farms. It feels quiet here with 50 people gone for the week.

We also have nursing students here today from Phoenix College. The STEPS to Health and Wellness program at ARCH partners with several nursing colleges as part of their curriculum. The students here today are doing mock exams and assessments.

We are also rehearsing for our upcoming performance of "We are all Heroes". This is an original piece written and directed by me and the ARCH Performing Arts group. It will involve singing, dancing, sign language, musical instruments, and acting. It is a story of empowerment and the confidence to know you can be your own hero. We recently celebrated the 40th year of providing entertainment to the community.

We just turned in several art and culinary projects as competitive entries at the Arizona State Fair and will get to see how we placed on our field trip coming soon.

So much has changed since my employment began but one thing has remained constant and that is the fact that we will consistently advocate for the ARCH Members to lead the life they desire by providing innovative and important life programming.

I want to send a heartfelt thank you to those who kept ARCH going and maintained this program.

To those who will come, I don't know what we as a society will look like regarding inclusivity for disabled individuals in 50 years. In 1975 people with disabilities were mistreated in institutions thought to be "the best place for services". It has greatly improved in 2025 but still has so far to go. ARCH founder Mary Lees was one of the first advocates for this improvement in Arizona. It is her vision we now, and you in the future, carry on.

It is my hope that the ARCH you know in 2075 brings the same joy as the place I know and love.

Grace Jones- Adult Service Coordinator

ARCH Mission:

To enhance and maintain the quality of life of individuals with special needs by providing therapeutic recreation services, health and wellness programs, socialization opportunities and basic living skills, in our facilities and in the community.

ARCH Values:

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, RESPECT, and INNOVATION