



September 23, 2025

Happy Birthday, ARCH. You are now officially 50 years old!

As the founding Executive Director of ARCH, this is my 50th year of service to the thousands of kids and adults with special needs who have entered our doors.

When ARCH first started in 1975, we rented the Old Alhambra Grade School for \$50 per month. At first, only a few participants came through our door. As word spread, more came to recreate, socialize and make new friends. We continued to grow and several years later, at the request of parents, we began offering summer day camp for children. Within a short amount of time, these same parents wanted after-school programming for their children. ARCH responded by opening two after-school program locations.

In 1983, an arson fire completely destroyed the cafetorium that housed ARCH, so we moved all of our programs into the adjacent gymnasium, determined to find a new homesite for ARCH. We began our search and started the capital campaign "Buy a Brick, Build a Foundation". We located the property on Colter Street and negotiated a rental agreement with the City of Phoenix. The main ARCH building was constructed and in 1987 we moved to our permanent home site. The campus grew strategically over time to include the gymnasium, garage, universal sports field with outside concessions stand/restrooms, ARCHKids building and an accessible playground. In 2019, ARCH had a capital campaign, "Cornerstone the Future of ARCH" to purchase the rented 5-acre parcel of land from the City of Phoenix. Debt free, this cemented our permanent campus in the heart of Phoenix.

In celebration of our 50th anniversary we are constructing a Health & Wellness Center to increase our capacity to serve and to promote healthy lifestyles through designated spaces for specific therapies, health assessments and preventive screenings by the 300 nursing, occupational therapy and dental students who utilize our facilities for internships and required rotations.

The philanthropic community has treated us well over the years and respects us because we always do what we say we will do; we do it well and we are unique. Even after 50 years, there is still no other place like ARCH in Arizona.

I have known literally thousands of kids and adults with special needs over the year. For most, I still remember their names. Each was special to me. On a sad note, we've had quite a few Celebrations of Life at ARCH after the passing of a participant. This has given closure for their ARCH friends and staff and is often soothing for the families....because ARCH IS one big family.

I am thankful to the many employees we have had over the years, helping to mold ARCH into what it is today. Many have been with ARCH 25 years or more. Their dedication, love and professionalism has been very important, giving consistency to our programs and strategic growth.

I am thankful to our Board of Directors for giving their time, expertise and advice. The board has changed over the years but our mission has not. Again, many have been serving for more than 20 years.

And, I am thankful to the many volunteers, who selflessly gave their time to make ARCH a better place.

ARCH has had good times and bad times throughout its history. However, being a Christian, I have always believed that God has watched over ARCH, which helps us endure the bad times and relish the good times even more.

I have been blessed to be a part of ARCH. It has been like a baby to me, which I nourished, cared for, molded and loved over the years. I watched it grow into what it is today. No two days are ever the same and each day is a new challenge. For this, I am thankful.

God Bless ARCH and the people who make it so special. I hope when the time capsule is opened, ARCH is still serving the most vulnerable of the community and still follows our motto: "ARCH, a Place to Thrive, Enriching Lives".

With all my love and best wishes for a happy future,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kip", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kip Murray
Executive Director