



## The Arc's Stepping Out Program Pivots During Time of COVID

While its physical building remains closed to staff and clients during COVID, The Arc Lane County continues to provide supports to adults who experience disabilities. Employees working in The Arc's Stepping Out program have had to pivot and be resourceful in thinking of fun and engaging activities to help boost client's morale while following safety precautions and steering clear of crowds and germs.

Angel Matthews, a direct support professional with The Arc Lane County, has been working to ensure Teresa Dye feels socially connected and supported during the pandemic, although she admits, this has required a lot of creativity and ingenuity. Even finding restrooms, especially when businesses and parks are closed, has required some creative problem-solving.

"My car is fully stocked with arts and crafts, games and puzzles," says Angel, as she wants to make sure she has plenty of fun activities for Teresa to do throughout the day.

Angel and Teresa have spent much of their time together outdoors, hiking, exploring, visiting local farms and geocaching in the forest. At the beginning of their outdoor adventures, Teresa could trek about a half mile. Now, the two regularly hike three miles together, with Teresa picking the trails and leading the way. In addition to regular exercise, the two have painted rocks and left them on trails for others to enjoy, enjoyed outdoor picnics and scoured outdoor garage sales for deals.

Although tired at the end of the day, Teresa typically does not want to return home. Angel understands why. The pandemic has robbed people of socialization, with many people feeling isolated, tired and bored. Angel tries to fill the void by providing friendship, fun and camaraderie.

Angel loves her job and she admits it has helped her battle her own feelings of anxiety and depression.

"You can't be down in the dumps when you help other people find joy and happiness," explains Angel. "When you're busy making other people happy, then you become happy."



Angel (left) and Teresa hiking a trail.