

Respite and Family Support Services



“Cutting essential services to people with disabilities will lead to a lost generation of children.”

Sheryl and Rob
Rebekah, Aaron, and Zachary

Sheryl and Rob:

We can't imagine what our family would be like if we didn't have the many services provided by Arc of Westchester. The Respite Program has given us the opportunity of keeping our family together despite the stresses, anxieties, and difficulties of raising a child with autism. Because of these physical, emotional and financial stresses, there is a 90% incidence of divorce in families with an autistic child. Aaron, age 10, needs constant supervision and attention which means that Rebekah and Zachary, his younger brother and sister, lose out at times. We all love Aaron dearly but know that occasionally we all need some "time off."

When Aaron goes to Respite House, we can spend some quality time with Rebekah and Zachary while knowing that Aaron is in a caring and safe environment. Residential habilitation staff also come to our home and work with Aaron within his everyday familiar surroundings.

Respite care is funded by Medicaid

and cutting these funds could devastate families. Yes, in the short run the government could save some money, but in the long run the cost will be enormous. Families will be split apart and become more dependent upon government services. Our goal for Aaron is that he will be able to live with a group of friends, have gainful employment and be somewhat independent. Only by maintaining these services like Respite and Family Support will this be possible.

Rebekah: *Once a week I attend a Sibling Group at Arc of Westchester where we talk about all kinds of things that affect our life. It's great to be able to speak to kids my age about these things.*

Zachary: *The Respite staff let me do things with my family that sometimes I can't do when Aaron is around. I have a lot of fun with him but sometimes need a break.*

