









ANNUAL REPORT 2021













MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The challenges we faced during Fiscal Year 2021 were emotionally and physically taxing for the organization. The lack of a consistent and reliable workforce continues to be our greatest concern. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present challenges, and the State of Wyoming's economic situation and lack of adequate funding occupy a tremendous amount of our time. Despite these challenges, we have continued to provide outstanding services for the people who count on us every single day. We are extremely fortunate to have such an amazing, committed, and supportive team. None of this would be possible without each and every person helping to move us through these unprecedented times.



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Over the past year, we continued to invest in our Direct Support Professionals. We increased wages for our DSPs by \$1 per hour and our starting wage is now \$12. This is still far too short of what direct care workers should be paid and we continue to advocate for higher wages. This will take a commitment from Wyoming Medicaid and the Wyoming Department of Health. Ark will continue to work with our partners at the state for a larger investment in Home and Community Based Services.

Our Direct Support Professional Certification program is up and running and we are seeing positive results from this commitment. This 60-hour internal certification provides increased knowledge and skill of our Direct Support Professionals and provides advancement opportunities and pay increases. We have over 25 certified Direct Support Professionals currently providing services at Ark.

Throughout the year we worked tirelessly to provide the people we serve with all of the support and opportunities they want and need while also keeping people healthy and safe. Ark's response to the pandemic received accolades from our families, guardians, and the community as a whole. Ark is extremely fortunate to have such a committed and knowledgeable workforce, many of which put the safety and needs of our clients ahead of their own. For this, the organization will be forever grateful.

Lastly, over the past year we faced a tremendous workforce crisis. At times we were down over 30 positions with hundreds of hours needing to be covered. The responses from supervisors, non-direct support staff, and staff in other areas to pick up shifts were phenomenal. Many people covered shifts while still fulfilling the obligations of their normal work responsibilities. We could not have survived the challenges we faced without our incredibly committed and caring employees. If there is one thing we learned over the past 12 months, it is this—the employees of Ark Regional Services will ensure high-quality care regardless of the challenges we face.

Bob

VISION

The vision of Ark Regional Services is that all people have the opportunity to experience the world in which we all live.

MISSION

In order to support this vision, Ark Reg<mark>ional Services</mark> will facilitate opportunities

fo<mark>r people:</mark>

- to LIVE enriched, full, and individualized lives;
- to LEARN what is necessary and meaningful to realize personal success;
- to WORK toward individual accomplishment, employment satisfaction, and community contribution;
- and to PLAY...

VALUES

The values of Ark Regional Services guide every decision made in supporting people with intellectual disabilities to live, learn, work, and play. These values are at the core of what we believe, and in turn how we behave. Ark values:

- All people;
- A strong organization;
- Integrity;
- Respect; and
- Commitment to the community.

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COOPER CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS

The Cooper Center for Creative Arts began the year greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Like the rest of the world, social distancing had become the norm by July 2021, and we found ourselves unable to connect with the public in the manner that we have in the past. With no foreseeable public art shows on the horizon and no live theatre performances scheduled, our artists found themselves faced with the same dilemma that artists all over the world were facing. To quote the words of one of our art instructors, "Art must be seen!". And that became our challenge; to engage our artists with a public who should see and experience their work while keeping them, our staff, and our community safe.

Out of this challenging year some new creative endeavors were born. Instead of planning for a live theatre production, the Cooper Center actors ventured into the world of film, creating a sketch comedy that we plan to premier on YouTube in Autumn, 2021. This venture engaged students in writing, video and sound editing, film, and expanded their experience with set and costume design.

Additional projects that arose out of the need for connection with our community included the development of classes that engage students in understanding social media. Specifically, the Social Media Ethics class engaged students in learning how to use social media appropriately and safely, including the participation in posting pictures and information to our Facebook page. This class led to the development of an additional class called the Cooper Center Voice: Archiving & Curation - which more fully engages our visual art students in the process of exhibiting and archiving artwork.

The Cooper Center continues to be a place of creative growth and exploration, and a large part of Ark's education program. Typically, the Cooper Center offers 30-35 creative arts classes to nearly 75 students each semester. Beyond the visual arts and theatre classes, we also offer classes in dance and movement, music, and history classes exploring all those disciplines.

As we look toward the future, we have begun to make plans to again open our doors to our community, and can't wait to welcome you back!



"THE MONESTARY" SKIT REHERSAL







Operating in Laramie for 31 years!

Ark Equestrian Center provides opportunities for personal growth for people with and without disabilities in a non-traditional setting through a variety of fun and engaging Equine Assisted Activities. Programs offered at the Center include Therapeutic Riding, Equine Assisted Learning, and Private Riding Classes. Classes can be tailored to accommodate all members of our community, including the individuals we serve and support at Ark Regional Services.

YEAR IN REVIEW - 2021

Adult Equine Assisted Learning Classes

Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) is a non-traditional approach to learning that helps participants build trust, respect, honesty, and communication skills. As people interact with equines, they begin to understand how their verbal and non-verbal communication impacts and influences others; consequently, they gain a heightened sense of self-awareness and an increase in confidence. In 2021, seven classes were offered each week to interested individuals receiving support from Ark Regional Services. In total 53 students participated in these classes.

Therapeutic Horseback Riding

Therapeutic Riding Lessons are designed to support people's cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being. During a session in riding skills, participants engage in a variety of fun, therapeutic activities that stimulate the mind and strengthen the body. Each Therapeutic Riding session is individually tailored, yet there are many universal benefits that people experience through participation in riding. People report improvements in balance, equilibrium, coordination, hand-eye coordination, muscle memory, and self-esteem. In this program 17 individuals receiving services from Ark Regional Services particpated in Theraputic Riding.

Horticulture Program

Ark Equestrian Center's horticulture program provides classes throughout the semeser, including understanding the basics of horticulture, plant science, plant identification, soil science and organic gardening and farming. Students from Ark and ACSD#1 participated in 2021.





EAL & ACSD#1 Equine Assisted Learning Partnership Program

Ark Equestrian Center has been serving students in Albany County School District #1 for over 6 years.

Each month, the EAL Program explores a different core Value/ Principle. The monthly lesson plans are written in advance to be easily incorporated into the Albany County School Districts lesson for that semester. This results in reinforcement of lessons learned in both the classroom and Equestrian Center, increases chances of success for the students.

The classes are tailored to meet the specific needs of, elementary, middle & high school children, as well as children in the ICARE program.

In 2021, six schools served with ten classes, including 65 students ranging in age from 5 to 21. Students were accompanied by teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, and University of Wyoming practicum students.

Ridin' for the Brand Triple Classic Fundraiser

This year the Ark Equestrian Center joined the Riding for the Brand Triple Classic event alongside other Equine Assisted Activity organizations Reach 4 A Star Riding Academy (Casper) and CHAPS (Sheridan).

The event lasted a total of three race days and consisted of multiple races at each center. Participants would bet on different horses, and riders (not to mention Ark's two miniature donkeys!) Grand Prize winners drawn from the event placed bets at all three programs.

The Riding for the Brand Triple Classic event involves all three organizations who have worked for years collaboratively on a variety of programs and events that raise awareness about Equine Assisted Activities within each prospective organization's community, and the state of Wyoming. We hope to make Riding for the Brand Triple Classic an annual event.



THE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ARK'S EDUCATION PROGRAM

What a year 2020-2021 has been for the Ark's Education Program! Our focus has always been on providing our students with opportunities for continued personal growth and development through a wide range of educational experiences. As in years past, we accomplished this by offering our students the choice of 67-75 in-person classes per semester ranging from subjects in the creative arts to language arts and literacy. Like the rest of the world, the challenge that we faced this year was the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our focus over this past year has been balancing the health and safety of our students with opportunities to continue to engage them in learning. The impact on our students' mental health from the temporary closure of the Education program in the Spring of 2020 can not be understated, and their motivation to assist us in keeping our classroom environment safe has been inspiring. Social distancing, masks, hand washing after every class, and disinfecting the classrooms has become the norm for both students and instructors, and allowed us to resume in-person classes over the past year with the exception of a couple of months in the fall of 2020 due to a spike in COVID -19 cases in our community.

The instructors who teach in Ark's Education program should also be highlighted for their commitment to keeping our students safe yet engaged through this pandemic. Without their creativity and passion, this would have been difficult to achieve. Beyond their teaching responsibilities, many instructors came together to support the organization as a whole and worked shifts in Ark's Residential Program when the pandemic created staff shortages.

While things have returned somewhat to normal, we continue to look ahead at maneuvering this ongoing pandemic while still offering our students opportunities to learn, grow and experience their world.



CREATIVE ARTS CLASSES

VISUAL ARTS: 2D Design, 3D Design, Mixed Media, Color Theory, Art Journaling, Painting, 3D Digital Design, 3D Resin Casting, Pottery Wheel Art, Sculptural Practices, Drawing Animals, Printmaking, Flower Study Through Art, Artistic Independent Study, Art History.

FIBER ARTS: Embroidery, Needle Felting, Impressionism, Painting & Needle Felting, Knitting, Knitting in the Round, Garment Design, Natural Dyeing.

THEATRE: Acting 1, Acting II, Acting for the Camera, Musical Theatre History, Theatre Appreciation, Scene Design, Stagecraft: Prop Making, Script Analysis, Play Writing, Film Editing, Sound Editing, Costume Design.

DANCE AND MOVEMENT: Ballet I, Ballet Port de Bras, Advanced Ballet, Tap Dance, Hip Hop Dance, Country Line Dancing, Breathing & Blood Flow Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Puns & Pilates, Chair Pilates, Modified Cheerleading, Cheerleading, Tai Chi, Stretching & Mobility Fitness, Foundational Fitness.

MUSIC: Instrument Exploration, Musical Theatre History, History of American Music, Piano & Keyboards, Music Games, History of Rock Music, Song Lyric Writing, 20th Century Art Music, World Music, Percussion, Violin, Poetry in Music, Popular World Music & Dance, Jazz History, Electronic Music.

LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY CLASSES

LITERACY: Emergent Literacy using ALL (Accessible Literacy Learning).

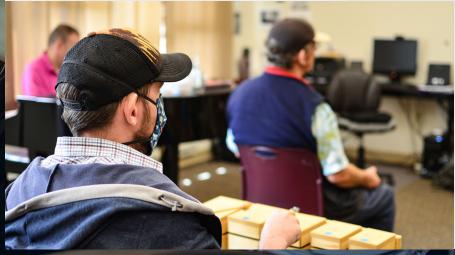
WRITING: Poetry in the Park, Playwriting, Writers Workshop, Song Lyric Writing, Collaborations in Writing, the Fruit Bowl Project, World Building, Codes in Communications, Story Adaptations, Speech & Writing.

BOOK CLUBS AND LITERATURE: The Harry Potter Series, Comic Book Lit. Storytellers Past & Present, Library Literacy, Native American Stories & Environmental Activities, Script Analysis, Voices of Enslaved People, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Bloodchild & Other Stories, The House on Mango Street,* Roald Dahl book club, Science Fiction Short Stories, *The Book Thief, Kindred*, African American Literature.

SPECIAL INTEREST CLASSES, INCLUDING TOPICS IN SCIENCE, HISTORY, CULTURE AND OTHER: Brainology, Genius Hour, Women's Studies, Astronomy, Mindfulness, Meditation, and Journaling, Exploration in Korean History, Gothic Literature, Permaculture, Current Events, Geology, Pirate History, Don Quixote's Funk, 3rd Rock from the Sun, History of Sport, Cryptozoology, History of Laramie, Historic Geology, Zoology: Dogs, Prehistoric History, D&D, ABCs of History, Cowboy History, American Political Theory, Egyptology, Fashion Through the Ages.

NUMERACY: I HATE MATH!, I HATE MATH MORE!.

OTHER: Russian Language and Culture, Conversational Spanish and Sign Language.Writers Workshop, Song Lyric Writing, Collaborations in Writing, the Fruit Bowl Project, World Building, Codes in Communications, Story Adaptations, Speech & Writing.







CARF SITE SURVEY

On April 23, 24, and 25 2018 three surveyors from CARF conducted a survey to ensure that Ark is in conformance with CARF standards. Ark received a 3 year accreditation. Ark's next survey will be November 2021.

STATE SITE SURVEY

On October 10, 2020 surveyors from the Behavioral Health Division conducted a remote survey to ensure that Ark is in conformance with state and federal Medicaid standard.

Our survey report included a summary of strengths, areas for improvement, and areas of exemplary practices. The report included:

- Ark met the standards of the survey at 99%
- Ark received recommendations in 1 area surveyed

A quality improvement plan to address documentation of employees reviewing policies and procedures on an annual basis

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Annually, we analyze information in specific areas to further improve the quality of our supports and services. We collect data on, then review and assess our progress toward meeting our targeted objective for efficiency, effectiveness, access, and satisfaction. Performance Indicators and results for Fiscal Year 2021 were:

- INDICATOR: People will be free from restraints and receive medications as prescribed.
 PROGRESS: Ark remains a restraint free organization at this time, no restraints were performed in FY 2021. Medication errors decreased by 11.7% as compared to last fiscal year.
- INDICATOR: People will have stability and consistency in their staff support.

PROGRESS: Staff turnover decreased 8% as compared to the previous fiscal year. Ark is working on a staff retention plan.

INDICATOR: More people will have the opportunity to receive support from Ark Regional Services.PROGRESS: 100% of applications were reviewed and responded to within 2 weeks of receipt.

INDICATOR: People receiving services and their family are satisfied with services provided by Ark.
 PROGRESS: 92% of families responding to the survey, positively responded to the question: "Overall, I feel that services and supports that Ark Regional Services provides are making a positive difference in the life of my family member." 94% % of person's served responded positively to "Overall, are you happy with your staff?"

ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY

ARK DISTRIBUTED ITS ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY TO FAMILY MEMBERS AND GUARDIANS. THE FEEDBACK AND INPUT WE RECEIVED FROM OUR STAKEHOLDERS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US. RESULTS FROM THE **2021** SURVEY INCLUDE:

- 92% favorable response to the question, "Overall, as a guardian or family member, I am satisfied with the supports and services provided by Ark Regional Services."
- 92% favorable response to the question, "Overall, I feel that the services and supports Ark Regional Services provides are making a positive difference in the life of my family member."
- 86% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with the health and wellness of my family member."
- 83% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with how my family member spends his/her day."
- 72% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with whom my family member lives."
- 72% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with where my family member lives."
- 58% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with the employment opportunities my family member has."

SOME OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED:

- "Ark has been terrific in providing opportunities and activities."
- "She is given great options. Ark is great for her!!"
- "I feel that everyone did an excellent job to protect and secure the lives of (participant) and the people in his house. They found things for them to do-games, fun, gardening, walks in the park."
- "I feel the (Covid-19) situation was handled well. It was difficult for everyone, but the safety of the clients was stressed, and the staff did an amazing job."
- "I don't have any ideas to improve services. When we have meetings, the staff seems to be "spot on" as to what (participant) prefers to do with her days at Ark."

ARK DISTRIBUTES AN EMPLOYEE SURVEY WHICH WAS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ONLINE SURVEY WEBSITE SURVEY MONKEY. RESULTS FROM THE **2021** SURVEY INCLUDE:

- 93% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with the communication between me and my supervisor"
- 91% favorable response to the question, "I have the opportunity to provide input, and have done so directly to my supervisor."
- 91% favorable response to the question, "Are you satisfied with your supervisor in holding you accountable to the job expectations."
- 90% favorable response to the question, "Are you satisfied with your supervisor demonstrating the values of the organization."
- 86% favorable response to the question, "I am satisfied with the communication between me and Ark's leadership team."

ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY, CONT

ARK DISTRIBUTES AN EMPLOYEE SURVEY WHICH WAS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ONLINE SURVEY WEBSITE SURVEY MONKEY. RESULTS FROM THE **2021** SURVEY CONT:

- 84% favorable response to the question, "Are you satisfied with your supervisor in explaining the expectations of your job."
- 77% favorable response to the question, "How satisfied are you with your current supervisor providing client specific training."
- 73% favorable response to the question, "I have provided input in the past and feel it was welcomed and valued."

SOME COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE QUESTION, "PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR THOUGHTS ON ARK'S RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC."

- "Pandemic response was quick and thorough."
- "Excellent. With the multitude of and contradicting information being disseminated through news outlets, following active CDC guidelines was logical and calming in hectic times."
- "I think finding more ways to be out and about. Better internet connectivity between clients. For example, having more webcams/laptops for clients to make zoom calls on their own or encouraging and teaching them to use their phones for this."
- · "Ark responded in a timely manner in a way that was designed with the clients in mind first."

SOME COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE QUESTION, "WHAT ARE SOME THINGS THAT ARK COULD DO TO ADDRESS WORK RELATED STRESS AND/OR BURNOUT?"

- "Encourage employees to use their PTO and make it easier to do so."
- "Leadership and supervisors could check in with staff if they seem stressed out, and provide advice or solutions."
- "...PTO accrual could be much better, so that we have the opportunity to take more time off, which would help significantly with burnout."
- "Adequate staffing and having fill-ins."
- "Having more staff in general. This would lighten the workload on everyone and provide more of a buffer when people leave the organization."
- "Provide personalized reminders of our value."
- "Incentives such as quarterly bonuses for staff that have been nominated by their supervisor."

ARK INTERVIEWED CLIENTS FOR THE CLIENT SURVEY AND ENTERED THE INFORMATION INTO THE ONLINE SURVEY WEBSITE SURVEY MONKEY. RESULTS FROM THE **2021** SURVEY INCLUDE:

- 94% responded yes to question, "Overall, are you happy with your staff?"
- 93% responded yes to question, "Are you happy with where you live."
- 90% responded yes to question, "Are you happy with how you spend your day?"
- 89% responded yes to question, "Overall, are you happy with your life?"
- 64% responded yes to question, "Do you like the people with whom you live?"

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Over the course of the year, employment fluctuated greatly due to COVID 19. With the vaccine becoming highly accessible, people have either returned to work, or they have obtained other employment.

We currently support 28 employed individuals, 8 of which hold positions with multiple employers. These numbers will only increase as we work with others who are in the process of securing employment, or additional employment in the Laramie community.

Current employers include:

ALBANY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

EPPSON CENTER FOR SENIORS

ALBANY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #1

ALTITUDE CHOPHOUSE AND BREWERY

ARK REGIONAL SERVICES

BERNIE'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

CARL'S JR.

CORONA VILLAGE

DAIRY QUEEN

IVINSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

LANDMARK

SAFEWAY

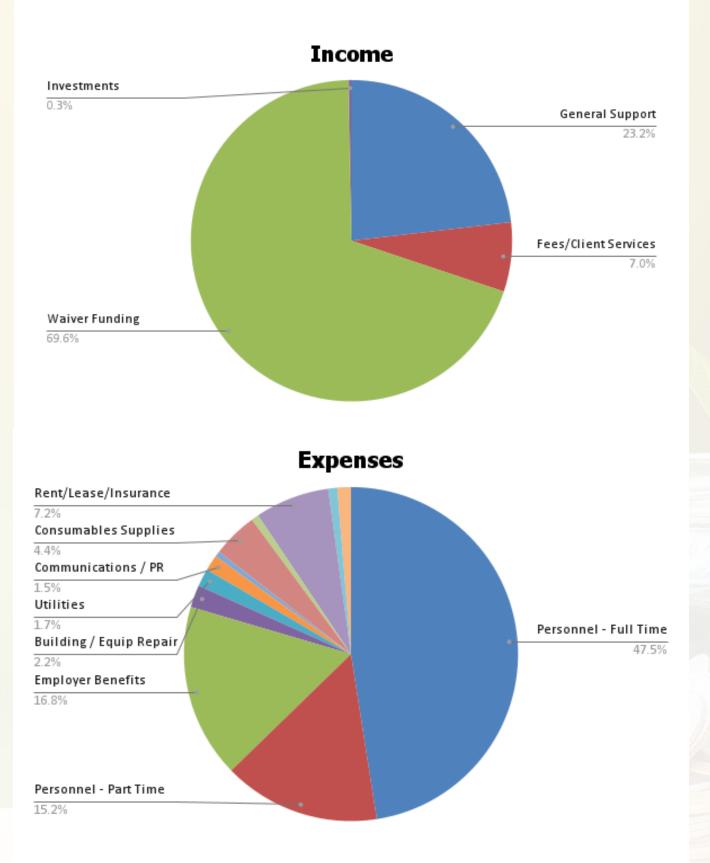
STUDIO CITY

UWHR

UW WASHAKIE

WYOMING SCHOOL OF GYMNASTICS

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



GRANTS AND FUNDING

ALBANY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	\$5,000
Community Agency Distribution	
BANK OF THE WEST	\$10,00
Community Supports Grant	
CITY OF LARAMIE	\$5,989
Performing Arts Program	
GUTHRIE FAMILY FOUNDATION	\$21,000
Visual Arts Program	
ROCKY MOUNTAIN POWER FOUNDATION	\$4,000
Language Arts and Literacy Program	
UNITED WAY OF ALBANY COUNTY GENERAL FUND	\$36,996
Operating Fund and Covid 2021 Fund	
WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANT	\$7,350
Performing Arts Program	
WYOMING BREAST CANCER INITIATIVE	\$4,148
Ark's Monthly Breast Clinic	

Ark Regional Services would like to thank all grant and funding bodies who contributed to operating and programatic services in 2021.

We could not do what we do without these incredible organisations! Thank you!

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Ark's 8th Annual Fundraiser was held as a week long virtual event! Although originally planned as a casino night, the fundraising team made the decision to hold the event virutally as was the event a year prior. Instead of having a one-night event, the decision was made to hold a week long online auction, from April 11th to the 16th. While there were no casino games, Ark was able to auction and raffle off many spectacular items donated by the community. Through the auction, raffle, and sponsorships, Ark raised over \$40,000 to help fund our programs. It was truly an amazing show of support from Laramie and beyond, especially during such a difficult time!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

HIGH ROLLER SPONSORS

BANK OF THE WEST TOYOTA OF LARAMIE TOYOTA DEALER MATCH WALTER HAMMONTREE REAL ESTATE, LLC.

KING SPONSORS

ASPEN FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC CARPET ONE COMMERCIAL FLOORING OF LARAMIE COLLIN AND ROXANNE KEENEY FROSTY AND HARRIETT KEPLER HUB INTERNATIONAL JIMMY & JEANNE GRAY POLE MOUNTAIN PHARMACY

QUEEN SPONSORS

ACRE COMPANY **BUD'S BAR** CAMERON ALLEN FIRST INTERSTATE BANK GROATHOUSE CONSTRUCTION, INC. HALLADAY AUTO GROUP **IVINSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL JEFF & ARLEE LUND K&A MERCIL CONSTRUCTION** AND DESIGN **KEITH AND ANN MARCOTT** KEITH AND MARY JO DOWNEY LARAMIE TELEPHONE EXCHANGE NORM & DOTTIE BOCK **QUALITY IV CARE TRISH BROCK** UNIWYO FEDERAL CREDIT UNION WAYNE AND SANDY HUBERT

JACK SPONSORS

ALBANY EYE CARE **BLOEDORN LUMBER** DUANE TORO REAL ESTATE **EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS** FREMONT ELECTRIC **GH PHIPPS IIM AND PATTY SULLIVAN KEITH AND JOYCE MILLER** LARAMIE GM AUTO CENTER LARAMIE LAWNERY, INC. LARAMIE RIVER DENTAL LAW OFFICES OF FRANK **BELLINGHIERE** MCPHERSON DENTAL **RIEGEL BODY SHOP, INC.** RON AND DONNA SHEEN TIM AND KAREN SULLIVAN





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors continue to dedicate their time, talent, and commitment to Ark Regional Services. They are an instrumental source of insight and vision as we embark on these exciting and challenging times. We are fortunate that Norm Bock, Pam Dovey, Sam Dunnuck, Donna Sheen, Joe Shumway, and Emory Spiegelberg gave their time to guide and govern our organization during this fiscal year.

ARK MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

The Ark Memorial Foundation was established to help ensure the financial stability of Ark Regional Services. The Foundation offers a variety of giving options so donors can support individual programs or the organization as a whole. Some of the options include:

Ark Equestrian Center The Cooper Center for Creative Arts Direct Support Professionals training & development General operating support for Ark Memorials for loved ones

Information on these giving options is available on our website. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

CONTACT US

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