



SPARC INC.

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Learn. Laugh. Live.

Mission: SPARC (Special Programs & Resource Connection) enhances the lives of people with developmental disabilities through high quality therapeutic recreation activities. Participants work on skill development in a nurturing social community that does not otherwise exist in their lives.

What does SPARC provide?: SPARC provides a wide range of recreational, arts, athletics and wellness programs for the Westchester County special needs community, from ages 5 through adulthood. We offer positive experiences and fun activities for over 1,500 participants year round, including over 500 who reside in the Town of Yorktown. The SPARC team members are highly trained professionals which includes certified Social Workers, Special Educators, Music and Recreational Therapist. Our program specialists facilitate goal-oriented activities designed to overcome obstacles in an engaging, joyful environment that fosters:

- Confidence and positive self-esteem
- Socialization and relationship building skills
- Independence and community integration skills
- Communication and long term life skills

Supporting the Community of Yorktown: Our organization has been a member of the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce, Yorktown Lions' Club and a staple of the Yorktown community for over 31 years. We offer programs in partnership with many local organizations, including after school programs at the Yorktown School District and the Lakeland School District, a teen program with YCCC, a golf program for young adults at Mohansic Golf Club and volunteering programs at various senior homes. SPARC also provides art, music, and cooking programs for adults with special needs at the PNW BOCES.

COVID-19: Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, SPARC had to cancel their in person programs on March 16, 2020. This has caused a financial strain on our organization. Our programs promote socialization and connections with others to prevent the individuals we serve from being isolated and feeling alone. The goal of our programs is also to provide families with relief time (respite) from the daily hardships of living with an individual with developmental disabilities. The suspension of our programs has caused a hardship for our families, caregivers and participants. Many of the individuals we serve have a diagnosis of Autism. The change of routine and stopping of services has affected many participants in their homes. Parents reported an increase of behavior issues at home and difficulty with daily living activities.

In response to the need of our participants and our continued goal to follow our mission, SPARC implemented free virtual classes 5 days a week. The following virtual programs are offered to participants of all ages: music, dance, art, yoga, money management, personal hygiene, social hour, cooking and film editing. Our virtual programs started on March 23rd. These programs have been very successful. Parents and caregivers report that the participants feel engaged and connected to their peers when seeing them on the virtual platform. This has also been a relief to the families especially during this difficult time. SPARC will continue to provide virtual programming as long as we are financially able to and until our hands on programs reconvene.

How to support SPARC, Inc.?: As a result of social distancing, we cannot continue with direct person services. This means SPARC will receive limited funding this year. Now more than ever SPARC needs the support of the community. Donations to SPARC will go towards supporting our virtual programs as well as the continuation of our in person direct services once group settings are acceptable and safe for our participants. Donations can be made directly on our website at www.sparcinc.org or mail in a check payable to SPARC, Inc. If you have any questions you can contact Kathleen Macias-Torres, MPA, Executive Director at (914) 243-0583.