



## Top 3 Issues of Concern in 2020

By Phil Prehn

Systems Change Advocate, pprehn@ariseinc.org

Our nation is facing three crises: coronavirus, economic collapse and the need to reform police departments to reduce racial violence. To top that off, our country is headed into an important election. What issues should members of the disability community pay attention to this fall? I'd suggest these three:

### 1. Will a coronavirus stimulus bill pass before the election?

In May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act, a stimulus bill that would extend the benefits passed in the stimulus bill in March—things like unemployment benefits, a personal benefit check, housing, transportation and health care.

The bill also included extensive support for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). Without more support, people with disabilities will not be able to live independently in the community. The U.S. Senate has refused to vote on the HEROES Act.

### 2. Will state and local governments receive support?

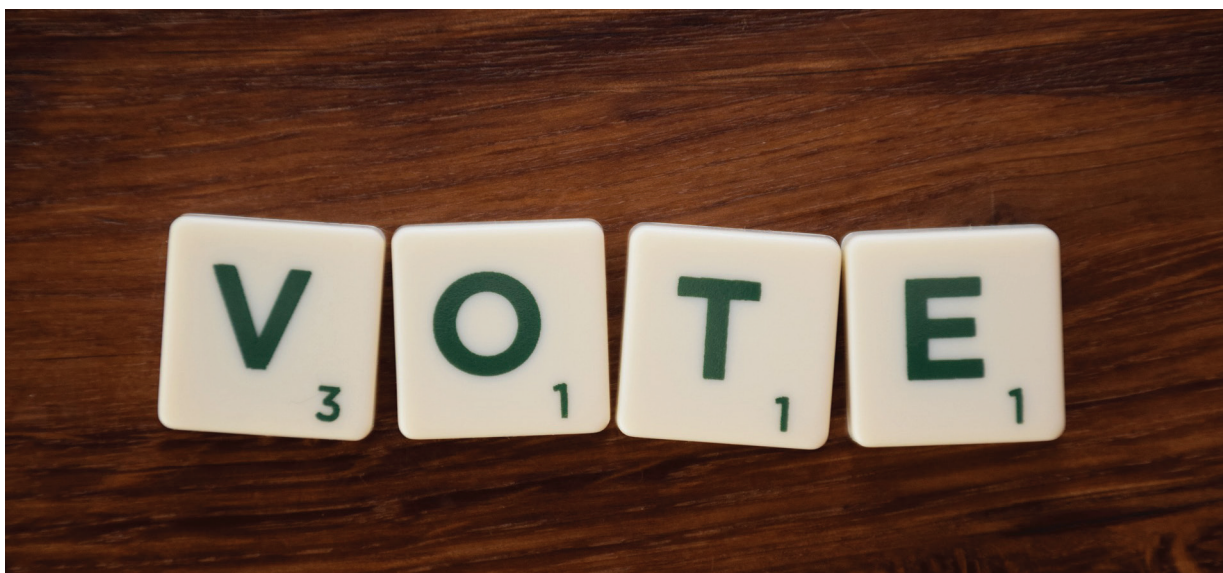
No financial aid was given to state and local governments in the first stimulus bill. Governments are facing huge deficits due to reduced tax collection and the increase in costs to deal with the coronavirus. Syracuse and Onondaga County have been forced to propose drastic cuts in services and employees. Governor Cuomo threatened to cut the New York State budget by 20% if no aid is granted. These cuts will affect all programs funded through Medicaid, including ARISE's Independent Living Center funding and services like Mental Health and supports for people with developmental disabilities.

### 3. Will the local cities and residents reform their police departments?

Many state and local governments proposed reforms to local law enforcement organizations after the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Governor Cuomo required all police departments receiving state funding to work with their citizens to change how the police do business—or lose that funding. A local group in Syracuse developed a nine-point platform for change, and the city is currently studying that plan.

Sixty percent of the people of color who die at the hands of the police every year are also people with disabilities. It is important that our community support reform.

## Researching Positions of Political Candidates



By Phil Prehn  
Systems Change Advocate  
pprehn@ariseinc.org

There are many things a voter has to do in order to cast a ballot in the upcoming election in November. Are you registered to vote? Have you ordered your absentee ballot? If you are going to vote in person, do you know where your polling place is located?

Whew! You've done everything you need to make sure you can vote. Now comes the biggest hurdle—which candidate deserves your vote? It's time to do some basic research on the candidates.

The first place to start is with your county's Board of Elections. On their website will be a list of the offices up for election and the names of the candidates who are running.

The internet allows voters to do a lot of research on candidates without leaving home. Type the name of the candidate you are researching into a search engine like Google and search for the campaign websites of the candidates. Once you are on their website, search for a link to the section that details the candidate's positions on the issues. This will give you a good idea of what is important to that candidate and if their positions line up with yours. Be sure to compare the positions with those of their opponent. Where do they differ? Are some issues not even on their radar?

The media spend a lot of time covering races, but to learn about candidates' stands on the issues you need to focus on the stories that analyze a candidate's positions. Use websites like [Congress.gov](http://Congress.gov) for the federal legislature and [nysenate.gov](http://nysenate.gov) and [nyassembly.gov](http://nyassembly.gov) to check the voting records of the politicians currently in office.

Lastly, if you really want to know how a candidate stands on a particular issue and can't find the information online, don't be afraid to contact the campaign directly and ask. If you call or send an e-mail message with your question, a staff person will likely get back in touch with you fairly quickly.

It's important that people with disabilities and their families make their voices heard. Make your vote count!



## Offering Mental Health Services in a New Way!

Chances are someone in your household is using Zoom in ways you never before imagined! You may never have heard of "Zoom" prior to the pandemic. COVID-19 is making technology critical for staying in touch.

ARISE Mental Health (MH) clinicians moved to virtual sessions in March and are finding creative new ways to connect with their clients and with each other.

ARISE School-Based clinicians now connect with kids through scavenger hunts, interactive mindfulness activities, and emotions taboo games for younger participants. They are using the Zoom "whiteboard" feature to play interactive games. Watching YouTube videos together leads to discussing mental health themes in story time and lyrics of songs. Virtual therapy has allowed us to join everyday lives and meet all of their natural supports. Even family pets make guest appearances!



The temporary NY state approval ARISE received to utilize phone services is an important way for keeping participants connected with their clinicians. Clinicians are working hard to ensure adult participants are comfortable with Zoom technology as well.

During May, known as Mental Health Awareness month, we offered weekly wellness sessions, along with providing presentations on coping with the stresses of COVID. Practicing self-care is necessary and encouraged for everyone – staff included. Some clinicians get together every Wednesday during their lunch to reconnect. Sometimes they even have a dance party! Virtual yoga sessions and trainings are helping staff stay connected while they are developing new ideas and strategies for telehealth sessions.

We encourage you to practice self-care, too. Remember ARISE Mental Health is here for you. Call 315-671-2955.

### Our Newest Farm Resident

Have you met Matilda? She is the newest addition to our animal crew at ARISE at the Farm.

Everybody just falls in love with this feisty and curious donkey.



## Kate's Remarkable Story

Kate Battoe is an intelligent young woman who has accomplished much. She earned a BA in history from Le Moyne College. Currently, she is a research assistant at the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University advocating for the rights of people with disabilities. She has published two articles and served as the senior editor of the Disability Law and Policy Newsletter.

Born with cerebral palsy, Kate's fine and gross motor skills are limited. She notes that she can't walk independently, needs help with everyday tasks, and has a speech impairment. Kate puts a high value on her physical accomplishments because those activities are a struggle for her.



Kate says her physical abilities dramatically improved and continue to do so thanks to the indoor and outdoor horseback riding arenas at ARISE at the Farm. She notes, "I'm not quite sure when I began riding at the Farm, but it was at least 20 years ago. At that time, I needed two side walkers and a leader. The purpose for going was to improve my motor skills. I left the Farm for a few years. Then I came back for the recreational riding, where the focus is on riding skills. I now ride completely independently, except for mounting and dismounting."

She further explains, "My skills have improved so much that I ride Snapple, a pony who is so stubborn that the Farm staff don't normally put independent riders on him. But I'm as stubborn as he is, so we work well together! My main goal now is to ride bareback. My other goal is to ride Snapple around the Farm's track by myself."

Riding horses is important to Kate because she sees her skills progress. "I love working with horses to get them to understand the cues I give them," she says. Because of her motor control issues and impaired speech, Kate's cues are a little different than the horses are used to and they have to learn her "dialect." She takes pride and finds joy in little things like remembering to maintain a certain posture while riding. In fact, the Farm is so important to her that it is a key factor in controlling her depression, which gets worse when she can't ride.

Although her physical progress is the primary benefit she gets from the Farm, there are others, especially during this pandemic. As a law student, Kate doesn't have much time to do anything but study. Because of her limited motor control, she spends most of her time in her wheelchair at her desk. Going to the Farm gives her an opportunity to get out of the wheelchair and move around. It also provides some socialization. With classes all online, the only socialization she has is at the Farm. "I can't imagine my life without horseback riding."

To learn more about riding opportunities, go to: <https://ariseinc.org/recreation-art/arise-at-the-farm/>





**Tania S. Anderson**  
CEO

## A Message to Our Friends

Fall is my daughter's favorite season. I suspect that is because her favorite color is orange and she likes nothing better than squishing "pumpkin guts" when it comes time to carve jack o' lanterns. For many of us, fall is a time to re-set, enjoy the shifting light and take in the beauty of the last bursts of color before winter. In a year like 2020, when so much has been unpredictable and out of our control, there is some comfort in the known cycles of changing leaves and falling temperatures.

At ARISE, we have been here for you through the tumult of 2020 and will be here for the duration. When the pandemic began, we quickly transitioned to remote services but never closed our doors. As more people come back to work and school, we are here, providing critical housing and food support for people impacted economically, offering mental health counseling, and advocating for students in school, for residents in nursing homes, for your neighbor or for you. We always have been about providing people with disabilities the services and supports they desire to live safely and independently in their own homes in the community. During a pandemic, the wisdom of that Independent Living Philosophy is more apparent than ever. Change is in the air this fall. Make it change for good, with ARISE as your partner.

## UNIQUE 2020 has a lot to offer!

We are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the UNIQUE magazine and exhibit! Through UNIQUE, ARISE displays to the world that people with disabilities are talented, imaginative, and offer a valuable perspective.

This year, amid the challenges of a COVID-19 pandemic, some of the UNIQUE literary and visual artwork reflects the isolation suddenly imposed on us. The art also reflects optimism and the resilience of the human spirit. These pieces impress and inspire despite the unusual circumstances surrounding the cancellation of so many activities, including the beloved UNIQUE art opening reception. ARISE is grateful that the Everson Museum of Art partnered with UNIQUE this year to host the initial exhibit in a socially distant setting. The UNIQUE Exhibit travels to the Nottingham Nursing Home in November.

If you would like a copy of the UNIQUE Magazine please stop by the ARISE office at 635 James Street in Syracuse. The magazine is free. The UNIQUE 2021 Calendar costs \$10, and all proceeds go to ARISE.



# ARISE

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Syracuse, NY  
Permit No. 1629

## About Us

We are a non-profit Independent Living Center, we are organized and directed by people with disabilities.

We work to ensure that every person, regardless of disability, has the power to make life choices and achieve his or her dreams!

## Our Locations

### Main & Onondaga County Office

635 James Street  
Syracuse, NY 13203  
Office: (315) 472-3171

### Oswego County Office

Creekside Plaza  
293 State Route 104  
Oswego, NY 13126  
Office: (315) 342-4088

### Fulton Mental Health Office

113 Schuyler Street, Suite 2  
Fulton, NY 13069  
Office: (315) 887-5156

### Cayuga/Seneca County Office

21 Lincoln Street  
Auburn, NY 13021  
Office: (315) 255-3447

### ARISE at the Farm Madison County Office

1972 New Boston Road  
Chittenango, NY 13037  
Office: (315) 363-4672  
Farm Office: (315) 687-6727

## Look for us at

[www.ARISEinc.org](http://www.ARISEinc.org)



Our mission is to work with **people of all abilities** to create a fair and just community in which **everyone** can fully participate.

# ARISE

f o u n d a t i o n

## SAVE THIS DATE!

# Tuesday, December 1, 2020

ARISE will conduct this year's #GivingTuesday campaign  
*We hope you can support us.*

For information about #GivingTuesday & sponsorships call:

**315-671-2903**

