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Contact: Jill Kagan, ARCH
703.256.2084
jkagan@archrespite.org

Four Respite Services Selected as Innovative and Exemplary in National Search

Washington, D.C., February 15, 2024 — The ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center is pleased to announce that four respite services from across the country were recognized with the highest level of distinction -- *Innovative and Exemplary*. Each respite service met a [stringent set of criteria](#) and all have outstanding programs that address the needs of family caregivers of children, adults and/or older adult family members. Having met the criteria, respite services selected as Innovative and Exemplary received an honorarium for their achievements, and will be recognized at the [2024 National Lifespan Respite Conference](#) in May in Albany, NY.

The four Innovative and Exemplary Respite Services are:

- **C.H.A.I. (Caregiving Helping Aid Initiative)**, a program of the Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF), Sterling Heights, Michigan
- **Musical Memories Café**, West Falls, New York
- **Saint Louis Crisis Nursery**, St. Louis, Missouri
- **Will's House**, Tulsa, Oklahoma

In addition, one service, **Autism Eats**, Boston, MA, was recognized as a *Rising Star*. Rising Stars have demonstrated a person and family-centered approach but have not yet met all criteria for Innovative or Exemplary practice.

Respite is the most frequently requested support service among the nation's 53 million family caregivers, yet 86% do not receive respite services, despite the proven benefits to caregivers and care recipients. Respite for these families can help reduce caregiver stress, improve caregiver and family health and well-being, help avoid more costly out-of-home placements, and may even help to reduce the likelihood of abuse or neglect.

By recognizing high quality respite services across the country, ARCH hopes to encourage the study, expansion, and replication of such services.

For more detailed information about each program and the selection process, see the attached and the ARCH [website](#).

ARCH extends sincere appreciation to the selection committee: Jed Johnson, MBA, MSW, retired Managing Director, Aging Services, CARF International; Melinda Perez-Porter, Director, The Relatives As Parents Program (RAPP), The Brookdale Foundation Group; and Casandra Firman, MA, and Susan Janko Summers, PhD, ARCH Senior Consultants.

The ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center (ARCH), national in scope, is a program of Families and Communities Rising in Durham, NC. ARCH assists and promotes the development of quality respite and crisis care programs; helps families locate respite and crisis care services in their communities; and serves as a strong voice for respite in all forums. The ARCH National Respite Network includes three initiatives: the [National Respite Locator](#) aids families in locating respite providers in their community; the [National Respite Coalition](#), which is the policy division of ARCH, advocates for preservation and promotion of respite in policy and programs at federal, state, and local levels; and the [Lifespan Respite Technical Assistance and Resource Center](#) provides respite training and technical assistance to [Lifespan Respite grantees and State Respite Coalitions](#), ARCH's membership, and the general public.

Visit archrespite.org or call (703) 256-2084 for more information.

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2024 Innovative and Exemplary Respite Services Selected by the ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center

To read more about the selection criteria, visit the ARCH [website](#).

2024 Innovative and Exemplary Respite Services

C.H.A.I. (Caregiving Helping Aid Initiative), is a Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF) program. Located in Sterling Heights, Michigan, C.H.A.I. strengthens the CCF's mission by continuing to improve the stability, health, and wellness of new Americans including refugees, immigrants, and vulnerable families. Of the 41,000+ individuals from 58 countries that C.H.A.I. serves, more than 4,000 are individuals with disabilities. C.H.A.I.'s comprehensive services include access to mental and behavioral health services, education, attainable housing, new American acculturation, and advocacy for religious and ethnic minorities. Caregivers often times feel hesitant about leaving a loved one with a disability and those with dementia in another's care. CCF's C.H.A.I. multilingual staff works to develop trust with caregivers over time. Connecting the caregiver through inclusive community supports, wrap-around social services, and ongoing education for the caring of loved ones with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities builds trust over time. Caregivers can also find self-care through social opportunities, support for individuals with dementia, wellness initiatives, recreation and a shared-respite model that continues to evolve. [Website](#)

The **Musical Memories Café**, located in rural West Falls, New York, and nearby communities, provides shared respite experiences for persons with Alzheimer's Disease and dementias and their caregivers, and other physically or socially isolated adults. Musical Memories Cafés offer regularly scheduled live music with local musicians and communal meals at community venues. Caregivers and care recipients, or multi-generational families — including grandchildren and extended family — can enjoy Musical Memories Cafés together as they connect with others in their community. Strong evaluation data collected by the Musical Memories Café program shows positive outcomes including reduced caregiver stress and improved caregiver-care recipient relationships. The program also shows the powerful social connections and emotional bonds that result from this experience through shared stories of spouses who lost loved ones but continued attending Musical Memories Cafés as volunteers. Musical Memories

Cafés arranged “porch concerts” and take-out meals during the pandemic to reduce isolation and maintain social connections during the pandemic. [Website](#)

The **Saint Louis Crisis Nursery** has provided trauma-responsive 24/7/365 emergency respite care services for children in the Greater St. Louis, Missouri region for nearly 40 years. Originally founded through the collaborative work of the St. Louis Junior League and the St. Louis Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery has since grown to include five 24-hour Nursery locations delivering its nationally and internationally replicated child abuse and neglect prevention programming to thousands of local families annually. Core services include 24/7 crisis intervention and emergency respite care for children as well as wrap around support for families at high risk of abuse or neglect. With stable, consistent leadership, strong partnerships across the diverse communities the agency services, and a committed and involved Parent Advisory Board, the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery consistently delivers strong positive outcomes for families. Annually, greater than 99% of the 4,000+ children served remain free from abuse or neglect, 95% of parents report decreased stress levels, and 95% of families meet safety & stability goals. [Website](#)

Will’s House, located in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was especially designed to provide customized respite care, including medical needs care, short-term, long-term, and emergency respite, to support families caring for children and young adults with disabilities. Will’s House is also a specialized foster care placement for the state of Oklahoma. Part of the mission of Will’s House is to fill as many service gaps as possible that individual caregivers experience when seeking care for their loved one with complex needs. Will’s House, a non-profit organization, is also designed to ease the financial strain families may experience obtaining respite care by offering “pay what you can” services. Will’s House is a contracted respite provider with Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Services and accepts respite vouchers and waivers. No families are turned away from services for financial reasons. Of the families using Will’s House respite services, 98% return for subsequent respite services. [Website](#)



2024 Rising Star

Autism Eats, recognized as a Rising Star, is located in Boston, Massachusetts. As a non-profit entity, it has organized more than 150 shared respite events across the country since it began 7 years ago. Persons of any age with autism along with their caregivers, families and friends may gather together to share a meal and dining experience at a local restaurant. Autism Eats provides guidance to restaurant staff in ways to prepare a welcoming space for families — “Autism 101 Training” — including: adjusting lights and music for those with sensory sensitivities; offering a prepared buffet meal so that families may choose menu items and avoid waiting for service; and offering choices of communal or individual seating, for example. Sensory toys are made available, and special guests — Santa, First Responders, Magicians, and the Boston Red Sox Mascot, Wally, have been known to visit Autism Eats events. Families pay for their affordable meal in advance, and those families unable to pay may participate at no cost. About 70 percent of families attend more than one Autism Eats event. [Website](#)