



The Arc of Mississippi  
*Association for the Rights of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities*

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*Community Participation Democracy Diversity Integrity Excellence People First Visionary Leadership*

October 7, 2008

Janie O'Keefe, Project Director  
O'Keefe Educational Media  
P.O. Box 4002  
Biloxi, MS 39535

Dear Janie:

I am pleased to write this letter of support for your project. Our coast has changed in so many ways since Hurricane Katrina, and there is a definite need for information and opportunity for people with disabilities. Even before Katrina, many people with disabilities were not participating in many recreational opportunities. Many do not have or utilize transportation to access recreational events, many simply do not understand what is available, and others do not have a network of friends to help them get started.

Our field is doing better with employment and housing to a limited degree. Unfortunately most recreational opportunities are still organized around segregated activities. Since real friendships are enhanced through what we all do with our leisure time, recreation is a natural conduit to allow natural bonding to occur.

One of the leaders in our field, Dr. David Pitonyak, says "loneliness is the only real disability".

The work that you are doing will certainly support a more inclusive society for everyone. Information, opportunities, and tools for professionals to use, will help overcome the lack of opportunities that currently exist across the coast. By including veterans and senior citizens, recreation for all can be enhanced.

The Arc of Mississippi is proud to offer this letter of support.

Sincerely,

Mike Montgomery  
Director of Special Projects