



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Normal Township ARC Celebrating 10 Years of Serving Local 55+ Community

NORMAL, IL, March 31 — Normal Township's Activity and Recreation Center (ARC) celebrates its 10th anniversary on April 25th and will host a variety of special programs and fundraisers throughout the month for members to enjoy. A "10 Free for 10 Years" program series will offer members the chance to take part in classes and social events that would typically cost extra to attend at no charge thanks to the support of generous community sponsors and long-time ARC instructors.

"10 Free for 10 Years" programs include:

4/4: Drop-In Sign Language class covering the alphabet, finger spelling, a few sentences to sign, and Easter signs

4/6: Game Night with Moe's Southwest Grill Taco Bar

4/7 & 4/21: Greeting card stamping classes with ARC member and artist Andrea Monninger

4/11 & 4/14: Textures in Watercolor classes with ARC member and local watercolorist Carol Boerckel

4/17: Glow Dance with DJ Brad Olson

4/18: Drumming cardio exercise class with instructor Nancy Norkiewicz

4/20: Dirt Pudding treats sponsored by Traditions Health

4/21: Internet TV educational technology class with The Tech Tutor, Nancy Komlanc

4/22: Music Bingo Night with Twin City Music Bingo and pizza sponsored by Papa John's

4/25: All You Need Is Zumba party with instructor Tracie Allen

"The past ten years have been an incredible journey of growth, connection, and community at the ARC. From fitness and creative arts to technology and social programming, we're proud to offer opportunities that enrich the lives of older adults across McLean County," says ARC Director of Programming Molly Camper. "Our '10 Free for 10 Years' celebration is a reflection of the vibrant, welcoming community we've built together, and a way to thank our members, instructors, and partners who have made this milestone possible."

The ARC team has much to be proud of in terms of center growth and the breadth and depth of programs and services provided over the last decade. Membership grew exponentially following ARC's opening in 2016, with the center now serving over 4,000 McLean County older adults looking for opportunities for socialization and to participate in fitness classes, pickleball, art workshops, cards and games, health and wellness and local interest education and more. The center now welcomes an average of over 500 participants per day with Mondays being the busiest day of the week thanks

to a large “grocery store bingo” following, dedicated fitness class and walking track attendees, and loyal Bonnie’s Café visitors.

Such quick growth in membership led to the need for additional program space which resulted in a full HVAC overhaul and renovation of 3,000+ additional square feet of activity space in 2019 that now accommodate yoga, Pilates, and group training classes, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Senior Health Insurance Program consults, CPR classes, Sign Language and Spanish classes, ever-growing card and game groups, and a variety of art and craft-based programs. Further center upgrades and updates have included the addition of a 784-panel solar array and an outdoor green space patio with raised garden beds, seating areas, and space to host outdoor programs and concerts. Spring 2026 will bring another green space improvement – a roofed pavilion – that will provide more shaded, comfortable space for outdoor programs and allow for the patio to be used despite unpredictable weather conditions. The pavilion project has been made possible by the generosity of members and friends of ARC who donated to the 2025 Build the ARC Campaign for the ARC Living Memorial Fund, including the leadership gift of former Tai Chi instructor Suzanne Sherman, who covered the full cost of the project by making a gift of \$37,000.

The ARC Living Memorial Fund (ALMF) was created in July of 2015 in anticipation of the opening of ARC to provide a way for members and others who support ARC’s mission to give back to the programs that they love and that have changed their lives for the better. To date, the ALMF has made a \$75,000 contribution to the green space project, a \$40,000 contribution to the 2019 building renovation, and a variety of contributions toward fitness and programming equipment. In addition, they will provide funding for the green space pavilion this spring and have planned to support AV equipment upgrades and classroom space renovation in the future.

“Through individual donations and investment growth in the last ten years, our community has helped to raise nearly \$300,000 to support a variety of programs and additions that will help ARC make a difference in the lives of local seniors for years to come,” says ARC Communications Coordinator Samantha Scott. “I’m so proud that our team has created such meaningful relationships with those we serve and that our programs bring such joy and connection that members and their families are moved to give to that extent. My hope is that as ARC continues to grow so does the sense of home and family that have gotten us here today.”

As they work to become the Central Illinois destination for 55+ recreation, the ARC team is excited for all that the future holds for program expansion and to continue researching the changing needs and interests of those 55 and older. Goals include expansion of center hours, specifically on Fridays, expansion of evening program offerings, hiring of additional shuttle van drivers to increase ability to assist those in need with getting to and from ARC, replacement of the center’s aging roof, and other capital improvements.

“The future is bright for the ARC. The entire ARC team has dedicated themselves to creating a welcoming atmosphere for all of our members,” says newly-appointed ARC Executive Director Elicssha Sanders. “One of the many goals we’ve set is to usher the ARC forward, expanding our visibility to the community. We want to continue partnering with community organizations, such as with current partnerships including the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA), Normal Public Library, and CCSI - Case Coordination, LLC. We plan to build bridges with more organizations and be an unmistakable beacon for senior service in the community.”

Throughout the months of April and May, ARC will share two surveys to collect community feedback on the center's programs and services. From April 1st through 15th, current ARC members are encouraged to provide their feedback on programs and their own center usage. From May 1st through 15th, community members who are 55 or older and who do not currently hold an ARC membership will be asked to help the ARC team learn what they are looking for out of a recreation center. These surveys will be shared at the center in paper format, on ARC's Facebook page found at handle @ARCNormal, and on the ARC website at www.activityandrecreationcenter.org.

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About Normal Township ARC

The ARC Activity and Recreation Center is a service of Normal Township for people age 55+. It is the mission of ARC to provide a modern, friendly atmosphere for socialization and fitness, as well as recreational, nutritional, health support and assistance services for older adults to help build social connections and keep our members active and engaged throughout the aging process. For more information visit www.activityandrecreationcenter.org.