

## 2015-J3118

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending George Suess upon the occasion of his retirement after 36 years of distinguished service to The Arc of Delaware County on January 16, 2016

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and honor those distinguished citizens of this great Empire State who have devoted themselves to faithfully serving the best interests of their community and the needs of its residents; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend George Suess upon the occasion of his retirement after 36 years of distinguished service to The Arc of Delaware County to be celebrated at a party to be held in his honor on Saturday, January 16, 2016, in Farrell Commons, at the State University of New York at Delhi; and

WHEREAS, George Suess is widely recognized as a leader in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities; not only is he paving the way and making great contributions to the field, he is helping other organizations find their way along the path as well; and

WHEREAS, George Suess earned his bachelor's degree in special education, and over the next 45 years he followed his passion for promoting and protecting the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supported their inclusion and participation in the community; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, George Suess began working at The Arc of Delaware County, and has served as CEO since 1986; in this capacity, he led the only organization in New York State and perhaps nationally with a written board of directors policy prohibiting any physical intervention, mechanical or pharmacological restraints; and

WHEREAS, George Suess has authored three books, including his best-

selling book, SHIFT HAPPENS...MAKING THE SHIFT TO PROACTIVE BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT, which integrates the disciplines of psychology, special education and clinical social work into a single model of practice; the well-received book describes the positive, proactive approach utilized at The Arc of Delaware County; and

WHEREAS, With unwavering passion and determination, George Suess has led the effort in showing other organizations that in order to be truly person-centered, he must treat other people with dignity and respect, starting with utilizing positive, proactive approaches in supporting people rather than aversive techniques and negativity; and

WHEREAS, George Suess supported the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) with launching its culture change initiative, which brought the message of positive behavior supports to hundreds of providers across the state; and

WHEREAS, In addition, George Suess has worked with several organizations in New York State, as well as Alaska, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee, to help implement the "Shift Happens Model"; and

WHEREAS, At The Arc of Delaware County, George Suess has created unparalleled success for individuals being supported and for those supporting them; individuals reach their person centered interests at unprecedented rates, abuse has virtually been eliminated and accidents and injuries are so infrequent as to generate insurance and workers compensation rates well below average; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his remarkable career, George Suess has received several awards and accolades for his dedication to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; most recently, his contributions to the field were recognized by the National Conference of Execu-

tives (NCE) of The Arc when he was chosen to receive the 2015 Executive Excellence Award, the highest honor bestowed upon an executive leader of The Arc; and

WHEREAS, This remarkable man has not only made a difference in the lives of the people supported through The Arc of Delaware County at a local level, but by sharing the proactive philosophy and positive approach with other organizations he has led the way to impacting the lives of countless individuals across the Nation; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his illustrious career in the human services field, George Suess served The Arc of Delaware County with intelligence and caring dedication, continuously striving to effectively fulfill the duties of his position; and

WHEREAS, Sincerely loved and greatly respected by all those with whom he worked, George Suess will be remembered for his honesty, integrity, keen sense of duty and ability to show a unique grasp of human problems in his official acts; and

WHEREAS, With him throughout have been his wife, the former Sharon Brookhouse, their two sons, Chris and Mat, as well as five grandchildren, Cara, Rebecca, Neva, Ellie, and Jack, all of whom feel privileged to be a part of his life and rejoice in his achievements; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of the great State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend George Suess upon the occasion of his retirement after 36 years of distinguished service to The Arc of Delaware County, and to wish him continued success in all his future endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to George Suess.