

2755 Hartland Road  
Suite 200  
Falls Church, VA 22043  
www.TheArcofNova.org



## News Release

**Contact: Larry Rockwell**  
Phone: (703) 208-1119 ext. 114  
Cell: (843) 368-4844  
LRockwell@thearcofnova.org

---

### **The Arc of Northern Virginia Announces New Executive Director** *Melissa Heifetz chosen to lead respected disability advocacy organization*

The Arc of Northern Virginia is very pleased to announce the selection of Melissa Heifetz as its next Executive Director. Ms. Heifetz is an experienced leader of non-profit organizations, and a passionate and dedicated advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. She will assume her new duties on January 1, 2023, upon the retirement of The Arc of Northern Virginia's current leader, Rikki Epstein.

Board President Mark Albert states, "Melissa's proven executive leadership, her exemplary success generating support and affinity for causes, demonstrated skill in building strong relationships and collaborations, and enthusiastic passion for our mission make her the ideal leader for The Arc of Northern Virginia at this exciting and important moment." Albert continues, "I want to thank the Search Committee and our Board members for their dedicated participation in this successful search for our next leader. We are looking forward with optimism to Melissa's leadership of our organization."



Heifetz previously served as the Executive Director of The Arc of Loudoun and at Congregation Beth Emeth in Herndon. In 2018, the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce awarded her their Non-Profit Leadership Award.

She founded Advocacy Partners, LLC in 2020 to provide advocacy services to individuals with disabilities and their families. In her role at Advocacy Partners, she contracted with The Arc of Virginia to represent our state chapter on General Assembly-created state policy workgroups, conducted numerous training programs, and has been an invited guest speaker at disability conferences throughout the Northern Virginia community, and at state and national conventions.

Heifetz received a Bachelor of Arts in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland, and her Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

"I have very big shoes to fill," said Heifetz, "but I am thrilled to be joining the talented and dedicated team at The Arc of Northern Virginia. I am looking forward to leading this organization that shares my same values of advocacy for human rights, full inclusion, equal participation in the community, fairness, and justice for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Heifetz takes the reins of the organization from Rikki Epstein, who was named Executive Director in October of 2011. In her 11 years of leadership, she has overseen the remarkable growth of The Arc of Northern Virginia, and led it through one of the most challenging eras for any nonprofit organization. Under her leadership, The Arc of Northern Virginia has expanded programming to better inform, educate, and serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families; matured into a

recognized force for advocacy among local and state governments; and grew to become the highly regarded and respected organization it is today.

### **About The Arc of Northern Virginia**

The Arc of Northern Virginia was founded in 1962 and today represents and serves over 39,000 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)--such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and rare chromosomal disorders--and their families in the cities and counties of Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church. The Arc of Northern Virginia is an organization that builds community opportunities for citizens with disabilities so that they can live "A Life Like Yours."

###