

## A Message from the CEO



In the 2019 ARISE Annual Report, I wrote about serendipity and the hard work we do to be in the right place at the right time. Writing this mid-way through 2020, in a world rocked by a pandemic, economic downturns and racial protests, it seems as though we all are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Not so fast.

This time of crisis will teach us many things, and as time passes we will learn more. Even in the middle of it, however, ARISE is thinking fast and acting quickly to do business in a new way and provide essential services. When the “right place” for many of us was at home, ARISE transitioned to telehealth and remote services. Our mental health clinic set up telephone and internet platforms in the space of a week to provide continued counseling and meet increased demand for mental health supports. Nearly all of our staff shifted to working from home, creatively delivering the same high-quality services as they had from an office. Our outreach to people with disabilities became even more deliberate and frequent, so we could be in the right place at the right time for them.

The COVID crisis is further exposing stark realities that only underscore the importance of Independent Living, the bedrock of all we do at ARISE. We know the pandemic disproportionately hurt people living in institutions. For more than 40 years, ARISE has worked to keep people in the community and out of institutions. We know that the pandemic disproportionately hurt communities marginalized because of age, race or disability. For more than 40 years, ARISE has worked as a civil rights organization to give equal access to all people.

We always knew we were essential. And now the world better knows it is essential to respect the power of every person’s voice, every person’s value, here in the community.

Tania Anderson  
ARISE CEO