



# Jesse's Story



In 1947, a young woman in labor was giving birth to her first born; a son. The labor was difficult with extreme complications. A doctor at her bedside decided to assist the infant in leaving the birth canal by wrapping a set of forceps around his head and removing him forcefully. In so doing, he crushed the left side of the child's brain; causing paralysis and brain damage. That young woman was my mother and that baby was my brother. As a result of his birth, he has since lived with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Fast forward to 1954, the year my parents, my brother, two other siblings and I moved to Harford County. In terms of medical and other needed services, not to mention an opportunity for an education, my brother was a non-entity. There was nothing for him. Fortunately for my parents and for several others with children with developmental disabilities, this was not good enough. I remember the struggles of my parents and others in bringing about change. Thanks to their continuing efforts, The Arc Northern Chesapeake Region was born, and a school for my brother and others who shared his disabilities appeared. Over the years, The Arc NCR and the movement grew, with gradual gains to give my brother and his friends the quality of life and recognition as human beings to which they are entitled and to which they so richly deserve.

My brother still lives, though his health is declining. But my memories of growing with him remain strong. He graduated from his school, gained employment with a job coach, and received transportation to and from work and special events. (Yes; thanks to The Arc NCR, he was able to get a job and be gainfully employed.) And, as it turns out, his athletic skills earned him Special Olympics medals. He is the real hero and a star in my family. The Arc NCR has given meaning to my brother's life; and it is a Godsend to him and to my family.

I believe we are put on this earth for many reasons; and one of them is to care for others less fortunate than ourselves. Through my support of The Arc NCR, I am able to meet my obligations to those who are most vulnerable and unable to help themselves. Given all The Arc NCR has done for my brother and what it means to me and my family, I owe a debt I will never be able to fully repay. To ensure I continue to do my part even when my brother and my family no longer need its services, I have included The Arc NCR in my will. It is the right thing to do. It is the necessary thing to do. And it will be my way to honor the memory of my brother when I can no longer enjoy the presence of his company. God bless The Arc NCR and those who work there; for they give meaning to the lives of others with developmental disabilities. And God bless my brother. I consider myself fortunate to have shared my life with him.

---