

History Note: ARRM marked 45 years' service in 2015

by [Jane McClure](#) // January 8th, 2016

Access Press is not the only Minnesota disability community member marking a major anniversary in 2015. Here is a look at three of our community counterparts:

ARRM marked its 45 years' service to Minnesotans with disabilities. What is now ARRM began in the summer of 1970. A small group of Minnesota leaders from private residential facilities for people with what was then called "mental retardation" met at an ARC convention in Bemidji. The leaders found that they shared many interests, concerns and goals, so they agreed to form an association and invited other community members to join them.

On November 13, 1970 ARRM—then known as the "Association of Residences for the Retarded in Minnesota"—was officially incorporated as a nonprofit organization. It later became the Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota, but is now ARRM.

Just as outdated language has changed since then, so too has the community served by ARRM. The state has closed its large institutions that housed many people with developmental disabilities and moved people to smaller, community-based settings. Services have become more person-centered. ARRM has expanded from being a representative of residential services to also including community services.

ARRM got its start in St. Paul and in its early years had an office not far from the state capitol. The organization always has had a presence during legislative sessions and has worked to raise awareness of the issues its members face. Its members support people with developmental, physical, and intellectual disabilities, as well as brain injury, autism, mental health needs and more. ARRM members also provide semi-independent living services (SILS) and other community-based services.

ARRM's activity at the capitol have frequently appeared in Access Press, most recently with the Best Life Campaign to increase the wages for caregivers. One December 1990 Access Press article described how ARRM members staged a lengthy protest of wage issues, in front of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). ARRM began the protest of October 15 and continued its presence until the November election.

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"The core of the argument is that wages paid to state employees for similar work in residential facilities is substantially higher than the wages to outside providers of service," the article stated. (This was before the state's current Personal Care Attendant program.)

Gerry MacInerney of ARRM told a news reporter that the discrepancy was the result of longstanding and cumbersome rules from DHS, as well as the rate increase system in place at that time.

Terry Shapiro of Mary T., who was shown picketing and handing out leaflets in front of DHS, said that the wage discrepancy was about \$4 per hour. Private contractor received an average of \$6 per hour, while the state paid \$10 per hour for the same work.

One photo showed a sign stating, “Gov. Perpich, why do you let this happen? Just say no to preferential treatment.”

Read about two other longtime disability community organizations, Vinland National Center and Tamarack Rehabilitation Services, in our People and Places section.

Access Press is interested in reader submissions for the monthly History Note column, to complement the articles. Submissions must center on events, people and places in the history of Minnesota’s disability community. We are interested in history that focuses on all types of disability topics, so long as the history has a tie to Minnesota. We are especially interested in stories from Greater Minnesota. Please submit ideas prior to submitting full stories, as we may have covered the topic before. Contact us at access@accesspress.org or 651-644-2133 if you have questions. The History Note is a monthly column sponsored by the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, www.mnddc.org or www.mncdd.org and www.partnersinpolicymaking.com.