**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact Name:** Summer Mandell

**Email:** smandell@thearcoftexas.org

**The Arc of Texas Announces Changes to Public Policy & Advocacy Team**

**(AUSTIN, TEXAS, 08/06/2021)** After 13 years in the disability field, predominantly with The Arc of Texas, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy Ginger Mayeaux’s last day with the organization is August 27, 2021, to relocate permanently to her home state of Louisiana.

“Throughout her career, Ginger has been a staunch advocate for the rights of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities, particularly through supporting and empowering Texans with IDD to use their power of self-determination,” said CEO Jennifer Martinez. “Many have benefited from not only her expertise but passion for systems change that benefit Texans with disabilities, their families, and their allies. Although Ginger is moving on from our organization, we know she will continue to play an integral role in the disability rights movement.”

“Ginger celebrates disability pride and empowerment, and is exceptionally gifted in supporting self-advocates in the exercise of their rights as citizens,” said Deputy Director of Public Policy & Advocacy Ashley Ford. “She consistently recognizes and elevates these rights in a respectful manner, empowering partnerships between people with and without disabilities, and leading the way to better outcomes and better lives for everyone in the community.”

Ricky Broussard, Imagine Enterprises SPEAKer and experienced self-advocate, is one of many advocates who experienced Ginger’s support. When asked what it was like to have her as his support person on the IDD System Redesign Committee, Ricky shared, “Ginger is a wonderful person. She really takes her time and asks how she can support *you*. She is dedicated to the empowerment of the community voice and she will often say that none of what she does compares to the efforts of the self-advocates, and she’s ‘just here to support them.’ The truth is, in an environment ill-equipped for disability, proper support from someone like Ginger is as important as a ramp up the front steps: she gets their foot in the door, but they take it from there.”

Mayeaux has received several awards during her career, including The Friendship Award from Texas Advocates and the Empowerment Award for Excellence in Promotion of Self-Advocacy from AAIDD, Texas.

Current Deputy Director of Public Policy & Advocacy Ashley Ford will assume the role of Director of Public Policy & Advocacy upon Mayeaux’s departure.

Ford has extensive experience in the disability rights movement and public policy and advocacy work. Prior to joining The Arc of Texas in 2020, Ford worked for the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) and at the Texas Legislature.

“We are thrilled that Ashley will be taking the reins as the new director of public policy and advocacy for The Arc of Texas,” said Martinez. “Her prior experience, coupled with her impressive advocacy skills, make her well-suited to effect positive change for Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

Ford’s first day in her new role is September 1, 2021.

-30-

*The Arc of Texas promotes, protects, and advocates for the human rights and self-determination of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Learn more at thearcoftexas.org.*