

You are helping
individuals with
disabilities exceed
expectations!



The | Tapestry

Autumn 2022 | Inside: Life-changing stories and impact start with YOU!



A Note From Our Executive Director



Dear Little City Family and Friends,

The tagline at Little City reads “creating hope, changing lives, challenging all limits.” These three simple concepts truly encompass the core ideals of Little City.

But what I really love about these words is that it is a call to action. These are active words and active words mean nothing without action behind them.

In this edition of the *Tapestry*, you will read stories about how the challenging, creating and changing are happening every day at Little City. The mission statement is on display across this vibrant community every time people pursue their dreams, work to overcome obstacles and fulfill their potential.

This mission is on display every day because of you.

In the following pages, you will get to meet an incredible young man named Josh, who changed his life by challenging his limits. Josh never allowed his disability to define him or expectations from others to slow him down. Today, he has gained community-based employment and is on the path toward building a career.

And he’s not the only one to leave his comfort zone in order to achieve success. Sixteen athletes recently went to the Special Olympics Summer Games and won more than 20 medals. All the participants at the former Lakeside Center found a new facility at a beautiful building in Grayslake and embraced an all-new curriculum, embracing a change and challenge that will help them reach new heights.

These many individuals with disabilities continue to inspire us and remind us that the only way forward is to have the courage to try something new and to work for something more.

Their determination and persistence are a reminder that if we are complacent in our support and the



work we do to help them, they will not have the opportunities they deserve.

But through your generous support today and every day, great things continue to be built.

This August, work began (*shown above*) on the final two homes at the Duffey Family Children's Village, including the Charles Evans Gerber Home. These homes will provide much needed relief to a growing waitlist of children in need of dynamic care and support. And a new school year at the ChildBridge Center for Education will begin, helping more than 30 students learn, grow and develop vital life skills that will empower them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives. And so much more!

And know that none of this is possible without you.

I hope these stories inspire you and make you proud of the important role you play in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And I hope these stories are a reminder that we must always be challenging, changing and creating in order to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of those at Little City.

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers
Executive Director

P.S. When you give today using the enclosed reply device, you are helping many just like the ones you'll read about in this edition of the *Tapestry* challenge, create and change so much throughout their lifetimes!

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Josh exceeded expectations because of YOU!

If there is an expectation, Josh will surpass it.

From graduating District 211's transition program, enrolling in Harper College's Career Skills Institute and even joining the school's wind symphony as a trombone player, Josh has always set goals and worked to accomplish them.

It was no different when it came to pursuing community-based employment after graduation. But while Josh had all the skills needed to succeed in a work environment, his speech delays and challenges prevented him from interviewing well.

And that is where your support came in to help Josh.

Because of support from donors like you, Josh was provided with the best resource in Dan Brueck and Little City's Employment First team.

Dan, a job developer at Little City, said Josh had been one of the most prepared and eager clients he ever worked with during his five years at Little City. Improving the interview experience was the only hurdle for Josh to clear. After practicing interviews, going through mock questions and working to help him open up, Josh was ready.

Josh landed his job in January at SIPI Asset Recovery after an interview went so well that they hired him on the spot. Josh started as a sorter, working two days a week organizing laptops and electronic equipment. But he quickly showed his ability and received a promotion within three months.

"If it weren't for Little City and the help from Dan, I am not sure Josh would have secured the job on his own," said Josh's mother, Melissa.

He now works three days a week and helps disassemble and assemble laptops and electronic equipment and can even wipe security software from hardware. Dan said he will continue to work with Josh on-site at times over the next six months because of the standard 12-month process a job developer works through with a client, but Josh has already exceeded expectations.



“He’s made such great progress and I am really, really proud of him,” Dan said. “It is really rewarding when you see someone not only get a job, but get a job they enjoy, and Josh absolutely loves it. It has been a joy getting a chance to work with him.”

Melissa said the job has been a life-changing step for Josh and he is so happy with the work he does. She said as his skills continue to develop, she could even see him get more full-time work in areas like data entry or other computer-related careers.

“Every time I pick him up, he has a smile on his face and says it has been a great day.”



When you give today, this is the impact you have on individuals with developmental disabilities. You help provide the best options and opportunities for them to learn, grow, and find success in community employment – just like Josh! Thank you for giving generously to help so many more reach their unique potential!



New location enables new curriculum

The participants at Little City's Lakeside Center have a new place to call home.

After years of searching, the new facility at 144 Commerce Drive in Grayslake has offered a major upgrade and perfect learning environment for the roughly 100 people who have relied on Lakeside programs.

From the outset, the Grayslake location offers a more welcoming and warm greeting to participants and visitors, boasting a beautiful exterior and nestled in a community of surrounding businesses – a stark contrast to the warehouse aesthetic of the old Waukegan location.

Inside, the 15,000-square-foot facility is conveniently divided into seven rooms and four suite areas, giving both participants and staff the space they need for focused classroom and administrative tasks. The setup has already shown to be a big improvement compared to the old facility where work was done primarily in two, big open spaces.

The nature of the programming has also become more focused allowing individuals a greater range of choices. Rooms are divided into Earn, Learn, Create and Recreate spaces. In the Earn curriculum, individuals learn work skills and social skills for potential employment. In the Learn area, people can work on subjects like math, reading and writing. Create allows participants to engage in art, dance and other outlets. And Recreate focuses on health, fitness and community engagement.





This new curriculum is a significant change from the on-site contracted work that served as the primary activity in the old location. After the state began phasing out of the subminimum wage work program, Lakeside used the opportunity to implement the new curriculum and found a learning environment in the new facility that will bolster growth for participants.

Individuals have many more choices in the new curriculum. Each day begins in a homeroom but then participants get the opportunity to decide which of the spaces they want to participate in including activities like volunteering, community visits and more. There is also an Employee Development Services program at the facility for the participants on track for community-based employment.

Cortney Lucente, Assistant Director of Lake County Community Day Services, said the new facility and program has been embraced by staff and participants alike.

“It brings so much more structure and organization compared to that big open space most people used in the old location,” Cortney said. “Each room has a uniformity and a purpose that makes it so much more productive. We’re just really excited about what we are able to do here.”

The new home and new approach has already received rave reviews from families. Roughly 100 people attended a private open house for families to see the new facility, and Cortney said the feedback was nothing but positive.

“People thought it was amazing,” Cortney said. “When you compare it to the old location, just the rooms, carpeting, the whole space is just so inviting and really conducive to what we are doing here. It’s a big difference.”

Your support today is what makes new curriculum developments like the Earn, Learn, Create, and Recreate spaces possible – helping many individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities find success throughout their lifetime. Thank you!



Pine Home gets a magical makeover

The girls at Pine Home received a wonderful surprise recently when volunteers from The Opus Group, Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago and artist Shane Anderson teamed up to complete a magical makeover. The renovation included remodeling the kitchen and bathrooms, adding safety features and updating the bedrooms.

But the most eye-catching change came courtesy of artist Shane Anderson who flew in from Minnesota to paint a princess mural in the main living area. The colorful and creative mural made the home feel completely new for the residents.

“To see so many people from different places coming together to make this home a better place for Little City’s youth is just inspiring to see,” said Executive Director Shawn Jeffers. “These are the moments that not only put smiles on the faces of those who live and work at Little City, but remind all of us of what we can accomplish thanks to the support of our community.”





The Pine Home is the only girls home at Little City, making it one of the busiest homes as there are rarely times when any room is available for new residents. And as the girls have grown together in the home, the renovation gave them a chance to personalize their space to reflect their personalities.

Artist Shane Anderson said he wanted to do something in the common space that could be enjoyed by all residents and came up with the concept after hearing what the girls enjoyed.

“I enjoy creating murals that can really transform a space and getting an opportunity to do it for a cause like this is just great,” he said. “There have been a lot of wonderful volunteers helping bring this to life and I think the kids are going to love it.”

Bill Brennan, Little City Director of Facilities, said organizations like The Opus Group and Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago are vital to ensuring the homes for Little City’s children remain safe and continue to be a dynamic and supportive environment where they can enjoy learning and growing together.

The Pine Home is just the most recent contribution the organizations have made to Little City as they previously helped with the stunning mural and renovation at the Center for Employment and Business Opportunities.

“They’ve just been great to work with and they always go above and beyond,” Bill said. “To get the amount of work done as fast as they do is just incredible. We wouldn’t be able to do this without them.”

If you are part of a company or group that would like to make a life-changing difference through volunteering, contact Michael Sprieser at msprieser@littlecity.org to learn more about potential opportunities.



Athletes win over 20 medals at Summer Games

Sixteen Little City athletes won more than 20 medals at the Illinois Special Olympics Summer Games, marking a successful return to the showcase event for the first time since 2019.

Familiar faces led the way as both Kevin M. and Jimmy S. won four medals each in powerlifting while newcomer Ryan Y. was one of the youngest competitors to medal, winning gold in the softball throw and silver in the 100-meter dash. Other gold medalists included Syed, Mark, Jodi and Sheldon.

Eli Martinez, recreational therapist and a Special Olympics coach, said it was a great event for her first time down state with the team. “Everyone had a lot of fun and competed really well,” Eli said.

As it was the first time in two years athletes were able to participate, the atmosphere was celebratory all weekend long. Coach Jacob Blakey said the moments and events happening off the field were just as important as what happened in competition because it gave athletes from around the state a chance to socialize and be together.

From waving at crowds in the opening ceremony to enjoying a block party dance in the evening, Jacob said the team was just happy to participate in the Summer Games again after the two-year break.

“It was a wonderful experience, and everyone was just really excited to be there,” Jacob said. “It was almost like a little vacation for them, but you could see how serious they still took the competition. Everyone was still there to win.”

Interested in volunteering with the Little City Special Olympics team? We are always in need of volunteers and coaches to help with programs and general recreation classes throughout the year. Contact Eli at evazquezmartinez@littlecitcity.org or Jacob at jblakey@littlecitcity.org.

Walk with the Heroes of Little City!



Register for the Hero Walk today and come celebrate over 63 years
of creating hope and changing the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Register for FREE at www.LittleCity.org/hero-walk
or learn about sponsorship opportunities!



Signature events return with huge success thanks to YOU!

After years of cancellations as a result of the pandemic, two of Little City’s premier events had incredibly successful returns with the Annual Gala and LCI Golf Classic bringing hundreds of supporters together to support people with developmental disabilities.

The Gala returned for the first time since 2019 on May 14th at the Drake Hotel in Chicago as Little City supporters gathered for a night of fundraising and celebration to raise \$395,000

in support of the more than 1,100 people with developmental disabilities receive the support and opportunities they deserve.

The night was also a special recognition of Howard Bell, who was posthumously honored with the Vernon Carson Luminary Award for his lifetime of support at Little City and pioneering efforts in helping the agency grow into what it is today.

Howard first came to Little City in 1964 after his daughter, Andy, had been

diagnosed with a developmental disability. Andy is now one of Little City’s longest tenured residents and has thrived over the last 50+ years, becoming an acclaimed artist, gold medalist Special Olympian and retiring from a successful work career in community-based employment.

Howard’s legacy continues to live on through the passionate support of his daughter Julie, who currently serves on the Little City Board of Directors and accepted the award in her father’s honor.

Additionally, Little City honored Motorola Solutions and its Foundation with the first ever Corporate Partner of the Year Award for their dedication to Little City’s mission.

That commitment was on full display in 2021 as Motorola Solutions and its Foundation made 24 donations including a gift that improved the way Little City communicates and





operates with a radio system donation valued at over \$110,000.

But their partnership does not end in donations. Motorola executives Chad Werkema and Dale Rublaitus serve on the Little City Board of Directors, and their staff have visited campus on countless occasions to dedicate their time and talent through volunteerism.

The impact of Little City's supporters continued to be celebrated at the annual LCI Golf Classic, which took place on June 20th at Twin Orchard Country Club in Long Grove. The event was one of the highest attended in recent history, with more than 260 golfers coming together to help raise an astounding \$400,000 for Little City.



The event also celebrated the incredible contributions of Wendy and Irwin Steinberg who were honored with the 2022 Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award. They have not only helped grow the event to new heights, but have made crucial investments to improve the lives of those at Little City.

As Little City ambassadors, the Steinbergs have introduced countless people to Little City through the event and have used their network and connections to help people with developmental disabilities. Their passion has been especially impactful for children, including funding a therapeutic playground that is still enjoyed by the kids today.

Little City wants to thank everyone for making these historical events more successful than ever!

Save the Date for our 2023 Signature Events!

Annual Dinner Gala: April 22, 2023 at The Palmer House | honoring Shawn Jeffers

LCI Golf Classic: June 19, 2023 at Twin Orchard Country Club | honoring Housh Khoshbin



Celebrate 63 years on our annual Day of Giving

DAY OF GIVING, FEATURING LITTLE CITY'S GOT TALENT

Saturday, October 1, 2022 | www.littlecity.org/dayofgiving

Celebrate Little City's 63rd anniversary and this vibrant community that you have helped create! For 1,959 minutes starting on Oct. 1st at 6am until 2pm on Oct. 2nd, help us support our mission by raising essential funds enabling individuals with disabilities reach their unique potential always.

A special MATCH campaign, fulfilled by Little City's Board of Directors, will be announced soon. Also, we will be hosting the 2nd Annual *Little City's Got Talent* virtual variety show on Oct. 1st featuring the incredible talents of Little City's participants! Stay tuned!



Community Partners

Thank you to the following funders for their generous grants that support the work and mission of Little City. The below referenced grants were awarded on or after December 2021:

- Andrew & Alice Fischer Charitable Trust
- Barrington Township
- BCU
- Bloomingdale Township
- Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation, Inc.
- City of Waukegan
- Cole-Crone Family Foundation
- Cook County

- DuPage Community Foundation
- DuPage County
- Hanover Township
- Marvin and Kay Lichtman Foundation, Inc
- Palatine Township
- The Coleman Foundation, Inc
- The FJK Private Foundation
- The RJN Foundation, Inc
- The Schwaben Society Charity Fund
- The Zurich Foundation
- Schaumburg Township
- West Bend Mutual Independent Agents' Fund
- Wheeling Township

Helping Hands

Little City extends its appreciation to the following groups and individuals for their recent volunteer work with us since April 2022.

Group Volunteers:

- Assurance
- Dick's Sporting Goods
- Robert Half



Walk with the Heroes of Little City!

LITTLE CITY'S HERO WALK!

Saturday, October 8, 2022 | Busse Woods, Grove 26 | Elk Grove Village, IL
www.littlecity.org/hero-walk

Event opens at **10:00am** | Walk begins at **11:00 am**

Register for FREE for the 3rd Annual Hero Walk! Enjoy a 1 mile stroll through scenic Busse Woods and come celebrate 63 years of creating hope and changing the lives of individuals with disabilities with other Little City friends and families!

This family friendly event for people of all ages will feature:

- Refreshments and snacks
- Arts & Crafts
- Yard games
- And more!
- Raffles & prizes

2022 Event Sponsors Thank you to our generous sponsors who ensured our 2022 Signature Events returned with enormous success!

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YOU CAN HAVE 12X THE IMPACT

by starting a monthly gift!



When you join the Circle of Love monthly giving program at Little City, you start impacting individuals with disabilities *every month*.

Making a monthly commitment is more than just a recurring donation – this is the impact you can start today by becoming a Circle of Love monthly donor:

- Your monthly commitment is ongoing support that we can count on to help sustain all that we do together to serve hundreds each month.
- Monthly gifts help continue to offer life-changing programs while reducing administrative and overhead expenses.
- It gives you the opportunity to have a greater impact in the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities year-round!

Start a monthly donation today at www.LittleCity.org/Monthly

