

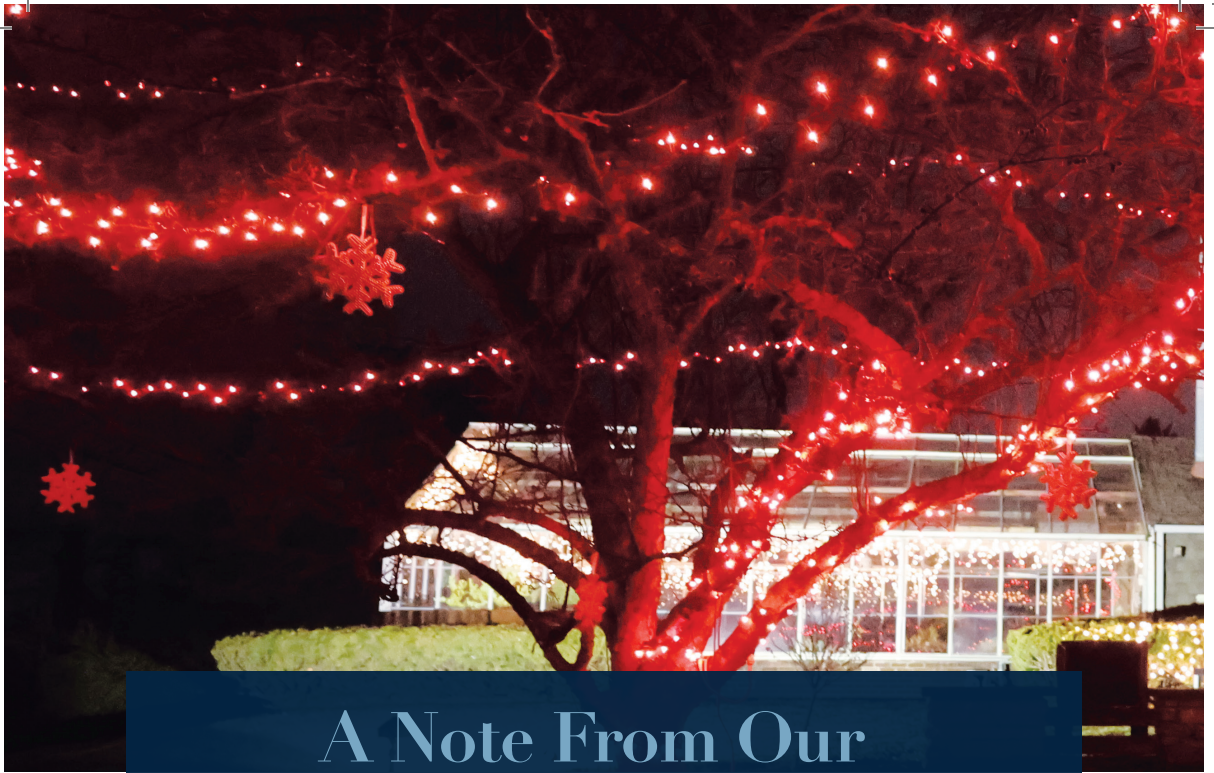


See how you
carried 2022 to
new heights!



The | Tapestry

Winter 2023 | Inside: 2022 was filled with incredible achievement because of YOU!



A Note From Our Executive Director



Dear Little City Family and Friends,

The new year is a time of reflection, connection and celebrating the things that bring us together as friends and family.

Our shared passion for helping people with developmental and intellectual disabilities receive the opportunities and support they deserve is what brings us together and it has led to incredible achievements in 2022. From a new day services center in Grayslake for adults to breaking ground for two new children's homes at the Duffey Family Children's Village and everything in between, this mission has taken important strides in reaching new heights because of friends and donors like you.

The work that you helped accomplish in 2022 has set the stage for an even bigger 2023.

Little City is now positioned as the only agency in the state delivering educational and residential services to children with the most significant needs. The Foster Care & Adoption program has expanded to as far as Joliet, reaching more families than ever. Our award-winning Center for the Arts is set to relaunch with a reimagined approach that will create even more opportunities for participants.

It's your belief, commitment and generosity towards this mission that has made all of these accomplishments – *both big and small* – a reality.

I often think about how lucky Little City is to have such a wonderful community of supporters, but it has been especially at the forefront of my thoughts this holiday season as I prepare to end my 20 years at Little City.

Throughout my two decades here, I have seen incredible growth in the passion and support for Little City. I have seen so many people who had never heard of this vibrant community become lifelong supporters and genuinely passionate about the mission after experiencing what we do here through



“The beginning is always today.”

volunteer work, special events and other interactions with our participants and staff.

Seeing people make that connection inspired me 20 years ago and it inspires me today. —Mary Wollstonecraft

It is that shared passion we have for building a better future for those we serve that makes me confident the future has never been brighter for Little City. This mission has always been bigger than one person – certainly bigger than me – and the staff, supporters and families that make this place so special are connected to the mission more than ever.

It has been the honor of a lifetime to be trusted to lead this special place for the last 20 years. I realized early on I only needed to help steer a ship that was carried on the shoulders of the families, staff and supporters who love Little City so dearly. You carried us to new heights in 2022 and will continue to carry Little City to new heights in 2023.

Every day is a new beginning and tomorrow promises to be the start of something special.

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers
Executive Director

P.S. Please consider making a gift today in this new year to help ensure the best options and opportunities are provided to those who need it most – helping each reach their unique potential every day!

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Year in Review: 2022 reached new heights, thanks to YOU!

This year was nothing short of impactful for hundreds of individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities – each being provided with the best options and opportunities to grow, integrated education environments to thrive, safe homes to learn life skills, and so much more! Relive the last 12 months with us and all that you helped accomplish for the hundreds that we serve together every day!

Participants, like Rachel, at Countryside Center embrace new programming designed to transition them from sub-minimum wage work on-site to community employment opportunities.



Volunteers from The Opus Group, Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago and artist Shane Anderson team up to complete a magical makeover for the Pine Home residents; providing updates to meet the needs of the residents, including a magical mural.



**2022
JANUARY**

Happy New Year! Little City entered 2022 with renewed hope and set out to achieve ambitious goals.



FEB/MARCH

The Lakeside Center moves to a new facility in Grayslake that provides an environment better suited for learning and growth for our participants!

APRIL

MAY



JUNE

16 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.





These are the heights you have helped many reach throughout 2022, but the reality is that we need your help in this new year to ensure individuals with disabilities always have the best opportunities and environments to reach their unique potential every day. Please consider giving a gift today using the enclosed reply envelope!

Employee Development Services launched into the community, giving participants more opportunities to explore community-based employment.



The Center for Education starts a new school year with six new elementary-aged students joining.



The Foster Care & Adoption program officially marks its expansion into Matteson and Joliet, helping connect kids in need with foster families.



AUGUST

OCTOBER

DECEMBER

JULY

SEPTEMBER

NOVEMBER



Ground is broken on the final two homes of the Duffey Family Children's Village; both homes are planned to open this Spring!



Little City celebrates its 63rd anniversary with its annual Day of Giving, Hero Walk, and a virtual *Little City's Got Talent* show.



The Center for the Arts officially relaunches; offering professional art and business management opportunities.



Foster Care expands to meet a growing need

The Little City Foster Care & Adoption program was on the move in 2022, opening two new offices that helped them double the number of families they serve.

In addition to the Chicago-based office, the program now operates out of offices in Joliet and Matteson, where they recently celebrated their arrival with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The offices play a pivotal role in reaching more families, giving them the opportunity to serve communities within a roughly 45-mile radius of each office location.

“We added about 120 families to what we already had so we are around 250 families now between the three sites,” said Emily Rawsky, Chief Program Officer of Family and Community Services. “Both places have been excited about having us and being a service provider in their region.”

The expansion into new regions came thanks in part to Little City’s longtime partnership with Aunt Martha’s Health and Wellness, which provides healthcare services to children and adults throughout Illinois. When they decided to divest from their foster care and adoption program, Little City was the first agency they sought out to take on the caseload.

While it is one of the largest acquisitions of cases Little City’s foster care program has taken on, it is not the first.

Little City has become one of the premier foster care providers in Illinois over the years, exceeding nearly every benchmark and criteria set by the Department of Children and Family Services year after year.

“DCFS has let us know how happy they are now that we are





in Will County and the Joliet area,” Emily said. “With our offices now, we are able to reach parts of seven different counties.”

Unlike most Little City programs, the foster care & adoption program has expanded to help both children with developmental disabilities and children with no special needs. Emily said the early focus in the new regions is to highlight the specialized foster care as it is an area that is often underserved.

And while the program has grown through case acquisitions, Emily said like many foster care and adoption providers, the agency is still struggling to recruit new families post-COVID. She said Little City licenses about 10 new families per year – far fewer than the number of families who come through other agencies.

But she said both Joliet and Matteson have had an overwhelmingly positive response to Little City’s arrival and events such as job fairs and Chamber of Commerce events have already led to some prospective foster families and employees.

“All of our regions are really just looking to continue to expand the number of families we are able to serve through recruitment events,” Emily said. “Our biggest need is still foster parents.”

While they hope to continue to grow through recruitment, Emily said Little City would likely continue to grow through acquisitions from other agencies as important metrics like placement stability, permanency and family retention are all exceeding state goals.

Interested in becoming a foster parent or want to learn more about Little City’s Foster Care & Adoption program, visit www.littlecity.org/fostercare or contact Mariah Brandon at mbrandon@littlecity.org.

The new offices can be found at 600 W. Holiday Plaza Drive, Suite 350 in Matteson and 116 N. Chicago Street, Suite 301 in Joliet.



Little City leads the way with THRIVE program

Teaching, Healing and Realizing Individual Victories Everyday

Little City is leading the way for children with the most profound intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As families and children continue to seek services out of state or are at-risk of institutional placements, Little City has become the first agency in the state to offer specialized residential and educational programs for the most vulnerable children.

Little City’s ChildBridge Center for Education has launched the THRIVE program – specifically designed to serve students who have high intensity behaviors and are at-risk of being placed in institutional settings.

The primary focus of programming is on addressing the student’s significant maladaptive behaviors and developing independence in achieving daily living skills and acceptable social skills. The focus





on social-emotional regulation capabilities helps the students learn safe and productive coping methods and communication.

School principal Phil Siegel said one key to the program that sets it apart from most other learning environments is the shift away from “masking” behaviors. He said while most schools would have students suppress behaviors, the THRIVE program has a team of support staff and BCBAs to safely guide the student through the process so they can learn to recognize and change the behavior instead of suppressing it.

“Growth and change can take time, especially for people with profound developmental disabilities, and this program allows them to learn and grow at their pace,” he said. “When they are able to work through their behaviors, they are able to learn much more efficiently.”

Each classroom has no more than four students and those students are supported by a special education teacher, no less than three paraprofessionals and a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst. The program utilizes a Direct Instruction Model that is based on the premise that all students can learn if instructional communications are presented logically, unambiguously, and clearly.

The educational aspect is only one part of a continuous learning and support program that will also extend to the home. Birch and Maple Homes as well as the new home being built at the Duffey Family Children’s Village will house many of the students in the program so there is a symmetry between the support and education they receive at school and in home.

State officials have already expressed interest in Little City expanding programs like THRIVE to serve more children at-risk of institutional settings or leaving the state.

It is through the support and generosity of friends and donors like you that make these life-changing programs a reality for those who have the greatest need. Please consider donating today using the enclosed reply envelope to help bring this new program to more students with the most profound disabilities.



Center for the Arts relaunches and expands

Little City's award-winning Center for the Arts is making its long-awaited comeback.

After a years-long closure due to COVID-19, the Center for the Arts is scheduled to officially begin operations again in January with a new look and new approach.

Since as far back as the 1960s, Little City has had an ever-evolving arts program that has produced everything from internationally featured artists, documentaries and even a public access TV show led by participants.

The newest chapter of the Center for the Arts will keep that spirit of innovation alive, serving not only as a creative hub for some of Little City's most talented artists, but a learning ground for valuable business skills including customer service, online store management and product preparation.

"We wanted to use what has been going on with the horticulture program as a framework for what we could do here, adding that vocational skills development aspect," said Wendy Mayfield, Director of Community Day Services. "It will work like a microbusiness and pair well with the employment programs we have now."

The program will start with limited classes in January including introductory art classes covering basics for beginners and advanced art classes for some of the longtime participants who will be returning to continue their art careers. Classes will continue to expand to include subjects like photography, so students can create their own art and take pictures of art pieces for the online shop; woodworking, where students can learn to build and set frames; and retail training, where participants can learn about gallery operations, online sales, customer service and more.

If you or someone you know has an artistry expertise in a specific medium such as ceramics, mixed media or other area and are interested in assisting the Center for the Arts, please contact Wendy Mayfield at wmayfield@littletcity.org.

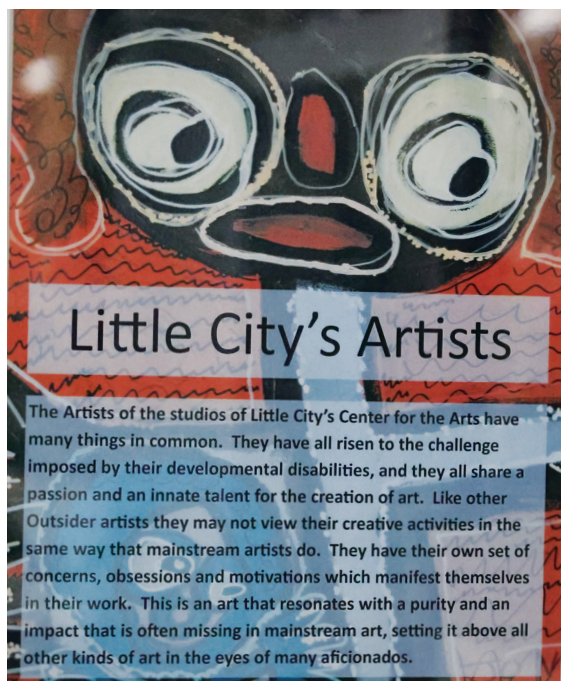


Community interaction will also be part of the new art program, with plans to take students out to local art galleries and museums to learn more about the world of art. There will also be opportunities to go to different locations and outdoors to create art. Wendy said they are also hoping to have area artists and experts come to the center for guest speaking and teaching engagements.

Long term, the new art program will be more robust and accessible than previous iterations. Wendy said the plan is to have gallery and store hours throughout the week and eventually on weekends. There are also plans to provide classes to more Little City families and participants through weekend and evening art classes in the future.

Special events, including Staff Art Night and Family Art Night, are in the works to allow more people to get involved with the Center for the Arts. Four quarterly gallery shows with featured artists are also planned so Little City supporters can see the incredible work being done at the center.

“Right now, we are just excited to get classes going again in January and welcoming people back to the program after a long time away,” Wendy said. “We see a lot of potential for the center and as we start to add more facilitators, we will keep expanding our programming and what we are able to do.”





Meet Aanav: The story of hopefulness

Aanav is just one of the many new faces who started at Little City's ChildBridge Center for Education this year.

As the Center for Education continues to evolve to meet the needs of school districts and families, an emphasis has been placed on reaching more elementary-aged students. At 11, Aanav is one of the youngest students in the school along with new friends like Noah, Patience and others who make up Little City's new elementary classroom.

Reaching students with developmental and intellectual disabilities at a young age gives them a greater chance of reaching a higher potential in the future.

"His potential is unlimited," said Phil Siegel, principal of the ChildBridge Center. "He is so bright and energetic and he has a way of just connecting with people."

Despite being one of the youngest students in the school, Aanav has already taken on a leadership role in his first few months at Little City. Bre Reveley, a school social worker, said Aanav tries to help the teachers anyway he can and reminds other students to listen and be nice to staff during the day.

Judy Kasner, who specializes in teaching elementary-aged students at ChildBridge, said Aanav is one of the brightest students she has worked with and has been eager to learn from the start. During a recent session, Aanav was reading and matching pictures with words, utilizing a task chart and following the schedule of the day without issue.

"He's such a smart kid and it's amazing to see where he is at already," Judy said. "We are just working on staying on schedule and staying focused on what we have to do each day."

Despite his quick success at the ChildBridge Center, Phil said Aanav's strong verbal skills and academic level cannot cause complacency in the work that needs to be done. The elementary age is the most important time to teach children with developmental disabilities as many academic skills as possible so the post-secondary years can focus on the life skills and vocational skills needed to transition to adult programming.



“He comes in with a smile and he is happy every day. He is enjoying himself and that is a key first step,” Phil said. “Judy and Aanav had chemistry from the very first day and we have to make the most of that and make sure he develops those social and emotional skills so he can succeed in less restrictive environments.”



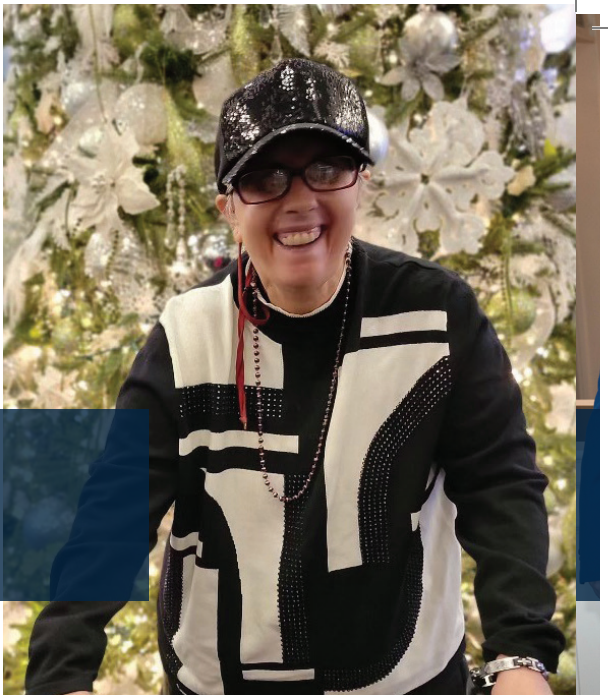
Aanav and the rest of the new elementary students at the ChildBridge Center are receiving life-changing opportunities they could not get anywhere else because of your support.

Your generous donation today is not just a one-time gift for students like Aanav, but a gift that will help equip them with the skills they need to thrive for the rest of their lives.

“I love coming here and I love my teachers,” Aanav said. “I always have fun.”

“The story of Aanav is hopefulness,” Phil said. “He is going to be a success story. We know exactly what we have to work on. He’s going to be a major success.”

When you donate today using the enclosed reply envelope, you help provide the integrated learning environment that students like Aanav need to thrive throughout their lifetimes. Please give generously today to help more students like him!



Residential Holiday Parties

Little City got in the holiday spirit this December, enjoying holiday parties in both the children's and adult programs.

Children were treated to a magical evening at the Polar Express thanks to staff and volunteers who helped transform the gym into a winter wonderland. Children had the opportunity to take their photos by a Christmas tree and fireplace design, enjoy holiday treats, watch a special screening of *The Polar Express* and meet Santa.

Adult residents experienced a night of fine dining and dancing at the gorgeous Seville in Streamwood. Attendees enjoyed a four-course meal and a night of dancing to a playlist they worked together to create. The night was made even more special by a surprise visit from Santa, who stopped to speak with attendees at each table.

Thank you to all the donors, staff and volunteers who made Little City's holiday parties a magical time for all!

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/received on or after September 2022:

- Allstate Foundation Adopt-A-Family Grant Program
- Bloomingdale Township
- Citi Retail Charitable Donations Program
- City of Waukegan
- The Coleman Foundation
- Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF)
- FEMA (paid out by IEMA)
- Fifth Third Chicagoland Foundation
- Kott Trustees
- Libertyville Township
- Village of Schaumburg
- Wauconda Township

Helping Hands

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

- American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA)
- Ernst & Young
- Motorola Solutions
- Omron
- Robert Half
- Society of Casualty and Safety Engineers (SCSE)
- Vistex
- Zurich



Upcoming Events

2023 ANNUAL DINNER GALA

Saturday, April 22, 2023 | The Palmer House | 17 E Monroe St, Chicago

As we look forward to the bright future that lies ahead of Little City, we honor and celebrate our deep history of providing hope and opportunity for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And this year, we are privileged to honor Little City's Executive Director, **Shawn Jeffers**, whose unforgettable journey here spans two decades.

Get your tickets now and learn about sponsorship opportunities at www.LittleCity.org/Gala.
Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor: George & Dimitra Zervas and Family.

60TH ANNUAL LITTLE CITY INVITATIONAL GOLF CLASSIC

Monday, June 19, 2023 | Twin Orchard Country Club | Long Grove, IL

Join us for one of the signature charity events of the summer, the Little City Invitational Golf Classic! Come out to Twin Orchard Country Club in Long Grove for a day of golf while assisting Little City in raising much-needed awareness and funds for children and adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This year we will be honoring **Housh Khoshbin** with The Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award for his generous partnership in helping build this mission into what it is today!

Purchase tickets and learn more about sponsorship opportunities today at www.LittleCity.org/LCI

POKER TOURNAMENT & CASINO NIGHT

Friday, Sept. 22, 2023 | Bank of America Tower | 110 North Wacker, Chicago

Save the date for our next Poker Tournament & Casino Night! Hosted at the Bank of America Tower in the heart of Chicago, it'll be an exciting night filled with Texas Hold 'Em and casino games with incredible prizes at stake and a gourmet buffet from Gibson's! More details coming soon!

4TH ANNUAL LITTLE CITY HERO WALK

Saturday, Sept. 30, 2023 | Busse Woods | Elk Grove Village, IL

Mark your calendars as we gather at Busse Woods for a celebratory walk. Every step you take will help empower Little City participants, so create a team, encourage your friends and family to join you, and start raising money for children and adults in need!

Register for FREE at www.LittleCity.org/HeroWalk2023

LITTLE CITY'S ANNUAL DINNER GALA

Unforgettable



Honoring Shawn Jeffers: Tying up 20 Memorable Years

APRIL 22, 2023 | THE PALMER HOUSE CHICAGO

Join us for an Unforgettable evening at Little City's Annual Dinner Gala! This signature event is a can't-miss evening honoring and celebrating our deep history of providing hope and opportunity for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

And this year, we are privileged to honor Little City Executive Director, Shawn Jeffers, whose unforgettable journey here spans two decades.

Purchase tickets and learn about sponsorship opportunities at www.littlecity.org/gala

