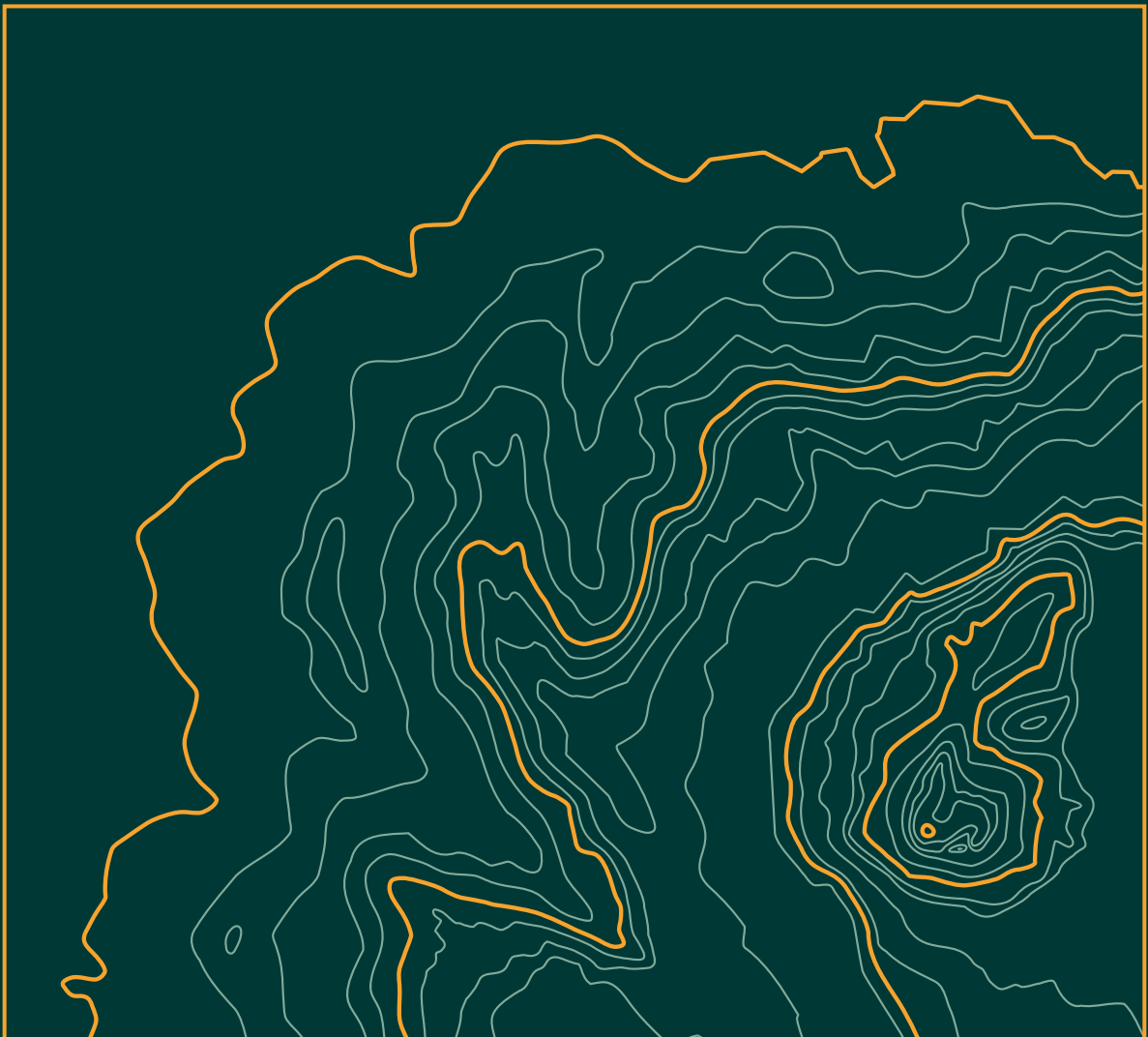


A YEAR OF BREAKING GROUND



Your Little City 2023 Annual Report



DEAR FRIENDS,

2023 was a year of change at Little City. From new community jobs for our Employment First participants, to a newly renovated softball field for our Special Olympics team, to a leadership transition, change was everywhere.

The stories you will see in this annual report capture only a few of the amazing moments we experience every day at Little City, and the truly groundbreaking events that are happening now and planned for the future. And while these stories capture all the wonderful differences that make Little City such a dynamic and special place, there is one constant: You.

Little City's accomplishments in 2023 were possible only because we are blessed to have people who believe in our mission and value every individual we serve by supporting them and their dreams. With all the exciting change now and on the horizon, it is the unwavering support from people like you that we cherish the most.

We have been thrilled to work together this past year to bring those we serve more opportunities than ever before, and even more innovation is planned for 2024.

The final two homes of the Duffey Family Children's Village will open this year, completing a dream that started 10 years ago. The facilities for our flagship programs, including the Center for the Arts and

Horticulture Center, will receive exterior makeovers and become a more welcoming presence for the many who pass by our beautiful campus every day.

Inside and outside those renovated buildings, programs like art, horticulture, and recreation will continue to expand to reach more people with developmental disabilities in the community. In addition, we will add more classroom space to the school and create more business and vocational opportunities for participants as we continue our quest to help those with IDD live fuller and more independent lives.

Fighting for our staff will also remain a top priority in 2024. As the state's financial support continues to fall behind, we have increased our political engagement and led the way in ensuring the people who support our residents and participants are also supported. Your letters and calls to elected officials and state leaders is another way in which you have helped make a difference.

The future is bright for Little City, and we owe that to you. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to sharing all the successes you will help create in 2024 throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Greg Burns
Chair, Little City Board of Directors



a year of TRANSITION

While we enjoyed plenty of groundbreaking moments in 2023, it was also a year of leadership transition for Little City. Our longtime Executive Director, Shawn Jeffers, concluded a 20-year career at Little City in April of last year. At the same time, Marie Newman became Chief Executive Officer and served for a short period until February of 2024.

Shawn's two-decade tenure at the helm was marked with multiple groundbreaking moments. From the opening of the ChildBridge Center for Education in 2011 to the launch of the Duffey Family Children's Village in 2014, he left a legacy that will benefit children and adults with developmental disabilities for years to come.

"What we did, how we did it, all these defining moments – I can pause and see it all so clearly now," Shawn said in his farewell. "We did all we could do together and now Little City is on to a new chapter, and I am on to a whole new book because this really feels like the perfect ending to me."

As Shawn left behind a career of memorable milestones, Marie Newman brought a passion for nonprofits that carried over into her leadership of Little City. During her short tenure, she expanded the employment, horticulture and art programs, renovated facilities, strengthened governmental connections, and saw through the completion of the final two homes of the Duffey Family

Children's Village to fulfill a dream that started a decade ago.

"We appreciated Marie's leadership during her time at Little City, and we have a tremendous leadership team in place that will continue to support our mission during this time of transition," said Greg Burns, Chair, Little City Board of Directors.

"We look forward to another year of groundbreaking firsts as we work together in our quest for equity and opportunity for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Celebrating Decades of Groundbreaking Innovation

Little City was founded in 1959 by a group of parents seeking to provide loving and nurturing environments for their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). It was one of the first facilities of its kind in the United States, breaking new ground by pioneering new services and programs to help those with IDD live fuller and more independent lives.

LITTLE CITY FIRSTS—As one of the first innovators on the scene for people with IDD, Little City broke down barriers, challenged limits, and enacted a vision that allowed those we serve to live a life of dignity, equity, and fulfillment. Our agency was among the first to develop innovative programs in many areas, including: education, the arts, horticulture, recreation, employment, foster care & adoption, and more. And the firsts continued in 2023.

2023: A YEAR OF FIRSTS

Little City broke new ground in many areas in 2023. Here are just a few highlights.



Our ChildBridge Center for Education:

- Enrolled a record-breaking **43 students** in our day school.
- **Enrolled 10** in our THRIVE program for students with the most profound disabilities.
- Had a record **18 students** from the community, compared to about 7 in a typical year.
- Held our first-ever **school prom!**



In Foster Care & Adoption:

- We achieved **40 permanencies** (exits from foster care services), the highest number the program has ever accomplished.
- We ranked among the **top five performers in the state** for the first time by licensing 65% of relative homes (compared to a statewide average of 35-40%)



61 adults in Little City's Employment First program got their first jobs!

Community Jobs

- Mariano's
- Panera
- American Place Casino
- MOD Pizza
- Portillo's
- Yuppie Puppies
- Goodwill
- BP Gas Station Urban Counter

Vocational Jobs

- Can-Do Coffee
- Horticulture



At Our Countryside Day Programs:

- We launched Little City's first-ever **Photography Club**, with aspiring photographers meeting bi-weekly to learn photo skills.



In Fitness & Recreation:

- We broke ground and completed a renovation of our campus **softball field**, providing a fresh new space for our Special Olympics softball team!
- Several participants achieved firsts including **Chrissy L** in powerlifting and **Katie H** and **Bobby T** in bowling, including regional and state tournaments.



Can-Do Coffee Cart:

- For the first time our Center for Employment & Business Opportunities (CEBO) launched an entrepreneurial venture with a generous grant from the Palatine Jaycees. Our **Can-Do Coffee Cart** teaches participants business skills such as sales, customer service, and money management.
- Coffee Cart employees sold **417 items** and made nearly **\$800 in sales** in 2023!



At our Grayslake Center:

- We partnered with the Lake County Forest Preserve for the first time to help with **conservation efforts** at the Grayslake Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve.
- Little City became the first organization to receive a **library card** at the Grayslake Public Library, allowing participants to borrow materials.
- In 2023, we received **more referrals than ever** from the Waukegan Department of Rehabilitation Services.



The Horticulture Harvest Stand sold pumpkins and gourds for the first time!



shifting gears to NEW CAREERS

When it came to landing his first job, Pavel hit the jackpot.

It's not easy for people like Pavel to find the right fit, but he navigated the difficult path that people with developmental disabilities travel when looking for community-based employment, and he beat the odds when he was hired by American Place Casino in Waukegan this past fall.

There are roughly 4.5 million open jobs across the country and, while people with developmental disabilities have the skills and ambition to fill many of those openings, the opportunities for them remain limited. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that roughly 22 percent of the population with disabilities was employed in 2023 and that number is even lower for those with developmental disabilities.

But people like Pavel are changing the mindset by showing employers the value they bring to the workplace.

Kelly Wagner is Pavel's job coach at Little City and said Pavel was one of the most ambitious and dedicated job seekers she has ever worked with. That work ethic shone through immediately in his job at the casino where he works in the kitchen washing dishes, cleaning, and helping organize and prep work areas. While they did not apply to all of them, Kelly said they found 26 places of interest during the initial job search because of how eager Pavel was to get to work.

"He takes pride in his work and puts 100 percent into everything he does," Kelly said. "He takes responsibility and ownership of everything. There were even interviews we went on where he set up his own transportation, so I just had to meet him there. He even called the Department of Rehabilitation Services on his own about his employment eligibility status."

It did not surprise Kelly how quickly Pavel transitioned from being a student in the Employee Development Services (EDS) program at the Grayslake Center to landing a job. Pavel started EDS in October of 2022 and was able to land a job within one year because of his commitment. Kelly said that, during his job search, Pavel would do any small job available at the Grayslake Center, such as shredding paper, just to get experience, and he would absorb all the information and experience he could, whether it was in the classroom or a volunteer opportunity.

It has paid off for Pavel who now works independently without a job coach and is already working six hours a day, four days a week. This is on the higher end for people landing a first community-based job out of programs like EDS.

"He has already talked about wanting to work two jobs, so I actually have to slow him down a bit," Kelly said with a laugh. "I'm just very proud of him and it has been amazing to see him realize his dreams."

There are so many people like Pavel who are making their dreams come true at Little City thanks to an ever-growing employment program. There were 61 adults in the Employment First program who earned their first jobs in 2023, a 53 percent increase from 2022 in employed adults with disabilities at Little City.

Opportunities continue to grow as Little City now works with 105 local businesses over seven counties to find employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Over the last five years, Little City has placed more than 240 individuals in community jobs, with a 97% retention rate.

Shawna Pearson, Director of Employment & Innovation Services at Little City, said 2023 was a great year but there are still more people like Pavel looking to achieve groundbreaking success in 2024.

"It's been amazing to see so much growth in our participants developing job skills and also the excitement and energy of our local businesses in working with us," Shawna said.

"Pavel is just one example of the kind of hard work and commitment so many people at Little City have to share with employers when given the chance."

a fresh start for ART

Diane wanted to paint a different picture of what could be.

After struggling to find what she was looking for in her former day program, Diane came to Little City in 2023 and found a fresh start with a little art.

Diane's infectious smile and outgoing personality helped her make friends at Little City right away and the variety of options – from horticulture to art and even choir – energized her to pursue interests that were unavailable to her previously. It did not take long for her to gravitate to the Center for the Arts.

“Diane has gone through difficult things in the past and I think she finds comfort in her art and writing. It is a way she can express herself,” said Jenny Boland, Business & Program Development Manager at Little City. “Even though she has been here less than a year, she has already found a perfect fit.”

Diane can now grow with the Center for the Arts, which has just started ramping up programming after a yearslong closure due to COVID. She is one of the first artists to take part in the new Emerging Artists class that serves as a bridge between casual or beginner artists and Little City's more prominent artists who have been featured in exhibits or have sold their work.

Diane's clear talent made her a perfect candidate for the new class and gives her a path to work toward her goal of ultimately exhibiting or selling her art.

The Emerging Artists class is not the only new feature of the reimagined Center for the Arts. As a retail concept takes shape in the newly renovated



studio in 2024, Diane and all participants will have the opportunity to develop vocational skills such as providing customer service to gallery visitors. They can also learn web skills for the digital store, inventory management, and other skills that can help prepare them for community-based employment.

The Center serves as an important connection to the greater community. A recently awarded grant will allow the Center to receive a needed exterior makeover, resulting in a modernized style that will look more welcoming to the many people who pass by our campus daily. The gallery also serves as a welcoming way to introduce first-time visitors to all Little City offers.

Eventually, the Center could even host art classes for community-based families to participate in together.

Shawna Pearson, Director of Employment & Innovation Services at Little City, said the possibilities are as endless as a blank canvas when it comes to the Center's future.

“There is so much we can explore and do here to help our participants learn valuable skills and create an enriching social experience where they can express themselves,” Shawna said. “We are excited to connect this unique part of Little City that truly sets us apart to the greater community.”

The possibilities are also endless for artists like Diane, who in a short eight months at Little City has already emerged as a special talent.

presenting... PUMPKINS!

At Little City's Dorothy Rose Horticulture Center, breaking new ground means harvesting new crops.

For the first time ever, horticulture participants took on the challenge of planting, maintaining, and harvesting pumpkins on the Palatine campus. The new effort required hard work from all involved, including Horticulture Manager Wayne Johnson using his local farming connections to borrow a tractor to prepare the ground for planting.

The first venture into pumpkin farming was a success as participants produced roughly 80 pumpkins that were later sold at the fall Harvest Stand on Little City's campus.

“This is part of what we are trying to build here to give as many options and experiences as we can,” Wayne said.

“It went really well and a lot of the participants were excited about the work and seeing the process.”

While the sales were a bright spot, longtime Horticulture Specialist Jackie Kenyon said it was seeing how growing a new crop like pumpkins energized and engaged different students. Avid Halloween fan Danny was one such student, taking great pride in growing one of his favorite parts of his favorite holiday.

Danny did everything from choosing seeds and placing posts at the right distance to planting and preparing the final product for sale. Because of the

dwindling population of honeybees, participants even had to do the delicate work of hand pollinating many of the crops.

Jackie said that, in all the time Danny has taken horticulture classes, it was the most excited she has ever seen him.

“It was amazing seeing people like Danny really connect with what we were doing and learn new things,” Jackie said. “There is a lot of work that goes into growing pumpkins and he was just so excited to do all of it.”

The pumpkin crop was just one of the many milestones the horticulture program reached in 2023. Participants sold more than 2,000 plants during the annual spring plant sale and more than 1,200 pounds of vegetables during the fall Harvest Stand sale.

The impressive production has allowed the Horticulture Center to hire nine of the students as employees who are paid to work for their skills in planting, cleaning, and customer service. This growing area of the Horticulture program is already helping people learn the skills needed for community-based employment, including at local plant nurseries.

What new crop awaits participants in 2024 is to be determined. The challenge with planting pumpkins is the difficulty in replanting the crop on the same plot of land year after year. Wayne said ideally one would find space to rotate the crop every three years, but with limited ground to work with, they will find ways to get creative.

“It's the hardest part and we don't have enough space to keep making different plots for pumpkin planting,” Wayne said. “But we would like to try to do pumpkins again this year and see if there are any new plants to try.”



opening the NEXT CHAPTER

There was a side to Damian that he needed help unlocking.

Damian suffered a stroke early in his life that left him with limited mobility on his left side. It was a clear area for the staff at Little City's ChildBridge Center for Education to focus on when the sixth-grader first came to the school in 2023. Helping him learn how to use his limited mobility to aid him in everyday tasks would improve independence and reduce frustration.

But there was a side to Damian that was not as apparent, and it was the key to unlocking his potential.

"Damian was always a very quiet kid and it was hard to hear what he was trying to communicate. I think he felt like he wasn't being heard," said Nicole Ruiz, Damian's Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) at Little City. "He would lash out a lot at first and be aggressive against peers and staff, especially students he felt were taking attention away from him."

Damian had struggled at the therapeutic day school he attended before Little City, and while the solution to his challenges was not as apparent as working on his mobility, Nicole and the staff at ChildBridge didn't take long to find the answer.

Staff started to focus on helping Damian communicate more clearly and confidently and soon realized he loved interacting with both staff and students – the same people he'd often lash out at previously. They started giving him responsibilities like making copies, running errands to other classrooms, and even pushing the lunch cart into the classroom with both hands.

The gradual process of encouraging Damian to come out of his shell led to a complete change in behaviors. He now is seen as a leader in his classroom, often making sure other students have everything they need when getting off the bus, greeting everyone and being the student to welcome new staff and visitors on tours.

School Assistant Principal Bre Reveley said there was such a huge improvement in such a short time that Damian accomplished the rare goal of graduating from his Behavior Implementation Plan within a single year.

"He decreased his behaviors so much that he doesn't need any kind of plan at all now," Bre said. "It has been really amazing to see such great progress in such a short time. We just really gave him a lot of positive reinforcement and it made all the difference. Now he just really loves being around people and making new friends and being a helper."

While Damian broke ground in 2023 by graduating from his Behavior Implementation Plan and becoming a school leader, there are a lot more big goals ahead that the staff at ChildBridge Center can already see for the sixth grader.

Both Bre and Nicole said Damian is well on his way to moving into a school district program before graduation age and they both see a future where he could not only thrive in an adult residential program, but also find community-based employment one day.

"The skills I've already seen him develop here are going to benefit him long term," Nicole said. "If we keep working on the things he has already shown he can do, he's going to have a lot of success everywhere he goes."





a beautiful day in THE NEIGHBORHOOD

For the women who live at the Euclid Home, Little City provides a house, but it is the people who make it a home.

And when housemates come together, they become family through communication. The women of the Euclid Home discovered that in 2023, participating in a program that involves Little City's Clinical Mental Health Coordinator Melissa Palmer holding weekly group therapy sessions in the home to improve communication, relationships, and support systems.

The Euclid Home has some of Little City's most active residents in Amanda, Ola, Jodi, Chrissy, and newcomer Katie. While all the women are friends, they all have their own schedules and are involved in everything from working at the coffee cart to participating in talent shows.

Melissa said that, with all different goals, schedules, and communication styles, coming together is an important way for the group to strengthen relationships and ensure everyone feels heard and supported in the home.

"The residents and staff at Euclid Home are setting new standards and expectations for themselves and each other," Melissa said. "They're really creating

a collaborative approach to problem solving and meeting needs both individually and as a team. It's been great to see how close they've become."

This work happens throughout many of Little City's 16 Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) homes and the group therapy sessions can be arranged for a variety of reasons. For example, having a new resident move in, like Katie at the Euclid Home, can be a reason to start group sessions, while other times it may be life changes such as a new job, a new schedule, or changes in physical needs for residents.

Regardless of the reason, the weekly visits have helped strengthen relationships between residents and among the Direct Support Professionals who work with them in the home every day.

Melissa said that, while she cannot share details to protect the privacy of the group, the women at the Euclid Home have taken respect and support to a whole new level. Even simple things such as household chores have become examples of consideration and support among the group.

Routine is important for anyone, but especially people with developmental disabilities. The group has gotten so good at respecting routine that they

know each other's preferred times to do laundry or take a shower. Even these simple things can strengthen the bond between housemates.

For Ola, the sessions have been another way to spend time with some of her favorite people.

"I love living here with my friends," Ola said.
"We have fun."

While the group has already made incredible strides, Melissa said the weekly meetings can continue for as long as they wish. With more homes using the service, she said it is just another way Little City is putting mental health at the forefront for residents and participants.

"Mental health is important for everyone, especially people who don't always feel heard and don't always know how to advocate for themselves," Melissa said. "We're really focused on that need not just in the homes but in our programs, too, and we will continue to integrate that more and more into all that we do."

outstanding in THEIR FIELD

Special Olympics marked a groundbreaking year with a literal ground breaking that will provide years of memories for athletes and residents alike.

Thanks to the work and dedication of volunteers, Little City's Special Olympics program received a newly renovated softball field on the main Palatine campus that features upgraded benches, fencing, a scoreboard, new field equipment, and more.

The improvements once again allowed Little City to host Special Olympics softball games on campus and gave the team more opportunities to practice and play.

Elk Grove Village-based Midwest Field Solutions spearheaded the ambitious project, donating more than \$30,000 worth of material, labor, and equipment to turn a field that had become overgrown with broken fences and benching into a pristine field with fresh sand, new benches, a repaired backstop, and surrounding fencing.

Jonathan Mueller and Chris Nielsen of Midwest Field Solutions made the dream a reality by repurposing material from Niles North High School, donating a special blend of infield dirt material that usually costs \$3,500 a load, and connecting with other local businesses to make their vision a reality. Nielsen's commitment to the project became a family affair, connecting with his mother who works at Probat Inc., which donated new dugout benches for the athletes.

Nielsen also connected with colleagues at the Chicago Cubs grounds crew who donated field equipment and friends at Werner Co. Professional Brands, which donated two Better Built equipment boxes for storage behind home plate.

"I don't think there could have been a more fulfilling opportunity," Nielsen said. "The players and the residents here, seeing their enthusiasm when they come out and see it, it has been an uplifting and wonderful experience. I can't say enough about Little City and all they do for the betterment of the residents here. I'm just super grateful to be part of it."

The new field was a blessing for multisport athletes like Marek and Lindsey who could add a full softball season to a sports schedule that already included football and basketball. While Marek called the new field "super cool," Lindsey said she was happy to be playing one of her favorite sports again.

"I like playing with a team and being outside," she said.

While the softball team was a major moment for Little City's Special Olympics program in 2023, there could be more opportunities to utilize all the open space of the 56-acre campus in 2024.

New Assistant Director of Recreation & Wellness Michael Cusick said he is excited about the programming potential he has already seen in his first few months at the agency. One dream that could become a reality with the help of volunteers would be a disc golf course where both Special Olympics events and casual recreation amongst residents could take place.

"One of the most exciting things about Little City is all the space it has for residents and participants to explore different interests and hobbies," Michael said. "I see a ton of potential to use even more of this space and am excited about the idea of a disc golf course. It would be something everyone could use, even therapeutically."





building a solid FOUNDATION

In 2023, Little City's Foster Care & Adoption program made the kind of difference that lasts forever.

For the first time ever, the program had the benefit of a permanency department, whose staff specialize in finalizing permanent placements, ranging from adoption, returns to home, guardianship, or emancipation.

Previously, case managers handled much of the final leg work for their cases, slowing down the process considerably. But with the new department, Little City's Foster Care & Adoption team has nearly doubled their yearly average and is on pace to achieve 40 youth permanencies by the end of the fiscal year.

"This is by far the most we have ever accomplished in a single year," said Mariah Brandon, Family Recruitment & Matching Supervisor for Little City. "Having that permanency team really allows everyone to focus on their own expertise. The case managers now can concentrate their efforts on being that liaison for families and making sure the plans are followed."

Part of the increase in finding forever homes for more youth is due to the program's continued reach. Mariah said there has been a lot of success in Joliet and Matteson, where the program first expanded in 2022, and the community partnerships have helped bolster support.

Partnerships have been especially strong in Joliet where institutions like the Joliet Slammers have been helpful collaborators on numerous occasions. She also said donations have increased to make sure each child is supported. In 2023, Little City was able to provide all 223 youth in care with back-to-school materials thanks to support received at the summer picnic, and each youth received gifts for the holidays thanks to donations from local businesses.

"We've had incredible support this year and a lot of engagement from supporters and families," Mariah said. "We were able to provide more than 200 hours of training this year to foster parents just because of the interest and engagement."

And while the focus is always on the end goal of permanent placements, Mariah said it was the

clinical services in the early stages that enabled the team to achieve the new permanency benchmarks in 2023. More in-home services were offered in 2023 than ever before thanks to the addition of managed care organization insurance that helped limit costs for families.

Mariah said the in-home therapy helps both the youth in care and the family adjust to the big changes that are part of the foster experience, address underlying emotional and behavioral issues that can be common among the youth in care, and focus on the goals of each family and individual.

"They are the backbone of our agency," Mariah said of clinical services. "They are the reason we have the success stories we do."

"To be able to go into the home and work directly with the family and youth is the most foundational work we do. There is a lot to navigate, and they do an incredible job of helping families and children reach their goals."

2024 is set to be an even bigger year for the program as more families come to Little City eager to become involved in the fostering and adoption process. But as Little City continues to grow into one of the state's top foster care and adoption agencies, the demand also grows.

If you or a friend or family member has ever been interested in the foster care and adoption process, please contact Mariah Brandon at mbrandon@littlecitcity.org for more information.

finding a new RHYTHM

Sometimes a change is all you need to break new ground.

Few people have seen more change at Little City's Countryside Center than Katie. Katie first came to Countryside in 1998, right after graduating from high school. For nearly 18 years, her days were often spent seeing the same friendly faces, completing piece work sent to the center by area businesses, and enjoying the same routine.

Things changed in 2016 when Countryside and Little City officially merged, leading Katie and her friends to meet new people in a new place. Two years later things changed even more as the piece work that filled the days for people like Katie was phased out due to a new state law that prohibited this type of subminimum wage work.

And then Katie changed.

"Katie is the sweetest person, but she has always been a little shy," said Nada Laing, Katie's case manager and a former direct support professional who has worked with Katie for a decade.

"With the different programs she can experience now, she has gotten more social and come out of her shell. And she enjoys trying new things with new people."

Little City's Countryside Center offered more choices and more experiences than ever before in 2023, giving participants a chance to choose from eight

core courses including cooking, health and wellness, art, life skills, environmental science, and more while also increasing the number of community trips and volunteer opportunities.

Participants like Katie choose the courses they want to explore on a quarterly basis, giving them a chance to experience all eight within a year if desired. Their days start in a homeroom and from there they proceed to different classrooms throughout the day to pursue their chosen interests.

Special events, from on-site concerts to volunteer-led clubs like the photography club, give participants even more opportunities to broaden their experiences.

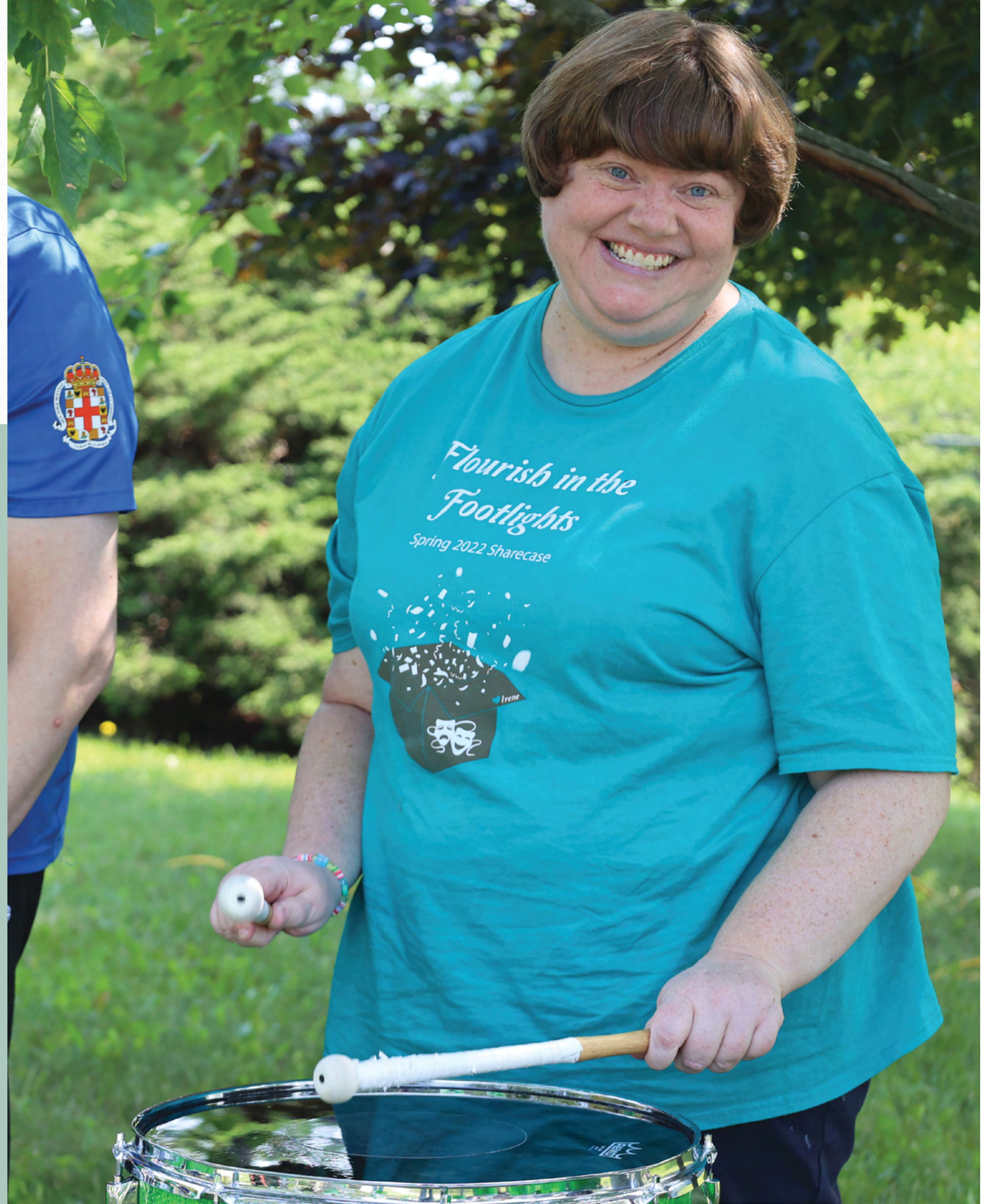
Celebrating 25 years now at Countryside, Katie still is breaking new ground by discovering new interests and exploring new things. She discovered a new passion in the cooking class, where she said she enjoys all the different recipes. Katie also started taking more community trips in 2023, learning about the resources in her community and how to stay safe. She even had the chance to drum along and perform with a visiting drumline!

"We are still just starting to expand Katie's interests, so there will be more of that to come," Nada said. "We interview everyone and try to get them into the area they want to explore each quarter. With 200 people, it can be a challenge, but we make sure everyone is accommodated."

Katie's growing social engagement expands beyond Countryside, too. She is an active member of her church and participates in a local theater group that performs at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre in Arlington Heights.

And if her recent community trip to the fire department was any indication, Katie will be exploring even more new places in 2024. After a day of seeing how fire trucks operate, the routine of firefighters, and how fire departments keep our communities safe, Katie was quick to pick her favorite part of the day.

"Seeing the cute firemen," she said.



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Left to Right: **Shawn E. Jeffers**, **Bill Chepulis**, **Heather Ritter**, **Dale Rublaitus**, and **Julie Bell**. Members of the Board, as well as friends, family, and staff, gathered in early 2023 to celebrate the street naming and sign reveal of Shawn E. Jeffers Way, honoring the career of Little City's former Executive Director.

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Our Circle of Love donors are those who have committed to recurring giving. We thank these loyal donors for their ongoing support.

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Because of our volunteers, Little City was able to complete the many projects that were accomplished in 2023. Additionally, Little City received many in-kind donations which are some of the most effective and impactful resources in helping us achieve our mission.

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Cakebread Cellars
Chicago Sinfonietta

In-Kind Gifts

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Perdoceo



Volunteers flocked to Little City's Childbridge Center for our 2023 Field Day. They facilitated a range of outdoor activities for participants, including face painting, bubbles, and water stations.

Visionary Society

The Visionary Society honors the lifetime individual givers of over \$50,000.

Platinum Leaf (\$500,000+)

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Alec K. and Viena P.
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Alfred B. Henry*
Donald & Ellen Kuhns

Dorothy Rose*/ The Dorothy
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Matthew & Tina Schubert
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Gwendolyn A. Damico
Todd DeFranco/
DeFranco Plumbing, Inc.
Nancy & James Donahoe
Rit & Mehetab Faisal
Charles (Gil) & Betty Fergus
Paul & Mary Finnegan

Andrew C. & Karen M. Flis
Bernard Goldberg
Good Family Foundation/
Dr. Mary L. Good*
Jean Hartmann*
Richard D. Hodgers
James* & Tamara* Howell
Leo B. Klimaitis/ Susan L.
Klimaitis Foundation
Charles Kotval*
Mitchell & Sari Kovitz
Frank R. Kral*
Wendy K. Kritt
Linda LaPorte
Carol L. Meyer
Kenneth M. &
Theresa M. Mihalka
Edward & Jean Murphy
David & Daryl Nelms
Norman* & Lillian* Orenstein

Daniel* and Helen* Pradt
J.B. and M.K. Pritzker
Family Foundation
Mark & Marianne Rakoczy
Andrew & Kim Richmond
David Rose
Janet & Alan Rosenfeld
Paul & Joan Rubschlager
Foundation
Robert & Julie Samson
Dennis & Carla Schlemmer
Debra Schnabel
John* & Erma* Schnabel/
John J. Schnabel Trust
Robert Stephen
Nancy Stokes
Carol M. Symons*
James Testa & Terri Rudd
Robert J. & Roberta Washlow

Legacies & Bequests

Legacies & Bequests are a result of the gracious philanthropy of those who made the decision to include us in their estate plans. To learn more about planned giving, contact Tina Maraccini at tmaraccini@littlecity.org or visit www.littlecity.org/plannedgiving

Realized Legacies & Bequests

Estate of Ronald S. Betts
The John M. Bremer
Living Trust
Edelstein Charitable Trust
Thomas P. & Etta L.
Garrity Trust

Estate of Frank L. Jallits
Jane Wilson and
David Mayhew Stone
Charitable Trust

The Judith & Abraham Bohrer Heritage Society Members

Jan Abramowitz
John L. Aikin
Alex & Karen Alexandrou
Alexis Alm
James Andersen*
Alan & Joy Baltz
Howard* & Linda Bell
Julie Bell/ Julie Bell
Living Trust
Abraham & Judith Bohrer
Lola J. Brantner
Vernon* L. & Merle* Carson
Nancy & B. Timothy
Desmond
William Drake*
Charles (Gil) & Betty Fergus
Alec K. and Viena P.
Gianaras Foundation/
Alexander Gianaras
Lillian Gorak*
Jonathan & Monica Green
Pamela & Gregory Greene
Ronald & Marci Holzer
James* & Tamara* Howell
Ryan & Carmen Isherwood

Shawn & Barbara Jeffers
C. Conrad Johnson*
William D. Johnson
Leland* & Shirley* Kenney
Ellen Kolegar
Linda LaPorte
Sandra Loebe-Stoken &
Richard Stoken
Michael & Joyce Lueth
Terence J. McElligott
Carol L. Meyer
Shirley L. Miller*
Deborah Nelson
Lucretia Perrone
Charitable Unitrust
Michael J. & Donna Polelle
Dorothy Rose*/ The Dorothy
Rose Living Trust
Randall & Elizabeth Sass
Harold H. Schmalbeck*
Matthew & Tina Schubert
Henry Smogolski/ Smogolski
Family Charitable Trust
Carol & Ulfur Thors
Rivian H. Wolf

* indicates donors and supporters who are deceased

by the numbers

Your support is the reason so many children and adults at Little City are challenging their limits and reaching their unique potential. It is because of your compassion that they are living safely, learning continuously, exploring creatively, and working productively throughout their lifetimes!

In 2023, your generous support helped provide:

AS MANY AS 950 CHILDREN & ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

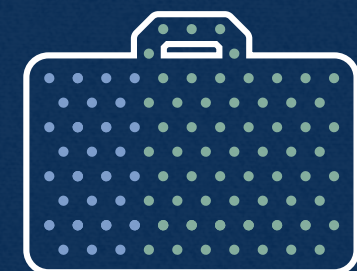
were provided with life-changing programs and services every single day.



476 volunteers gave **1,868 hrs** of their time and talent to Little City – including generous corporate volunteer groups from Zurich, Motorola, Discover, and Omron!

We achieved **40 permanencies** (exits from foster care), the highest number the program has ever accomplished.

We ranked among the top five performers in the state for the first time by licensing **65% of relative homes** (compared to a statewide average of 35-40%)



61 ADULTS IN THE EMPLOYMENT FIRST PROGRAM EARNED THEIR FIRST JOB IN 2023

and now there are **89 individuals** at Little City who are actively employed in community-based jobs – that's a 53% increase in employed adults with disabilities compared to 2022!

15 different recreation classes were offered in 2023

TO HELP 61 OF OUR ATHLETES ACHIEVE SUCCESS

in Special Olympic competitions throughout Illinois. And over **320 hours** of programming was provided across **14 different recreational and fitness activities:**

Golf • Track & Field • Cooking • Master Crafts • Strength & Conditioning
Zumba • Social Hour • Meditation & Relaxation • Flag Football • Softball
Bowling • Volleyball • Basketball • Powerlifting • Swimming



43 STUDENTS ARE GROWING AND LEARNING AT OUR CAMPUS DAY SCHOOL –

nearly a 25% increase in enrollment from 2022 – and **five of our students** graduated in May!

Our THRIVE program for students with the most profound disabilities enrolled **a record 10 students** with one student already graduating into our Moderate Program.

And we continue to be grateful for the more than **30 school districts** that we partner with and help provide the educational environment that students with disabilities need and deserve.



Operated by our participants,

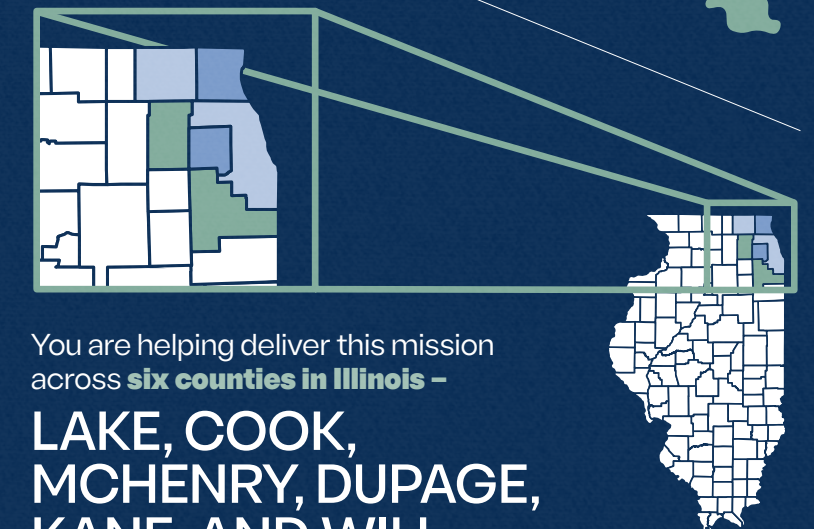
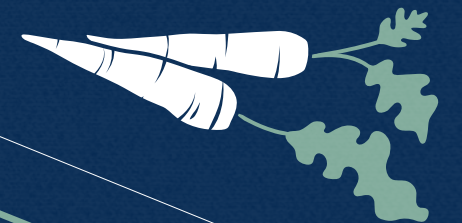
THE ANNUAL PLANT SALE SOLD OVER 2,000 PLANTS

The Harvest Stand sold over 1,250 pounds of vegetables and more than 230 pumpkins to friends like you – helping 60 master gardeners strengthen their skills and abilities.

Plant Sale
200 hanging baskets
50 patio planters
110 herbs
350 vegetable plants
1,200 annuals
125 succulents

Harvest Stand
Over 1,000 lbs. of tomatoes
250 lbs. of zucchini
100 cantaloupes
55 bunches of carrots
600 garlic bulbs
230 pumpkins & gourd

Our 9 vocational employees at the horticulture center were busy in 2023 – thank you for helping them grow their employment skills and supporting their annual sales!



You are helping deliver this mission across **six counties in Illinois** –

LAKE, COOK, MCHENRY, DUPAGE, KANE, AND WILL

in loving memory

Wayne Mazurek (March 4, 1943 – July 28, 2023)

It is the residents and participants at Little City who make our community such a special place. So many make a lasting impact on friends, family, and staff and few residents lived at Little City as long as Wayne Mazurek, who passed away in 2023 at 80 years old.

Wayne first came to Little City in 1965 and lived here for more than 50 years, becoming a good friend to countless residents and staff and emerging as one of the most successful artists Little City's Center for Arts ever produced.

Wayne became famous for his artwork of cars, space travel, and all forms of transportation. He had a genuine passion for vehicles and creating new concepts. He was a devoted attendee of the annual auto show in Chicago and even inspired some automobile designers with his unique art including a taillight design that went into production at Cadillac.

His work gained international attention and was displayed in galleries throughout the country, even as far as Alaska. In 2013, he was featured in the documentary "Share My Kingdom" with fellow Little City artists Harold Jeffries and Luke Tauber. The film premiered at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago and was later screened at multiple museums and film festivals around the country.

Wayne was one of the first residents at Little City and his family played a vital role in growing Little City from essentially two buildings on the Palatine campus to what it is today. Wayne's brother John said Little City was special not only to Wayne but the entire family and gave Wayne a lifetime of opportunities, friendships, and experiences he would have otherwise missed out on.

"He was glad to share what he has with everybody. If you ever walked up to him, the first thing he ever wanted to do was show you his artwork," John said. "That's what gave him happiness."

Everyone at Little City extends their heartfelt condolences to the Mazurek family and the countless friends Wayne made during his unforgettable time at Little City.



FY23 Financials

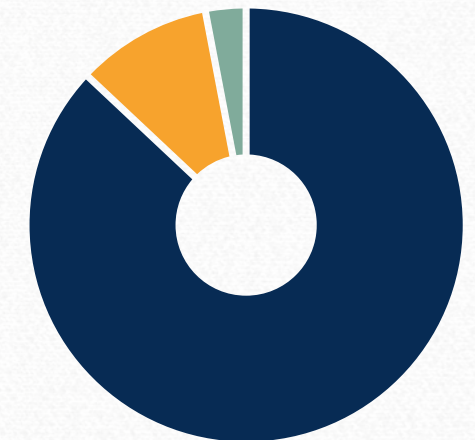
Little City provides innovative programs and services that foster development and personal fulfillment for the individuals served. To do so, Little City relies on government funding and direct contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

Beyond the state-required minimal standard of care, Little City's quality-of-life standards encompass programs and services that foster a life of health, recreation, education, and culture that protect one's rights, beliefs, choices, and aspirations.

The charts below provide a glance at Little City's operating expenses and revenues for Fiscal Year 2023 dating July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

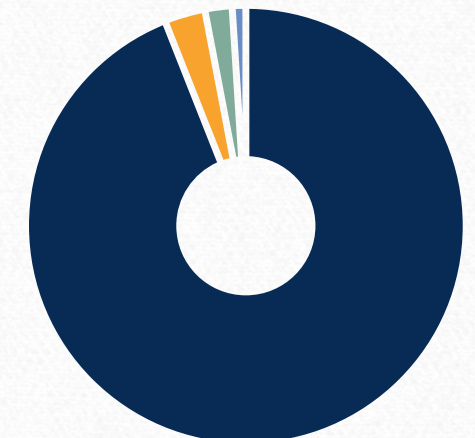
How Funds Are Used:

- Program & Services: **87%**
- Management & General: **10%**
- Fundraising: **3%**



Where Funds Come From:

- Government Funding: **94%**
- Private Donations: **3%**
- Corporate Foundations & Grants: **2%**
- Investments & Other Income: **1%**





Since 1959, Little City has been dedicated to serving children and adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing the best options and opportunities to live safely, learn continuously, explore creatively, and work productively throughout their lifetime. By inspiring, advocating, and pursuing success with passion and purpose, lives are changed through hope, happiness, and optimism.

Learn more at www.littlecity.org

MAIN CAMPUS | (847) 358-5510

1760 W. Algonquin Road • Palatine, IL 60067

EXECUTIVE OFFICE | (847) 358-5510

1610 W. Colonial Parkway • Inverness, IL 60067

CHICAGO FOSTER CARE OFFICE | (773) 265-1539

700 North Sacramento, Suite 201 • Chicago, IL 60612

COUNTRYSIDE CENTER | (847) 438-8799

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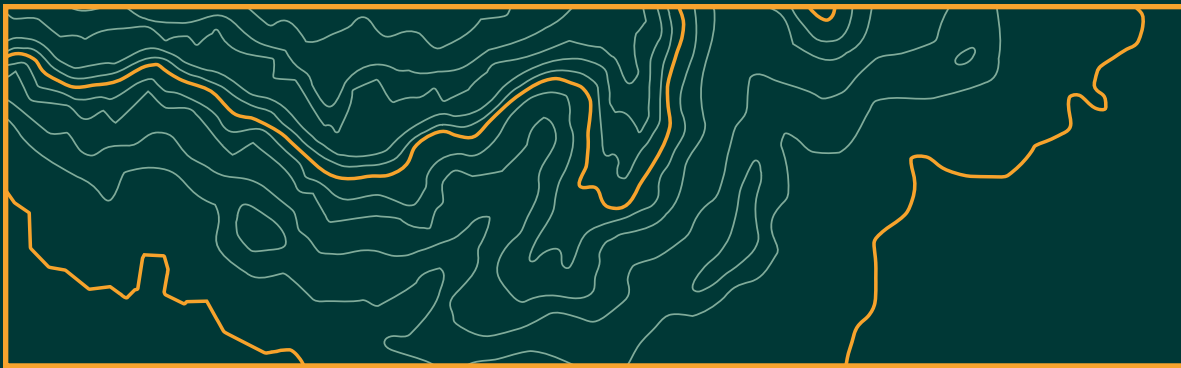
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144 Commerce Drive • Grayslake, IL 60030



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