



**A SEASON
OF GROWTH,
THANKS TO YOU!**



The | **Tapestry**

SPRING 2024 |

INSIDE: See how you are helping people with disabilities grow this spring

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Little City Family,

It's hard to believe spring is already here. This time of year always brings a sense of excitement and renewal as the sun shines a little brighter and longer days bring more opportunities. This is the energy I feel all around Little City.

As many of you know, I was appointed in March to be the new Chief Executive Officer of Little City, following the resignation of former CEO Marie Newman. The work Marie did here helped Little City grow stronger, and I am excited to carry the leadership forward for our organization.

Being named CEO of Little City is a tremendous honor and privilege, and I am so grateful to work with our talented team members, parents, families, and supporters on our continual mission to make lives better for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Having served in several roles over 12 years at Little City, most recently as Chief Operating Officer, I'm so proud of the improvement and growth we have seen across the organization.

I am fully committed with our team to continue carrying the torch ignited by Little City's founding families: to ensure that the individuals and families we serve are better off and enjoy the highest quality of life because of our work together.

At Little City we are **adaptable, advocates, compassionate, inclusive, and leaders**. Those five values guide every individual at Little City from our Direct Support Professionals to the Board of Directors. Our values are what makes Little City the special place it is, and that is the constant even when there is change.

Thank you for your continued support of Little City. Our supporters are the people who truly make the

world a brighter place for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities and help them access the opportunities they deserve.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the *Tapestry* and look forward to this next exciting chapter of Little City with all of you.

Sincerely,



Rich Bobby
Chief Executive Officer



COMMUNITY PARTNERS: Thank you to the following funders for their generous grants that support the work and mission of Little City. Little City was awarded grant funds from the following grantors between December 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024.

Barrington Township • Joliet Township • Schaumburg Township • West Bend Community Foundation's West Bend Mutual Independent Agents' Fund • Hanover Township • Illinois Department of Transportation • IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity • Northwest Community Healthcare/Endeavor Health • Dick's Sporting Goods Foundation • The Coleman Foundation • Marvin and Kay Lichtman Foundation • The Schwaben Society Charity Fund • George M. Eisenberg Foundation for Charities • Alexander Pissios Family Foundation

HELPING HANDS: Little City extends its appreciation to **Zurich** and **Omron** for their recent volunteer work with us.



KATIE IS FINDING HER VOICE & *FIT* AT LITTLE CITY!

Katie came to Little City in May of 2023 after aging out of her previous program when she turned 22.

The transition from children's to adult day programming can be overwhelming and intimidating for people with autism and other disabilities, especially when it means going to a new place with all new people. That was the case for Katie.

"When I first met Katie she was one of the shyest people I had worked with," said Judy Martinez, Katie's case worker. "She would whisper so softly you couldn't understand her. And because she felt she wasn't being heard, she would run out of rooms and hide and get upset."

But where she felt overwhelmed in her early days at the Countryside Center, she was finding friendship, her voice – *and a fit* – at the Euclid Home. Katie moved into one of Little City's Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA) where she became quick friends with the women who were closer in age and active in many Little City programs. Katie and her housemates quickly bonded, in part through using one of Little City's lesser-known programs that has the mental health coordinator lead weekly group talks in the home.

Judy said Katie's comfort at home – especially with her friend Ola – helped her warmup quickly at the Countryside Center and she started making major strides. **Today, Katie not only is comfortable around others and participating in events, but she is also actively advocating for herself and speaking up about the activities and interests she wants to pursue.**

Judy said they are already developing a two-year plan with Katie working through the Employee Development Services program to prepare her for community-based employment one day.

For individuals like Katie, an autism diagnosis can challenge and limit their way of life, but because of your support Katie is thriving and working her way towards great achievement. You're helping her and so many others unlock their full potential and find a fit for a lifetime!

APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH!

Did you know that nearly 90% of individuals who benefit from programs and services at Little City have an autism diagnosis?

As we all know, an autism diagnosis is a puzzling condition, often displaying varying difficulties in each individual: challenges in communication, social interaction, repetitive and restrictive interests or behaviors. But it is your support that is challenging these limits and helping individuals just like Katie to find a fit for a lifetime at Little City. *Thank YOU!*



ATHLETES ARE RALLYING TOGETHER FOR THE UPCOMING GAMES!

It has been a year of change for Little City athletes as they welcomed a new coach in the fall, said goodbye to longtime teammates, and learned to adapt. But that wave of change brought out the best in so many of our athletes.

Jimmy has been a longtime Special Olympics athlete, medaling in everything from powerlifting to basketball and track and field in his many years of competition. When the new coach came on board, Jimmy was the first to step up and lead.

“Jimmy is one of those guys where if I am doing something different from how they do things, he’ll let me know and show me what to do. He leads by example,” Michael said.

And when state champion powerlifter Kevin moved to a new state this year, it was Simone who helped fill that void. She and all the women on the team have emerged as the rallying point to make up for Kevin’s big absence.

“We have three women on the powerlifting team, and the level of support they give each other and the enthusiasm they bring to this usually male-dominated sport has brought the whole team together,” Michael said.

And several of our athletes have already qualified for the Summer Games!

“Everyone loves going to the Summer Games and wants to make it there, but I don’t want to put that pressure on them,” Michael said. “We just talk about the next competition and doing our best.”

This is why your support of our athletes is so important because they deserve these opportunities all year long – to compete, to challenge themselves, to achieve, and to explore new passions in their lives!

Please consider donating today using the enclosed reply to help our athletes achieve on – and off – the field this season!



GROWING LITTLE CITY’S HORTICULTURE PROGRAM FOR 50 YEARS!

Little City’s Dorothy Rose Horticulture Center is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year and is going stronger than ever.

With a vocational program that offers paid positions, our more advanced students can learn the skills needed to pursue community-based employment. We also offer a therapeutic curriculum that introduces the many benefits of gardening to casual participants. With these offerings, horticulture has become one of Little City’s most popular programs.

The horticulture program is as unique as the flowers it grows, offering people with disabilities an experience found in few other places. Today, the center not only serves Little City participants, but also people with disabilities throughout the community.

From the sensory and therapeutic benefits of working with plants and the soil to learning life skills and social skills, this program goes beyond the garden.

“Horticulture offers so many benefits, so we are always looking to get as many people involved as possible,” said Jackie Kenyon, horticulture specialist. “To see how much it has grown over the years I think shows the value people get out of being here.”

And you have a chance to see and experience the hard work of our horticulture participants with their annual plant sale – opening May 2nd! The increasingly popular sale features annuals, vegetable plants, herbs, succulents and hanging baskets – all grown and prepared by participants in the vocational program.

For 50 years, you have supported hundreds of participants through our growing horticulture program, and we’re excited to have you back this spring for the annual plant sale in May!



SHOP THE PLANT SALE IN MAY!

Help our participants GROW, shop the annual Plant Sale!



GRAND OPENING ON MAY 2ND

HOURS: THURS/FRI 1PM-5PM | SAT 9AM-3PM

LITTLE CITY HORTICULTURE CENTER
1740 W. ALGONQUIN RD, PALATINE

A SEASON FILLED WITH GROWTH & GAMES!



UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US FOR THE 61ST ANNUAL LITTLE CITY INVITATIONAL GOLF CLASSIC

MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2024 | 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 for a day of golf while helping Little City raise much-needed funds for kids and adults with disabilities. This year, we are honored to present the Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award to the Twin Orchard staff who have helped make this a successful event for over 50 years!

Register your foursome and learn more about sponsorship opportunities today at www.LittleCity.org/LCI

WALK WITH THE HEROES OF LITTLE CITY AT THE 5TH ANNUAL HERO WALK!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2024 | BUSSE WOODS | SCHAUMBURG, IL

Walk with the Heroes of Little City at the 5th Annual Hero Walk! Join us in September and walk with the heroes of Little City on a leisurely stroll through scenic Busse Woods. Gather with other Little City friends and families to help celebrate 65 years of creating hope and changing the lives of individuals with disabilities!

This family-friendly event is open to all and includes lunch, games, raffles, and more!
Start your team today at www.LittleCity.org/HeroWalk

CHECK OUT LITTLE CITY'S NEWEST PROGRAM: PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB!

The Photography Club has taken off at Countryside Center and has opened up a whole new world of creativity and skill development for our participants. Thanks to parent-volunteer Paul Ivaska, this program has come to life and become a crowd favorite and new passion for many.

"You can see how much this means to them when they take a picture and have it printed out. They'll carry it in their pocket all day and are proud of what they did," Paul said. "Helping them have that sense of accomplishment is great."

See more of our budding photographers' work and how the program was started at www.LittleCity.org/PhotoClub



www.LittleCity.org/PhotoClub

VISIT FULL ONLINE GALLERY