

A SEASON OF
CHANGE FOR MIKE
**AND LANDING HIS
DREAM JOB!**



THE | Tapestry

FALL 2024

INSIDE: Horticulture's Golden Legacy
as it celebrates 50 years!



MIKE LANDS HIS DREAM JOB

Thanks to you and your support, Mike was able to navigate the ups and downs of employment and has become a shining star on his new team.

Sometimes you can't break ground without a stumble or two.

That was the experience for Mike, who navigated the difficult path that people with developmental disabilities encounter when looking for community-based employment.

Mike was not unfamiliar with hard work and that is thanks to you and your support. As a graduate of Little City's Employee Development Services program, Mike was able to learn the necessary skills to thrive in community employment.

For nearly 10 years, he worked as part of an enclave at a local hospital, gaining valuable experience. But he was ready to branch out on his own and find community employment. Mike found that dream job at a local restaurant, where his duties were cleaning and performing routine maintenance.

Unfortunately, that particular dream did not last long as the restaurant decided to use an outside contractor for that work – a possible employment reality for anyone.

"It's hard for anyone to lose a job and it was hard on him. He felt it was something he did, and I had to really coach him through that part," said Keenya Coley, Mike's longtime job coach at Little City. "I just reassured him that he did the best he could and that he could still find a job he really wanted."

That dream became a reality last year when Mike found the job that stuck.

Mike started at MOD Pizza in the local community last fall and has found a perfect fit there. He cleans dishes and surfaces, keeps facilities clean, and helps prep areas, and he has come to love his role.

It hasn't just been Mike's achievement in earning the new job; he also brings value to his new employer. As he's grown in the role, Mike has established a reliable work ethic, an ability to be thorough in every task, and a can-do attitude, all of which have made him a valuable team player.

"Mike has a very humble spirit and great attitude and is always eager to work. He even asked about finding a job at Little City because it took a while to find the MOD Pizza position and he was just ready to go," Keenya said. "He really loves it, and MOD Pizza has been great. You hear a lot of corporations talk about diversity, but you don't always see it at the local level. They really have embraced Mike and made him part of the team."

Mike is just happy to work again and find the kind of job that he spent years hoping he could one day have. He said his favorite part is the people he works with and helping customers.

Mike's story is one of many that you help create at Little City through our Employee Development Services program – in fact, 61 adults just like him earned their first job last year thanks to what you give to support individuals with disabilities.

DONATE TODAY USING THE ENCLOSED REPLY DEVICE. You can empower another individual with a disability just like Mike to find their dream job through Little City's Employee Development Services program. Thank you!

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Little City Family,

As I reflect on this summer at Little City, I continue to be in awe of our incredible team, families, donors, and community partners who help us achieve our mission: To ensure the people we serve are better off because of the work we do together.

These past few months were extremely active with several new opportunities for those we serve.

We hosted WGN's amazing Ana Belaval, who broadcasted her "Around Town" segment live from Little City's Palatine campus – spotlighting our outstanding day programs, Center for Education, and children's group homes.

The Chicago Blackhawks hosted a "takeover" of our campus, giving individuals we serve the opportunity to meet Blackhawks defenseman, Alex Vlasic, and mascot, Tommy Hawk, as they played floor hockey, created art and horticulture projects, and played drums to "Chelesa Dagger." This fun-filled day concluded with an outdoor BBQ hosted by Blackhawks arena announcers Genna Rose and Jon Hansen, with hot dogs donated by Vienna Beef.

Our Special Olympics athletes traveled downstate for the Summer Games and proudly brought back an incredible 17 gold medals and 1 silver – Congratulations to all of our dedicated athletes!

The 61st annual Little City Invitational Golf Classic was again a huge success thanks to our incredible team, LCI committee, volunteers, and Little City resident Jerry Rose who kicked off the event with a moving national anthem. We are so grateful to this year's Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award honorees, Gavin Speirs and the Twin Orchard Country Club team, who have been our gracious hosts of this most special annual fundraising event for over 50 years.

What a summer it has been! I feel incredibly fortunate to share these summer activities with you and these amazing stories and achievements in this edition of the *Tapestry* because this continues to be a demonstration of what you are doing to move this mission for people with disabilities.

It is because of you, that our mission continues to grow stronger. I cannot express how grateful I am for the role you play in supporting our mission and the people we serve. Your generosity is essential to helping us achieve our newly defined vision for the years ahead:

To create an inclusive community where each individual and family we empower can achieve equity, pursue their dreams, develop meaningful connections, and gain the support and skills they need to thrive.

Thank you for helping this vision come to fruition!

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 received grant funds from the following grantors between March 16, 2024 and July 15, 2024.

Barrington Junior Women's Club • Barrington Township • Bloomingdale Township Mental Health Board • Charles & M.R. Shapiro Foundation • Chicago Seva Foundation • Hanover Township Mental Health Board • Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity • Illinois Department of Human Services • Joliet Township • Schaumburg Township • The RJN Foundation • Township of Palatine • Vernon Township Community Mental Health Board • Village of Grayslake • Westfield Insurance • Wheeling Township

HELPING HANDS: Little City extends its appreciation to **Omron, Zurich, Motorola, Vistex, Ernst & Young, Perdoceo, Discover, Weber, High 12 International, Littler Mendelson, and Marsh McLennan Agency** for their recent volunteer work with us.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF LITTLE CITY'S HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

What started as a seed of an idea 50 years ago has blossomed into something truly special today.

Founded in 1974, Little City's Dorothy Rose Horticulture Center has provided decades of opportunities for individuals with disabilities to immerse themselves in gardening, learn about horticulture, pursue their passions, and gain vocational skills through the joy and beauty of flowers, plants, and produce.

Since the beginning, this growing program has centered its approach on providing a hands-on therapeutic experience that allows participants to gain invaluable employment experience on campus and develop job skills to help them achieve community-based employment.

Today, the thriving horticulture program serves more than 60 people with disabilities – all thanks to what friends and supporters have shared with this mission for over five decades. Thank you for growing this program into what it is today to empower more individuals with disabilities!

SHOP THE HARVEST STAND NOW!

Support our participants and their annual Harvest Stand!

**HOURS: THURS/FRI 10AM-5PM
SAT 9AM-3PM**

**LITTLE CITY
HORTICULTURE CENTER
1740 W. ALGONQUIN RD
PALATINE, IL 60067**



SYED IS LEARNING – AND TEACHING – IN THE HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

For 50 years, Little City's Horticulture Center has been helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities grow in unique ways.

As Little City continues celebrating this milestone, it is participants like Syed who show how special and meaningful this program has been to so many people over the years. Syed has been working in the Horticulture program since before Horticulture Manager Wayne Johnson and Horticulture Specialist Jackie Kenyon joined the team.

Syed's love for the work keeps him coming back year after year and he has become a role model and teacher for other students . . . *and even Wayne and Jackie!*

"He just loves the work," Wayne said. "He's very proactive and knows what to do next. He'll be getting things ready before we tell him or move on to the next step."

"And he is so excited and even vocal about the work," Jackie added. "He'll try to say the words while also using sign language, so we actually are learning, too!"

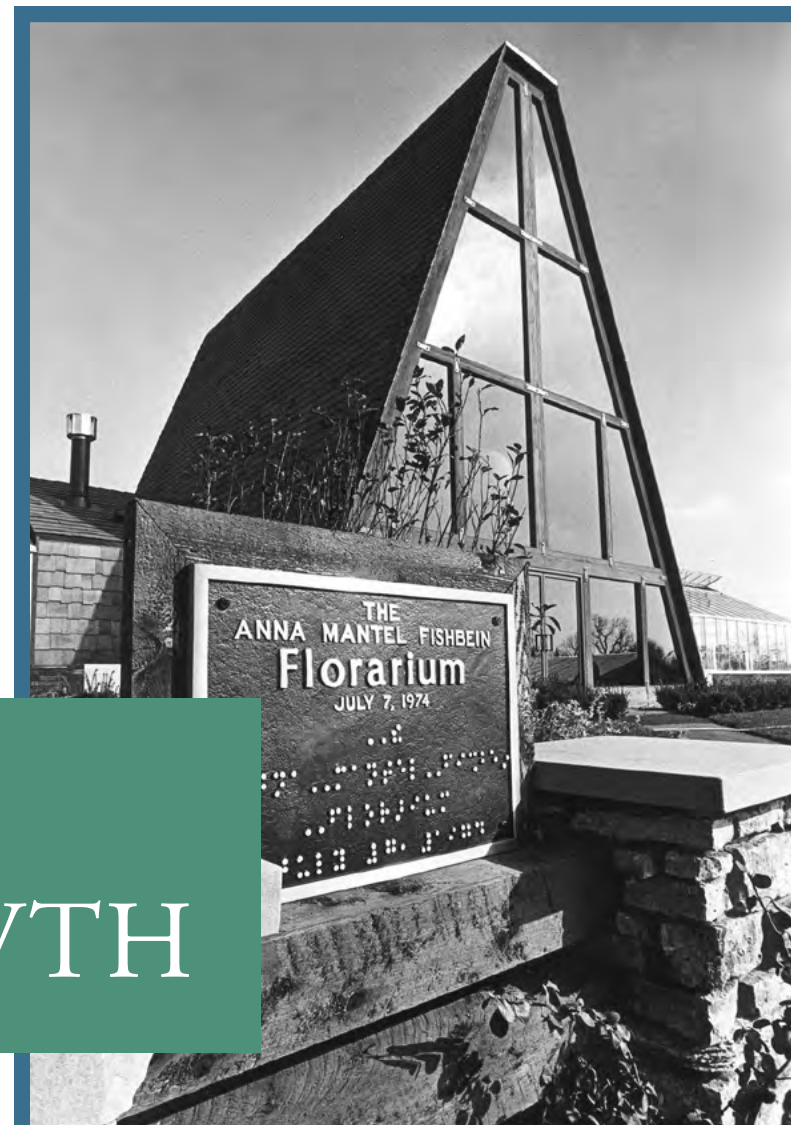
Over the years, people like Syed have helped build a program that now serves more than 60 people and generates major annual sales events like the Plant Sale and Harvest Stand. And with this year's Harvest Stand, customers can expect a bigger and better experience.

From all-new displays to the new addition of fresh corn grown right on campus, the participants at the Horticulture Center are working hard to create a bountiful Harvest Stand for the community.

These kinds of experiences over the last 50 years have helped countless people at Little City gain vocational skills, receive the therapeutic benefits of working with nature, and engage in social activities with friends.

With your help and support for programs like the Harvest Stand, Little City's Horticulture Center will empower more people and provide more opportunities for those we serve. Thank you to all those past and present for supporting this program for an incredible 50 years. It is the growth in the people we serve that lasts a lifetime!

HORTICULTURE'S GOLDEN LEGACY: 50 YEARS OF GROWTH



GROWING OVER THE YEARS!

The famous A-frame building first opened its doors July 7, 1974, as the Anna Mantel Fishbein Florarium. Anna had dedicated much of her life to special education and believed that a horticulture program could provide vital therapeutic, social, and recreational benefits for people with disabilities.

The program flourished for more than a decade and stood out as one of the few programs in the region that gave people with disabilities the opportunity to work directly with nature and learn vital skills.

After the program unexpectedly lost funding in the late 1980s, it was donors like you who stepped up and saved the day for our horticulture program to keep it running.

The program was revitalized and reimagined in the 2000s and has since grown into what it is today. The Dorothy Rose Horticulture Center launched in 2009 after Dorothy became determined to re-envision the program that had meant so much to her son, Jerry, who is still a Little City resident.

By the mid-2010s, the program was not only serving Little City residents, but also creating opportunities for all participants in our day program following the merger with Countryside Association.

Today, the center is a place where vocational and collaborative skills are highlighted and empowering individuals with disabilities to learn, grow, and reach their unique potential.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US FOR THE 5TH ANNUAL HERO WALK & FAMILY FEST!

SUNDAY, SEPT. 22, 2024 | BUSSE WOODS, GROVE 27 | ELK GROVE VILLAGE



Walk with the Heroes of Little City and get a firsthand opportunity to experience many of our most popular programs at the 5th Annual Hero Walk & Family Fest! Join us on September 22nd to walk with the heroes of Little City on a leisurely stroll through scenic Busse Woods and enjoy an afternoon of activities and fun hosted by our programs and participants. Help celebrate 65 years of creating hope and changing the lives of individuals with disabilities with other Little City friends and families!

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

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2025 ANNUAL DINNER GALA!

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025 | THE RITZ-CARLTON | CHICAGO, IL

Join us as we honor and celebrate our deep history of empowering people with disabilities at our elegant Annual Dinner Gala. **More details to come!**

A special thank you to our 2024 Annual Dinner Gala sponsors: George & Dimitra Zervas and Family, DLA Piper, The Grabill Family, Dale & Leanna Rublaitus, Julie Bell, Zurich, Akerman, Alliant, The Blecha Family, Jimmy & Eleni Bousis, The Burns Family, Daily Herald Media Group, Howard & Susan Derdiger, Nancy & Timothy Desmond, The Faisal Family, The Gianaras Family, The Green Family, The Heise Family, Motorola Solutions, Inc., David Pfau, Kim & Andy Richmond, Rose & Hockfield Families, Matt & Tina Schubert, Catalina Cares Foundation, The Fergus Family, and Simon's Tavern.

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 62ND ANNUAL LCI GOLF CLASSIC!

MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025 | TWIN ORCHARD COUNTRY CLUB | LONG GROVE, IL

Join us at Twin Orchard Country Club for one of the signature charity events of the summer, the LCI Golf Classic! **More details to come!**

A special thank you to our 2024 LCI Golf Classic sponsors: TTSG Inc., GSD, 20Twenty Design, Performance Wealth Partners, Nancy & Timothy Desmond, ABT, Alec K. and Viena P. Gianaras Foundation, CIBC, Daily Herald, Dussias Wittenberg Koenigsberger LLP, Ernst & Young, J Krug & Associates, Old National Bank, Project Management Advisors, Inc., Rose & Hockfield Families, Barbara & Steve Anderson, Sysco, Wintrust Financial Corp, Wipfli, XXIO/Srixon, Hal Wolken Family Sonic Drive-In, Alvarez & Marsal, John Bird/RSM, Akerman, Greater Chicago Club Managers Foundation, Robert Half, Twin Orchard Board of Directors, and the Windy City Bulls.