

LITTLE CITY, BIG
P I C T U R E
N E W S L E T T E R



WINTER 2025

A YEAR IN REVIEW

A look at what YOU helped accomplish in 2024!

**NEW LOOK,
NEW NAME!**

**FORMERLY
"TAPESTRY"**



Little City, Big Life.



IT TOOK A VILLAGE

Celebrating the completion of the Duffey Family Children's Village

We recently celebrated a very special mission moment for Little City as the Duffey Family Children's Village was completed in late 2024, concluding a 10-year journey. The fifth home (the Charles Evans Gerber Home) and sixth home (the Duffey Home) are now complete and fully occupied, along with the four other homes in the Village.

What started as a passion project for John and Becky Duffey more than 10 years ago has become a life-changing reality for children with disabilities. Since Larry's Home first opened in 2014, the Village has served 95 children over the last decade, **creating a dynamic and supportive living environment for many families who were running out of options for their loved ones.**

"Many of the kids we serve are non-verbal, and their high-level needs are too extensive for their families to fully support them," said Rich Bobby, Chief Executive Officer. "These homes were specifically designed to support those children and we've already seen how amazing and life-changing the impact can be."

One of the many success stories that the Village has produced is Tommy. Tommy was one of the earliest Village residents and struggled with emotional regulation, behaviors, and skill development.

That all started to change during his time at Larry's Home, where he could work on his social skills and life skills while also learning to regulate his emotions and complete tasks independently in a safe and supportive environment.

Because of that experience, Tommy has since graduated from Little City's Center for Education, now

participates in our adult day program, and lives in one of our community-based homes with his friends.

"The transition from our home to Larry's Home was seamless," said Mary Carol Grabill, Tommy's mother. "He has grown so much and now he gets to live in a home with some of his friends from school. I can't say enough about how much of a difference Little City has made and how amazing the staff is."

The fifth and sixth homes will help create more success stories like Tommy's as they provide more ways for children to grow together at their own pace. The Village is organized so that residents can live in a home with others at the same skill and support level. As they grow and develop, they can move into other homes where they can further cultivate their independence and prepare for adult programming and residential services.

Meanwhile, the Duffey Home became the first ever Village home to serve girls. Formerly residents of Pine Home on the Little City Campus, the girls have moved to the Duffey Home and are thriving in their new environment.

Thanks to John and Becky Duffey and the commitment of so many supporters, the Village became a reality. The entire project was 100% funded by donors and grants and required no state or federal money – the power of your generosity!

"It really all started with a vision by (former executive director) Shawn Jeffers and the Board at that time and it was a pretty lofty goal," said John Duffey. "To see it completed is a really special moment. There were a lot of challenges along the way, but it all succeeded because of the hard work of everyone at this organization."

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Valued Friends,

As we usher in a new year, it is with immense gratitude and excitement that I welcome you to the newly rebranded Little City, Big Picture newsletter!

This edition is particularly special as it allows us to reflect on the remarkable journey of 2024, a transformative year filled with milestones for our community.

In 2024, we celebrated the success of our Annual Dinner Gala in April, the Chicago Blackhawks campus "takeover," and the Little City Golf Invitational. Our Dorothy Rose Horticulture Center and thriving horticulture program proudly marked its 50th anniversary, and our organization reached the incredible milestone of 65 years of service to individuals and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



We were thrilled to welcome WGN-TV's Ana Belaval for an exciting live segment highlighting our mission and the important work we do here at Little City. It has been a year of significant achievements and heartwarming moments, from the introduction of music therapy classes to fun-filled community outings, to my own honor of being named Little City's Chief Executive Officer.

Each event underscores our collective commitment to enhancing the lives of those we serve.

Your unwavering support has been the cornerstone of our endeavors, enabling us to make a positive impact on countless lives and foster a nurturing environment where individuals we serve can thrive. As you peruse the highlights of this year, you will see the tangible impact of your generosity — stories of growth, joy, and resilience that you have made possible.

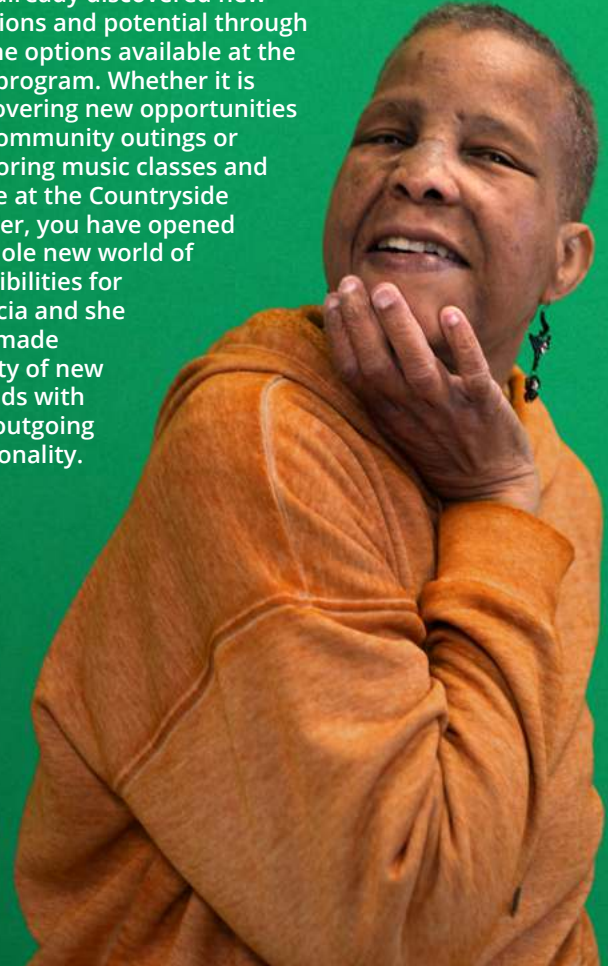
Thank you for being an integral part of our mission and ensuring that the people we serve are better off because of you.

Your belief in our vision ensures that every individual we empower has the opportunity to be included in a community, have meaningful friendships, and build skills to thrive. This propels us forward in our mission every day. Together, we look ahead to another year of growth, opportunity, and hope.

Sincerely,

Rich Bobby
Chief Executive Officer

Trescia started a new journey at Little City in 2024, first coming to the Countryside Center in March. In her first year at Little City, Trescia has already discovered new passions and potential through all the options available at the day program. Whether it is discovering new opportunities on community outings or exploring music classes and more at the Countryside Center, you have opened a whole new world of possibilities for Trescia and she has made plenty of new friends with her outgoing personality.



Thanks to you, Paulina made huge progress in 2024, transitioning from Little City's THRIVE program, designed for students who need the highest level of support, to a traditional classroom. She overcame communication barriers and built social skills to become a star student who has become a great help to teachers.

Howard has been a shining example of how your support of our Employee Development Services program can change lives! After first graduating a special Culinary Arts program at Little City years ago, Howard has built a long resume in the restaurant industry and currently works at The Cheesecake Factory.



Auggie joined the Countryside Center Photo Club! Led by volunteer Paul Ivaska, the photo club has opened a whole new world of creativity and opportunities for people like Auggie to develop new skills and find a new passion.



Even as one of Little City's longest tenured residents, John continues to find new ways to stay active. This year, John was part of Little City's Flag Football team that was invited to play a special tournament at the Chicago Bears practice facility at Halas Hall! John continues to learn new things every year.



2024: YEAR IN REVIEW

Look at what you helped accomplish in 2024!

JANUARY

Music Therapy becomes a featured class at Countryside Center to encourage communication and creative expression.

FEBRUARY

Community outings become a vital program component to help participants stay connected to the community.

MARCH

Rich Bobby is named Chief Executive Officer – leading this mission towards more growth and opportunity for those we serve.

APRIL

Our Annual Dinner Gala celebrated the collective work of our DSPs. We also had the privilege of presenting the Zervas Family with the Luminary Award, and Discover with Corporate Partner of the Year.

MAY

WGN visited campus to do a special "Around Town" segment featuring our programs and services.

JUNE

The Chicago Blackhawks took over campus! Defenseman Alex Vlasic, Tommy Hawk, and others hosted a fun day for residents and participants.

JULY

Our students enjoyed a Field Day before the start of the new school year thanks to volunteers from Motorola and Discover.

AUGUST

The Dorothy Rose Horticulture Center celebrated 50 years! For five decades, you have been helping hundreds of individuals grow their skills and abilities through this thriving program.

SEPTEMBER

Our flag football team was selected as one of only 11 teams to participate in a Special Olympics competition at the Chicago Bears Walter Payton Training Center at Halas Hall.

OCTOBER

Little City celebrated the opening of its sixth and final home in the Duffey Family Children's Village. Spanning over 10 years, the Village has helped 95 children work to fulfill their own unique potential.

NOVEMBER

Little City participants did their civic duty and voted in the presidential election! Self-advocacy is a major priority for the IDD community and voting in elections is one of the most powerful ways to make their voices heard.

DECEMBER

Little City closed out 2024 with a month full of holiday celebrations. Adults and children alike celebrated the holidays with parties, special events and activities throughout the month.

UPCOMING EVENTS

GET TICKETS NOW FOR OUR 2025 ANNUAL DINNER: LITTLE CITY'S MASTERPIECE GALA

Saturday, May 3, 2025
The Ritz-Carlton | Chicago, IL

Join us as we honor and celebrate our deep history of providing hope and opportunity for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities at our Annual Dinner: Little City's Masterpiece Gala.

This year we are delighted to present Eleni and Jimmy Bousis with the Vernon Carson Luminary Award.

Get tickets now at www.LittleCity.org/Gala

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 62ND ANNUAL LITTLE CITY INVITATIONAL!

Monday, June 16, 2025
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 helping Little City raise much-needed awareness and funds for children and adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

More details to come soon!

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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 July 1, 2024 and November 15, 2024.

The Cole-Crone Family Foundation • Village of Hanover Park • Women's Club of Inverness • The Richard A. Perritt Charitable Foundation • Illinois Department of Human Services • Wauconda Township • Discover, Inc. • Zurich North America • Citi • The Russell & Josephine Kott Memorial Charitable Trust • Village of Schaumburg • Schaumburg Township Mental Health Board • Bloomingdale Township Mental Health Board • Motorola Solutions Foundation

HELPING HANDS: Little City extends its appreciation to the following businesses and corporations for their recent volunteer work with us since August 2024.

- Perdoceo
- Zurich
- Little City Associate Board
- MEL
- Motorola
- Redwood Logistics
- Girl Scout Troop #47427
- Gallagher