

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

**FALL 2025**

**ENCLOSED:**

Michael's Story  
of Purpose &  
Connection

**Bell Family**

**Arts Center:**  
Groundbreaking!



Little City, Big Life.



# A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends & Donors of Little City,

What an incredibly eventful summer at Little City, filled with powerful moments of celebration, advocacy, and connection!

Our annual gala was an outstanding success. Thanks to your generosity and that of Julie Bell, we raised vital funds to help launch the new Bell Family Arts Center. This exciting new space will be an extraordinary home for individuals to gain learning experiences and opportunities for creative expression and social connection.

At our Little City Invitational golf outing, we had the distinct honor of recognizing Jack George, a long-time legacy supporter who has helped shape Little City through years of dedication and belief in our mission.

Perhaps one of the most meaningful victories has come through our advocacy efforts. With our families leading the way by courageously sharing their stories, we helped protect Medicaid in Illinois, the foundational funding that supports 90% of the individuals we serve. But there is continued uncertainty around Medicaid and our state budget, and we will continue to advocate fiercely for those we support.

**As we move into the fall, we do so with purpose and momentum. We are committed to growing strategically so that more individuals and families – especially those still waiting for help – can receive the support they need. The holiday season will be upon us soon, and I ask you to continue your meaningful support for our mission.**

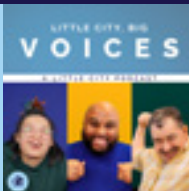
You are part of every success story at Little City. Thank you for continuing to stand with us to ensure that every individual and every family we serve is truly better off because of Little City.

With gratitude and hope,



Rich Bobby  
Chief Executive Officer

**P.S.** Tune into our new podcast: **Little City, Big Voices!**



## PRESS PLAY & PUT YOUR IMPACT ON REPEAT

Press play on monthly giving today and put your impact on repeat for people with disabilities at Little City.

Repeating **empowerment.**  
Repeating **inclusivity.**  
Repeating **opportunities.**  
Repeating **compassion.**  
Repeating **equity.**  
Repeating **hope.**  
Repeating **achievement.**

This is what it means to be a *Circle of Love* monthly donor.

Join today for just \$15 and start changing lives all year long. It's an easy and powerful way to give.

Join at [littlecity.org/monthly](https://littlecity.org/monthly) or scan the QR code here.



# MICHAEL'S STORY OF PURPOSE & CONNECTION

You helped him earn a new  
job and find a fresh start



For Michael, a new job meant so much – *it meant purpose, connection, and a fresh start.*

After experiencing profound personal loss and growing isolation, Michael was at a crossroads. His support system had grown smaller over the years, and with fewer social outlets, his world became increasingly quiet. As an individual with a developmental disability, he was running out of options on where to go next.

That's when he was introduced to Tom Jahncke, a job coach at Little City. "Michael was going through a tough and lonely time when I first met him," Tom recalled. "But even in those early days, it was clear how special he was."

Together, Michael and Tom spent months building trust and practicing essential job skills – growing not just professionally, but personally. Eventually, the perfect opportunity opened up at the Jewel-Osco in Palatine.

**What began as just a few hours a week with coaching support quickly evolved into one of the most independent success stories Tom has ever witnessed. Michael now works as many hours as he can, manages his own transportation, and no longer needs job coaching. He has become a beloved member of the Jewel team – so much so that his example helped open doors for others to be hired.**

"Michael would work 60 hours a week if he could," Tom said. "He truly loves his job, and his coworkers love him."

Shortly after beginning his job, Michael also secured a placement in one of Little City's campus apartments, giving him the stability and community he deserved. On days off, he continues to grow – volunteering, attending classes, and making the most of every opportunity.

Michael's journey is a testament to resilience and the power of your support. Thanks to donors like you, Michael has overcome his challenges and is thriving in life.

► **Donate today using the enclosed reply envelope to help more individuals just like Michael find purpose and connection at Little City.**



# AMANDA IS FINDING HER PASSION AGAIN

For over 20 years, Amanda Kallas (pictured below) has been telling stories in bold, vibrant color. Her signature butterflies, bright florals, and joy-filled canvases are instantly recognizable to anyone familiar with Little City's art program.

But when COVID shut down the program in 2020, Amanda and many of her peers lost not just a space – but a community.

She missed not only the painting but the people. Amanda would create alongside friends like Andy Bell and John King (right). The art room was her space to express, to belong, and to shine.

With the renovation and reopening of the Bell Family Arts Center, that space is coming back – better than ever.

For Little City artists like Amanda, the new studio means more than fresh paint and materials. It means reconnection to her purpose, her peers, and her potential.

Thanks to the leading generosity of Julie Bell and so many others, Amanda and her peers will soon return to dedicated spaces for digital design, textiles, ceramics, and more. A new café will provide vocational training opportunities for Little City participants, while an art gallery will offer the chance to purchase the art first-hand – creating a community built for everyone.



John King pictured above showing off his artist profile from Little City's new coffee table book. This hardcover book will be available for purchase online and at the new Bell Family Arts Center.

# A PLACE TO DREAM, CREATE & THRIVE: The Bell Family Arts Center Breaks Ground

While artists make new creations at Little City, Little City is creating something new for them.

Donors, families, and participants gathered at Little City's Palatine campus on August 2 to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Bell Family Arts Center. This newly renovated space will be the new home of Little City's award-winning arts program, built with purpose and promise.

Designed with creative exploration in mind, the Bell Family Arts Center will include dedicated studios for painting, textiles, digital art, and more. It will also feature a public-facing art gallery and café – allowing visitors to connect directly with the incredible work and vision of Little City artists.

Julie Bell, a longtime Little City Board Member and sister of renowned Little City artist Andy Bell, was joined by family at the ceremony. What began as a tribute to her father's legacy has blossomed into a full-circle gift for generations to come.

"We cannot thank Julie enough for this gift that will give Little City artists a life-changing experience for decades and decades to come," said Rich Bobby, Little City CEO. "Julie has such a love and care not just for her sister but everyone at Little City and continues to inspire us all to keep working toward making the best future for those we serve."

For many, the newly renovated space opens a door to a passion that has been limited ever since COVID first shut down the art program in 2020.

Julie said the Bell Family Arts Center is a dream that is years in the making. The idea started as a way for Julie to honor her father when he passed away, but has continued to grow over the years and is now near completion. She said the center is a way to help other families enjoy the enriching and fulfilling experience her sister Andy has enjoyed for more than 60 years at Little City.

"Always have a dream," Julie said. "It means so much to me my family [was] here because they are the next generation



that can carry on this legacy and see how Little City can help so many."

Little City would like to thank Julie Bell for her leading support, Illinois State Rep. Michelle Mussman for a generous grant that made construction possible, and IKEA for an above-and-beyond donation that will furnish the entire facility.

Learn more or sponsor an artist in the newly renovated Bell Family Arts Center at [www.LittleCity.org/Arts](http://www.LittleCity.org/Arts)



“The Bell Family Arts Center will be a place where Amanda and every artist can grow, be seen, and be celebrated.”

Elizabeth Stafford  
Art Educator  
& Coordinator



# SHOP THE HARVEST STAND!

Now through October, shop Little City's Annual Harvest Stand and support people with disabilities!

Our Annual Harvest Stand grows more than just produce. When you shop the sale, you are supporting a fully-operational horticulture center that doubles as a vocational skills program for individuals with developmental disabilities.

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

LITTLE CITY HORTICULTURE CENTER  
1740 W. ALGONQUIN RD, PALATINE

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## GRAB A SEAT FOR OUR POKER TOURNAMENT & CASINO NIGHT!

**Friday, October 17, 2025**  
The Bank of America Tower | Chicago, IL

**Join us for our charity poker & casino night and go ALL IN for people with disabilities at Little City!** This featured event includes a Las Vegas style Texas Hold 'Em poker tournament, charitable casino gaming, gourmet classics from Gibsons Restaurant, open bar, and a grand champion prize: entry into the 2026 Millionaire Maker Tournament in Las Vegas!

**Seats are limited, grab yours now at [www.LittleCity.org/Poker](http://www.LittleCity.org/Poker)**

## SAVE THE DATE: 2026 DINNER GALA

**Saturday, May 2, 2026**  
The Ritz-Carlton | Chicago, IL

Honoring Gil & Betty Fergus with the  
Vernon Carson Luminary Award

## SAVE THE DATE: 63<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL LITTLE CITY INVITATIONAL!

**Monday, June 22, 2026**  
Twin Orchard Country Club | Long Grove, IL

# 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 March 15, 2025 and July 31, 2025.

The Coleman Foundation • The RJN Foundation • Alexander S. Pissios Family Foundation • Barrington Township • Bloomingdale Township Mental Health Board • Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation • DuPage Community Foundation • Elk Grove Township • Hanover Township Mental Health Board • Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity • Illinois Department of Human Services • Jackson National Life Insurance • Palatine Township • Rotary Club of Palatine • Schaumburg Township Mental Health Board • Village of Grayslake • Village of Schaumburg • Wheeling Township Mental Health Board

**HELPING HANDS:** Little City extends its appreciation to the following businesses and corporations for their recent volunteer work with us since April 2025.

- |                 |                                   |                     |                     |         |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|
| • Forward Space | • Pleasant Hill Elementary School | • EY                | • Perdoceo          | • MMA   |
| • Zurich        | • Motorola                        | • MorningStar, Inc. | • Pavilion Payments | • Omron |