

LITTLE CITY, BIG
PICTURE
NEWSLETTER



**WINTER 2026:
YOUR YEAR
IN REVIEW**

See what **YOU**
made possible
in 2025!



Little City, **Big Life.**



YOU'RE HELPING NICK CHASE HIS BIGGEST GOAL YET

Nick is on a mission for gold – and for records.

For years, former Little City resident Kevin M. set the standard in Special Olympics. With multiple gold medals, state records, and a deadlift topping 400 pounds, Kevin's strength made him almost untouchable in powerlifting. And for a young athlete watching from the sidelines, those accomplishments lit a spark.

That athlete was Nick.

Nick has been part of Little City's recreation and Special Olympics programs for many years, and because of supporters like you, he has grown from a determined participant into a focused competitor chasing a personal dream: to match the feats of his longtime friend Kevin.

"Nick has always been really involved in Special Olympics, but he is as motivated as I have ever seen him right now," said Katlyn Shute, Special Olympics head coach. "He's working as much as he can in the weight room and pushing himself to keep setting new personal bests."

And it's your support that makes his level of dedication possible.

Because of donor-funded recreation programs, Nick has access to structured training, coaching, and equipment

that allows him to push himself safely and consistently. **Every hour he spends in the weight room, every new personal best he hits, and every ounce of confidence he builds is strengthened by people who believe in giving athletes like Nick a chance to challenge their limits.**

Nick's athletic ability comes from years of playing multiple sports. He has been a leader on Little City's softball and basketball teams – encouraging teammates, working hard at every practice, and showing up with dedication that sets the tone for others. He does all of this while working almost every day in Little City's on-campus kitchen, helping prepare meals for children's homes and more. His commitment is constant, whether he's in the gym or on the job.

After a state-championship basketball season, Nick has turned his focus fully to winter powerlifting. He is steadily approaching the 400-pound mark as he pushes for new personal records – and one day, Kevin's.

"I'm coming for that record. I'm going to do it."

Because of you, Nick and other Little City athletes can challenge their limits, discover their strength, and pursue their dreams with confidence.

Thank you for helping make stories like Nick's possible. The hard work of everyone at this organization.

A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends, Families & Donors,

As we step into 2026, all of us at Little City are filled with sincere gratitude – for you.

Your generosity, dedication, and unwavering support throughout the past year made the holidays brighter and the future more hopeful for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health challenges.

Because of you, the people we serve are entering this new year with greater confidence, connection, and opportunity.

2025 brought many meaningful milestones – one of the most exciting being the appointment of our new Board Chair, Heather Ritter. Heather has been a longtime advocate and Board Member and formerly served as Board President of Countryside Association. Her leadership is especially meaningful as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the merger between Little City and Countryside in 2026.

It's truly an honor and privilege to work more closely with Heather and the rest of our dedicated Board of Directors, whose commitment and leadership inspire us daily.

Looking ahead, we're more energized than ever to fulfill our shared mission.

Together, we envision a future where every individual we support:

- Is included in their community.
- Has someone they consider a friend.
- Continuously learns and builds their skills.

These guiding principles drive every decision we make – and your partnership makes them a reality.

With your continued support today, we will keep building an inclusive community where every person and family is empowered to thrive, pursue their dreams, and live a fulfilling life. The road ahead is full of promise, and we're excited to walk it with you.

Thank you for believing in this mission, thank you for standing with us, and thank you for making 2025 a year of limitless possibility.

Sincerely,



Rich Bobby
Rich Bobby
Chief Executive Officer

2025: YEAR IN REVIEW

Look at what you helped accomplish in 2025!

GIVING TUESDAY



You Scored BIG on Giving Tuesday!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, our Giving Tuesday campaign was a home run for our athletes! The support from so many funded the essential resources that make participation possible – new equipment, new jerseys, support for travel to competitions, and the tools our athletes need to play with confidence and pride.

Because of you, Little City athletes can continue stepping onto the field, pushing past challenges, and experiencing the joy of being part of a team. Thank you for making their seasons possible!

YOUR IMPACT IN STORIES!

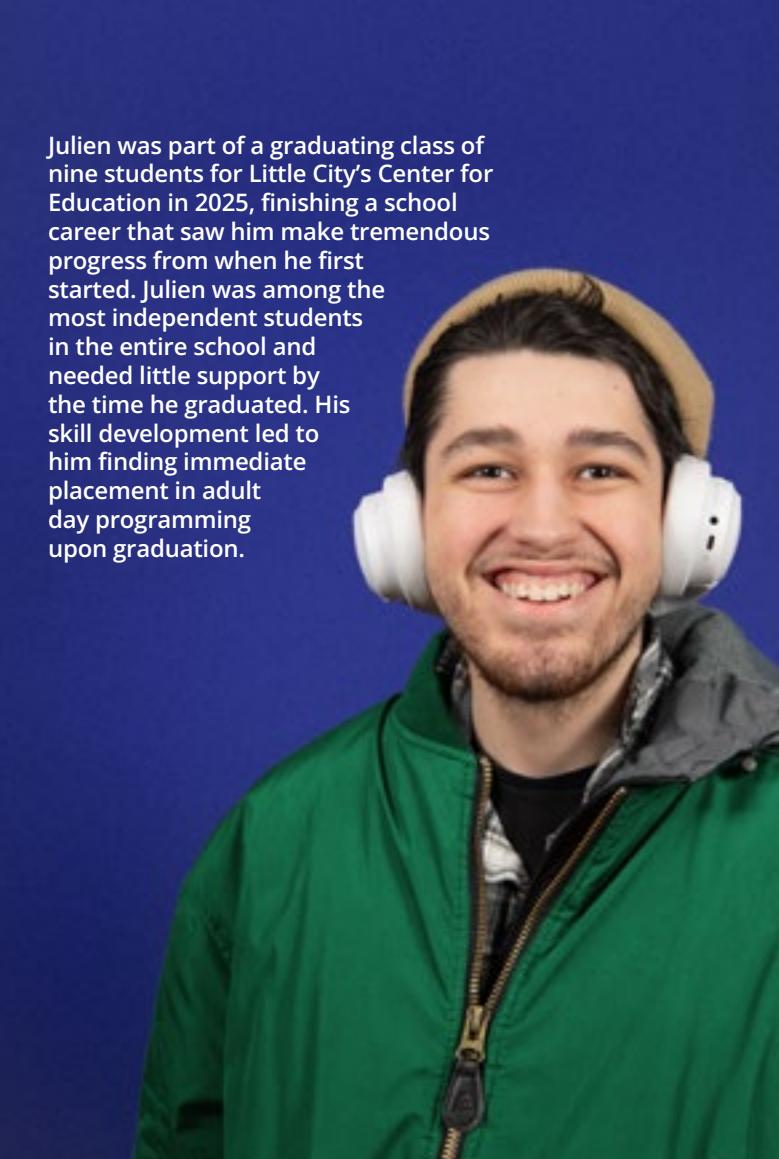
These short stories are a reflection of your generosity in 2025 and the achievement you can help support in 2026.



Henry took big strides toward community-based employment in 2025, becoming as active as he could be in any opportunity that provided him a chance to build new skills. Henry volunteered at places like animal shelters – caring for the animals and their spaces – and at a firehouse, where he helped maintain a clean and safe environment. He also worked at Little City's coffee cart, preparing drinks and treats for staff and participants. After a big 2025, Henry is one step closer to finding community-based employment in 2026!



Aubrey was one of the biggest success stories at Little City's Center for Education in 2025, going from the high-support THRIVE program to the more independent classrooms within months. Aubrey overcame her struggles with emotional regulation and was able to go from constant one-on-one support when she first started in THRIVE to blossoming more independently in bigger classroom settings. Aubrey's goal now is to transition to her home school district in the future because of the progress she has shown!



Julien was part of a graduating class of nine students for Little City's Center for Education in 2025, finishing a school career that saw him make tremendous progress from when he first started. Julien was among the most independent students in the entire school and needed little support by the time he graduated. His skill development led to him finding immediate placement in adult day programming upon graduation.



JANUARY

Life in Motion launches, providing families with an option for their loved ones to experience a full day of programming on and off campus.

FEBRUARY

"Recreation Rotation" gives participants from all buildings the opportunity to participate in horticulture, art, athletics and more.

MARCH

Little City Bulls win their first-ever Special Olympics State Championship after an amazing basketball season with comeback wins!

APRIL

Little City participants put together a special Earth Day event with U.S. Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi to celebrate 50 years of the Horticulture Center.

MAY

Little City's Center for Education celebrates another great year with nine students graduating, and our annual Gala honors Eleni and Jimmy Bousis.

JUNE

The Little City Invitational honors legal counsel and former Board Member Jack George for 50 incredible years of support.

JULY

Little City holds its first ever "Club Night" in Arlington Heights where participants join others from similar organizations to dance the night away!

AUGUST

The Bell Family Arts Center hosts a groundbreaking ceremony honoring Julie Bell for her leading generosity and IKEA for their support in furnishing the building, and celebrating the work of Little City's artists.

SEPTEMBER

The annual Harvest Stand sells a record amount of produce to support the Horticulture program, and our annual Hero Walk rallies nearly 200 attendees to support this mission!

OCTOBER

Poker & Casino Night returns for a fun night of table games and Texas Hold 'Em at the beautiful Bank of America Tower in downtown Chicago.

NOVEMBER

Three participants in our employment program celebrate earning community-based jobs – highlighting great achievement from their hard work!

DECEMBER

Little City children and adults celebrate the holiday season with parties throughout campus and receive gifts from their wish list thanks to our incredible donors!

UPCOMING EVENTS

GET TICKETS FOR OUR 2026 ANNUAL DINNER GALA: **LITTLE CITY, BIG DREAMS.**

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

As we look forward to the bright future that lies ahead for Little City, we invite you to join us as we honor and celebrate the dreams becoming reality for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This year we are delighted to present **Gil & Betty Fergus** with the Vernon Carson Luminary Award and honor **IKEA** as our Corporate Partner of the Year!

Get tickets now at littlecity.org/Gala

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR **63RD ANNUAL LITTLE CITY INVITATIONAL!**

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

Honoring Alex Gianaras with the Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award

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 August 1, 2025 and November 30, 2025:

The Cole-Crone Family Foundation • Motorola Solutions Foundation • Palatine Township • Elk Grove Township • Hanover Township • Discover Financial Services • All Saints Lutheran Church • Wheeling Township • Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity • Township of Schaumburg • Wauconda Township • The Russell & Josephine Kott Memorial Charitable Trust • Vernon Township • Illinois Department of Human Services • Richard A. Perritt Charitable Foundation • Frechette Family Foundation • Zurich North America

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

- MEL
- Motorola
- Omron
- Perdoceo
- Wintrust
- Zurich
- Schaumburg Boomers
- IKEA
- Gallagher