



Disability Resource Center

-a Center for Independent Living-

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Disability Resource Center Newsletter

LIFE SKILLS CENTER, OPEN HOUSE, & ANNUAL MEETING

DRC could not be prouder of how our fully accessible Life Skills Center has turned out and we couldn't wait to show it off. Over the past couple of months, several groups of students who participated in our Fast Track program came to the Life Skills Center to learn various Work-Based Learning skills. Some of the skills taught included dusting, sweeping, changing sheets, and making the bed. These skills are necessary for positions such as housekeeping in hotels, nursing homes, and hospitals, etc. Students also learned clerical/office work duties such as making copies, emailing, and answering phones. These job skills could be used at an office, hotel, or school. Culinary and Food & Sanitation skills were also taught for possible positions in the restaurant industry. Included in this lesson was the importance of cleanliness when working with food, following recipes, and cleaning up at the end of class. The staff and students had a great time exploring all of the different lessons.

The fun didn't stop there!! On May 5th, 2022, DRC hosted Road 2 Eternity Media which produced a Wendy Lyfe cooking segment in our Life Skills Center kitchen. With the help of Cornerstone's very own Christina, Chef Tiffany, and Wendy, an amazing mouth watering recipe of smothered cheesy shrimp and grits were cooked and filmed in front of our very eyes! It was just like being in the studio of GMA. The lights, the cameras, and the smells coming from the kitchen were heavenly. We cannot wait to post the segment and recipe on our website and Facebook page for you to try it for yourself!

BUT WAIT, there's more! On May 18, 2022, our Open House was in full swing when over one hundred fifty (150) people, including Joliet Mayor Bob O'Dekirk, toured the Life Skills Center. DRC staff ran tours of the Center as well as handed out custom-designed cookies, water, and answered questions regarding upcoming classes and events. A video of the before and after construction pictures were playing on our two (2) Smart Screens as well as pictures of the students that had visited the Life Skills Center in the earlier months. Around 4 PM the Joliet & Grundy County Chambers had our official ribbon cutting.

The Annual Meeting began at approximately 5:15 PM, our outgoing Board President (Zachary Fleming) and incoming Board President (Susan Jarosinski) were thanked for their service by our Executive Director, Missy Martin. Awards were presented to Missy Martin for ten (10) years of service and Marie Malfatti for twenty (20) years of service. Aysel Golbahar was presented with the Ed Roberts Excellence in Independent Living Award. Carolyn Kucinic received a recognition award for her dedication to helping DRC continue its mission of helping people with disabilities.

Phew...we hit the ground running and it seems like so many wonderful things have happened within a short period of time at DRC and our Life Skills Center. When dreams start to come true you share the news with everyone. We plan on helping even more people with disabilities in the future, and **we aren't done dreaming yet!** 😊

If you were unable to attend our open house and would like a tour of the Life Skills Center, please contact Kindall, Julee, Kevin, or Delaney at 815-729-0162 to schedule your appointment.



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*"Do not let what you cannot
do interfere with what you
can do!"*

-John Wooden





WELCOME TO DRC DELANEY WOODALL!



Delaney Woodall is our new Independent Living Advocate and Deaf Services Coordinator at Disability Resource Center. Delaney is a recent graduate from the University of Iowa who earned a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and a Minor Degree in Deaf studies. Delaney is also fluent in American Sign Language (ASL). In her free time, Delaney likes to take care of her house plants, create art, and play with her baby nephew. Delaney goes by She/Her/Hers pronouns and is excited to work at Disability Resource Center and to serve the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing population in the Will-Grundy area.

After Delaney gets acclimated to her new position, she will be starting up a Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Peer Support Group. Please contact Delaney 815-729-0162 or delaney@drcjoliet.org if you are interested or have any questions.



"A ship is always safe at shore but that is NOT what it was built for." Albert Einstein

Peer Support Groups

Men's Group-Starting in September. Contact Sam Knight (sam@drcjoliet.org) for questions dates and times.

Young Adults Group

Starting in August. Contact Julee Opel (julee@drcjoliet.org) for dates & times. Ages 23-30.

Woman's Group

Starting in August. Contact Delaney Woodall (delaney@drcjoliet.org) for dates and times. Ages 31+

NEW Independent Living Small Group

Wednesday, July 13th - August 10th. Time: 1:30 - 2:30 PM Contact Kevin Huckfeldt (kevin@drcjoliet.org). Ages 14-18.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Group

COMING SOON! Contact Delaney Woodall (delaney@drcjoliet.org).

Accessible Will County (AWC)

The second Wednesday of the month from 1 pm-2:30 pm. AWC is a partnership between DRC, disability advocates, persons with disabilities, the City of Joliet businesses, the Joliet Regional Chamber of Commerce & Industry, professional trade organizations, media representatives and civic leaders. Contact Sam Knight (sam@drcjoliet.org).

PERSONAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM (PA)



Are you KIND, CARING, RELIABLE and looking to make a difference in someone's life?

If you are looking for a rewarding job and are interested in gaining valuable work experience working one-on-one with consumers in the community; then you would be a great fit for our PA program.

Centers for Independent Living are looking for people to become Personal Assistants to help people with disabilities. Duties include but not limited to: bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, cleaning, cooking, shopping, running errands and mobility exercises, etc.

Benefits include competitive pay, flexible schedule, and professional as well as personal development.

From July 1, 2021 to present the Personal Assistant Program added over 25 new PA's. Will you be our next one??

If you are interested in attending one of the mandatory orientation classes or for more information on this rewarding program, please contact Maureen Kelly our Personal Assistant Coordinator at 815-729-0162 or via email maureen@drcjoliet.org.



“Teaching Life Skills & Empowering Students”

FAST TRACK PROGRAM

Heading into the 2022-2023 Fall school year we have over thirty one (31) re-enrolled consumers and over five (5) new enrollees. Students will learn the Five Core Services of Self Advocacy, Post Secondary Education, Work Place Readiness, Work Based Learning and Job Exploration Counseling. These skills are taught in a class room environment and will compliment your child's school curriculum.

Our ILA's are refreshed and ready to head back into the classrooms!

If you haven't sent back your Fast Track Service Agreement paperwork don't delay. We don't want you to miss out on a single session.

S.K.I.L.L.S. PROGRAM (SHARING KEY INDEPENDENT LIFE LESSONS)

Our goal is to help people with disabilities gain more confidence in their everyday life. In 2022 we taught over ninety five (95) consumers topics such as Money Management, Personal Relationships, Job Interviews, Pubic Transportation, and Driving Tools.

We teach these classes to students 18-22 years old that are in a Transitional School within the Will & Grundy County areas. We also have a partnership with Lewis University students majoring in Education that assist us in the program.

Starting in September S.K.I.L.L.S. classes will be offered on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday's. If you are interested in our S.K.I.L.L.S program please contact Sam Knight for details at 815-729-0162 or email at sam@drcjoliet.org.

Come and join us!

WHAT IS FAST TRACK

Fast Track is a free program for students with disabilities ages 14-21 who do not have an open DRS case and are enrolled in an education program.

- Fast Track is designed to teach student life skills such as; Self Advocacy, Job Exploration, Work Place Readiness, Post Secondary Education, Work Based Learning and much more.
- Classes are taught in a classroom environment.
- Fast Track will not interfere with your child's school curriculum. Fast Track will only enhance learning and help prepare students for their future.

For more information on dates, times, or questions please call DRC at 815-729-0162 and ask for Kindall Carmouche' or via email kindall@drcjoliet.org.

If at any time you have suggestions for classes, peer support groups, or informational sessions please contact us.

We would love to hear your ideas!



ITAC NEW EQUIPMENT

ITAC, has been providing Illinois residents with equipment for over 30 years.

This is a state-regulated, non-profit program that is funded by a small sur-charge that every Illinois resident already pays on their telephone bill. This fund is utilized by the ITAC program to provide communication equipment to Illinois residents with a disability.

Speech iPads with AAC apps are available free of charge thru ITAC for individuals with a Speech Disability. Inventory is limited.

Please visit DRC's Facebook page, website (drcjoliet.org), or contact ITAC directly at 800-841-6167 for the applications that need to be completed by a doctor.



ITAC (ILLINOIS TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS CORP)



Marie Malfatti is DRC's ITAC Coordinator. **Marie has helped over ninety five (95) people with hearing loss obtain a free amplified phone from January 2022-May 2022. This puts DRC in first place for the ITAC distribution in the entire state of Illinois!!**

What does this mean? DRC has helped more Illinois residents with hearing loss obtain free amplified telephones, cell phones, and answering machines than any other selection center in the state.

The ITAC program provides FREE amplified telephones and other equipment to all allow Illinois residents with qualified hearing loss regain the ability to hear on the phone. DRC is an official "selection center" for ITAC. Consumers can call to make an appointment with Marie to test different types of amplified phone equipment to find the one that best suits their needs.

There are 28 ITAC selection centers in Illinois, including the highly populated Chicago, Springfield, and Aurora areas. Since 2020, our Joliet based selection center distributed over 460 amplified devices and outpaced all the other centers by over 10 percent! **Thank you everyone for supporting DRC and keep up the great work MARIE!!**



SUCCESS STORIES

DRC's Kevin Huckfeldt, Independent Living Advocate, worked with R.P. during the Spring 2022 semester of our Fast Track program. Kevin and R.P. focused on key employment skills such as dressing for an interview, arriving early, as well as participating in mock interviews which allowed R.P. to practice and gain valuable feedback. R.P. also learned to ask appropriate questions pertaining to the job she was interviewing for. With the skills R.P. learned from our Fast Track program she landed her first job at a local grocery store! Congratulations, we are very proud of you!

While exploring the JJC campus N.J. who is enrolled in our program, found a flyer that advertised a Teddy Bear Clinic. This clinic utilizes JJC's 3D Maker lab which makes orthotics and prosthetics for Teddy Bears. These bears are then given to children with disabilities. N.J. became extremely interested in this field, unfortunately he was unable to pass the academic requirements to attend JJC. DRC and his parents advocated for N.P. and now JJC has decided to offer N.P. a one-on-one class in this field. Upon completion N.P. will be offered a job at a local business that makes devices for patients. Due to this advocacy, others with disabilities will now be given the chance to follow their dreams as well. Great job!

WAYS TO GIVE

Your support allows us to continue providing the core services that are so important in helping people with disabilities achieve their goals. And the truth is, we ALL benefit when everyone has a chance to fulfill their potential. Thank you for being a part of the solution that helps motivate people with disabilities of all ages fulfill their goals. We couldn't do it without you.

Disability Resource Center and our consumers rely on many sources for funding but many of those funds are earmarked only for specific uses. Your donations help fund *everything* that it takes to allow us to continue serving people with disabilities.

If you wish to donate to DRC, you can do so through our yearly **Annual Appeal**, www.drcjoliet.org, **Facebook page**, **shopping through Amazon Smile**, or **PayPal**.

We can't say it enough – **THANK YOU! Thank you for your donations and supporting our mission.**



"Don't wait. The time will never be just right." - Napoleon Hill

HIGHLIGHTS (9/30/20 - 5/18/22)

Assistive Technology for Children Program: Ninety Four (94) young consumers (0-23) with disabilities received an assistive technology device that helped them to participate more fully in their lives.

Community Reintegration Program: The Center has had six (6) successful move outs to date.

Advocacy: Staff assisted five hundred and ninety eight (598) consumers with Advocacy related issues.

Fast Track: Five Hundred and Fifty (550) Students participated in our Fast Track program.

Independent Living: Almost one thousand five hundred and ninety four (1,594) intake & casual consumers have participated in our S. K. I. L. L. S. program.

Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation (ITAC): DRC came in first place for 2020 & 2021! Almost four hundred and sixty (460) amplified phones were distributed by our office to consumers with hearing loss.

Housing Vouchers: DRC obtained approximately seventy one (71) housing vouchers which helped 142 people and their families get placed into housing.

Peer Counseling: Four Hundred and Fourteen (414) consumers participated in one or more of our 6 groups: Young Women's, Women's, Men's, Spanish Parent, Teen Talk, and Parent Support Group.

Annual Appeal 2021 (Emergency Funds): *The following were purchased and/or paid for with donations to the 2021 Annual Appeal Emergency Fund.* Over Fifty (50) people were assisted with hotel rooms for shelter in place, groceries, prescriptions, and security deposits and/or rent.



Spring/Summer 2022

Mission Statement:

As people with disabilities and their advocates, Disability Resource Center strives for equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities in the Will and Grundy areas.

Who We Are

Disability Resource Center informs persons with disabilities of their rights, educate them about their responsibilities, provide support services, promote advocacy, and raise community awareness about disability issues. Disability Resource Center is a cross-disability, community-based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that operates solely on grants and contributions. We welcome and appreciate ongoing support from businesses, foundations, individuals and organizations.

DRC STAFF & BOARD

Staff:

Missy Martin:
Executive Director

Tammy Semmler:
Administrative Assistant

Maureen Kelly:
Personal Assistant Coordinator

Sam Knight:
Independent Living Coordinator

Julee Opel
Independent Living Advocate

Kindall Carmouche'
*Independent Living Advocate
Transition Coordinator*

Kevin Huckfeldt
Independent Living Advocate

Delaney Woodall
*Independent Living Advocate
Deaf Services Coordinator*

Marie Malfatti
ITAC Coordinator

Board of Directors 2022-23

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President

Ivan Bew
Vice President

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Secretary

Jennifer Koff
Treasurer

Jenny Carey
Delegate at Large

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Rhonda Price
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Directors

Zachary Fleming
Past President

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