



## Disability Resource Center

-a Center for Independent Living-

77 N. 129th Infantry Dr.

Joliet, IL 60435

Voice: (815) 729-0162 VRS: (815) 768-2582

TTY: (815) 729-2085

[www.drcjoliet.org](http://www.drcjoliet.org)

## Disability Resource Center Newsletter

Driving is a privilege, NOT a constitutional right! People obtain driver's licenses based on the skills they have, agreeing to follow the rules of the road, and demonstrating the ability to drive safely. Illinois laws are meant to protect everyone on the roadways while still granting the freedom to drive if the driver is legally able. No one has more rights on the road than anyone else and this includes people with disabilities.

In order for a person with a disability to drive, their car usually has to be altered to fit the needs of the individual who will be driving it. All modifications must comply with all federal and environmental laws and should be modified by an authorized agency.

Adapted vehicles allow people with disabilities to drive with improved safety and comfort, but some of these systems can be very pricey. This is where Disability Resource Center's Assistive Technology for Children's Program helped our consumer Danielle and her family.

Danielle was born with Spina Bifida and is paralyzed from the waist down. Danielle, like all 16-year-olds, was excited about gaining her independence thru driving. Even though her grandmother donated her car, with Danielle's disability and the cost of a modified vehicle, Danielle's family was unsure if this dream would ever be a reality. Danielle's family found DRC.

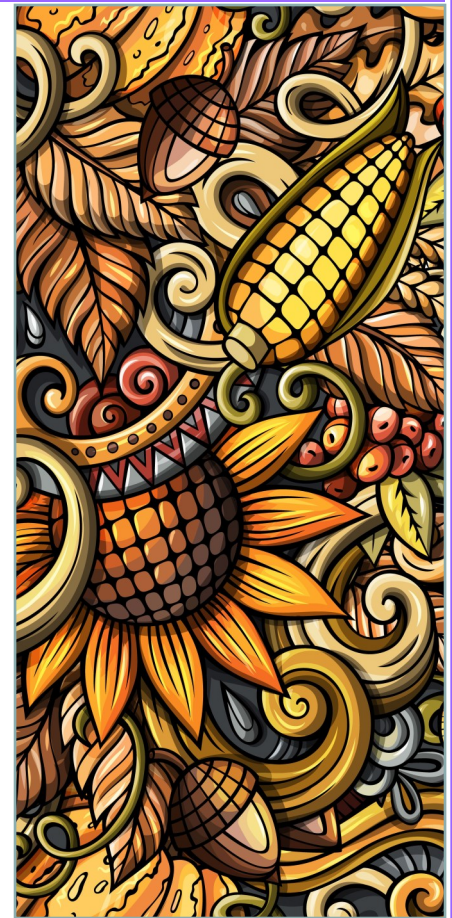
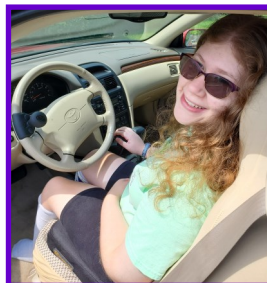
The Assistive Technology for Children's Program is funded through United Way of Will & United Way of Grundy Counties and thru generous donations from local businesses and families around our service area. The program services children with disabilities up to the age of 23 and allows DRC to help families like Danielle's up to \$600.

Danielle's family was able to put this money towards having Danielle's car modified with hand and speed controls which allowed this excited teenager to finally be able to drive on her own!!

Danielle's family couldn't be happier, well not happier than Danielle that is! Danielle has gained the independence that she never thought she would have been able to obtain. Danielle and her mom drove to DRC and showed off her newly modified vehicle. We all celebrated, took pictures, and had moments of happy tears.

If you are interested in applying for The Assistive Technology for Children's Program please contact Disability Resource Center. Funding is limited and assistance depends on availability. If you wish to donate to this program please send your donation to Disability Resource Center at the address above, or through PayPal (Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living), or shop Amazon Smile during the year.

**Thank you for helping us help our consumers!**



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

S.K.I.L.L.S. ....	2
PA Program.....	2
Fast Track .....	3
ITAC .....	4
Success Stories.....	4
Ways To Give .....	5
Highlights .....	5
DRC Staff & Board.....	6

***"Your present  
circumstances don't  
determine where you  
can go; they merely  
determine where you  
can start"***  
**- Nido Qubein**

**I love  
& FALL  
most of  
ALL**

## Fall/Winter 2022



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

Our goal is to assist people with disabilities gain more confidence in their everyday life. Starting July 1, 2022 we taught over sixty-three (63) consumers topics such as Money Management, Personal Relationships, Job Interviewing Skills, Public Transportation, Housing, and Driving Tools, etc.

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.

Our S.K.I.L.L.S. classes are offered Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. If you are interested in our S.K.I.L.L.S. program please contact Julee, Kevin, or Delaney for details and times at 815-729-0162.

**Come and join us!**

*99% of the battle is getting your MIND right!*

#### Peer Support Groups

**Men's Group**-Third Wednesday of the month, 11 AM - 1 PM at DRC. Please bring a lunch. Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at [kevin@drcjoliet.org](mailto:kevin@drcjoliet.org), or Sam Knight at [sam@drcjoliet.org](mailto:sam@drcjoliet.org). Ages 18+

**Teen Talk (Teen)** Biweekly on Wednesdays, via Zoom 6 PM - 7 PM Contact Julee Opel at [julee@drcjoliet.org](mailto:julee@drcjoliet.org) for questions. Ages 16-20.

**Woman's Group** Biweekly on Thursday's, 3 PM - 4:30 PM at DRC. Contact Julee Opel, [julee@drcjoliet.org](mailto:julee@drcjoliet.org) Ages 20+

**Deaf/Hard of Hearing Group** February 2023 partnering with the Shorewood/Troy Library. Contact Delaney Woodall at [delaney@drcjoliet.org](mailto: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 at [sam@drcjoliet.org](mailto:sam@drcjoliet.org) for more information.

### PERSONAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM (PA)



Are you 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.

Disability Resource Center is 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.

Are you CARING and RELIABLE? Contact Maureen Kelly our Personal Assistant Coordinator at 815-729-0162 or via email [maureen@drcjoliet.org](mailto:maureen@drcjoliet.org), to start your application process and schedule your mandatory orientation training.

From July 1, 2022 to present, the Personal Assistant Program added almost 20 new PAs. Will you be our next one??



### *“Teaching Life Skills & Empowering Students”*

## FAST TRACK PROGRAM

Our Fast Track Program has grown!! For the 2022-2023 fiscal year we have over sixty (60) re-enrolled consumers and over sixty-six (66) new enrollees. Students learn the Pre-Employment Transition Services of Self Advocacy, Post Secondary Education, Work Place Readiness, Work Based Learning, and Job Exploration Counseling. The Fast Track Program is taught in a class room environment and will compliment your child's school curriculum.

If you have not turned in your Fast Track Service Agreement paperwork.....don't delay. We don't want you to miss out on a single session.

DRC teaches Fast Track in the following Will & Grundy County area schools: Minooka, Lincoln Way, Beecher, Reed Custer, & JJC. If your school is interested in Fast Track, please contact Kindall Carmouche' at [kindall@drcjoliet.org](mailto:kindall@drcjoliet.org) to learn about this exciting opportunity!



Is your business interested in providing Work Based Learning Experience to our Fast Track students? DRC is looking for businesses interested in providing short small group sessions to teach students necessary job skills, job shadowing, mentoring opportunities in the community, internships, apprenticeships, short term employment or fellowships.

Please reach out to Kindall Carmouche' at 815-729-0162 for more information.



### ITAC (ILLINOIS TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS CORP)



From January 2022 to date, DRC had over one hundred and fifty (150) people obtain a free amplified phone.

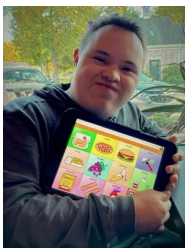
What does this mean? DRC has helped more Illinois residents with hearing loss obtain free amplified telephones, cell phones, and answering machines than any other selection center in the state. Out of the 28 selection centers, **DRC is still in 1st place!**

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 to test different types of amplified phone equipment to find the one that best suits their needs.

Call Tammy at 815-729-0162, visit [itactty.org](http://itactty.org) for more information on the amplified phones, or to find a testing center near you!



### SUCCESS STORIES



DRC's consumer D. received an iPad to help him communicate on his own. D. is now ordering his own meals when he goes out to eat with his family. D.'s family will continue to add words and categories to the (Touch Chat App) to help him continue to be more independent.



With United Way Funding and private donations to our Assistive Technology for Children's Program, we were able to approve an AT application for D.R., a one-year old boy who has a visual impairment. The letter from his therapist requested an iPad to assist him with engaging in educational applications and increase his learning. Not only will the iPad increase D.R.'s learning, but there are applications that can help navigate his surroundings to ensure his safety when he is at his home; as well as in the community as he grows older.

### 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 what 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](http://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.**



---

*"Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."-Nelson Mandela*

---

### HIGHLIGHTS (7/1/22 - PRESENT)

**Community Reintegration Program:** DRC has had one (1) successful move out since July 2022.

**DMD (Disability Mentoring Day):** DMD Day is a nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities thru hands on career exploration. **Thank you to the following businesses for allowing twenty-seven (27) Lockport HS students visit on DMD day: CW Avery Family YMCA, Joliet Slammers, Lockport Police Department, Plainfield Park District PARC and Home2Suites Hilton in Joliet.**

**Fast Track:** One hundred and fourteen (114) students were approved thru DRS to participate in our Fast Track program.

**Voting:** Two (2) students from Plainfield voted at the County Clerks Office.

**Housing Vouchers:** DRC obtained twenty-two (22) housing vouchers which helped 58 people and their families get placed into housing.

**Peer Counseling:** Men's Group had over twenty (20) Participants, Women's Group had over ten (10) participants, and Teen Talk over six (6) participants.



# Fall/Winter 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  
ITAC Coordinator*

Maureen Kelly  
*Personal Assistant Coordinator*

Sam Knight  
*Independent Living Advocate*

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  
*Receptionist/ITAC Coordinator*

### Board of Directors 2022-23

Susan Jarosinski  
*President*

Ivan Bew  
*Vice President*

Chris Boyk  
*Secretary*

Jennifer Koff  
*Treasurer*

Jenny Carey  
*Delegate at Large*

Zachary Fleming  
*Past President*

Connie J. Henley  
Rhonda Price  
Ericka Williams  
Riley Spreadbury  
Shannon Tipton  
*Directors*

DRC is always looking for new board members. If you are interested in becoming a board member, contact Missy Martin, Executive Director at [missy@drcjoliet.org](mailto:missy@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!*

Disability Resource Center  
77 N. 129th Infantry Dr.  
Joliet, IL 60435

Phone: 815-729-0162  
VRS: 815-768-2582  
TTY: 815-729-2085  
Fax: 815-729-3697

[www.drcjoliet.org](http://www.drcjoliet.org)



A Center for Independent Living



PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE



## Disability Resource Center Newsletter Inside

**DRC will be closed:**  
**December 23rd-January 3rd**