

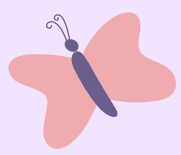
SUMMER NEWSLETTER

2025



*Disability
Resource
Center*

A Center for Independent Living



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Joliet, IL 60435
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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, educates them about their responsibilities, provides support services, promotes advocacy, and raises 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 the ongoing support from businesses, foundations, individuals, and organizations.

Ways To Give

Your support allows us to continue providing core services that are so important in helping our disabled community achieve their goals. Everyone benefits when all of us have a chance to fulfill our 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 for specific usage. Your donations allow us to continue serving people with disabilities.

If you wish to donate to DRC, you can do so through our **Annual Appeal, or by sending monetary donations to Disability Resource Center at 77 N. 129th Infantry Dr., Joliet, IL 60435.**

Thank you for your donations and supporting our mission!

Consumer Success Story

J.M. started working with an Independent Living Advocate (ILA) about a year ago when she decided she had a desire to drive and wondered if there were resources available to help her with that goal. Her ILA began assisting J.M. with study techniques every week in order to prepare for the learner's permit test. They went over all the rules of the road and J.M. was able to ask questions when she needed further clarification. After a few months, her ILA met J.M. at the DMV and helped her sign up to take the permit test. She took it and passed with an almost perfect score! Now she is preparing to get behind the wheel lessons with Strive for Independence and still works with her ILA every week on other goals such as cleaning and budgeting.



DRC continues to help Illinois residents with hearing loss obtain free amplified telephones, cell phones, and answering machines. We are one of the top selection centers in Illinois!

ITAC provides FREE amplified telephones and other equipment to all qualifying Illinois residents with hearing loss regain telephone usage.

DRC is an official ITAC selection center where consumers can schedule an appointment to test different equipment to find the best amplified phone for their needs.

Please call us at (815) 729-0162 for more information.

Peer Social Groups

Men's Group: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 11:45–1:00pm.
Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at kevin@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Women's Group: 2nd Thursday of the month, 3pm – 4:30pm at DRC.
Contact Julee Opel at julee@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Brain Injury Group: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 4:30–6pm at DRC.
Contact Julee Opel at julee@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Group: 2nd Monday of the month,
1–2:30pm at DRC. Contact Riley Spreadbury at riley@drcjoliet.org for
more information.

Game Night: 2nd Friday of the month from 3–5pm.
Contact Kindall Carmouché at kindall@drcjoliet.org for more
information. (Check DRC Happenings Calendar for location details).

Accessible Will County (AWC): The 1st Wednesday of the month from 1
pm–2:30pm. Contact Sam Knight at sam@drcjoliet.org for more
information.

Adult Autism Group: Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at kevin@drcjoliet.org for
more information.



Early Start Pre-Employment Career Training Program (Early Start PECT)

Early Start PECT is a free, in-school program designed for students with disabilities (ages 14- 21) who are not yet part of the Department of Rehabilitation Services vocational rehabilitation program. Taught by our Independent Living Advocates, this program complements school curriculum and covers key skills like Self-Advocacy, Job Exploration, Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness, and Work-Based Learning.

S.K.I.L.L.S. Programs

The **S.K.I.L.L.S. Program** empowers individuals with disabilities to live more independently by offering a wide range of training, from financial education to communication skills, legislative internships, and household management. This program is available upon request in both group and individual settings.

Community Connections Program

In partnership with Joliet Junior College and Lewis University, the Community Connections Program offers students with disabilities (ages 18-22) who are not enrolled in a Transition Program the opportunity to gain a valuable on-campus experience. This free, non-accredited course focuses on Independent Living Skills such as Self-Advocacy, Work Readiness, Job Exploration, and Work-Based Learning.

Participants learn essential skills for living and working independently, including employment strategies, building healthy relationships, leadership, teamwork, and communication.

Registered students receive a student ID and email address and have access to clubs, sports, and events open to enrolled students.

For more information, contact **Kindall Carmouché** at (815) 729-0162 or kindall@drcjoliet.org

Personal Assistant Program

The Disability Resource Center offers two services through our Personal Assistant Program:

Orientation for Personal Assistants:

Monthly sessions cover topics like disability awareness, ethics, and payment methods for those interested in becoming personal assistants.

Management Training for People with Disabilities:

We provide guidance on how to interview, hire, manage, and, if necessary, terminate a personal assistant. This service is available to individuals at risk of entering a nursing home or facing challenges with their current assistants.

For more information or to apply, contact Amy Hahn, amy@drcjoliet.org

Highlights from 4/1/2025 to 6/30/2025

Information and Referral:

Staff assisted 254 people with information and referral inquiries.

Independent Living Skills:

Staff assisted 71 people with independent living skills and life skills services.

Housing:

84 individuals were referred to the **Statewide Referral Network**.

Assistive Technology for Children Program:

9 consumers (0-23 years old) with disabilities received an assistive technology device that helped them to participate more fully in their lives.

ITAC:

9 individuals received amplified hard of hearing devices through the ITAC Program.

Personal Assistant Training:

16 individuals were recruited, trained, and put on the P.A. List.

Pathways to Partnerships

49 students participated in the Pathways to Partnerships Program

2024-2025 Board of Directors

Susan Jarosinski, President
Ivan Bew, Vice President
Chris Boyk, Secretary
Jennifer Koff, Treasurer
Shannon Tipton, Delegate-at-Large
Zachary Flaming, Past President
Kristine Czaplicki, Director
Connie J. Henley, Director
Rhonda Price, Director
Ericka Williams, Director
Delaney Woodall, Director

Business Office

Fran Smego, Chief Financial Officer
Emilee Shouldice, Bookkeeper

Staff Members

Missy Martin, Chief Executive Director
Kindall Carmouché, Program Director
Amy Hahn, Personal Assistant Coordinator
Sam Knight, Independent Living Advocate
Julee Opel, Independent Living Advocate
Kevin Huckfeldt, Independent Living Advocate
Riley Spreadbury, Independent Living Advocate
Markea Knox, Independent Living Advocate
Alicia Pernell, Community Transition Coordinator
Sarah Sinner, Pathways Program Manager
Briana Neurohr, Pathways Coordinator
Nicole Corneglio, Administrative Assistant
Miguel Vargas, Administrative Intern

DRC is always looking for new board members. If you're interested in becoming a board member, contact Missy Martin, missy@drcjoliet.org



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