

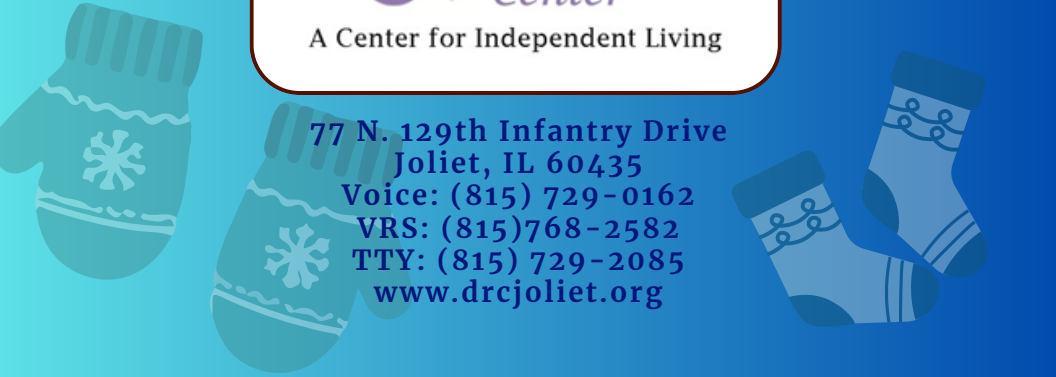


# WINTER NEWSLETTER 2025



*Disability  
Resource  
Center*

A Center for Independent Living



77 N. 129th Infantry Drive  
Joliet, IL 60435  
Voice: (815) 729-0162  
VRS: (815) 768-2582  
TTY: (815) 729-2085  
[www.drcjoliet.org](http://www.drcjoliet.org)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Who We Are.....	2
Consumer Success Stories.....	3
Disability mentoring day.....	4
Joliet Philanthropy Award.....	5
Peer Groups/ITAC.....	6
Education Programs.....	7
Personal Assistant Program.....	8
Highlights/Important Dates.....	9
Advocacy Story.....	10
DRC Staff and Board.....	11

## **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 STORIES

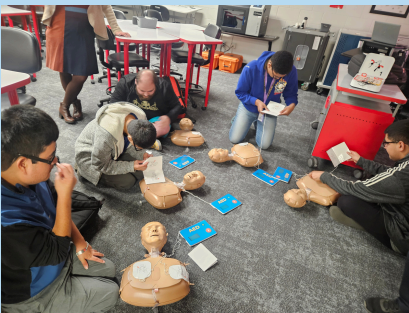
Marlen initially reached out to us seeking guidance on transportation services in her area. She needed education on how these services worked and assistance with signing up for Pace Paratransit and community township transportation. ILA, Kevin provided ongoing support, helping her complete a reduced fare application.

After Marlen was approved, she faced significant challenges accessing transportation, particularly with scheduling rides through Central Dial-A-Ride. Following numerous advocacy calls on her behalf, Kevin was able to assist her and provided her with keywords to advocate for herself.

Marlen recently reported that she successfully scheduled a ride using Central Dial-A-Ride, which has allowed her to gain more independence within the community. She is looking forward to her upcoming paratransit appointment. Both programs will enable her to access more places and pursue her goal of furthering her education.

Marlen expressed her sincere gratitude to all the DRC staff who assisted her, including Independent Living Advocates, Sam and Julee, Kevin, and the Program Director, Kindall. She shared that DRC is a valuable resource for support.

Our ILA, Julee Opel and our Lewis university students learned CPR! These life-saving skills empower them to act quickly and confidently in an emergency. Great job to everyone who participated in this important training!





# DISABILITY MENTORING DAY

Our JJC students participated in Disability Mentoring Day with four local businesses. DRC is thankful that these businesses allowed our students to learn about different career opportunities in the community.

## EASTER SEALS OF JOLIET



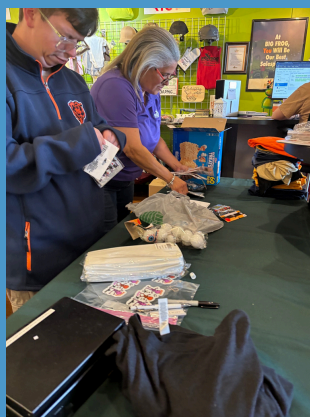
## JOLIET CITY HALL



## COSTCO



## BIG FROG





# JOLIET PHILANTHROPY AWARD

The Joliet Philanthropy Recognition Awards Ceremony took place on Saturday, October 4th, at the Renaissance Center.

Surrounded by her family, staff, and board of directors, Disability Resource Center's Executive Director Missy Martin proudly accepted her award from Joliet Mayor Terry D'Arcy.





## PEER SOCIAL GROUPS



**Men's Group:** 3rd Wednesday of the month, 12:00pm-1:00pm.  
Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at [kevin@drcjoliet.org](mailto:kevin@drcjoliet.org) for more information.

**Women's Group:** 2nd Thursday of the month, 3:00pm-4:00pm at DRC.  
Contact Julee Opel at [julee@drcjoliet.org](mailto:julee@drcjoliet.org) for more information.

**Brain Injury Group:** 3rd thursday of the month, 4:30pm-6:30pm at DRC.  
Contact Julee Opel at [julee@drcjoliet.org](mailto:julee@drcjoliet.org) for more information.

**Deaf/Hard of Hearing Group:** 1<sup>st</sup> wednesday of the month,  
10:00am-11:30am at DRC.  
Contact Riley Spreadbury at [riley@drcjoliet.org](mailto:riley@drcjoliet.org) for more information.

**Game Night:** 2nd Friday of the month from 2:00pm-4:00pm.  
Contact Kindall Carmouché at [kindall@drcjoliet.org](mailto:kindall@drcjoliet.org) for more  
information. (Check DRC Happenings Calendar for location details).

**Accessible Will County (AWC):** The 1st Wednesday of the month from  
1:00pm-3:00pm. Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at [kevin@drcjoliet.org](mailto:kevin@drcjoliet.org) for  
more information.

**Adult Autism Group:** Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at [kevin@drcjoliet.org](mailto:kevin@drcjoliet.org) for  
more information.



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.

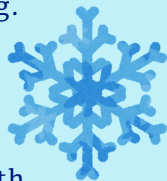
Please call us at (815) 729-0162 for more information.





## **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](mailto: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](mailto:amy@drcjoliet.org)

77 N. 129th Infantry Drive  
Joliet, Illinois 60435  
HOURS 8:30 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
A 501(c)(3) organization



Disability  
Resource  
Center

A Center for Independent Living

Phone: 815-729-0162  
TTY: 815-729-2085  
VPVRS: 815-768-2582  
Fax: 815-729-3697  
Website: [www.drcjoliet.org](http://www.drcjoliet.org)



## Disability Resource Center 2025 Personal Assistant Orientation Dates


Class times are 10 am to 1 pm unless otherwise noted.  
All Classes are Subject to Change.

- Thursday, Jan 15, 2026
- Thursday, Feb 12, 2026
- Thursday, March 12, 2026
- Thursday, April 9, 2026
- Thursday, May 14, 2026
- Thursday, June 11, 2026

PA Classes are held at the Disability Resource Center. **Pre-Registration is required.**

**Call 815-729-0162 and ask for Amy Hahn for further information.**

(The Personal Assistant Coordinator at Disability Resource Center must receive the following: Personal Assistant Application, Driver's License and Social Security Card, prior to PA Training attendance). Please arrive (5) minutes prior to class to check-in.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2025– SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2025.

### **Information and Referral:**

Staff assisted 1,626 people with information and referral inquiries.

### **Independent Living Skills:**

Staff assisted 409 people with independent living skills and life skills services.

### **Housing:**

41 individuals were referred to the Statewide Referral Network.

### **Assistive Technology for Children Program:**

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

### **ITAC:**

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

### **Personal Assistant Training:**

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

### **Pathways to Partnerships**

89 students participated in the Pathways to Partnerships Program.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

### **DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>**

PA ORIENTATION 10:00AM–1:00PM

### **DECEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup>**

UGLY SWEATER PARTY

2:00PM–4:00PM RSVP ONLY

### **DECEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>**

DRC OPEN 8:30AM–11:30AM

### **DECEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup> & 23<sup>RD</sup>**

DRC OPEN 8:30AM–5:00PM

### **DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> – JANUARY 4<sup>TH</sup>**

DRC CLOSED

### **JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>**

DRC OPEN 8:30AM–5:00PM

## ADVOCACY STORY

Susan Jarosinski, DRC Board President, called the Disability Resource Center in the hopes that we could assist her in solving an accessibility issue that she and the residents of her complex were experiencing. She explained that there was a water main break near her building, which required a portion of a nearby parking lot to be dug up. Unfortunately, this completely blocked the residents' access to the businesses that shared this lot, as wheelchairs and rolling walkers could not maneuver over the area where the breakage occurred.

One of our Independent Living Advocates, Riley Spreadbury, reached out to Illinois American Water, as Susan had already tried calling her property manager, the local retail facilities, and the non-emergency police line, all of which were not motivated to assist. Luckily, our ILA was put in contact with someone who looked into the issue and determined it was not only an accessibility issue, but a safety issue.

Illinois American Water explained that as soon as the weather allowed, the company would come in and fix the issue. They kept their promise and fixed it once temperatures reached a suitable height for construction to take place involving concrete. Now, Susan and the residents of the complex have a parking lot that is completely accessible again!







## **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

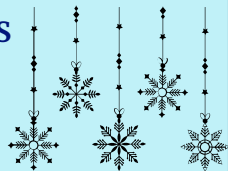
Kristine Czaplicki, Director

Connie J. Henley, Director

Rhonda Price, Director

Erica 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

Sarah Sinner, Pathways Program Manager

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

Kurt Kociss, 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](mailto:MISSY@DRCJOLIET.ORG)



A Center for Independent Living

DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

77 N. 129TH INFANTRY DRIVE  
JOLIET, IL 60435

VOICE: (815) 729-0162  
VRS: (815) 768-2582  
TTY: (815) 729-2085

WWW.DRCJOLIET.ORG

