A new look for a new era

Little City updates logo in response to changing disability landscape

With a goal of preserving key elements of a strong and well-recognized brand and logo, Little City Foundation “refreshed” its look after retiring its Golden Anniversary logo.

As Little City Foundation’s 50th Anniversary Celebration came to a close earlier this year, the Little City team was faced with the option to return to the same logo that had been used for several decades, or purposefully tweak it to better reflect the changing direction of the organization and the people it serves.

The most obvious update to the logo is the use of one child and one adult versus a single stick figure. When opening its doors in 1959, the majority of children served by the organization had Down syndrome and other developmental delays. Today, with the rising prevalence of autism, 80 percent of children at Little City are on the autism spectrum.

The color blue is often used with autism illustrations because of its soothing influence. In the case of the logo refresh, the use of blue for the child was intended to illustrate the autism link at Little City. The adult figure was designed in green, to preserve a key color that many supporters, clients and partners have associated with Little City for decades.

Little City also changed the shape of the original stick figure. With a stance much further apart and arms higher in the air, the shape of the individual depicts greater empowerment, independence, stability and joy—feelings and characteristics Little City strives to obtain for the hundreds of children and adults it serves.

“If we had returned to the same logo, the message we send is that we are not changing and not moving forward,” commented Executive Director Shawn E. Jeffers. “Instead, we are looking at the future and creating a logo that reflects that.”

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“With our new logo, emphasis was placed on the ‘individual’ outside of the house to help communicate our core values and corporate culture,” commented Executive Director Shawn E. Jeffers. “In addition to residential options, we provide therapeutic, person-centered planning in all aspects of life, and it was important to us to express that.” Added Jeffers, “we also wanted to incorporate characteristics of our desired public image: fresh, current, cutting-edge, forward-thinking, friendly, open and promoting independence.”

“The softer and less rigid edges of the house signify a friendlier environment versus a structure that seemed more solid and institutionalized,” commented Director of Communications & Marketing Lisa Hoffmann. “The new house communicates that the residential options at Little City are not the focus of programming, but simply support the individual with a gamut of other leading-edge supports.”

What do you think of the new logo?
“Like us” on Facebook and share your thoughts with the community!
Executive Director’s Corner

“The moment you begin to marginalize people with disabilities is the moment you can dangerously ‘justify’ anything.”

—Shawn E. Jeffers

In sociology, marginalization is the social process of relegating or confining to a lower social standing, or outer limit or edge.

According to Robert Mullaly, a university professor of social work, material deprivation is the most common result of marginalization, when looking at how unfairly material resources are dispersed in society. Marginalized individuals are also excluded from services, programs, and policies.

We cannot marginalize or let others marginalize individuals with disabilities. To do so would communicate to our children, to future generations, to other parts of the world that we believe individuals with disabilities are less or deserve less than others in our society.

When I discuss the state budget in my correspondence to you, it is my goal to talk about it in a way that is informative, empowering and will prepare us to mobilize. One of the criticisms given to the communications strategy for many human service agencies is that there is so much hysteria and predictive gloom and doom that it is difficult to know when someone should take our messages seriously. Our promise to you is that we will not be a “Henny Penny” constantly proclaiming the fabled phrase—“the sky is falling!” It is not our approach to recklessly promote messages that incite unreasonable fear. Rather, we reach out to you, to the media, and to all our stakeholders when there is a real danger and when we need your help.

Today, I share with you a real threat. Last month, Governor Quinn gave his Budget address to the combined houses of the Illinois General Assembly proposing $500 million in cuts to human services with $76 million worth of cuts to the Department of Developmental Disabilities. These cuts will threaten to “turn back the clock” on progress made for and by people with disabilities, and the service system they rely on.

Crippling cuts like these (similar to the “Doomsday Cuts” of 2009) marginalize people with disabilities…and with as much energy and passion I can muster, I say to you: “Illinois CANNOT balance the budget on the backs of people with disabilities.”

In the coming months, we ask you to please join us in our advocacy efforts and become a champion for the most vulnerable among us.

Blessings,

Shawn E. Jeffers

P.S. To learn how to join us in our advocacy efforts, contact info@littlecity.org or 847-221-7831 or donate at www.littlecity.org/support.

Little City Spotlight

Tricia Miller: A friendly face for foster families

When it comes to welcoming or recruiting potential new parents for Little City’s Foster Care Program, few do it better than Tricia Miller.

“I have always loved working with children, and I knew I had found where I was meant to be when I started working at Little City,” Tricia says. “Working with children with disabilities and helping them reach their highest potential through foster care and adoption services is so rewarding.”

At Little City, Tricia balances recruitment, orientation and licensing, while overseeing a caseload of clients. Providing encouragement and support to potential foster or adoptive parents, Tricia also paints a “real-world” snapshot of what it’s like to be a parent to children with disabilities.

Tricia developed her knowledge while earning a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Social Work from Carthage College in 2004 and a Master’s degree in Social Work from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She also gained important, first-hand experience through her internship at Little City in 2006.

“The dynamics of a case are always challenging,” she says. “We work with the families; we work with the courts, and we try to make sure everything is in place so the best outcomes are achieved for everyone,” she explains.

“I also realize the children and families we serve have made as big a difference in my life as Little City has made in theirs.”

Little City’s Tricia Miller hugs 2½ year-old Jaionne, her most recent adoption placement.
Unique Benefits for YOUR Business

Businesses that employ people with disabilities turn social issues into business opportunities. These opportunities translate into lower costs, higher revenues and increased profits. Little City’s Center for Employment provides your company the ability to hire skilled workers with disabilities from Little City to assist with a variety of jobs. Services, which can be performed at your place of business or off-site on Little City’s campus, include: light assembly, packaging, janitorial duties, warehouse work, and more.

Learn how your business can partner with Little City’s Center for Employment to increase your bottom line, benefit from tax incentives and provide a satisfaction of social civic duty! For more information, visit www.littlecity.org/hire, call (847) 221-7408 or email hire@littlecity.org.
Young, but mighty: The Young Professionals Group raises over $16,000 for Little City

On March 10, Little City’s next generation of leaders proved they too could make a difference. Building upon the success of the last year’s inaugural Food Frenzy fundraising event at Loft on Lake, Little City’s YPG wanted to continue the momentum and provide another opportunity for young Chicagoans to mingle and sample delicacies from some of the best local restaurants, as well as a forum to share the important mission and critical needs of Little City.

Chaired by YPG member Rachael Rose, the 2nd Annual Food Frenzy attracted more than 125 supporters and raised over $16,000 for Little City’s programs and services. Under Rose’s leadership, 11 additional committee members helped promote this event and built partnerships with Chicago establishments to secure food and beverage donations and an array of great raffle prizes.

The large open loft space was the perfect platform for each of the participating restaurants to showcase a sampling of their menu to the eager crowds.

Participating restaurants included: COCORICO, Crofton on Wells, De La Rue, Mana Food Bar, Prairie Fire, redFLAME Pizzeria, Sweets & Savories, Taco Joint, and Theory Chicago. Candoni Wines, Connoisseur Wines, Terlato Wines and Goose Island Beer Company served as the official wine and spirit sponsors of the event.

Representatives from the Celebrated Chefs program were also on hand, to enroll attendees in their dining rewards program where 5% of a diner’s bill is donated back to Little City. Nearly 100 upscale Chicago area restaurants participate in this program. (See ad below.)

Generous donations by le Fixe, Lefkofsky Family Foundation, the Gordon H. & Karen M. Millner Family Foundation and other community leaders helped underwrite the cost of the successful event.

“My heartfelt appreciation goes out to the committee members, Little City staff, and community partners who made this night a reality,” remarked Rose. “While we are gathered to raise money for the individuals served by Little City,” she announced to the crowd, “we are also here to honor you — dedicated young leaders who care about the future of our community.”

Currently comprised of nearly 30 young community leaders, the YPG is interested in expanding and participating in other activities that advocate for the funding needs of Little City Foundation. Do you know someone between the ages of 22-35 in the Chicago metropolitan area who would make a great leader? For more information on becoming a YPG member, visit www.littlecity.org/ypg, contact ypg@littlecity.org or call (847) 221-7804.
A sustainable future: As easy as 1-2-3

Did you know that without a will, the state in which you live has the authority to distribute your assets as deemed appropriate by state law?

The Heritage Society of Little City was created to recognize those who wish to create an enduring legacy by including Little City in their estate plan. Bequests are an important source of funding that help Little City weather various economic cycles and budgetary setbacks.

Leaving a legacy through provisions in your estate plan is easier than you may think. Just a few sentences in your living trust or will is all you need to leave a meaningful gift to Little City. You are free to make adjustments to your declaration until your will goes into effect.

Here are the simple steps you can take.

1. Contact your tax professional or attorney. An estate planning professional will assist you with identifying your assets and help establish the provisions you’ll need to include in your plans.

2. Declare your gift. Include the following language in your will: “I, (name), bequeath (written amount OR specified property OR percentage of the residue of my estate) to Little City Foundation as an unrestricted gift.” Alternately, you can specify a particular program or area to designate your contribution.

3. Alert Little City to your plans. Knowing your future gift intentions will help Little City proceed with its vital work. Contact the Little City team at bequests@littlecity.org or (847) 221-7880.

Family matters

Creative thinking is all about seeing a need and finding a solution…in a unique way. The parents and other family members of the individuals served by Little City are taking strides in creative thinking when it comes to fundraising. Following are a few recent initiatives that members of the Parent/Family/Guardian (PFG) Group have assumed to provide the best possible opportunities for their loved one at Little City.

On March 13, 2011, two Little City families held the “3rd Annual Derrig and Haugh Family & Friends Northwest Side Irish Parade” in Chicago. Every year, the family of 16-year-old Timmy Derrig, a resident of Maple Home on the Palatine campus, hosts a float and gathers together walkers to participate in the parade. The family generously donated all proceeds from the event to Little City’s Maple Home.

A sibling of a Little City participant has also taken matters into her own hands to help raise money for Little City. Dana Saccomonto, whose brother Michael works at Little City’s Adult Vocational Service Center (AVSC), hosted family and friends on April 9, 2011 at the Elgin Public House for a comedy show. The evening of laughter helped generate much-needed funds to purchase new furnishings for the AVSC, which houses hundreds of Little City workers.

Numerous other families have also hosted creative events including pizza parties, bake sales, art exhibits featuring the work of Little City artists, cocktail parties and more to help spread the word about Little City and the need for community involvement and support.

With threats of grave government funding cuts, Little City is always looking for new ways to engage the community and raise money to support hundreds of individuals with disabilities. And you don’t have to be a family member to help out! If you’d like to propose your own fundraising initiative, please contact Maureen Coates at mcoates@littlecity.org or (847) 221-7882.

If you missed any of these exciting fundraising events but are interested in joining in on the fun, “Like us” on Facebook!
For the second consecutive year, Little City has introduced Chicago’s most fashionable community to the latest trends while raising awareness and funds for its programs and services.

The latest spring and summer fashions from exclusive retail partner Neiman Marcus were showcased on the runway by Ford Models.

The talented artists at Little City’s Center for the Arts were also in the spotlight that night. A boutique featuring handmade crafts from Little City’s artists showcased a variety of paintings, textiles, ceramics and wearable art that were all up for sale. The artists also designed the centerpieces at each of the tables in the ballrooms, which attendees also purchased at the end of the night.

“We wanted to create an event that not only raised money for the people served by Little City,” commented Director of Special Events Adam Meade, “but showed the community the talents and accomplishments of our individuals.”

Don’t want to wait until the next event to purchase products from the Center for the Arts? Visit www.littlecity.org/shopnow today!

With hundreds in attendance, Little City’s Runway Exclusive 2011 Fashion Show proved that “compassion is always in fashion.” The event took place on March 4 at the Chicago Hilton and was chaired by board member Eleni Bousis, Mary Jo George and Susanna Negovan.

Negovan, the editor-in-chief of Michigan Avenue Magazine, also served as emcee for the evening and spread the word about the event and the good work of Little City to her publication’s readers and throughout Chicagoland.

Ann Derrig, whose 16-year-old son Timmy lives at Little City, moved the crowd with her heartfelt story of the positive influence Little City has on her son and entire family.
Little City employee recognized for exemplary service

Casey Connor named recipient of Gianaras Scholarship Award

For Casey Conner, it was one of those “well, why not?” moments, when a friend recommended that he volunteer with a local Special Olympics group. He was just a freshman in high school at the time.

Years later, as a Quality-of-Life Coordinator (QLC) for Little City, Casey is still focusing his career on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And for his efforts, Casey was recently named the second recipient of the Alek K. Gianaras Scholarship Award, which provides a one-year, $5,000 scholarship to further the advanced education of a Little City Foundation employee.

Casey will use the funding to continue his efforts at Loyola University, where he is enrolled in the Graduate School of Social Work and working on his Master’s degree with a specialization in mental health and leadership development.

“I’m very honored to have been selected as the second recipient of the Alec K. Gianaras Scholarship Award,” said Casey, whose brother, Andrew, also works at Little City as a children’s recreation therapist. “This scholarship is a huge help for me because it enables me to attend grad school at no cost for one semester. I am very grateful that the scholarship will help me pursue my objective to develop leadership skills in the mental health field.”

Casey began his career at Little City in November 2008 shortly after obtaining his bachelors.

The Alec K. Gianaras Scholarship Award was created through a generous endowment by the Gianaras Family in honor of Mr. Gianaras who served as Little City Board President from 1974 to 1994. Mr. Gianaras believed in lifelong learning and helping those who wished to further their education.

Little City Bulls finish second in state tournament

Capping an exceptional season, the Little City Bulls “Red” team placed second in the Special Olympics State Basketball tournament in Bloomington-Normal during the March 11-13 weekend. Overall, 63 teams competed in 21 adult brackets during the three-day tournament.

The Bulls played well in both games, but ran into a fast-breaking squad from Ottawa in the first game on Saturday, eventually falling 63-47. In their second game of the tournament, the Bulls fell behind 8-0 to start the game, but fought back with strong defense and a big offensive second half to defeat the SRJC Gems 2 team from the Joliet and Channahon areas by a 55-37 score. For the season, the Bulls finished with an outstanding 13-1 record.

Members of the Bulls “Red” team (Little City also has a “White” squad) are Jeff Aikin, Dean Christiansen, Nick Diederich, Robbie Herrin, Harold Jeffries, Steve Kemeny, Kevin Mastin, John McClelland, Jimmy Stelmach and Andy Stern.

To stay on top of Little City news, events and advocacy efforts, join us on our social networks.
Little City Invitational

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2011
Twin Orchard Country Club
22333 Old McHenry Road, Long Grove, IL

The 48th Annual Little City Invitational (LCI) Golf Tournament is taking a couple of twists in 2011—moving the traditional late-August event to June and honoring one of its own – the Little City Special Olympics Golf Team.

In past years, the LCI Golf Tournament has honored individuals who have excelled at providing longtime support to people with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“We feel it is very appropriate this year to honor a group from Little City, and our Special Olympics Golf Team is a perfect match for what our tournament emphasizes,” said Ed Hockfield, co-chair for the tournament and the Executive Vice President of Little City’s Board of Directors.

Entry fee is $750 per golfer for the shotgun-start tournament, which also includes brunch, a five-star dinner, great raffle prizes and special live auction items. For more information, visit www.littlecity.org/lci or call (847) 221-7892.

Little City Book Fair*

AUGUST 19-21, 2011
Harper College
1200 West Algonquin Road, Palatine, IL

Mark your calendar for the new date and location of the Little City Book Fair. The weekend-long fair at the Harper College gymnasium will offer thousands of new and gently used books in nearly 60 subject categories. A wide range of DVDs, CDs, cookbooks and collectors books will also be available for purchase.

Sale hours are as follows:

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Admission is free, except opening night, when a $10 donation is appreciated. For more information, visit www.littlecity.org/bookfair or call (847) 221-7807.

*Formerly the Little City Used Book Sale held at Westfield Old Orchard Shopping Center in Skokie.

Wanted: Book Donations

As you embark on your spring cleaning plans, don’t be so quick to toss out those books you’ve already read…donate them to the 2011 Little City Book Fair! Each summer, Little City hosts one of the premier book fairs in the Midwest and is in need of books and other media to sell. This year’s sale will be held on August 19-21, 2011 at Harper College in Palatine, and donations are welcome throughout the year and during the event.

If you have any new or gently used books you’d like to donate, Little City has multiple drop-off locations, including the Little City Palatine campus and other sites throughout neighboring suburbs. The Little City team will also pick up donations of 150 or more books. For a complete listing of drop-off locations and for details about the sale, visit www.littlecity.org/bookfair.