15,000 Reasons to Watch & Share Our New Video

Fielding potential loving foster and adoptive families for children with special needs is the goal of Little City’s new 15,000 Reasons campaign. Beginning in August, a compelling short video showcasing former foster children and their families was released, with the hope that individuals can help by sharing it with friends and family.

There are 15,000 reasons to watch and share the video because there are currently 15,000 youth in the Illinois foster care system. A large majority of these children are looking for loving families to call their own.

“We have an urgent need to find loving families who can open their homes for our children waiting for permanency,” said Little City Director, Center for Family & Community-Based Services Rich Bobby. “Last fiscal year we had to turn away 40 children who were referred to our program and met the program criteria because we didn’t have foster families for them.”

Little City’s Foster Care Program is celebrating 20 years of successfully matching foster children with caring and supportive families. Over the years, Little City has helped nearly 200 children find families and has successfully helped returned 27 children to their previous homes.

Little City is committed to recruiting and supporting foster/adoptive families who provide homes for children with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. Little City hosts customized pre-licensing training to all prospective foster/adoptive parents along with comprehensive case management services and an extensive foster parent to foster parent support mentoring network.

We are searching for welcoming homes and loving parents regardless of age, race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender-identification, income or education level.

“One person sharing this message could lead to a child’s life being positively changed forever,” concluded Bobby.

The strategic integrated campaign includes billboards, a special event, a new microsite, social media posts, success stories and much more all referencing 15,000 Reasons.

To view the video, read success stories and learn more about foster care and adoption, visit littlecity.org/foster.
Little City Friends and Family,

It's an exciting season for all of us here at Little City. On October 3 at the NBC-5 Chicago Tower, Little City’s Foster Care Program celebrated 20 years of successfully finding safe, nurturing and loving families for hundreds of children who were displaced from their natural home setting. Local celebrities including Chicago Bears’ Brandon Marshall joined us. The Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City takes place on November 3 in Grant Park and our Annual Dinner Gala is just around the corner on November 16 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

In addition, our acclaimed Center for the Arts has always received recognition for the stunning masterpieces it produces and on October 9, we hosted the world premiere of “Share My Kingdom”—an awe-inspiring documentary profiling the lives of three incredibly talented Little City artists.

The Chicago Community Trust took the stage and recognized the unique role Little City plays in the Arts and in the field of disabilities. NBC-5 Chicago sponsored the premiere and hundreds of viewers discovered how art truly is the most intense mode of individualism.

No matter what event Little City is about to stage, or initiative we are about to embark upon, a few things remain the same—we love spotlighting the individuality and abundant abilities of those who are sometimes only seen from a lens of “disability.”

Art is one mode of individualism and we invite you to learn more. Little City rolled out our very first eStore—an online gallery displaying hundreds of paintings available for purchase at www.littlecity.org/arts.

We are extremely busy here at Little City and we know you are too so we thank you for sharing some of your time with us.

We hope to see you at the Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City (www.littlecity.org/walk) and the Annual Dinner Gala (www.littlecity.org/gala)!

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers

---

Little City Introduces “Resources Page”

From a “People-First Language Pledge” to help eradicate use of the R-word to a glossary of common disability-related terms and abbreviations, the new “Resources Page” on Little City’s web site will serve as a web site library for Little City parents and general members in search of resources.

“Sometimes parents can experience somewhat of an ‘information overload’ when looking for resources because there’s so much to weed through,” commented Shawna Egan, Director of Community Outreach and Engagement. “We wanted to create a web site library to help parents, professionals and advocates access reliable and useful information...whether it’s learning more about autism: facts or myths, or learning how to navigate the system, this resource page will help answer some of those important questions.”

The web site library will continue to develop as new research becomes available. To learn more about Disability Etiquette, the DHS Rights of Individuals, how to evaluate interventions and more, visit www.littlecity.org/resources.

For suggested topics of interest, or to learn more about Little City programs and services, please contact Shawna Egan at segan@littlecity.org or 847-221-7840.

---
City Planning

Senior Fitness Program

Little City now offers a Senior Fitness Program that helps adults increase their strength and balance.

Each weekday, adults gather for a 30-40 minute fitness class. The Senior Fitness Program consists of two different classes, a Circuit Class and Chair Chi. Participants attend the Circuit Class three times a week and go to Chair Chi twice a week.

Created by Little City Recreational Therapist Tim Lahart, the Circuit Class gathers individuals into groups of six where they complete two balance and two strength exercises. Each exercise is done for 30 seconds and individuals complete each circuit twice. Exercises include calf raises, sit and stands, steps and arm raises. Direct Support Professionals help run the class and ensure individuals are safely performing the exercises, while providing encouragement.

Chair Chi was designed by Little City Fitness Instructor Cailie Emmerich which she adapted from Tai Chi and specifically designed for individuals with disabilities. All exercises can be accomplished while sitting down in a chair.

“Our seniors look forward to starting their day with activity and many of our individuals ask upon arrival if we will be doing fitness,” commented Little City Senior Program Manager Carol Helsdon.

All of the exercises in this program have been developed for the senior population and are adapted to meet each individual’s needs. Often the mention of exercise is met with refusal, but the adults enjoy attending these engaging classes each morning.

“These classes provide the opportunity to participate in easy to perform but beneficial exercises that are fun,” added Helsdon. “Since staff do all the exercises with the seniors there is a genuine sense of team spirit while everyone is working together to be fit and healthy.”

Annual Dinner Gala · Annual Dinner Gala · Annual Dinner Gala

LITTLE CITY ANNUAL DINNER GALA

Building Our Children’s Future

THE DUFFEY FAMILY CHILDREN’S VILLAGE

Join us in celebration of a national breakthrough in the design of home environments for children with autism—the Duffey Family Children’s Village.

{ Save the Date } NOVEMBER 16, 2013 • HYATT REGENCY CHICAGO
**Making a Difference**

**Zurich North America Volunteer Groups**

This year, three volunteer groups from Zurich NA joined Little City to help improve the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

In May, 12 volunteers from Zurich NA Group Reinsurance worked to beautify a community group home in Hoffman Estates. The group began the day by cleaning and organizing the garage, bathrooms and common areas.

Volunteers also painted a few of the rooms in the home, planted flowers and mulched. When the project was finished, a few members came back to donate bowls, pictures, rugs, games and other items to the home.

“I think the best part of our experience was watching the teamwork and camaraderie develop outside of the usual work environment,” said Zurich NA Group Reinsurance Financial Analyst Matthew Schmitt. “There were no managers, technical staff, or administrative assistants. Rather, there were only committed individuals working together to help make the lives of others just a bit more comfortable and enjoyable.”

The Zurich NA Claims group performed gardening and landscaping tasks on Little City’s Palatine campus in August. These 15 volunteers spruced up the outside of the Port Center by pulling weeds and mulching. When participants came home later that day, they thanked the volunteers for all their hard work.

“Community service projects allow us to interact outside of our traditional work environment and collaborate as a team for a greater good,” commented Zurich NA Claims Vice President Chief of Staff Jack Hochwarter. “Volunteer projects exemplify ‘The Zurich Commitment’ of caring about our communities.”

A third group of 11 Zurich NA Learning & Development volunteers worked to beautify the Plum Grove group home in September.

“Zurich is committed to developing strong, sustainable communities, not only through the financial investment we make but through the active engagement of our employees who so generously give of their time and talent,” said Jillian Walsh, Director of Community Investment. “Volunteering at Little City allows our colleagues the opportunity to give back and create hope in a meaningful way. This is important to our heritage, to our more than 100-year history insuring America, and to who we are as a company today.”

**Plan Now for Lower Taxes**

If you give a property gift now, you’ll avoid capital gains later. It’s like giving a gift and getting something back! A gift of land, stock, personal property or business interest may provide you with a way to sell your assets without paying capital gains tax. Because Little City Foundation is tax-exempt we can then sell your assets tax free. You will avoid capital gains tax and receive a charitable income tax deduction for the value of your gift that can help reduce your taxes this year. And, you will feel good knowing that your gift will benefit Little City participants! Questions? Call Kate Maver, Planned and Major Gifts Officer, at 847-221-7809.
In an effort to build awareness surrounding the Center for the Arts (CFA), Little City recently added an online store and artist galleries to its website. Visitors can learn more about each individual artist who works out of the CFA and can conveniently purchase artwork in a matter of a few clicks.

At the core of the Center for the Arts is the individual artist whose own personal experiences are echoed in their art. The online galleries represent just some of the talented artists and their work in a variety of mediums.

Artwork is available in a variety of sizes and prices with the option to have pieces framed and matted. Buyers may pick up the piece or choose to have it shipped upon purchase.

“The store will help us increase revenue for our program and our artists,” said Center for the Arts Administrator Frank Tumino. “We’re excited to reach a new audience of people who appreciate outsider art and are in the market to purchase work.”

For more than 20 years, the CFA has provided children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to explore and expand their unique and creative talents, promoting a sense of accomplishment and empowerment through the arts.

Little City is grateful for the support of The Chicago Community Trust, which helped make the development of this online gallery possible.

To purchase artwork and view the online artist galleries, visit littlecity.org/arts.

Jar of Fireflies by Lori Couve, marker on paper, 8.5 x 5.5, $175. Available for purchase online.

Trees by Joe Flasch, acrylic on canvas, 32 x 32, $350. Available for purchase online.

The newly renovated Center for the Arts website. Check the online store often as new pieces will be added.

Special thanks to Fortress Consulting Group (fortresscg.com) for their support and work on this project.
Little City Training Administrators Casey J. Carraher and Rizik Mohammad joined the President of the Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc., (CPI) in Milwaukee this past summer to educate trainers across the country on best training practices.

“We feel that no other educational event provides the same level of valuable information and training resources and we invited Casey and Rizik to share their expertise at the CPI Instructors’ Conference,” stated Judith Schubert, CPI President. “We’re grateful for the positive impact the Little City practice has now made on others.”

The Conference theme, “Training Customization,” was focused on Adapting, Customizing, and Tailoring the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® program content to increase relevance for staff who require training, such as the 450 Little City employees who actively serve individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

As certified instructors, Casey and Rizik taught other instructors how to implement methods for checking staff competencies in “lab” settings outside the training session. Their seminar, “Using Scenario-Based Learning to Assess Understanding” educated other professionals as to how to more effectively train their staff by using real-world scenarios.

“Sometimes our work can be quite challenging and excellence in training is critical to the mission of Little City to promote safety for our individuals as well as our employees,” stated the Director of Little City University, Elecia R. Dexter, MS, MA. “We’re really proud of Casey and Rizik and the entire Little City training team; we know how hard they work to make sure each Little City employee knows how to use nonviolent crisis intervention when necessary.”

Community Partners

Thank you to the following funders for their generous grants that support the work and mission of Little City:

- Charles and M.R. Shapiro Foundation
- Illinois Arts Council
- Walter J. and Edith E. Best Foundation
- H.B. Fuller Company
- Hanover Township Mental Health Board

Little City Trainers Take the Stage and Share Expertise with Industry

Carraher and Mohammad enjoy the presentations of other fellow certified instructors at the 2013 CPI Instructors’ Conference in Milwaukee

Chicago’s Sweetest Walk

Join us Sunday, November 3 at the Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City! Support Little City while enjoying chocolate fondue and hot chocolate at the greatest post-race party!

The Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City is a family event, with many fun post-race activities for children of all ages including a large Kid Zone and much more. Children under the age of 12 are encouraged to participate and can register as a junior walker.

Don’t forget to “Go the Extra Mile” and fundraise for Little City. Register at littlecity.org/walk and use code littlecity13.

Want to participate in the fun but don’t want to walk? Volunteer to help cheer on walkers and runners with Little City! Volunteer at littlecity.org/volunteer.
On August 20, students at the ChildBridge Center for Education started a brand new school year. For more information on Little City’s therapeutic day school, visit littlecity.org/school.

Thank you to Ethel and Joel Sharenow for their continued generosity towards renovating Little City’s Recreation Center. The pool and locker rooms are complete and ready for use. The next phase will include renovation of the Lobby of the Recreation Center.

News from Around the City

Little City aims to continually provide a distinguished quality of life for the people it serves, including offering a variety of educational and recreational opportunities, wellness initiatives, options to explore creativity and more. Some recent updates from around the “City” include:

Pool & Locker Room Renovations
Thank you to Ethel and Joel Sharenow for their continued generosity towards renovating Little City’s Recreation Center. The pool and locker rooms are complete and ready for use. The next phase will include renovation of the Lobby of the Recreation Center.

New School Year
On August 20, students at the ChildBridge Center for Education started a brand new school year. For more information on Little City’s therapeutic day school, visit littlecity.org/school.

LifePath & ChildBridge Picnics
At the end of summer, both LifePath and ChildBridge Programs held picnics for their participants to enjoy lunch, games, music, dancing and much more. Thank you to the volunteers who helped at the ChildBridge picnic.
Building Our Children's Future: Annual Dinner Gala

Your presence is requested at Little City's Annual Dinner Gala. Join us in celebration of a national breakthrough in the design of home environments for children with autism—the Duffey Family Children's Village. For more information, visit littlecity.org/gala.

Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City

Sunday, November 3, 2013 | Grant Park, Chicago

Join us at the Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City. Support Little City while enjoying chocolate fondues and hot chocolate at the greatest post-race party! Register at littlecity.org/walk and use code littlecity13.

Spring 2014
Location TBD

Presented by Little City Foundation
1760 West Algonquin Road
Palatine, IL 60067
www.littlecity.org

City Guide: Upcoming Events