A Day in the Life of a Direct Support Professional (DSP)

“The work of a DSP is hard, selfless and immensely rewarding. It takes skill, strength and extraordinary compassion to take on the responsibilities of a job that is so demanding.

After years of professionally observing the relationship between a DSP and their Little City client, I am moved to offer some firsthand expressions—through my eyes—of how a child with intellectual developmental challenges might express their gratitude and appreciation if they were able to do so.”

Rich Bobby, LCSW
Chief Program Officer
Little City Children’s Services

“With a gentle nudge to help me start my day, my Little City Direct Service Professional (DSP) is my support, my life skills instructor, my coach, my teacher, my constant, my helper, my planner, and my guide throughout each day of my life.”

“Together we share a daily journey of developing and maintaining skills necessary for me to be independent, to contribute to my community, make my own life choices, and to fill each day with meaningful accomplishments.”

“Although I may not be able to independently communicate, bathe myself, go to the bathroom on my own, brush my own teeth, comb my hair, get dressed and put on my shoes, eat dinner without assistance, calm myself down when I’m upset, my DSP is there to show me the way.”

“It really helps knowing that I can count on my DSP being there for me, because how would I start my day without my guide? How likely would I go to bed each night knowing I accomplished something meaningful without their assistance? Could you imagine never asking anyone for help for something you didn’t know how to do? Me either.”

“My family loves me dearly and only wants the best for me. I know that even though they can’t be with me every day – at every moment of my life – they can be assured that my DSP is there by my side, helping me build my skills and improve my well-being.”

“Do you know someone in your life who never needed assistance, someone who never had a mentor, never had a guide, never had a teacher, never had a coach, or never had a planner to assist with something this someone wasn’t skilled to do? I cannot imagine that either.”

Thank you to all the DSPs who dedicate their hearts and minds to making the lives of those you serve meaningful and filled with accomplishments.
Executive Director’s Corner

“Home is not where you live, but where they understand you.” — Christian Morganstern

Dear Friends,

If there is one word that is looming large for Little City in 2016, it is the word “community.” Aristotle first defined community as “people simply having shared values.” Its meaning has been expanded, restricted, redefined and politicized to where it is now a word filled with controversy.

“Community” is a word that defies a precise definition. Like a chameleon, its meaning can change depending on the context in which it is used. People belong to a number of different communities simultaneously – communities of place; cultural and spiritual communities; communities guided by a common bond, sentiments of trust, co-operation and altruism.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rule (Illinois 1115 Waiver) has redefined what home and community-based settings should be. We agree with the spirit of the rule in its offering of meaningful community integration. However, due to the way in which the rule is written, we do not meet their definition of “community.” This threatens campus-based residential settings like Little City and consciously disregards the freedom of parents, families and guardians who have voluntarily made us their community of choice.

What many people fail to understand is that being in a community is not the same as being a part of one. People can live in a “community” and experience segregation, hostility and loneliness. Being part of a community means having meaningful and positive interactions with community members in an environment that accommodates your needs. It means being accepted as an individual and appreciated for who you are.

The song from the TV show “Cheers,” which heralds a place “where everybody knows your name,” does not come close to describing how our lives intertwine. An open, therapeutic community such as Little City offers so much more than just knowing your name. It is where individuals with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to find camaraderie, programs, services and support, as well as fulfilling face-to-face relationships.

A perfect example of this came from one of our participants. When asked what he likes best about living at Little City, his answer was simple: “My friends. They laugh at what I laugh at.”

Governmental oversight and legislation have always been part of Little City life. With this rule, along with other legislative issues, there is more at stake for Little City than ever before.

Keeping you informed and involved will help us secure the brightest and most sustainable future possible. I welcome your questions and comments, and look forward to discussing ways in which we can, individually and collectively, take action to ensure that our relevance and mission is secure for many, many years to come.

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers
Executive Director

Little City Spotlight

New Junior Board President Andrea MacIver

Andrea MacIver joined Little City’s Junior Board in 2013, chaired the Food Frenzy, their showcase event, in 2015 and became Board president in the summer of 2015.

“What impresses me the most about Little City is how passionate its employees, board members, and everyone involved with Little City are about the organization,” said Andrea. “My goal as President of the Junior Board is to instill that passion in as many others as possible.”

“Given our mission and inspiring ability to help children and adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities flourish and reach their unique potential, it isn’t surprising that once someone experiences the great big world of Little City, getting involved is just a natural next step.”

Prior to joining the junior board, Andrea worked at The Deratany Firm as a litigation associate focusing her practice in foster care negligence, nursing home negligence and medical malpractice. After two years, she was offered a position as an appellate judicial clerk for the Honorable Nathaniel Howse Jr. in the Illinois Appellate Court, First District, where she is currently employed.
Heart of the City

Poker Tournament & Casino Night Raises $120,000

cocktails and drinks provided by Chloe Wine Collections, Deep Eddy Vodka and Heaven Hill Distilleries, Inc.

“It was in the cards that our Poker Tournament & Casino Night was going to be a great success, and it was,” said Shawn E. Jeffers, Little City Executive Director, “Our generous sponsors were terrific and we had a full house, Everyone had a great time supporting Little City.”

A special thank you to all our sponsors for their generosity in helping make this event possible: Presenting Sponsor: Spex; Straight Sponsors: Kovitz Investment Group, Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC and Aurora Investment Management; Three-of-a-Kind Sponsors: BMO Harris Bank, Katten Munchin Rosenman, LLP, Miller Cooper & Co., Ltd., MVP Staffing, RSM McGladrey, Select Rehabilitation and Vedder Price, P.C.; Aces Sponsors: Laner Muchin, Paramount Staffing, Venture One Real Estate, LLC and Wintrust Commercial Banking; Participating Sponsors: Chloe Wine Collection, Deep Eddy Vodka and Heaven Hill Distilleries, Inc.; Official Media Sponsor: SPLASH.

Nearly 200 attendees supported Little City’s “Seeing Hope Together” Poker Tournament & Casino Night presented by Spex, March 11th at the Montgomery Club in Chicago and raised $120,000.

The “James Bond” themed event promised to be an exciting evening for lucky participants with many of last year’s poker players returning for another chance at winning the grand prize.

Congratulations to the Poker Tournament winner, James Spiech, who won a $10,000 seat at the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas.

This year, guests enjoyed a lavish all-night buffet provided by Gibson’s Steakhouse, specialty

Above: Dan McGrath, Chris Moore, Michael Caputo, Lauren Pappas and Boyce Moffit from Spex enjoying the evening in the Spex Gold Bar Lounge.

Left: Jonathan Green and Chris Breaux hanging out with the Spex “Bond Girls!”
Little City partnered with Harper College and Hands On Suburban Chicago (HOSC) for a day of service to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. Sixty five student volunteers came out to listen to inspirational speakers and participate in a service project. Each speaker touched on the importance of giving to others and being proud for what you stand for.

Little City’s residents work alongside the students and assembled activity kits that included games, puzzles, colorful and textured toys, art supplies and other sensory stimulating activities. Each kit that was created came with a special note of encouragement from the Harper students.

“MLK boot camp was inspired by the vision of HOSC to get the community involved and give back to a great organization,” said Libby Boer, AmeriCorps VISTA. “I was thrilled to have a volunteer leader team of 13 graduated service scholars who came to meetings and helped the day run smoothly. They all worked really hard and the day would not have been possible without them.”

Along with the activity kits, eight fleece blankets were made and given to the children to cuddle up with at their homes and thirteen brightly colored canvas murals that promote healthy eating lifestyles.

Little City’s Manager of Volunteer Services, Catrina Johnson, opened up the service project by speaking on the need to get involved and how everyone’s contribution would benefit Little City. Catrina then welcomed Little City’s residents Jeff Aikin, Howard Bynum, Josh Marabanian, Kevin Mastin and Rob Herrin to share a little about themselves with the students.

Each resident spoke about Little City and how much they enjoyed being there. Some shared about their hopes and dreams, and how if not for Little City they would not have been able achieve them.

Harper students painted large canvas murals that promoted healthy eating.

IDOT Awards Little City a Paratransit Bus

Annually, the Illinois Department of Transportation provides specific non-profits with an opportunity to apply for vehicles through its Consolidated Vehicle Procurement (CVP) Program. A non-profit agency is only eligible if it regularly provides transportation to either seniors and/or individuals with disabilities. In past years, Little City has been the recipient of mini-vans (with ramps), that transport two wheelchairs or a maximum of five passengers.

This year, for the first time, Little City was awarded a Medium Duty Paratransit Bus with a wheelchair lift that will transport a maximum of five wheelchairs or 14 passengers. With the new vehicle, Little City staff will be able to take groups of our participants on community outings or transport individuals to Special Olympics competitions.
The Kenneys Honor their Daughter with Estate Gift to Little City

Shirley and Leland Kenney, who live over 330 miles away from Little City in a quiet community on the outskirts of Des Moines, Iowa, have been giving to Little City since 1970. Shirley and Leland shared with us why they remained loyal to Little City over many decades despite the distance.

Shirley, now a retired business owner, grew up in Crystal Lake, IL. In 1956, Shirley and Leland celebrated the birth of their daughter, Jackie Lee, who was diagnosed with Down syndrome. Common for children born with such diagnosis at that time, Jackie Lee had a heart condition that unfortunately caused her much celebrated life to end prematurely at the tender age of two and a half.

Within the year following Jackie Lee’s death, the surgery that could have saved her life became widely available to families and extended the lives of children with this type of heart condition. Today, ongoing medical, therapeutic and education techniques help individuals diagnosed with Down syndrome live long lives.

“Little City remains close to our hearts. We know that our ongoing support helps provide better opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities to grow, learn and have a better quality of life for generations to come. That is why we decided years ago to bequeath our entire estate to Little City. Had our Jackie Lee lived, she would have benefitted from the wonderful programs at Little City. We hope that our story will inspire others to consider making a bequest to Little City in honor of their loved ones.”

Heartwarming faces of generosity: Shirley and Leland Kenney show their pride in supporting Little City.

WE KNOW THAT OUR ONGOING SUPPORT HELPS PROVIDE BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES TO GROW, LEARN AND HAVE A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.
News From Around the City

Flying4Kids Takes Little City Participants Indoor Skydiving

After a 10-minute instructional video, participants and staff suited up in jumpsuits and helmets before entering the wind tunnel. In the first round of indoor skydiving, Daniel and Collin ensured participants felt comfortable inside the tunnel by having their legs, hands and chin positioned correctly while maintaining a low flight level.

During the second round, participants were given a little more freedom. While some twisted and turned to balance and gain stability, others mastered the skills and were taken up higher into the wind tunnel for a once in a lifetime experience.

“Seeing the kids’ faces light up when they enter the wind tunnel is priceless. It is such a gratifying feeling to be able to make a dream come true,” said Robb.

“Although Little City offers a multitude of wonderful programming options, nothing quite compares to the opportunity to spread your wings and fly,” said Shawn E. Jeffers, Executive Director of Little City. “The carefully selected participants were both eager and fearless.”

Little City Celebrates Becoming a Certified Service Enterprise

“Less than 15% of organizations nationwide can be characterized as a Certified Service Enterprise,” said Shawn Jeffer, Little City Executive Director. “As one of ten non-profit organizations to participate and complete the training, we are very proud to have been recognized by the distinguished Points of Light. The ultimate benefit is that for every $1 we invest in volunteer engagement, we can expect $3-$6 in return.”

Points of Light is the world’s largest organization dedicated to volunteer service working in 30 different countries and coordinating over 250,000 service projects per year. They help mobilize millions of people to take action on the causes they care about and have Service Ambassadors that include Kevin Bacon, John Oliver, Laura Ling, Dikembe Mutumbo and Lauren Bush Lauren.

Studies show that Service Enterprises are more adaptable, sustainable and capable of scaling their impact in comparison to peer organizations and, as a result, are able to more effectively deliver on the social mission of their organization.

According to Catrina Johnson, Little City’s Manager of Volunteer Services, “The recognition by Points of Light is a tribute to the extraordinary efforts of our incredible volunteers who so generously give their time, talent and treasure to Little City. They not only help our staff and elevate our entire organization, many needed projects would simply not get done without them.”
Little City aims to provide the highest possible 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. Recent updates from around our “City” include:

**Woodfield Mall Hosted a Spectacular Little City Art & Craft Showcase**

The Little City Art Showcase, in collaboration with the Woodfield Mall, was held on May 13 & 14, featuring framed art and other art items. Pictured above is *Untitled 25* by Joe Flasch (left,) and *Untitled 140* by Harold Jeffries (right.) To support our talented artists and purchase artwork, visit www.littlecity.org/arts.

**Harper College Dental Interns**

Seventeen Harper College students chose Little City for their spring internship community outreach project. Four groups are working with our dental programs assisting with desensitization, which helps increase the time our patients can sit in the dental chair in order to complete the 13 steps of a dental visit. The students are also working with participants on interproximal cleaning (how to brush between the teeth) and choosing the right foods for improving oral health.

**Chicago Flower & Garden Show**

A spring visit to the Chicago Flower and Garden Show was the perfect way to wrap up our winter horticulture programs. 19 program participants who are active in horticulture or plant science classes or horticultural vocational training attended through a gift from the Howard Bell Recreation Fund. The group enjoyed interacting with the exhibits and observing this seasons new plant varieties. They also learned about sustainable practices and how urban agriculture is playing a larger role in people’s lives.
**City Guide: Upcoming Events**

### PFG Ted Arndt Memorial Golf Outing

**Friday, June 17, 2016**  
Highland Woods Golf Course | Hoffman Estates, Illinois  
A golf outing designed exclusively for Little City’s Parent/Family/Guardian Group. The event includes an 18-hole scramble with cart, lunch, dinner buffet and free driving range before shotgun start.  
For more information, contact Phyllis Shipbaugh at 847-221-7892 or pshipbaugh@littlecity.org.

### 53rd Annual LCI Golf Classic

**NEW DATE:** Monday, August 22, 2016  
Twin Orchard Country Club | Long Grove, Illinois  
Honoring John F. McDonough, President & CEO of the Chicago Blackhawks  
Enjoy 18 holes of golf at one of the top golf courses in the country. The day is capped off by a fabulous dinner and a silent auction that is guaranteed to impress. Register today at [www.littlecity.org/lci](http://www.littlecity.org/lci).

### 57th Annual Dinner Gala

**Saturday, October 22, 2016**  
The Drake Hotel | Chicago, Illinois  
Join us at the Little City Annual Dinner Gala. Our distinguished honorees are [Illinois Secretary of State, Jesse White](https://www.littlecity.org/lci) – receiving the Little City Community Partnership Award – and [Julie Bell and the Bell Family](https://www.littlecity.org/lci) – receiving The Legacy of Distinction Award for their dedication and commitment to supporting children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.