A “Bright Space” and an iPad Make a World of Difference

Recently, the Maple Home sensory room was refurbished by volunteers and more than $11,000 in contributions from Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, The Early Childhood Education Center, Roosevelt University and Zurich, NA.

Led by Mary Grimm, the Little City team designed a phenomenal room with sensory equipment designed specifically for children with autism, including tactile walls, a sensory swing, a projector to display calming and colorful images, and a fiber optic tactile sensory light.

Staff from Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, The Early Childhood Education Center and Little City celebrated the expansive work accomplished for the kids of the Maple Home at a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 17th.

Dana Balogh, Director at Bright Horizons says, “As a long-term volunteer of Little City, I was very proud to participate in the creation of this “Bright Space” for the boys of Maple. It has come together beautifully.

“The sensory room is just what Clifford needs,” commented his mother, Colleen. After Clifford had been placed in his fifth psych hospitalization, Colleen worried about finding a place for her son to flourish. In April 2011 her concerns diminished when Clifford moved to Little City into the Maple Children’s Group Home to live with nine other boys with autism, ages 11 – 21.

The ARC of Illinois recently granted Clifford an iPad through its new Assistive Technology program, which funds the purchase of assistive technology for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities for social and communication skills. The iPad grant included a protective cover made of recycled Crocs. Colleen says, “Clifford was a very articulate toddler before he regressed, so I hope that one day I will hear more of his speaking voice.” She continues, “There are so many capable and caring staff at Little City, past and present, who have helped Clifford. He has made a lot of progress in mastering his behavior.”

Clifford has a beautiful smile and an engaging way about him. A music lover, he is always singing favorite songs and making up new ones.

“His relatives are impressed when Clifford expresses his social skills and positive behaviors. He’s an ambassador for Little City,” says Colleen.

(Above) Clifford received an iPad from the ARC of Illinois to assist in building his communication skills.

(Right) Staff of The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, The Early Childhood Education Center and Little City celebrate the opening of the new “Bright Space.”
Executive Director’s Corner

“If you believe in yourself and have dedication and pride - and never quit, you’ll be a winner. The price of victory is high but so are the rewards.” – Paul "Bear" Bryant

Dear Friends,

Little City has much to be proud of this summer. Our Special Olympians went to State and returned covered in medals, the Maple Home unveiled its new “Bright Space,” and successful fundraisers raised thousands of dollars. With the ending of the school year, the Little City campus spirit was infused with celebrations of prom and graduation.

These events and milestones are made possible only by the Little City Team’s hard work, dedication, pride and perseverance. Although we have our struggles as every family does, our service and commitment shine through to the benefit of the children and adults in our care.

As the New Little City moves forward, we are continuing to forge partnerships with corporations, donors, members of the community, other agencies, our fellow team members and others. We are reminded that as long as we persevere, we will be winners. The rewards to our participants are invaluable.

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers
Executive Director

Little City Spotlight

New Chief Program Officers

Jason Clark, Little City Chief Program Officer, Adult LifePath Services

Although Jason joined Little City eight months ago as Director for the Center for Employment, he quickly and effectively has shown his ability to lead at a higher level. His previous experiences and successes have uniquely positioned him to take on the demands of the LifePath Adult Services program.

Jason holds a M.A. in Management and Leadership from Webster University and a B.A. in Psychology from Northern Illinois University. He has 18 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities.

Rich Bobby, Little City Chief Program Officer, ChildBridge Services

Rich Bobby is the new Chief Program Officer for the ChildBridge programs, including Residential, the Center for Education, and the Foster Care and Adoption program in Chicago. He brings a tremendous amount of knowledge, skills and experience to the position, particularly in child welfare areas. Rich will be at the helm as Little City takes on the challenge to increase the Foster Care and Adoption program census by over 100%. Based on our exemplary case management practices, DCFS has requested Little City’s assistance in moving more than 70 cases to our program, including staff and families.

A Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Rich has more than 16 years of experience in working with children and families impacted by trauma, mental health and/or disabilities.
With members between the ages of 22 and 35, the Junior Board works to support the programs and services offered to individuals with disabilities at Little City in a fresh and engaging way. This group demonstrates its commitment to children and adults with autism and developmental disabilities through fundraising and volunteer activities, while offering its members invaluable networking and leadership opportunities.

Please contact jrboard@littlecity.org or call (847) 221-7807 for more information.


This event would not have been possible without the fine efforts of our committee: Chair–Andrea MacIver; Co-Chair–Molly Nartonis; Chef Chair–Jill Barron, MANA Food Bar.

Molly Nartonis, Carl and Jen Lindberg, Andrea MacIver and other young professionals helped to raise $20,000 for Little City’s Special Olympics program.

On May 1st at Loft 644 in the River North area, guests enjoyed food and drinks from some of Chicago’s hottest restaurants at the 6th Annual Food Frenzy, raising $20,000 for Little City’s Special Olympics program. These funds will help provide Little City athletes with equipment, uniforms, transportation lodging and training needs.

Young and engaged professionals in the community are ambassadors for Little City as the Little City Junior Board. The Food Frenzy is the Junior Board’s flagship event of the year.

A wide variety of delicious food and drink was enjoyed by all.

Delicious samplings were created by Tanta Cocina Peruana, 118 West Grand Avenue, Chicago.

**Limited Space Available!** Join Little City at the longest-running charity golf tournament in the Greater Chicago Area — the Little City Invitational Golf Classic — on Monday, August 3 at Twin Orchard Country Club.

This year, we honor David Althoff, Co-Head of Global Industrial Banking, Duff & Phelps, for supporting Little City and the hundreds of children and adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities we serve.

Learn more and register today at [www.littlecity.org/lci](http://www.littlecity.org/lci)
Discover Partners with Little City for Playground Rebuild

In a stunning all day effort, more than 75 volunteers from Discover worked Thursday, May 28, 2015 to rebuild a state of the art KaBOOM! interactive play area, which is specially designed for children with disabilities, on Little City’s 56-acre campus in Palatine. To provide maximum safety and protection against falls, the team also installed SMARTE Safety Surfacing consisting of layers of rubber mulch ‘pillows’ made from recycled tires.

In 2011, Discover partnered with KaBOOM! to build a new playground for Little City residents. Due to required facilities renovations in 2013, the playground had to be disassembled.

“We've partnered with Little City on several volunteer projects over the years, but the playground we built for Little City’s residents back in 2011 was probably the most rewarding. When we heard that the playground had to be taken down for facility renovations, we were determined to rebuild it and I’m proud to be working alongside nearly 70 Discover volunteers to make this playground a reality again for Little City’s residents.” – David Nelms, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Discover Financial.

Over the years, numerous Discover business units have generously partnered with Little City on needed projects, including beautifying Little City’s campus through painting, landscaping and the playground build/rebuild.

Thank you, Discover Financial!

Our Helping Hands

Little City extends its appreciation to the following groups and countless individuals for their recent volunteer work with us:

- Allstate
- Assurance
- Berkshire Hathaway KoenigRubloff
- Bright Horizons
- Chase
- CITI
- Discover
- First Presbyterian Church of Arlington Heights
- Foster Care/Adoption & Home Based Picnic Volunteers
- Junior Board Food Frenzy Volunteers
- Kernel Season’s
- Liberty Mutual
- Nielsen
- South Minister Church of Arlington Heights
- Special Olympic Volunteers
- William Rainey Harper College Phi Theta Kappa
- William Rainey Harper College Environmental Club
- Zurich (Commercial Markets, DDC and EUS)

For detailed descriptions of these recent projects or to learn more about getting involved, visit www.littlecity.org/volunteer or contact (847) 221-7804.
Thank you to the following funders for their generous grants that support the work and mission of Little City:

- Assurance Agency
- Barrington Junior Women’s Club
- Elk Grove Township
- Greater Chicago Club Managers Association
- Washington Square Health Foundation
- Women’s Club of Inverness
- Zurich N.A. Foundation

The above referenced grants were awarded on or after April 2015.

Every family has special traditions that represent their love and values, which are passed down from one generation to the next. Henry and Isabel Smogolski always believed in the importance of passing on those traditions to each of their three children and on to their five grandchildren.

“We wanted our children and grandchildren to appreciate their blessings by helping others in need. Every year we gather our family and give each child a specific dollar amount, with the caveat that they donate to a cause. I was always touched by my grandkids’ excitement about their charity and seeing their ‘passion for giving’ grow,” says Mr. Smogolski.

More than 30 years ago, Henry and his late wife Isabel were moved by the life challenges that many children and adults with disabilities experience. They wanted to promote the highest possible quality of life, improve education and provide hope for the future for people with disabilities.

Mr. Smogolski comments, “We began by supporting Misericordia, a Catholic based organization serving individuals with developmental disabilities. At the bank where I worked, one of our coworkers with more than 15 years of service, was a long-time resident of Misericordia. Later, we learned of Clearbrook serving a similar population of individuals with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.”

He continues, “One day, several bank customers invited me to play golf at Twin Orchard Country Club in Long Grove and told me about their favorite charity. By the end of the game, Isabel and I welcomed Little City to our family of supported charities. Over the years, we have visited Little City and remain impressed with their work and the achievements of the children and adults.”

“By establishing a trust that includes Little City, our legacy is the impact that we have made on many lives throughout the Chicagoland community.”

“I personally believe in the mission of Little City. I would consider it an honor to listen to your wishes and work closely with you to help you make your gift and leave your legacy.”

India Alexis Ehioba, MNA, CFRE, Senior Philanthropy Officer and Director of Planned Giving, is an experienced, highly-credentialed gift advisor. The Donor’s Corner is a regular column providing helpful information on various gift options to Little City friends and supporters. You can contact India directly at 847.221.7809 or iehioba@littlecity.org with your questions and to discuss your personal interest in supporting Little City.
Happy Birthday George!
Patriarch of the Parent, Family and Guardian Group

George Alexandrou and his late wife Emilee were one of Little City’s first families. George was a Board Member and Member Emeritus of Little City’s Board of Directors for more than 30 years. Emilee was one of Little City’s greatest ambassadors to the community.

The Alexandrou’s devotion to Little City began in 1962 when their seven year-old son, Peter, was admitted to Little City to live with 24 other children with developmental challenges. For 40+ years, George and Emilee hosted numerous family picnics and dinners, often donating food from their restaurant. They actively participated in successful fundraising events for Little City.

They joined the Parent, Family and Guardian (PFG) Group as board members and soon thereafter, George became President of the PFG Group, in a role he proudly filled for more than 25 years. Meanwhile, Emilee also served as an active PFG Group board member and constantly encouraged friends, family and new acquaintances to contribute time, talent or treasure to Little City.

In honor of Emilee’s profound dedication and love for Little City, a memorial endowment was established in 1999 to support the Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA) program.

George semi-retired to his native Greece in 2005 and has continued to raise money and actively recruit new friends for Little City. Today, at the young age of 90, he lives with his son Alex & daughter-in-law Karen and their two children, George & Evan, in Aurora, Illinois.

As a Little City parent or family member, you can play a significant and important role in providing the highest possible quality of life for your loved one. For more information about the Parent, Family and Guardian Group contact Phyllis Shipbaugh at (847) 221-7892.

Little City Special Olympics Athletes Return Covered in Medals

On Friday, June 19th, 35 athletes and 16 Little City coaches and direct service staff caravanned to Bloomington-Normal to compete in the Illinois State Special Olympics. Despite the hot, humid weather, the talented athletes brought home an astounding 43 medals overall: 20 Gold, 13 Silver and 10 Bronze.

After the opening ceremonies on Friday, which included the Parade of Athletes and the lighting of the torch, competitions began in bocce ball, track and field, swimming and women’s powerlifting. Saturday’s events included men’s powerlifting, swimming and track and field.

A victory dance and block party followed on Saturday evening as competitors from all over the State gathered to celebrate their achievements. Little City athletes and staff met afterward to watch the Blackhawks win the Stanley Cup.

Tim LaHart, Manager of the Ethel B. and Joel H. Sharenow Fitness and Recreation Center, says, “Big thanks to Lisa Deligio, who did an excellent job coordinating the trip and to the outstanding team of dedicated Little City employees that helped make this our smoothest trip ever.”

To stay on top of Little City news, events and advocacy efforts, join us on our social networks.
Little City aims to continually 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. Some recent updates from around the “City” include:

**New Indoor Golf Facility**

Mary Dwyer, former LPGA touring professional and teacher, provides instruction in the new indoor golf facility on Little City’s campus. The facility includes a state-of-the-art putting green and two practice bays for Little City golfers to hone their skills to compete in Special Olympics.

**Grant to Meet Sensory Needs**

The Assurance Caring Together Team generously supplied funding to provide one of the children’s residences with a sensory room and therapeutic equipment. Similar to the “Bright Space” created in the Maple Home, the new sensory room will be specifically designed for girls with autism.

**Award for 22 Years of Service**

Karen Ginsberg has worked at Jewel Osco for 22 years and recently received an award for her dedicated service. She is a Special Olympics Gold Medalist in Bocce Ball. Karen’s peers say, “Our Care Bear not only wears gold, but has a heart of gold. She’s a hard worker and we enjoy working with her!”

**Thank You, Knights of Columbus**

Representing Little City, Ciara proudly accepted a $500 check from the Knights of Columbus. Funds were collected through the Knights of Columbus of Palatine’s Tootsie Roll Drive. Little City’s Boy Scouts also received a donation. The awards dinner was held on Friday, May 8th. Little City staff and program participants (Ciara, Howard and Jeff) attended.
City Guide: Upcoming Events

52ND Annual Golf Classic

Monday, August 3, 2015
Twin Orchard Country Club | Long Grove

Enjoy 18 holes of golf at a premier golf course, followed by dinner, silent and live auctions. This year we honor David Althoff, Co-Head of Global Industrial Banking, Duff & Phelps. Register today at littlecity.org/lci.

56TH Annual Dinner Gala

Saturday, September 26, 2015
The Field Museum | Chicago

Join Little City for a once in a lifetime night at the Field Museum. The evening will include exclusive private access to the Vikings exhibition, and dinner alongside the world-famous Tyrannosaurus rex, Sue. To purchase tickets, visit www.littlecity.org/gala.

5TH Annual Hot Chocolate Walk

Sunday, November 8, 2015
Grant Park | Chicago

Support Little City while enjoying hot chocolate and chocolate fondue at the Hot Chocolate Walk for Little City. It’s chocolately fun for the whole family! For more information and to register, visit www.littlecity.org/walk.