Little City Special Olympics Set Gold Standard

It would not be a stretch to call Kevin M. the most powerful Special Olympian in Illinois. After all, he recorded the heaviest deadlift in the state this year at 450 pounds.

But his power doesn’t just come from brute strength. His power comes from the process.

“These guys work hard all year,” said Tim Lahart, Little City’s Special Olympics head coach. “It’s not about the medals. It’s about setting goals and getting new personal records.”

That work ethic and focus has led Little City to become one of the state’s most successful Special Olympics teams and Tim Lahart one of the most respected coaches in his field. 2018 was another banner year for Little City as 21 athletes brought home 37 medals including 18 golds from the annual Summer Games competition that brings together the state’s best Special Olympics athletes.

In addition to Kevin’s monstrous lift, more history was made when Jimmy S. became the first Little City athlete to sweep his entire weight class in power lifting.

Jimmy, who competes in the 130-pound division for power lifting, recorded the best bench press, squat and deadlift in his class. The total combined weight was 505 pounds, which resulted in Jimmy winning four golds at the Games.

Outside of the always dominant power lifting team, Little City took three golds and a silver and a bronze in track and field, a silver in swimming and a gold, silver and two bronze medals in bocce ball.

“We had a good showing for a small delegation. It was exciting to see all the success we had,” Tim said. “The way we prepare, success is expected.”

The dedicated way Little City prepares is what got Tim noticed on a national level.

Tim was selected to be the power lifting coach for Illinois at the Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle during the first week of July. In addition to coaching Little City athletes, Tim spent his free time on the weekends coaching the group of the four lifters from around the state he took to Seattle to compete.

The lead up to the national games also caught the attention of World Wrestling Entertainment, which came to Little City and filmed a special feature on Tim and Katie, one of the four lifters who was preparing for the Seattle competition.

(Above:) Kevin M. takes a break before performing the heaviest deadlift in the state this year at 450 pounds.

(Right:) Little City’s Tina Lowry, Danny S., Jeff A., and Maggie Brennan were all smiles at the Illinois Special Olympics Summer Games. Danny and Jeff were two of 21 Little City athletes that helped bring home 37 medals.
Executive Director’s Corner

Dear Friends,

Little City is moving forward faster than ever. The progress can be seen everywhere you look. Whether it is new buildings, expanded programs or in one case, an entirely new children’s village that seems to grow each year.

But like any great organization we know our success is rooted deeply in our past.

No person embodied that connection from the foundation of the past to the vision for the future quite like Verne Carson. Verne passed away in June this year after 91 years of vibrant living and more than 50 years of tireless dedication to Little City. Verne never stopped innovating, implementing or inspiring during his five-plus decade tenure on the Little City Board of Directors.

To attempt to list all of Verne’s contributions to Little City and just how influential he was would be nearly impossible. And the Verne I knew wouldn’t want those accolades. He was never concerned with what had been done – only with what was possible.

That spirit is engrained in Little City today. Whether it is the Special Olympians breaking state records and still striving for more or the ChildBridge Center for Education finding new breakthroughs for each student to open doors for opportunities, Verne’s spirit can be seen everywhere.

So as we celebrate our accomplishments and our progress, let us all remember Verne Carson did not leave behind big shoes to fill. He left behind big shoes to move forward – always forward.

If we continue to work together to move forward as staff, supporters, families and the greater community, we can make the next impossible, possible. And every time we do that together, that is when our past will meet our present. Because that is Verne’s legacy and that legacy is Little City’s future.

Yours in service,
Shawn E. Jeffers
Executive Director

Little City Special Olympics Set Gold Standard

...continued from the cover

Once the competition started in Seattle, Tim impressed right away as he networked with other coaches and led his team against the strongest lifters in the country. Of the four lifters on the team, only one medaled, but Tim said he was proud of the personal records everyone set.

One of the four lifters was unable to compete as he was still recovering from emergency surgery, but Tim said he became a star at the Games and a rallying point for the entire Illinois team.

“It was a lot of fun,” Tim said. “It was a lot of coaching because everything had to be perfect.”

With another incredible year behind him, Tim is already focused on the future.

Through the coaches he met at the national games, Tim said there are discussions about holding a competition in Myrtle Beach, a “Border Wars” with Indiana and a regional competition that would involve unified partners, meaning Tim would lift alongside a Special Olympics athlete and the combined weight would be counted.

In addition to all the possible competitions in the future, Tim will also be working with the national Special Olympics program to work on the updated manual and discuss potential rule changes and additional competitions for the power lifting program.

“I’d love to go back and do it again,” Tim said.

Little City Special Olympics coach Tim Lahart had the honor of being selected as the power lifting coach for Team Illinois at the Special Olympics USA Games in Seattle this past July.

To stay on top of Little City news, events and advocacy efforts, join us on our social networks.
In Loving Memory of Vernon Carson

Little City is deeply saddened to share the news of the passing of Little City’s longtime board member, friend and ambassador Vernon Carson, who peacefully passed away on Monday, June 25 at the age of 91.

As a vocal, inspiring and passionate board member since 1966, Verne poured his heart and soul into making sure that Little City stood firm behind its mission of caring for individuals with disabilities. He cared deeply for every person served at Little City, and he had a special connection as his daughter Jamie has been with Little City since 1963 and continues to thrive because of the work supporters like her father always provided.

Jamie was always Verne’s pride and joy and he was always Jamie’s beloved “buddy.” In addition to Jamie, Verne and his late wife Merle were blessed with two other cherished daughters, Julie and Vicki.

Verne’s passionate spirit and unwavering dedication led him to become an inspiration and pioneer at Little City. Not only did he initiate Little City’s direct mail efforts years ago, but he had the foresight to develop the long-term legacies and bequests program, which has proved critical to keeping Little City strong during times of financial uncertainty for many nonprofit organizations.

His legacy of giving and innovating not only served as a major foundational cornerstone for Little City, but provided a guide for how to move confidently into the future.

“The word extraordinary is used a lot, but it truly does describe Verne Carson and the life he led,” said Shawn Jeffers, Executive Director of Little City. “Knowing Verne meant knowing an optimism for the future and passion for selflessly giving that is so rare to find. Verne was one of a kind and his contributions to Little City will never be forgotten, but continued to be built upon.”

Verne’s spirit of advocating for the children and adults at Little City continues to inspire. As a dear friend and role model to many at Little City, including his fellow board members, he was an unparalleled inspiration for the many lives he touched. All those lucky enough to have met Verne are better for having known him and his commitment to bettering the lives of those at the organization that he helped build.

News from Around the City

Little City Artist Sweeps Art Competition

The Little City Center for the Arts has received acclaim from exhibitions and museums around the world, so it can be hard to stand out in the crowd of talented artists.

But Davey S. found a way.

Some of Davey’s art was recently submitted into the Alaska State Fair art competition by his sister Debra who lives in the state. Davey ended up sweeping every category he entered. He took first place in both abstract art and in overall category which included every style of art by adults. The judges were completely unaware that Davey has a disability.

“I didn’t even know [Debra] was going to do this ahead of time,” said Frank Tumino, Administrator for the Center for the Arts. “It doesn’t surprise me that he won because his art can be extremely good. And as far as I know, this is a first for Little City art to be in Alaska.”

The honor is even more impressive because Davey has one of the most limited skill sets because of the severity of his disability, Frank said. Davey only has a few ways he can make marks on a page, but over his 15-plus years of creating art, he has found a way to use that skill in a way that makes creative, compelling and beautiful pieces every time he puts ink to paper.

The end result is a work of art that is indistinguishable from his peers who have no disabilities.

“The thing about Davey that has always astounded me is he has such a limited repertoire because of his severe limitations and he still finds a way to make unique art,” Frank said. “There are only a handful of ways he can make marks on a paper but he always gets the most out of what he can do. It is remarkable.”
Little City extends its appreciation to the following groups and countless individuals for their recent volunteer work with us:

**GROUPS:**
- Assurance
- Astellas
- Berkshire Hathaway Koenig Rubloff: Schaumburg
- Boy Scouts of America
- Chicago Cares
- Citibank
- Countryside Summer Picnic Volunteers
- Discover
- District 211 Adult Transition Program
- First Presbyterian and South Minister Church
- Friends of Countryside
- Lake Fun Fair Volunteers
- LCI Golf Classic Volunteers
- Liberty Mutual Insurance
- Little City PFG Group Golf Outing Volunteers
- Lou Malnati’s
- National Eagle Scout Association
- Omron Foundation
- Palatine Bank and Trust
- Palatine Public Library
- Palatine Township
- Royal United Mortgage LLC
- Warehouse Direct Workplace Solutions
- Zion Walmart
- Zurich Foundation

**INDIVIDUALS:**
- Nancy Ardnt
- Terri Balbirer
- Anna Bechtloff
- Bree Bogucki
- Joanne Brzozowski
- Payton Collins
- Stephanie Gorman
- Evan Hernandez
- Jacob Holm
- Stefanie Kim
- Megan King
- Joyce Leong
- Julia Love
- Cindy Lubin
- Michael Makote
- Garrett May
- Chris McCarthy
- James McDunn
- Molly Mench
- Laken Schiefelbein
- Sallie Reva
- Tony Rey
- John Wilhelm

Lou Malnati’s Makes a Special Delivery

Tanya Syperski was a Lou Malnati’s waitress with an idea in 2017.

With a sister at Little City’s Countryside Center, Tanya worked to have the Lou Malnati’s Schaumburg crew come to Little City for a day of volunteering. Six months later, Tanya was interning at Little City. Four months after that, she was a Little City employee.

“I’ve loved it here,” Tanya said. “This is definitely my career choice so I expect to be here for a long time.”

The experience went so well in 2017 for not only Tanya but the whole Lou Malnati’s crew that they came out again this past July. And it turns out the kings of deep dish are also kings of the deep clean.

More than 20 volunteers deep cleaned and detailed over 10 Little City vehicles and also weeded and landscaped the new therapeutic garden for the ChildBridge Center for Education. The two groups of volunteers managed to get both projects done within three hours. The sparkling vehicles and tended garden will give Little City students and residents a safe and pleasant environment.

Lou Malnati’s Makes a Special Delivery

Tanya said she plans to continue the relationship between Little City and Lou Malnati’s as she still takes shifts with the pizza establishment when she is able to. Having that connection gives volunteers an inside perspective to just how much their contributions mean.

“Because I have an inside view now, I can explain to them how appreciated it really is,” Tanya said. “I definitely see the value more now that I work here compared to when I was volunteering.”

Having been promoted from Health and Community Specialist to an Assistant Program Manager in charge of four Community Integrated Living Arrangements, Tanya is staying plenty busy at Little City. But she said she loves the community aspect of volunteering and plans to keep volunteering with her Lou Malnati’s friends any time she can.

10-Year Old Makes a “Big” Difference

Chris Paterson wanted to make a difference for Little City. And he did so in a “Big” way.

Like most 10-year old boys, Chris loves to build with LEGOS. To support his brother who lives at Little City’s Duffey Family Children’s Village, Chris decided to use his hobby and fundraise at the same time.

Chris set up a GoFundMe page to support his “Build-a-thon,” and all proceeds were donated to Little City. But this was no simple accomplishment. The “Big Ben” LEGO set contained 4,163 pieces, and took Chris two weeks to patiently build the masterpiece all by himself.

His favorite part of the building process was putting the clock tower together, but more importantly he was proud of what his accomplishment is giving Little City.

“I love my brother and want him and his friends to do extra fun things this summer,” Chris said.

And that will most certainly happen. Chris was able to raise $1,280 and all funds will directly support an activity that his brother and the other children at Little City will enjoy.

Chris proudly brought his “Big Ben” masterpiece to Little City’s offices to share.

Our Helping Hands

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

Josh can get plenty of mileage out of Marivel Escatel's unique and generous donation.

Marivel recently discovered Little City for the first time when she took the opportunity to volunteer as part of Liberty Mutual’s “Serve with Liberty” day that allows employees to give back to the community. Marivel initially chose Little City because of the mission, but she didn’t know the experience would have such a profound impact on her. She spent the day cleaning and beautifying campus areas for more than four hours along with Josh and other residents and left that day knowing she wanted to do more.

“The staff was incredible and the residents really made a huge impact on me personally,” Marivel said. “Josh was there the entire time with us and he is just an incredible person. He really inspired me.”

The emotion is clear as Marivel recounts her first meeting with Josh and that meeting left such an impression that she went above and beyond and decided to give Josh what he would love the most – a new bike.

Josh spends most days riding his bike around campus and delivering mail when needed, but his bike no longer worked and he had been using another resident’s bike to get by. On July 20, that all changed. Marivel and her 7-year-old son met Josh at Target and purchased him a new bike and shoes for all the pedaling he planned on doing. After a test drive down the aisle, Josh knew it was the perfect bike for him.

Marivel said the experience was not only great for her, but for her son who learned more about the importance of giving back and helping people. By the time her son left the store with her, he was asking if they could see Josh again and Marivel said there is no doubt she would be coming back to Little City to continue to help anyway she can.

“This is really about Josh and how incredible of a guy he is,” Marivel said. “You will definitely see my son and I around Little City in the future.”

Day School Ready for Another Year

The ChildBridge Center for Education is ready for another school year after celebrating a graduation class of six students in June and welcoming 37 students to the 2018-19 school year on Aug. 14.

The students’ path for success has been laid out for them as Ricky, Elie, Luke, Johnny, Hunter and Jason showed goals can be achieved when they walked across the stage this past June for graduation. Hunter and Jason are on their way to adult placement while Ricky, Elie, Luke and Johnny will be entering high school at the school.

“Our graduating class did a great job and they all brought their unique skills and personalities to the ceremony,” said Karrie Dean, School Administrator. “They were all very proud and so were their families.”

The day school already has impressive accomplishments and big plans as the school year gets started anew. One student has progressed so much that he has started the new school year in his home school district in a much less restrictive environment. Karrie said it is a major step for the school to see the hard work pay off in such a meaningful way.

The school also has exciting plans within the campus this year as three new teachers will start at the school, a seventh classroom is opening in the building and a brand new sensory garden will be used for the first time after a ChildBridge student’s brother volunteered to build one outside the school during the summer.

The new features, fresh faces and excited students has Karrie optimistic for a year that will build off the tremendous success in the 2017-18 school year.

“There are lots of fresh ideas and the beginning of the school year always brings about anticipation and excitement,” Karrie said. “The objective is to still push academics and social and life skills. We had a little time away, which helps us all refocus and come back excited.”

Community Partners

Thank you to the following funders for their generous grants that support the work and mission of Little City. These grants were awarded on or after May 2018.

- Barrington Junior Women’s Club
- Charles and M.R. Shapiro Fndn.
- Chicago Dental Society Fndn.
- City of Waukegan
- DuPage County Human Services Grant Fund
- Elk Grove Township
- Hanover Township Mental Health Board
- Illinois Department of Transportation
- Lake County
- Laughing Acres Family Fndn.
- Motorola Solutions Fndn.
- Omron Foundation
- Palatine Township
- Palatine Women’s Club
- RJN Fndn.
- Township of Schaumburg
- Vernon Township
- Village of Schaumburg
- Westfield Insurance Fndn.
- Wheeling Township
- The Zurich Fndn.
Golfers Raise $340,000 at 55th Annual LCI Golf Classic

Roughly 220 golfers came out to Twin Orchard Country Club in Long Grove for the 55th Annual Little City Invitational Golf Classic to raise nearly $340,000 for people with developmental disabilities.

The LCI Golf Classic was another successful chapter in one of Chicagoland’s longest running charity golf events. Of the $340,000 raised, $18,000 will go toward Little City’s new SmartHome pilot program.

SmartHomes are innovative setups that will allow Little City residents greater access to and control of their environment. Some features include adjustable countertops, software designed to improve communication, automated windows and locks and safety features such as emergency call buttons. The pilot program is aimed at converting three of Little City’s Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILA).

“Little City strongly believes SmartHomes can provide life-changing resources for our residents and allow our aging adults to remain safe and comfortable in their homes,” said Shawn Jeffers, Executive Director of Little City. “This exciting program would not be possible without the amazing support we receive at this event year after year.”

Two of the strongest supporters of the LCI Golf Classic have been Kenneth Kolmin and Marcus Montanye, who were honored with the Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award. Both have co-chaired five LCI Golf Classics and have been responsible for recruiting committee members, sponsors, players and honorees. Through their efforts, the tournament has experienced incredible growth and raised more than $3 million under their leadership.

“Little City, and this tournament, would not be where it is today without supporters like Ken and Marcus,” Jeffers said. “We are privileged to honor their legacy of support and look forward to many more years of working closely with them to help Little City grow and thrive.”

Little City would like to thank all its tournament sponsors including Underwriting Sponsor: CIBC Bank USA; Birdie Sponsors: Dentons US, LLP; Keystone Capital; Melissa & Marcus D. Montanye; Par Sponsors: Baird – The Angeletti Group; Chicago Blackhawks; Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Desmond; Duff & Phelps Investments; Dussias Wittenberg Koenigsberger LLP; Patrick C. Frangella; Jack George; Gianaras Family Foundation; Hockfield & Associates/Barbara & Steve Anderson; Hockfield/Rose Families; Patrick J. Jensen; McHugh Construction; Mesirov Financial; Reyes Holdings; Scott & Kraus, LLC; Ethel & Joel Sharenow; Bob Sherman & Barbara Bradford; Sysco Chicago, Inc.; TTSG; Vedder Price P.C.; William Blair & Company; Wintrust Commercial Banking; Wipfli LLP; The Hal Wolken Family & Sonic Drive-Ins; Additional Sponsors: Newman Realty; First Bank of Highland Park

PFG Raises Money for Equine Therapy

The Little City Parent/Family/Guardian Group held another successful golf outing this past June as they once again raised thousands of dollars for Little City residents to have the unique opportunity to take part in equine therapy.

More than 60 golfers converged on Highland Woods Golf Course in Hoffman Estates for a day of golf, raffles and a silent auction to help Little City. The event raised money for residents to once again go to Walk On ranch in Barrington to take part in equine therapy that will allow them to connect with nature and horses.

Gil Fergus, President of the PFG, said it was an easy decision to raise money for equine therapy for a second year in a row after it proved to be a huge success in 2017 when the group supported the cause for the first time. Gil’s own son has participated in the program and 21 other residents had the opportunity last year thanks to the PFG’s golf outing.

“People absolutely loved it,” Gil said. “I’m not sure how many will be able to go this year, but I know everyone who has done it has really enjoyed it.”

While the golf outing was a success, there are still more opportunities to join the PFG group and take advantage of networking with other families and supporting Little City.

Gil said the first opportunity to get involved with PFG will come on Sept. 16 at the Pinstripes in Northbrook. The event will be held from noon to 3 p.m. and allow families to meet other Little City families and fundraise in a casual and fun way.

The second event will take place on Oct. 21 at Little City’s Palatine campus for a volunteering event. Gil said volunteers will plant flowers and beautify the campus. He encouraged everyone to bring a guest to both events to help spread the word about Little City.

“We want more people to participate,” Gil said. “It’s all to help our parents and families and also to help Little City. We look for ways to contribute and support Little City events in affordable and enjoyable ways.”
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:*

**Alec Gianaras Scholarship Recipient**

The annual Alec K. Gianaras Scholarship has been awarded to Temitope Sofowora – a home-based employee who goes above and beyond every day. The one-year, $5,000 scholarship is provided to an employee who not only displays Little City’s core values, but who also wants to pursue further education in helping those with disabilities. Thank you for all you do Temitope and we wish you success in your continued education!

**Garvey’s Gives Back**

Burt Horowitz (right,) Vice President of Business Development at Garvey’s Office Products presents Shawn Jeffers with a check for $6,341. Little City was the beneficiary of Garvey’s second quarter “Recycle for a Reason” fundraising campaign. Thank you Garvey’s and everyone who recycled their products for Little City!

**Little City Given Family Stability Grant**

Jeff Krug (right,) of J. Krug & Associates Inc., presents a $5,000 check alongside Bev Saiz, Little City’s Director of Foundation & Government Relations, and Shawn Jeffers, Executive Director. The $5,000 Family Stability Grant was part of Westfield Insurance’s larger *Legacy of Caring* program that has provided nearly $2 million to 95 nonprofits in 2018.

**Special Garden at Countryside Center**

Tina Lowry, Little City’s Director of Health and Wellness Services, has helped create a special memorial garden at Countryside Center. The garden, named in memory of her grandparents Raymond J. and Marie A. Zajic, will be loved and cared for by Countryside Center’s seniors and participants.
City Guide: Upcoming Events

13th Annual Recipe for Success
Monday, October 1, 2018 | www.littlecity.org/recipe
The Stonegate Conference & Banquet Centre | Hoffman Estates, IL

Inaugural Book Run
June–October 21, 2018 | www.littlecity.org/bookrun
BBQ Celebration: Oct. 21, 2018 | Penny Road Pub | Barrington, IL

60th Annual Dinner Gala
Saturday, April 13, 2019 | The Drake | Chicago, IL

10th Annual Food Frenzy
Friday, May 10, 2019 | Chicago, IL

56th Annual LCI Golf Classic
Monday, June 17, 2019 | Twin Orchard Country Club | Long Grove, IL

#GivingTuesday
Tuesday, November 27, 2018

Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving that benefits thousands of organizations around the world.

Last year, Little City supporters raised more than $26,000 in one day. We invite you to participate in this year’s event by donating online at www.littlecity.org on Tuesday, Nov. 27. You can follow us throughout the day on our social media accounts to see how your donations will help!

Be sure to visit www.littlecity.org/givingtuesday to learn about ways you can help Little City reach its #GivingTuesday goals this year!