Little City Heads to Capitol Hill

Ciara is used to winning medals in the arena of Special Olympics. But winning over powerful lawmakers in the political arena of Washington D.C. was going to be a whole new challenge.

Lucky for Little City, Ciara thrives on those challenges.

Ciara was an influential voice during Illinois Day on Capitol Hill on November 8 when a contingent of Little City representatives went to the nation’s capital to talk about the importance of preserving the rights of people with developmental disabilities and allowing them to choose where and how to live.

During her speech to elected officials, Ciara talked about how Little City gives her the freedom and motivation to accomplish any goal she sets her mind to. Whether it is winning gold medals in Special Olympics power lifting, participating in pageants, working at Macy’s or enjoying any other community resource like malls or theaters, Ciara said she has the ability to live where she wants and how she wants because of Little City.

“Little City is my home and I make the choice to be a part of it every day,” Ciara said. “Little City is not an institution. It is a neighborhood that is filled with the people I love and trust the most.”

While Ciara’s testimony was an important part in winning hearts and minds, the politicians also heard from Little City parents who know better than anyone the triumphs and struggles of caring for a person with developmental disabilities.

Two Little City parents, Lianne Paterson and Sue Garesche, who both have sons at the organization, also made the trip to D.C. to talk about the vital services Little City offers to families who care for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“I never thought Austin would get to experience all the opportunities that Little City offers,” Sue said. “It has provided him with the quality of life I have always dreamed of. He is the happiest he has ever been and of course that gives me the greatest peace of mind.”

Lianne, whose 11-year-old son lives at Little City, talked about the tremendous progress her son has made since coming to the Duffey Family Children’s Village and participating in the ChildBridge Center for Education.

“Tim is provided with high quality care and lives in a beautiful new home. He is taught valuable skills for independence and participates in campus- and community- based recreation activities,” Lianne said. “We see Tim almost daily and he loves visiting the family home to play with his siblings, watch a movie or eat dinner together. We are thankful for Little City and the balance it has provided our family; when raising child with a significant needs, it truly does ‘take a city’.”

Continued on page 2...
Dear Friends,

Home is not always an easy word to define. Is it where you were born? Is it where you grew up or lived the longest? Or does it change to wherever you live currently no matter how often you may move?

Currently, Congress and our state government are struggling with that question. Our elected officials are having a conversation on what constitutes a community as opposed to an institution. What is an acceptable living arrangement for a person with intellectual and developmental disabilities? Is it at a place like Little City or in a subdivision or community they may or may not want to be in?

For us at Little City, the answer is simple. Home is not about what or where, it is about who. Home is when you are with the ones you love and care about. That is why there must always be a choice. Some may find their home in a subdivision as part of a community they love, but others may find their home at Little City where they live among those they care about the most.

The answer seems clear when you see what Little City families have built together. The Duffey Family Children’s Village just completed its third home and a fourth, Mario’s Home, is nearing the fundraising goal in order to break ground. Little City would not have been able to build a single home if not for the incredible donations and commitments of the families who want to come here.

Families continue to give so much effort and financial gifts to the Duffey Family Children’s Village because they see how these houses they build become homes. It is a place where children learn, grow and build relationships. These homes were built out of the organic desire for families to have a community that would bring the best out of a loved one with developmental disabilities.

We hope you are inspired by the stories you read in the Tapestry about Little City residents going to D.C. to fight for their home, or companies donating gifts to make sure each Little City home has a happy holiday season and of course the families who come together to make the Duffey Family Children’s Village a reality.

As we start a new year, may we all continue to work together to build a place to call home for the children and adults at Little City.

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers, Executive Director

Little City Heads to Capitol Hill

...Continued from cover

While Little City was a shining example in Washington D.C., it did not have to carry the torch for people with developmental disabilities alone.

Little City was joined by similar Illinois-based agencies under the “Together for Choice” banner. “Together for Choice” is a national advocacy organization with a mission to protect and advance the rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live, work, and thrive in communities and settings of their choosing.

With the increasingly complex array of federal Medicaid and state agency rules that govern these critically important and personal housing and employment choices, regulations are reducing options and availability of long-term care services for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Many agency leaders, family members and self-advocates passionately spoke to discuss the importance of communities like Little City and the positive impact the choice to live there has had on so many people.

The message was heard loud and clear by many influential lawmakers including Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-08) and Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) who offered staunch support of the agencies that represented “Together for Choice” and their missions. Sen. Durbin agreed there should be flexibility in how a community is defined and reassured the longstanding commitment he has had to people with developmental disabilities would continue.

Along with “Together for Choice,” Little City will push for change in how a community is defined, and at the forefront of that definition, is choice.

“It doesn’t take a trip to Washington D.C. to advocate for people with developmental disabilities,” said Shawn Jeffers, Executive Director of Little City. “Any action of advocacy, no matter how big or small, makes a difference. As long as the right to choose where and how to live remains in question, we encourage all of Little City’s supporters to continue to advocate for people with developmental disabilities in any way they know how.”
Heart of the City

Help Build a Home: Mario’s Home Nears Fundraising Goal

When Mario Zervas’ parents needed support for their son with developmental disabilities, they didn’t know where to turn. Having a young boy diagnosed with autism at the time was an overwhelming time for the family.

They found Little City through a conversation with Eleni Bousis, a cousin who just happened to serve on the Board of Directors for Little City. That conversation changed the Zervas’ life and opened a world of opportunities for Mario that they never thought possible.

After many years of watching Mario grow through all Little City has to offer, the Zervas family wants to make sure any family with a child who has developmental disabilities will have even more opportunities.

With the third home of the Duffey Family Children’s Village – The Coleman Foundation Home – now complete, the Zervas’ are even more committed to see Mario’s Home become a reality.

With three homes in operation, there are 24 children who have access to state-of-the-art sensory rooms, 24/7 care that focuses on teaching important life skills such as bathing, cleaning, cooking and toileting and an opportunity to learn to socialize and live with their peers.

Once Mario’s Home reaches its fundraising goal and breaks ground, eight more children will get that same opportunity. And even though as an adult Mario will not benefit from this new home, the Zervas family is passionate about seeing other children receive the same transformational services as their son.

“Little City has been truly life-changing for Mario,” said George and Dimitra Zervas, Mario’s parents. “It is our hope that Mario’s Home will create hope and success for the youth who will live there and participate in so many of the activities that keep our son flourishing.”

The Duffey Family Children’s Village has already proven successful for the many children who have come through the homes. Residents such as Clifford at Larry’s Home blossomed into a social butterfly and learned vocational skills that allowed him to get jobs including custodial and cafeteria work. Even the youngest residents like 11-year-old Tim have already learned important life skills including self-regulating emotions.

Mario’s Home is so close to becoming a reality after substantial and generous donations from both the Zervas and Duffey families.

John Duffey, the namesake of the children’s village, has continued his investment in these state-of-the-art homes by promising to match donations for Mario’s Home dollar-for-dollar in order to help Little City meet the fundraising goal.

Little City donors and supporters will also have the opportunity to take Mario’s Home to the finish line at this year’s Annual Dinner Gala on March 3 at The Hyatt Regency Chicago where Mario’s Home will benefit from the Fund-A-Need.

Take the Duffey Family Children’s Village to the finish line! To have your donation matched dollar-for-dollar, please visit www.littlecity.org/marioshome today!

You are invited to Little City’s Annual Dinner Gala as we celebrate 59 memorable years of stories that began with our Founding Families and continue today. We honor their legacy of supporting children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and invite you to become a part of this continuing story.

Saturday, March 3, 2018 | The Hyatt Regency Chicago | www.littlecity.org/gala
Donors Help Little City Surpass Giving Tuesday Goal

Giving Tuesday was monumental for Little City this year as supporters and donors came together to make it the most successful campaign in the three years Little City has participated in the global day of giving.

Donors raised more than $26,000 on Nov. 28 – a significant increase from last year’s Giving Tuesday. But that was only part of a record $43,200 Little City raised with the help of The Coleman Foundation and community partners.

The incredible generosity of donors was once again matched by The Coleman Foundation, helping Little City reach the impressive Giving Tuesday number. The Coleman Foundation also gave Little City an opportunity to participate in an early giving window from Nov. 1 – 3, which resulted in more than $3,000 raised toward the total.

Money raised from Giving Tuesday will help all programs at Little City maintain their high standards and open more opportunities for those served.

“It is humbling to see how many people in the community choose to give to Little City during a time where there are so many worthy places to give to,” said Shawn Jeffer, Executive Director of Little City. “People with developmental disabilities remain one of the most vulnerable and overlooked groups in society and we are proud people in our community have done so much to rally around and support our mission.”

Little City was widely embraced by the community during Giving Tuesday as well. Jersey Mike’s in Palatine generously made Giving Tuesday a “dine and donate” day, committing a portion of all sales on that day to Little City. Companies including Motorola and Cadence also played a big part in Giving Tuesday by matching donations made by their employees.

But Little City runs on more than just the generous financial gifts of its supporters. Volunteerism is a huge part in making Little City a great place, and that tradition continued on Giving Tuesday. Twenty volunteers came out to the Little City campus and made sock snowmen, created 20 wreaths and 200 ornaments and painted an additional 100 ornaments.

Without those volunteers, Little City would not have the festive holiday feel this winter. Little City is deeply grateful for everyone who made Giving Tuesday a huge success.

Community Businesses Give Residents a Happy Holiday

Throughout the month of December, Little City resembled Santa’s workshop thanks to the extraordinary generosity of local community groups and area corporations.

Organizations including Motorola, IKEA, Holy Family Community Church and a private donation from John Castiglione provided more than $30,000 worth of holiday gifts to those at Little City. Everything from toys to electronics filled the conference rooms and hallways of Little City buildings.

“It was an incredible sight to see our conference room with gifts and donations stacked up to the ceiling,” said Stephanie Darnell, the Volunteer Services Supervisor at Little City. “We were truly overwhelmed with how much was donated to our participants. It truly demonstrated the spirit of giving during the season. Every day it seemed that we had a new delivery of presents that we knew our participants would love.”

Many of the gifts came straight off the wish lists provided by Little City residents and other gifts were special items entire households could use including televisions, refrigerators and other kitchen appliances.

Motorola alone gave more than 300 gifts through their donations and decided to include Little City directly into its holiday party by having a gift-wrapping competition. Roughly 150 people divided into different teams to wrap gifts based on a particular theme, for example, the Stars and Stripes team wrapped one gift to look like an American flag!

The event was not only a great way for Motorola employees to get to know each other, but for those employees to get to know Little City and feel more connected to the gifts they were generously giving.

“Every single person I talked to said they enjoyed it and they just had a really positive experience,” Stephanie said. “It was cool to watch them all come together in a team-building exercise and it definitely raised awareness about Little City.”
Donors help Little City in many ways. Whether contributions come in the form of financial gifts, time or talent, Little City relies on the incredible engagement of its supporters throughout the year.

One of those special families played an important role in 2017 as Little City and the former Countryside Association looked to strengthen their bond and come together as one. That family is the Hoeser family, who played no small part in making Countryside traditions such as Recipe for Success and the 5K Walk and Roll a reality for Little City.

Joellen Hoeser talked with Little City about what inspires her to donate, how families can get involved and her hope that the Countryside and Lakeside Centers continue to feel at home at Little City.

**Little City:** Little City recently celebrated its one-year anniversary of bringing on Countryside Association and recognized a lot of people that made that happen. How has the first year of being part of Little City gone from your perspective?

**Joellen:** I think that the merger was a little tenuous at times, but all in all it worked out very well. I love the new facility and [Countryside] really wanted to find a place where our adult children would have the ability to work and be with their friends, and that is exactly what happened.

**Little City:** You were always very involved at Countryside and you continue to be very involved at Little City. What’s your motivation for giving so much of your time and effort?

**Joellen:** I do it for two different reasons. The first reason is I want to give back to the Countryside Center and Little City for having such a professional and caring staff that help our children do what they can and be what they can. It’s sort of a communal thing where the community is stronger when everyone is pitching in to help out and give back. Secondly, it gets the Little City name out there and the importance of helping people with developmental disabilities. Not everyone is aware of this population of people and what they need. If I can work hard and help raise awareness, that’s great.

**Little City:** You played a big part in bringing Recipe for Success and the 5K Walk and Roll from Countryside to Little City. What is the importance of those events to you and do you think it has helped build the unity you’d like to see?

**Joellen:** The Walk and Recipe are very important. Recipe is great because it’s fun, not pricey and has fun little things like the cork pull and silent auction to keep everyone involved. It’s a celebration of who we are. The Walk is fun too and it’s great seeing those shirts all over the place. I definitely see a lot of the Walk shirts during the spring and summer and it’s another way to get our name out there.

**Little City:** Do you have advice for families who want to get involved or why they should get involved?

**Joellen:** If we don’t help, no one is going to. This is a family. Giving doesn’t always have to be financial. I’ve met so many parents from Little City and of course the Countryside Center who give back and that has given all our kids so much. We’re just happy to keep doing what we can.

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### Our Helping Hands

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

- Assurance Agency
- Chicago Cares
- Discover
- District 211 Adult Transition Program
- District 15
- District 54
- Friends of Countryside
- Holy Family Catholic Church
- Ikea
- Little City Parent/Family/Guardian Group
- Motorola
- Netrix
- Omron Foundation
- Palatine Public Library
- Palatine Township
- Shire
- St. Edna’s Catholic Church
- Woodfield Mall Gift Wrapping Volunteers
- Zurich Foundation

For detailed descriptions of these recent projects or to learn more about getting involved, visit [www.littlecity.org/volunteer](http://www.littlecity.org/volunteer) or contact Stephanie Darnell at sdarnell@littlecity.org.

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### Community Partners

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

- Adreani Foundation
- The Chicago Blackhawks Foundation
- Chicago Dental Society Foundation
- Citi Group
- Cole-Crone Family Foundation
- The Davee Foundation
- Dermody Properties Foundation
- George M. Eisenberg Foundation
- Laughing Acres Family Foundation
- Jerome S. and Grace H. Murray Foundation
- Northwest Community Hospital
- Richard A. Perritt Charitable Foundation
- The Schwaben Society Charitable Fund
- Wells Fargo Foundation
- Winnetka Congregational Church

The above referenced grants were awarded on or after October 2017.
Little City Celebrates the Holiday Season

Christmas comes once a year, at least for most children. For some, it doesn’t come without the love and kindness of others, which was on full display at Little City’s Foster Care & Adoption Program holiday party.

The celebration, at Faith United Methodist Church in Dolton, featured games, arts and crafts and some very special guests including a tortoise, a bobcat and an aardvark for the children and their families to enjoy.

The children and families also had the chance to tell Santa what they wanted for Christmas and were able to have a photo taken with Santa himself to commemorate the occasion.

The event continues to grow as 150 children came with their parents, siblings and foster families this year. Friends and families had the opportunity to engage with other caring foster and adoptive parents who have also committed to helping a child in need.

This year’s event was extra special because it helped kicked off the 25th anniversary of Little City’s Foster Care & Adoption Program. The program continues to provide hope to special needs youth by matching them with safe, stable and nurturing families in the Chicagoland area. The 25th anniversary celebration will continue all year long and include special events that recognize the program’s success and achievements.

But the Foster Care & Adoption Program was not the only Little City program to enjoy the holidays. Continuing the yearly tradition, the children residents enjoyed a buffet-style dinner and a visit from Santa Claus and Elf at the ChildBridge Center for Education Gymnasium.

The adult residents enjoyed a night on the town with a four-course holiday dinner at the Cotillion Banquet in Palatine. The party-goers dressed in their finest suits (and in some cases, top hats and canes) and dresses as they danced the night away. And for the first time ever, they were able to bring their immediate family to enjoy the celebration and take in the holiday spirit.

Little City Helps Cook Up a Dream Job

Andy dreamed of one day working in a bustling kitchen where he could help make restaurant-worthy dishes for a dining room full of people.

That dream became a reality for Andy in November when Andy was asked to join Executive Chef Michael Ponzio’s kitchen team at the Medinah Country Club. And already just more than a month into his job, Andy has proven to be a versatile asset in the kitchen as he has done everything from peeling carrots to prepping casseroles and even rolling, stuffing and breading the many rice balls the restaurant requires.

“He surprises me every day with what he is able to do because there is something new every time,” said Rebecca Schachter, Andy’s job developer. “You can tell he takes a lot of care in what he does and he becomes a perfectionist. I didn’t know that about him until I saw him at this job.”

The opportunity would have never been possible if Andy did not put in the work to make his dream come true. After growing disinterested with the work he was doing at a supervised work center, Andy wanted community employment that would challenge him.

He signed up for Little City’s first-ever LifePath Culinary and Kitchen Arts Program, which was presented by the Greater Chicago Club Managers Association. The 10-session training program was conducted by staff from Twin Orchard Country Club and covered topics such as kitchen safety, hygiene, table setting and food preparation.

Andy’s training proved valuable as he was brought on during the busiest season for Medinah Country Club when holiday brunches and dinners keep the kitchen busy the entire day.

Because of the busy schedule, Andy has had to perform new tasks on almost every shift he takes during his three-day work weeks, which means Rebecca has stayed on-site just in case he needs support. But Rebecca said even with the frequent changes in responsibilities, Andy has not needed much help at all and he will be fully on his own when he masters public transportation to get to and from his job.

“He’s very independent. He already worked to get direct deposit set up and he’s learning what he needs to do to get to and from work,” Rebecca said. “He has really enjoyed the whole experience. The whole staff has been really friendly and that has helped a lot.”
Heart of the City

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:

An Experience to Remember

Over fifty Little City supporters came out to the Sears Centre Arena on Dec. 16th to cheer on the Windy City Bulls against the Raptors 905. With a generous sponsorship from Paramount Staffing, the event was a night to remember. All Little City supporters and participants were invited on the court to receive a check for $1,300 presented by the Windy City Bulls. Thank you both to Paramount Staffing and the Windy City Bulls organization for granting Little City this memorable experience.

IDOT Grants Little City a New Bus

Little City would like to thank the Illinois Department of Transportation for yet another new vehicle at no cost. Since 2002, Little City has received roughly 50 vehicles worth approximately $2.5 million through the IDOT program.

Jewel-Osco Donates a Holiday Feast!

A special thank you to Jewel-Osco for donating 45 turkey dinners for Thanksgiving and 55 ham dinners for the holidays. The donation was enough to feed all Little City residents and nearly 30 home-based service participants.

Uline Grants Lakeside $3,000

The Little City Lakeside Center had a happy holiday thanks to a $3,000 grant from Uline. The money went toward gifts, games and a special visit from Santa for the Lakeside Center party.
You are invited to Little City’s Annual Dinner Gala as we celebrate 59 memorable years of stories that began with our Founding Families and continue today.

We honor their legacy of supporting children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and invite you to become a part of this continuing story.

www.littlecity.org/gala

9th Annual Food Frenzy
May 2018 | Chicago, IL

Clipped Wings Golf Outing
May 14, 2018 | Royal Melbourne Country Club | Long Grove, IL

55th Annual LCI Golf Classic
June 18, 2018 | Twin Orchard Country Club | Long Grove, IL

PFG Golf Outing
June 2018 | Highland Woods Golf Course | Hoffman Estates, IL

Opportunity Walk & Roll
Summer 2018 | Little City Campus | Palatine, IL