Lou Malnati’s Serves Up Employment Opportunities

Lou Malnati’s served up more than just pizzas when participants from Little City’s Employee Development Services (EDS) program came to be a part of the staff on a special job shadowing opportunity.

The Aug. 1 event was a first-of-its-kind opportunity for many of the participants who helped greet customers, work in the kitchen, serve food and clean tables among other tasks at the Lou Malnati’s on 1 S. Roselle Rd in Schaumburg.

Lori Palmer Kane, Employee Development Services Coordinator, said while the program has brought students out to the community to volunteer or tour a workplace, Lou Malnati’s was the first business to provide such a valuable, hands-on experience.

“In the enclave, they are more sheltered, they are supervised by a Little City job coach and they are working just with other EDS participants,” Lori said. “Here they were working with the public and in an entirely different environment. This is as close to a real-world job as they can get. It is a much better taste of what an actual integrated, competitive employment situation is like.”

The 10 students chosen for the experience ranged from those who are near community employment and already well on their way in working with a job coach, to those who are still in the early stages of the EDS program. Two of the students were even selected for job interviews by Lou Malnati’s management during the event thanks to their exemplary work, with one already accepting a part-time position!

The close and beneficial relationship with Lou Malnati’s was created in large part by Tanya Syperski, who works at both Little City as an assistant program manager for community residential homes and at Lou Malnati’s for her aunt – who is the general manager of the location.

Tanya said she has been excited to see the connection between the organizations grow from a small group of Lou Malnati’s staff volunteering on campus to one that allows those at Little City real-world work experience that leads directly to community employment.

“I think when you first come up with an idea you are not sure how it is going to flourish, so it’s been really great to see,” Tanya said of the relationship. “It gave [Little City] an opportunity to see different skill sets from the people in EDS and the staff at Lou’s really felt like they made an impact in someone’s life by giving them that experience.”

Lou Malnati’s has not stopped at giving Little City job seekers a chance at community employment. During the same job shadowing event, Lou Malnati’s also donated 20% of all purchases the entire day.
Dear Friends,

Every day at Little City, we need to measure. We measure the progress of a student at the ChildBridge Center for Education. We measure our finances against our budget to make sure we have the resources to provide the services expected of us. We measure our engagement to make sure our message is getting out to the community.

But it is that which we cannot measure that can have the biggest impact.

It could be someone like Howard who has an opportunity to take a customer’s order at Lou Malnati’s. It could be a Discover volunteer having a personal interaction with one of Little City’s residents on campus. It could be one of our foster care children being inspired by something as simple as a true-crime TV show and ending up getting accepted into a four-year university to study criminal justice.

These small moments have the power and potential to change a life in unexpected ways. At Little City, we are lucky enough to have a community of supporters who not only give their time, talent and treasure, but also give these meaningful moments and experiences.

On Oct. 1, we will celebrate that spirit of giving as we mark 60 years to the day of Little City first opening doors. A dream come true by a group of families fueled by the desire to give the greatest gift of all – opportunity for their children.

And on Oct. 1, we will ask you to give. It could be through financial donations or volunteering or it could be through one of those ways we cannot measure. Giving a thank you to a Little City staff member or a word of encouragement to one of the many people we serve who overcome their obstacles every day. You could give a friend, co-worker or neighbor an introduction to Little City.

However and whatever you choose to give, we hope you will join us in our greatest celebration of giving we’ve ever had on our Day of Giving on Oct. 1. Together, our spirit of giving has helped grow that beautiful gift of vision from our founding families into a reality beyond what they could never have imagined back then.

On behalf of everyone who has come through Little City’s doors and from the bottom of our hearts, thank you for helping Little City make it to 60 years old.

Yours in service,

Shawn E. Jeffers, Executive Director

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Little City Spotlight

Jayne Drew Named New Chief Development Officer

Little City is pleased to introduce Jayne Drew as the new Chief Development Officer.

As Chief Development Officer, Jayne will oversee the entire Development Department including Marketing & Communications, Grants, Volunteer Services, Special Events, Government Affairs and all donor engagement and fundraising efforts including Major Gifts and Corporate Sponsorships.

In previous roles, Jayne has served as Director of Development & External Affairs for Meals on Wheels Chicago, as the National Director of Community Development for NephCure Kidney International in Philadelphia, and the National Director of Development and Marketing at GiGi’s Playhouse Down Syndrome Achievement Centers. Prior to Jayne joining the non-profit sector 10 years ago, she spent 25 years in the for-profit arena in a variety of leadership roles in a wide range of industries.

“Jayne brings the experience and perspective that will enhance and accelerate Little City’s effort to grow its private donation and fundraising base,” said Shawn Jeffers, Executive Director of Little City. “Her team-building and leadership skills will help Little City become an even greater presence in and resource for all the communities we serve.”

After three months, Jayne has already made a positive impact on the Development Department by increasing outreach, focusing on major gifts and strengthening corporate partnerships. She said she is excited to work with her dedicated team to grow Little City’s support.

“I am thrilled to be joining the Little City family right as we are celebrating our 60th anniversary, to lead the charge and enhance our image and grow our fundraising to position Little City for the next 60 years,” Jayne said.

Jayne earned her MBA from Durham University in England and a BS in Business (Finance, Economics) from Northern Illinois University. She is active on a number of boards and activist organizations, including for the Porchlight Music Theater. She has two young adult sons, Matthew and Max, and lives in Barrington.
Making a Difference

Little City DSP Acts Fast to Save a Life

All James Doyle wanted to do was go to his car and exhale. He was still coming to terms with something he had never done in his 30 years at Little City and something he never expected to do. He had just saved a life.

“People were congratulating me and saying I was a hero, but this is what we’re here for,” James said. “I just had to get out of the room and go sit in my car, but then realized I couldn’t get in my car because people were still eating. So once lunch was finished I just sat behind the computer and I was just drained. I started crying.”

James had performed his life saving act during the lunch hour when he used all 30 years of his training and all those years of CPR and First-Aid training to properly execute the Heimlich and save an individual from choking. Seconds felt like minutes and minutes like hours as he was the first to determine what caused the person – who could not speak or motion as to what was wrong – to go blue in the face.

While he still has no idea how long the ordeal lasted, James said the important part is he knows it was fast enough to prevent any long term damage as the person was checked out as just fine by the hospital after the incident.

For James, it was yet another happy ending to an unexpected event during his long Little City tenure. His start at Little City in 1988 was unexpected in itself as his aunt – herself a Little City employee for 20-plus years – suggested he apply for a summer job after seeing his easy-going way with the residents when he would pick her up from work.

That summer job, despite him having no previous experience working with people with developmental disabilities, turned into the most unexpected and rewarding career where he has met his wife, made lifelong friends and enjoyed watching the growth of those he serves every day.

“This is probably the most fun I have had in my 30 years. Now, as they are all older and I have seen them age, I get to play games with them and just say yes a lot,” James said. “What’s kept me here the longest has been watching everyone grow and learn new skills and just being there with them during that process. There is an old saying that goes if you love what you do you don’t work a day in your life and that is me to a tee.”

Foster Care Teen Defies the Odds and Heads to College

A young girl learning to cope with unspoken traumas and having no family sounds like the start of one of the true-crime stories Shaquita loves to watch. But this is Shaquita’s story and she’s never started anything she doesn’t finish. And Shaquita doesn’t end her story as a victim.

“In the very end, I hope to be a judge,” Shaquita says. “There are steps in between, but at the very end and my time is up, I’m going to be a judge.”

From the first day Shaquita came to Little City’s Foster Care & Adoption Program in 2012 as a special case from the Department of Children and Family Services due to severe emotional trauma, she has reversed the script on the story people expected of her.

She had tough times, but she stuck with her foster family. Then she attended Steinmetz College Prep in Chicago where she joined the volleyball, basketball and softball teams. Then she joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). But she didn’t just join, she also was crowned Military Ball Princess for being an outstanding student.

And now, she is a member of the Illinois State University Class of 2023 where she will study criminal justice.

“I wasn’t thinking much about college for her when I first met her,” said Jordan Sigunick, Shaquita’s case manager. “Then midway through her junior year she started talking about college and how she is interested in true-crime shows and wanted to study criminal justice. From that moment on, nothing but a four-year college would do.”

Staying busy and excelling at what she puts her mind to has always come natural for Shaquita. To get away from the issues, she threw herself into sports. To play sports, she knew she needed good grades. It was always part of the future she saw for herself.

“I don’t want to end up like my (biological) parents, so I better myself,” she said. “Sports were a great way to express that and I like helping people and doing different activities.”

Shaquita also recently received some help for the major transition to college as Second Bridge – an agency dedicated to supporting foster children – fulfilled her entire college wishlist within 24 hours of it being posted.

Shaquita plans to pay that generosity forward by staying involved in foster care causes and Little City – as her little sister is in the care of the same foster family. No matter what is next for Shaquita, Jordan has no doubt she will succeed in whatever she sets out to do.

“More than any child I have worked with, she has worked to overcome the cards that life dealt her to write her own story,” Jordan said. “And it is a really, really good story so far.”
A sea of orange and gray t-shirts filled the Little City gym this past July as more than 250 Discover volunteers armed with shovels, paint brushes and many tools in between revitalized Little City’s campus.

“Large groups of volunteers like Discover accomplish the impossible at Little City,” said Stephanie Darnell, associate director of volunteer engagement. “Without these groups, projects would never be completed. They bring so much drive and ambition to events and are willing to work hard as well as embrace and learn about our mission.”

The event was a part of the Discover Cares program that helps support the community by volunteering and donating time. Little City has become an annual visit by Discover volunteers as part of that program.

“Discover employees are committed to helping build stronger and brighter communities,” said Matthew Towson, director of community affairs at Discover.

“The volunteer support we’ve provided Little City over the years has always been meaningful to our employees. We hope the work our volunteers did in July has a positive and lasting impact on the Little City community.”

While on campus, Discover built 10 picnic tables, constructed multiple planter boxes and benches, washed Little City vehicles, painted the Center for the Arts and Center for Employment & Business Opportunities, put together activity kits, landscaped and made four small murals.

Discover wasn’t the only group that came out to help Little City this summer either.

Paramount Staffing created a new seating area for employees, painted picnic benches and mulched the front and side of the administrative building on campus.

“Our team really enjoyed spending time with Little City’s residents. Their attitude was uplifting to everyone who attended,” said Matt Schubert, owner of Paramount Staffing and Little City Board President. “Our company has been a believer since day one that to be a great company you have to be involved in the community. I highly recommend volunteering at Little City to anyone or any company who wants to see the spirit of Little City.”

Top: Paramount volunteers were happy to help paint picnic benches, create new seating areas for employees and do some much needed mulching to beautify the Little City campus.

Bottom: More than 250 Discover volunteers helped build picnic tables, planter boxes and benches, wash vehicles, paint the Center for Employment & Business Opportunities, create activity kits, landscape and design murals. The amazing effort was part of Discover’s annual Discover Cares program.

Among the volunteers were Scott Michelau (far left,) Vice President of Business Risk and Auditing, and Dan Capozzi (second from right,) Senior Vice President and General Manager of Deposit Products, who took a quick break to chat with Little City’s Chief Development Officer Jayne Drew and Executive Director Shawn Jeffers.
Little City Board Members Recognized for Achievements

Little City’s success is made possible by our dedicated staff, community support and bold leadership.

One of the most important components of that community support and leadership is Little City’s Board of Directors. From the very beginning, those on the Board have offered insightful leadership and invaluable connections to networks of supporters that have become close partners for decades.

The strength of our board lies in its diversity, whether it is a member with a family legacy dating back to the first days of Little City or a motivated professional who comes to us with a passion for our mission, the views and perspectives offered by our Board supports our today and shapes our tomorrow.

In an effort to properly recognize these amazing individuals, Little City will be launching a Board of Directors webpage. This new resource will not only give our Board members the recognition they deserve, but it will give our families and supporters an opportunity to get to know the people who help guide our future.

The site will not only include small biographies on each member, but frequent updates about their professional and charitable accomplishments. The success of our leaders is success for Little City and those milestones come often with our Board members. Recent examples include:

Chad Werkema: Promoted to Vice President of Global Operations at Motorola Solutions, Inc.

Motorola has been a close and valuable supporter of Little City for many years thanks in large part to Chad Werkema. Chad has been a Board member at Little City for nearly three years and has used the same vision and strategic planning to bolster Little City that now has him in a global leadership role for one of the top technology companies in the world. Chad has been with Motorola since 1995.

Mrinalini Lakshminarayanan: Recognized by the Women of M2M and IoT as an innovator and trailblazer.

Mrinalini, head of IoT Technology and Operations at Parker Hannifin, was recognized at the prestigious WoM2M Gala in Rosemont this past June. The annual gala recognizes the top women in technology from all across the country. Mrinalini was honored in an exclusive group of top professionals from places such as Amazon, Microsoft and the Department of Homeland Security.

Jack George: Featured on the cover of Leading Lawyers Magazine

Jack, who serves as general counsel for Little City, has established himself as the preeminent lawyer in real estate development throughout all of Chicago. Alongside his daughter and protégé, Meg, Leading Lawyers writes "The George family dominates redevelopment law in Chicago, advising on massive and complex projects that have shaped the growth and expansion of Chicago and will influence it well into the future." His fingerprints are on the Chicago skyline as much as Little City.

Little City congratulates Chad, Mrinalini and Jack for their amazing accomplishments and is grateful for the talents and vision they lend as Board members.

Our Helping Hands

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

- Assurance
- Berkshire Hathaway Koenig Rubloff: Schaumburg
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
- Boy Scouts of America
- Builtech Services LLC
- Career Education Corporation
- Chicago Cares
- Cornelius Inc.
- Discover
- Ernst and Young
- Friends of Countryside
- Foster Care Annual Picnic Volunteers
- Foster Care Parent Appreciation Day Volunteers
- Hands on Suburban
- Helping Hands and Heart Community Engagement Volunteer Event
- HSBC Bank USA
- Liberty Mutual
- Little City Invitational Golf Classic Volunteers
- Little City Parent/Family/Guardian Group
- Lou Malnati’s: Schaumburg
- Minecraft Volunteers
- National Eagle Scout Association
- Omron
- Optum
- Palatine Township: Apple Tree Program
- Paramount Staffing
- Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago
- Sherwin Williams
- Volunteer Match
- Village of Schaumburg
- William Rainey Harper College
- Wipfli LLP
- Zurich Foundation

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 2019.

- Greater Chicago Club Scholarship Foundation
- Retirement Research Foundation
- The RJN Foundation, Inc.
- Township of Schaumburg
- Wheeling Township
- Women’s Club of Inverness
- Zurich Foundation
Students Start New School Year

Heading up some of those new classrooms will be new teachers including John Kamplain, Rebekah Spaulding and Greg Prout. All three joined the school late last year, and with all 36 students being returning students, the transition for students and teachers heading into a full school year should be seamless.

In addition to the valuable classroom experience, the school will continue to increase its community learning experiences. Karrie said the Bryan D. Hancock School Bus will get plenty of use this year as one group of students will take community trips on Wednesdays and Thursdays while those closer to transitioning to adult programs will go on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

For the younger students, the trips provide an opportunity to learn how to grocery shop and locate important community resources like fire departments. For the older students, the trips involve learning how to use public transportation and even volunteering and being exposed to different businesses.

Karrie said the school is also hoping its grant proposal for a $50,000 PAES lab will come through this school year. PAES (Practical Assessment Exploration Station) is a multi-layered lab that offers simulated experiences in computer technology, construction and industrial jobs, consumer services, processing and production and more.

With the emphasis on vocational and life skill training, Karrie said students are more likely than ever to find rewarding community experiences and even employment by the time they graduate and move on.

“For our students who have the potential to do things like work at a job in the community, we want to give them as many opportunities as we can. That’s not everybody, but it is quite a few,” Karrie said. “All of our students are going to end up in an adult program somewhere, so they all need the skills to be more independent and ready for that step.”

...cont. from cover

to Little City. The Monday after, a group of roughly 15 Lou Malnati’s volunteers did major renovations to the Danby and Bradley CILA homes.

For Kerri Syperski, general manager of the Schaumburg Lou Malnati’s, she said she feels like the restaurant has been getting as much as it gives in the relationship with Little City, especially after the morale-boosting job shadowing event.

“I know as far as our staff, they loved it and asked if we could do it again. They had a great experience working alongside people who just smiled the whole time and kept the energy going,” Kerri said. “The workers from Little City seemed super excited and enjoyed every minute and didn’t want to stop working.”

Both Kerri and those at Little City fully expect the relationship to continue to grow and strengthen in the coming years. After successfully hosting 10 EDS students at one time – a number even Lori thought to be ambitious – the possibilities are endless for the future. Whether it is an ongoing enclave that serves as a real-world workshop, or a steady stream of full-fledged employees, Lori is not limiting the potential of what Lou Malnati’s can mean for all of Little City’s community employment hopefuls.

“The best thing about having opportunities like this is it opens up people’s minds and maybe leads them to apply where they normally wouldn’t. One of our students had been set on a place like Ace or Menards, but after this, she really enjoyed it and now food-service is an option,” Lori said. “It was such a valuable, hands-on experience and everyone worked so hard. I couldn’t be more proud.”
Little City’s marquee summer event was another huge success as more than 170 golfers brought in over $300,000 at the Little City Invitational on June 17th at Twin Orchard Country Club in Long Grove. Gary Shutan, a partner at Wipfli, was honored with the Morrie Kellman Humanitarian Award for his volunteerism and philanthropy.

Thanks to everyone who helped make it a special event including: **Birdie Sponsors:** Wipfli LLP, Trivest; **Par Sponsors:** Abt, J.C. Anderson, Barbara Bradford & Bob Sherman, CIBC, Chicago Blackhawks Foundation, Dentons, Friends of Kevin Desmond, Dussias Wittenberg Koenigsberger LLP, Jack George, Alec K. and Viena P. Gianaras Foundation, Ed & Andrea Hockfield, Hockfield, Keystone Capital, McHugh Construction, Mesirow Financial, RSM, Ethel & Joel Sharenow, Sysco Chicago, TTSG, William Blair & Co., Wintrust, The Hal Wolken Family & Sonic Drive-In’s; **Golf Hat Sponsor:** CIBC; **Golf Ball Sponsor:** Wipfli LLP; **Locker Room Sponsor:** Dentons

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**Center for Employment & Business Opportunities Receives an Impactful Renovation**

The Center for Employment and Business Opportunities building has a great new look thanks to a flooring donation. Barry Germaine (far right) from Pabcor Management and Mike Kautz (second from right) of Michael Kautz Flooring Designs made it possible by donating the materials necessary for this project.

“I live near here and have always been aware of Little City, so I wanted to get involved. Immediately when we visited, you could tell there are great people here. It’s just wonderful to give back to the community in such an impactful way,” Barry said about the project.

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**Golfers Help Raise Over $300,000 at Little City Invitational**

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Poker & Casino Night  
Friday, Sept. 27, 2019 | The Chicago Sports Museum at The Water Tower Place | www.littlecity.org/poker

Family Fall Fest  
Friday, Oct. 4, 2019 | 4:00-7:00 pm at Little City’s main campus  
Music • Food • Games • Crafts and much more!  
For more info contact Susan at: sclark@littlecity.org

2nd Annual Book Run  
June–Oct. 5, 2019 | www.littlecity.org/bookrun  
BBQ Celebration: Oct. 5, 2019 | Pointers Saloon | Marengo, IL

Little City Links  

61st Annual Dinner Gala  
Saturday, April 4, 2020 | The Drake Chicago | www.littlecity.org/gala

1959-2019 | Celebrating 60 Years

As we celebrate sixty years of transformation and inspiration, we also celebrate our growth. Today, we support over 1,400 children and adults with autism and other disabilities.

On Oct. 1 – our 60th Anniversary – help us continue to grow by donating to our first annual Day of Giving campaign at www.littlecity.org/DayOfGiving