FALL NEWSLETTER

Disability Resource Center
A Center for Independent Living

77 N. 129th Infantry Drive
Joliet, IL 60435
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MISSION STATEMENT

As people with disabilities and their advocates, Disability Resource Center strives for equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities in the Will and Grundy areas.

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WAYS TO GIVE

November 2026

Dear Friend of Disability Resource Center,

Disability Resource Center (DRC) and the individuals we serve rely on various sources of funding. However, many of these funds are restricted to specific programs, services, or expenses. For this year's Annual Appeal, we are requesting donations designated specifically for our Emergency Fund.

These donations will allow DRC to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities who are experiencing an emergency or unexpected hardship. The funds will help eligible individuals access or reconnect with essential services and supports needed to maintain their health, safety, and independence and to remain in their communities. Last year, with your help, we were able to assist ten (10) families experiencing an emergency. In order for these "emergency" funds to be distributed to a consumer in need certain criteria will need to be adhered to and submitted to Disability Resource Center.

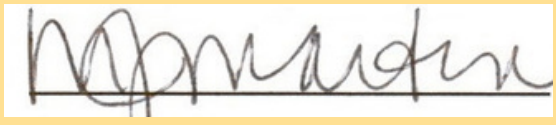
To learn more about our services, please visit our accessible website at www.drcjoliet.org. If you wish to make a donation online, you can submit your payment through PayPal. Simply click on "Ways to Give" and then select "PayPal." You may also mail your donation to:

Disability Resource Center
77 N. 129th Infantry Drive
Joliet, IL 60435

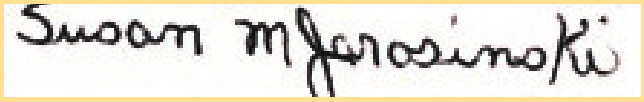
Your generous contribution will help DRC respond to urgent needs and provide a helping hand to individuals with disabilities when they need it most. Every donation makes a difference and helps us support individuals in maintaining their independence and remaining safely in their communities.

We both wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season filled with happiness and peace. May the coming year bring you good health, joy, prosperity, and countless blessings!

With Gratitude,



Sincerely,



Disability Resource Center
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UNITED WAY

DRC SUCCESS STORIES

W.W. is a consumer who is blind and deaf and was admitted to a long-term care (LTC) facility following medical complications. After completing rehabilitation, his mother contacted the Disability Resource Center (DRC) for assistance with helping him return home.

Through the Community Reintegration Program (CRP), DRC was able to assist W.W. by purchasing essential equipment and durable medical equipment (DME) to support his transition home and ensure he had access to the resources needed to meet his daily needs.

With DRC's support, W.W. successfully returned home and has now remained in the community for 90 days. He is doing well and continues to live in his home environment.



"A longtime consumer with us recently called to explain that due to her vision loss, she was having difficulty reading her mail, prescription bottles, and other important written material. She said she is on the hunt for a CCTV. A CCTV stands for Closed-Circuit Television, which refers to video magnifiers designed to assist individuals with low vision by enlarging text and images for better visibility. Our consumer's Independent Living Advocate did some research and found that this assistive device cost thousands of dollars. The Independent Living Advocate then decided to put together a list of consumers who are requesting particular devices in the hopes we come across one at some point. Months later, someone called looking to donate a CCTV! Now, our consumer has the ability to read print independently and is thrilled by the generosity of those willing to donate their assistive technology when they no longer need it."

PEER SOCIAL GROUPS

Men's Group: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 12:00pm-1:00pm.
Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at kevin@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Women's Group: 1st Monday of the month, 3:00pm-4:30pm
Contact Rachael at rachael@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Brain Injury Group: 3rd Thursday of the month, 4:30pm-6:00pm at DRC.
Contact Julee Opel at julee@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Social Support Group: 1st Wednesday of the month 10:00 am - 11:30 am at DRC
Contact Riley Spreadbury at riley@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Game Night: 2nd Friday of the month from 3:00pm-5:00pm.
Contact Kindall Carmouché at kindall@drcjoliet.org for more information. (Check DRC Happenings Calendar for location details).

Accessible Will County (AWC): The 1st Wednesday of the month from 1:00pm-3:00pm. Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at kevin@drcjoliet.org for more information.

Neurodiversity Connection: 3rd Monday of the Month
3:00 - 4:15 pm
Contact Kevin Huckfeldt at kevin@drcjoliet.org for more information.

ASL Signing Space
3rd Monday of the Month 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Contact Riley at riley@drcjoliet.org

Social Group for Adults with Physical Disabilities
2nd Wednesday of the Month 4:30 - 6:00 pm
Contact Riley at riley@drcjoliet.org



ITAC



📞 ITAC Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Disability Resource Center is pleased to provide ITAC amplified phone services to support individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Eligible consumers can receive an amplified landline telephone with a captioning tablet or a iPhone 16 with captioning Apps at no cost. Our staff is available to assist with the application process and answer any questions.

If you or someone you know could benefit from clearer, more accessible communication, contact the **Disability Resource Center (DRC)** to learn more about our ITAC services!

Please contact Nicole at:

815-729-0162





EARLY START PRE-EMPLOYMENT CAREER TRAINING PROGRAM (EARLY START PECT)

Early Start PECT is a free, in-school program designed for students with disabilities (ages 14-21) who are not yet part of the Department of Rehabilitation Services vocational rehabilitation program. Taught by our Independent Living Advocates, this program complements school curriculum and covers key skills like Self-Advocacy, Job Exploration, Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness, and Work-Based Learning.





S.K.I.L.L.S. PROGRAMS

The S.K.I.L.L.S. Program empowers individuals with disabilities to live more independently by offering a wide range of training, from financial education to communication skills, legislative internships, and household management. This program is available upon request in both group and individual settings.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

In partnership with Joliet Junior College and Lewis University, the Community Connections Program offers students with disabilities (ages 18-22) who are not enrolled in a Transition Program the opportunity to gain a valuable on-campus experience. This free, non-accredited course focuses on Independent Living Skills such as Self-Advocacy, Work Readiness, Job Exploration, and Work-Based Learning.



Participants learn essential skills for living and working independently, including employment strategies, building healthy relationships, leadership, teamwork, and communication.
Registered Lewis students receive a student ID and email address and have access to clubs, sports, and events open to enrolled students.



For more information, contact Kindall Carmouché at (815) 729-0162 or kindall@drcjoliet.org

PERSONAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Personal Assistant Coordinator Services

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) Personal Assistant Coordinator provides training for individuals interested in becoming Personal Assistants (PAs), helps consumers find PAs on DRC's PA list, and provides referrals for the Home Services Program.

Interested in Becoming a Personal Assistant?

PAs assist individuals with disabilities with daily living tasks, including personal care, meal preperation, shopping, light housekeeping and other approved needs.

DRC provides training covering Home Services Program guidelines, communication skills, care techniques, employer-employee relationships, and payment information. No prior healthcare expierence is needed. After completing the required training and orientation, eligible PAs may be added to the local referral registry.

Do You Need A Personal Assistant?

*Approved Home Services Program Consumer? Contact DRC for the PA referral list

*Need a PA but haven't applied for the Home Services Program? DRC can provide you with information or submit the referral with you.

Contact Amy Hahn, Personal Assistant Coordinator
amy@drcjoliet.org
815-729-0162

HIGHLIGHTS FROM JULY 1, 2026 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

Information and Referral:
Staff assisted 393 people with information and referral inquiries.

Independent Living Skills:
Staff assisted 545 people with independent living skills and life skills services.

Housing:
67 individuals were referred to the Statewide Referral Network.

Assistive Technology for Children Program:
6 consumers (0-23 years old) with disabilities received an assistive technology device that helped them to participate more fully in their lives.

ITAC:
54 individuals received amplified hard of hearing devices through the ITAC Program.

Personal Assistant Training:
13 individuals were recruited, trained, and put on the P.A. List.

Pathways to Partnerships
376 students participated in the Pathways to Partnerships Program.



Early Start
406 Students Participated in Early Start PECT.

Peer Counseling
190 Consumers received Peer Counseling.

Community Reintegration Program (CRP)
2 Successful move-outs.



We have added two new employees to the DRC team



Yvette Wilkinson

Pathways Coordinator

Yvette holds a Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology



Rachael Johnson

Independent Living Advocate & Early Start PECT Coordinator

Rachael studied Psychology at the University of Nebraska Omaha and holds graduate degrees in Family and Human Development and Social Work from Arizona State University.



2026 - 2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Rachael Johnson, Independent Living Advocate
Alicia Pernell, Community Transition Coordinator
Kurt Kociss, Pathways Coordinator
Yvette Wilkinson, Pathways Coordinator
Miguel Vargas, Administrative Intern

