

Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living  
2415-A W. Jefferson Street  
Joliet, Illinois 60435

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Will-Grundy

**CENTER** for INDEPENDENT LIVING

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## HERALDING of 2011 HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 2,341 individuals received Information and Referral in Program Year 2010-2011.
- As part of the Center's Community Reintegration Program, a total of 22 adults with disabilities were reintegrated from nursing homes to their own residences. Several took part in a rally in Springfield to advocate with legislators that the CR program be spared from extreme budget cuts. Additionally, two were married and enjoy their new lives.
- Sixteen youth with disabilities took part in the Center's new Youth Leadership Program. The program allows CIL staff to teach disabled high school students vital skills including basics of budgeting government, job preparedness, effective communication skills, etc. Several young leaders have emerged from the group.
- Having opened an office in Grundy County in January, 2011, staffed twice a week, the Center continues to make its services more widely available and accessible. In 2011, staff participated in community events and outreach with Saratoga Tower residents, schools and local leaders. In 2012, the Center looks forward to working with more disabled seniors and veterans, as well as a group of disabled youth and their families from Special Connections, offering an educational youth leadership program. For more informations, call Debbie at (815) 416-6460 V/TTY.

- Amplified Telephones were provided free of charge to 235 hearing impaired individuals in 2011! The Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation (ITAC) designated WGCIL as a distribution center for these free amplified phones many years ago, and is thrilled to be offering this valuable assistive technology to those living independently for whom it benefits.
- Twenty-three youth with disabilities benefitted from Assistive Technology grants, from which parents and their disabled children selected the most suitable technology device.



## Independent Living Skills and "Money Smart" Courses Empower and Educate

Since October, 2011, Independent Living Skills Advocate Mary Tisdale has been facilitating a monthly workshop series that has become a great asset to consumers. To make it easier for consumers with disabilities to participate in both segments, she has arranged for Independent Living Skills Training to be followed by the Financial Education Program all in one day.

Twenty-five consumers -- representing a range of disabilities and ages -- have participated in this joint program. As the hallmark of the Center's resources, independent living skills are essential to disabled consumers who wish to do for themselves, in alignment with the independent living philosophy. Whether how to utilize public transportation to housekeeping hints, or health and wellness tips, the information and peer support is a win win for all involved. With support from Old Plank Trail Community Bank and its Money Smart course, the Center is greatly appreciative of the Bank's sponsorship of the program. Thanks to the expertise of Holly Bishop and Kathy Devlin, Old Plank Trail representatives, who help adult consumers learn basic, but vital, money management skills. Call Mary for details!

**KEEPING IN CONTACT:** *In an effort to cut costs but keep our consumers, partners and supporters informed, we are seeking email addresses of those who want to stay updated. If you would like to learn of WGCIL program and event updates via email, please send a note to Steve Miller at [stevewgil@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevewgil@sbcglobal.net). Also, check out our new and improved, updated website at [will-grundycil.org](http://will-grundycil.org), or on Facebook!*

- "My child received an assistive technology device from the Will-Grundy CIL and it has changed all of our lives...."  
-- *Mother of a child with a disability*
- "Being able to live independently with the help of a Personal Assistant, thanks to support from the Center and the Community Reintegration staff, has meant the world to me. My disability no longer holds me back, and the programs make life easier, too."  
-- *Russell, visually impaired adult consumer, Joliet resident*
- "Although I am retired, I like to remain active and social, which is why I am so glad I learned about and received a free amplified telephone from the Center. Thanks!"  
-- *Retired resident of Frankfort*
- "Thanks to the Center's Morris office staff, who I met at the Chamber Health Expo, for her help in working with me on Medicare Part D and getting a rate reduction on several bills."  
-- *Disabled veteran from Morris*

### Board of Directors

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### Staff

Pam Heavens, *Executive Director*  
Kelly McKenzie, *Personal Assistant and DMD Coordinator*  
Mary Tisdale, *Independent Living Skills Advocate*  
Debbie Tarrant, *Independent Living Skills Advocate*  
Heidi Litchfield, *Community Reintegration Advocate*  
Olivia Cruikshank, *Reintegration Aide*  
Steve Miller, *Development Director*  
Missy Martin, *Administrative Assistant*  
Marie Malfatti, *Administrative Aide/Bookkeeper*

#### Will County Office

2415 W. Jefferson Street  
Joliet, IL 60435

(815) 729-0162 Voice  
(815) 768-2582 VP/VRS

Hours: Monday thru Friday  
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

#### Grundy County Office

1700 Newton Place  
Morris, IL 60450

Located in Saratoga Tower  
(815) 416-6460 v/tty

Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Check out our new and improved website for news and updates at

[www.will-grundycil.org](http://www.will-grundycil.org)

## Disability Mentoring Day 2011

Once again this year, Kelly McKenzie, the Center's Disability Mentoring Day Coordinator and Personal Assistant Advocate, worked successfully with a volunteer committee, special education/vocational rehabilitation teachers and students with disabilities from five local schools for another terrific job shadowing program.

Students from Joliet Central, Plainfield Central, South and North took part in the career exploration opportunity which was held on November 15, 2011. With more than 30 workplace mentors volunteering to participate, Kelly matched 15 of them with students who had expressed an interest in their area of employment, and the half-day job shadowing matches made for many great stories of mutually beneficial match-ups. Mission accomplished!



Thanks to all the workplace mentors: Applebee's, Culver's, Red Lobster, Golden Corral, Stanton Architecture, Provena St. Joseph Medical Center, D'Arcy Motors, Grace United Methodist Church, Greg's Auto Body, Impress Printing, Joliet

## WGCIL 2012:

### Focus on Youth Leadership

The Center's staff has been working diligently to bring its programs and services to the growing population of youth with disabilities. Last fall, a Legislative Internship Program was held for transitioning consumers -- high school graduates -- from Hopewell Academy in New Lenox and Career and Community Connections in Lockport. Thanks to the staff and students involved in these two great programs, the Center provided its popular Legislative Internship program to nearly 30 youth. Leadership skills and understanding the legislative process are key to this course, which ran from October, 2011, through January, 2012, and the power of the program was clear. Hats off to all of those who worked hard and took part in the program. Already in 2012, the Center's Youth Leadership Program is working with Lockport East High School and Joliet West High School to help high school students with disabilities gain vital and valuable independent living skills and be empowered with advocacy and action-oriented ideas.

Township Animal Control, National Weather Service, Joliet Junior College Police, Slammers Baseball Team, Our Lady of Angels. Special appreciation to Joliet Junior Woman's Club, who sponsored and delivered lunch for the students during their job shadowing experience, and all Committee members. Huge thanks to the teachers whose time and dedication made it a successful program that our Center is proud to have been part of for so many years. Contact Kelly to get involved in DMD 2012. Mentors matter!



## This Just In...

Great news from the office of Will County Executive Larry Walsh. Chief of Staff Nick Palmer has sent word to the Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living and other community partners who served on the Will County RTA Paratransit Committee, that the County HAS received a grant to expand paratransit services and transportation for disabled consumers. Hats off to the County Executive's office, the County Board, and all committee members, including representatives from Pace, municipality and township reps, and service agencies! Transportation was THE top priority of the Disability Advisory Panel when first created by Walsh in 2004. This grant marks significant progress, as was the 2010 study, and will help answer the needs of disabled consumers for better, customer-focused transportation. Stay tuned!

### Personal Assistant Management Corner

*For those consumers who are currently utilizing a Personal Assistant, and for those who are hired to be one, here is some valuable insight from Kelly McKenzie:*

The lack of communication is usually the reason personal assistant/consumer working relationships come to an end. It is essential that consumers communicate with their personal assistant(s) to handle conflicts that may arise. Consumers should be willing to listen as well as talk. Positive feedback and constructive criticism are another effective part of managing personal assistants. **Remember:** Positive reinforcement is always appreciated!

# THANK YOU for MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

## WGCIL Donors for Program year 2010 – 2011

### \$10,000+

James E. Hearn  
Charitable Foundation

### \$1,000 – \$5,000

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### PLEASE JOIN THE

Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living's  
Annual Meeting and Celebration of Independence

**Noon, Wednesday, April 18, 2012**

For more information, please go to:

[www.will-grundycil.org](http://www.will-grundycil.org)