



# Annual Report 2007-2008



*CENTER for  
INDEPENDENT  
LIVING*





*CENTER for INDEPENDENT LIVING*

**PROFESSIONAL,  
PERSONABLE PEOPLE  
MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE**

The Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living is a unique service organization, in many ways, one of which is that its staff and Board are comprised of a majority of disabled individuals. These individuals serve as exemplary role models for consumers of all ages, as well as providing peer support that enhances outcomes, establishes long-term relationships, and provides valuable community visibility to the non-disabled general public, as well as local leaders and elected officials who have come to know and respect the CIL team.

**Staff Members throughout  
Program Year 2007-2008:**

- Pam Heavens, Executive Director
- Festus Fabilola, Program Manager
- Carol Warunek, Office/Business Manager
- Lyda Dew, Administrative Assistant
- Marie Malfatti, Clerical Aide
- Mike Lord, Clerical Aide/Home Ownership Advocate
- Kelly McKenzie, Personal Assistant Advocate
- Mary Tisdale, Independent Living Advocate
- Debbie Tarrant, Community Reintegration Advocate
- Laura Zeiger, Independent Living Advocate
- Tijuana Sanders, Community Reintegration Advocate
- Jerry Kewley, Low Vision Advocate
- Maria-Cristina del-Moral Hansen, Hispanic Outreach Advocate
- Te'Aira Malone, Deaf Advocate

**Volunteer Board of Directors**

- Val Rand, President
- Carol Cawvey, Vice President
- Denise Winfrey, Secretary
- Dan Donica, Treasurer
- Andrea Robison, Delegate-at-Large
- Ann Johnson, Officer
- Margaret Ward, Officer
- Bob Smith, Officer
- Jim Albritton, Officer
- Sister Rosemary Small, Officer
- Alan Trantina, Officer

## **TAKING PRIDE IN PROGRAMS and SERVICES**

Core Services offered at the Will-Grundy Center for Independent are  
focused on these four primary elements:

***Independent Living Skills Training and Enhancement***  
***Information and Referral***  
***Individual Advocacy***  
***Systems Advocacy***

Specialized Services and Customized Programs of the Center include, but are not limited to:

<b><i>Accessible Cities Alliance (ACA)</i></b>	<b><i>Legislative Internship Program</i></b>
<b><i>Amplified Telephone Distribution (ITAC)</i></b>	<b><i>Low Vision Loan Closet</i></b>
<b><i>Assistive Technology Resources and Referral</i></b>	<b><i>Parent and Family Support Services</i></b>
<b><i>Business/Government Compliance Support</i></b>	<b><i>Personal Assistant Coordination/Registry</i></b>
<b><i>Community Reintegration</i></b>	<b><i>Sensitivity Training</i></b>
<b><i>Computer Courses</i></b>	<b><i>School Outreach Presentations</i></b>
<b><i>Deaf Services</i></b>	<b><i>Sign Language Classes</i></b>
<b><i>Disability Awareness</i></b>	<b><i>Support Groups for Men, Women, Youth</i></b>
<b><i>Disability Law Compliance Workshops</i></b>	<b><i>Transportation Training</i></b>
<b><i>Educator Liaison/IEP Coordination</i></b>	<b><i>Video Relay Service</i></b>
<b><i>Educational Outreach</i></b>	<b><i>Volunteer Corps</i></b>
<b><i>Fair Housing Information</i></b>	<b><i>Voter Registration</i></b>
<b><i>Financial Education Training</i></b>	<b><i>Workshops</i></b>
<b><i>Hispanic Translation</i></b>	<b><i>Youth Programming</i></b>
<b><i>Interpreter Referral</i></b>	

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The number of individuals who received **information and referrals from our Center in the Program Year 2007-2008 totalled 3,961**. This marks the third highest number in as many years, and it is with great pride that we continue to promote the Center as a leading resource in its service region!

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## **Who is Served**

### ***Youth and Families seeking information and resources***

Whether it is through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which a staff member works on with a teacher, a Disability Mentoring Day career exploration opportunity, assistive technology provided by vouchers from the Abbey Woods Foundation, any of a number of parent workshops, or Legislative Internships provided to transitioning post-high school graduates, the Center's youth services provide customized and caring support in many ways to many children, adolescents and families. We outreach to related service agencies, promote independent living in schools, partner with administrators and Special Education teachers, and continually encourage families to take advantage of the broad range of resources, skilled experts and independent living advocates offered at the Center.

### ***Adults, seniors and veterans with all types of disabilities***

These specific target groups represent an increasing consumer base at the Center.

The Center has worked hard in the past year to extend outreach to this expanding population, and is proud that the numbers served reflect positive results. From assistive technology and various household devices to increase independence for individuals with limited or low vision, to amplified telephones for hard of hearing, as well as independent living skills, transportation training and financial education. Our Legislative Internship Program, Disability Law Series, Liberty Launch and special events continued to be popular and well-attended in the past Program Year, which is a tribute to the staff, its community of expert partners, and of course the consumers whose time and commitment make the difference as proof positive that the Center's mission as a key resource is accomplished.

### ***Elected Officials, State and Local Government Agency Staff on key advocacy issues***

The Center prides itself on being the area's one stop shop for disability issues, and nowhere was that more evident than with the 2008 Disability Forum. This educational event, held in conjunction with the ADA anniversary in July, 2008, was a great example of the ways in which the Center and its Accessible Cities Alliance partners with elected officials, civic leaders and municipality representatives to provide current, comprehensive and collaborative information and resources which promote disability rights, both individually and system-wide. Impressive experts on the amended ADA, voting and parking access, as well as emergency management resources, were featured and well-received by civic leaders, as well as the more than 100 disabled adults, seniors and veterans in attendance.

The Center's leadership on legislative affairs focuses on productive and positive partnerships with elected officials in the federal, state and local governments. Ongoing communication, meetings and issue updates ensure key issues of disability rights and equal access are represented. For the Center and all disabled residents of Will and Grundy Counties, these CIL's efforts continue to produce a valuable exchange of ideas, forward-thinking initiatives and tangible results.

### ***Business and Community Leaders***

Additionally, the Center works regularly with business leaders, Chambers of Commerce and economic development planners, as well as individual business owners and state and regional professionals regarding access, reasonable accommodations, transportation, employment and planning. Recommendations on compliance of federal and state access laws, updates on key issues, suggestions on local program initiatives and ongoing outreach are key components of these relationships where the Center serves as a vital cog in the wheel of continued and equal access.

### ***Related Agency Collaboration***

Partnerships with fellow social service representatives and the many local advocacy organizations are critical to the positive progress of disability issues throughout Will and Grundy Counties. Amassing and capitalizing on support of a cross-section of disabled persons of all ages sends a clear and compelling message to the community, its leaders and elected officials who continually dedicate their time and support to expand disability rights thanks to this unique and admirable local network.

# AN ACTIVE YEAR: ADVOCACY, OUTREACH, EDUCATION and EXPANSION

## Fall/Winter

The Fall season, always a busy time at the Center, led off the 2007-2008 year with a trifecta of important events that drive home the Center's key priorities: advocacy, outreach, education and accomplishment.

The "**Liberty Launch**" event in early October served as a rally by independent living advocates to help educate elected officials about the importance of understanding and funding community reintegration. Adult disabled consumers of the Center spoke about their own experiences in nursing homes, and empowered those in attendance with their success stories about community reintegration. The program was coordinated by the Campaign for Real Choice with whom the Center is always proud to collaborate.

Now an annual success story of its own, **Disability Mentoring Day** in mid-October was a the largest ever such local job shadowing event for high school students with disabilities. Career exploration is the focus at workplaces across the region where mentors share their experiences and answer questions on various 'real world' jobs where students express an interest. More than 80 students from seven high schools were paired with 60 mentors in what is truly a team effort showing community-wide cooperation.

The **Special Education Conference for Parents** was coordinated by the Center to support the needs of families with school-aged children with disabilities. Expert speakers presented valuable one-stop shop resources and insight to enhance the school experience.

The Center's **Annual Meeting**, held every November, allows CIL leadership to express appreciation to its outstanding staff and board, consumers, volunteers and civic leaders whose support is critical to CIL success. Consumer Charles Fuqua accepted the Ed Roberts Excellence in Independent Living Award. Laurie McPhillips, then Will County Recorder of Deeds, received the Accessibility Achievement Award, and Mike Lord earned the Volunteer of the Year Award. State Senator A.J. Wilhelmi and State Representative Jack McGuire earned Special Recognition for their support in securing funds for the Low Vision Loan Center. Featured guest speaker was Rob Kilbury, Director of the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services who wowed the crowd of nearly 80 guests.

## Spring/Summer

The Spring and Summer saw little slowdown in action at the Center. A generous **Harrah's Foundation grant** to the Center was a great way to start the spring season in late March. After the **2008 Legislative Internship** session was complete, graduating consumers joined board members and staff in Springfield to test out their skills. **The INCIL/CCDI Annual Conference** was the first-ever collaborative conference hosted by the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living and the Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois, focusing on legislative advocacy, workshops and resources.

Summer activities were jam-packed with valuable educational outreach programs and public events. The **Summer Disability Law Series** featured in-depth presentations and discussions on disability related legislation. Experts on the IDEA, Fair Housing Act and other hot topics included elected officials, judges, lawyers and advocates with impressive background on key issues of importance to disabled adult consumers who participated in the 6-week Series.

To commemorate the anniversary of the ADA in late July, the first of its kind **Disability Forum** was held by the Center. Presented by the CIL's Accessible Cities Alliance, this event was targeted to disabled adults, seniors and veterans. Elected officials and staff from Will County and local towns were also on hand to learn the latest information on everything from accessible voting, disaster preparedness, the Secretary of State's

handicapped parking program, State Treasurer's programs, County access measures, and an ADA Amendments Act status report. The ACA was proud to present its "Ambassador of the Year" Award to Robin Jones and the Great Lakes ADA Center based at UIC for their resourcefulness to the Center, the business community and area municipalities.

Fall activities found the Center's staff and consumers busily working together on many free programs and expanded services to meet the growing demand of an increasing consumer base. Both the **Transportation Training** the Center began offering and the "back by popular demand" 8-week **Financial Education Program** are vital independent living skills courses taught by capable and committed CIL staff. The consumers gain knowledge, independence and confidence. Youth continue to access assistive technology grants made available through the Abbey Woods Foundation, and senior consumers received support with Medicare Part D coordination and L-Heap applications. A growing number of hard-of-hearing area residents took advantage of the **ITAC free amplified telephones**, while individuals with vision loss stopped into the **Low Vision Loan Center** for assistive technology, tips and useful "try before you buy" opportunities. Such supportive services are offered free year-round. A quarterly newsletter, the **Barrier Free Press**, distributes timely news and events to more than 4,000 individuals, and ongoing community outreach attracts new consumers, while keeping local leaders and supporters well-informed. The Center proudly serves as a valued resource on key issues.

Last but not least, the Center was thrilled to have its **office expansion** completed. Thanks to the efforts of State Representatives Tom Cross and Brent Hassert, the Center secured a grant which allowed it to add a new reception area facing Jefferson Street for greater visibility. Additionally, a conference room, computer lab, assistive technology/ ITAC amplified phone distribution room, and extra storage were added after months of planning and a great team of contractors and specialists working with the staff and board.



State Representatives Tom Cross and Brent Hassert were instrumental in securing a state grant in 2008 which allowed the Center to expand its office space, including this new conference room where the legislators are joined by Executive Director Pam Heavens and Board members Val Rand and Denise Winfrey.



A consumer, volunteer, and current Board member, Charles Fuqua earned the Ed Roberts Excellence in Independent Living Award, presented here by CIL staffer Laura Zeiger during the 18th Annual Meeting.



The 2008 Disability Forum began with Robin Jones of the Great Lakes ADA Center receiving the Accessible Cities Alliance "Ambassador of the Year Award" on behalf of her staff from ACA advisors.



After completing an 8-week course, these Financial Education Program graduates were congratulated by Michael Steward, from Will County Treasurer Pat McGuire's office (top left), Helen Puente of NuMark Credit Union (top right), and the Center's Mary Tisdale (front right).

**- Community Reintegration empowers disabled adults to live independently**

An adult male from Morris is thrilled with the collaboration that he witnessed when the Center supported his community reintegration from a nursing home to an apartment in Grundy County. He is now an active CIL consumer, registered voter and participant in many educational programs which have combined to create a confident, active, advocacy-minded and motivated individual. Similar case studies from Will County have emerged over the past year as 18 adults have been assisted with Community Reintegration in the past year.

**- Low Vision Loan Closet liberates consumers at home**

Household items made specifically for persons with low vision are plentiful in the Center's Low Vision Loan Closet which has been expanded to include a vast array of customized devices and assistive technology products from varied suppliers. One elderly woman boasts of her new-found independence after having tried out several useful products which help with preparing food and having to rely less on others for assistance.

**- Video Relay Service enables families to reconnect**

Many consumers from the Deaf Seniors organization are welcome regulars on the VRS. Many share stories of the enthusiasm of their family members across the country who can stay in contact with them, some for the first time in years, and see them signing on the screen for the first time. This communication also allows consumers to touch base with service and medical providers which further enhances their independence and quality of life.

**- Amplified Phones allow seniors to stay connected**

From the many thank you notes received to the happy faces coming and going, it is clear the consumers taking advantage of the ITAC free amplified phones are pleased with their product. Nearly 300 phones were distributed in the past Program Year. The glowing commentaries received make it quite satisfying to the CIL staff that meets with the new consumers in the newly-expanded office space dedicated to this equipment.

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**Consumers At-a-Glance**

The following statistics reflect consumers receiving direct services:

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Race</b>	
Female:	97	African American:	63
Male:	81	Caucasian:	106
<b>Age</b>		Hispanic:	8
Under age 5:	1	Other:	1
5-19 years:	20	<b>Disability</b>	
20-24 years:	23	Mental/Emotional	81
25-59 years:	121	Physical	33
60+ years:	4	Multiple Disabilities	46
Unknown:	1	Vision	6
		Hearing	4
		Cognitive	4
		Other	5

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# PARTNERS YIELD PROGRESS, SEIZE POTENTIAL

- Agencies United
- Association of People with Disabilities
- Black Deaf Associates
- Career and Community Connections
- Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois
- Community Services Council
- Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center
- Grundy County Chamber/CED
- Grundy County Inter-Agency Coalition
- Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living
- Inter-Agency Council/Will County United Way
- Joliet Lions Club
- Joliet Mayor's Committee on Disabilities
- Joliet Chamber of Commerce
- Latino Business Association/Hispanic Coalition
- PACE Advisory Council
- RTA Advisory Committee
- Rotary Club of Joliet
- Silver Cross Community Trustees
- Statewide Independent Living Council
- United Way of Will County Southwest Suburban  
Philanthropic Network
- Will County Continuum of Care
- Will County Executive's Disability Advisory Panel

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## In Memorium

*The Center lost a few good men in this past year, although the memory lives on.*

**Bang Long**, longtime disability advocate, charter CIL Board member and DMD Coordinator

**Pete Neff**, supporter of the Center and Summer Serenade volunteer along with wife Pat

**Ken O'Brien**, talented journalist, role model for disabled adults and friend of the Center

**John Salvatore**, an original CIL Board member in 1989, and a faithful Serenade guest.

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## **SOLID SUPPORT ENABLES STABILITY AND GROWTH**

Operating solely on grants and contributions, our Center continues to serve an expanding consumer base emerging from two of the fastest-growing counties in Illinois. The Board of Directors and staff are grateful for the monetary support received from varied and valued partners, who are clearly vital in these difficult economic times.

### ***Grants from federal and state sources include:***

- U.S. Department of Education
- Illinois Department of Human Services - Division of Rehabilitation Services

### ***Contributions have been made by the following organizations in Program Year 2007-2008:***

- United Way of Will County
- United Way of Grundy County
- Abbey Woods Foundation
- Catholic Campaign for Human Development
- Crane Fund for Widows and Children
- James E. Hearn's Charitable Foundation
- Holly Club
- Joliet Junior Woman's Club
- Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation

### ***Corporate donations to support the Center's programs were received from these companies:***

- Caterpillar, Inc.
- "D" Construction
- D'Arcy Motors
- First Midwest Bank
- Founders Bank
- Harrah's Joliet
- Northern Illinois Steel Supply Company
- Remco Medical
- Senesac & Lennon Ltd. CPA
- Wal-Mart Super Center of Morris

### ***The following generous individuals offered significant financial support in the way of private donations to the Center in the past year:***

- Ed and Gloria Dollinger/Edward Jones Investments
- John Heavens
- Andy and Cindy June
- Bill and Evelyn Michas
- Richard and Mary Beth DeGrush

Last but not least, great thanks also to our 2008 Summer Serenade Guests, more than 150, as well as dozens of Program Book advertisers and donors who could not attend but offered financial support, for helping to make it our most successful annual fundraising gala yet. Hope to see you again this year for another terrific event!

# SENESAC & LENNON, LTD.

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS • PERSONAL FINANCIAL SPECIALISTS

Stephen A. Senesac, CPA/PFS

David D. Lennon, CPA/PFS

## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

The Board of Directors  
Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living (a non-profit organization) as of June 30, 2008 and 2007, and the related statement of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living as of June 30, 2008 and 2007, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated September 10, 2008, on our consideration of the Organization's internal control over financial reporting and our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards and should be read in conjunction with this report in considering the results of our audit.



September 10, 2008

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**WILL-GRUNDY CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**June 30, 2008 and 2007**

	June 30, <u>2008</u>	June 30, <u>2007</u>
<b><u>Assets</u></b>		
Current:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 2)	\$ 290,534	\$ 257,117
Investments ( Note 2)	297,770	317,523
Prepaid expenses	6,450	12,631
Grants receivable (Note 3)	<u>55,243</u>	<u>55,268</u>
Total current assets	649,997	642,539
Property and equipment - net (Note 4)	159,757	59,647
Deposits and other	<u>1,600</u>	<u>1,600</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 811,354</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 703,786</u></b>
<b><u>Liabilities and Net Assets</u></b>		
Current:		
Accounts payable	\$ 14,778	\$ 13,418
Accrued liabilities (Note 5)	8,232	6,950
Deferred revenue	<u>41,072</u>	<u>40,883</u>
Total current liabilities	64,082	61,251
Long-term debt	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b><u>64,082</u></b>	<b><u>61,251</u></b>
Unrestricted net assets	<u>747,272</u>	<u>642,535</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 811,354</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 703,786</u></b>

**WILL-GRUNDY CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**  
**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY**  
**Years ended June 30, 2008 and 2007**

	June 30, <u>2008</u>	June 30, <u>2007</u>
Revenues and other support:		
Federal and state grants	\$ 755,859	\$ 582,649
Other grants	108,531	86,245
Fund-raising and contributions	74,801	63,349
Fees for services	15,830	13,960
Investment returns	(18,378)	51,539
Other	<u>2,267</u>	<u>1,590</u>
Total revenue and other support	<u>938,910</u>	<u>799,332</u>
Expenses:		
Program services	674,181	525,677
Management and general	149,592	138,349
Fundraising	<u>10,400</u>	<u>8,109</u>
Total expenses	<u>834,173</u>	<u>672,135</u>
Change in net assets	104,737	127,197
Net assets, beginning of year	<u>642,535</u>	<u>515,338</u>
Net assets, end of year	<b><u>\$ 747,272</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 642,535</u></b>

Visit or call:  
2415-A W. Jefferson Street  
Joliet, Illinois 60435

815-729-0162 (Phone)  
815-729-3697 (FAX)  
815-729-2085 (TTY)

Visit our websites:  
[www.will-grundycil.org](http://www.will-grundycil.org)  
[www.ada411.com](http://www.ada411.com)

Our Center is an active member of the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, working in collaboration with INCIL leadership and 22 other Centers statewide.



The Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living is a proud United Way agency.  
Live United.



The WGCIL is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization which operates solely on grants and contributions. We appreciate and welcome ongoing support. Contact the Executive Director to discuss annual giving and program sponsorship.

## Our Mission

As people with disabilities and their advocates, the Will-Grundy Center for Independent Living strives for equality and empowerment of persons with disabilities in the Will and Grundy County areas.

The Center is a cross-disability, community-based organization. We are your local resource for information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability related laws. We inform persons with disabilities of their rights, educate them about their responsibilities, provide support services, promote advocacy, and raise community awareness and disability issues.