A Powerful Partnership

DRC, Cornerstone Services and Joliet Junior College have partnered to form a new program: "JJC Community Connections." This program provides educational and career pathways for young people ages 18 and up who want to develop basic educational and employment skills. Completion of the program will allow career-ready students to complete their goals with Cornerstone Services and/or for college-ready students to pursue academic goals with Joliet Junior College. Costs for these courses will be covered by grant funds administered by DRC. Students interested in the program will need to apply through DRC to determine eligibility. A pilot program will start July 1st, with the full rollout on August 12.

The initial course offering, which begins August 12, is "Transition to College & Career Skills." This 16-session course includes a job shadowing experience, will cover the following topics:

- Self-Advocacy
- Time Management
- Decision Making
- Goal Setting
- Communication
- Career Readiness
- Resumes & Applications
- Interviewing
- Workplace Responsibilities
- Career Management
- Managing Stress
- Employment Law

For more information about the program, contact Missy Martin or Jerrod Nichols at (815) 729-0162 or email jerrod@drcjoliet.org


**Destination: Springfield**

*Independent Living Day Rally & ITAC Training & Banquet*

*May 16, 2019*

On this busy day, DRC staff “divided and conquered” in the city of Springfield. Some staff attended the "Red White & Bluetooth" ITAC Training and Banquet event for continuing education about the ITAC free amplified phone program as well as accept an award for Highest Amplified Phone Distribution for 2018. Marie Malfatti accepted the $2,500 award on behalf of DRC.

The rest of the staff joined the other 21 Centers for Independent Living at the State Capitol building for the Independent Living Rally Day. Eight consumers accompanied Independent Living Advocates Katy Hoyer and Sam Knight to the capitol, where they spoke to legislative staff about issues affecting people with disabilities, such as fair budgeting and community living.

**Assistive Technology Smiles!**

As individuals with disabilities and our allies, we at DRC strongly believe that everyone, no matter their abilities, has the right to live, work, and play on their own terms!

For this reason, we were thrilled to have had the opportunity to purchase an **adaptive swing** for this young girl on the left, allowing her to explore play and social interaction in a way that is comfortable for her. On the right is Independent Living Advocate Katy Hoyer (L) and an AT consumer (R) with his brand new **iPod**. He will use his new device to live more independently by allowing him to schedule appointments, communicate better on the job, make lists, and listen to audiobooks and music. Both purchases were made possible thanks to the Assistive Technology for Children Program and donors like YOU! **THANK YOU!**
Annual Meeting 2019

Almost 40 people attended this year's event on April 17, including Joliet Mayor Bob O'Dekirk and Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow.

Mayor O'Dekirk fielded questions from the guests about road safety and accessibility issues.

State's Attorney James Glasgow expressed an interest in learning about our organization and partnering with us to help people with disabilities with transportation needs.

Board President Zach Fleming greeted the guests and announced the new board roster for 2019-2020.

Executive Director Missy Martin presented a Staff Appreciation award to Independent Living Advocate Tabitha Boshears for five years of dedicated service.

Tabitha, in turn, presented the 'Suzy Q Volunteer of the Year" award to her grandfather, Bill Hombaker.

Finally, Independent Living Advocate Sam Knight presented the Ed Roberts Excellence in Independent Living Award to Kim & Clarence Fields. Tabitha Boshears, who had been working closely with the Fields, was also presented with the same award.

Sign language interpretation was provided by Balbina Snerling. CART services were provided by LMH Certified Reporting.
New Faces

Dani Mitchell
Dani is our newest Independent Living Advocate at DRC. Her goal is to provide services to people with disabilities who need assistance in achieving their goals of an independent life. She has a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a master’s degree in human services. Her background includes being a correctional officer for Cook County Juvenile Detention Center, a behavioral specialist for several Centers for Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs), as well as a psychiatric rehab service coordinator for a residential facility. Her interest in psychology and social service started early in her life when she saw family members whose needs for help with mental and physical conditions were being ignored. This heartbreaking situation motivated Dani to dedicate her life to helping those in need. She is a published author and she is also pursuing a doctorate degree in clinical psychology.

Maureen Kelly
Maureen is DRC’s Personal Assistant Coordinator, replacing Tabitha Boshears, who is now an Independent Living Advocate full-time. Maureen recruits, trains and refers personal assistants to people with disabilities in the Will and Grundy county areas. Her professional background includes 25 years of patient care and business administration at Franciscan St. James Hospital in Chicago Heights, Illinois, where she oversaw nursing and other daily operations throughout the facility. She is also a CPR instructor, and prides herself on her ability to collaborate, team build, and to help others achieve their goals.

Be sure to say "hello" to our new staff members when you stop by our office!

Mentors Wanted!

Did you know October is National Disability Employment Awareness month? October seems far away now but it will be here before you know it!

Every October, DRC participates in Disability Mentoring Day, a nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities through hands-on career exploration. Students with disabilities are matched with workplace mentors according to expressed career interests. Students experience a typical day on the job and learn how to prepare to enter the world of work and employers gain an increased awareness that people with disabilities represent an overlooked talent pool.

DRC is looking for businesses, organizations, government entities, and individuals interested in mentoring students on Wednesday, October 23, 2019. To learn more about providing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our high schoolers, contact Tabitha Boshears at 815-729-0162 x 230 or email tabitha@drcjoliet.org.
Here are some highlights of our activities since July 1, 2018 that YOUR support helped make a reality. THANK YOU!

- **Advocacy** - Between staff and consumers, 10 people with disabilities attended the Independent Living Rally Day in Springfield on May 16.
- **P.A. Orientation & Training** - Throughout the year, 75 individuals were recruited, trained and put on a P.A. availability list for consumers with disabilities.
- **Community Reintegration Program** - DRC has had six successful move-outs for the year, and a ramp was installed for one of our consumers.
- **Assistive Technology for Children** - Over 30 young consumers with disabilities received assistive technology devices to help them to participate more fully in their lives.
- **Independent Living** - Almost 150 new enrollees in our Seeking Key Independent Living Life Skills (S.K.I.L.L.S.) classes; field trips include the Joliet Secretary of State office to obtain state IDs and the Will County Clerk’s Office to register to vote.
- **ITAC (Illinois Telecommunications Accessibility Corporation)**: DRC came in first place in the state for 2018, distributing almost 300 FREE amplified telephones to consumers with hearing loss.
- **Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP)**: Twenty senior consumers were assisted with this program, including Medicare Part D Enrollments, qualifications and answering questions.
- **Pace On Demand**: DRC is now a designated stop for the Pace On Demand, a reservation-based, shared-ride service open to the public.

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**FUNDRAISER: "Luau" Game Night**

*Saturday, August 17 - 5 pm to 9 pm at Disability Resource Center*

"Ante up" at our next fundraiser and play Texas Hold’Em, Black Jack and Left-Right-Center - Hawaiian-style! **Proceeds to benefit our educational programs for people with disabilities.**

Tickets are $25 to reserve your spot and includes luau-themed food; game fees are extra. Play Texas Hold’Em, Black Jack, or Left-Right-Center. Pots are split 50:50. Door prizes and silent auctions also planned. C’mon out, wear your favorite Hawaiian shirt, and play for a good cause! Prize for "Best Hawaiian Outfit" too!

**Must be 21 or over to attend.** Deposit of $25 required by **Friday, Aug. 9**. Includes luau themed buffet and two non-alcoholic drinks, or BYOB. **For TICKETS** call (815) 729-0162 or visit www.drcjoliet.org/events.
ITAC Happenings!

DRC staff have been out and about lately, with a visit to Park Tower residence in Joliet on April 22 and hosting a booth at the Herald News Senior Expo at Joliet Catholic Academy on April 25, helping to promote the ITAC Free Amplified Phone program. On May 16, Marie Malfatti accepted the Award for Highest Phone Distribution in the state at the annual ITAC training and awards banquet in Springfield. Congratulations Marie!

Open House Mornings - FREE!

Mark your calendars - starting in May, every third Monday of the month DRC will be hosting ITAC Open House Mornings from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Audiologist Karen Pastell from Prairieland Audiology will be on site to give FREE hearing screenings, and qualified consumers can then test and select an amplified telephone on site the same morning. Just bring a photo i.d. and a copy of your most recent phone bill.

The event is FREE, the screenings are FREE, and, if you qualify for one, the amplified phones are FREE. No appointments are necessary; consumers are seen on a first-come-first-served basis. It’s the easiest way to qualify and select a FREE amplified telephone. Stop missing out on the conversation - get your hearing tested and select a phone all at one place! Call Marie at 815-729-0162 for more information.

Yes - you can AMPLIFY your CELL phone too!

SA-40 Cell Phone Amplifier
- Works with most Bluetooth cell phones or smartphones
- Amplifies up to 40dB
- Loud ringer
- Latest technology eliminates static and distortion
- Can use with T-Coil hearing aids
- Speakerphone mode available
- Magnetic visor clip for hands-free conversations
- 5.2” high by 2.0” wide
- NOTE: the SA-40 is NOT a cell phone; it is an amplified handset that pairs with your existing cell phone. A Bluetooth-capable phone is required for the SA-40 to operate

Clarity Sempre Mini
- Works with most Bluetooth cell phones or smartphones
- Amplifies up to 40dB
- Built-in ClarityPower with high frequency emphasis
- Built-in microphone
- Binaural earbuds included, 3.5mm jack
- Missed Call notification
- Built-in shirt clip
- 1.75” x 1.25” x 0.5”
- NOTE: the Sempre Mini is NOT a cell phone; it is an amplifier that pairs with your existing cell phone. A Bluetooth-capable phone is required for the Sempre Mini to operate
"For Now, We Wait" - UPDATE

- Last issue, we included a story about one of our consumers, Clarence F., and his wife Kim, and their struggle to secure home support services from the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services. Clarence had had a stroke and required in-home care while Kim worked outside the home. After almost a year after applying, following-up and waiting, Clarence is finally receiving the quality care he needs in order to remain in his own home and avoid returning to the nursing home where he had recovered from his stroke. From the time he was discharged from rehabilitation, Clarence was adamant he would never go back. Kim can now leave for work knowing that her husband has the support and services that he needs, and the independence and dignity he deserves.

Ongoing Activities

- **ITAC Open House** - Every 3rd Monday of the month from 8:30 am to 9:30 am at DRC. Free hearing screening on site. Contact Marie Malfatti for more information at marie@drcjoliet.org or (815) 729-0162.
- **Men’s Group** - Every 2nd Wednesday of the month from 11 am to 1 pm. Locations vary - contact Sam Knight for more information at sam@drcjoliet.org or (815) 729-0162.
- **Young Women's Group** - Every 2nd Wednesday of the month from 11 am to 1 pm. Locations vary - contact Katy Hoyer for more information at katy@drcjoliet.org or (815) 729-0162.
- **Weekly Women’s Group** - Every Monday from 1 pm to 3 pm at DRC. Contact Katy Hoyer for more information at katy@drcjoliet.org or (815) 729-0162.
- **Deaf Senior Club Bingo** - Every 2nd Wednesday of the month from 9 am to 4 pm at Croatian Cultural Club, 1503 Clement St., Joliet.
- **Accessible Will County (AWC)** - First Wednesday of the month from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm, at DRC. AWC is a partnership between DRC, disability advocates, persons with disabilities, the City of Joliet, businesses, the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry, professional trade organizations, media representatives and civic leaders. Contact Sam Knight for more information at sam@drcjoliet.org or (815) 729-0162.
- **"My Child is Special"** - Make a special book about your child with your stories, pictures and memories at this monthly workshop at DRC. Consuleo Puente, mother of two sons with autism, will guide you in the process. Jun. 24 & Aug. 26 (no July meeting) 10 am to 12 pm. $15 for album and materials. Bring photos of your child(ren).

**DRC Staff & Board**

**STAFF:**
- Missy Martin - Executive Director
- Tabitha Boshears - Independent Living Advocate
- Katy Hoyer - Independent Living Advocate
- Maureen Kelly - Personal Assistant Coordinator
- Sam Knight - Independent Living Advocate
- Marie Malfatti - Clerical Aide/ITAC Specialist
- Dani Mitchell - Independent Living Advocate
- Jerrod Nichols - Community Reintegration Transition Coordinator
- Cathie Stewart - Administrative Assistant

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-2020:**
- Zachary Fleming - President
- Rhonda Price - Vice President
- Susan Jarosinski - Secretary
- Jennifer Koff - Treasurer
- Ivan Bew - Delegate-At-Large
- Susan Jarosinski - Past President
- Connie J. Henley, Brandon Ivins, Dianne Mundle, Kevin Pruitte - Directors
Barrier Free Press inside!

Upcoming Events
- Accessible Will County Meeting - Jun. 5, Jul. 3, Aug. 7
- Deaf Senior Club Bingo - Jun. 12, Jul. 10, Aug. 14
- ITAC Open House - Jun. 17, Jul. 15, Aug. 19
- Personal Assistant Training - Jun. 21, Jul. 19, Aug 23
- Board Meetings - Jun. 19, Jul. 17, Aug. 21
- "My Child is Special" - Jun. 24, Aug. 26
- Independence Day CLOSED - Thurs. Jul. 4
- DRC "Luau Game Night" Fundraiser - Sat. Aug. 17
- Labor Day CLOSED - Mon. Sept. 2

Hear every conversation!
Get YOUR Free Amplified Phone

Remember, DRC is a Selection Center for the ITAC program. Do YOU or someone you know qualify for a FREE amplified or captioned telephone? Find out today - call (815) 729-0162 or visit www.itactty.org