

# 2021

# Annual Report



## MISSION

To offer opportunities for growth and independence for people with developmental disabilities.

## VISION

A community where everyone is valued for their presence and contributions.

# Living Life to the Fullest

MANY PEOPLE SLOWED DOWN DURING THE PANDEMIC, BUT NOT JAMES



James had lived in a Community Link CILA home for several years, but was ready for more independence. So, in the fall of 2019, he moved into an apartment within one of our CILA homes. He now has his own kitchen where he can prepare his own meals. He has plenty of space to work on his craft projects, play video games, and assemble puzzles. But he also has the support of staff and the friendships with his housemates. He joins them when they go out for fun or errands and for meals when he is not cooking himself.



In 2018, James had begun working at the Republic of Tea, where he fit in right away and has been proud to earn a paycheck. He continued to work, following all the safety precautions, throughout the pandemic. His supervisor said he did an excellent job and remained his positive self throughout.

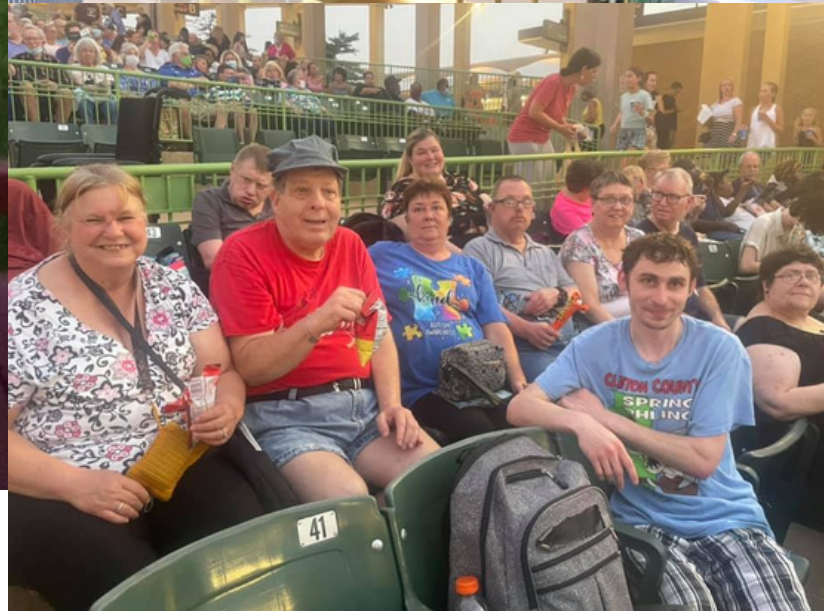
James loves sports, watching them and playing them. He has participated in Special Olympics as a softball catcher, and also competed in bowling. When it is safe to do so, he loves attending St. Louis Cardinals baseball and Blues hockey games. Of course, his favorite colors are red and blue.



*"My favorite holiday is Christmas and the reason is because its all about giving."*

*~James*





He also loves making a variety of crafts to sell. He has made ear rings, ornaments, coasters, bracelets, necklaces, and sand bottles. He had a booth at our last Buddy Walk with great success, selling many items.

James is always eager to learn. He takes pride in working, at Republic of Tea and at Community Link. To reach his future goals, of which he has many, he counts on his Community Link support staff to continue to move toward more independence. Nothing can slow down James.







# Work and Play

## COMMUNITY DAY SERVICES

### ADAPTING TO A CHANGING WORLD

After the mandated closure, day programs resumed in September 2020. The rooms looked different, tables were more spread out. This actually led to participants having more personal space and fewer behavioral incidents. This time has taught us to be flexible and expect changes at any minute. Our staff and participants approached every day with a positive attitude, and everyone loved getting back to work.

Our staff showed their exceptional knowledge and problem-solving skills constantly throughout the past year, and we are ever grateful for their efforts to find quick solutions for every daily challenge. Through the collaboration of staff, families, and participants, we continued to safely work and learn together, as well as enjoy some good times with friends.







# Home and Family

CILA (COMMUNITY INTEGRATED LIVING ARRANGEMENT)

## AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME

Ensuring residents are happy and healthy has always been our highest priority. The methods to uphold that commitment have changed, but our determination has not. We understand the importance of supporting every individual's physical and mental health and adapted to find the balance of wellness. We enjoyed the outdoors whenever possible and partied on backyard patios. We used technology to connect when we couldn't be in the same room. Most importantly, our staff and participants continued to live together as a family, in the comfort of home.





## **VIRTUAL LEARNING**

For such a hands-on program, it was challenging for the First Step staff and participants to go virtual, but the solutions found were able to ease the stress of the situation. It's a home-based program, so switching quickly from going into homes to conducting visits remotely (by phone or video platform, such as Zoom) was difficult. On top of that, figuring out how to have virtual socializations (we call them playgroups) posed problems too. For example, instead of 2 hours, playgroups were reduced to 30 minutes in order to keep the child's and parent's attention. We learned to work around the immediate technological obstacles. Policies and procedures also had to be updated for the future. Despite the adjustments, the First Step program was able to provide support and services for 53 families.



## **ALL SMILES AT THE BUDDY WALK**

Many people are familiar with Community Link's support for adults with developmental disabilities, but may not be as familiar with our children's programs. At our 2021 Buddy Walk, we introduced Margarita, a participant of our Early Head Start program. She is a delightful, happy one-year-old whose family, including her 3 big sisters and brother, has been involved with programs for 8 years. A Family Educator meets with Margarita and her family weekly to assess her development, have playgroups, prepare her for success in school, support good health and nutrition, and more.



## BETTER THAN EVER

The Red Porch Café, co-founded by Clinton Manor and Community Link, was only around a short time before the pandemic shook things up. After opening in the fall of 2019, the café very quickly had to adapt. In March of 2020, the café closed and didn't open again until June of that year. Despite the hardships, the café found ways to overcome the obstacles. The Red Porch started doing back door pick-ups, and most of its sales came from online orders. The café also turned one of its windows into an order window, and it expanded seating outside. After the initial lockdown and wave of the pandemic, everyone stayed employed and came back to work. The changes the café underwent helped it serve the community in the uncertain times, and, in fact, it has been busier than ever since it reopened.





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Helen Heimann  
President

Amy Kruse  
Vice President

Joe Heimann  
Secretary

Amber Brooke  
Treasurer

Marian Albers  
Stan Brandmeyer  
Ashley Gramann  
Erin Hamilton  
Amy Maschhoff



### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Even during the tough times, the Special Needs Foundation for Community Link board members worked hard to support the foundation and Community Link. Though the foundation isn't in the spotlight as much, it plays a vital role in Community Link's success and prosperity over time. The board members who oversee the decisions that affect the foundation and its endowment also had to adapt to the changing times this past year, but they didn't let that stop them. This is important, as any donations that the foundation receives goes to its endowment, which, as it grows over time, directly supports Community Link's needs.



Save the Date

*Building for the Future Gala*  
*April 1, 2023*



# Generosity and Kindness

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OUR FRIENDS

## CREATING POSSIBILITIES

Our supporters have been driving us for nearly 50 years, and they are also the reason we will be able to celebrate our anniversary in 2022. During such a difficult year for everyone, our supporters were everything. We want to give a huge and special thank you to all who have shared our message throughout the years and have helped make our mission possible. As we reflect on our past and look to the future, we want to share our gratitude.

We are especially grateful for the team captains, sponsors, volunteers, and donors for the Buddy Walk. On October 9, 2021 we had over 1100 registered walkers and raised \$129,000 to support the participants and programs of Community Link. Our community is amazing!



## *Remembering our friends who passed away*

Sung In Kim, 52, March 17, 2020  
Diane Hemker, 65, July 19, 2020  
Gail Simpson, 64, July 24, 2020  
Linda Poynter, 67, September 15, 2020  
Mark Kujawa, 56, October 25, 2020  
Jill Husted, 42, February 14, 2021

Bonnie Dillard, 68, February 18, 2021  
Michael Mayberry, 62, March 5, 2021  
Allison Williams, 61, March 16, 2021  
Arsbie Biggs, 61, May 1, 2021  
Vernon Wagner, 55, June 6, 2021  
Octavia Thomas, 30, July 15, 2021



# Financial Report

Community Link presents the following audited summary of revenues, expenses and changes in net assets for the Agency's Fiscal Year 2021, ending this past June 30. For a copy of the completed audit, please email [info@commlink.org](mailto:info@commlink.org) or call 618-526-8800.

## REVENUE

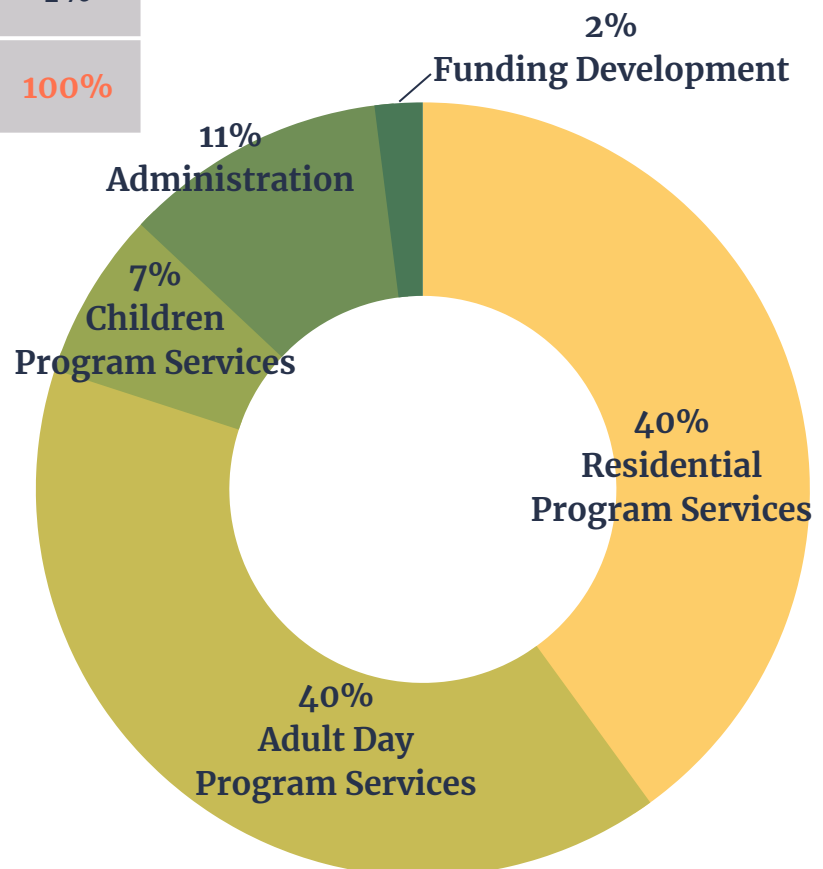
Fees for Service/Gov't Grants	\$6,707,007	86%
Contributions/Fundraisers	\$451,019	5%
Sales from Worksites	\$647,435	8%
Investment and Other Income	\$20,904	1%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$7,826,365</b>	<b>100%</b>

## OPERATING EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$5,688,855
Other Operating Expenses	\$1,621,960
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$7,310,815</b>

Net Operating Gain	\$515,550
Depreciation Expense	(\$252,007)
Depreciation on Capital Assets Expensed	(\$18,574)
Gain on Loan Forgiveness	\$977,000
<b>Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restriction</b>	<b>\$1,221,969</b>

## FUNCTIONAL EXPENSE FY 2021





# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

After a year of challenges and changes in 2020, no one knew what 2021 would bring. However, we knew one thing for certain: the strength of our community would get us through. We worked together to overcome every new obstacle that stood in our way. With persistence, we stuck to our mission and focused on what is most important every day – ensuring the health and happiness of our participants and our people.

We had to change some of the ways we serve individuals with developmental disabilities, but we continued to serve. We couldn't have done this without our talented staff, generous friends, and devoted families who serve with us, and we're incredibly grateful to all!

The past couple years have been unprecedented because of the challenges faced and because of how our teams stepped up to overcome them. For example, our caring Direct Service Professionals have been serving above and beyond by taking extra shifts, creating fun activities, and keeping our spaces safe and clean. When the demands on them increased they rose to the occasion. All of our team members are truly superheroes and make a profound impact on the lives of our participants!

Like many of you, I could not have imagined the impact the pandemic would have on our lives and our community. I remain grateful for the collective efforts that have strengthened our programs and systems here at Community Link during these unprecedented times. We will remain steadfast, resilient, and dedicated to living our values of dignity, respect, integrity, compassion, and unity. On behalf of the entire board, thank you for your continued contributions to this great organization.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Loepker

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Amanda Loepker**  
President

**Paulette Evans**  
Vice President

**Theresa Morrison**  
Secretary

**Jeff Niemeyer**  
Treasurer

**William Becker**

**Ron Foppe**

**Charles Hilmes**

**Tara Hilmes**

**Theodore Macon**

**Sandra Porter**

**Kirsten Wilkerson**

**John Huelskamp**  
Executive Director





## *Celebrating 50 Years of Possibilities*

### *1972 – 2022*

As we look back to remember, honor, and celebrate the accomplishments of our participants these past 50 years, we boldly look to the future, reimagining ways to serve individuals with developmental disabilities.

Your support has sustained us for 50 years. Thank YOU for creating possibilities for future generations!

*16th Annual  
Community Link  
Buddy Walk*



*Northside Park  
Breese, IL  
October 8, 2022*

#### **EAST FACILITY/ADMINISTRATION**

1665 N Fourth Street  
Breese, IL 62230

#### **WEST FACILITY**

8510 Old US Hwy 50  
Breese, IL 62230

#### **FIRST STEP (CHILDREN'S PROGRAM)**

955 N Plum Street  
Breese, IL 62230

#### **METRO**

9815 Bunkum Road  
Fairview Heights, IL 62208



Proud member of

United Way  
of Greater St. Louis



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