



Possibilities

Spring 2026

A Remarkable Rockin' Evening

The recent *Rockin' the Possibilities* gala was a night filled with music, dancing, singing, and laughter. It was also an evening that will make a lasting impact for the participants of Community Link.

Over 250 guests, as well as sponsors and donors, raised over \$112,000 for the Special Needs Foundation for Community Link. All net proceeds of the event are invested in the foundation's endowment, which provides stable and consistent funding for the future.

One of the most impactful moments of the evening was a special video featuring longtime participant and guest of honor, Steve Huelsmann. In his video and speech, Steve shared his personal journey, his humor and wit, and what Community Link means to him. You can view his video "Big Daddy" at commlink.org or on our Facebook page.

Thanks to our board members, friends, families, and all who made the evening a success. You are creating more chart-topping opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.



A Meaningful Future

For 54 years, Community Link has been providing opportunities for our loved ones with developmental disabilities. Recent changes in legislation have presented challenges, but have also given us the opportunity to look to the future and evolve to the Community Link of tomorrow.

We have big plans to diversify our day program. We are excited to create even more ways to connect with the community, with a strong emphasis on growing our volunteer efforts. With the support of friends like you, many participants are embracing the chance to give back, build new skills, and experience activities they've never tried before.

We are looking to expand our CILA program by investing in new houses where individuals live together as a family, enjoying their home and community.

Together, we can ensure that all individuals can continue to expand their horizons and choose their paths. These are some examples of how our participants have been benefiting from your support and new opportunities.



Growing our Fleet – More volunteering and community inclusion requires more vehicles. William loves going on Meals on Wheels routes to talk with all of the recipients. The ride is more comfortable in our new vehicles, and more will be needed for the future.



Personalized Choice – In our CILA homes, we have added a Community Inclusion Specialist that can take individuals with similar interests from different homes to activities they choose. Leroy recently enjoyed watching wrestling with his fellow wrestling fans.

Expanding CILA - Michelle, a long-time Day Program family member, recently joined our CILA family! She is enjoying new experiences with her new housemates. We are developing plans to provide more homes for more individuals.



Person-Centric Programs - Colin enjoys all of the different activities Day Program has to offer. He especially loves to cook, try different art projects, and play games!

Nursing Care - Steve has been part of our family for many years. As his medical needs have increased, he knows he can rely on our full-time nursing staff to ensure he is always living life to the fullest.



Increasing Volunteerism - Diane is a hard worker with a big heart. When she isn't working, she is volunteering! She recently started volunteering to sort clothes at the Carlyle Christian Church.

Phase 3: Serving with Purpose

At our Breese East and Metro (Fairview Heights) Day Program locations, we are implementing multi-phase plans to expand our services beyond work activities. This strategic plan aligns with the State of Illinois' decision to eliminate subminimum wage employment by December 31, 2029. Breese East has begun phase 3, placing a strong emphasis on expanding volunteer opportunities and increasing meaningful choices for participants.

One of the most exciting changes in this phase is the growth of community-based volunteer options. Individuals may also choose whether they would like to pursue work opportunities or join a "go group" designed to explore new activities and experiences in the community.

While change can sometimes feel uncertain, this transition has brought energy and excitement. We are discovering new interests, building skills, and enjoying refreshed schedules.

The generosity of our friends and families, especially those who support Community Link through the Buddy Walk, play a vital role in making this progress possible. We are deeply grateful for your continued support. Thank you!



20TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY LINK BUDDY WALK: A ROYAL CELEBRATION!

September 19, 2026 | Northside Park - Breese, IL



Join us for *A Royal Celebration*, the 20th Annual Community Link Buddy Walk! Honor all of the kings and queens in our lives who have developmental disabilities. Celebrate, walk, and show your support beginning at 10am. Proceeds from the Buddy Walk benefit Community Link and help raise awareness for individuals with Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities.

BUDDYWALK[®]
national down syndrome society[®]
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Registration opens in June, more details to follow

Please contact Michelle Delfel at MichelleD@commlink.org or 618.526.3989 for more information