



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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OUR CUP RUNNETH OVER!

First Paycheck

We all remember what it was like to receive our first paycheck. It was a feeling of independence. Wasn't it nice that we didn't have to ask for money to ride our bikes up to the local store to buy candy, a Ski or baseball cards? Oh, sweet freedom.



Unfortunately, Amanda Schniers and Keith Taylor didn't know that freedom.

Amanda went to her mother's work and assisted her, but she didn't earn a paycheck. And Keith stayed home with his father every day.

Amanda was looking for an opportunity to learn employment skills. And, when his father passed away, Keith lacked the funding to receive services from Community Link.

Community Link approached the The Republic of Tea to fund services for both Amanda and Keith. They agreed to sponsor Community Link's "My Cup of Tea" program and now both Amanda and Keith enjoy the freedom of earning their own money.

***"She loves going to work and seeing her friends."
- Jane Schniers***

Job Readiness

We appreciate The Republic of Tea for funding our new Employment Options program. Six managers were trained in Customized Employment, which is a discovery process that focuses on an individual's skills and abilities while matching them to an employer's needs.

This will allow for participants to choose a job that they **want** to do while making sure that they have the skills and abilities to do the job.

Jill Husted and Matt Statszewski will complete the discovery process in the fall of 2017.



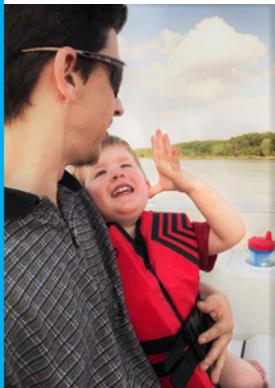
First Step

The Jared Burke Foundation Boating Day created a lifetime of memories through outdoor adventures. Not only did they provide dinner for families, but they gave boat rides, taught families how to fish, and more importantly, provided experiences that families may not otherwise be able to experience.



JARED BURKE FOUNDATION BOATING DAY

John Burke, from the Jared Burke Foundation, watches Emma Mueller attempt to reel in the catch of the day!



Michael and Emery Frerking enjoy the wind in their face during their boat ride.



Savanna Knee patiently waits for a fish to take the bait.



Safety first! Jason Knee has his lifejacket on and is ready for his boat ride.



A Jared Burke volunteer lets Brayden Marcum take the wheel to steer the boat while on the open water.

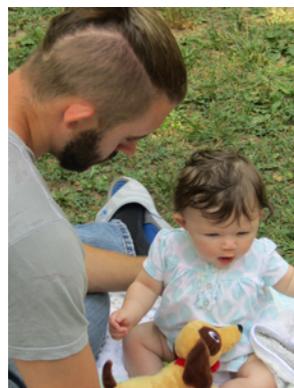


Taylor Trame reaches to pop bubbles while at the Jared Burke Foundation Boating Day.

Monthly Playgroups



Tabitha Isaak (Parent Educator) and Emery Frerking.



Jake (dad) and Jamie Gale.

135 CHILDREN SERVED IN OUR DENTAL CLINICS!



♥ 15 Families Adopted by Private Donors ♥

THANK YOU

for selflessly donating money for cleaning baskets. Parents were able to provide a healthy environment for their children and they were able to use their money for other necessities.

Inspiring Volunteers

Your volunteer hours continue to make a difference. In the last year, you volunteered more than **1,500** hours! With 38 **recurring** volunteers, your bond has strengthened and has created a united group to help our participants. Your time and talents are such an encouragement and inspiration and you're truly making a difference in the lives of our participants!



Community Link adopted a portion of a road by Walnut St. and new Route 50. Volunteer groups take turns with trash pick-up to keep it clean. This project was spearheaded by our most passionate volunteer Bob Brandkamp.



Central Football players volunteered to assist in setup of the Buddy Walk. These fine young men made a big difference and we are forever grateful!



The yoga class took time out of their warrior pose to wish their wonderful yogi Aggie Becker a Happy Birthday. They have so much fun with her! Namaste Aggie!



Karen Garrison, employee of The Republic of Tea, assisted with painting at the Production Building. Her cheerful attitude is contagious!



Employees of The Republic of Tea volunteered to tear down a very old shed at the Breese 555 CILA.



Both Althoff and Mater Dei Catholic High School students volunteer as part of senior service projects. Pictured are Althoff students that made a great friend during their time at our Metro location.

Please consider joining our Volunteer Email group to stay current on volunteer opportunities. If you're interested in joining the email group or to volunteer, please contact Chris Gebke, Director of Community Outreach at 618-526-3929 or email at ChrisG@commlink.org.

Remembering Our Friends

Rhonda Adams, 60

Rhonda participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Breese West facility. She passed away on 5-24-17.

Anne Bunse, 65

Anne participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Breese West facility. She was a resident of Clinton Manor Living Center in New Baden.

Jack G., 67

Jack participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Metro facility. He was a resident of Specialized Living Center in Swansea.

David Igel, 73

David participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Metro facility. He was a resident of Specialized Living Center in Swansea. He passed away on 2-15-17.

Oscar Jones, 86

Oscar participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Breese West facility. He was a resident of Clinton Manor Living Center in New Baden. He passed away on 3-30-17.

Tanya Kelly, 53

Tanya participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Metro facility. She was a resident of Specialized Living Center in Swansea. She passed away on 11-18-16.

Leroy L, 77

Leroy participated in our Adult Day Training Program at our Metro facility. He was a resident of Specialized Living Center in Swansea. He passed away on 3-9-17.

Linda McCracken, 62

Linda participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Metro facility. She was a resident of Specialized Living Center in Swansea.

Harold Price, 72

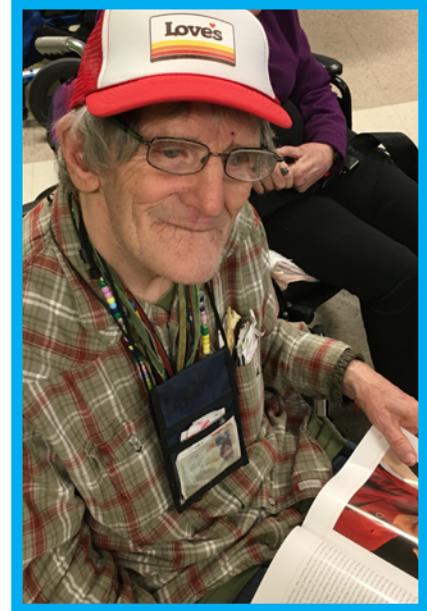
Harold participated in our Adult Day Training program at our Breese West facility. He was a resident of Clinton Manor Living Center in New Baden.

Sara T, 95

Sara participated in our Adult Day Training program at Breese West facility. She was a resident of Clinton Manor Living Center in New Baden.

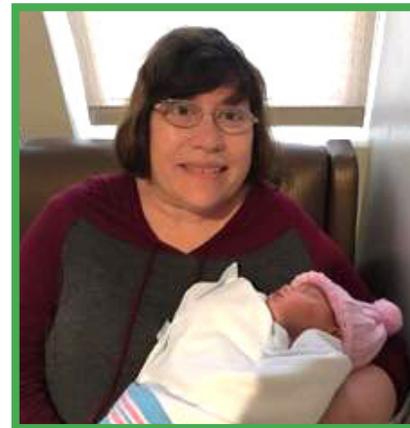
Simple Joy

LARRY - Sometimes if you really listen, it can be easy to make dreams come true. Larry was talking to Stephanie Cook, Associate Program Director about his passion for trucks. He also likes to draw pictures of trucks. Stephanie asked him what's his biggest dream and where he would want to go if he could pick anywhere in the world. Larry replied, "Love's Truck Stop to watch the big trucks." That was it. Stephanie made the arrangements for a staff person to take Larry and some friends to visit the truck stop in New Baden. Larry met truckers from all over the United States. One couple embraced Larry's love of trucking with stories and songs over coffee. Larry was in truck heaven. Stephanie went the extra step and contacted the Love's Headquarters in Oklahoma. She shared Larry's story and they sent Larry a Love's care package. Larry's normal everyday visit turned it into a trip of a lifetime!



GINALYNN - Ginalynn wants to be a public speaker. She began giving tours to participants and families who have an interest in services at our Metro location. She had the opportunity to speak on a much more public format last January at a State Quality Committee forum. The panel included Greg Fenton, the Director for Developmental Disabilities in Illinois. The topic was most appropriately, "Putting Person to Person-Centered." Ginalynn discussed the characteristics that make her unique and her goals and dreams, ranging from minor to grand. She concluded by saying, "I want my life to be about my interests and what I like doing." She said that she would like to experience speaking to a group and being an advocate. Ginalynn was a bit nervous, but it all came together and she was glad that she had the opportunity.

DIANA - As any grandmother would be, Diane was very excited about the arrival of her fifth grandchild. However, there was a small “bump” in the midst of her excitement—her daughter lives in Hawaii. Diana had not seen her daughter since she moved from Oklahoma two years ago and she really missed her. Now she also wanted to meet her new grandchild. With the help of her manager, Diana prepared a budget for a plane ticket and made detailed plans for her trip that would involve assistance from the airline because Diana would need to change planes. She landed just two days before her granddaughter was born and was able to enjoy family time, baby snuggles and the Hawaiian scenery for three weeks.



COLIN - Colin loves racing. He eats, sleeps and breathes it. When one of our staff members saw Colin wearing a Cole Sellers t-shirt, she quickly sent text messages and placed a few phone calls to see if Cole would take a few moments to stop by and visit Colin. As you can see by the look on his face, he was so happy! Its little acts of kindness like signing a t-shirt that can have a huge impact on someone. Thank you Cole for making Colin's day!

GARY - Gary loves suit jackets. He had one in every color except for white. Jim's Formal Wear Co. was contacted so one could be purchased for Gary. They wouldn't take any money and insisted on giving one to him. Rodney Quitmeyer from Jim's Formal Wear sent a white suit jacket with a letter stating that he was sure that the jacket would make Gary's day! As you can tell, it did! Look out America's Next Top Model, Gary's on the runway! Thank You to Rodney and to Jim's Formal Wear for helping make Gary's dream come true!



Home Sweet Home

Everyone has a different reason for wanting to move into a new home. Some want a larger home, while others prefer to downsize. For Ron Albers, he desires a quieter home. Ron is one of eight individuals who'll be moving into Community Link's newest CILA located in Trenton.

Ron was asked about what he's looking forward to in his new home and he stated, "I want to go bowling. I really had to push to go bowling a couple of weeks ago. We hadn't

"I like chocolate malts."

gone for six years." He admitted that he doesn't like rice and he's allergic to salmon. And, he's really looking forward to barbecuing on a grill.

Ron also enjoys going to tractor pulls. One look at his room and you would know his favorite tractor company. He was so excited when he was able to choose his own paint colors—yellow and John Deere green (yes, that's an actual paint color).



He's interested in learning to write a check. He's not needed to write a check before. Ron closed the conversation with, "I'm very happy that the house is close to Dairy King. I like chocolate malts."

The Fabulous Four

Thank you COBRAA for hiring four of our Community Link ladies this past summer. Deb Delano, Cindy Lee, Sandy Plocher and Heather Holthaus assisted COBRAA in filling a large order in a short period of time.

Community Link had provided a job coach when these ladies had worked for COBRAA in the past. Because they had the skills needed to complete their job assignments, they did not need a job coach. Each worker understood the directions given to them and who to go to if they had questions. COBRAA knew Deb, Cindy, Sandy and Heather's work skills enhanced COBRAA's final product. They had no reservations about hiring persons with disabilities.

Ashley Ritzheimer, Supervisor/Administration stated, "The workers did great! We were extremely busy during this time so they had to work

independently a lot of the time. I gave them directions and they completed the work on time and accurately. This gave me the opportunity to work on other duties I had to get done. They were super workers!"

"They were super workers!"

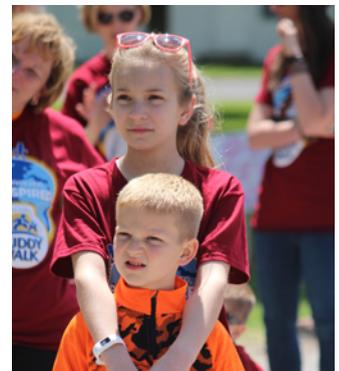


Believe. Achieve. Succeed.



Our community came together and supported us through another successful **Buddy Walk**. We could not have done it without you. Your generosity went above and beyond our expectations.

We not only met our Buddy Walk fundraising goal of \$125,000, but we far exceeded it by raising more than **\$143,000!** We are very proud of our community for coming together to support our participants by flooding Northside Park and the streets of Breese!



Financial Report

Community Link is pleased to present the following audited summary of revenues, expenses, and changes in net assets for the Agency's Fiscal Year 2016-2017, ending this past June 30. For a copy of the completed audit, please e-mail info@commlink.org or call (618) 526-8800.

Revenue

Fees for Service/Gov't Grants	\$6,231,592	86%
Contributions/Fundraisers	\$576,715	8%
Sales from Worksites	\$368,951	5%
Investment and Other Income	\$39,736	1%
Total Operating Revenue	\$7,216,994	100%

Operating Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	\$5,451,302
Other Operating Expenses	\$1,599,238
Total Operating Revenue	\$7,050,540

Net Operating Expenses

Depreciation Expense	\$166,454
Net Loss after Depreciation Expense	\$20,518

Functional Expenses FY 2016-2017

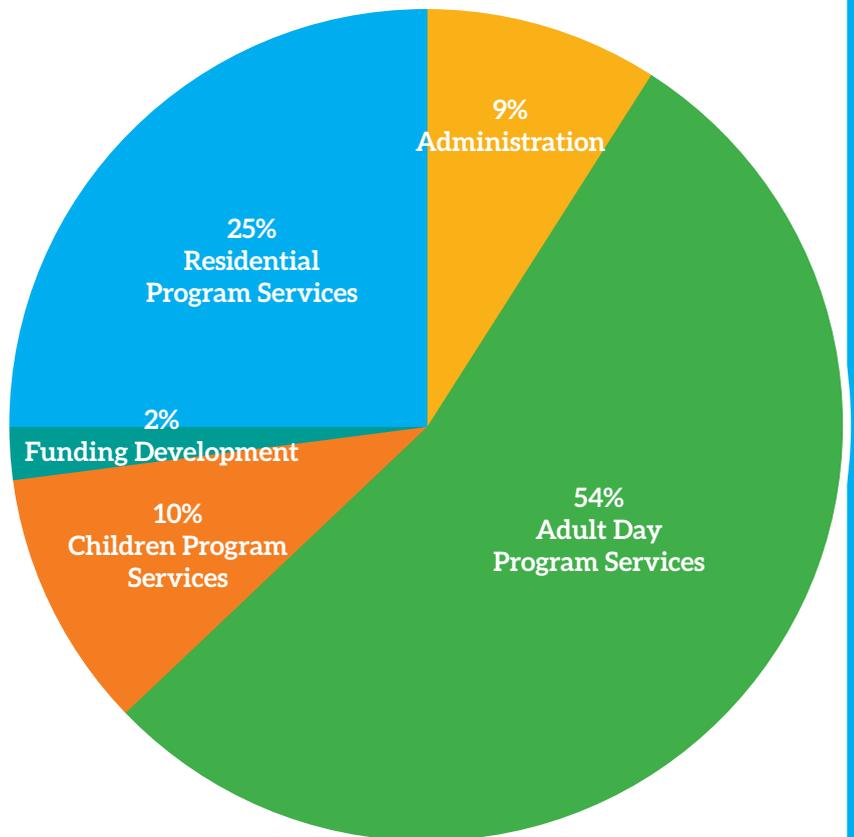
Residential Program Services - 25%

Adult Day Program Services - 54%

Children Program Services - 10%

Administration - 9%

Funding Development - 2%





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Visit our website at

Commlink.org/give/GEMs

Your monthly gift makes it possible for us to plan ahead with confidence and reduces administrative costs.

FY 2017 Board of Directors

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Donna Brauer
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Jennifer Foushee
Wesley Gozia
William Hibner
Amanda Oelze
Tracy Welker

Executive Director

John Huelskamp

Message from the Board President

Almost without exception, whenever I find myself talking to someone about Community Link they are shocked to learn that it's a \$7 million organization that employs more than 140 people and serves more than 500 disabled adults and deserving children in seven counties. When they ask why I support Community Link with my time and money, I tell them about my sister and how Community Link's workshop gives her dignity and pride that comes from putting in a day's work, a value taught to her as one of David and Johanna Heimann's seven children. Finally, I tell them about the professionals who work at Community Link for a fraction of what they could make if they had not chosen to work for a not-for-profit organization. As the new Board President, I consider it an honor to serve Community Link and to be part of a group of professionals who care more for our participants than they do about themselves. Statesman Clarence Francis said, "You can buy a man's time and physical presence at a certain place...But you can't buy enthusiasm, initiative, loyalty, and the devotion of hearts, minds and souls." That is evident at Community Link. Their loyal staff gives of their hearts, minds and souls every single day.

Despite great effort and careful stewardship of funds, we ended our fiscal year in arrears for the first time in a number of years due to funding neglect by the state of Illinois. But despite that neglect, I can assure you that the Board of Directors, the Community Link staff and participants are doing everything possible to not only survive, but to grow and improve the experience of each and every one of the participants and children we serve. The most visible sign of this commitment is our Buddy Walk. I hope you perceive our recent Buddy Walk success as a beginning of something even bigger. As you plan ahead for 2018, remember that the first Saturday in May (May 5th) is Buddy Walk day. Save the date and bring a buddy or two to join our walk.

A less visible but critical area of our growth is our new CILA (Community Integrated Living Arrangement) home for our participants in Trenton, Illinois. Our CILAs continue to be a vital element of our financial stability, but more importantly the CILAs allow Community Link to be involved in every aspect of our participants' lives. As an organization, we continue to find it challenging to staff our CILAs. So, if you know someone who is eager to be part of a great organization, please tell them to contact us.

Finally, I want to highlight our Foundation. When you consider your options for supporting Community Link, remember that the Special Needs Foundation for Community Link provides you the choice of leaving a legacy gift to Community Link. The Foundation will preserve your contribution and use the earnings to help Community Link serve our participants well into the future. As you consider estate planning or any other type of legacy gift, please remember our Foundation as one of your options.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you on May 5th at the 2018 Buddy Walk.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Heimann

Community Link

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