



ANNUAL REPORT 2019

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

Assisting Individuals with Disabilities to Achieve and Maintain Independent Lives



**PROMOTING
INDEPENDENCE**

**BUILDING
CONFIDENCE**

**CREATING
ADVOCATES**

IMPACTING LIVES

LIFE CIL's disability awareness event includes a Wheelchair Basketball game with members of the University of Illinois Wheelchair Basketball teams. Photo shows one of the U of I players, Ali Ibanez, showing a young man how to maneuver his wheelchair down the basketball court. Peer mentoring at its finest.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who We Are	3
A Few Highlights	4
Message from our Board President	5
Message from our Executive Director	8
Program & Service Highlights	10
Income and Expenses	12
“My Road to Independence” Consumer Story	14
Our Supporters	17
Board of Directors	27
The LIFE CIL Team	28
How Could You Make an Impact?	29

Our Mission:

LIFE Center for Independent Living advances equality and integration of all persons with disabilities. To achieve this mission we:

- Promote local, state, and national advocacy
- Educate persons with disabilities about their rights and responsibilities
- Provide support services
- Raise community awareness about disability issues in DeWitt, Ford, Livingston, and McLean Counties.

WHO WE ARE

LIFE Center for Independent Living (LIFE CIL) is a not-for-profit, non-residential organization established in 1985. We empower individuals with disabilities by sharing the tools needed to take control of one's own life. We promote equal opportunities and access by breaking down barriers and prejudices within communities.

We serve people of all ages and all kinds of disabilities and their families and friends who reside in DeWitt, Ford, Livingston and McLean counties. Services are available regardless of type of disability, sex, gender identity, income, ethnicity, or citizenship status*.

We believe that every person seeking services has the right to choose services and how those services are provided. Our consumers set their own goals and we work together to assist them in achieving their goals.

LIFE CIL's mission results in a huge impact for both our consumers and community. This report shows how we have impacted lives this year.

*Some specific grants have income requirements and/or require citizenship status.

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

Impacting Lives



300+ Junior high school students learned about disability awareness and etiquette



LIFE CIL in the Labor Day Parade September 2018



132 Individuals attended the Low Vision Fair to learn more about vision loss and devices

61 Individuals with hearing loss received an amplified phone or cellular amplifier to increase their access to communication

45 Youth with disabilities learned about options to transition into adult life

23 Site accessibility surveys completed for the Bloomington Election Commission



Wheelchair Basketball event April 2019

“This class has been packed with so much information that will help the students be successful in the future!”

4 Graduates of Community Advocacy Training class learned about the legislative process, advocacy and more

2 Individuals moved out of a nursing home and into their own home



Some members of LIFE'S LEADERS (youth support group)

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

It seems impossible that an entire year has passed since I last addressed you through this letter. But when I reflect on the tremendous amount of work done and progress made by LIFE CIL's devoted employees and volunteers during this period, the year starts to take better shape in my mind.

As LIFE CIL's Board President for a second year, it is my honor and privilege to shine the spotlight on some of the activities that capture LIFE CIL's fulfillment of its mission, which is to advance equality and integration of all persons with disabilities through local, state and national advocacy, through education of those with disabilities about their rights and responsibilities, through provision of support services, and through increasing community awareness about disability issues. We've done this successfully under the leadership of our Executive Director, Rickielee Benecke, who is to be commended not only for the organization's service to the community but also for



Board President, Erin Engle (on the left) addressing the guests at Wheelchair Basketball 2019 as Rickielee Benecke, Executive Director looks on.

ensuring a smooth transition in leadership (a transition that was finalized in 2018).

As has been publicized through local media, access to public transportation in Bloomington-Normal is an ongoing challenge. Having served consumers in the local community for 34 years, LIFE CIL is uniquely positioned to assist and educate as public policy-makers evaluate the options. Conan Calhoun, LIFE CIL's Disability Rights Advocate, continues to work tirelessly in promoting access to transportation for all. Both Mr. Calhoun and Ms. Benecke have met with many officials from the city, town, county and Connect Transit to discuss the continuing accessibility issues and barriers to transportation in our community. Additionally, Ms. Benecke serves on the Transportation Commission for the City of Bloomington, (a mayoral appointee), which positions her and the LIFE CIL team well to continue to educate with an eye toward access for all.

More youth with disabilities are being served. Peer groups for both adults and youth with disabilities have been highly successful. Key services continue to be provided and new funding sources secured. To mention just a couple of specifics: Youth Global Citizen group raised over \$5,000 for LIFE CIL, dollars that will be put to good use in advancing our mission and serving consumers. (Our sincere thanks to this amazing and inspiring group of young people!) We're also incredibly grateful for the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation

grant that provided \$1,000 worth of durable medical equipment for use in our loan closet!

We appreciate the perseverance and continuing good work by all who engage with LIFE CIL, whether as an employee, a consumer, or board member. It is a special community of which to be a part, and a true privilege to continue to serve alongside so many driven, passionate individuals who are deeply committed to the cause.

I wish you and yours all the very best as you prepare for a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Erin Engle

“Thank you for being so helpful to my mother. She has a new outlook on life because of the devices you set her up with. Thank you.” -K.H.

*From the Family of Evenglow:
“The residents are still talking about your visit and how they are enjoying the products.
Thanks from the bottom of our hearts.”*

Thank you so much for your services. They are definitely needed in this community.” -A.E.



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

In addition to Erin's letter, I felt it necessary to add a postscript.

It is with great sadness that I add this tribute to a beloved disability rights leader. Marca Bristo, founder and CEO of Access Living (the Center for Independent Living in Chicago), passed away on September 8, 2019 at the age of 66 after a hard fought battle with cancer.

Many of you may remember meeting Marca at our Annual



Photo shows Marca Bristo speaking at LIFE CIL's Annual Meeting in 2015.

Meeting in 2015 where she received LIFE CIL's very first "Distinguished Leadership Award".

Marca's life was exemplary of what we, as advocates and people with disabilities ourselves, do each and every day. We fight to break down the barriers that confine us and limit us.

It was because of Marca, and others like her, that we are

where we are today. As U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth said “Without Marca’s work over the last 30 years, the Americans with Disabilities Act would not be in existence & I would not be a U.S. Senator. Because she crawled up the steps of the Capitol to pass the ADA, I get to roll through its corridors to cast my votes in the U.S. Senate.” Truer words could never have been spoken.

LIFE CIL boldly commits to carry on the work that Marca started. We are reminded that our work is not yet complete. While we may have come a long way, there is still more to be done.

Lead on!

Rickielee Benecke



**“We have to be bold and say,
‘Come on. It’s time’.”
- Marca Bristo**

2,773

Lives impacted from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019



2,526

Individuals received information and referral services



1,634.75

Hours spent on community activities such as:

- advocacy
- collaboration and networking
- community education
- outreach
- technical assistance

1,623

Individuals received medical equipment from our equipment loan program



25% OF AMERICANS

HAVE A DISABILITY

- Physical
- Vision
- Hearing
- Mental/Emotional
- Cognitive
- Multiple Disabilities



FOUR COUNTIES



LIFE CIL serves anyone with any disability and their family members

786

Likes on Facebook



LEARN MORE ABOUT US

Visit our website:

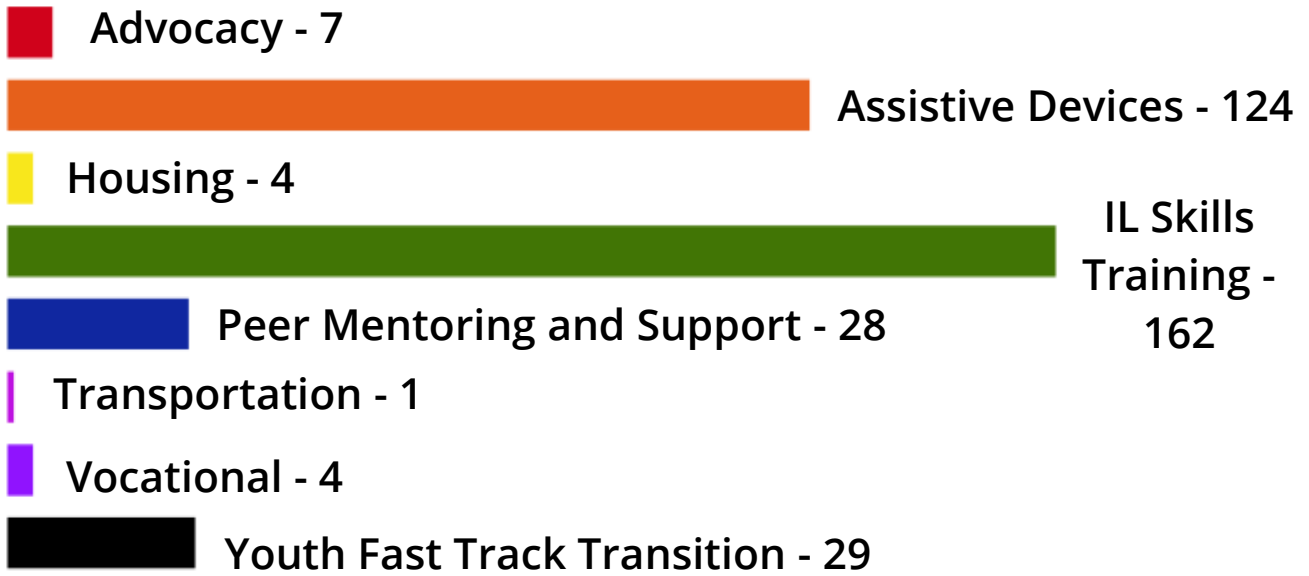
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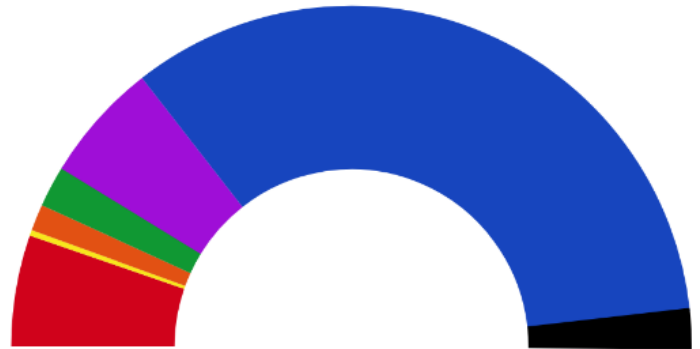
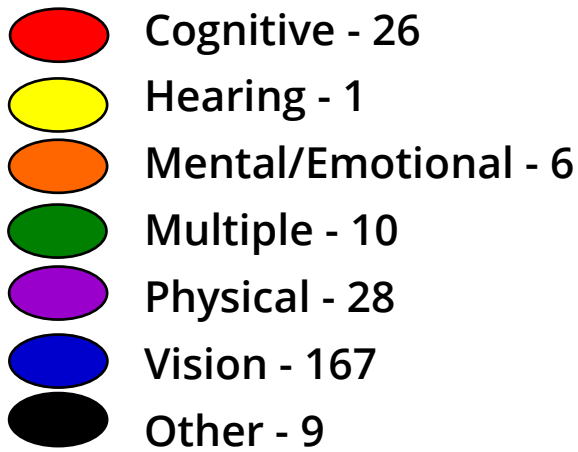
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Individual Services Provided



Type of Disability for Individuals Served



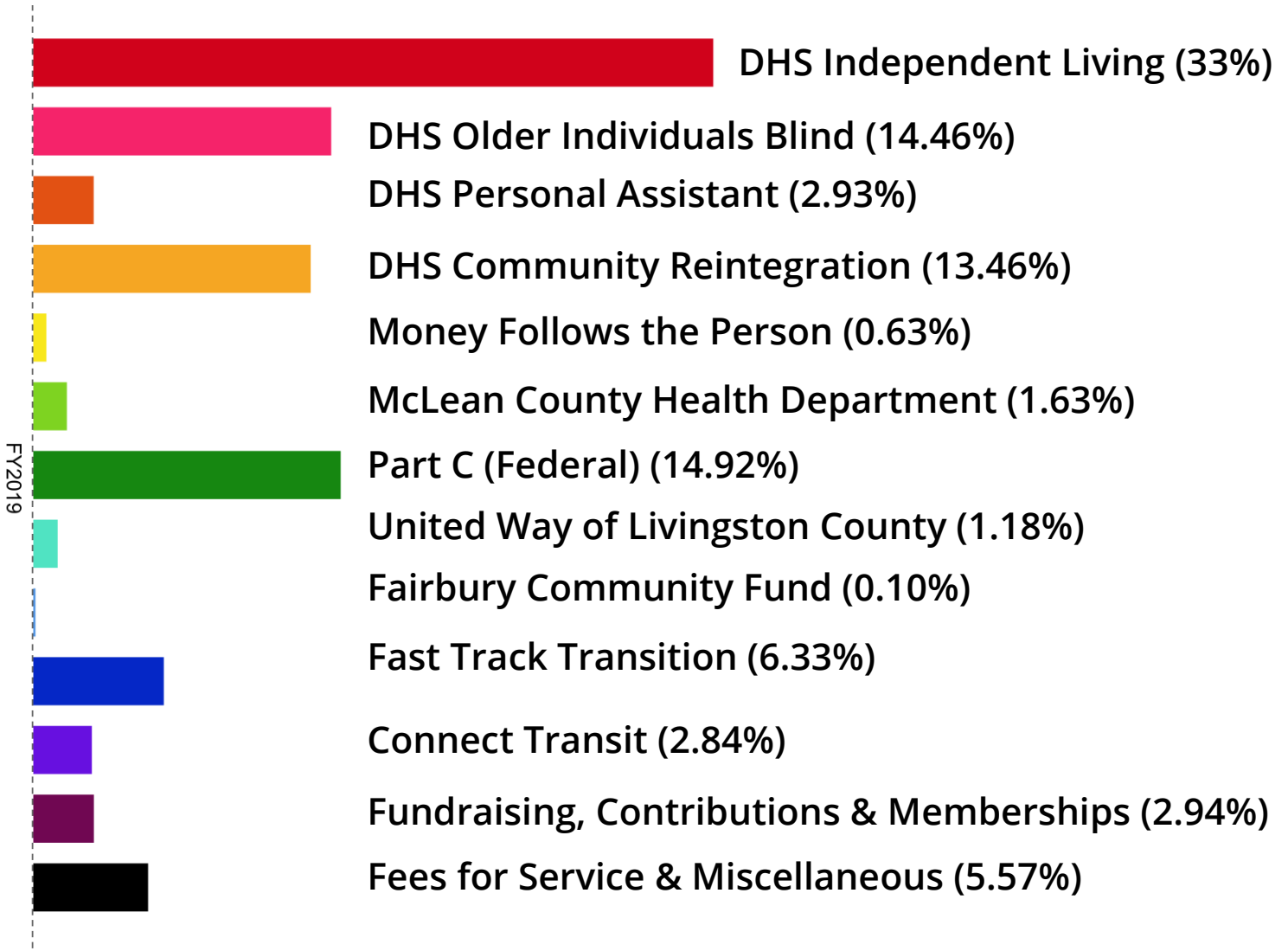


INCOME AND EXPENSES

July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

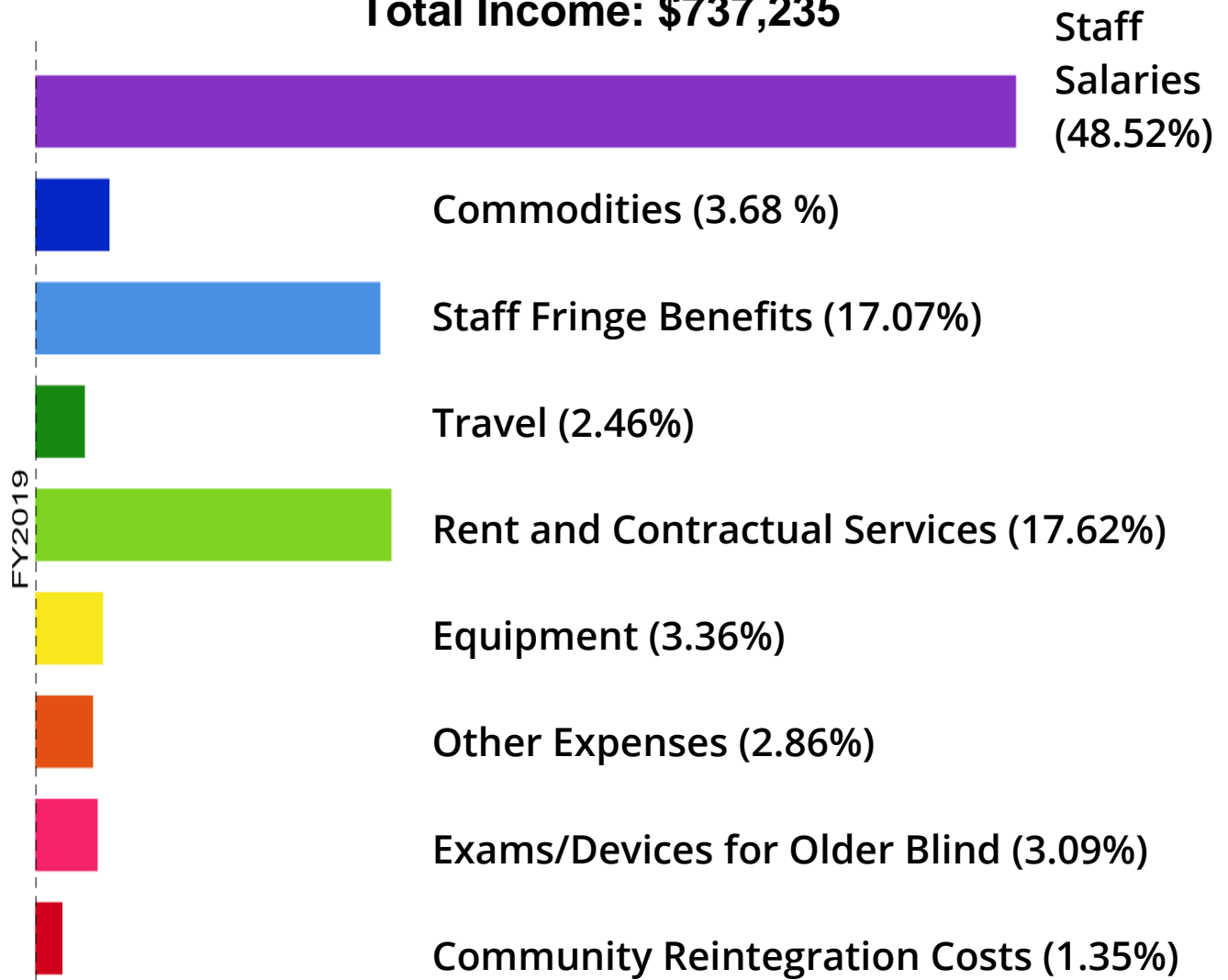
INCOME

Total Income: \$780,156



EXPENSES

Total Income: \$737,235



INCOME OVER EXPENSES: \$42,922



39.6%

FY2018 Income over Expenses = \$16,985

Last year, total income was \$793,145 and total expenses were \$776,159

FY2017 Income over Expenses = \$17,278

In 2017, total income was \$738,591 and total expenses were \$721,313



40.3%

*Figures based on unaudited year-end financial report.



"MY ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE"



Meet Rose. Learn how LIFE CIL assisted in her journey.

Rose, a mother of four and Veteran of the Army National Guard who served in Desert Storm, had a brain aneurism shortly after the birth of her youngest daughter. After her hospitalization, Rose moved in with her parents and children into a home that was accessible to her. Rose, with the help of her family, therapists and doctors

learned to walk, talk, eat and see again. After several years of living with her family, and a

couple of setbacks, she found herself in a nursing home 11 years after her brain aneurism. Rose was struggling with relying on her family for assistance and as she stated she was "ready to start on the next bridge to independence." She wanted to prove to everyone that she could do things on her own again; therefore, she went to the nursing home for therapy in hopes to gain more independence and find a place of her own.

Rose was introduced to LIFE CIL's Community Reintegration Program shortly after her admission to the nursing home by her social service director. LIFE CIL staff assisted Rose with developing goals of her choice and working towards them. Rose wanted to live on her own, and found an apartment complex in town that was a perfect fit for her. The apartment complex had case management staff and provided meals, which was what she was looking for. Rose and her family took a tour of the complex and she submitted an application. Rose then waited almost two years for an apartment to become available to her, but Rose would say, "It's in God's hands and the apartment will be ready when the time is right."

After a long wait and a lot of patience, Rose moved into her own apartment. Rose states that the Community Reintegration Program

and LIFE CIL staff, "went above and beyond her

"Good things come to those who wait patiently." - Rose

expectations." The program was able to assist her with obtaining all of the household items, medical supplies and durable medical equipment that she needed to be independent in her own home. LIFE CIL staff also assisted her with coordinating Personal Assistant Services and Adult Day Care Services. She states that, "I couldn't have gotten back home without the program", and is extremely thankful for all that she was able to receive.

Rose is currently living independently in the community with support from her personal assistants. She attends adult day care, participates in swim class three days a week at the YMCA, is active in her church, a member of the Stroke/Brain Injury support group, a participant of the Best Buddies program and visits with family often. Rose is also a graduate of LIFE CIL's Community Advocacy Training Class, and spoke publicly at the Independent Living Rally Day in Springfield this past spring. She is a pronounced advocate and is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in. On top of what she already does, Rose is exploring local volunteer opportunities and potentially would like to obtain a part-time job. Rose is active in the community and is happy living her best life.



Rose at the Independent Living Rally Day in Springfield.

“Thank you very much for the cordless phone and cell phone amplifier. It is a wonderful service for those who need these. I do appreciate your time and care.” – P.G.

OUR DONORS

MONETARY AND IN-KIND DONORS



We thank all of you for your generosity. Your donation helps make an impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities and supports our mission.

Vincent and Judy Addicks

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MANY anonymous donors

SPONSORS OF WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL



We appreciate your support to help make
our annual event a success!





OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for contributing your time and talent to help LIFE CIL succeed in our mission. We appreciate you.

Jim Allen	Michelle Hamman	Dave McMorris
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Abby Farrell	Michael Lee	Nancy Warner
Gabriella Generally	Damian Lewis	Andi Whalen
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Shawn Gore	Jim Martin	Rachel Wingard
Sarah Grammer	Stella McMillan	

OUR MEMBERS



Thank you, we appreciate your support.

Cathy Ahart
Brienne Anderson
Baron and Judith
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(LIFETIME)
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Wesley Cowden
Gerald DeFrates (LIFETIME)
Joyce Dunlap
Rodney and Donna Evans
Patricia Gaertner
Donna Gannon
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Monica Innis
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you.

Your time, talent and dedication is greatly appreciated.

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Nancy Warner, Vice President
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Renee Ingalsbe, Secretary

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Margarite Brooks
Wesley Cowden
Monica Innis
Vasudeva "Vasu" Kalla
Melissa Kearney
Nancy Littell
Jim Martin
Samuela Perez
Kevin Roberts
Cecilia Ruffin
Barbara Singer

Centers for Independent Living are mandated to have at least 51% of their board and staff be individuals with disabilities. 67% of our board members have a disability.

THE LIFE CIL TEAM



Thank you to the dedicated and passionate individuals
who work tirelessly to fulfill our mission.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Rickielee Benecke, Executive Director

Meri Helbig, Program Director

Brianne Anderson, Administrative Services Director

DIRECT SERVICE STAFF

Conan Calhoun, Disability Rights Advocate

Vicky Hogan, Community Living Advocate

Andrea Kindseth, Community Reintegration Advocate

Kim Tarkowski, Vision Access Advocate

Shannon Tarkowski, Independent Living Advocate

SUPPORT STAFF

Keith Adams, Custodian and Center Photographer

Jasmine Gibs, Administrative Assistant

CONTRACTUAL

Chris Bergstrand, Accountant

90% of our team have a disability.

The amount of time our team members
have been a part of LIFE CIL ranges from
5 months to 19 years.

"You do so
much for
others. You
should be so
proud."

– M.H.



HOW COULD YOU MAKE AN IMPACT?

We are one of the best-kept secrets in our area.
You can help change that.

1. Tell your family and friends about us.
2. Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/lifecil
3. Make a donation to LIFE CIL – either monetary or in-kind. We accept durable medical equipment for our loan closet.
4. Ask your company to sponsor our Wheelchair Basketball event in the spring.
5. Become a volunteer!
6. Become a member and get updated news, information, event invites and vote for our Board of Directors.

CONTACT US



MAIN OFFICE



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Bloomington, IL 61704
Phone: 309/663-5433
Toll-Free: 888/543-3245
Fax: 815/844-1132

Hours: Monday – Friday;
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

BRANCH OFFICE

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ON THE WEB

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