



COMMUNITY NEWS



WHAT'S NEW AROUND DSC...



Dear Friends,

Spring has been a season of action and connection at DSC. Advocacy efforts were front and center, with two groups traveling to Springfield to support Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Our self-advocates participated in the "They Deserve More" Advocacy Day in April, while staff attended the IARF Advocacy Day in May. We met with legislators to advocate for increased DSP wages and to oppose cuts to DSP funded staff support hours in group homes. We're pleased to report the state budget reflects an increased wage for DSPs and delays group home hour reductions until January 1st.

We are also incredibly grateful for our volunteers. In April, 40 individuals helped see the runners off at the starting line of the Christie Clinic Illinois Race Weekend, and in May, several groups donated their time for spring clean-up projects at our group homes. Your support makes a real difference—thank you!

Our March Art Supply Drive saw wonderful support as well. The donated materials will be used for creative projects and enrichment activities by the people we support! Thank you to everyone who contributed, we appreciate you!

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for Tuesday, August 5th, The Eastern Illinois Parrot Head Club is once again hosting Back to the Prairibbean, featuring live music by The Boat Drunks! Join us at Riggs Beer Company from 5:00-8:00pm for a great night of fun and community benefiting DSC. I hope to see you there!

Sincerely,



Danielle



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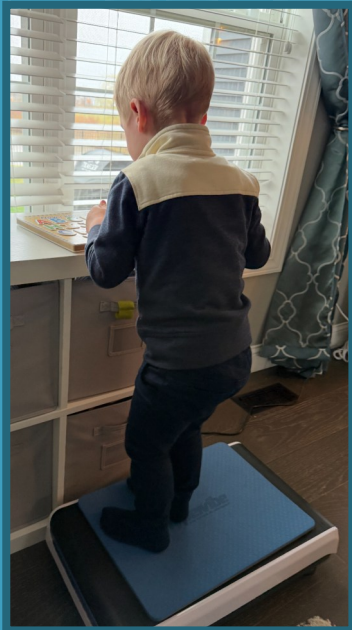
Since September 2023, DSC has been supporting Finley and his family through their early intervention journey. They have encountered some challenges, particularly in accessing the adaptive equipment essential for Finley's development. He had outgrown standard infant seating, and most toddler options required more core strength than he currently has. Until recently, his only seating options were a reclined swing or someone's lap with constant physical support.

Because of a generous grant from The TJX Foundation, DSC was able to add a specialized seating system to our Family Development Lending Library—giving Finley the support he needs. With this adaptive seat, Finley can now sit upright independently, engage in play with his siblings, strengthen his motor skills, and take part more fully in daily family life—all without requiring continuous hands-on assistance.

"This may sound a little dramatic, but this chair is going to be life changing for him. He was able to see what he was playing with without anything around his neck!" - Finley's Mom

This grant from the TJX Foundation also made it possible to add many other assistive devices and adaptive technology to our lending library, expanding our ability to support many more children. The lending library serves families who are facing delays in insurance approval or financial barriers, ensuring that children can continue progressing toward their developmental milestones without unnecessary interruption.

Thank you TJX Foundation for making this possible!



Vibration, Strength, and Smiles

Thanks to Iroquois Federal Foundation, who recently provided grant funding, DSC added the Hypervibe Gio Mini vibration plate and step/mat combo to our lending library—and one little boy is already seeing benefits.

This assistive technology supports muscle strength, balance, and mobility—especially for children with muscle tone challenges. With the Hypervibe, this child can now engage in fun, structured activities that help him build the muscles needed for crawling, standing, and walking. The step/mat combo allows him to safely explore different positions like hands-and-knees and tall kneeling, all while developing critical postural strength.

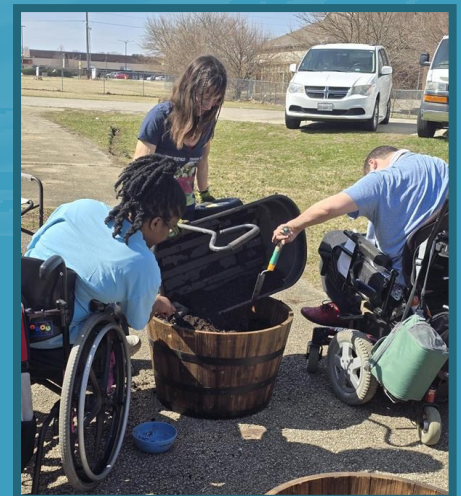
We are so thankful to the Iroquois Federal Foundation for helping us make these meaningful moments possible.

"Our son has really enjoyed using the Hypervibe—the sensory input is one thing he particularly enjoys. I feel like I am seeing an increase in his core strength and stabilizing muscles. This translates into better stability with running, climbing, and even possibly help with improving some of his speech. We appreciate the opportunity to be able to use this equipment with his therapy to see how he responds to the vibration therapy." - Mom

Growing More Than Vegetables: A Garden of Inclusion

The Junior League has provided grant funding for a beautiful accessible garden—and it's already beginning to grow! This garden offers individuals the chance to spend time outdoors, connect with nature, and build life skills through hands-on experiences. From planting seeds and watering plants to harvesting produce, every activity supports personal growth, connection, and independence.

DSC is grateful to the Junior League for helping us turn this vision into a vibrant reality. The garden is more than a patch of green—it's a place of learning, belonging, and community.



Annette Becherer Retires

After more than 40 years of dedicated service to DSC, Annette Becherer, Director of Employment Services, has retired! What started as a temporary position turned into a lifelong passion for our mission. Over the years, Annette has played a key role in major milestones, including new group homes, a 24-unit apartment building, and The Crow at 110.

Most recently, she has focused on mentoring DSC's managers, ensuring strong leadership and lasting impact. Her guidance has already fostered collaboration and growth among our team.

Beyond DSC, Annette is an outdoor enthusiast, passionate about nature, kayaking, hiking, and photography. As she settles into retirement this spring, we know she'll be enjoying every moment of the season she loves—along with Cardinals baseball!

Annette, your unwavering commitment has touched so many lives. Thank you for all that you have done—you will be missed!



Party with a Purpose: Back to the Prairibbean

Join the Eastern Illinois Parrot Head Club on Tuesday, August 5th, at Riggs Beer Company, for a summer evening of fun benefiting DSC! Enjoy live music from The Boat Drunks, delicious food and sweet treats, and your favorite Riggs beverages. Admission tickets are on sale now and can be purchased online at eiphc.org or day of at the gate. Come for the fun—stay for the impact!

A colorful event poster for "Back to the Prairibbean '25". The top features the text "The Eastern Illinois Parrot Head Club Presents..." in a script font. Below this is a large, bold title "Back to the Prairibbean '25" in yellow and black. The event details are listed: "Tuesday, August 5th", "5:00PM - 8:00PM", "RIGGS BEER COMPANY URBANA". It also mentions "RAFFLE BASKETS, 50/50, LOTTERY TICKET BOARD, AND SO MUCH FUN!". Ticket information states "\$10 ENTRY FEE" and "PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE AT EIPHC.ORG OR AT THE GATE". Logos for "FEATURING THE BOAT DRUNKS", "All Proceeds Benefit DSC", "SMITH BURGER CO.", "Watson's SLACKERAIL", "La Paloma Mexican delicacies", and "The Main Scoop ICE CREAM PARLOR" are included. A QR code and the DSC logo are also present.

Enjoying Spring!

We've had a wonderful spring, so far! Trips to get donuts, the Spurlock Museum, and the Chicago Auto Show are just a few of our favorites!





LEAP is growing, and we're thrilled to be reaching more businesses than ever! More locations have discovered the benefits of hiring talented candidates with disabilities. A heartfelt **thank you** to the businesses below for their dedication to creating inclusive workplaces and for joining us at a recent LEAP training. Your commitment to accessibility and opportunity makes a real difference!



- Champaign County Forest Preserve District
- Gibbs Carpet Service
- Atkins Golf Club

Is your company listed in the Champaign County Directory of Disability-Inclusive Employers? This public directory helps job seekers, including those working with DSC and Community Choices, find inclusive workplaces. Join today and show your dedication to workplace inclusion!

Register now at <https://leapdirectory-cu.org/directory>

Leave a Legacy with DSC

Support the future. Empower lives.

Planned giving is a powerful way to ensure that DSC's mission continues for generations to come. By including DSC in your estate plans, you can create lasting impact for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Your legacy gift helps sustain essential programs that promote independence, inclusion, and opportunity—ensuring that individuals and families receive the support they need, now and for years to come. Whether through a bequest, trust, or other planned gift your generosity becomes a lasting investment in securing the future of DSC.

To learn more about how you can leave a legacy of hope and possibility, please contact Jodie Harmon, Vice President of Development & Communications, at jharmon@dsc-illinois.org or 217-398-7110.



Mid-Year Appeal

Our Mid-Year Appeal is coming to your mailbox soon! We hope you'll consider joining us in empowering people with disabilities to live full, independent lives. Every act of support—big or small—helps strengthen the programs that make the support we provide possible.

It's Grilling Season!

Warmer weather is here, and we are ready to enjoy the sunshine, good food and the joy of gathering outdoors. But some of our grills at our group homes have seen better days—and we could use your help to replace them!

If you are interested in donating a grill or contributing towards a new one please reach out to Jodie Harmon at 217-398-7110 or jharmon@dsc-illinois.org.

Volunteers Needed

We're looking for folks to help us with some yard work. If you or a group you're associated with is looking for volunteer time, this could be a good fit! Reach out to: Development@dsc-illinois.org.



Save the Date

DSC is excited to once again take part in the Disability Resource Expo on Saturday, October 18th at Market Place Mall. This free event runs from 11 AM to 4 PM and offers resources, support, and accessibility services for all ages. Come see us there!



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Mission: DSC supports people in living a rich and meaningful life.

Vision: Striving to assure that every person lives a full life in the community.