

Helping Hand Center is a nonprofit serving adults and children with developmental disabilities in suburban Cook County and greater Chicagoland communities since 1955. We offer a range of programs and services, including outpatient therapies, early intervention, a school for children with autism, high school transition, residential homes, employment services, adult developmental training, and special recreation programs.

Helping Hand Center Board of Directors

Andrea Barczak
Elaine Burke
David DiSanto
Nicole Erickson
Dennis Higgins
Anne Kokoris
James P. Lill
Susan Schell
Barbara Weyrick

Helping Hand Foundation Board of Directors

Robert Ackermann
David Bishop
Kevin Chandler
Robert Conrad
Michael Ettleson
Edward J. Farrell III
Howard Habenicht
Tom Janus
Patricia Lehman
Phil Palmer
Jeff Pieta
Michael Slinkman
James Stillo
Christine Speiser

Special Olympics Basketball Team Qualifies for Statewide Tournament

This past fall, Helping Hand Center's Special Recreation Department introduced a brand new Special Olympics program. Over 20 people signed up for the basketball team, known as the Wildcats, and they started practicing and eventually started playing games against Special Recreation Associations. In January, the team went to the Area 5 sectionals and took first place with two victories.

The win qualified the team to participate in the statewide tournament at Illinois State University in March, where they took home the bronze medal.



Special Olympics Basketball Team Members

Front Row: (left to right) Peggy Jean Neiweem, Lisa Manata, Mary Beth Webster, Linda Chopp, Kim Thomas, Casey Kufel, Lupe Villa, David DeVeno. Back Row (left to right) Steve Shubat, Coach Joe Hart, David Ferris, Tim Van Beveren, Joe Shaughnessy, Deon Sims, Kevin Finch, Chris Novak, Coach Jillian Palmer, Coach Ashley Colletti. Not Pictured: John Hansen, Kevin Dahmer, Megan McClellan, Andrew Morton

A note from the Executive Director



Mary Beth Hepp
Executive Director

Happy Spring! We have made it through a “real” Chicago Winter and Spring is finally here. Spring always reminds me of rain showers, May flowers...and report cards at the end of a school year. Helping Hand Center just received its own “report card” and I am thrilled to let you know we received an “A”! Quality in our programs, services and staff continues to remain the main focus and it shows. Over the past few months the Department of Human Services Bureau of Quality Management and Bureau of Licensure and Accreditation conducted extensive reviews of Helping Hand Center including our Residential Services, Developmental Training, Medication Administration, Service Facilitation and Policies and Procedures.

The State Reviewers were impressed with Helping Hand Center and our quality of work. I am pleased to report we received very high marks; 92% - 97% throughout all areas. The Reviewers said Helping Hand Center has high quality programs and superior staff! **Thank You** to all the staff – they work very hard and go above and beyond to make sure we provide quality services everyday.

But the numbers do not always tell the specific stories of our success. Here are just a few of those stories:

Ava, 6 yrs. old, is now able to dress and undress herself, which has been a struggle for her in the past and gives her a new sense of self-reliance.

Ronnie, 16 yrs. old, has learned to ride a bike because he has significantly improved his stability and balance. This has been a long time goal of his.

Logan, 9 yrs. old, has improved his handwriting so much that he is now able to keep up with the rest of his public school class on writing assignments.

Erik, 7 yrs. old, who has overcome his difficulties with self-control and attention span, now participates in group activities in school and even helps teach other children in class.



We continue to be proud of these and all our 500 clients for their extraordinary efforts to reach their goals for independence. And, of course, they do not do it alone. Each and every family, friend, guardian, and neighbor associated with Helping Hand should feel a huge sense of pride for all the hard work and support you provide. You all get an A!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Beth Hepp".

Mary Beth Hepp

Client Achievement Awards

These new awards were designed to recognize individuals who have exhibited an overall desire to develop their life skills and have shown significant progress in their development. Our clients deserve a great deal of recognition for all their hard work. Every step, big or little, toward meeting the next developmental milestone is worthy to be commemorated. And while we recognize all our 500 clients work hard everyday and all achieve a great deal, these awards just highlight just a few very special people.



Keith Kujawa, Achievement Award Recipient

Keith had the highest overall score in the area of attitude. Whether this individual is meeting a new person, trying something new, or even dealing with a difficult situation, he does it with a genuine smile on his face. He is a reminder to us all to keep in perspective, that despite the difficulties one may experience, happiness can be achieved.



Mark Grant, Achievement Award Recipient

What stands out about Mark are his efforts in a group called the "Leadership Training Peer Facilitator" group. As part of this group, he assists staff in choosing group activities and helps his peers engage in these activities. Through this program, not only has he developed himself, but he has made a significant impact on others.

Monthly Communications to Families and Friends

As you know, good communication is key in any relationship. It is the same for the relationship between Helping Hand Center and all our families, friends, guardians, and clients. It is important you know what is happening at Helping Hand on an ongoing basis. Therefore, we have set up a posting of information on our website at www.hhcenter.org/familynews/familynews.php. This is a great way to let you know all of the wonderful things going on at Helping Hand Center! This is a monthly posting and is sent out via e-mail each month with a link to read this posting on our website.

To get this e-mail with the link we need your e-mail address! If you are not receiving this link already, please e-mail your address to Tiffany Moore at tiffany.moore@hhcenter.org. If you do not have access to a computer, please let us know and we will get this information to you through another family member or friend. We hope you find this communication helpful! As always, thank you for all your support for Helping Hand Center.

Helping Hand Pleased to Announce New Partnership With The Home Depot



Helping Hand Center's Employment Services Department attended a Community Summit at The Home Depot in Alsip where they were introduced to Dee Veirtel and Yolanda Edwards, The Home

Depot District Human Resources Managers for the Chicago suburbs. Through Dee and Yolanda, Job Developers established contact with over 20 Home Depot locations, ranging from the north Chicago suburbs to as far south as Joliet. We are excited to announce that eight Helping Hand clients have been hired at The Home Depot locations in Bedford Park, Bolingbrook, and Northlake, as well as the Chicago locations at 47th & Western, and 87th & Dan Ryan.

Nearly a decade ago, two Helping Hand clients were hired as Lot Attendants at the Home Depot in Countryside – a position that typically results in a great deal of turnover. According to managers at that same location, the company spends about \$2,500 to hire and train a new associate. After almost ten years of gainful employment, these two clients have saved their employer nearly fifty-thousand dollars.

As part of Home Depot's dedication to community philanthropy, they awarded Helping Hand a grant to fund the renovation of a Residential Home in LaGrange, an undertaking that would require nearly \$60,000 worth of supplies and labor. The renovation is scheduled for completion this summer.

Helping Hand Center would like to extend our gratitude to The Home Depot for their support of both our clients and mission. We look forward to continuing a partnership with The Home Depot and their incredible staff.



Penny Rivers, Garden Sales Associate
The Home Depot, Bolingbrook

Helping Hand Forms New Partnership with Best Buy

In January, Helping Hand was thrilled to receive a donation from Best Buy that included 3 ipads, a Wii gaming console, and a discount on other Best Buy electronics. This was a result of an ongoing partnership with Jack Stonebraker, Community Relationship Program Manager at Best Buy. As a result of this relationship, Jack and Brenda Blough, Human Resources District Manager's invited members of employment services to the Lumity Dinner held on March 16th at the Four Seasons Hotel. The Lumity Dinner honored Best Buy and its community outreach programs as well as giving awards to nonprofit organizations that are active in Chicagoland. In the coming months, we're excited to be able to build our relationship with Best Buy and have planned many initiatives, including volunteer and employment opportunities.



St. John of the Cross Adult Service Project Day

April showers didn't prevent nine volunteers from St. John of the Cross parish from coming out to Helping Hand Center to give their time and energy. The volunteers spent their Saturday prepping and painting the two stairwells and the kitchen at our center. A huge thank you to the volunteer team of John Ericson, Lisa Den Besten, Tom Foody, Ken Hohl, Susan Kiley, Kathleen King, Pat Klopp, Denise Posen, and Mari Uribarri.



St. John of the Cross Volunteers
Mari Uribarri and Kathleen King volunteer their time prepping and painting the kitchen.

Kohl's Donates Time and Money for Movie Night

On April 15th, 2011 Kohl's Department Store in North Riverside hosted a Helping Hand Movie Night in the Wellness Center through their program, Associates in Action. The volunteers served pizza, soda and popcorn while over 80 clients and staff enjoyed a viewing of the movie *Iron Man 2*. Along with the evenings volunteers, Helping Hand also qualified for a \$500 grant through the Associates in Action program. We would like to extend our appreciation to Kohl's Department Store for their time and we look forward to next months activity.

The Helping Hand Thrift Shop Springs Ahead With Positive Changes

The Helping Hand Thrift Shop has gone through quite a few changes in the past year - all to get ready for new opportunities that are available for our staff and clients. Through the Employment Services Department, we have been able to use our thrift store as a retail training facility for several students who are transitioning out of high school and into the workforce. We also provide experience to individuals who are looking to strengthen their retail skills in order to obtain a job in the community. A long time staff member of Helping Hand, Claudia Flores, is working on using our thrift store as a training and volunteer experience for some of our clients attending the day programs. She is also utilizing volunteers and continues to seek new ones interested in giving their time to the program. The store utilizes many volunteers who strive to make sure our store operate both efficiently and effectively. With all of these wonderful new additions, we have made the thrift store a great experience, not only for the customers, but for the people we serve, as well!

Mark your 2011 Calendars

May 25

Family Association Meeting
Helping Hand Center
Countryside
7:00 p.m.

May 30

Memorial Day Holiday
Helping Hand Center Closed

June 10

Staff In-Service Day
Helping Hand Center Closed

July 4

Independence Day Holiday
Helping Hand Center Closed

July 18

27th Annual Golf Classic
Riverside Golf Club

July 30

Family Association
Ice Cream Social
Countryside
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

August 1-5

Summer Vacation
School for Children
with Autism Closed

September 10

Helping Hand Center
Donation Day

Highlands Middle School Students Lend a Helping Hand

On April 13th, a group of 8th grade students from Highlands Middle School in LaGrange hosted their first annual all-school service project. They served 17 community organizations and families by providing landscaping and yard clean up. Melissa Luetkehans, school social worker, and Joan Metz, head of the parent volunteers, organized a group of 10 student volunteers, one teacher and one adult to provide landscaping for our Residential Home in LaGrange. The student's families and parents provided all of the plants, mulch, bushes and stone. The students spent their morning planting, mulching the flower beds and digging up and laying stone near the driveway. We are so thankful for all of the wonderful volunteers time and energy. The adults who live at the home love their new beautiful outside area and are so delighted and very thankful.

If you are interested in volunteering, please call Carolyn Kline, Director of Volunteers at 708-352-3580 x246.



Highlands Middle School Volunteers

Teacher: Matt Yena, Parent: Laurie Scheer, Students: Melissa Marston, Karli Fehrman, Jessica Bendyk, Elizabeth Johnson, Jack Bibeau, Eddy Moskos, Jake Nelson, Chad Holland, Danny Farmer, Louis Colonna

Donors Give Money for Wellness Center Kitchen Renovation

This winter, thanks to the very generous donations from BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe), Rotary of LaGrange and Arthur Goff, we have a beautiful new training kitchen in our Wellness Center.

Helping Hand maintenance staff started the renovation by removing all of the walls, old tile, and cabinets. New stainless steel shelving and tables were purchased to make a more functional area for clients. Fiber glass panels were installed on the walls for a more durable use and easy cleaning. A new floor was installed, along with new ceiling tiles and lights for a much cleaner, updated look. To complete the space, we finally said goodbye to the 1970's era stove and purchased a new electric range and built in microwave. The food storage area was also reconfigured to allow for more space and shelving to be installed. Throughout the renovation, clients were very excited and kept thanking us time and time again for all of our hard work. Most of them could not wait for the renovation to be complete so they could make use of the new space.



Wellness Center Training Kitchen
Renovated Winter 2010

It Really is a Beautiful Life!

On March 12, we presented our 12th annual gala, La Bella Vita, at the Marriott Hotel in Burr Ridge. The theme said it all - it really is a beautiful life – as we focused on the achievements of the individuals we serve with disabilities. More than 400 people were on hand to support our center, raising over \$125,000 to directly benefit the non-profit programs and services provided to the community of children and adults with disabilities at Helping Hand.

“Our gala is one of our most important fundraising efforts of the year”

Mary Beth Hepp, Executive Director

The evening also included the presentation of the Client Achievement Awards recognizing individuals who exhibit a strong desire to develop their life skills. Keith Kujawa was one of the recipients of the Adult Services Awards; he was recognized for his positive attitude, cheerful smile and strong motivation. Mark Grant was also an award recipient, recognized for his leadership skills, participation in group activities and his humble and gentle manner. The Children Services Award was awarded to all the collaborative teams that Children’s Services nurtures. The teams include the children we serve, the devoted and caring parents and guardians, and our skilled therapists and educators.

Guests enjoyed a fabulous evening of cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, dinner, dancing, silent and live auctions. Helping Hand clients were a visible and integral part of the event by selling raffle tickets, greeting guests and working the silent auction tables. For the silent auction, clients created beautiful and unique art pieces with glazed tiles, which were then set in trays, trivets and mirrors. Dan Devries, a Helping Hand client, offered a blessing before dinner. Rob Johnson of Hinsdale, CBS-Channel 2 news anchor, served as emcee and shared the stage with auctioneer Vinnie Zafarrano who facilitated the fundraising efforts for the evening.

A very special thank you to our hard working Gala Committee and to all of you who attended, bid on auction items, sponsored the event and made donations. The Helping Hand staff and clients are overwhelmed with your generosity, kindness and willingness to support our mission.

Annual Gala Committee Members

Andrea Barczak

Elaine Burke

Sue Howe

Beth Janus

Niamh Kristufek

Angela Riggio

Carol Riggio

Christine Speiser

2011 Sponsors

Gold Level Sponsor



Silver Level Sponsors

TPC Foundation

Lyons Township
Mental Health Commission

Bronze Level Sponsors

Community Bank of Western Springs

Enterprise Rental

First National Bank of LaGrange

Dr. Margaret Hannon

Huizenga Capital Management

McMahon Transport

Mid American Group

Mulcahy, Pauritsch, Salvador & Co.

NuMark Credit Union

Normandy Builders

Nyco Products

The Private Bank

Silpada Jewelry

Stairway Partners/LLC

Wilson & Wilson Law Offices

Your gift provides...

a place to call home	futures of independence	expanded job opportunities	special recreation
\$500	\$250	\$100	\$50
			

Any gift will help an individual with a developmental disability achieve their highest level of success!

Name: _____ Donation Amount: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

To make a tax-deductible donation, please visit www.hhcenter.org or send a check payable to:
Helping Hand Center • 9649 West 55th Street • Countryside, IL 60525

www.hhcenter.org
(708) 352-3580
Countryside, IL 60525
9649 West 55th Street

SERVING CHILDREN &
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

