

Power Forward

2009 Progress Report >>

From the director

The next voice added may just be the one that gets the job done

Dear Friend,

It's been a whirlwind year.

It's been a year of breakthroughs, from the passage of two legislative resolutions supporting the *Blueprint for System Redesign* to the launch of the first state-funded microboard, which has unblocked the funding stream for future microboards. Thanks to tireless advocacy efforts of many from across the state, Gov. Pat Quinn this past summer announced the closure of Howe Developmental Center, one of the state's nine institutions for people with developmental disabilities.

We are encouraged by the launch of many meaningful projects and programs that are helping more people with developmental disabilities live in their communities and bringing us closer to the ultimate goal of system change. But this year has not been without its challenges.

We have all felt the tremendous loss of one of America's foremost disability rights leaders, our very own Chairman Lester Pritchard, who passed away at the age of 60 in October. Lester led by the way he lived. He was lauded by each human being whose path he crossed, from the Governor to the hundreds of self-advocates he inspired across the state.

A true visionary, Lester dreamed of a better world for people with developmental disabilities — one of inclusion for all and community for all. He powered forward from each challenge to bring us a step closer each day to achieving that vision. Like many of us, he considered full inclusion, equality and opportunity for people with disabilities the modern civil rights battle of our time.

Although Lester is gone, we can't stop now. There are 17,000 people with developmental disabilities on a waiting list for the services they need. Although Howe will close, there are eight other state-operated developmental centers that continue to be the only option for thousands of people.

There's much work to be done.
We must power forward.

Sincerely,

Sheila Romano

Director

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities



“The responsibility for making change rests on all of us. Instead of only asking why something can’t be done, we should be asking what can be done to make it happen.”

└───▶ *Lester T. Pritchard*
Chairman, ICDD
1949–2009

Power Forward >>

A brighter future for Illinoisans with developmental disabilities



Change isn't easy and it doesn't happen overnight. Inequalities, stigmas and insufficient funding plague our state and too often stymie progress towards a better system of services for people with developmental disabilities.

But amid all these challenges are powerful stories of success by people who power forward. Stories such as the woman with a developmental disability who gained employment for the very first time thanks to the El Valor program. Such as the man who had been told all his life he couldn't live independently — and he now is wrapping up his first year living independently in the community. And there's the young girl whose goal was to learn to use words to express herself. Her mom recently called her project leader and said she won't stop talking.

As we look at the projects and programs we supported this year, it's clear a brighter future for Illinoisans with developmental disabilities is within reach.

Power forward.

“Everyone has a future.”



► *Ally McAleer, Highland Park*

>> visit LifeMyWay.org to see my video >>

A better Illinois for all

Serving and empowering people with developmental disabilities

The Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD) serves people with developmental disabilities through education, outreach and investment in initiatives that improve the quality of life for all Illinoisans with developmental disabilities, across all phases of life.

The quality of the state's system of services often determines the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families. We are committed to improving the system so that all individuals with developmental disabilities are better served and, consequently, achieve a better quality of life.

Our mission:

"ICDD helps lead change in Illinois so all people with developmental disabilities exercise their right to equal opportunity and freedom."

We recognize and honor the capabilities of people living with developmental disabilities. By investing in people and organizations that serve people with developmental disabilities throughout Illinois, we work to amplify the collective voices of people with developmental disabilities in order to ultimately force real system change. We support

the rights of all individuals as equal citizens of Illinois and assist those who need our support for quality services and opportunities.

Council members come from diverse backgrounds. We are people with developmental disabilities and family members, representatives from various government agencies, service providers and advocates. We oversee a variety of initiatives that help ensure people with developmental disabilities have the right to choose and receive the community supports they need.

ICDD is administered by the Federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The Council was established pursuant to a 1974 amendment to the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.

The Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities invests in nine service areas across all phases of life. This year, we focused our supports on the following three areas:

- > **Employment**
- > **Community**
- > **Quality Assurance**



“If you believe in yourself, you can accomplish anything.”

▶ *Ravelle McDonald, Robinson*

>> visit LifeMyWay.org to see my video >>



“My job at the local fire department lets me help others. I love being out in the field with the search and rescue team.”

Employment

Power forward for work opportunities

When a self-advocate tackles his or her first day of work and comes home with new skills and a new sense of self-worth, we are refreshingly reminded of the difference that employment can make.

Preparing businesses to hire

Collaborating with a team of public and private workforce partners, the **WorkneXt Level of Business Partnership** is identifying and educating more than 20 DuPage County businesses that may employ and support people with developmental disabilities in community-based jobs. This effort is led by the Parents Alliance Employment Project.

Making businesses more successful

The El Valor Corporate Development Project helps business entities develop the knowledge and skills to successfully connect with the disability community. Hiring workers with disabilities is part of being recognized publicly as a “disability-friendly” workplace.

Finding the right job

Working Today, Changing Tomorrow provides individualized employment services to people with developmental disabilities by matching the job seeker’s strengths to the appropriate job.

Developed by the Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials, this project promotes full integration in the work setting and identifies, educates and supports local businesses committed to hiring people with disabilities.

Getting the job

Thanks to **Pathfinders to Employment & Community Life**, more than 20 people with developmental disabilities and co-occurring mental illness acquired integrated, individualized and supported employment in their communities. The Individual Advocacy Group, Inc. launched this project, which integrates assertive community treatment, customized employment and personal future planning to help participants secure jobs.

Stabilizing wage and self-employment for people with developmental disabilities

Led by the Health and Disability Advocates, the **Rural Illinois Customized Employment Sustainability Project** brings nationally recognized experts in customized employment to Illinois to provide training and technical assistance to our state’s vocational providers. Regional and state-based partnerships support creative approaches to employment for all.

Robert Barnes, East Alton

>> visit LifeMyWay.org to read my story >>

Community

Power forward for full inclusion

We all want to be treated with respect and accepted as part of our community. People with developmental disabilities are no exception.

Real reform for a better system

Produced by the Human Services Research Institute, the *Blueprint for System Redesign* is a well-researched, thoughtful plan for reform that would correct Illinois' over-reliance on institutions, increase quality community supports for people with developmental disabilities and eliminate the state's waiting list for services over a 7-year period. This year, both the Illinois Senate and House unanimously approved resolutions supporting the *Blueprint*. Learn more at GetToKnowTheBlue.org.

Taking action for dreams

Led by Macon Resources, *New Visions* is empowering persons with developmental disabilities to envision, express and realize their dreams. This statewide initiative utilizes personal coaches in a Full Life Future Planning process to guide and help people develop support networks and create their own action plans to accomplish their dreams. Thus far, 54 people with developmental disabilities have achieved at least one of their dreams.

Building support networks

Tony Records & Associates have administered *Managing the Art of Living*, a project that provides people with disabilities the opportunity to manage and direct their own services and living conditions through the use of microboards and cooperatives. So far, 27 microboards and three cooperatives have been developed, two of which have become licensed by the state Department of Human Services to equip individuals with home-based waiver funding.

A person-centered approach

In partnership with Illinois State University, *Personalized Supports Needs Assessment and Planning in Illinois* taught more than 80 professionals and family members how to facilitate person-centered planning sessions and complete a standardized supports and needs assessment scale. People with developmental disabilities and their planning teams were empowered to develop individual support plans that helped produce a higher quality of life.



Creating and empowering advocates

Led by Serafin & Associates, LifeMyWay.org is shifting public perception and understanding about the capabilities of people with developmental disabilities by empowering them to tell their stories as a means of advocacy. This 3-year project, just beginning its second year, has already collected hundreds of stories from self-advocates, family members and third-party advocates across the state, and is featuring local news coverage on disability issues while reporting on the talents and lives of people with developmental disabilities.

“One day, I want to live on my own with my buddies because we have parties, we talk and eat together and just have fun.”



Kellen Ehrenhardt and mom Teri, Eureka

>> visit LifeMyWay.org to hear our stories >>

Quality Assurance

Power forward to a better life



“I researched to find a music coach, got permission from my parents and practiced for weeks to see my dream of learning to play the guitar come true.”



Bonnie Dietz, LaGrange

>> visit LifeMyWay.org to read my story >>

Breaking barriers isn't easy, but learning to advocate helps people achieve goals they never thought they could. Programs that empower people with developmental disabilities with self-advocacy skills, leadership training and other life supports are paramount to improving quality of life.

Uniting school districts and parents

Through this 4-year investment with the **DePaul University Office of Sponsored Programs**, the Law School is training culturally-diverse law students through an innovative, comprehensive advocacy program that emphasizes ongoing collaboration between school districts and parents. Students gain experience and exposure to relevant legal cases.

Bringing people together to speak out

Administered by the Arc of Illinois, the **2009 Speak Up, Speak Out Summit** brought people with developmental disabilities from around Illinois to Springfield so they could make their voices heard — many for the very first time. Together, hundreds advocated for positive changes and a better system of services.

The ARC of Illinois administers our **Consumer Involvement Fund**, which provides stipends to people with developmental disabilities and their families to attend helpful conferences and training sessions they otherwise would not be able to attend.

Empowering people to use data for change

In partnership with the Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities, the **DDD Quality Initiative** is an intensive training program that's teaching people to use data to improve quality at the systems level and to become Certified Quality Analysts (CQAs). While 20 CQAs have been certified in the country, Illinois' first-of-its-kind program is seeking to certify 50 CQAs, including five self-advocates.

Working together to improve life quality

Another project led by the Human Services Research Institute, **The Alliance** creates a network of self-advocacy groups and self-advocates who, together, improve their lives, change local service practices and make contributions to their communities through a variety of local actions. They learn to work together to advocate for statewide changes in disability policy and practices.

Accomplishing goals through self-advocacy

The young adults of **PathWays to Self-Advocacy** learned how to discover, prepare and accomplish their goals through self-advocacy. Coupled with support from the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce & Industry Foundation, this 2-year program allowed 50 young adults from the LaGrange Area Department of Special Education to build confidence while improving motivation and growing skills.

Learning how to make choices

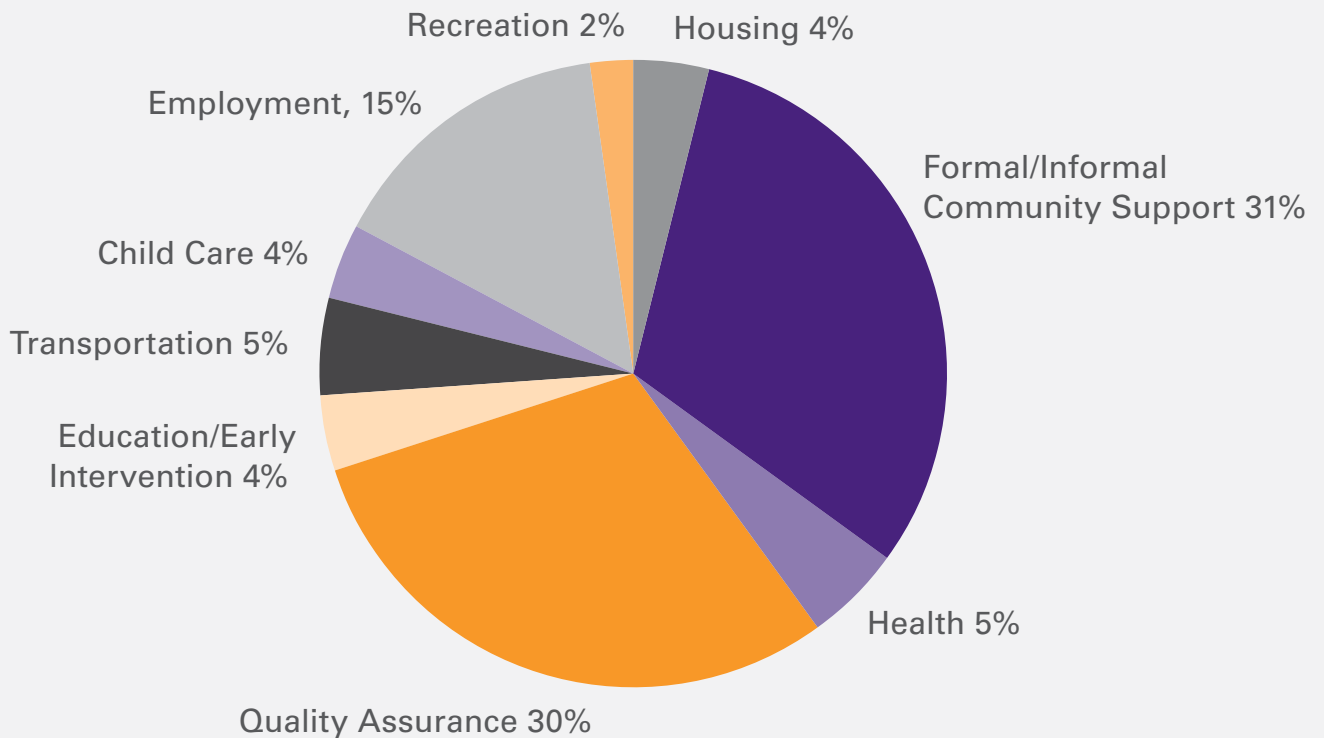
Project Hear MY VOICE is a collaborative 3-year project between Indian Prairie School District #204 and Northern Illinois University to develop a lasting model that helps youth with developmental disabilities develop leadership skills to make personal life decisions. Youth build multimedia presentations to present and lead at their IEP meetings.

Investing in a Brighter Future

Power forward to achieve the vision

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

FFY Budget: \$2,970,429



The Building Blocks for a Brighter Future

Making system change possible

Child Care

Parents of children with developmental disabilities depend on properly trained childcare providers to educate and assist with the care of their child. We aid parents of children with developmental disabilities in finding the appropriate resources, while providing a peace of mind for all family members.

Education/Early Intervention

Full inclusion in Illinois' school classrooms is still a work in progress. Individuals with developmental disabilities are capable of succeeding in school when given the opportunity. Early intervention can help more children receive services as soon as is needed, so they can make strides throughout their lives.

Health

We work with key organizations and leaders in the healthcare industry to ensure the best possible healthcare is available for people with developmental disabilities now and in the future.

Quality Assurance

Individuals with developmental disabilities want the option to determine their future and improve their quality of life. We believe that self-advocacy and leadership can help mobilize people with developmental disabilities to achieve success.

Transportation

Reliable and convenient transportation continues to be out of reach for many people with developmental disabilities. We envision more accessible

transportation options statewide through the help of various funding projects.

Community Supports

We continue to push for a future of inclusion for people with developmental disabilities in communities throughout Illinois. Community supports are more efficient for Illinois taxpayers and offer people with developmental disabilities the opportunity to live where they choose.

Employment

Individuals with developmental disabilities deserve the opportunity to excel in the workplace. We envision an Illinois where organizations help connect motivated individuals to businesses that recognize the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities.

Housing

Thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities dream about living in their own apartment or owning their own home. We believe that every person with a developmental disability has the right to decide where to live and with whom; we envision a future where these decisions can be made freely.

Recreation

We support programs for individuals with developmental disabilities that promote a healthy mind and body. People with developmental disabilities should not be relegated to the sidelines, but rather asked to partake in enjoyable, recreational activities in their communities.

Partners

The Arc of Illinois
DePaul University Office of Sponsored Programs
El Valor
The Foundation for Quality & Leadership
Health and Disability Advocates
Human Services Research Institute
Illinois State University
Individual Advocacy Group, Inc.
Macon Resources, Inc.
National Association of State Directors of
Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS)
Northern Illinois University
Parents Alliance Employment Project
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Tony Records & Associates
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