

Helping people with  
disabilities flourish  
and live full and  
abundant lives

2nd Quarter  
2024

# The COMPASS

*So that our mission is never lost...*

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On May 18, 2024, Trinity Services and Abundant Living for All (ALFA) Foundation dedicated the new pool house with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

## 2024 Event Schedule



Mark your calendars for all the 2024 Trinity Services events including:  
*Trinity Triumph 5K Run and Walk* (6/20), *Better Together Dinner Dance and Auction* (9/21), and *An Evening of Holiday Music Concert Gala* (12/6).

Supporting people with disabilities and mental health needs since 1950.

## Trinity and Abundant Living for All Foundation Dedicate New Pool House

In 2012, Abundant Living for All (ALFA) Foundation started a capital campaign to raise money to build a pool for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the Trinity Southwest Day and Residential Program in Mascoutah, Illinois.

In 2023, ALFA, with a grant from the Veterans United Foundation and generous donations from a wide array of supporters, completed construction of a new pool house that was dedicated on Saturday, May 18, 2024.

The dedication ceremony featured a ribbon cutting and a pancake breakfast for donors, families, friends, and staff members, followed by a tour of the new facilities.

"The new pool house has a changing area and a rest room," said Angie O'Saben, ALFA Board President. "The pavilion area offers much needed shade and space for activities."

People served by Trinity will enjoy a picnic area, swimming and aquatic therapy.

# Letter from the President of the Board



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## The COMPASS

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or call (815) 717-3750.

Dear Friends,

I hope everyone is enjoying this beautiful weather.

First, I want to congratulate Valerie Woodkirk, manager of Trinity's horticulture program, who received the ANCOR 2024 Illinois Disability Service Professional (DSP) of the Year Award. Congratulations, Valerie! Thank you for all your hard work and your dedication and commitment to Trinity Services.

Everyone enjoyed the 30th Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Classic held this year at beautiful Ruffled Feathers Golf Club. Thank you to our players, sponsors, and volunteers who made this a huge success!

In May, The Arc of Illinois presented awards to two of our fine Trinity colleagues. Sabrina McLernon, case manager in charge of helping people with disabilities gain employment, received the Arc of Illinois 2024 QIDP Award. Paige McLawhorn, daughter of Laura McLawhorn, who manages the STRIDES Therapeutic Riding Center and Farm, received the Arc of Illinois 2024 Volunteer of the Year Award.

Abundant Living for All (ALFA) Foundation and Trinity Services celebrated the completion of the pool and the new pool house at the Trinity Southwest

Day and Residential Program in Mascoutah, Illinois. The Veterans United Foundation, the Masons, and a wide array of supporters provided the needed funding to complete the project. A job well done!

Alex Brown, a recent graduate of Lincoln-Way West High School, earned the rank of Eagle Scout in part through a service project that demonstrated both his leadership and commitment to duty. Alex, with the help of community members and family, built an accessible flower box for the people we support at one of the homes Trinity operates in New Lenox. Thank you, Alex!

Finally, you will want to read the heartwarming story of one of the people we support who lives in Mascoutah. Matt, who has a passion for horseracing, is a wonderful handicapper. He never bets on the races, but certainly has a knack for picking winners. This September, Matt will enjoy his fifth trip to Churchill Downs.

Enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

Raymond D. McShane,  
Chairperson of the Board



# Matt from Mascoutah and His Friends Enjoy a Day at the Races at Historic Churchill Downs!

When it comes to the sport of horseracing, it is difficult to find someone more passionate than Matthew from Mascoutah, a person served by Trinity Services. This September, Matthew – or Matt to his many friends – will be making his fifth trip to Churchill Downs in Lexington, Kentucky to watch the races.

“I love going to Churchill Downs and watching the horses run,” said Matt. “I like horses better than people. They are in my comfort zone.”

On his first trip to the racetrack, Matt brought along some friends, accompanied by Mike Lowry, Director of Trinity Services Southwest Illinois. Matt planned the entire trip, making sure to include some time for shopping in the stores for collectible items like puzzles and hats.

Mike Lowry is effusive about Matt’s abilities as a handicapper. “Matt is very good at handicapping races, even though he does not bet,” said Lowry. “Last year, Matt picked the winner of the first four races. Although his pick to win the fifth race scratched and he did not pick the winner of the sixth race, he did pick the winners of the seventh and eighth races. Picking six out of eight winners is an amazing feat!”

When Matt and his friends

attend Churchill Downs, they all drive together in a large van. Matt always brings along a binder of documents to follow all the horses who will race that day.

“The people at Churchill Downs are very nice to us,” explained Lowry. “The first time we went, an employee at the track named Laurie recognized that this was a very special day for our group and everyone received a hat and a commemorative pin. She even gave us a tour of the VIP balcony on the third floor.”

On their second trip to Churchill Downs, the group brought Laurie a gift basket with a copy of Trinity’s *Bee Book* and *How Full is Your Bucket*, plus a card from Matt thanking her for the racetrack’s hospitality. Since then, Laurie has always been an ambassador for the group. “Last year, Laurie brought me and my friends up to the announcer’s booth and introduced us to the track announcer,” explained Matt. “We even got to watch him call a race!”

Matt closely follows each race and savors every minute of the experience. He also enjoys the moment when Steve Bartman, the Churchill Downs’ bugler, plays the National Anthem and the calls to the post.

Matt is also a movie buff,

maintaining a database of movies and a website with reviews. His favorite director is Stanley Kubrick, and his favorite Kubrick film is *The Shining*. However, Matt’s favorite movie is Steven Spielberg’s *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Matt’s favorite theaters are the Alamo Draft House in St. Louis and AMC Theaters.

As for the future, Matt hopes to go to the Kentucky Derby. “I really love going to Churchill Downs,” said Matt. “It’s my favorite place to be!”



Matt meets the track announcer.



Tre, Emily, Matt, and Tiffany having their photo taken on the track at Churchill Downs in Lexington, Kentucky. Matt closely follows each race and savors every minute of the experience.



# Trinity Hosts 30th Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Classic at New Venue - Ruffled Feathers Golf Club in Lemont.

On Tuesday, May 21, 2024, Trinity Services hosted its annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Classic at Ruffled Feathers Golf Club in Lemont.

This year's theme was the Tumbleweed Tee-Off. After breakfast and a putting competition, golfers teed off in a shotgun format at ten o'clock, followed by a post-tournament meal, raffle prizes, a silent auction, and golf awards.

"We got very lucky with the weather," said Thane Dykstra, President and CEO of Trinity Services. "The new venue provided a great golfing challenge and everyone enjoyed themselves."

A special thanks goes out to the golfers, our generous sponsors and advertisers, as well as Trinity staff members who volunteered their time on and off the course to make this a truly memorable experience.

"It was a very successful event," said Sherry Ladislas, Trinity's Director of Development. "We look forward to seeing everyone again at the 31st Annual Memorial Golf Classic in May 2025."

This year's winning foursome, with a score of 15 under par, was Mars Medical: **Mike Foy, Jim Jercich, Paul Marolda, and Todd Sparrey.**

Congratulations to the victors!





# Trinity Employee and STRIDES Volunteer Receive Special Awards at the Arc of Illinois 2024 Conference

Each year, The Arc of Illinois honors exceptional individual performance with special awards in several categories. This year, Sabrina McLernon and Paige McLawhorn received recognition from The Arc of Illinois at the 74th Annual Convention in Springfield on Wednesday, May 1, 2024.

## Sabrina McLernon QIDP Award

The Career Access Network (CAN) at Trinity Services strives to help people with disabilities and mental illness achieve their dreams by helping them find competitive community employment. Employment specialists take on the role of case manager to help individuals with their journey to finding a job.

Samantha Stockman-Medina, Trinity Services' Director of Employment Programs, nominated employment specialist Sabrina McLernon for The Arc of Illinois 2024 QIDP Award. "Sabrina is a dedicated and passionate employee who takes great pride in helping people with disabilities gain employment. She is constantly thinking of new ways she can help those in need. She strives for success and it shows in her work."

Since joining Trinity in October 2019 – right in the middle of COVID – Sabrina has helped secure twenty-seven job placements, with twenty-four being successful. Due to her efforts, Sabrina has helped CAN almost double referrals. "She is helping get the people we support excited about the idea of working," said Stockman-Medina. "Sabrina helps give confidence to all those she supports because she truly believes everyone should have the opportunity to work if they want to work."



Sabrina McLernon has worked at Trinity Services since 2019.



Paige McLawhorn has been riding horses since she was nine.

## Paige McLawhorn Volunteer of the Year Award

Founded in 1990, STRIDES Therapeutic Riding Center and Farm provides an environment where people of all abilities can come together to experience the joy and therapeutic benefits of interacting with horses and other animals. In addition to the dedicated staff, STRIDES relies upon volunteers to assist with taking care of the animals and the facilities. One of those volunteers is a young woman by the name of Paige McLawhorn, a fourteen-year old high school student, who also happens to be the daughter of Laura McLawhorn, the Director of the STRIDES program.

Paige is an accomplished equestrian who loves to teach others to ride, especially people with disabilities. "During the school year, I volunteer at STRIDES on weekends or during school breaks," said Paige. "However, during the summer, I volunteer 40 hours or more a week. It's a very rewarding experience."

Stephanie Behlke Leigh, Director of Community Day Services at Trinity, nominated Paige for The Arc of Illinois 2024 Volunteer of the Year Award. "Despite her age, Paige has used her extensive equestrian background and experience to play a critical role in serving as a reliable backup when staff are unavailable to care for the horses or other animals."

# Someone You Should Know

## Valerie Woodkirk, DSP of the Year



"I'm just doing what I love to do!"  
-- Valerie Woodkirk

When asked how she felt about receiving the prestigious ANCOR 2024 Illinois Disability Service Professional (DSP) of the Year Award, Valerie Woodkirk had only one word.

"Shocked," exclaimed Valerie. "I mean, I'm just doing what I love to do."

Born in Central Illinois, Woodkirk grew up in a family devoted to gardening. She worked in a greenhouse in Mokena for many years, where her love of growing things blossomed.

"After I was married, we moved up here," said Woodkirk. "I then worked several years for a retail greenhouse in Lockport. Eventually, I needed a change."

In 2011, Valerie decided to apply for a position with Trinity Services. Judy Jones, then the coordinator of the Trinity horticulture program, hired her immediately because of her extensive greenhouse experience, even though she had never worked with people with disabilities.

"At that time, I knew nothing about Trinity Services. I was totally new to the world of people with disabilities," said Woodkirk. "I enjoy working in the greenhouse because it's my true passion. However, working everyday with the people we support is a wonderful extra benefit."

Thirteen years later, Valerie Woodkirk still loves her job in the greenhouse, especially working with the people Trinity serves. "My joy is seeing them learn," said Woodkirk.

"I get great satisfaction from teaching the participants how to wait on customers and to use technology."

To illustrate her point, Valerie tells the delightful story of one man at the greenhouse who was helping customers carry plants to their car. "On his own, he decided they needed a few extra plants and just brought them to the car with the rest of the order," said Woodkirk. "The couple was overwhelmed by his generosity and purchased the additional plants."

*"Like my Dad told me – you found what you were supposed to be doing, all along."*

Valerie loves helping people to learn something that they did not know before. "One example is showing them how to water," explained Woodkirk. "Helping to learn a new skill is wonderful. Our gardeners water the seeds and then watch them grow. It's a joy to see the expression on their faces when they are given a task that I know they can learn."

Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., President

and CEO of Trinity Services, said Woodkirk is very deserving of this special honor. "Valerie is an exceptional DSP, a compassionate and caring person who seeks to provide services to those who struggle the most," explained Dykstra. "Her incredible dedication and desire to go the extra mile for the people she supports makes Valerie an exemplary member of the Trinity Services' team."

Just by talking with her, you can tell that Valerie loves working with the people supported by Trinity. "It's definitely a blessing to have this job," said Woodkirk with a smile. "Like my Dad told me – you found what you were supposed to be doing, all along."





# Lincoln-West High School Senior Earns Eagle Scout Rank and Gives Back to Trinity Services!

In February 2024, Alex Brown, a senior at Lincoln-Way West High School, earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Alex and his older brother, Zach, have both achieved this very significant honor as members of Troop 12 in New Lenox.

"When I joined Cub Scouts, it was really to hang out with my friends," explained Alex. "Through Boy Scouts, I became a leader and made new friends who have become like brothers to me. When I saw Zach go for Eagle Scout, I knew I had to go for it!"

According to the Boy Scouts of America, a Scout who has earned the rank of Life Scout for a period of at least six months may work toward the rank of Eagle Scout. The Scout must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, demonstrate Scout Spirit, and exhibit leadership within their troop. Additionally, they must plan, develop, and lead a service project – the Eagle Project – that demonstrates both leadership and commitment to duty.

For his Eagle Project, Alex and his family chose to build an accessible flower box for one of Trinity's New Lenox homes. Alex and his mother, who works at Petals and Twigs, a Trinity support business, met with Thane Dykstra, President and CEO of Trinity Services, Ray Carmody, Trinity's Director of Operations, and Bob Taylor, Trinity's Chief Financial Officer, to discuss the concept.

"It was a great idea to build the accessible flower box," explained Thane Dykstra. "Alex managed the entire project and Trinity was happy to support his efforts."

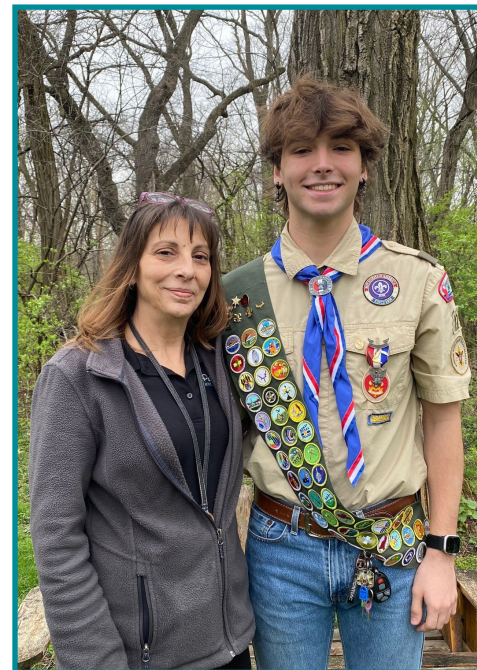
Once Trinity approved the concept,

Alex, acting as the general contractor, did all of the plans for the flower box, took measurements, ordered supplies, scheduled the work to be done, and signed off on community service hours for volunteers who assisted with the project. The project was two weekends of family and friends working together. The first weekend included clean up, pulling weeds, and delivering mulch. Alex' mother, Cheryl, even repainted the lawn ornaments. During the second weekend, Alex supervised the clearing of the area, building the flower box, and laying rock.

Mr. Bill Crone, who owns Crone Construction and is the Committee Chair for Troop 12, supplied the materials and tools for the project. Alex reimbursed Crone for the materials. Trinity supplied all of the mulch to landscape the front of the box.

"I was very excited to do this project to support people with disabilities," said Alex. "It's nice that people in wheelchairs now have access to participate. I hope everyone at the house will have the opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine."

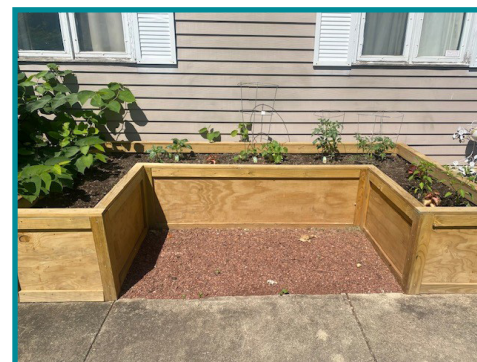
After graduation this spring, Alex is considering attending Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan, located right on Lake Superior. He likes the town, the dorms, and the people. Although he is done with scouting, Alex is very appreciative of what he has learned and the friends he made along the way. "Scouting has taught me to be a leader in the community, to be a role model for others, to do a good turn daily, and to be the best you can be."



Alex Brown and his mother, Cheryl.

"I was very excited to do this project to support people with disabilities."

-- Alex Brown



Alex served as the general contractor.

# Donations

## January 2024 through March 2024

*Trinity Services extends heartfelt thanks to the individuals and businesses whose generous contributions help people with disabilities and mental illness flourish and live full and abundant lives.*

We update our records regularly to recognize donors how they would like to be addressed. Please let us know what format you would like your name or household to be listed in this newsletter and correspondence by emailing [sladislav@trinityservices.org](mailto:sladislav@trinityservices.org).

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Thank You  
for All  
You Do  
for Trinity  
Services!



# *Run or Walk for a Great Cause!*

# Trinity Triumph 5K



Join us for the Trinity Triumph 5K on Thursday, June 20, 2024. The race begins promptly at 7:00 pm at the Village Commons in New Lenox. **\$30 ages 13 and up, \$20 kids 5-12, under 5 free.**

This USA Track and Field-certified course winds its way through the beautiful Wildwood subdivision just south of Village Hall.

Top male and female finishers each receive a Trinity Triumph 5K trophy. Top three finishers in each age group receive a medal.

Your registration fee includes a race performance t-shirt, swag bag, and more. Form a team and run or walk to support people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs.

Register at [www.trinitytriumph.com](http://www.trinitytriumph.com)



# TRINITY TRIUMPH 5K

Thursday, June 20, 2024  
7 p.m. Start

2024 Race  
Performance Tee



📍 1 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox, IL  
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**Proceeds benefit Trinity Services, Inc.**  
Helping people with disabilities so that they may flourish and live full and abundant lives.

Enter to win a pair of Beats Solo3 Wireless Headphones with every adult registration. (One lucky winner will be announced during the awards ceremony post-race.)



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[www.TrinityTriumph.com](http://www.TrinityTriumph.com)  
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Chip-timed race



#Triumph5K Updates





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## Summertime is a Great Time to Plan a Visit to STRIDES!

Member agency



STRIDES Therapeutic Riding Center and Farm is located at 27655 South Gougar Road in Manhattan, Illinois, 60442. For more information about riding lessons, birthday parties, and other activities please contact Laura McLawhorn at (815) 263-0085 or email Laura at [lblume@trinityservices.org](mailto:lblume@trinityservices.org).