TRINITY Services, Inc.

The COMPASS

So that our mission is never lost...

Helping people with disabilities flourish and live full and abundant lives

2nd Quarter 2025

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2025 Events Schedule

Mark your calendars for the 15th Annual Trinity Triumph 5K to be held on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at the Village Commons in New Lenox, Illinois.

To register, go to www.trinityservices.com, or call (815) 717-3750.

Trinity employees, community leaders, friends, and people supported attend Stakeholder's Day during CQL accreditation week.

Trinity Services Achieves Highest Level of Accreditation from CQL

This year, Trinity Services achieved the highest accreditation from the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL), ***Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation, with Distinction***. This level of accreditation recognizes that Trinity Services is among an elite group of organizations that exemplify excellence in its services and support.

Trinity is currently one of only nine organizations to earn the coveted ***With Distinction*** designation, which goes well beyond the standards included in CQL's other accreditation options.

"I am truly grateful for the extraordinary efforts of our hard working staff each and every day," said Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., President and CEO of Trinity Services. "It is their incredible compassion and dedication that allows Trinity to live out its mission: *to provide the highest quality, person-directed services and support to people with disabilities and mental health needs so they may flourish and lead full and abundant lives.*"

Trinity Services has received the highest recognition from CQL since its first accreditation process was completed in 1992.

Letter from the President of the Board

Trinity Services, Inc.
301 Veterans Parkway
New Lenox, IL 60451
(815) 485-6197
FAX (815) 485-5975
www.trinityservices.org

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Dear Friends,

This has been quite a spring with temperatures fluxuating from the 40s to the 80s. Hopefully, we can all look forward to an enjoyable summer!

First of all, I want to congratulate Trinity Services on achieving, once again, the Council on Quality and Leadership's (CQL) highest level of accreditation, **Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation, with Distinction.** On behalf of the Trinity Services Board of Directors, I want to thank all of our staff members who worked tirelessly to achieve this important honor.

Trinity also received other special recognitions from the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR). Michael "Mickey" Whitesell, one of our excellent Direct Support Professionals (DSP), received the ANCOR 2025 National DSP of the Year award, while Jennifer Hodges, a Residential Director, was honored with the ANCOR 2025 Rising Star Mid-Career Impact award. Congratulations to both of these outstanding staff members.

In April, The Arc of Illinois presented Trinity with the Outstanding Family Member Advocate Award and the Distinguished Service Award for its Without Walls program.

Well done!

Despite the weather, the 31st Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Outing was a resounding success. A big thank you to the Development Department for their great work! Next up, the Trinity Triumph 5K, which will take place on Tuesday, June 24, at the Village Commons in New Lenox.

Mark your calendars for this year's Better Together Dinner Dance and Auction on **Thursday, September 18**, where we will celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Trinity Services. Tickets will go on sale later this summer.

Finally, I want to express our deepest sorrow at the recent passing of long-time Trinity Foundation Board member Klint DeGeus. During his lengthy tenure, Klint introduced many people to Trinity Services. We are all grateful for Klint's years of dedication and hard work. He will be missed!

Sincerely,

Raymond D. McShane,
Chairperson of the Board

Klint DeGeus, Long-Time Trinity Foundation Board Member, Remembered for Dedication to Trinity Services

Klint L. DeGeus, a long-time supporter of Trinity Services and a valued member of the Trinity Foundation Board for over three decades, passed away peacefully, with his family by his side, on Tuesday, February 11, 2025. He was 87. Klint was married to his devoted and loving wife, Kay, for 64 years.

"I first met Klint through the First Presbyterian church in the late '80s," remembered Art Dykstra, former CEO and President of Trinity Services, and the current Executive Director of the Trinity Foundation. "Klint was a wonderful person who dedicated much of his time and treasure to community service, and Trinity Services in particular."

Born on October 8, 1937, in Joliet, Klint was a lifelong resident of the area with a part-time residence in Ft. Myers, Florida. He was President of L. DeGeus and Associates insurance agency, which his father, Lester, founded in 1945. He was incredibly proud of this currently run fourth-generation family business. Trinity will remember Klint for his dedication to community service and fundraising efforts for Trinity Services and numerous other local area organizations in Will County.

In addition to his years of service on the Trinity Foundation Board, Klint served on the Boards of United Way and the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce, and many others.

"Klint believed in Trinity's mission to support people with disabilities and mental health needs so they could live their best possible life." said Dykstra. "As a member of the Trinity Foundation Board, Klint went out of his way to introduce me to important community members who could support Trinity Services and help us grow. He knew how to talk to people, and he knew how to promote Trinity."

Klint was honored to be the first individual awarded by Trinity Services for his unwavering dedication to helping children and adults with disabilities. He also received the Thanks Award from the Girl Scouts for his service and fundraising efforts to their agency. This award is the highest award given to a non-member, and Klint DeGeus was the first male recipient to receive it.

Klint cherished his days on the golf course, with family and friends, at clubs in Joliet and Ft. Myers. "Klint loved the Trinity golf outing," recalled Dykstra. "From its beginning in 1994, Klint brought many people to play and learn about Trinity Services."

As a member of the Trinity Foundation Board, Klint was always a good listener but was not afraid to speak his mind or offer advice. "Klint knew the business community, the clubs, and the organizations," said Dykstra. "He and his wife, Kay, and John and Pat Slack were instrumental in chairing our capital campaign and raising funds. Klint made a difference in helping Trinity grow."

In his later years, Klint and his wife spent more and more time at their residence in Ft. Myers. "When he could no longer serve on the Foundation Board, Trinity named Klint DeGeus an emeritus member," explained Dykstra. "He will be missed for his warmth and personality, and for his many contributions to our organization."

Klint DeGeus: 1937 - 2025

Golfers Play Through Wet and Chilly Conditions at the 31st Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Classic

On Tuesday, May 20, 2025, a determined group of golfers braved 50-degree temperatures and occasional downpours to complete 18 holes at the 31st Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Outing, held for the second year at Ruffled Feathers Golf Club in Lemont.

The winning foursome shot 15 under par and included **Tom Haubenreich, Wayne Harer, Kyle Harer, and Kavan Hoff.**

This year's event featured a tribute to the original Star Wars movies of the 1970s and '80s, "May the course be with you." Trinity staffers dressed up as Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia Organa, Hans Solo, Darth Vader, Chewbacca, R2-D2, C-3PO, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and a Stormtrooper.

A special thanks goes out to our 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 memorable experience.

"Despite the conditions, this was a very successful event," said Sherry Ladislas, Trinity's Director of Development. "We look forward to seeing everyone next year at the 32nd Annual Memorial Golf Classic in May 2026."

ANCOR awards special honors to Trinity Services

The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), the leading voice in Washington for community-based disability service providers, honored Trinity staffers Michael "Mickey"Whitesell, Director Support Professional (DSP), and Jennifer Hodges, Residential Director during the ANCOR Connect Conference in San Diego, California on April 9, 2025.

Whitesell Receives National Award

Whitesell was named the ANCOR 2025 National DSP of the Year for his work serving people with disabilities and mental health needs. This year's award garnered over 500 nominations, a new record.

Whitesell was a butcher and a cook before discovering his passion for helping people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health issues. "I had a knack for cooking," explained Whitesell. "I ran a pub for 15 years before looking to change careers.

Since June 2020, Whitesell has worked at one of Trinity's community day programs, Studio 22, a former warehouse converted into a recording studio with other activities including music, cooking, and making soda pop. Mickey loves his job, especially the people he supports. "Each person is awesome in their way, and I treat them all the same, with care and compassion," said Whitesell. "Every day is different. You never know what to expect. If someone comes in feeling sad, I do my thing, and five minutes later, they're laughing and happy. It makes my heart feel great!"

Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., President and CEO of Trinity Services, says Whitesell is very deserving of this award. "It is truly an honor to have Mickey Whitesell as a colleague at Trinity," said Dykstra. "Mickey brings an authentic dedication and compassion to the people he supports, and makes a positive difference in people's lives every day."

Dystra added, "I've been so impressed with Mickey's working knowledge of positive psychology and how he has incorporated these tools into his work. Mickey is an inspiration, to me, our staff, people receiving services at Trinity, and their family members."

Mickey Whitesell with State Representative Lawrence "Larry" Walsh, Jr.

Hodges Receives Rising Star Award

Jennifer Hodges was honored with the ANCOR 2025 Rising Star Mid-Career Impact Award.

Established in 2024, the ANCOR Rising Star Mid-Career Impact Award recognizes mid-career professionals who support ANCOR's mission through service and dedication to change in public policy or organizational practice.

Hodges' career in intellectual and developmental disabilities has positioned her as a subject matter expert across several key areas, particularly in sexuality education and advocacy for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Beyond her work with sexuality education, Jennifer also serves as a board member for the Human Rights Authority, a state-level investigative body dedicated to protecting the rights of people with disabilities.

"We are extremely proud of Jen Hodges," said Dykstra. "Her dedication and leadership have made a significant impact on the lives of those she serves, and her work continues to be a model for best practices in the field."

Dykstra went on to say, "Jen is a most talented leader and colleague. Her commitment to ongoing learning and networking has allowed our staff and people receiving support to flourish. She is a rare servant leader who makes a positive difference every day."

Jennifer Hodges
Residental Director

Someone You Should Know

Joshua Pieper, Associate Director

"Trinity Services was a perfect fit for me!"
-- Joshua Pieper, Associate Director, Network 2

Joshua "Josh" Pieper is an Associate Director for Trinity Services' Network 2, located in Wilmington, Illinois. In this role, Josh oversees the community day services for people supported at the main Wilmington location, the drop-in center, and manages several work sites, including Fritters for Critters, and the Trinity Barkery.

Born in Michigan and raised in Illinois, Josh was a special education teacher and a college baseball coach before joining Trinity Services in 2024. Josh attended Marian Catholic High School in Chicago Heights and graduated from Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois. He excelled as a baseball player in high school and college.

"I love baseball," said Pieper. "It's a true passion."

Josh's interest in helping others goes back to his childhood. In 1993, Josh's family started a faith-based camp for adults with cognitive disabilities. "My father opened the original camp in Fenton, Michigan," said Pieper. "Every July, we would go up there for a week. We looked forward to seeing everyone. As a kid, I enjoyed helping out at the camp. I learned the importance of putting others before myself."

In 2020, Josh took over as the president and director of the camp. "A couple of years ago, we transitioned into a nonprofit organization," said Pieper. "We recently opened a second camp here in Illinois."

Josh believes his education and work experience have prepared him well for his position at Trinity Services. "My special education background and working at the camp every summer helped prepare me for the work I'm doing at Trinity."

When Anita Goulding, Director for Network 2, interviewed Josh, she knew that he would be a valuable asset to Trinity Services. "He has an undeniable spirt and passion that makes him perfect for Trinity," said Goulding. "He brings energy and laughter into our Network. Often when you make a hiring decision you ask yourself if this person will make the Network better. In this case, he not only makes our Network better, but he makes Trinity Services better."

Since he arrived at Trinity, Josh has been working with program coordinators and staff to make the community day services curriculum more person-centered. "The idea is to allow people to make decisions for themselves," said Pieper. "We listen to their ideas and work them into the daily curriculum. The mornings are devoted to exercise and curriculum, with clubs and activities in the afternoon."

In addition to managing the community day services programs and work sites, Josh is assisting in the development of a new fitness center at Trinity's former conference center, and other special projects.

"Most recently, I have been looking into trying to find work opportunities for some of the people receiving support in Network 2 who might not be able to fit into a traditional job," said Pieper. "We are currently looking at the idea of creating a business owned and run by the people we support."

Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., President and CEO of Trinity Services, is very pleased with the work Josh is doing. "I do believe we are blessed to have Josh in the Trinity family," said Dykstra. "In a short time, he has proven to be a creative thinker and a talented leader. I have been incredibly grateful for the discretionary effort he has put forth in planning the new fitness center, which will open soon."

Josh is married to Victoria. They have two boys, Booker and Tucker. "I used to work multiple jobs," said Pieper. "My position with Trinity has allowed me to focus more on my family. I am very appreciative of Trinity for that. I look forward to coming home and playing with my boys."

Josh still enjoys playing baseball. "It's a bit more difficult with two young children," explained Pieper. "I play as often as I can, and Victoria and I play together in a slow-pitch softball league."

"I am very happy to part of Trinity Services," said Pieper. "The compassion and love for the people receving services is very apparent."

36TH ANNUAL

TRINITY SERVICES, INC.

BETTER TOGETHER

Dinner Dance & Auction

IN CELEBRATION OF 75th ANNIVERSARY

We feel privileged to be celebrating our 75th year of providing supports and services for people with developmental disabilities and mental illness. Since first opening our doors as a small school in 1950, Trinity Services has been committed to helping people with developmental disabilities and mental illness flourish and live full, abundant lives. Today, we support more than 5,800 people through an array of innovative programs. This would not be possible without generous supporters like you.

We hope you will join us for this evening of entertainment, fine dining and dancing.

Thursday, September 18, 2025

DiNolfo's, Homer Glen, IL

Entertainment by The Connexion Band

5 p.m.	Cocktails and Silent Auction
6 p.m.	Dinner
7 p.m.	Live Auction and Dancing

RSVP by Friday, Sept. 5, 2025

Two ways to register

1. Visit www.trinityservices.org/dinnerdance
2. Call 815-717-3750

Trinity Services Celebrates 75 Years of Helping People with Disabilities and Mental Health Needs Flourish!

In 1950, a group of devoted Joliet parents established a private school for their children with disabilities rather than placing the youngsters in an institution. The Trinity School would form the basis for what today is Trinity Services, one of the largest human services organizations in Illinois, serving over 5,800 people with disabilities and mental health needs.

One evening in 1950, at the invitation of Pauline Stempien who had placed an advertisement in the local paper, a group of Joliet parents met to form the Will County Parental Group for Mentally Retarded Children* and decided to establish a private school rather than place their youngsters in an institution.

When this school was organized, there were only five other such schools in Illinois: four in Chicago and one in Rockford. At that time, no public schools in Illinois provided an education for children with I.Q.s of less than 59.

Pauline Stempien, the president of the newly formed parents group, approached Dr. Gayle N. Hufford, superintendent of the Joliet grade schools, about using a vacant classroom in the Central School. The Joliet school board voted to give the organization a room to use that needed considerable repair. The fathers washed and painted walls and windows, and laid flooring where necessary. The mothers located desks, tables, and other equipment in the basement of the building.

The parents absorbed the costs of operations, including the salaries of teachers. They also transported their children to school.

Once the refurbished room was completed, the school officially opened on September 7, 1950. The organization hired Mrs. Oda Christensen, who had devoted 15 years to teaching children with developmental disabilities, to conduct the class of eight students.

Following the school's opening, the organization developed a plan to incorporate the parent group as a nonprofit entity and raise funds. Mrs. Stempien, an accomplished pubic speaker, spoke before clubs and other organizations. The group held bake sales, rummage sales, sold Christmas cards, and collected newspapers and rags.

On July 5, 1951, the parents' organization filed Articles of Incorporation with the Office of the Secretary of State, as provided b the General Not-for-Profit Corporation Act of Illinois. That same year, the school changed its name to Trinity School and adopted an emblem: a green three-leaf clover inset with the hand, heart, and head that represented the organization's mission to educate the whole person.

Forced to move out of their classroom in Central School the following year, Trinity acquired the vacant Babylon School, located at 826 Manhattan Road, in November 1951. The Kiwanis Club of Joliet agreed to paint the building with help from the parents.

The school offiically opened at its new location on September 8, 1952. The Babylon School served its purpose until 1954, when the Trinity School moved to a former school building on Gougar Road in Joliet.

In April 1959, after years of planning, ground was broken for a new building for the Trinity School, a community project spearheaded by the Exchange Club of Joliet, with assistance from other civic and community organizations.

The new structure was built on the site of the former Gougar School. The modern brick building, constructed for $34,000, had four classrooms and three teachers to support 50 students.

The Exchange Club of Joliet solicited the communities for funds, materials, and labor for the new school. Joliet Painters and Decorators Local No. 33 donated time to paint the entire school.

Classes commenced for the first time in the newly completed Trinity School on October 12, 1959. The principal, Mrs. Edmund Verville, with teachers Russell Curl, Mrs. Thomas Laning, and Mrs. James Stokoe, welcomed the students.

The official dedication took place on November 15, 1959. Speakers included Arthur R. Thompson, president of the Exchange Club of Joliet, Dr. Joseph Fields, president of the Parental Group supporting the school, and Mrs. Henry Brunings, chair of the Trinity School board of directors.

***In the 1950s, the public commonly referred to people with disabilities as mentally retarded. In October 2010, Congress passed Rosa's Law, which changed references to "mental retardation" in specified federal laws to "intellectual disability,", and references to "a mentally retarded individual" to "an individual with an intellectual disability."**

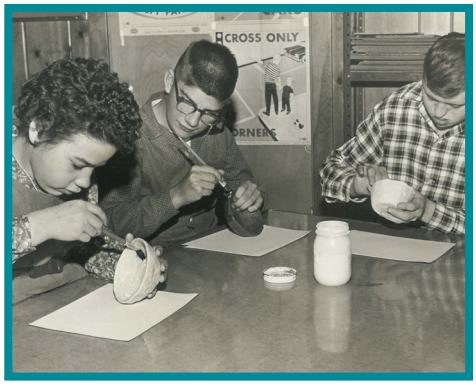
This year marks the 75th Anniversary of Trinity Services, one of the largest human services organizations in Illinois.

75th ANNIVERSARY

TRINITY SERVICES, INC.

CONTINUING OUR COMMITMENT

1950 - 2025



Photographs of children with developmental disabilities attending the Trinity School in the 1950s and 1960s.

TRINITY TRIUMPH 5K

RUN IT. WALK IT. HAVE FUN!

JOIN US ON
TUESDAY JUNE 24th, 2025

2025 Race Performance Tee

Enter to win a pair of Apple AirPods 4 Wireless Earbuds with every adult registration. (One lucky winner will be announced during the awards ceremony after the race.)

Registration includes race t-shirt, swag gift bag, post-race snack and more!

Register & Details:
TrinityTriumph.com

1 Veterans Parkway, New Lenox, IL
Race begins at 7pm

75th ANNIVERSARY
TRINITY SERVICES, INC.

Proceeds benefit Trinity Services, Inc.
Celebrating 75 years of helping people with disabilities and mental illness so that they may flourish and live full and abundant lives.

Get #TrinityTriumph5K Updates
For more information, call:(815) 717-3750

Chipped time race
USATF Certified 5K Course IL-10086-JW
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Member agency of:
United Way

Trinity Services Receives Prestigious Awards from The Arc of Illinois at 2025 Annual Conference

On Tuesday, April 22, 2025, Trinity Services received two prestigious awards from The Arc of Illinois at their annual convention in Normal, Illinois .

The Arc of Illinois advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families and community organizations to ensure that people with disabilities can live, work, learn, and play in communities across the state.

Trinity received the Outstanding Family Member Advocate Award and the Distinguished Services Award for its Without Walls program.

Outstanding Family Member Advocate Award

For most of his adult life, Angelica "Angel" Tobias' brother has received services and support from Trinity Services. In addition to the efforts of dedicated Trinity staff members, Angel, who is not an employee of Trinity Services, works tirelessly to provide for her brother.

"Angel has always been a passionate and involved sibling who helps and advocates for her brother and others with developmental disabilities," explained Geno Bagnuolo, an Associate Director at Trinity Services who works with Angel's brother.

A few years ago, Angel stepped up to serve as the guardian for her brother when he has gone through a time of great crisis and need.

"Angel not only advocates for her brother to receive the best care and support possible," said Bagnuolo. "Angel also ensures others at Trinity receive the same level of care."

Angel is a member of Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters, or SIBS, the official Illinois chapter of the Sibling Leadership Network (SLN), that offers support for siblings throughout the lifespan.

Thane Dykstra, Ph.D., President and CEO of Trinity Services, is grateful that Angel Tobias was recognized for her efforts.

"Angel is a very caring person who demonstates her compassion for others by thinking about more than her brother," said Dykstra. "She is empathetic to our staff and continually displays a willingness to help train, support, and collaborate to help them become the best they can be."

Distinguished Service Award Without Walls Program

A challenging part of providing services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities is delivering consistent and accessible opportunities to interact with people in a meaningful way.

Following the pandemic, Trinity Services developed the Without Walls program to facilitate those opportunities. Sarah Sugas is the program's coordinator.

"The Without Walls program is based on the idea that community involvement provides vital leisure and recreation experiences, as well as skill-building ones," said Sugas. "Variety, accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and choice are all hallmarks of the program."

Sarah chooses activities by incorporating the personal and therapeutic goals of the people Trinity supports. "A planned schedule of evening and sometimes weekend community-based activities are put in place and facilitated by our program," explained Sugas. "Due to this personalized approach, feedback from participants is quite positive."

"The relationships we build are strong," Sugas said. "Community members are very receptive to providing accommodations."

Thane Dykstra paid tribute to the program's success.

"Sarah has done a remarkable job with the Without Walls program," said Dykstra. "In less than 4 years, we have provided oppportunities for 90 people we support to participate in over 850 community activities. Sarah's work has truly impacted people's lives and allowed them to participate in meaningful ways."

Sarah Sugas
Project Coordinator

Donations

January through March 2025

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 sladislas@trinityservices.org.

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Join Trinity's Sustained Giving Program and help persons with disabilities and mental health needs flourish!

On behalf of our entire Trinity Services family, and especially the people we serve, we want to personally thank you for your continued support of the work we do to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health needs.

Trinity Services invites you to participate in our **Sustained Giving Program**, that offers two charitable options for those who would like to make monthly or annual contributions.

Champions Circle

As a member of the Trinity Services' Champions Circle, we ask for a minimum commitment of $1,000 per year over five years. In return, we will honor you and your family on our new donor wall at the Trinity Services administration building in New Lenox. You will also receive a set of beautiful slate coasters with the Champions Circle logo, recognition in our quarterly newsletter, and an invitation to attend the annual Champions Circle appreciation dinner.

Join the Champions Circle by September 1, 2025, and receive two complimentary tickets to this year's An Evening of Holiday Music on Friday, December 5, 2025, at Butterfield Country Club in Oak Brook, a $290 value.

Partners Circle

As a member of the Trinity Services Partners Circle, we ask you to make a monthly donation that fits your budget. In return, we will honor you and your family on our new donor wall at the Trinity Services administration building in New Lenox. You will also receive a set of beautiful slate coasters with the Partners Circle logo, as well as recognition in our quarterly newsletter.

Join the Partners Circle by September 1, 2025, and receive two complimentary tickets to this year's Better Together Dinner Dance and Auction on Thursday, September 18, 2025, at DiNolfo's in Homer Glen, a $200 value.

To become a member of the Champions or Partners Circle, please visit our secure website at www.trinityservices.org/sustainedgiving, select the plan of your choice, and fill out the form with your credit card information. If paying by check, please make it payable to Trinity Foundation. For more information a about our sustained giving programs, contact Sherry Ladislas, Director of Development, at sladislas@trinityservices.org, or call Sherry at (815) 717-3750.

Join Trinity's *Sustained Giving Program* and help persons with disabilities and mental health needs flourish so they may lead full and abundant lives. Your annual or monthly gifts truly make a difference. For more information about our *Champions Circle* (annual) and *Partners Circle* (monthly) giving programs, call Sherry Ladislas, Trinity's Director of Development, at (815) 717-3750, or email Sherry at sladislas@trinityservices.org.

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Petals & Twigs is a support business of Trinity Services, Inc., offering antiques, crafts, candles, jewelry, and many other lovely items!

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