

Helping people with disabilities flourish and live full and abundant lives
2nd Quarter
2017

The
COMPASS
So that our mission is never lost...

Illinois budget provides disability services a more predictable future

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Notes from the lily pad



Executive Director Art Dykstra writes a weekly blog, "From My Pad to Yours," about topics relating to leadership, positive psychology and the developmental disabilities field.

www.trinity-services.org/home/blogs/from-my-pad-to-yours



They deserve more



A postcard created by They Deserve More, a coalition of Illinois developmental disability service providers, prompts State legislators to end the workforce crisis.

After two years without a budget, the State of Illinois' financial stalemate is over as of July 6.

With the passage of the State's fiscal year 2018 budget, Trinity Services and its fellow providers of developmental disability services in Illinois can now plan for a slightly more predictable future. During such a prolonged time of financial uncertainty, complete inaction from the state would have been the worst-case scenario for providers.

Organizations that provide disability services are reliant on State funding to continue to offer the programs and supports that help people with developmental disabilities experience full, abundant living. Providers can take a brief sigh of relief that this budget has

prevented the State from going into complete financial free fall, while simultaneously not cutting money from developmental disability services.

Despite the good news the budget brings, it carries with it many unanswered questions and does not immediately end the workforce crisis providers have faced for years. Much advocacy work remains for providers to secure a full, living wage for direct support professionals, as well as better continuity and security for people with disabilities as a result of that living wage.

For more information on the details of what the budget means for Trinity Services and what challenges lie ahead, read Pages 6-7.

Letter from the President of the Board



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The COMPASS

is published by
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Dear Friends,

Our summer at Trinity Services is off to a great start, and I hope yours is, too.

The weather has been perfect for enjoying some outdoor recreation, and in this issue of *The Compass*, you can read about some of the people we serve doing just that through Trinity's first Bike Club (See Page 5). Tony, a gentleman Trinity supports, loves riding bikes and decided to bring the joy of cycling to others through the creation of the club.

We had plenty of outdoor fun, ourselves, golfing, running and walking with you at our 24th Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Classic in May (See Page 10) and our Trinity Triumph 5K in June (See Page 4). Thank you to our generous sponsors, and to everyone who attended these events and enjoyed getting active with us in support of our mission. Your support is what makes these events so much fun to enjoy and so successful each year.

In fact, it is because of your support that we were able to launch some new initiatives this quarter, including an Adult Learning Program in Elwood, Illinois, which offers new program space, as well as expanded room for the Trinity Barkery (See Page 3). The Trinity community is abuzz with excitement about this endeavor, and we are thrilled to be able to find new ways to support people, especially as we continue to battle the workforce crisis.

You may notice we devoted three pages of this issue (Pages 1, 6-7) to discussing the impacts the new Illinois budget will have on Trinity Services and fellow de-

velopmental disability service providers throughout the state. We spent the legislative session spreading the message that direct support professionals need a living wage in order for the workforce crisis to end and for the health of disability services in Illinois to be ensured.

The budget included a 75-cent hourly increase for DSPs, which may help Trinity maintain some of its talented, dedicated professionals, but it will do little to help Trinity recruit new staff members or fill the many staff vacancies it still faces.

The future of the developmental disability community in Illinois depends on the services we provide being properly funded. We remain optimistic that a solution will be achieved and are devoted to continuing to work toward that future.

Speaking of the future, A Day Long Look at Assistive Technology June 6-7, organized by Trinity's National Association of Qualified Developmental Disabilities Professionals, was well-attended and featured a wealth of information about how AT can be used to enrich the lives of people we support (See Page 4).

And, for a future invitation, I'd love for you to join us at our 28th Annual Dinner Dance & Auction, themed "Havana Nights," Saturday, Sept. 16, at the Odyssey Country Club in Tinley Park.

For the present, please enjoy this issue of *The Compass*, and, as always, thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Raymond D. McShane,
Chairperson of the Board

Trinity opens Adult Learning Program in Elwood Trinity Barkery moves production of pet treats to new space

Approximately 40 people with developmental disabilities who receive support through Trinity Services' Adult Learning Programs now have increased opportunities to garden and experience the benefits of open outdoor space through a move to Trinity's new program building in Elwood, Illinois.

In mid-April, attendees relocated from other Trinity Adult Learning Programs, drawn to enjoy the open, relaxing space — both indoors and outdoors — that Elwood has to offer.

Situated on Hoff Road, surrounded by acres of open farmland, the 11,000-square-foot building is entirely wheelchair-accessible. It is composed of a large multipurpose area; three program rooms; large bathrooms with showers and Hoyer lifts; deep closets to store tables and chairs if more open space is needed; offices and a conference room; a living room with comfortable furniture and ambient lighting for people who want to relax; a large kitchen and lunchroom; and an entire section of the building for production and packaging of the Trinity Barkery's Fritters for Critters all-natural pet treats.

The program offers a homey, on-the-farm feel, with plenty of space for program attendees to plant and care for their own fruits and vegetables.

Tall ceilings with large skylights make the building bright and cheerful, and the addition of the quiet living room is beneficial for people who want to experience a more soothing atmosphere. It can be used to take breaks from program activities, listen to classical music or simply enjoy some quiet moments to oneself.

Lori Hausherr, director of Adult Learning Programs at Trinity, said she is very excited about how roomy the building is and how accessible it is for people who use wheelchairs. One of the accessible features is a 4-by-7-foot island in the spacious kitchen, which allows groups to enjoy culinary activities. Canning is

a possibility for the future, after the harvest is complete and as the weather turns colder.

Some people supported by Trinity Services specifically requested to join the Elwood program after hearing about it because of the location and the opportunities to garden, Hausherr said.

Additionally, the program is in closer proximity to STRIDES, Trinity's therapeutic horseback riding program, than any other Trinity program, allowing for more people to experience what STRIDES has to offer, said Pam Van Hess, Trinity's associate director of Adult Learning.

"Tech will also be a big focus," she said. "We are including a variety of adaptive equipment and technology for people to enjoy."

Excitement over the Elwood Adult Learning Program has been flowing throughout the Trinity community and particularly among its first attendees since its opening.

"The first couple months have been going really well," Van Hess said. "There is plenty of excitement, smiles and eagerness. Everyone is content and engaged, and is having a great time being outdoors more."

Trinity Barkery enjoys expanded space

The Trinity Barkery, a pet-focused support business of Trinity Services, is now able to expand its product line and reach thanks to its substantially increased production space through the move to Elwood.

The Barkery's flagship store is still housed at its original location, 240 W. Baltimore St. in Wilmington, Illinois, but the move of manufacturing operations allows for at least 10 additional people to join the Trinity Barkery team, creates more retail space in Wilmington, and allows for greater efficiency with baking, packaging and shipping in Elwood.

Since their creation, the Barkery's Fritters for Critters treats, which are baked

by men and women with developmental disabilities who are supported by Trinity, have delighted the taste buds of dogs, cats, and even horses around Illinois and the nation.

The move allowed the business to add a larger mixer that mixes four batches of dough in the time it used to take to mix one batch, as well as a double-stack oven that increases the amount of treats that can be baked at a time. The building offers more storage space and an employee lounge for Barkery staff members to relax in once they have finished working or if they need a break.

"The floor space is wonderful," said Shirley Lewis, manager of the Trinity Barkery. "In the past, we had to be very creative to find space in the building to decorate and package treats. In the new facility, there is a room designated for just this."

Wholesale opportunities have caught the attention of retailers near and far, and all sales of Fritters for Critters, as well as all other products the Trinity Barkery carries, benefit the people Trinity supports.

The Barkery's latest partnership is with Tangled Roots Brewing Company in Ottawa, Illinois. The brewery generously donates its spent grain, from the production of craft beers, and Barkery team members use the grain to produce Brew and Chew, a new line of Fritters for Critters treats. Additionally, the brewery's restaurant, The Lone Buffalo, has a dog-friendly pub room where the treats are sold.

"It's a beautiful, gorgeous building designed to provide programs for any person we serve," Hausherr said. "Each season will bring another opportunity. It's going to evolve and have its own personality."

"We had a lot of fun designing it. We got to build rooms that are able to accommodate all people."

For more information about the Trinity Barkery and to purchase its products, including Fritters for Critters pet treats, visit FrittersForCritters.com.

Trinity Triumph 5K thrills runners, walkers

This year's Trinity Triumph 5K gave local runners and walkers the opportunity to get active in support of Trinity Services on Thursday, June 22, in the New Lenox Village Commons.

Roughly 200 people participated in the 5K. They shared their inspirations on the

Wall of Triumph, browsed sponsor tables, and enjoyed refreshments and music from a DJ after the race.

Overall male and female winners, as well as the Top 3 male and female winners in each age category, were announced and awarded trophies and medals, respectively.

This year's overall male winner was 16-year-old John Stiglic, with a time

of 17:56.7, and the overall female winner was 42-year-old Sara Boss, with a time of 23:23.3.

Trinity Services extends its congratulations and thanks to all who participated in the 5K.

All proceeds raised from the 5K's generous sponsors and participants benefit the people with developmental disabilities and mental illness whom Trinity Services supports.



Overall race winners John Stiglic (left) and Sara Boss hold their trophies June 22 in front of the Trinity Triumph 5K's Wall of Triumph.



Runners take off from the starting line at the 2017 Trinity Triumph 5K in the New Lenox Village Commons.

Illinois' first assistive technology conference offers innovative ideas

Trinity Services' National Association of Qualified Developmental Disabilities Professionals held Illinois' first-ever assistive technology conference, A Day Long Look at Assistive Technology, June 6-7 at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

The event was held in partnership with the Coleman Foundation and the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities and was at-

tended by hundreds of people interested in finding out about ways assistive technology can enrich the lives of people with disabilities.

Greg Fenton, director of the IDDD, opened the conference with a brief speech welcoming all attendees.

Innovative ideas on topics including iOS devices, new and emerging forms of AT, how to help people achieve greater independence and success with AT, using AT to find and sustain employment, and remote supports, were presented by Alice Brouhard, Bridget Gilormini, Luis Perez, Jackie Tijerina, Mary Held, Richard Ellenson, Connie Melvin, Richard Harrington, Dustin Wright and Duane Tempel, respectively, on Day 1 of the conference.

Day 2 was full of hands-on AT fun for a smaller group of attendees. Melvin and Harrington led a class full of eager learners on a mission to construct a variety of low-tech devices that could assist people in numerous ways. Projects included jars full of floating glitter and sequins that people can use to soothe themselves during times of stress; an industrial twist-tie wrapped around a spoon handle that people with limited hand mobility can wrap around their wrists and use to eat; a flexible PVC pipe figurine that can be used to hold books and tablets; and much more.

Throughout both days, attendees were encouraged to share their experiences on the event's app, ask questions and take notes to use their newfound AT knowledge to help others.

During a closing speech for Day 1 of the conference, Fenton said he hopes that Illinois can become a leader in the field of assistive technology, using the solutions AT offers to help create new possibilities for peoples' lives.



Attendees create PVC pipe figurines, which can be used to hold tablets and books, June 7 at A Day Long Look at Assistive Technology.

Trinity's first Bike Club draws interest of cycling lovers and beginners, alike

Tony has loved cycling since he was a child.

He spends every weekend and each opportunity he gets on nice days to ride local trails, and enjoy the feeling of the wind rushing past and the gentle coasting of his red, three-wheeled vehicle. One of his favorite places to ride is Old Plank Road Trail, near his Frankfort home.



Mike Chandler (left), a program coordinator in Trinity Services' Network III, rides a tandem bicycle with Marcus.

Tony appreciates the recreational and health benefits of cycling so much that he recently worked with Trinity Services staff members to share this experience with others through the creation of Trinity's first Bike Club.

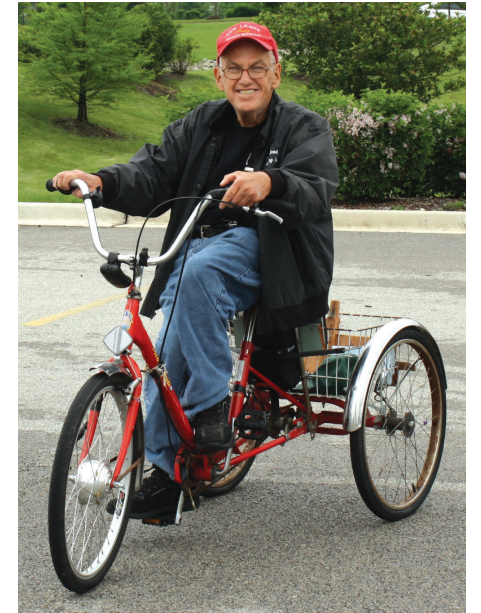
The club had its inaugural meeting May 24 in a coned-off section of the parking lot of Trinity's Corporate Center in New Lenox. The traffic-free space allowed cycling aficionados free reign to cruise and cycling newcomers the chance to try something new. More than one dozen people attended. The group had a variety of cycles to choose from — bicycles, tricycles and even a tandem bicycle that could be used alongside a Trinity staff member. The cost of the bicycles was covered by a generous grant from the Sage Foundation.

The meeting was facilitated by Elise English, the coordinator of Trinity's Social Center, which opened last year to host and organize a multitude of group activities for the people Trinity supports to enjoy together.

Tony said he was very excited that the inaugural meeting of the Bike Club was

able to draw such a successful turnout, and he looks forward to what the future holds, including introducing cycling to even more members of the Trinity community.

Another goal for the future is for members of the club to travel trails together, particularly once more members have mastered controlling speed, braking and, for those who choose to ride two-wheeled cycles, balancing, according to Mike



Tony poses with his red cycle May 24 at the kickoff meeting of Trinity's first Bike Club.

Chandler, a program coordinator in Trinity's Network III, who worked with Tony to launch the club.

The Trinity Bike Club is open to everyone supported by Trinity Services and meets roughly every other week. Its goal is to provide an opportunity for gentle exercise, recreation and relaxation for the people Trinity serves to enjoy with each other and with members of the community.



Attendees of the inaugural Trinity Bike Club meeting gather for a photo.

Trinity, fellow providers continue advocating for adequate funding of developmental disability services

By definition, the Illinois developmental disability community is in the midst of a crisis — “an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; especially: one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome,” according to Merriam-Webster.

For years, underfunding by the State of Illinois has left approximately 27,000 people who depend on disability services in the state in increasingly worse circumstances. The quality of their care is impacted as providers are unable to fill vital direct support positions and are unable to pay direct support professionals a competitive wage.

By definition, the State of Illinois is also in the midst of a crisis. Despite the passage of a budget this year, the State faces almost \$15 billion in unpaid bills, an underfunded \$130 billion pension liability and the looming threat of having its bond rating downgraded to junk status.

The passage of the State’s first budget in two years presents a new set of questions for developmental disabilities service providers.

What does this mean for the direct support workforce crisis?

When lawmakers voted to approve and

subsequently override Gov. Bruce Rauner’s veto of Senate Bill 6, for expenditures, and Senate Bill 9, for revenues, they approved, along with the budget, roughly \$53.4 million in rate increases to organizations providing community-based services for people who have developmental disabilities. That amount funds a 75-cent hourly wage increase for front-line personnel, including DSPs, front-line supervisors, qualified developmental disabilities professionals, nurses and support staff.

Prior to this budget’s passage, DSPs were paid, on a statewide average, \$9.35 an hour.

In other words, wages for DSPs remain far from competitive. Trinity Services would need to be able to pay its DSPs at least \$13, ideally \$15, an hour to compete with local retailers, small industrial manufacturers, warehouses and even fast food establishments.

The small rate increase from the State may help providers hang onto their talented, dedicated DSPs, but it will do little to help providers recruit staff to fill many vacant DSP positions.

Over the years that providers have faced this growing workforce crisis (See the timeline, below) countless DSPs have left behind the jobs they loved and the

people they cared deeply about because they needed higher-paying jobs in order to pay their bills.

People who live in community-based settings are losing the homes they loved as organizations are increasingly making the tough decisions to close doors, discharge people they served and consolidate homes, without the workforce necessary to operate at the levels they once could.

The urgency of the workforce shortages and the problems that stem from the crisis — including increased stress on remaining staff members, increased opportunities for bad things to happen, substantial decreases in the amount of times people receiving services are able to participate in community events or do much outside of their homes, and home closures or consolidations — prompted a heavy, concentrated effort by a coalition of providers, individual members of the disability community and advocates around the state to urge lawmakers to provide a living wage for DSPs this legislative session.

Countless supporters mailed postcards to the Governor’s Office; called, emailed and met with their legislators; spread the word about the issue through press conferences and social media; and recruited their family members and friends to get involved

with the advocacy campaign.

There is not a member of the disability services community in Illinois who has not been impacted by the workforce crisis, and yet the wait for complete relief through the adequate funding of competitive wages continues.

What does this mean for people with disabilities?

Though people with developmental disabilities must still contend with the issues that have been unresolved through the continuing workforce crisis, the passage of the State budget does bring some positives.

To start, lawmakers did not cut any money from developmental disability services and even restored a \$4.3 million grant to The Autism Program of Illinois.

Additionally, the State raised the Personal Needs Allowance for persons living in community integrated living arrangements and intermediate care facilities for persons with developmental disabilities to \$60/month. A Personal Needs Allowance is money a person keeps out of his or her Supplemental Security Income each month for use on things like hygiene products, clothing, shoes and haircuts.

Prior to the budget’s passage, rates were at \$50 for CILA residents and \$30 for

ICFDD residents.

This same increase passed in 2014 but was allowed to “sunset,” or return to its lower rates, the following year.

What happens now?

There are still many unanswered questions and unresolved issues following the passage of the budget — the biggest issue for Trinity Services being the continuing workforce crisis.

Some of the questions include:

- Now that a budget has passed, what happens to the Ligas Consent Decree, mandating that Illinois pays for developmental disability services on time?

- Will Rauner and the Illinois Office of Management and Budget implement the budget’s spending plan as written?

Over the past several years, staff members at all levels of the Trinity Services organization have worked to advocate for an end to the workforce crisis and for proper funding for developmental disability services in Illinois.

This entire legislative session, Trinity worked to encourage lawmakers to support Senate Bill 955, which would have raised wages for DSPs to at least \$15 an hour. The bill passed the Senate but was not called for a vote in the House.

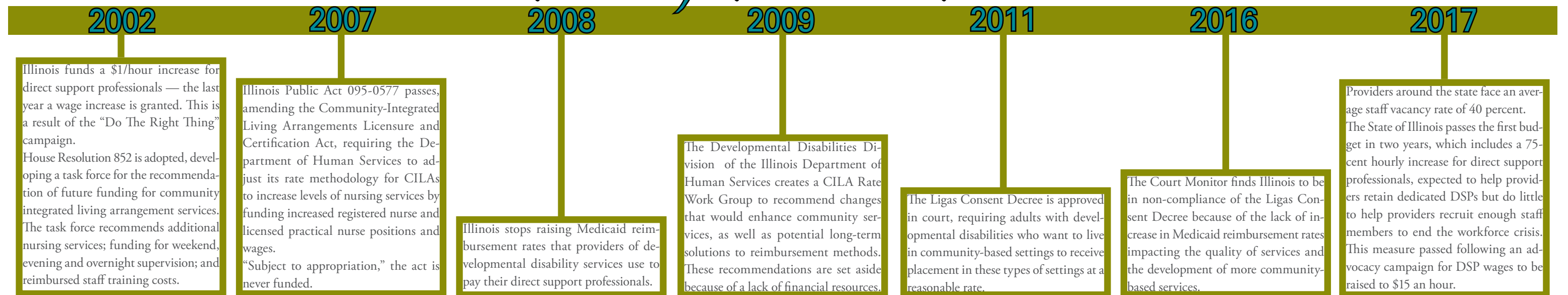
Additionally, Trinity Services has worked on more than 40 different recruitment techniques over the past few years to try to attract more people to become DSPs. Despite the draw of the rewarding work, without a living wage to pair with it, many positions remain vacant.

Now, Trinity and its fellow providers continue to ask lawmakers and Rauner to recognize the severity of the workforce crisis and act to adequately fund developmental disability services.

If the crisis continues, more closures, consolidations, staggered weekend closures, a transition to intermittent settings and greater use of remote monitoring technology may lie ahead. But people with disabilities and the dedicated DSPs who serve them deserve so much more. Trinity’s commitment to advocating for them is unwavering.

For more information about the direct support workforce crisis in the Illinois developmental disability community, stay tuned to Trinity-Services.org, or follow Trinity Services on Facebook or Twitter.

A Brief History of the Workforce Crisis



Someone You Should Know

Bonnie Hassan



"I always saw myself in a helping profession."

Since she was a child, Bonnie Hassan knew she wanted a career through which she could help others.

Hassan has fulfilled that dream through a variety of positions throughout her career — the past 18 years of it spent at Trinity Services, where she is today the director of Family Counseling.

"I always saw myself going to work with people in a helping profession," Hassan said.

She received her bachelor's degree in psychology from DePaul University and her master's degree from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University.

When she was still an undergraduate, in 1999, Hassan became a children's residential counselor in Trinity's children's residential program. The position was similar to the position that independent living coaches — or direct support professionals — hold at Trinity today, assisting people on an individual level. Hassan then became a social rehabilitation counselor in the same program upon receiving her bachelor's degree.

Upon completion of her master's degree, Hassan became a therapist for the program, and then took over as its director. When the program closed, she saw it through its final days, then became director of Trinity's Glenwood Center for Behavioral Health, and roughly two years ago accepted a role as director of Family Counseling.

Hassan said that though all of her past positions have been different, she has always strived to keep a one-to-one connection with clients. In her present role, she still counsels two people.

But the majority of her responsibilities are divided between helping her staff provide the best possible services to their clients and networking with community organizations to ensure Trinity is taking full advantage of every opportunity to increase the availability of mental health services for underserved populations.

Some of the organizations Family Counseling is involved with include United Way of Will County, United Way of Grundy County, the Community Services Council of Will County, and local behavioral health advocacy and alliance organizations.

"We focus on how to reduce stigma, noticing service deserts and where we can meet the gap, and early intervention and how we can get people into services quicker," Hassan said.

Family Counseling has offices in Joliet, New Lenox, Homewood and Naperville, but under Hassan's direction, its reach is expanding to other communities.

Recently, Family Counseling entered into a partnership with the Orland Park Police Department through which police officers can refer people in need of mental health services to Family Counseling and can request counselors to arrive at scenes on an on-call basis.

In June, Hassan had the opportunity to present at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2017 Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting, along with officers from the OPPD, to demonstrate how the collaboration works.

A big part of Hassan's willingness to accept leadership positions throughout her career has been a quest to continually step

outside of her comfort zone, she said.

"That was one of the big decisions I made when leaving Glenwood," she said. "I could have stayed there forever and been happy, but I would not have been pushed. Now, I have to do presentations and things I'm not comfortable with. But I want to continue to improve so, ultimately, the things we're doing have a bigger impact and wider influence."

Of all of her accomplishments at Trinity, Hassan said she is proudest of having been able to build effective teams and see members of those teams rise to become leaders.

"When I went from Glenwood to Family Counseling, what made it easier was knowing there was a strong team there," she said. "A lot of people start off with us as students, and now one of them is the director of the program. Getting to see them progress is really cool."

Hassan's supervisor, Behavioral Health Director Mike Mecozzi, said people enjoy being able to work with Hassan.

"Bonnie is diligent, resilient, courageous and driven," he said. "She is a true leader, because people want to follow her."

Outside of her role at Trinity, Hassan enjoys spending time with her 7-year-old daughter, Leila. They go on walks and runs together, and enjoy adventures to the park and zoo. Leila was born prematurely, so each year, the Hassans participate in the March for Babies.

"It's cool to see her notice, 'Other people's baby pictures don't have tubes in them. Why do I look like that? But I want to help!'" Hassan said. "She's a cool person who I enjoy spending time with."

~ John A. Shedd

TRINITY SERVICES, INC.
28TH ANNUAL DINNER DANCE & AUCTION
HAVANA
Nights

SAVE
the
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Trinity's 24th Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Classic brings patriotic fun to crowd of roughly 150

A red, white and blue-filled day on the green delighted a crowd of nearly 150 golfers, onlookers and diners, alike, at Trinity Services' 24th Annual Tom O'Reilly Memorial Golf Classic on Thursday, May 18, at Odyssey Country Club in Tinley Park.

The golf outing was themed "Patriot Putt" and featured characters like the Statue of Liberty, Abraham Lincoln, Rosie the Riveter and Uncle Sam, who interacted with attendees throughout the course, selling raffle tickets, serving drinks, and encouraging golfers to try their luck and skill at various contest holes.

After a full 18 holes of golf in the warm sun and cool breeze, golfers gathered in the Odyssey's elegant first-floor dining hall to relax and enjoy a buffet-style dinner.

Tournament Director Bob Hand announced the first-place foursome of the event — Scott Creech, Scott Gapsevich,



Trinity Services staff, dressed as patriotic characters, gather inside the Odyssey Country Club, ready to greet guests for a fun-filled day.

Tim Thanasouras and Tom Thanasouras. The group earned the best score of the day and acquired the Golf Classic's traveling trophy to commemorate the achievement for the year.

Thanks to generous sponsors, other attendees went home winners of raffle prizes including a Bushnell Range Finder, a liquor basket, Chicago Wolves tickets, a split-the-

pot cash prize and more. Additionally, a silent auction featured sports tickets and memorabilia, a Scioto Country Club golf package, a Kindle and more.

This year's Golf Classic earned nearly \$60,000 for the people with disabilities and mental illness whom Trinity Services supports — a full \$10,000 more than last year's event.

Hand thanked everyone who made the event such a success and who continue to support Trinity Services through their sponsorship, donations and participation.

"We hope to see you back here again next year," he said.



Members of the winning foursome (left to right), Scott Creech, Scott Gapsevich, Tom Thanasouras and Tim Thanasouras, gather together on the course.



Golf Classic Grand Marshals prepare to lead golfers in their patriotic-themed golf cart.

Donations March-June 2017

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.

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Thank You!

*We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions.