Developments Levelopments Summer 2025

The Wildwoods Hosts Ribbon Cutting & Open House Ceremony

On August 7, AID welcomed community members to a ribbon cutting and open house at 691-695 S. State Street, Elgin, marking the completion of new affordable and supportive housing. Distinguished speakers included AID President & CEO Lore Baker, Elgin Mayor Dave Kaptain, Kane County Board Chair Corinne Pierog, several Illinois State Representatives and Senator Karina Villa, and AID Board Chairman Jim Gould.

The Wildwoods features Wildwood Commons, a 24-unit permanent supportive housing community, and Wildwood Trace, a 50-unit affordable housing property—made possible through generous support from PNC Real Estate, ComEd, the Illinois Housing Development Authority, the Seigle Foundation, and Kane County.

In his remarks, Jim Gould likened the nation's housing shortage to "musical chairs," noting that too few affordable homes leave many without a seat. "With The Wildwoods," he said, "AID is adding more chairs to the circle—especially for our most vulnerable neighbors."







COMMUNITY * ADVOCACY * RESOURCES * ENGAGEMENT * SUPPORT

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AIDCARES.ORG









LETTER FROM AID PRESIDENT



OUR MISSION:

To empower people with physical, developmental, intellectual and mental health challenges to enjoy lives of dignity and purpose.

ABOUT AID:

AID is a nonprofit, community-based organization that serves 5,300 individuals throughout DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, McHenry, suburban Cook and Will counties. Programs are available for individuals with developmental, behavioral and crisis needs. AID is a United Way partner agency and accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Please visit our website: AlDcares.org

or call:

AID Services: 877-AID-0001

(877-243-0001)

Crisis Line: 630-966-9393



Dear Friends,

What an exciting time at AID! We continue to grow our programming, office space (in which to deliver programs) and housing opportunities for those we serve.

- Construction will begin soon on Las Rosas, a 20-unit Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) project in Aurora with our partners The Neighbor Project and Hesed House. We are so grateful to our friends at Las Iglesias San Pablo for selling us the property. We look forward to being their neighbor soon!
- The Employment First department received a Dignity In Pay grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Developmental Disabilities in order to work with persons with IDD on vocational skill development.
- We are supporting persons with disabilities who were former residents of a Street Encampment in Elgin through an Unsheltered Homeless Pilot Project grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Family and Community Services in partnership with the City of Elgin.

...And so much more!

But we are facing some challenges as well. Many of our programs work out of our administrative building and Thompson Center located at 309 New Indian Trail Court. This building is very old and during this incredibly hot summer, we have had ongoing issues with our air conditioning system, which is fifty years old and not long for this earth. We are also hoping to begin construction on a Community Mental Health Center in Elgin for which we have secured funding for \$4M of the \$7M project.

The communities that we serve are so incredibly supportive of the work we do at AID and we are grateful for you! I mention these particular capital needs to ask you to consider giving a bit more, if you are able. The need is great, the work is hard and our clients and staff deserve decent (air-conditioned) places to work, learn, recover and grow.

Thank you for your consideration and as always, for your support!

Lore Baker AID President & CEO











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President and CEO



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Chief Operating Officer



CHERIE MARTIN
Chief Financial Officer



COURTNEY LITTLEJOHN

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Wendy Gorog, AVP of Finance

Jennifer Hanson. AVP of Behavioral Health Services

Ashley Heinekamp, AVP of Crisis and Outreach Services

Danielle La Ha, AVP of Behavioral Health Services

Kimberly Lynch, AVP of Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Services

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Set Connected!

Be the first to know what's happening at AID! Sign up to receive inspiring stories, upcoming events, program updates, and exclusive news delivered straight to your inbox.

Stay connected and see how your support makes a difference!

Enter your e-mail in the pop-up window at AIDcares.org or scan this QR code:



Receive the following directly to your inbex!

• FRIDAY FOCUS:

Each Friday, a specific AID program or service is highlighted with a client success story and detailed program information.

• ADVOCACY ALERTS:

Receive important legislative alerts that affect AID and our community. Includes direct calls to action.

...and more!

AID Dream Team Featured in Friday Focus

Did you know that more than 700 people work at AID across all our programs and service areas with a 15 member board of directors? In an effort to get to know each other better and to feel more connected, once per month we highlight different members of the AID Dream Team in our Friday Focus!

These employees are chosen by a computer-generated randomizer, answer four simple questions and provide a photo so we can all learn a little bit more about each other. Use the QR code above or visit **AIDcares.org/get-connected** to sign-up for our weekly Friday Focus e-mails.

AID EMPLOYEES RECENTLY HIGHLIGHTED AS MEMBERS OF THE DREAM TEAM



Emalie Shearer Social Media & Integrated Content Specialist



Hannah Armijo Supported Living Case Manager - MHP



Gavin Shearer
Authorized Direct Support Professional



Brigette Tillman-Henderson

Therapist - QMHP



AIDCARES.ORG/CAREERS

JOIN THE AID TEAM!

\$1,000

SIGN-ON BONUSES FOR MOST POSITIONS!



A Flavorful Future: Introducing the Flavor Lab Food Truck

In early May, AID proudly unveiled the Flavor Lab—a one-of-a-kind food truck that will soon be run by participants in Community Day Services, made possible through a generous grant from the Kane County Riverboat Fund.

More than just a food truck, the Flavor Lab is a mobile culinary experience designed to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through hands-on training and meaningful employment. The truck will offer a rotating menu of mix-and-match dips and a variety of delicious dipping items — providing the community with bold flavors and a taste of the creativity that AID clients bring to the table.



The project is the result of a powerful collaboration among AID team members, including Colette Jung (Former Director of Community Day Services at the Thompson and O'Shea Centers), Anna Barnes (Culinary Specialist), Courtney Littlejohn (Vice President of Equity and Inclusion), and Nikki Delgado (Former Director of Employment Services). Working in partnership with an AID client advisory council, the team brought their shared vision to life with a focus on inclusion, skill development, and community connection.

The unveiling event celebrated the progress made thus far and gave clients, staff, and local supporters an exciting preview of what's to come. It also served as an opportunity to honor Nikki Delgado for her outstanding contributions to the organization. As she moves on to the next chapter in her career, AID recognized her pivotal role in shaping the Flavor Lab and expanding client employment opportunities.

Clients can't wait to hit the road and share the Flavor Lab experience with the community. Stay tuned for more updates—including our official opening date—and get ready to dip into something special!







AID Hosts Annual Meeting and Awards Night

On Wednesday, May 14, 2025, the AID Annual Meeting & Awards Night was held at The Lincoln Inn Banquets in Batavia. This celebratory event shines a spotlight on AID commitments, achievements, and impacts. Open to the public, it brings together clients, staff, supporters, and honored guests to recognize individuals who have demonstrated exceptional dedication and accomplishments over the past year.

The highlight of the evening was the awards presentation, celebrating the achievements of 15 AID clients. Each honoree has demonstrated impressive growth in their personal development, work ethic, and overall well-being — shining examples of resilience and determination.



Jim Gould, AID Board Chairman (right) presented Corinne Pierog, Kane County Board Chairperson (left), with the Outstanding Advocate Award for her support of AID programs and services.

As they shared their inspiring stories, attendees witnessed firsthand the remarkable progress they've made and the powerful impact of their hard work.

In addition to celebrating client achievements, AID proudly honored 66 dedicated staff members for reaching significant career milestones. These individuals have demonstrated unwavering commitment to AID's mission—providing essential support, care, and encouragement to those we serve. Retiring Board Members Chuck Miles, Toni Vaughan, Dr. Melinda Tejada, and Matt Bretz were also honored for their years of dedication, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the mission of AID.

We were also honored to celebrate extraordinary community supporters whose generosity and partnership fuel the work of AID. Thanks to their unwavering support, AID continues to deliver impactful, life-changing programs that meet the evolving needs of our community—encouraging clients to grow, thrive, and realize their fullest potential.

The evening came to a close with heartfelt congratulations and deep appreciation for all awardees, guests, and supporters. The AID Annual Meeting & Awards Night stands as a powerful tribute to the strength, compassion, and dedication of the entire AID community. Year after year, it serves as an inspiring reminder of the incredible impact we can achieve together—through unity, purpose, and celebration.



Lore Baker (right) presents Preston R. (left) with the "Heart of the Community Award".



Zedvie S. (right) embraces Lore Baker (left) as she receives her "Inspiring Journey Award for Crisis & Outreach Services".



Lore Baker (left) presents a retiring board member gift to Chuck Miles, former AID Board Member (right).

Snapshots! EPHOTOS AROUND AID



AID Keeler Community Day Service clients and staff had a blast soaking up the sunshine at Funway! From bowling strikes to bumper boat splashes and go-kart zooms, the day was packed with laughter and excitement. Of course, no summer is complete without some tasty treats from the concession stand!



In honor of World Elder Abuse Awareness
Day, Natalie Horath, Director of Behavioral
Health, Region 6, and LaTasha Harris,
Behavioral Health Program Manager
represented AID at the DuPage County
Senior Resource Fair—sharing resources
and raising awareness about
elder abuse prevention.



After 30 remarkable years of service, AID proudly celebrated the retirement of Colette Jung, Director of Community Day Services. Clients, staff, and friends gathered for a heartfelt farewell at the O'Shea Center. Colette's leadership and compassion created a lasting legacy, and we wish her all the best in retirement.



Clients from the Behavioral Health Supported Living program stepped back in time for an epic adventure to Medieval Times! From knights in shining armor to thrilling jousts and a royal feast, everyone had an unforgettable experience full of fun, laughter, and chivalry.



For Earth Day, AID TLF clients and staff hosted a 'Paint & Plant' project, decorating terracotta pots and planting something special inside each one. These vibrant creations brighten the TLF common room, where everyone can watch their plants—and each other—grow and bloom.



Thank you to the Dundee Township
Lions Club for their generous donation.
We were proud to welcome them
to Wildwood Trace, an AID housing
development providing safe, supportive
homes for individuals with disabilities,
those at risk of homelessness, and
low-income families.



AID clients recently volunteered at Feed My Starving Children, helping pack MannaPack Rice meals—nutritious food for families in need around the world. Clients and staff enjoyed music while they worked and felt proud with every box packed.



The AID Aktion Club of Elgin welcomed Elgin Firefighters and First Responders for an unforgettable visit. Members learned about fire safety, explored emergency gear, and toured a real fire engine and ambulance. Thank you to our local heroes for sharing your time, knowledge, and courage!



Thank you to 100 Women Who Care Naperville for their generous donation to the AID Keeler Center Community Day Services. During a recent visit, representatives were presented with handmade thank-you cards from clients and toured the center.









AID hosted its annual Summer Stroll & Roll in June, uniting clients, employees, family members, and community supporters for a day of fun and philanthropy. Participants enjoyed a leisurely stroll or roll through the scenic trails of Peck Farm.

The event featured light breakfast refreshments to start the day and offered snacks and snow cones in the afternoon, keeping spirits high throughout the festivities.

Attendees engaged in carnival games, with opportunities to win prizes, adding an element of excitement to the day. Event speakers provided insights into the impactful AID work across Kane, Kendall, DeKalb, DuPage, Will, McHenry, and northwestern Cook County, highlighting the organization's commitment to supporting individuals with developmental, behavioral, and crisis needs. The event not only fostered community spirit but also raised crucial funds for AID programs and services, ensuring continued support for those in need.



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Kelsey, Conner and Jack Lloyd

David Bixby

Rose Reid

Susan Kuen Gregory

Stephanie Norwood

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Jeanine Rodriguez

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Mark Melnicoff

Danny Trippon

Norman Berthusen

Mary Trippon

Elyssa Joy Springer

Tony Winter

Peter Winter



Honor that special someone today!

- 1. Visit **AIDcares.org**
- 2. Click "Donate" in the menu bar
- 3. Click "Dedicate my Donation"
- 4. Select "In Memory" or "In Honor"
- 5. Enter the Name of the honoree
- 6. Complete donation

Vlew Feature!

Once you've made your dedicated donation, you can create and send a personalized e-card to the individual or their family—in whose honor your gift was made.

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11/12/24 - 8/12/25

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UPCOMING EVENTS



AID BENEFIT AUCTION - SEPTEMBER 18 - THE LINCOLN INN (BATAVIA)

The largest in-person event of the year, the AID Benefit Auction is a night of fun and benevolence as attendees help raise vital funds for AID programs, services and properties. Purchase event and raffle tickets online: **AIDcares.org/auction**

This event is successful thanks to generous business and individual donations and sponsorships. Contact Kayleigh Aleck, Fundraising Events Specialist at (847) 931-2293 or KAleck@AlDcares.org to learn more or to make your donation.



AID HOLIDAY HOPES PROGRAM - BEGINS WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1

The holidays can be a challenging time for clients who don't have families. With the help of our exemplary donors, AID brings a little holiday cheer to clients in need by providing small gifts at Christmas. Individuals, groups or businesses interested in helping to purchase gifts for clients for the holiday can display itemized "gift tags" with gift ideas for clients at their place of business, worship or other social settings. Help provide some holiday joy for our clients by contacting Kayleigh Aleck, Fundraising Events Specialist at **(847) 931-2293** or **KAleck@AIDcares.org**.



GIVING TUESDAY - DECEMBER 2 - ONLINE EVENT

Giving Tuesday continues to be AID's largest day of online giving—with donations once again being doubled. Your generous support helps AID enrich the lives of children and adults with developmental, behavioral health and crisis needs.

Mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 2, 2025, and help us reach our fundraising goal by making an even greater impact with your online gift.

CONNECT WITH AID ONLINE TO DISCOVER EVERYDAY SUCCESSES AT AID!









