The mission of the Center for Independence is to help children and young adults with disabilities achieve their highest level of independence in the home, school, community and workforce. We provide therapy programs that develop life skills and motor function in a manner that promotes self-reliance and an “I Can!” attitude. Committed to breaking down barriers to employment, the Center also provides job linkage and placement for young adults with disabilities through our innovative program, Working Together Chicago.

(708) 588-0833 ~ www.CFlmove.org

**Note from the Director**

Hope is the foundation of the Center’s work. Our vision is that all people with disabilities should expect to live with dignity and pride in who they are. The Center’s programs help children and young adults with disabilities gain the confidence and skills they need to lead self-determined lives filled with purpose.

The last two years of living through a Pandemic has been exhausting for the entire world. Like everyone else, we are relieved that there is finally light at the end of a very long tunnel. This year will be exciting and filled with renewed hope. Our Therapy Programs are back to pre-Covid levels and the Center’s Working Together Chicago program is getting young adults with disabilities back to work! We are also thrilled to announce that this year the Center will completely renovate our Countryside location - after 22 years of constant use, it is in need of an upgrade!

Our heartfelt thanks to all of you, our generous supporters, who have helped keep the Center operating in-person throughout this crisis. Your support gave hope to the Center staff, our children, young adults and families, to come out stronger and remain confident that great new opportunities are ahead of us.

~Patricia Herbst
Executive Director

**Site Locations:** The Center is proud to offer programs at the following locations:

**Countryside**
(Main Site)
100 W. Plainfield Rd, Ste. 100
Countryside, IL 60525

**Brighton Park - Chicago**
2701 W. 36th Place
Chicago, IL 60632

**Northwest**
The Hope Collective
23153 W Miller Rd.,
Lake Zurich, IL 60047
Financial Report for year ending December 31, 2021

87% of every dollar was spent on therapy and vocational programs that serve children and young adults with disabilities!

Total Revenue & Public Support $2,069,558

$1,040,610 of Charitable Care, allowing every child to participate regardless of income or insurance limitations! THANK YOU!

Total Expenses $1,819,446

For a copy of the Center’s Audited Financial Statements, please contact pherbst@cfice.org.
Program Impact

535 children, young adults and family members served in 2021

17,000 hours of *in-person* therapy provided in 2021

97% of children and young adults have improved independence and daily life skills

80% of Center preschoolers have transitioned to a regular ed classroom!*  
*Did you know only 13.6% of children with multiple disabilities are included in regular ed classrooms?

568 hours of Social Work and 6 Parent Training Workshops provided

29 New paid jobs created for adults with disabilities; 129 participant placements total!

Thanks to the generosity of our community and a grant from the State of Illinois, the Center will completely renovate the Countryside classrooms and offices in 2022!
Let the good things grow! During 2021/2022, WTC has continued its efforts to increase participant opportunities in the workforce.

Our goal of a more inclusive work environment continues to gain traction in our communities. We always welcome leads for employers looking to expand their workforce with enthusiastic, dependable, and hardworking WTC participants!

Connor (below) works at Green Home Experts in Lyons. He assembles energy efficiency kits that help lower the environmental impact.

“Connor’s very excited about being back and doing well. Connor’s biggest motivation is getting that first paycheck!”

-Connor’s Dad

Thank you for giving young adults with disabilities the purpose and pride of a paycheck!

Your donations make a difference...

64% of children attending the Center live in low-income households and face barriers to therapy services. But it’s not just low-income families who face barriers...

High deductible insurance plans and HSA plans continue to shift the cost of therapy and healthcare to middle-income families.

The CDC estimates medical costs for children with Cerebral Palsy are 10 times higher than typically-developing children. Middle-income families are struggling to pay for their child’s necessary therapeutic services.

The Center has never turned a child away due to insurance or income limitations! Thank you.
What is Conductive Education?
Conductive Education is an intensive method of teaching people with motor disabilities to be more functionally independent. It is founded on the premise of neural plasticity; with intensive focused practice, the brain is capable of creating new pathways despite significant damage.

Children with motor disabilities develop and learn in the same way as typically developing children do. However, what most children learn through assimilation, the child with a motor disorder must be taught as a skill, whether it be walking, toileting, or dressing.

Our talented staff of Conductive Education Teachers, Physical and Occupational Therapists work together to provide a comprehensive program to promote confidence and motivation in every child, so that life skills are achieved to the best of their ability. The peer setting encourages children to take responsibility for their learning with an "I Can!" attitude.

CE Testimonial from Center Family:
Mia’s diagnosis of cerebral palsy should not have come as a shock. She and her sister were born at 29 weeks. We knew there were risks at the time of delivery and to this day we are both so grateful that our girls were born healthy.

That said, the news was unsettling. From the moment they are born, a parent wants their child to experience all of life’s gifts without limitations. When Mia was diagnosed with CP we feared that may not be the case. Her doctors were optimistic and told us that with the right kind of therapy Mia would still be able to live such a life.

We researched treatment and therapy options for Cerebral Palsy and learned about conductive education. We found the Center for Independence and instantly fell in love with their mission, therapists, educators and staff.

Mia started at CFI in the NICU graduate program at 5 months old. Right from the start we felt a tremendous sense of dedication. It’s not just clinical. There is real heart. Though Mia’s therapists work her tirelessly to be mobile and independent - the loving environment of the Center has been the difference maker.

The Center does not just treat Mia. It treats our whole family. It has events for Mia’s siblings so that they can socialize with other Center siblings. Its social worker will talk to Mia’s siblings about how they feel. It has educational courses for parents so that they can navigate the complex and frustrating government systems to ensure our children get treated fairly and receive the benefits they are entitled to in order to live an independent life.

We have seen the immediate impact the Center’s services have made not just on our daughter’s mobility, but her positive sense of self. We have seen its graduates become well rounded individuals that succeed in life and we celebrate knowing our daughter will too. Our whole family is stronger for being part of this community. We are so grateful for the Center for Independence.

- Courtney, Mom of Mia

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Improving self-determination and self-reliance in children with disabilities is the greatest influence in success at school, college, and ultimately, employment!
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Our sincere thanks to the Board for donating their time and talents to the Center!

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The Center meets all 20 Better Business Bureau of Chicago Charity standards, is rated Platinum by Guidestar Charity Navigator, and received a 2021 “Top Non-Profit” Award from Philanthropedia!

Save the Dates

April 10th - Northwest Virtual Fundraiser! Join us from the comfort of your own home! The silent auction will be live from April 7-11th. Raffle will be pulled April 10th!

September 23rd - CFI 24th Annual Golf Outing and In-Person Fundraiser

November 17th - WTC In-Person Fundraiser

More details to come!

Interested in the Field of Conductive Education?

Have you always wanted to work with children and young adults with physical disabilities? Maybe a career in Conductive Education is for you!

Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan offers the only undergraduate degree in Conductive Education in the U.S. CE embraces both education and rehabilitation in an integrated setting.

Scholarships are available! Reach out to Patti Herbst at pherbst@cfice.org for more information!

Center for Independence is an Illinois nonprofit under section 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.
Donor List
Our programs could not exist without the generous donations from Individuals, Corporations, and Foundations. Thank you for helping so many children and young adults with disabilities achieve their full potential!

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George and Juliane Schmidt
Hollis Turner
James R Buckhahn
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Mark and Robynne Woll
Paula Carmody
Peggy Scherrer

Donations in Memory of
Millie Pietrini
Jack and Heather Silhavy
Joseph Cannova
Robert and Katherine Sparr
Denise Mack and Brian Jonland
Josephine Barinaga
James and Miren Crawford
Dawn Sundquist
M Kay Brown

Donations in Memory of
Bert Gancayco
George and Jamie Gancayco
Drs. Manuel and Purita Gonzales
Francis and Margarita Gonzales
Rosario and Aileen Uy
Charles Pak
Anthony St Joseph
Patricia Cuna

Donations Celebrating the
Wedding of Warren Wenzloff
and Angie Martin
Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen
Bri Applegate
Nicole Jackson
Rebecca Hartstein
Jessa Steinworth
Steven D Friedland

The Center is OPEN and providing in-person therapy programming!

Despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID Pandemic, the Center is open and providing intensive motor training therapy to the CFI kids!

YOU make that possible.

Thank you to our generous donors - you help so many hardworking children and young adults reach their full potential.

THANK YOU!

Your generous donations allowed us to safely STAY open to continue providing hands-on Conductive Education for so many hardworking children and young adults with physical disabilities. More than 300 children and young adults are back in our buildings receiving the intensive motor therapy they need to stay active and healthy during this time. The CFI families, children and staff continue to take all necessary precautions to ensure safety for everyone.

Make a Plan

Is the Center in your estate plan?
Your generosity and planning could directly impact the life of a future child with a physical disability.

To learn more, contact Patricia Herbst at 708-588-0833 or pherbst@cfice.org.

* Funds designated to the Working Together Chicago Program
You Kept Us Hard at Work during this Challenging Year!