

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 varying disabilities through our innovative program, Working Together Chicago.

A Note from the Director

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I'm filled with pride and gratitude. Because of your support, the Center for Independence **served over 965 children, adults, and family members**—empowering them through therapy, employment programs, and vital family support services.

We expanded our Parent Education Workshops, helping parents feel more confident and less stressed while navigating the challenges of caregiving. We also provided **over \$1.2 million in charitable care**, ensuring no one was turned away due to cost.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers, and generous supporters like you. Every milestone reached—a first step taken, a first job secured, a newfound confidence achieved—is a testament to the belief you have placed in us and the abilities of those we serve.

Together, we are creating real, lasting change and building a future where **independence is possible for all**.

My heartfelt thanks,
Patti Herbst
Executive Director



Site locations:

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

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



Your Impact, By the Numbers

Thanks to your generosity, the Center for Independence remained financially strong and mission-focused in 2024. Together, **we raised over \$2.29 million** to support therapy, employment, and family services, and provided \$1.2 million in charitable care, so no family had to choose between care and cost.

December 31, 2024 Financial Summary

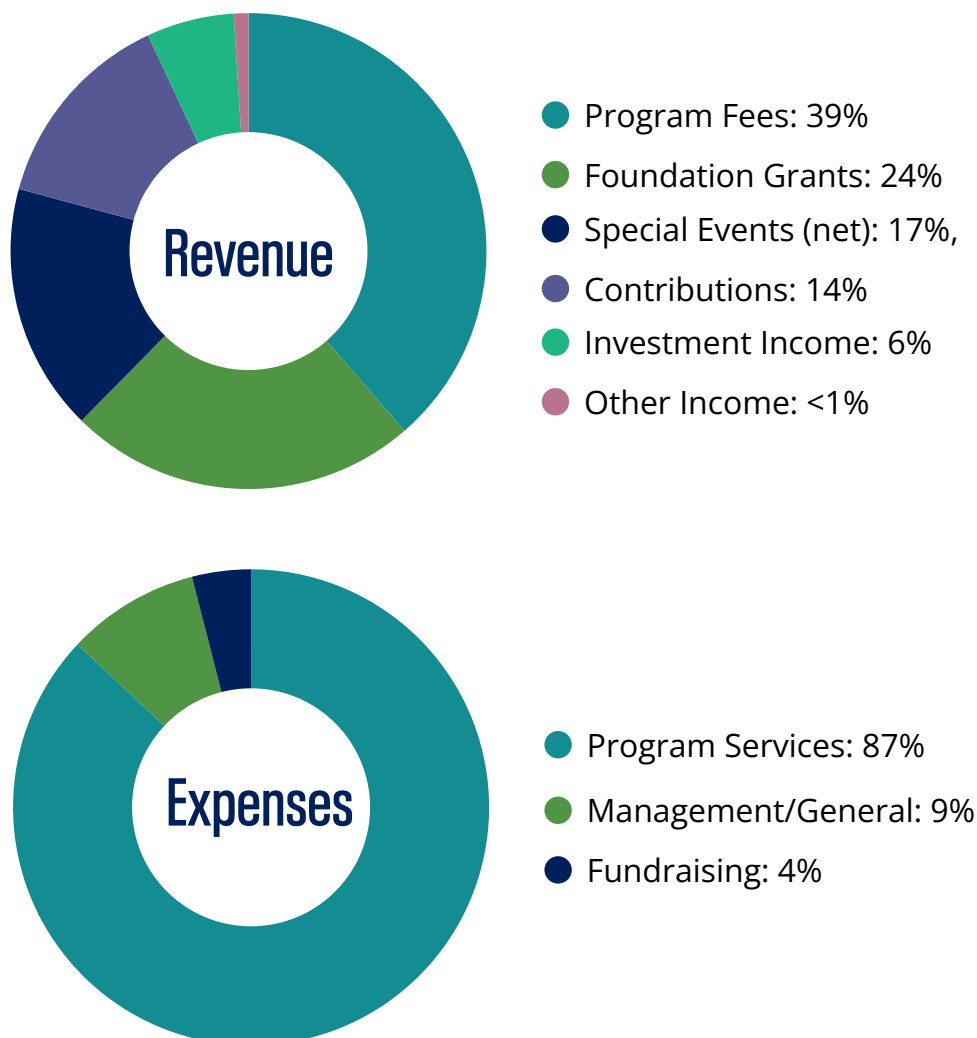
Total Revenue: \$2,297,007

Total Expenses: \$2,111,396

Net Assets (End of Year): \$2,177,410

Charitable Care Provided: \$1,184,630

For every \$1 spent, **87¢ directly supported programs** serving children and adults with disabilities and their families. The Center maintains strong financial health with **\$2.18 million in net assets**, allowing for stability and continued growth.



Your dollars at work

Because of you, we have had an amazing year.

965 people served!

236 children and young adults in therapy

234 young adults with varying disabilities in job development

495 parents and siblings in support programs

13,076 hours of charitable therapy care

132 hours of free Social Work

18 Free Parent Training Workshops

61 people with disabilities working!

20 new paid jobs created

107 people attended employment workshops

6,240 hours of Charitable Job Placement Services



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"I Can!" Corner

Client Testimonials

We cannot thank you enough for welcoming our daughter so warmly and doing such incredible work with her. **She is walking thanks to you**, and we are so grateful!

-Countryside Mother of 3 year old



My little brother has autism, and he has been employed through Working Together Chicago for 5+ years now. **His job has changed the trajectory of his life.** It gives his life purpose, structure, and allows him to interact with people he would certainly not meet without his job.

-Brother of WTC Participant



My son has not only increased his strength, **his confidence has grown!** He cried during the evaluation, and we were so worried about how he'd adjust. After just a few months, he's more confident and able to regulate himself in new spaces and situations. I'm forever grateful for everything CFI has done for my son and am looking forward to the future!

-Center Parent, 2 year old

The Center has been a bright light in our time of unknown. From the amazing therapists that become like family to the solidarity that comes with finding friendship in fellow disability families within the center to the well thought out workshops that help navigate our family's well-being. **This place is like no other.**

-Center parent, 6 year old

Join us at our golf outing and fundraiser!

Scan to learn more

 A SWEET
CELEBRATION 

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26, 2025



Follow us on social media @cntr_4_independence!



May 2025

All we can achieve, together!

We accomplished a lot in 2024....



Advanced educational outcomes!
70% of preschoolers transitioned to regular education classrooms, far exceeding the national average for children with multiple disabilities



Prepared 100% of therapy participants to graduate from high school, with 52% of graduates enrolling in college courses



Delivered over \$1.2 million in charitable care, ensuring no family was turned away due to financial hardship



Hosted 18 free Parent Education Workshops, giving families tools to support their children's growth and development



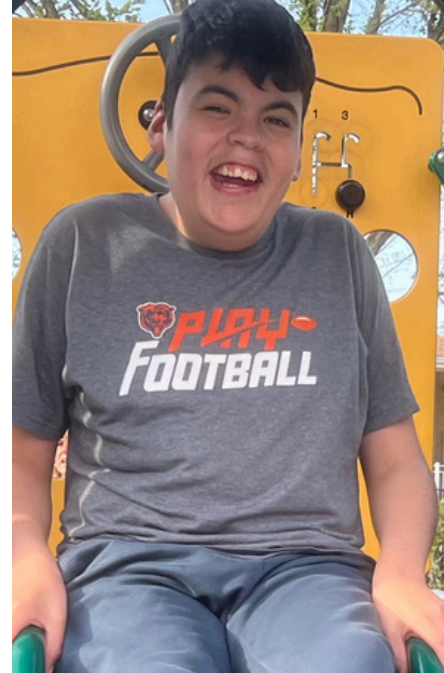
Reduced stress for 94% of parents through affordable programs and ongoing caregiver support



Strengthened families through free social work services, case management, and educational resources



Guided 234 adults with developmental disabilities on their path to employment and independence



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Putting People to Work!



Last May, our Working Together Chicago team brought four job seekers with disabilities to a local hiring event—and **all four were offered jobs on the spot**. Three accepted positions with Aramark and are now thriving in their new roles. With the support of Aramark's inclusive team, they've gained not just employment, but confidence, independence, and a real sense of belonging. It's moments like these that remind us what true inclusion can mean—for individuals, their families, and our entire community.

Learn more and find out how to get involved at workingtogetherchicago.org.



Community Spotlights



Special shoutout to Dr. Marni Tahvilian for hosting Parent's Day Out on December 7th. Center families had a much-needed day off!



Thank you to the amazing dynamic duo, Dr. Keen and Dr. Kirchoff, for hosting the Center's CP 101 Workshops for families! Be on the lookout for our next series coming soon!



Thank you Nives and Joe Rizza for bringing holiday magic to our Center families! The Santa breakfast was filled with pancakes, gifts, and good cheer!

Board of Directors

Our sincere thanks to the Board for donating their time and talents to the Center!

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Recognition

The Center meets all 20 Better Business Bureau of Chicago Charity standards, is rated Platinum by Guidestar Charity Navigator, and received a 2024 "Top Non-Profit" Award from Philanthropedia!



Ways to get involved

Donate or designate the Center in your Will!

Make a lifelong impact by donating through your will or 401K. You are helping children and young adults with physical disabilities receive therapy, regardless of insurance or income limitations.

Send a Child to Summer Therapy

The Center offers two intensive 4-week sessions of intensive therapy during the summer. For \$5000, you can cover the costs for a child with a physical disability to attend. Any donation makes a difference!

Hire a Person with a Disability

Does your employer want to become more diverse and inclusive? Hire a young adult with a disability through Working Together Chicago! Not sure what position you might have? Contact our WTC team today at Comalley@cfice.org or 312-995-3302.

Volunteer

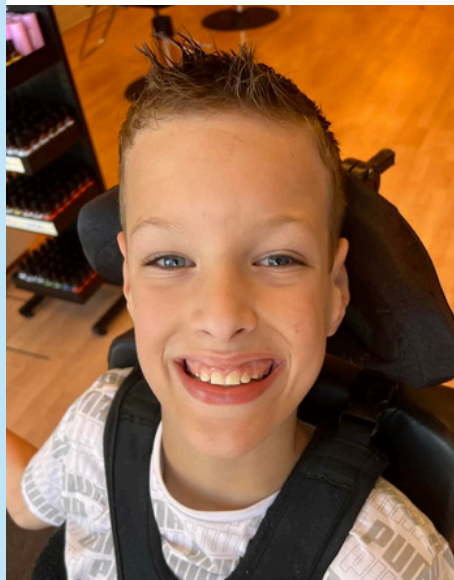
The Center regularly needs volunteers to help with painting, weeding, envelope stuffing and more! Get involved by emailing Courtney at cthauer@cfice.org.

Spread the word!

The Center grows through word-of-mouth! Your support connects families and job seekers to life-changing therapy and employment programs. Please keep spreading the word to those who could benefit!

Learn more at CFImove.org!

In loving memory of our friend, Avery Card



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Thank you to our 2024 Donors!

We are so incredibly grateful for all our amazing supporters.

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Center for Independence

Helping children
and adults with
disabilities grow.



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highest level of independence!