



The Douglas Center Creates Opportunities for Community Integration and Inclusion for our Participants

Since returning from the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown, The Douglas Center has been preparing for the implementation of the federal HCBS (Home and community-based services) settings rule to be implemented by all service providers by March 17, 2023. The goal of the HCBS settings rule is to assure people receiving services have access to community living that meets their needs and is of their choosing.

Over 61 million (nearly one in four) people in the United States are living with a disability. Too often, individuals with disabilities are excluded from community participation, leisure activities, educational opportunities, employment, social interaction, etc. Community integration seeks to ensure that all individuals have access to the full range of opportunities that enable them to participate in life at the same level as nondisabled persons. Community integration and inclusion for individuals with disabilities is essential to the overall health and wellbeing of the individual and the entire community. The community as a whole benefits from being in relationship with those who have different experiences and/or appearances. The community receives more funding for public spending as a result of people living with disabilities who work, pay taxes and spend within the community. The community is able to experience the often unknown and unsung gifts and talents of individuals with disabilities. Over the past year, The Douglas Center has actively been engaged in developing and implementing programming that provides greater opportunities for integration and inclusion for our participants. In January of 2022, our participants were involved in 154 hours of Community Integration/Inclusion activities. In January of 2023 the number of hours increased to 997 hours.



In keeping with our mission, our overall goal for this programming is to provide more opportunities for our participants to develop independent living skills, social skills, health and nutritional training, budgeting, etc. These are a few examples of the types of program activities The Douglas Center has created for our participants.

- Educational: Local Museums, Skokie Library
- Budgeting, Money Management (Malls, shopping excursions)
- Observational Learning in the Workplace re: specific employment positions
- Practical Nutritional Information and Budgeting: Restaurants and grocery shopping
- Volunteering: Niles Township Pantry, Touched by an Animal, Skokie Library Homebound book delivery, Lauth Park, Church Community Clothing Closet

The Douglas Center is committed to providing our participants with the opportunities to improve their independent living skills and enrich their quality of life. We have made great strides toward increasing these opportunities for those we serve and are already planning for and are excited about the next phase of this vital programming. Transitioning into this new programming has come with considerable expense. To ensure the safety of our participants it is essential to increase the number of staff supervision for each activity. Additionally, as we have increased the number of community activities for our participants, so have our transportation vehicle needs also increased. The Douglas Center has thus far been able to keep up with these needs because of the generosity of our donors and friends.

The Douglas Center would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Niles Township for their generous grant toward the purchase of an additional vehicle. This grant enables our center to expand our transportation capability to include more participants in our community integration/inclusion activities.

To our 2022 Donors: There are no words to express our deepest gratitude for your generosity during the past year. 2022 was a year in which we were still recovering from the effects of the pandemic. The needs of those we serve had increased while funding had diminished. Through careful planning and because of your generosity, our center not only survived but moved forward to meet the needs of those who are most at risk. Your support of our mission means so much to our participants. Thank You for your continued support.

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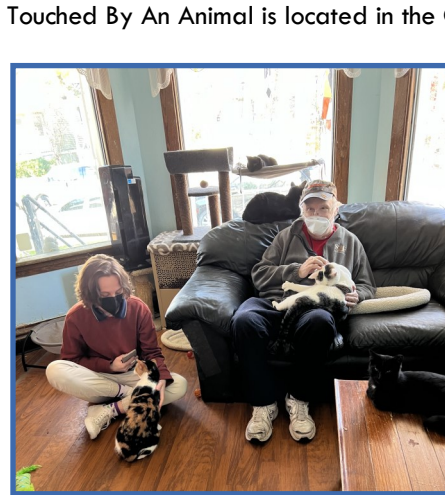
The Douglas Center Closing Schedule

- In-Service Day: March 17th
- Good Friday: April 7th
- In-Service Day: May 12th
- Memorial Day: May 29th
- In-Service Day: June 16th
- Independence Day: July 3rd & 4th

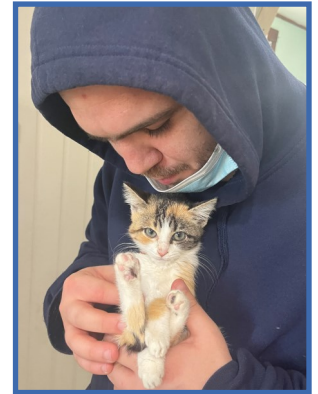


Touched by an Animal

By Rachel Delman, Midwestern University Student



Touched By An Animal is located in the Chicagoland area and provides a lifetime or transitional home for abandoned cats. The organization is filled with cats who are full of personality and have found their way to Touched By An Animal in unique ways such as through the loss of a loved one, homelessness, or are there temporarily. A favorite among the volunteers, staff, and visitors is named May who found her way to Touched By An Animal after being rescued from a house fire. This resilient cat decided this organization would be her forever home and demonstrates great joy in welcoming all that enter. Other cats like Jubilee and a litter of kittens-- Fluffernutter, Fancy Pants, Floofy and Fireball—have also found solace and socialization through the care and support provided to them at Touched By An Animal. The clients from the Douglas Center are provided the opportunity to participate in this outing weekly and it is clear how much of a treat it is for them as much as it is for the cats. Touched by an Animal provides mutually needed love, compassion and quality of life for both the animals and the people who are welcomed into the cat sanctuary.



The Douglas Center Celebrating 24 Years of Service

On March 8, 2023, The Douglas Center marked its 24th year of serving individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. From the humble beginnings of a small storefront facility consisting of three small rooms with a small warehouse, and two staff members, to its current 40,000 square foot location, The Douglas Center has grown and expanded its mission's reach. The Douglas Center began with one participant and two staff members. Today the center serves 150 participants with 70+ staff members, consultants, therapists, contractors, volunteers, and student interns.

. "We are extremely happy and proud of the excellent services we continue to provide our participants," stated Rifath Khan, CEO. "The Douglas Center continues its commitment to expand the choices and opportunities available for our participants with special needs." The Douglas Center would like to express our gratitude to everyone for their support and commitment to our mission of improving the quality of life for people with special needs. A huge thank you to those that work at The Douglas Center, who have been the backbone of our program. A special thanks to our Board of Directors who have given their full support in order to create the programs we have implemented. To our volunteers and interns, thank you for the creativity, time, and support that you bring to our center, we are honored to have you here. In 2024, The Douglas Center will celebrate its 25th Anniversary. Stay tuned for a memorable celebration!



The Impact of Inclusive Volunteering: Building Better, Stronger Communities

Every day, throughout the world, people volunteer their time, resources, and gifts toward helping others in need, from furthering human rights to noble causes within their communities. Volunteering is an essential part of the American culture. Approximately 25% of Americans volunteer at least once a year. The benefits of volunteering are huge! They include improved physical and mental health, social inclusion friendship, self-confidence, sense of purpose, development of marketable job skills and opportunities, etc. One of the most emotionally fulfilling rewards of volunteering is the satisfaction that comes with supporting others.

Volunteerism by individuals with disabilities is just as meaningful and valuable for them as it is for the communities in which they serve. Volunteerism assists people with special needs in alleviating social exclusion which so often affects those living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The act of volunteering enables individuals who often require special assistance, to be in a position of helping others, giving them a greater sense of purpose and self-esteem.

Inclusive volunteering enables individuals with disabilities to assist their communities and to be seen and recognized as a community asset sharing their talents and gifts. This is a win-win situation for all involved. An individual with special needs is able to meet an identified need within the community, providing them with the same rewards and benefits received by volunteers without special needs. Additionally, the community is provided with the opportunity to witness and respect the skills, contributions, and talents of volunteers with special needs. This is a powerful experience for everyone.



The Douglas Center continues to seek out new collaborative volunteering opportunities within the community for our program participants. One of the biggest barriers to volunteering faced by people with special needs is transportation. The Douglas Center through the generosity of donors has been able to acquire additional vehicles to accommodate the increase in our community integration efforts. We are deeply appreciative of the support that we have received from our donors and the Niles Township government grant.

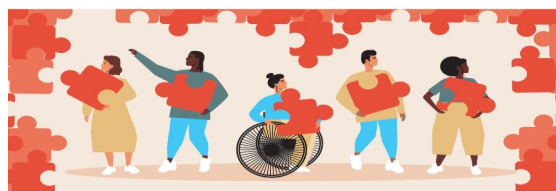
Volunteering within the community provides our participants with a sense of pride, responsibility, and services. While our list of volunteer opportunities continues to grow, here are a few examples of some of the many opportunities undertaken by our participants.

Touched by an Animal: Our participants volunteer weekly at Touched by an animal, a nonprofit organization that provides a home for cats who are displaced, helping to find adoptive homes for them. Participants have the opportunity to interact and play with the cats and kittens, as well as making cat toys. We have witnessed a profound positive effect on several of our participants who have previously been quiet and introverted, have since begun to open up after this volunteer experience.

Volunteering at Church Community Clothing Closet: Our program participants volunteer every other Wednesday morning at the Community Clothing Closet to help organize, fold, sort, hang coats and clothing that have been donated. In giving back, they have an opportunity to practice the retail job skills they have learned and can add to their resumes for future employment within the community.

Niles Township Food Pantry: Our participants volunteer every week at the Niles Township Food Pantry to assist in stocking shelves, unpacking boxes of grocery items, sort and bag vegetables as well as cleaning the shelves and breaking down of empty boxes, giving them the opportunity to learn retail skills for future job opportunities in the community.

Skokie Public Library Homebound Book Delivery: In collaboration with the Skokie Public Library our program participants serve the community by assisting with the delivery of books, CDs and DVDs to homebound residents in the Village of Skokie.



The Douglas Center Awards 2022 Star Performers

Each year, The Douglas Center presents its Star Performers Awards celebrating outstanding performances by staff members. The Douglas Center has a monthly program, “DC Bucks”, that tracks the punctuality, attendance and paperwork completion of each staff member. DC staff who have met the criteria for all three categories receive DC bucks for the month (which can be redeemed for cash). At year end, staff members who have met the criteria for the entire year are awarded a certificate, “Star Performance” pin and an additional monetary award.

This year’s presentation was held on February 14th and attended by staff members and program participants. The 2022 DC Bucks award recipients were David Banas, Director of Program and Clinical Services; Anna O’Dwyer, Office Manager, Tolu Feyisitan, Program Coordinator, Vincent Pacis, Case Manager.



Rifath Khan, CEO , awards The Douglas Center DC Bucks Award to its Star Performers. Left to Right: Tolu Feyisitan, Vincent Pacis, Anna O’Dwyer, Rifath Khan, CEO, David Banas., Director of Program and Clinical Services

The Journey Continues for The Douglas Center Quilt of Inclusion Traveling Exhibit

The Douglas Center Quilt of Inclusion exhibit continues its journey throughout the community. During the month of February, the quilt exhibit was hosted by the Skokie Public Library. The next stop on the tour is the Nilis-Maine District Library where they will host our Quilt of Inclusion during the month of March.

About The Douglas Center Quilt of Inclusion: This quilt project was created during our recent AbilityLab event, which was a part of Coming Together 2022: Sharing Experiences of Disability. The community members, our program participants and staff engaged in this hands-on project by creating painted and decorated quilted fabric squares which became a part of our community quilt display. With simple elements such as paint, fabric, glue, Scissors, etc., our program participants and staff members of The Douglas Center along with members of the community crafted images onto fabric squares to create a beautiful feast of expression and imagination. Each fabric piece holds a story, a meaningful inspiration that comes together to form a visual symbol of inclusion.

The Quilt of Inclusion traveling exhibit began at The Douglas Center during the month of September 2022, followed by the First Bank Chicago in Skokie during the month of October. The exhibit then traveled on to the Lincolnwood Public Library in November followed by the Nilis Township High Schools’ District Office in January 2023 and the Skokie Public Library in February 2023. “The Douglas Center is honored to be sharing this beautiful symbol of inclusion and diversity with the community,” stated Rifath Khan, CEO and Founder of The Douglas Center. “It has been received so warmly within the community.”



The Douglas Center Quilt of Inclusion displayed at the Skokie Public Library.

🌸🌸🌸 **SAVE THE DATES!** 🌸🌸🌸

Come see our latest selection of beautiful gifts and home décor including mosaic pots and mirrors, paintings, jewelry, coasters, inspirational plaques, and so much more! Featuring our new line of coasters and aprons Browse our show for a great gift idea! Easter and Mother's Day are just around the corner!



Spring Art Show

COME SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS!

HANDMADE MOSAIC ART, PAINTINGS, COASTERS, JEWELRY, AND MUCH MORE

3445 Howard St. Skokie, IL
April 24-28, 2023
9am-4pm

 **The Douglas Center**
A ray of light for individuals with special needs
Established in 1999

McGrath Evanston Subaru Extends its Hand of Inclusivity to Program Participants of The Douglas Center

The Douglas Center would like to extend our appreciation to McGrath Evanston Subaru for their generosity in gifting our participants with tickets to the 2023 Chicago Auto Show. Our participants with disabilities were able to experience the show up close while having an amazing time! This annual show is the largest auto show in North America. Held in Chicago's McCormick Place, the show features multiple world and North American introductions as well as a complete range of imported passenger cars, trucks, sport-utility vehicles, minivans, and experimental and concept cars.

On Friday, February 17th, members of our staff escorted our participants to this exciting event, many of whom had never attended the auto show. It was a feast for the eyes and imagination. "I enjoyed learning about cars, taking pictures while sitting in them, and learning about how fast they go!" commented one participant. Another participant stated, "This is the first time I've seen big fancy cars. My favorite part was watching the tires of trucks being tested and getting free prizes!"

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to include our participants with special needs in activities within the community", stated Rifath Khan, CEO. "It means so much to them to be able to experience the same type of events that people without special needs are able to experience."

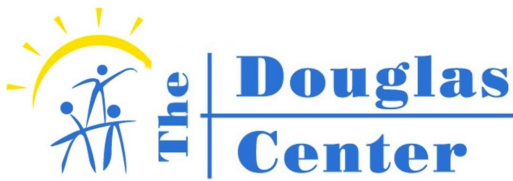


March is National Developmental Awareness Month

March is National Developmental Disability Awareness Month as proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan in 1987. This year marks the 36th anniversary of the signing of the Presidential Proclamation urging, "...all Americans to join me in according to our fellow citizens with such disabilities both encouragement and the opportunities they need to lead productive lives and to achieve their full potential."

Developmental disabilities occur among all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups. According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) approximately one in six, or about 17% of children aged 3 through 17 years have one or more developmental disabilities which include ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, intellectual disability, learning disability, vision impairment and other developmental delays.

"The Douglas Center is committed to raising public awareness of the many contributions, skills and potential of people with special needs and to provide our participants with more opportunities for community integration," stated Rifath Khan, CEO of The Douglas Center. The Douglas Center continues to expand the number and types of opportunities for inclusion within the community for our program participants. Over the past year, our center has had a fivefold increase in the number of hours spent on our monthly community integration/inclusion activities. "We are dedicated to expanding the choices and opportunities for community inclusion for individuals living with developmental disabilities."



A ray of light for individuals with special needs

Established in 1999

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www.thedouglascenter.org



The Douglas Center serves to assist adults living with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities in improving their independent living skills and enrichment of their quality of life.

OUR MISSION

SAVE TIME AND FULLFILLMENT COSTS WITH BUSINESS SOLUTION SERVICES FROM THE DOULGAS CENTER



BUSINESS SOLUTIONS for businesses seeking to save costs while supporting individuals with disabilities.

The Douglas Center Work Center offers local businesses a variety of cost-effective services so that they can better focus on their core businesses.

We collaborate with manufacturers, corporations, and individuals in the Chicagoland area for manufacturing, industrial sewing, electronic recycling, piecework, packaging, assembly and collating. While we provide you with quality, cost-effective services, our special needs participants are able to continue to improve their work skills, providing them with sense of self-esteem and fulfillment. It's a win-win situation.

We ask that you consider The Douglas Center for your next manufacturing, electronic recycling, or commercial sewing project. Rest assured, all work is carefully inspected by quality control specialists prior to each shipment. Contact us for a quote today. Together we can make a difference!

Call or email Mir Khan, Chief Operating Officer at mir@thedouglascenter.org or call: 847-674-1921.



The Douglas Center welcomes (L to R) Jared Davis, Deputy Director; Josina Morita, Cook County Commissioner, 13th District; Rifath Khan, CEO and Founder; Omar Khan, Dir. Of Health and Wellness, Administration and Development.

The Douglas Center would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to Josina Morita, Cook County Commissioner, 13th District for this recognition and for the support and interest you conveyed during your visit to our center.

We are honored and look forward to working with you on future endeavors.



Josina Morita, Cook County Commissioner, 13th District

Just now · 🌐

Thanks to Rifath Khan for her dedication to empowering those with special needs at The Douglas Center! She is a 13th District Woman History Maker!



JOSINA MORITA
13th District

Women History Makers



Rifath Khan
Chief Executive Officer
The Douglas Center