

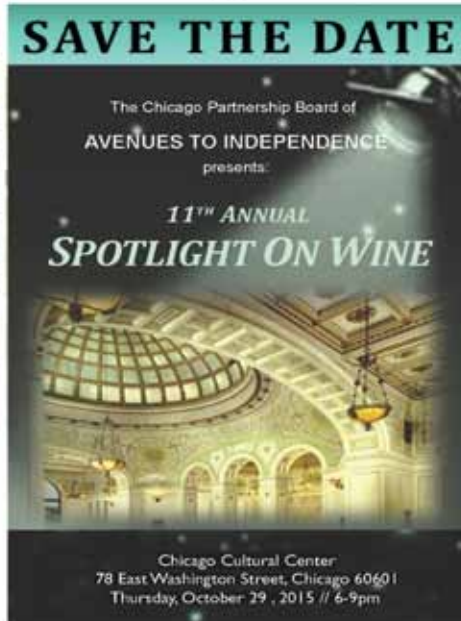
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Celebrate with Avenues at these popular events!
Join us Sunday, September 20 & Thursday, October 29



**4th Annual Beyond the Runway
Tea & Fashion Show**

Hilton/Chicago Northbrook Hotel
September 20, 2015 2:00 - 5:00 pm



**Visit our website at avenuestoindependence.org
for more information or to register**

Calendar of Events

- 9/20 Beyond the Runway Tea and Fashion Show
- 10/29 Spotlight on Wine
- 2/20/16 Love Affair

AveNews Fall 2015

Avenews is published three times a year for the friends of Avenues to Independence..

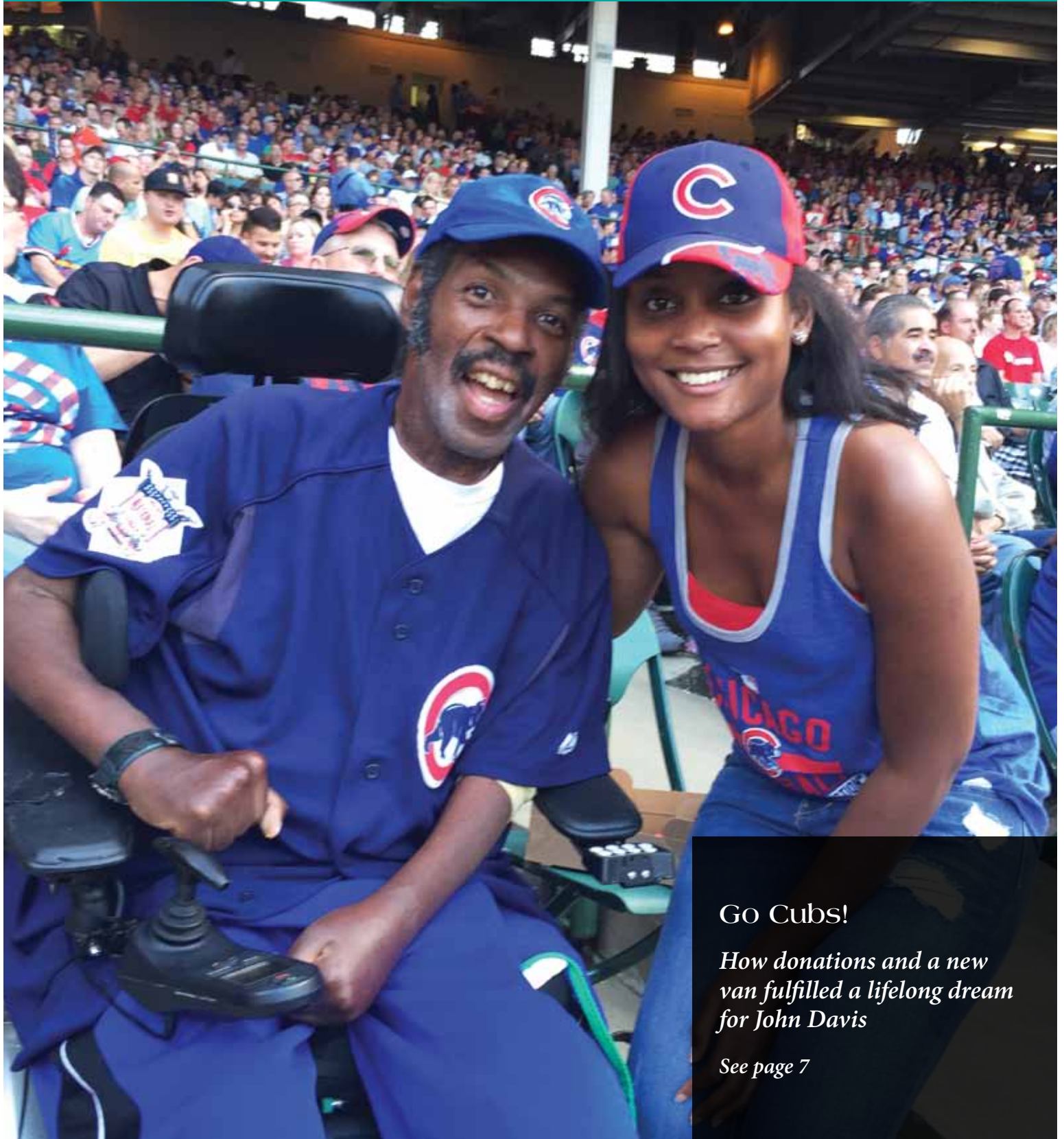
Avenues to Independence
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Chair of the Board	Peg O'Herron
Executive Director	Robert Okazaki
Editor	Laura Miles Lockwood
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Avenues to Independence is dedicated to putting aside old ideas about what is possible.

We work in partnership with the community to support and encourage people with disabilities to lead the lives they choose. Our success will eventually be measured by how little we are needed.

Avenues to Independence is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing services for adults with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities. All services and employment are provided on an equal opportunity basis. Avenues is accredited by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities).



Go Cubs!

How donations and a new van fulfilled a lifelong dream for John Davis

See page 7

Annual Dinner shows why *There's No Place Like Avenues*

On Friday, June 19, more than 350 of Avenues' participants, family members, friends and supporters celebrated why *There's No Place like Avenues* at the 62nd Annual Dinner and Dance.

Although the large banquet room at the Hilton Chicago/ Northbrook Hotel was filled nearly to capacity, the annual dinner- Avenues' most beloved event - was a very intimate affair, since so many participants enjoyed dinner together with their own family and friends, as well as with their Avenues' family. Noting the large group, Vice-President of Development Ann Marie Ehrlich reminisced that, "The annual celebration started 62 years ago as a \$5 pot-luck in a school basement and look at us today!"

Perennial favorite emcee Ron Reeves, who called himself "*The Wizard of Odd*," welcomed everyone to the Emerald City setting, complete with a yellow brick road.

But the theme of "*The Wizard of Oz*" extended much beyond the evening's décor, as Ron expressed, "We have adapted the sentiment of "There's no place like home" from *The Wizard of Oz* to Avenues. We strive every day to make certain the people we

service can truly think of Avenues as their home."

"We see wisdom in clients who express a desire to live as independently as possible and who understand what it means to work and earn a paycheck. We see their courage when they take on new tasks – like learning a new bus route or taking on a new job, or stepping out of comfort zone to try a new activity. We see people who show a lot of heart to those around them." Highlighting the wisdom, courage, and heartfelt expressions shown by many of Avenues' clients was a short video presentation, *There's No Place like Avenues*.

Arguably the favorite part of the evening was the opportunity for the participants and guests to dance, and thanks to the music of DJ Rigo, everyone got a chance to show off their happy feet!

To view more photographs, or watch the video *There's No Place like Avenues*, please visit the media gallery on our website at avenuestoIndependence.org.



a. Marietta Marchetti (center) celebrates with her family. From left are Ginny Safranek, JoAnn Casali, Tiffany Safranek and Dawn Jansen.

b. Dressed in their finest are participants (from left) Sharon Duggan, Lori Guthrie, and Stephanie Kegermann

c. Participant Kurt Kapustka leads Lisa Shewfelt on the dance floor.

d. Thank you to Max Johnson and Erica Nelson from the Crate and Barrel store in Deer Park, for their community support to Avenues. Also recognized were the Park Ridge Community Fund, the Rotary Club, and Kiwanis Foundation of Park Ridge.

e. Going the distance! Special thanks to Jim and Anita Hornbrook for traveling from their northern Wisconsin home to celebrate with their Avenues' friends.

f. Fred Voelkner poses with his son Michael

Kathy Green Seiwert recipient of the Second Annual Spirit of Avenues Award.



With many of the Tuesday Night Friends group joining her on stage, Kathy Green Seiwert receives the 2nd annual Spirit of Avenues Award from Peg O'Herron, Chair of Avenues' Board of Directors.

Long time volunteer Kathy Green Seiwert was presented with the 2nd Annual *Spirit of Avenues* Award, for her outstanding contribution to the mission and community of Avenues. The award was presented to Kathy by Peg O'Herron, Chair of Avenues' Board of Directors. Peg explained that, "For more than two decades, Kathy Green Seiwert exemplifies what is meant by 'spirit,' and is passionate about 'putting aside old ideas about what is possible' for the people of Avenues."

The passion began in 1997 when Kathy was invited to Avenues' Love Affair Gala. The following year, she chaired the event, and quickly became friends with many of Avenues' participants. That was the beginning of the popular Tuesday Night Friends social group, which still meets nearly 20 years later, and with many of the same original members.

In a very moving acceptance speech, Kathy thanked everyone in the room. "I don't have courage, and I'm certainly not brave but my heart is exploding tonight with gratitude for this wonderful honor. My heart grew and grew when my absolutely awesome Avenues' friends became a part of my life. I promise to live up to the 'spirit' that all of you bring out in me."

In conclusion, Kathy and her Tuesday Night Friends sang a heartfelt chorus of "You Are My Sunshine," and she encouraged everyone to share the sunshine!



From our Executive Director Robert Okazaki

As *Avenews* goes to press, there is no state budget for fiscal year 2016. Please check our website for updates and advocacy information.

Special Thanks to the Annual Dinner Benefactors:

Avenues is extremely grateful for the generous sponsors who helped make the Annual Dinner and Dance a memorable event.

Presenting Sponsor - Robert and Roberta Washlow

Client Transportation Sponsors - Jerry and Janice Babiarz; The Bon Ton Stores Foundation

DJ & Video Sponsors - Terri Kaisling, Evelyn Boos, the John Marshall Family Foundation

Client Table Sponsors - Glen and Laura Amundsen, Len and Barbara Bunge, JoAnn Casali Marchetti, Gail Edgren, Bob Healy and Peg O'Herron, Susan Sasser

Client Support Sponsors - Doug Beardsley, Charles and Doris Blachut Trust, Liam and Lynn Farrell, Gerald and Medalon Goldblatt, Kevin and Naomi Goll, Sandy Henich, Tom and Cathy Joyce, Larry Kearns, Shelly and Jacki Kimel, Jeff and Linda Krol, Patricia Maroney and Joseph Kogut, Steve and Jolene Silverman, Fred Voelkner, Mary Zungrone

Generous Foundation and Corporate Support

Avenues is thankful for the grants we received since our last publication.

The Pert Foundation - Program support

Wohlers Family Foundation - Employment options program

AT&T Aspire - Employment options and computer training for program participants

Sasser Family Foundation - Sasser Family House renovations

20th Century Club of Park Ridge - Program support



Please Mark your Calendar for Giving Tuesday on December 1st!

Avenues has been invited to participate in the 2015 Coleman Foundation #ILGiveBig Matching Grants Program (up to a maximum of \$20,000) with online donations on Giving Tuesday, December 1. Giving Tuesday is a global day dedicated to giving back. Watch our website for more information.

Our apologies!

We regret omitting donors Don and Shirley Kengott from the \$1,000 - \$4,999 donation category in the 2015 Impact Report.

Sasser Society – A Lasting Impact

This year's annual Sasser Society Reception and Dinner, hosted by Fred and Pam Sasser on May 28, honored more than 55 guests at the Park Ridge Country Club.

The theme of the evening, Be Bold - Be Outrageous, reflects the impact the Sasser Society has had on Avenues since its inception 15 years ago. Executive Director Bob Okazaki gave credit to the bold actions by the Board of Directors and stated, "More than \$2.1 million has been realized from

planned gifts to the Sasser Society, which has grown from 16 charter members to nearly 70 members today."

The evening was bittersweet as it was dedicated to the memory of Sasser Society members who recently passed: Charles and Doris Blachut, Bill Gorman, Edith Kooyumjian, and Albert Wohlers; but we also welcomed new Sasser Society members Michael Bruni, Len and Barbara Bunge, Greg Kintzle, Collin Sasser and his

wife Alison Whittington.

Fred Sasser acknowledged the many families from which the Sasser Society has received support from over the years. "Pam and I appreciate the support of everyone in this room for their dedication and commitment to the clients of Avenues. This is a great organization that supports a great organization."

Investing in Avenues Future

The Sasser Society honors donors who have included Avenues in their wills and future plans. If you would like more information or wish to join the Sasser Society, please contact Michele Shoolin, Vice-President of Development, at 847-292-0870 X116 or email shoolin@avenuestoindependence.org

- a. Greg Kintzle is welcomed to the Sasser Society by Peg O'Herron, Chair of Avenues' Board.
- b. Kevin Murphy (left), his brother Brian, and their mother Alice represent multi-generational members of the Sasser Society.
- c. From left, new Sasser Society members Collin Sasser and his wife Alison pose with the evening's hosts, Pam and Fred Sasser.
- d. Guest speaker Jeffrey Jones shared stories about his life as a new resident at Kendrick House, and his employment at Culver's and at Avenues' Work Center.



Help Avenues Go Global!

Avenues Around the World asks Avenues friends to take pictures wearing the Avenues logo when they travel. Avenues apparel can be purchased at cafepress.com/avenuestoindependence, and 20% of all the proceeds get donated back to Avenues.



Pictures will be posted on our website and social media! Individuals who send their pictures to AvenuesRTW@avenuestoindependence.org by October 1, 2015 will be entered in a drawing to win a pair of tickets to the Avenues Spotlight on Wine held on October 29, 2015.



Suburban Partnership Board Member Kathy Korsch (with her husband Ken) proudly wears her Avenues t-shirt in Washington.



Great Things Happen at Avenues!

- a.** Volunteer Peter Doheny shares grilling duties with Thrift Shoppe Manager Willie Sterba at the Thrift Shoppe's "Thank You Volunteer Celebration."
- b.** David Blachut demonstrates his power punch with trainer Michael Gaggiano at Studio Fitness. David uses the money he earns at Avenues' work center to pay for the twice weekly sessions.
- c.** Brian Ray is proud of the new bicycle he purchased with his earnings. He uses the bicycle to travel to his community jobs.
- d.** Entrepreneur and Thrift Shoppe participant Lenore Sierzega, with the help of volunteer Mary Johnson, display a pillow case Lenore is making to sell in the Thrift Shoppe Client Boutique
- e.** Christmas in July! Cindy Wroblewski is part of the Tuesday Night Friends social group that recently went Christmas caroling to the delight of their Park Ridge neighbors.
- f.** Steve Zungrone gives his mother Mary a hug at the Avenues Family Meeting. At the large gathering, Mary announced to the group that, "We really appreciate what Avenues does for our children."
- g.** Recycling Avenue participant Matt Palmore helped collect five skids of electronics and other items at the 4th Annual Buffalo Grove Green Fair, which Recycling Avenue will recycle or sell on eBay.
- h.** Avenues PET (Participant Event Team) helped sponsor a "Guys' Night Out" at Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant in Skokie. From left Angus McClaughry, Allan Rehwinkel, Jim Kearns and Daniel Begich were four of the nine "guys" that enjoyed the evening with staff members Gina Mailhiet, Katie Garrity and Kim Cooper.

Avenues/Gorman Golf and Tennis Classic Sets New Record

Celebrating its 27th year, the Avenues/Gorman Golf and Tennis Classic boasted a record breaking 144 golf and tennis players, and 100 additional dinner guests at the Park Ridge Country Club on July 20.

Thanks to the generous support of the players, the sponsors and everyone who attended, another record was set with an unprecedented \$160,000 the Classic raised to support Avenues' programs. At the live auction, \$62,000 of that total was raised to purchase and install new flooring in eight apartments at Herbst Family House.

Unlike the inclement weather that delayed the famed British Open, Classic Chair Steve Wilson, along with the Classic committee, ensured that Avenues' players enjoyed a great day for their golf scramble and tennis games.

During dinner, Avenues' Executive Director Bob Okazaki, along with Board Members Jerry Feldman and Fred Sasser paid tribute to Bill Gorman, founder of the Avenues/Gorman Classic who passed away the day after the event last year.

Jerry said, "Bill was the driving inspiration behind the golf classic. With his passing, Avenues lost a great friend and advocate, and a friend who was a mentor to me. Bill taught me valuable life lessons."

Executive Director Bob Okazaki echoed Jerry's sentiments, adding that "Bill wanted what was best for the organization, and Bill networked for Avenues to the very end."

Fred Sasser stated, "I am proud that over three generations of the Sasser family is following the three generations of the Gorman family that has led this organization." In keeping with tradition, three generations of Bill's family members were present, including his wife Vivien, who was a volunteer teacher at Avenues in the 1960's.

Bill would have been proud to know that since 1989, the year of the first Classic, the event has raised more than \$2.5 million to support Avenues' programs.

To view more photographs, visit the media gallery on our website at avenuestoindependence.org

a. Classic Chair Steve Wilson congratulates MSC dream cruise winner Cindy Davenport.



b. Three generations of the Gorman family attend the Classic. From left, Mindi Rice, Ron and Peggy Bjelopetrovich, Amy Thalmann, Vivien Gorman, Brian and Julie Rice, Mark Thalmann and Suzanna Bjelopetrovich.



c. Enjoying the great day are (from left) Classic Chair Steve Wilson and committee members Mark Dow and Luther Thomas.



d. The Classic has been a perennial favorite since its inception for Fred Sasser (right, pictured with Mike Fernen) and Sasser Family Holdings, Inc. Many foursomes and guests of Fred's from over the country participate in the event every year.



e. Chris Wilson was one of a dozen tennis players at this year's Classic.



f. Kevin Goll gets a gift bag from participant Mary Grace Powell.

g. Sara McKittrick drops what she hopes is the winning raffle ticket for a Colorado Vacation.

We would like to thank our Classic sponsors

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Lunch Sponsor

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Invitations

Al and Lorie Bartel
Halfway House

**Luther Thomas and Cindy
Davenport**
Luther's Circle

Kathleen and Chuck Goro
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Thank you to MB Financial Bank, our Eagle Level Corporate Sponsor for the 5th consecutive year. Representing MB Financial (from left) are Andy Bennett, Jerry Kallio, Chris Habjan, Amy Bergren, Jerry Feldman, Chad Andrulonis, Rich Berthold, Beth Feeney, and Dana Bell

Last Year's Classic makes a Dream Come True!

John Davis has always been a big Chicago Cubs fan, but never attended a game. That all changed when Avenues received its first accessible van with funds raised at last year's Classic. When John learned that transportation was available to take him in his wheelchair to his

first Cubs game, he quickly bought two tickets (with money he made working at Avenues' work center) for himself and staff member Maere Bebora (see cover picture). Even though the Cubs lost the game that day, it was a big victory for John.

