



*Craig Randall and Kurt Kapustka (seated) relax in their new home. Craig, who has the distinction of being part of the Avenues family longer than any other participant - since the 1950's - seems to like his "peaceful" setting.*

# NEW HOME FOR AVENUES

## Community of support unites to purchase home

It took more than nine months to come to fruition, but thanks to the generous support of our donors, and the perseverance of our staff, three of our long-term residents recently moved to a wonderful new home.

The story began early last year, when Avenues learned that we would have to vacate the Park Ridge house that was home to several residents. Upon hearing the news, our supporters initiated plans to help with the purchase of a new home. First, the Chicago Partnership Board that sponsors the annual *Spotlight on Wine* decided to donate all the proceeds from the October event - \$17,000 - towards the down payment.

Concurrently, a team of staff members led by Vice-President of Programs Cathy Kerr and Residential Director Floyd Kortenhof, searched for an area home that would fit our needs and budget. After checking several listings and touring more than a dozen area homes, they favored a renovated three bedroom ranch home in northern Des Plaines. With the approval of the Governing Board of Directors and the Foundation Board, a purchase was negotiated.

The pledge for support continued at our recent Diamond Jubilee Love Affair, when more than \$50,000 was raised for the home during the live auction. (see Love Affair story on page 4) Additionally, thanks to two extremely generous donors, we have raised enough money to pay off the mortgage, and purchase necessary safety items for the home including a fire alarm system.

### Staff ensures a smooth transition

With everything in place, the move took place on a mild, sunny morning in February. While the three residents of the new home – David Tiderman, Kurt Kapustka and Craig Randall - were at the work center in Wheeling, no less than 10 staff members made sure that all the clothes, furnishings, food, and household items were unpacked, organized and ready for them when they returned from work in the afternoon. Floyd felt the move “went flawlessly,” and is very happy Avenues obtained the home. “All the living spaces are on the same level, which makes it convenient for both the residents and staff, and the home has a lot of natural light – it’s very bright and cheerful. Plus, it takes less than half the time it took from the Park Ridge home to get to the work center in Wheeling.”

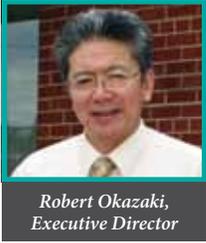
### A new place to call home

Immediately, it was clearly evident that David, Kurt, and Craig like being in their new home. According to DSP (direct support person) Rebecca Smith, “They are showing a lot of respect for the home. They keep their rooms neat and clean, and put away their things without being asked.” As *Avenews* goes to press, plans are being finalized for a fourth resident to move into the home and join David, Kurt and Craig!



a. New home in Des Plaines ready for move!

b. Staff unites to make smooth move! Clockwise from left, Social Services Director Joni Kraft cleans while Residential Director Floyd Kortenhof and Social Services Manager Janice Valentine carry in boxes; Rebecca Smith, Direct Support Person, and Cathy Kerr, Vice-President of Programs handle the unpacking duties.



Robert Okazaki,  
Executive Director

## Managed care system a problem for disability services

One night, quite a long time ago, my brother took ill and mom and dad called our doctor to see what could be done. Twenty minutes later, Dr. Thurber arrived

at our house, iconic black bag and all, to attend to the ailment that was afflicting my brother. When he was done, Dad settled up with "Doc Jim", paying with whatever cash he had at the time. No paperwork or complexity, just a simple interaction between two people.

Fast forward to today. Medical care takes place in malls and mega-stores; "house calls" happen about as much as someone using a dial telephone. Heaven help you if you don't have a medical card and some sort of identification. Plus, who carries enough cash these days to pay for the cost of a medical appointment?

Doctors are fast becoming employees of major medical conglomerates. Mergers between Provena/Renaissance, Ascension/Alexian, Advocate, Northwest, Sherman and others are making the concept of the local community hospital obsolete. There are those who feel that these mergers will not be enough; one prediction is that by 2020, there will only be a half dozen hospital systems east of the Mississippi.

I present this because the entire disability field is on the brink of a similar transformation. While your medical needs have probably been under "Managed Care" for some time, long-term services and supports for individuals with disabilities in Illinois are just beginning to experience what life could be like under a managed care scenario.

In 2011, Medicaid recipients in the collar counties of suburban Chicago, began to obtain health care through one of two designated insurance companies. In 2012, persons eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid and also those receiving long-term services other than intellectual/developmental disability support, began to enroll in managed care.

By 2014, Avenues and other providers of long-term support services for persons with I/DD are scheduled to be integrated into the Illinois managed care system. No longer would Avenues receive funding

directly from the State of Illinois; under managed care, we would become a subcontractor to one of the approved Managed Care Organizations (MCOs).

Workcenter, group home, job placement and other state funded services would all be obtained through the MCO. Rates paid for these services would also be set by the MCO.

Just as with hospitals, Illinois disability agencies will consider merger arrangements to create entities with sufficient economic size to negotiate with the insurance companies and MCOs. In states with managed long-term disability systems, the number of service providers has been substantially reduced. And,

### Services for persons with disabilities are not based upon a medical, but on a social model of support.

oh-by-the-way, rates paid for disability support services in those states have been cut by the MCOs upwards of 50%.

Funding was high enough in those other states to create managed care savings and still leave a profit for the insurance company MCOs. One of the goals of managed care is to bring down reimbursement rates; with rates already so low in Illinois, there is no room left for the state to cut costs while giving the MCO any profit margin.

Illinois thinks it can save money under managed care. When you consider eliminating unneeded use of emergency rooms, preventative care and other discrete medical services, this is definitely possible.

However, MCO's are experienced in the delivery of medical services. Services for persons with disabilities are not based upon a medical, but on a social model of support. There is no known cure for intellectual and developmental disabilities; much of what we do at Avenues is to provide daily, life-long support that enables an individual to live as independently as possible.

Illinois cannot save money by forcing people with autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and other intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities into a funding scheme that is woefully equipped

to meet their needs. Illinois should be addressing its pension and other spending problems to get its fiscal house in order.

Contact the Governor, your state senator and representative; let them know that Avenues is not a provider of medical services. Daily living support of people with disabilities does not belong under medical managed care.

We need to get away from all of this talk about mergers and economies of scale and get back to the real concern of providing good quality services. The people supported by Avenues do not care about insurance companies and MCOs. They just want someone who cares about them to be there when needed.

Managed care or not, Avenues will continue to be there for those people who look to us every day for support. Since 1953, we have existed as a local charitable organization, helping to support the needs of individuals with disabilities every day.

Just like Doctor Jim, nothing complex, just a simple interaction between someone in need and someone in a position to help out.

## Foundations Support our Programs

Avenues is thankful for the generous grants received since the Fall 2012 edition of *Avenews*.

### For the Job Placement Program:

- Butler Family Foundation
- Donald P. and Byrd M. Kelly Foundation
- Edmond and Alice Opler Foundation
- Daniel F. and Ada L. Rice Foundation

### For nursing support:

- Fred Brunner Foundation

### For Recycling Avenue support:

- Walter and Caroline Sueske Charitable Foundation

### For an accessible restroom at the work center:

- George M. Eisenberg Foundation for Charities

### For general support:

- The Louis and Harold Price Foundation

## Diamond Jubilee Love Affair Dazzles!

The celebration of Avenues' 60 Anniversary was launched in grand style at the Diamond Jubilee Love Affair on February 16. With an elegance befitting Hollywood galas, or "the WOW factor," as Love Affair Chair Patricia Maroney called it, the Donald E. Stephens ballroom was a stunning display of crystal chandeliers, cascading draperies, intricate ice sculptures, towering centerpieces, and even jeweled napkin rings.

Welcomed with a champagne cocktail and serenaded with melodies from a baby grand piano, nearly 350 guests joined in the evening's festivities. They sampled hors d'oeuvres, specialty martinis and cocktails, bid on a wide range of silent auction items, and enjoyed a four course dinner featuring filet mignon and lobster tail.

### Overwhelming Generosity Raises Record Earnings

Proceeds from the silent auction, raffle tickets, sponsorships, and the live auction, provided Avenues with a unprecedented \$135,000 – more than any previous Love Affair. The monies raised from the live auction will be used to pay off the mortgage on our new residence in Des Plaines. (see cover story)

We are also extremely grateful to Clarence Herbst, the Love Affair's major benefactor for many years, and the evening's recipient of the Jane and Albert Wohlers Visionary Award recipient. (Please see adjacent page)

Special thanks to Chair Patricia Maroney and the largest Love Affair committee in our history – 19 enthusiastic members – who made the evening a stunning success! In 2014, join Chair Kathy Korsch and her committee as they present another wonderful Love Affair on Saturday, February 15.

To view more photos from the Love Affair, please visit the Media Gallery at [avenuestoIndependence.org](http://avenuestoIndependence.org)

- a. Ann Maroney poses by Avenues' ice sculpture, and says her two daughters are "ice chips" off the Avenues block - Love Affair Chair Patricia Maroney, and Vice-President of Development Ann Marie Ehrlich.
- b. Chris Rolfes Wilson (right) winner of the grand raffle, receives her prize from Love Affair Chair Patricia Maroney. Thanks to Oscar Serna (Oscar's Watch and Jewelry) for donating the diamond necklace and bracelet set valued at nearly \$2500.
- c. Love Affair major benefactor Clarence "Joe" Herbst is joined (from left) by his daughter Cathy, niece Anne Caddell, and wife, Linda Vitti Herbst.
- d. Board Member Al Bartel and his wife Lorie dance to the music of the Gold Coast Orchestra
- e. Nancy and Jim Malik (right) pictured with Executive Director Robert Okazaki, celebrate the presentation of the Wohlers Visionary Award. Nancy is the daughter of Jane and Albert Wohlers.
- f. Board Member Jerry Feldman and wife Sue (seated, second and third from left) celebrate with their guests.
- g. Special thanks to David Fasano (left) our Master of Ceremonies, and Mike Bruni, who inspired nearly 100 guests to raise their paddles during the live auction.



## Clarence “Joe” Herbst recipient of the Jane and Albert Wohlers Visionary Award



*Natalie Malik, Director of the Wohlers Family Foundation, presents the Visionary Award to Clarence Herbst.*

It was dubbed an “Oscar worthy presentation” by Executive Director Robert Okazaki, but there were no nominees for this award – just one very worthy recipient – Clarence Herbst,

affectionately known as “Joe.”

The Visionary award was inaugurated in 2012 in honor of Jane and Albert Wohlers, who strongly believed that when we all put aside old ideas about what is possible, the people of Avenues thrive in the

community, and make our community a better place as well.

Presented annually to an individual, family, business or organization that embraces those beliefs, Natalie Malik, Executive Director of the Wohlers Family Foundation, and granddaughter of Jane and Albert Wohlers, proudly presented the award to Clarence. “Like my grandparents, Clarence Herbst is a generous philanthropist, and embodies the spirit of the Jane and Albert Wohlers Visionary Award.”

Like the Wohlers, Clarence has supported the mission of Avenues to Independence for more than three decades. Robert Okazaki recalled that when he was working as a trainer in the work center years ago, “Joe, Howard Ebner, and their company Resinoid Engineering, brought in one of the first big jobs the work center had. Bob added that, “Joe also made the first grant so we could purchase a brand new

van in 1985, and it was very exciting for us because we were operating on a shoestring budget.”

Michele Shoolin, Vice-President of Development, talked about her first meeting with Joe at the open house of Avenues’ new apartment home for 21 residents in 1995. “Ultimately the apartment house he visited all those years ago was named Herbst Family House, and today Avenues is a much stronger organization because of Joe’s vision. He has become a friend and mentor.”

Upon receiving the award, Joe humbly gave credit to his business compatriots, parents, teachers and citizens of Park Ridge that served as his role model over the years. “One man does not change the world, and therefore I have to personally thank the people that have inspired me and contributed to my life.”

## Trio Tops Twenty Years of Employment

Congratulations to workers Nadine Henich, Cindy Wroblewski, and Bill Rogers on their outstanding achievement! Each has recently celebrated 20 years of employment at their respective employers –Nadine at the Glenview Dominicks, Cindy at the Park Ridge Dominicks, and Bill at the Park Ridge Jewel.

Twenty years working for the same employer is a remarkable milestone, especially in these volatile economic times, and even more so for adults with developmental disabilities. But Avenues’ workers have proven themselves to be loyal, long-term employees. From the beginning, we learned that work is extremely important to our folks, and we have always put a high priority on obtaining

community employment.

### Jobs Wanted!

However, for every success story like Nadine, Cindy and Bill, there are several qualified workers that currently need jobs. If you have a business, or know an employer that needs loyal part-time workers to do light office, maintenance or retail work, please contact Randall Smith, Job Placement Manager at 847-292-0870 X 127, or email [rsmith@avenuesonline.org](mailto:rsmith@avenuesonline.org).

a. Nadine Henich shows off the poster she was given at her anniversary celebration at Dominicks. Nadine enjoys the bigger paycheck she now earns after 20 years.

b. Cindy Wroblewski says working at Dominicks “makes me feel important,” and wants to work there until she retires!

c. When Bill Rogers was recognized at Jewel for his 20 years of service, he was told by the manager that “they’d be lost without him.”



### Bestow a Memorial or Honorarium with a Gift to Avenues

Honorariums and memorials are wonderful tributes, and go a long way to help the many individuals at Avenues who depend upon us every day for support.

If you would like to make a donation in honor of, or in memory of someone, you can donate online at [avenuestoindependence.org](http://avenuestoindependence.org), or you may call our office at 847-292-0870.

## Irish Fest Celebrates Avenues 60th Anniversary with a Celtic Flare

For 16 years, Irish Fest has been a very popular event eagerly anticipated by Avenues participants, family members, and friends alike. This year was no exception. On March 10, nearly 300 celebrants, including more than 60 program participants, enjoyed an afternoon filled with Irish music, singing, dancing and food at the Cotillion Banquets in Palatine.

Avenues certainly had the luck o' the Irish as more than \$30,000 was raised to support

Avenues' programs, including more than \$4,000 to help fund a new accessible restroom at Avenues work center.

### Go raibh maith agaibh! (Many Many Thanks!)

Much of the success of Irish Fest is due to the tireless efforts of the committee members - Bob Healy and Peg O'Herron, Mike and Mary Prindiville, Peter and Jeanne Doheny, and Pat Grimes. Since Bob and Peg initiated Irish Fest 16 years ago, more than

\$250,000 has been raised to support Avenues.

Special thanks to Frank Calabrese, who has been Irish Fest's major benefactor for many years; the guest entertainers including the Irish Music School of Chicago, the Irish Heritage Singers, the Weber Dance Company of Chicago, and Marysue Redmann; and all the volunteers, sponsors and donors who continually make Irish eyes smile on Avenues!



**a.** Lucky William Powell proudly escorts his two dates – daughters Janet Griesenauer, and Mary Grace Powell.

**b.** Demonstrating their quick steps are members of the Weber Dance Company of Chicago.

**c.** Everyone's Irish at Irish Fest! Sporting their green derbys are participants David Goldblatt and Larry Kujack.

**d.** John Kolassa (right) and his son Jim eagerly await their Irish supper.

**e.** Meet our Irish Fest Clan: e1) Irish Fest founders Bob Healy and Peg O'Herron; e2) Co-chairs Mary and Mike Prindiville (pictured right) celebrate with two of their children, Patrick and Nora; e3) Co-chairs Peter and Jeanne Doheny are pictured with their daughter, Kelly; e4) and Co-chair Pat Grimes (2nd from right) enjoy the fest with friends (from left) Marge Wanat, Cathy Taylor, Maria Savino, and Lisa Pozzi.

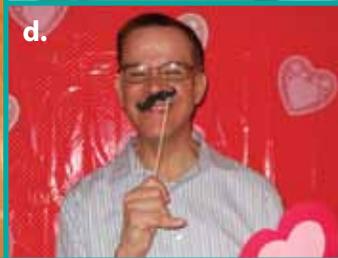
## Avenues/Gorman Classic prepares for its 25th tee-off



Please join Avenues at the 25th Avenues/Gorman Classic on Monday, July 22 at the Park Ridge Country Club. Enjoy 18 holes of golf, a game of tennis, or just relax with cocktails and dinner and bid on our silent auction items. Watch for your invitation in the mail or the on-line registration at [www.avenuestoindependence.org](http://www.avenuestoindependence.org) later this spring.

*Classic Chair Steve Wilson (2nd from left) takes a break from last year's game to pose with Mike Roberts (left), Rene Collins, and Steve Trapp*

# Great Things Happen at Avenues!



- a.** Congratulations to the victorious Wildcats! Beaming with pride for finishing the season in first place are residents (from left, front row) Denise Hacke, Jim Kearns, Cindy Wroblewski, Brian Ray (behind Denise) and Jim McClory (behind Cindy). They are pictured with their other NSSRA teammates.
- b.** A real trooper, Anne Marie Riscossa clears the snow from the front walk of her Niles townhome.
- c.** Greg Campone presents Eagle Scout Jeff Dietsch with a Recycling Avenue framed picture in appreciation of the huge recycling drive Jeff hosted with his Boy Scout Troop.
- d.** Rick Kryder was among the 30 residents that enjoyed the Valentine's Day party sponsored by the case managers' PET (Participants Event Team).
- e.** Avenues Celebrity Chefs! Cheryl Grafman (left), and Connie Koshaba are proud of their culinary skills.



## Kevin Healy – Creative Communicator

Ordering food at restaurants, preparing scrapbooks of mementos, writing notes and letters daily, making phone calls, and even posting pictures on his Facebook page; these are just a few of many ways Kevin Healy expresses himself. Kevin also loves to dance and participate in sports - bowling is his favorite- and is so proud of the medals he wins at various activities through M-NASR (Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation) that he wears them for weeks afterwards. And if you want to know where a particular movie is playing, or the latest local happenings, just ask Kevin. He stays on top of all current events. What makes all these accomplishments so remarkable is the fact that Kevin is deaf.

Part of the Avenues' family for more than 15 years, Kevin

shares a Niles townhome with three other deaf residents, and comes to the work center in Wheeling every day. Despite being close with his large family (including seven siblings), Kevin enjoys a special friendship with Kay, his best buddy and one of Avenues' weekend staff members.

Kevin wants to be as independent as possible, and is currently busy planning an upcoming visit to family members in New Jersey later this year. He is researching where they will eat, stay, and even the directions they will take while traveling.

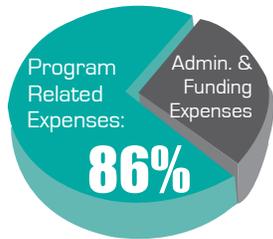
Kevin's twin sister Eileen sums up his personality best. "Being deaf does not interfere with the hearing world getting to know Kevin Healy." We couldn't agree more.



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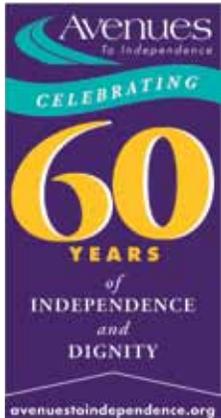
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We are proud that more than 86% of all donations directly fund our vital programs.

# Community Support Makes Avenues' 60th a Banner Year!



## City of Park Ridge Celebrates with Avenues

At the Park Ridge City Council Meeting on February 4, Mayor David F. Schmidt presented to Executive Director Robert Okazaki the proclamation "in recognition of the 60th anniversary of Avenues to Independence." The proclamation, read by the mayor, honors Avenues for "providing work and living opportunities to those individuals with disabilities for the last 60 years and helping these individuals become independent and an integral part of our community."

Additionally, as we go to press, the city is hanging banners throughout downtown Park Ridge (shown left) celebrating our 60 years of service. Throughout the month of April, the Park Ridge Library will also be showcasing photographs and other information about Avenues.

### Calendar of Events

- 4/14 Annual Family Meeting
- 5/22 Sasser Society Dinner & Reception
- 6/21 Annual Awards Dinner & Dance
- 7/22 Avenues/Gorman Classic

### AveNews Spring 2013

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

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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 CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities).



Visit Avenues blog *The Lives We Choose*  
<http://avenuestoindependence.blogspot.com/>



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