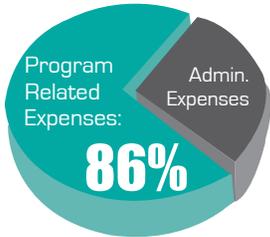




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We are proud that more than 86% of all donations directly fund our vital programs.



Rick Kryder – Man in Motion!

Rick's independent life with Avenues started when his parents first learned about Avenues through the school Rick attended - the Institute of Logopedics (now Heartspring), a leader in the treatment of speech and hearing disorders in Wichita, Kansas. When Rick, who is hearing impaired, left the school, he moved into an Avenues townhome in 1991 (then known as Builders of Skills) and has become good friends with his roommates – Kevin Healy, David Roma, and Scott Kurschner. Since 1996, Rick has also enjoyed working at the McDonalds in Rolling Meadows, and depending on his schedule, often takes two or three buses from his Niles home to get to work.

While one job is enough for most people, that's not the case for Rick. When he isn't working at McDonalds, Rick comes to the Work Center, and according to his supervisor Crissi Houselog, is extremely conscientious and has made a lot of friends. Rick, who takes care of his

own banking, also spends a lot of his free time in the community – he loves to shop and people watch at Golf Mill Shopping Center, take walks to Walgreens, and sometimes treats himself to dinner at Bakers Square.

Whenever Rick has the opportunity, he enjoys working with his brother's carpentry business in Rockford, and has even done a few projects of his own. For the last 10 years, Rick has been building a model cruise ship out of popsicle sticks, and hundreds of popsicle sticks later, it is still a work in progress – just like Rick, a man in motion!

AveNews Fall 2014

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

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Gregory Metzler
John Sasser

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).

Special thanks to Joe Ropski of Palwaukee Printing for providing color printing of Avenues.



Avenues' Volunteers - Enriching Lives | Creating Friendships



*Andrew Tawse with Rebuilding Together
Executive Director Wanda Ramirez
Read full story on page 2.*

In this Edition

- *Getting "Happy" at the Annual Dinner & Dance*
- *Avenues/Gorman Golf & Tennis Classic*
- *Surfin' USA BBQ*
- *PepsiCo EnAble team sponsors picnic*
- *New Board of Directors members inducted*
- *Sasser Society members honored*

Avenues' Volunteers Change our World



a. Ron Reeves (left), Avenues Vocational Director, coordinated the project with Chad Ruckauf, Program Manager for Rebuilding Together, a community service organization that brings together 100,000 volunteers and completes about 10,000 projects each year. In the background American Airlines employees construct a paver block patio at the Work Center.

b. American Airlines employee Miriam Goyes applies some of the 25 gallons of paint that were used for the project, part of the \$7500 in supplies that was paid for by Rebuilding Together.

Avenues, and we thank Rebuilding Together and American Airlines for providing a much needed facelift and creating an attractive environment at the Work Center."

For many of the volunteers, the highlight of the day came when the work was finished, and more than 100 of Avenues' workers thanked them in the special way only they can do – from the heart.

DECADES OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Rebuilding Together project was just one example of the many exceptional volunteer efforts that benefit the people of Avenues, and we've been fortunate to build relationships with several volunteer groups and individuals that have lasted for decades. The Pioneers, originally a group of former employees from Teletype in Skokie, first came to Avenues in 1986, and they've been volunteering and making a difference ever since. Harry Webber and Carl Heldmaier hold the distinction of being two of the founding members, and along with Marv Anderson, John Kolassa, George Rancich, Mike Prindiville, Don Wisnoski, and Gus Zahareas, come to the Work Center or Avenues' residences every Thursday morning. They help maintain the facilities, and build work tables or other fixtures for the various contract job requirements. According to Carl, "We enjoy being able to help out and do things; it gives us a sense of accomplishment."

Joining the Pioneers in longevity are two popular groups that provide a variety of social and leisure activities for our residents.

It started with an inquiring phone call from Chad Ruckauf, Program Manager for Rebuilding Together Metro Chicago. Chad was looking for a facility where their team, along with 50 volunteers from American Airlines could volunteer as part of American's "Give Back Day." Not only would they donate their time to do maintenance or renovation work Chad explained, but also pay for any paint, materials, meals and other supplies the project would require. Within three weeks, Executive Director Bob Okazaki and the staff of Rebuilding Together designed a project to enhance the Work Center in Wheeling.

AMERICAN AIRLINES LANDS AT WORK CENTER

Fast forward to the morning of July 2, when 50 American Airlines employees – representing all departments from pilots to ramp workers, flight attendants and maintenance crews – gave up one of their personal days to "Give Back" to Avenues. The team constructed a new outdoor patio, cleaned, and painted walls throughout the 48,000 square foot Work Center.

Despite a few hours of rain, the efficient volunteers finished all the work in one day. "Rebuilding Together was extremely easy to work with," according to Bob. "It's difficult to coordinate work for 50 people at a time, but they made the whole project run seamlessly from start to finish. It was a really nice day for



a. Participant Mary Grace Powell poses with Kim Galvin from the American Airlines Employee Resource Group. According to Kim, "It's terrific to be here, and I am so impressed with Avenues and the great job they do."

b. Worker Lance Cobb thanks American Airlines employee Margie Dzielski as fellow volunteer Krys Phillips looks on.

For nearly 30 years, volunteers Judy Halteman and Davvy Netchin have facilitated the Monday Night Girls group. According to Judy, it is "more of a family group" and they really have enjoyed bonding with the "girls" and watching them grow through the years. Once a month on Tuesdays, Cathy Siewert and Lynne Hjelmberg host Tuesday Night Friends. Since they started 18 years ago, the group has formed many great friendships among Avenues participants and community members.

VOLUNTEERS TACKLE SPRING CLEAN-UP

This past summer, a host of volunteers helped spruce up many of our residences, including over a half dozen employees from SS&G in Des Plaines. Led by volunteer Tracy Ahlbeck, the group, as part of their "Serve, Share, Give" program, traded in their accounting and business hats for the day and became gardeners. They helped to landscape and plant the Feldman Garden at Sasser Family House.

At our townhomes in Niles, Eagle Scout Daniel Schulz and several of his friends and fellow troop members removed fences and posts, and even donated the proceeds - \$42.00 - earned from the metal they recycled.

SINGULAR SENSATIONS

Avenues is very fortunate to have many volunteer groups, but we are equally grateful for the many individuals that donate their time and talents.

Deanna Wohlgemuth volunteers at the Thrift Shoppe *AveVentures* Employment Training Program once a week and works with Avenues' artists to create items to sell in the Thrift Shoppe's Client Boutique. Deanna is just one of the 15 volunteers who are making a difference at the Thrift Shoppe. Since it began in 1977, volunteers have always played a very important role at the Thrift Shoppe.

Suburban Partnership Board Member Lisa Dideriksen visits participant Bill Rogers twice a month at his Avenues home to help with his budgeting. While Lisa has certainly helped Bill balance his checkbook, Bill has enriched Lisa's life as well. "I am inspired to be a better person due to Bill's strength of character... Bill has added joy to my life."

A WORLD OF CHANGE

So much of what happens at Avenues is the result of the hard work of literally hundreds of volunteers who make life better for the people of Avenues. And in the words of Margaret Mead, thank you for changing our world!



a. Lynne Hjelmberg (left) and Cathy Siewert, hosts of the monthly Tuesday Night Friends group, are pictured with participant Fred Littell

b. From left, volunteers Don Wisnoski, Harry Webber, Carl Heldmaier, and John Kolassa install and build items at the Work Center to make the workers' jobs easier.



Volunteer Deanna Wohlgemuth helps Thrift Shoppe participant Laura Kazmerick prepare handmade jewelry to sell in the shop's Client Boutique.

"Never doubt that a thoughtful, committed citizen can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has".

-Margaret Mead

61st Annual Dinner and Dance – A Happy Celebration!

It was a very “Happy” time for the more than 375 participants, friends, family and staff members who gathered at the Westin Hotel in Itasca on June 20.

“This is a very fun event - a social event- where we celebrate the success of all of our people and the success of the organization. That’s what makes the annual dinner the best event we have during the year,” stated Executive Director Bob Okazaki. “Our annual meetings are not like other annual meetings; we don’t have boring speeches – well, maybe just one, but I’ll be done in a minute,” Bob quipped.

Chair of the Board Peg O’Herron added her “Happy” thoughts, expressing to the participants, “How happy you make the rest of us as we see you living full lives and growing into your potential.”

Adding to the very “Happy” tone for the evening was Emcee Ron Reeves, Avenues Vocational Director.

Ron, in true flash mob style, got everyone off their feet to dance along with the popular “Happy” song by Pharrell Williams. Additionally, a “Happy” music video was presented that featured over a hundred of our participants, staff members, volunteers and board members that showed how “Happy” they were at our Work Center, at their homes, at the Thrift Shoppe and throughout the community.

(to view the video and see more photographs from the event, please go to avenuestoindependence.org)

Spirit of Avenues Award Announced

Jerry Feldman, Vice-President of the Governing Board, announced the first annual *Spirit of Avenues Award*, to be given annually to an individual or group who best exemplifies what Avenues is all about.

“The first ever recipient is every member of the Avenues’ staff - the heart and soul of Avenues, and a truly amazing group of people,” Jerry explained. “In honor of the incredible work the staff delivers every day, a tree has been planted in Hodges Park in Park Ridge. The tree will grow strong and flourish just as Avenues has done.”



a. From left, Roberta Washlow, participant Louis Kaufman, Gayle Kaufman Washlow, and Foundation Board Member Bob Washlow join Executive Director Robert Okazaki and VP Development Ann Marie Ehrlich

b. Residents George Minasian (left), John Davis (seated) and Bill Yacilla (third from left) join Avenues Community Care Specialist Gregory Mathis (top

left), Residential Manager Stephen Kray, and Residential Director Floyd Korten Hof (right).

c. Kelly Doheny (standing), is one of the 200 participants recognized at the dinner.

d. Vocational Director and Emcee Ron Reeves gets the crowd “Happy.”

Welcome New Governing Board Members!

Avenues welcomes Andrea Goodkin, Jill Liska, Jolene Wise Silverman, and Jim Meyer to serve a three year term on our Board of Directors effective July 1, 2014. Chair of the Board Peg O'Herron says, "We are so fortunate to have four new Governing Board members who will complement the skills and interests of the existing Board members."



Andrea Goodkin, a partner at Laurus Strategies, is "passionate about Avenues' mission and the services the agency provides." Andrea served on the Chicago Partnership Board and is committed to support Avenues. She would like to "give back" professionally and help Avenues thrive and grow by sharing the specific skills and

experience she has gained as a human resources professional. Andrea and her husband live in Chicago.



Jim Meyer, an attorney at Lalongo & Meyer in Chicago, originally served on the Board of Directors more than 30 years ago. Jim is the brother of Tim Meyer, who before his passing, was a long time Avenues participant and one of the original residents of Sasser Family House. Jim is "glad to be back on the Board and is interested to see how we

can improve in the next 30 years." Jim and his wife Francine live in Gurnee, and have two children and three grandchildren.



Jill Liska, Vice-President and Director of Legal Services with Sargent & Lundy, LLC, started working with Avenues because she saw "a great opportunity and wanted to contribute to its great mission." Jill has been a member of the Chicago Partnership Board since its inception 11 years ago, and continues to work with Avenues "because of the

people – the clients, the employees, the volunteers; everyone is dedicated, excited, creative and earnest." Jill and her husband and two children reside in Chicago.



Jolene Wise Silverman, a Senior Staff Attorney for the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission, has been a member of the Chicago Partnership Board since 2007, and served as Chair for the past five years. Jolene "looks forward to working with the Governing Board, and is interested in exploring the development of a volunteer program

that expands the base of Avenues' supporters." Jolene says, "Sharing activities with the program participants is such a joy and always leaves me feeling inspired." Jolene and her husband Steve reside in Chicago's Streeterville neighborhood.

Board Member Al Bartel elected as President of the Park Ridge Rotary Club



Al Bartel (left) celebrates with Rotary officers Roger Crawford and John Alan Boryk. Several times a year the Rotary Club sponsors a Pizza and Bingo night for Avenues participants.

"100 Men Who Care 10% More" donates \$6800 to Computer Center Program



Michael Glickman (2nd from right) and Suburban Partnership Board member Marc Blumenthal present VP of Programs Cathy Kerr (left) and VP of Development Michele Shoolin with checks totaling \$6800 to benefit the Computer Center Program. The locally based group was inspired by the national organization, 100 Women Who Care.

Avenues/ Gorman Golf and Tennis Event – A Classic from Start to Finish



For the fourth consecutive year, we thank MB Financial bank for being our Eagle Level Corporate Sponsor. Posing before they tee off are (from left) Sean McGuire, Jerry Kallio, Rich Berthold, Chad Andrulonis, Corey Roberts, Nick Cox, Andy Bennett, Evelyn Berthold, Chris Habjan, and Jerry Feldman

Every year for more than a quarter century, the Avenues/Gorman Golf and Tennis Classic has brought together hundreds of Avenues supporters to the Park Ridge Country Club for a sporting day filled with fun and friendship. And in the

process, they have raised nearly \$2 million to benefit Avenues programs.

This year, the Classic was bittersweet. In the morning of July 22 - one day after the Classic – Avenues lost a great friend with the passing of Bill Gorman. It was in 1989

that Bill and his wife Vivien sponsored the first Avenues/Gorman Classic, and Bill will forever be associated with the event. (see inset)

In keeping with tradition, several of Bill’s family members did attend the event, and participant Brendan Foley, Bill’s cousin, was the guest speaker during dinner. To a crowd of 250, Brendan reprised his speech from the Sasser Society Dinner (see page 8) and entertained the guests with his stories about his life at Avenues.

Thirty thousand dollars was raised to purchase a wheelchair accessible van in a live auction. Vice-Chair of the Board Jerry Feldman expressed the crucial need for the van, “Avenues works with many people who have mobility issues, transporting them to work, to their homes and around town, but it’s even more of a challenge when it comes to transporting wheelchairs. Avenues does not have a wheelchair accessible van, and physically lifting our folks is not a dignified way to get around town.”

Once again Board of Directors member Steve Wilson chaired the event, and was supported by a committee over 30 strong. Bill would have been proud to know that this year’s Classic raised more than \$60,000, thanks to the generous support of our sponsors and everyone who attended. ([View more photos in the media gallery at *avenuestoindependence.org*](#))

Bill and Vivien Gorman and Avenues – An enduring friendship for 50 years

The Gorman’s relationship with Avenues began in the mid 1960’s, when Vivien became a volunteer and taught the children in our program about important daily living skills so they could become more independent.

Vivien eventually took time off to raise her own children, but many years later, Bill, remembering his wife’s earlier commitment to Avenues, became a founding member of Avenues’ Corporate Board. Bill ultimately served on our Board of Directors for more

than two decades, and in addition to sponsoring the first Avenues/Gorman Golf Classic in 1989, he and Vivien supported it every year since.

We are grateful that the generous philanthropy of Bill and Vivien Gorman to Avenues has made a significant difference in the lives of our participants.



We would like to thank our Classic Sponsors and Committee:

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Lisa Arger
Al Bartel
Lorie Bartel
Ed Berry
Linda Buggy
Jason Collins
Cindy Davenport
Craig Dow
Mary Dow
Mark Dow
Rachel Dow
Jerry Feldman

Sue Feldman
Alora Foley
Leo Foley
Kevin Goll
John Konopinski
Bob Mau
Cathy McCarthy
Brad Metzger
Jenny Perry
Tim Perry
Jim Stonebridge
Luther Thomas
John Twohy
Rich Vengazo
Chris Rolfes Wilson
Jamie Zimmermann

a. Taking a swing is Classic Committee member Bob Mau, one of the original tennis participants.



b. Congratulations to the lucky winners of the super raffle prizes! From left, Burton Nelson - the Dream Cruise Package; Mike Murphy - the Ski, Wine and Dine Package; and Linda Buggy - the Ultimate Sports Package.



c. From left, Paul Deasy, Brian Schultz, Jim Kennedy and Fred Sasser represent four of the 32 golfers that played from Sasser Family Holdings, Inc., - a team represented by Chicago Freight Car Leasing, CF Rail Services, and Union Leasing, Inc.



d. Dynamic Duo! Kudos to Classic Chair Steve Wilson (right) and Mark Dow for their efforts in putting together another great event!



e. (l to r) Becky Michalek, Margaret Tower, Becky Pontarelli, Amy Thalmann, Rosemary Hughes and MaryAnne Bobrinsky keep the Gorman tradition! Amy is the daughter of Bill and Vivien Gorman.



f. During the live auction conducted by Board of Directors Vice-Chair Jerry Feldman (left), and assisted by Steve Wilson, \$30,000 was raised to purchase a wheelchair accessible van.



The evening's hosts, Pam and Fred Sasser



Peg O'Herron presents Terri Kaisling with her Sasser Society certificate



New Sasser Society members Clark and Marianne Gapen



Guest speaker and resident Brendan Foley (center) with his parents, Leo and Alora Foley

Sasser Society Members Honored

Since its inception 14 years ago, Fred and Pam Sasser have annually hosted a dinner and reception to recognize the Sasser Society members, and this year was no exception. On May 28, members met at the Park Ridge Country Club. Michele Shoolin, Vice-President of Development, acknowledged the Sasser family's "decades of caring and concern for Avenues." Fred thanked everyone for their commitment to the people of Avenues, "It's really refreshing to see the group get larger – a group who sees the importance of long term support."

Additionally, Executive Director Bob Okazaki announced that the Sasser Society has raised \$1.5 million in legacy gifts, and that planning for the future is something all families should consider to ensure our services will continue to be there for all who need them. Bob paid tribute to three Sasser Society members who recently passed away. All had children in Avenues' programs – Doris Blachut, Richard Dohnke, and William Powell. The society also welcomed new members Clark and Marianne Gapen, Brenda and Jerry Grafman, Terri Kaisling, and Mary and Joe Kelly.

After dinner, resident Brendan Foley addressed the society members, and shared stories about his life at Avenues. Prior to joining Avenues, Brendan lived in Naperville with his parents, "but at Avenues the staff is real friendly and I have independence – I visit my parents and old friends and buy a 10 ride reduced fare Metra ticket, cause I earn my money and don't want to waste it!"

Investing in Avenues Future

The Sasser Society recognizes donors whose future gifts will secure continued opportunities for people with developmental disabilities who live and work in our community with Avenues' support. The Sasser Society includes families, donors, community members and staff members who have committed to Avenues' future with a provision in their estate plans. If you would like more information or wish to join the Sasser Society, please contact Michele Shoolin at 847-292-0870 X116 or email shoolin@avenuestoIndependence.org

Our apologies! We regret omitting the following donors in the 2014 Annual Report.

Campaign for Independence

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Joel and Lynn Altschul
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Fred Voelkner

Mary Zungrone

Donations between \$500 and \$999

John and Carol McKinnon

Donations between \$100 and \$499

Mark and Julie Lerman

Annual Report Corrections

- Peg O'Herron was omitted as a Foundation Board Member
- Donations between \$1,000 and \$4,999: Wintrust Financial was incorrectly listed as Wintrust Financial Park Ridge.

Surfin' USA BBQ Makes a Big Splash at the Work Center

The Big Kahunas, aka the Suburban Partnership Board, threw a Surfin' USA BBQ bash that caught the waves at the Work Center on Friday, August 15. Nearly 150 workers enjoyed the great sunny day and played a variety of games, received prizes, danced to Jan and Dean tunes, and lunched on grilled burgers and dogs! A highlight for many of the participants was getting their photo taken in a flashy red jeep decked out with real surf boards, thanks to Board Members Ed and Matt Coyne - Avenues' own Beach Boys!

Many thanks to the Suburban Partnership Board and the volunteers who provided (in California surfin' slang), an "off the richter" party and special thanks to Bob Schwartz of Vienna Beef for donating 300 hot dogs; Jared Skiba, owner of Allegro Music Center for donating the rockin' sound system; and to Bethel Community Church in Chicago for the use of their popcorn machine.

a. Partnership Board member Sue Feldman expresses her delight at Bijal Shah's ring toss as David Blachut looks on.

b. Stephanie Kegermann and David Goldblatt look like they're ready for a day at the beach.

c. Decked out in his favorite beach garb, Andy Arroyo welcomes everyone to the party.

d. Cassie Jenkins tries her luck at the bean bag toss as Suburban Partnership Board member Sara McKittrick and her daughter Claire cheer her on.

e. Craig Randall gives his lunch a thumbs up!

f. From left: Ed* and Karen Coyne, Cheryl Border,* Kathy Korsch,* Dirk Ahlbeck,* Teagan, Claire and Sara McKittrick,* Larry Borgman, Matt Coyne, Sue Feldman,* Richard Feldman, Bob Border*, John Sasser,* and Lorie Bartel. (*denotes Suburban Partnership Board Member)



Picnicking with the PepsiCo EnAble Team

For the seventh year, employees and family members of PepsiCo and of PepsiCo's EnAble Resource Group have been providing a fun-filled afternoon for our residents, and every year it gets bigger and better! Participants enjoyed lunch, games, and prizes on the lawn at Sasser Family House, and were entertained by several friendly therapy dogs. They also had fun putting on disguises and getting their picture taken in the outdoor photo booth. According to retired PepsiCo employee Karen Clarke, "The employees look forward to the event every year as much as the clients do!" (to view more pictures, go to the media gallery at avenuestoindpendence.org)

a. Pictured are six of the 20 PepsiCo employees and family members who provided another wonderful picnic!



b. "Diva" Jennifer Ross poses for PepsiCo photographer Gregory Metzler.



c. Jeffrey Jones wins a game of Bingo



d. Cindy Wroblewski enjoys petting "What's Up," a therapy Newfoundland brought by Cheri Nicholas



e. PepsiCo Chef Matt Czech cooks hot dogs on the new grill donated by Home Depot in Darien.



f. Bill Rogers, sporting a Gatorade drink, salutes the PepsiCo EnAble Team.

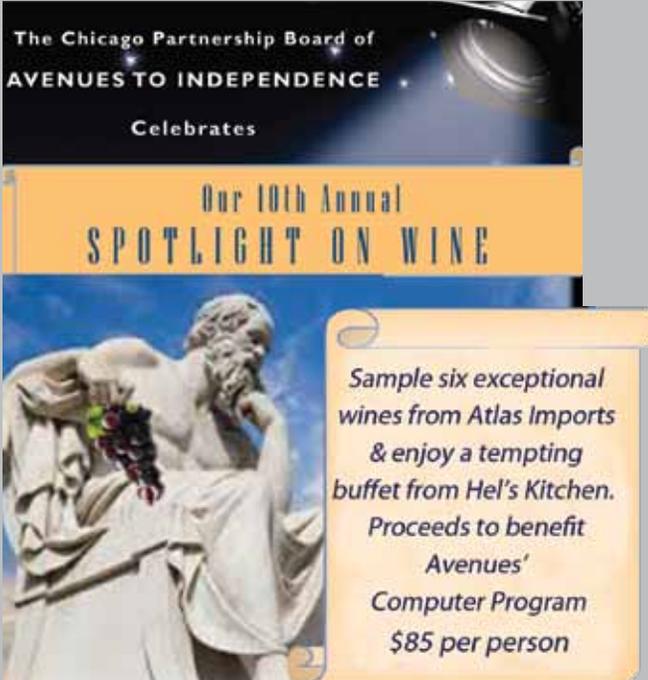
Thrift Shoppe Celebrates Grand Re-Opening

On Saturday June 7 friends of Avenues celebrated the grand re-opening of the newly expanded and remodeled Thrift Shoppe. Originally established in 1977 by a group of volunteers to provide funding for Avenues' programs, today the Thrift Shoppe is also home to an employment training program called AveVentures, which currently serves seven participants. The Thrift Shoppe was recently featured on the television program Chicago Tonight on channel 11 – WTTW. To view the segment, visit the media gallery at avenuestoindpendence.org, or go to the link below: <http://chicagotonight.wttw.com/2014/06/09/helping-adults-disabilities-achieve-independence>.



Avenues staff and Board members prepare for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Celebrate with Avenues at these Upcoming Events! Register at avenuestoindependence.org



The Chicago Partnership Board of
AVENUES TO INDEPENDENCE
Celebrates

Our 10th Annual
SPOTLIGHT ON WINE

Sample six exceptional
wines from Atlas Imports
& enjoy a tempting
buffet from Hel's Kitchen.
Proceeds to benefit
Avenues'
Computer Program
\$85 per person

National Hellenic Museum
333 South Halsted St. | Chicago
Thursday October 2, 2014 | 6-9 pm



**3rd Annual
Tea & Fashion Show**

Sunday October 26
2 - 5 pm

Cotillion Banquets
360 S. Creekside Dr
Palatine

Proceeds to benefit
Avenues' Thrift Shoppe
AveVentures Training
Program

\$35 per person

Generous Foundation and Corporate Support

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

- A Montgomery Ward Foundation** – for kitchen renovations at Herbst Family House
- Blue Cross Blue Shield IL Community Partners Grant** – for nursing services
- Jewel Osco Park Ridge** – Job Placement Program
- Pert Foundation** – for general operations
- Sasser Family Foundation** – for kitchen renovations at Herbst Family House
- Small Moves Foundation** – New Vulcan range at Sasser Family House
- Walter and Caroline Sueske Charitable Trust** – Recycling Avenue expansion
- Wohlers Family Foundation** – Work Center improvements

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