



COMMUNITY NEWS



WHAT'S NEW AROUND DSC...



Dear Friends,

As we welcome September and look ahead to fall, there is much to celebrate at DSC! The past few months have been filled with wonderful events, meaningful connections, and countless examples of the incredible community support that makes our work possible. As we move into a new season, we look forward to continuing that momentum and finding new ways to connect, celebrate, and make a difference together.

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Back to the Prairibean in August! With more than 700 attendees and beautiful weather, it was a wonderful evening of fun, community and support for DSC. We are especially grateful to the Eastern Illinois Parrot Head Club who hosts this event and generously chooses DSC as the beneficiary. Their continued partnership and commitment to 'Party with a Purpose' make a meaningful difference and help support the programs and services for the individuals and families we serve.

This September we look forward to recognizing some of the most important members of the DSC team, our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) during national DSP week. During this special week take a moment to pause, acknowledge, and honor our dedicated DSPs who provide compassion, encouragement, dedication, and truly make a difference every day. We are grateful for all they do and cannot thank them enough for their commitment to our mission.

And this fall we're excited to continue that spirit of community and celebration with the return of Oktoberfest! After a few years away, this much-loved DSC fundraiser is returning in a fun new location, inside the historic Orpheum Theatre in Champaign. We invite you to join us on Friday, October 23rd for an evening of live music, German food, local and authentic beer, and fun while raising a stein in support of DSC. More than just a great night out, Oktoberfest raises critical funds that support DSC's programs and services throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Danielle



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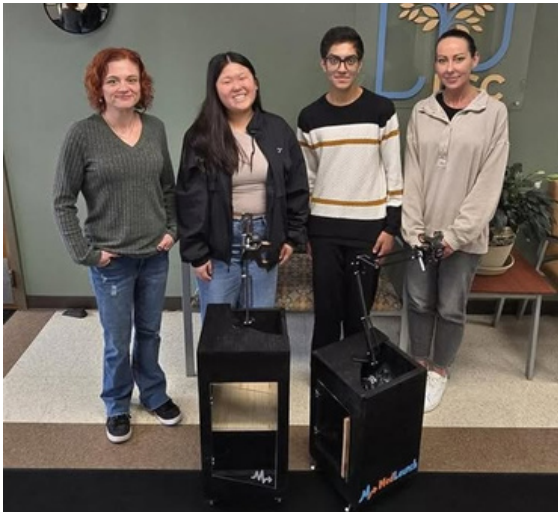
We invite you to join us for a fun night out while supporting the mission of DSC! Enjoy live music, delicious German-inspired food, local beer, and plenty of Oktoberfest spirit at the historic Orpheum in Champaign on Friday, October 23.

Gather your friends, raise a stein and celebrate with us! Your support helps DSC create opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to learn, grow, build confidence, and thrive in their community.

Individual tickets and reserved tables are on sale now and may be purchased online at www.cuoktoberfest.org.



Friday, October 23, 2026 5:00–10:00 p.m.
The Orpheum - 346 N Neil St, Champaign



MedLaunch UIUC Project-Nutristand

DSC was proud to partner with MedLaunch, a student-led University of Illinois organization that develops innovative, human-centered solutions for the disability community. Over the past year, a multidisciplinary team of students collaborated with DSC staff to create the Nutristand, a device designed to make G-tube feeding cleaner, easier, and more efficient for staff supporting individuals with digestive needs. We are grateful for the creativity, dedication, and hard work of the MedLaunch team and their contribution to enhancing the quality of care for the individuals we serve.



Thank You Orange Krush

Our Community First program received grant funding from the Orange Krush Foundation to purchase two Canon DSLR cameras for our Photography Club.

These cameras will help participants capture meaningful moments and tell their own stories through the lens of creativity. Thank you, Orange Krush Foundation, for your continued support!



Serra Champaign Shares the Love

We are very grateful to Serra Subaru Champaign and our community for supporting our mission through the 2025 Subaru Share the Love® Event. We recently received a generous donation from Serra of \$9,500 to help us continue providing vital services, programs, and opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities in our community.

Thank you to Serra Subaru Champaign for selecting DSC as a local charity partner, and to every customer who helped make this gift possible! Your support is making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.



A Fun Evening Downtown!

Members of Employment Plus enjoyed a fun-filled evening at Champaign's Friday Night Live event. They spent the night exploring the various music stages, taking in the lively atmosphere, and even showing off some dance moves along the way!

After enjoying the entertainment, the group headed to Smith Burger for a delicious bite to eat. The beautiful weather made it the perfect evening for walking outdoors, connecting with friends, and enjoying the vibrant community event.



Community Discussion Focuses on Accessibility

We participated in the Tolono Public Library District's recent Community Discussion on Accessibility. The event brought together community members and organizations to share ideas, perspectives, and experiences related to creating more accessible and inclusive spaces for everyone.

We appreciated the opportunity to listen, learn, and contribute to a meaningful dialogue about reducing barriers and promoting inclusion.



Happy Retirement

Congratulations to Brad Parks on his recent retirement after 27 years of dedicated service to DSC. As Director of Business Operations, Brad oversaw production and transportation and played an instrumental role in planning the DSC Golf Classic in the 1990s and 2000s, as well as C-U Oktoberfest.

Thank you, Brad, for your years of leadership and commitment. Best wishes as you begin this next chapter!



ECL Graduate

Congratulations to Elle Frazier (pictured middle) who recently graduated from the Emerging Community Leaders (ECL)! ECL is a leadership development program through United Way that empowers young professionals to grow as leaders while strengthening our community through nonprofit service and volunteerism.

Elle coordinates DSC's Parent Wonders program, which provides support to families with children from prenatal to three, fostering connection and relationship building through parent-child interaction.



Engaging Experiences Thanks to Grant

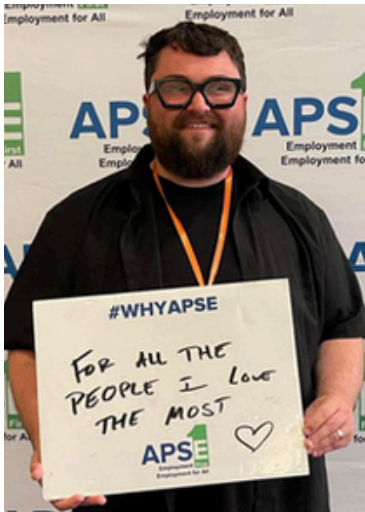
Thanks to support from the Community Assistance Fund grant from the Junior League of Champaign-Urbana, we were able to purchase a variety of new activities and enrichment materials for our Community Day Services program. The grant funded puzzles, bingo sets, sensory tools, conversation games, and motor skill activities.

We are grateful to the Junior League of Champaign-Urbana for its longstanding commitment to our mission and to individuals with developmental disabilities in our community. Your support is helping create a more engaging, inclusive, and enriching environment.



LEAP is growing, and we're thrilled to be reaching more businesses than ever! More locations have discovered the benefits of hiring talented candidates with disabilities. A heartfelt **thank you** to the businesses below for their dedication to creating inclusive workplaces and for joining us at a recent LEAP training. Your commitment to accessibility and opportunity makes a real difference!

Urbana Park District Aquatics Staff and Summer Camp Supervisors - Surface 51
Kyle's Corner Restaurant - Parkland College



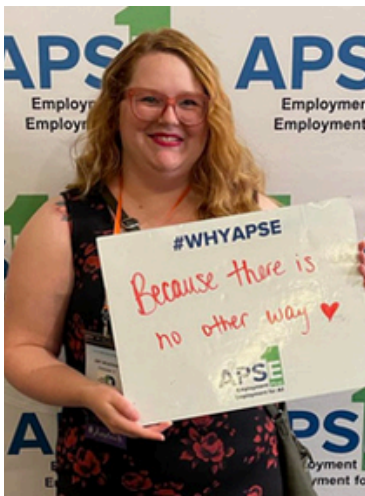
Professional Development Brings New Ideas!

DSC Employment Services Director AJ Zwettler and Employment Specialist Amy McGowan attended the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) National Conference in Dallas, where they joined disability service professionals, self-advocates, and industry leaders from across the country to explore innovative approaches to community employment and inclusion.

The conference provided valuable opportunities to learn new strategies and connections with organizations across the country. Highlights included sessions on entrepreneurship for people with disabilities, successful employment pathways, effective advocacy, and person-centered service delivery.

AJ and Amy also gained insights from individuals with lived experience who shared personal perspectives on disability services and ways organizations can continue improving supports.

The experience provided fresh ideas and renewed inspiration that AJ and Amy can bring back to DSC to help strengthen employment opportunities and support for the individuals and families we serve.



Infant and Toddler Fall Playgroups



Fall Playgroups are starting soon! Visit our website to learn about upcoming infant and toddler playgroups and parent support groups. Scan the QR code below to view offerings in our community.



Leave a Legacy with DSC Support the future. Empower lives.

Planned giving is a powerful way to ensure that DSC's mission continues for generations to come. By including DSC in your estate plans, you can create lasting impact for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Your legacy gift helps sustain essential programs that promote independence, inclusion, and opportunity—ensuring that individuals and families receive the support they need, now and for years to come. Whether through a bequest, trust, or other planned gift your generosity becomes a lasting investment in securing the future of DSC.

To learn more about how you can leave a legacy of hope and possibility, please contact Jodie Harmon, Vice President of Development & Communications, at jharmon@dsc-illinois.org or 217-398-7110.



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Let's stay connected!



Mission: DSC supports people in living a rich and meaningful life.

Vision: Striving to assure that every person lives a full life in the community.