

Choices & Opportunities



FALL 2011

Our Individuals Wear Many "Hats"

Construction Advocates ■ Productive Citizens ■ Community Employees



From left to right: Board Members **Sylvia Davis**, **Tom Nicholas**, **Larry Hoesser**, **Glenn Bensen**, and **Pierre Zermatten**; Program Participant **Kristine H.**, Executive Director **Wayne Kulick**, On-site Director of Countryside Center **Kathy Deka**; Board President **Richard Martin**, and Board Member & Foundation Board President **Janet Johnson**

Construction Begins at Countryside Center

Making Room for an Additional 50 Participants

"When I think of Countryside Association I don't see *disabilities*. I see *possibilities*," said Board President **Richard Martin**. His comment was made at the groundbreaking ceremony hosted at its Palatine campus on August 26th. The event marked the start of a \$2.5 million, 9,000 sq. ft. expansion and renovation that, ultimately, will enable an additional 50 area residents with disabilities to take advantage of all that Countryside Association has to offer.

The building construction project, now well underway, is the first step in a four-phase master plan. Glenn Johnson Construction of Des Plaines will complete the expansion designs that were drawn up by Carlson Architecture, Ltd. (Palatine).

"With more than 20,000 children and adults with disabilities waiting for support services in Illinois, our efforts to expand paid work opportunities to those who want to work, learn, and socialize, are more timely than ever," says Executive Director **Wayne Kulick**. See weekly updates about this project on our website, www.countrysideassn.org. Click *About Us* then *Building Opportunities Construction Update*.



Countryside In Top 3% of Rehabilitation Providers

In August, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) announced that Countryside has been accredited for a period of three years for several of its programs. This makes the twelfth consecutive Three-Year Accreditation the agency has been awarded.

The report summary stated: "On balance, Countryside provides high quality services and is highly regarded by persons served, family members, and other stakeholders. The organization is under the direction of a well-organized administration and board of directors. Through good hiring practices and ongoing training, the organization is able to ensure that personnel providing direct services are the best available. Through the very capable leadership of the organization, Countryside has been able to meet the challenges it faces while exploring expansion opportunities and securing its position in the community."

Executive Director **Wayne Kulick** is thrilled about the results: "While working in a state that seems to measure quality based on catching providers doing something wrong, it's refreshing and uplifting for our dedicated employees to hear all the things they do so well." In fact, the surveyors made no recommendations, which signifies they did not identify any areas of nonconformance to CARF standards. The award letter states that "this is an extraordinary accomplishment, as only 3 percent of CARF surveys result in no recommendations."

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...and more

Message from the Executive Director

Making Do With Less?

Just last month a local Illinois state legislator personally confided in me that, due to the state's economic condition, community agencies that support people with disabilities are just going to have to learn how to make do with less.

After reminding him that Illinois agencies like ours have been doing just that for many years, it became obvious to me that what has contributed to the longevity of our agency is the diversity and creativity offered by our employees, board, families and participants. Believe me, there is nothing like an economic slow-down to encourage the creativity in all of us!

In this newsletter issue you'll read about the many different interests of our individuals as well as the many new ways we continue to connect people with disabilities to their communities and their dreams in new and creative ways.

Making do with less? We always have. But doing less? Never.

Sincerely,



Wayne A. Kulick
Executive Director
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Like Our Services, Our Participants are Diverse

What is it about you that people define you by? Is it your gender? Your racial affiliation? Or maybe your religion? When you find yourself categorized and linked to a stereotype, how does it make you feel? People with disabilities are pigeon-holed by their limitations, grouped together and not viewed as the diverse population that they are. Across the many programs and service offerings at Countryside Association, the many different "hats" our individuals wear might surprise you! Rather than defining people by their disability, we strive to help our folks to realize the identity they want. From employees, commuters, and authors to advocates, volunteers, and award recipients, there are many distinct identities and talents at Countryside Association.

Variety in Employment

Every few months, it seems there's always news to share about new jobs on the work floor, and this is thanks to the excellent production rates of individuals at Countryside's Work and Training Centers, tremendous Quality Assurance procedures, and **Dory Cooper**, Senior Operations Manager. One of the new jobs is for **ITW Fastex** and it is different than the standard packaging and assembly work—it involves *sorting*. The job entails separating a fuel cap from a "runner," and the basic nature of the job has enabled roughly 50 people to try it, including individuals in the *New Horizons* program!

Those with a *Green Heart*

The summer newsletter gave an introduction to a new recycling committee at Countryside—started by individuals who want to work as a team to fight pollution. Through several *Electronics Recycling Drives* and ongoing aluminum collections, a grand total of \$765 has already been raised to support the agency. Committee participation is voluntary and members are passionate advocates for our planet! See **page 7** for information about recycling opportunities in 2012!



Time Well Spent

Hobbies and personal interests are some of the greatest blessings in life. And the ability to choose

how you spend your time is a luxury afforded to everyone who receives services from Countryside. **Johanna D.** (shown above), program participant since 2005, took advantage of an arts and crafts opportunity at Lakeside in September, and the ornaments she made will be sold at a craft fair this fall! Her Case Manager, **Greg Arty**, says that "she likes working on paid work in order to earn her own money." But aside from working on jobs for **USA BlueBook**, **Assembled Products**, and **Quill Corporation**, Johanna also likes her self-advocacy class, fitness class, and the many ways Lakeside helps connect her to the Waukegan community.

Contact Us!

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Wheeling H.S. Students Fight for Countryside's Cause

Thank you to Wheeling High School for recently hosting two *Contenders for Courage Fight Night* events on June 10 and October 29. WHS students were matched by weight, gender, and skill and engaged in three-round exhibition boxing-bouts. Proceeds benefitted the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Illinois and Countryside Association! The event seeks to link strong bodies—the "Contenders" in the ring—with strong wills—the "Courage" of those fighting life-threatening medical conditions and disabilities. In total, these events raised a little over \$2,000 in support of Countryside's services.

Jonathan S. of *Lakeside Center* is a *Commuter & Boyfriend*



Jonathan S. poses with his girlfriend **Sh'Vonne K.** before departing for the day from Lakeside Center.

Jonathan S. is a friendly, personable young man who began attending Lakeside Center in January of 2000. Initially, he worked on a variety of the contract jobs available to him at Lakeside but he ultimately transitioned to the enclave at **Cardinal Health** in McGaw Park.

Every weekday, Jonathan works on-site at Cardinal sorting medical supplies and loading and unloading trucks. And he enjoys this work. According to his Case Manager, **Larry Winn**, Jonathan is a “conscientious, dependable worker, who readily completes any task assigned to him by his Training Specialist.” Additionally, one of Jonathan’s goals is to ask to assist other workers once he has finished his assigned work. He is awesome at helping others!

Aside from being an employee at Cardinal, though, Jonathan is a commuter in Lake County because every morning he is picked up from his home in Zion by one of Lakeside Center’s lift-equipped busses. He spends the 30-minute ride chatting with his girlfriend of 3 years, **Sh’Vonne K.** and has said “he really appreciates having a reliable transportation system that gets him to work on time.” Jonathan also takes this system from Lakeside Center to his enclave at Cardinal Health.

In his free time, he says he enjoys bike riding and playing basketball. “It is a pleasure to work with Jonathan,” says Larry. “His upbeat attitude and sense of humor helps to create an enjoyable work atmosphere.”

From Goals to Accomplishments

All Direct Support Professionals (DSP) are essential at Countryside, yet Case Managers are the most visible face for most of the family members of program participants. In short, each Case Manager is responsible for the coordination and provision of service delivery to meet the needs of individuals with regard to their abilities and personal choices.

In their words...

What is your favorite thing about what you do?

“I love seeing the individuals when they are with their families. That is when I really see how special and important they are to others.”

— **Rebecca Mollett** (1 month at Lakeside Center)

“I laugh all the time! This job is fun and allows me to interact with people everyday!”

— **Shannon DuLaney** (4 years at Countryside Center)

What are your thoughts on the capacity of our individuals to “wear different hats?”

“As with all individuals, sometimes it just takes time to develop or recognize our own strengths and turn them into accomplishments.”

— **Karissa Jones** (1 year at Countryside Center)

What is your personal approach to helping someone understand and manage a new opportunity?

“Guidance and verbal prompting can help someone navigate a new role in their life. Giving advice from my own learning experience is a great tool as well.”

— **Greg Arty** (3 months at Lakeside Center)

What is an example of a time when you witnessed someone in a role other than “Countryside Client?”

“I have a client who expressed interest in volunteering more within his community. He has participated with the Lakeside Recycling Committee and looks forward to other opportunities!” — **Alejandra Chavez** (1 year at Lakeside Center)



Model ■ Award Recipient ■ Reporter & Author



Events Galore — From the Everyday to the *Special Days* *Linda K. is a Model*

Aside from the steady flow of the many different jobs at Countryside every day, there's always something new and exciting going on. Educational classes on a variety of topics as well as opportunities to connect with what is happening in the nearby communities are a valuable, but sometimes overlooked service. The *Golden Opportunities* program is a fabulous example of the creativity that Countryside puts into supporting adults with disabilities.

On September 23, **Michele Fuller**, Aging Specialist at Countryside Center organized a "Pretty Blouse Day" for the ladies who participate in her Women's Club. "I started the Women's Club to give seniors (particularly women) something that others in the community would do on a regular basis. We have done things like have a tea party or go on an outing to *Bath & Body Works*. I had 'Pretty Blouse Day' because I knew the women would feel good about themselves and feel special. It was great for everyone's self-esteem!" Linda K. (shown on left) is one of 10 women who participated in walking the "runway" to show off their special blouse or outfit.

One of the great things about Michele's approach to her program is the fact that it is voluntary. Linda was not one of the original participants in the Women's Club, but when she heard how much fun they were having she asked if she could join. "She is always faithful about coming," says Michele. "She says she likes what we talk about and Linda always has a lot to say about her family."

Mike G. is an Award Recipient for His Work

On September 9th, Lakeside hosted its 10th annual *Recognition Banquet* at the Greenbelt Cultural Center in North Chicago. This favorite event is a time to show appreciation for the outstanding achievements of program participants.

This year's event theme was *Fiesta Del Sol* and more than 136 individuals received a medal and certificate for their hard work during the last year. Recognition categories included *Productivity*, *Goal Achievements*, or *Perfect Attendance*. Many thanks to the wonderful members of *Helping Hands of Lakeside Center*, who sponsored the entire event and served a delicious meal.

Mike G., shown on right, "is a very conscientious, dependable worker," says his Case Manager **Larry Winn**. "He has made positive advances in achieving his objectives this past year." Since 2004, Mike has worked at **Cardinal Health** and enjoys the time he spends sorting and processing the company's excess inventory. His Training Specialist, **Amelia Neal**, says that he "displays much respect of others' personal belongings as well as their space while working. He maintains an excellent attendance record and has stated on several occasions that he wants to continue at Cardinal Health because he is very happy doing what he does." Congratulations to Mike and the 135 other individuals who received recognition for their efforts over the last year!



Giving May Reduce Stress

Did you know that your degree of happiness may be linked to your level of generosity? It was recently reported in a 2010 study for the University of British Columbia that students who made donations to other participants in a game had decreased levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

These results suggest that helping out a friend in need or donating to your favorite charity helps the recipient of the assistance as well as promotes the health of the donor. So if you want to reduce your levels of stress, consider helping others. Maybe at Countryside? We're just sayin'...

Kelly S. is a Reporter & Author

Kelly S., participant since 2004, has a passion for connecting with others and sharing what's going on. So it wasn't surprising when she said she wanted to interview her peers for an article about the renovation and expansion of Countryside Center. She started developing questions right away and what follows is the result of her investigative and journalistic talents!

How do you feel about more clients and staff coming to Countryside?

"We will need more qualified people to help and we need more clients." — **Andy S.**

What do you want to have outside at Countryside?

"We need a shelter and sidewalk around building. A hotdog stand and shopping around the corner—yoga and a massage class. Ice cream and chicken stand." — **Wendi G.**

What else do you want out of Countryside Association?

"We are looking for more recycling in the community. More table space in Area A and a bigger lunchroom. We need more clients and I want to see new people coming in. We need more big open space outside. We are looking for a water fountain outside." — **Lukasz D.**

How do you feel about Countryside Association getting bigger?

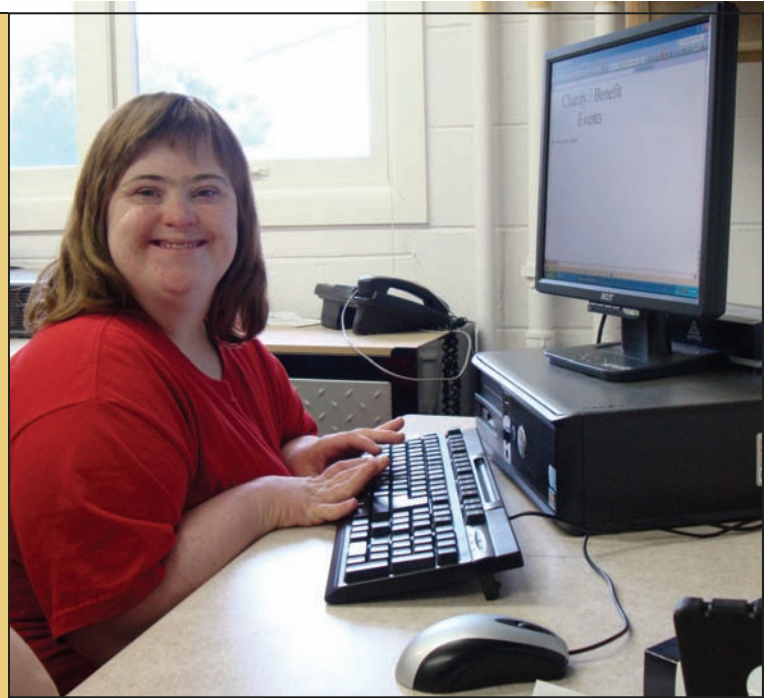
"We need more microwaves and bathrooms. Healthier drinks and vending machines. We should have an expanding walkway. One walkway for walkers and wheelchairs and for other people. Also, a bigger parking lot." — **Leah L.**

"We love to see new people and bigger lockers" — **David K.**

What are you hoping for the future of Countryside?

"Bigger bathrooms with extra stalls. We need Countryside running and working in the future. We want everybody to keep working here." — **Patricia M.**

About the Author: Kelly is a wonderfully multi-faceted person. She is a writer and a dedicated student in her *Current Events* class; she even brought in an article to share with her peers. Her typing skills have improved through weekly practice and Kelly has also been volunteering in the *New Horizons* program at Countryside on Fridays.



Board of Directors: New Members & Goodbye

Mike McArthur joined the Board of Directors over the summer after connecting with Community Employment Specialist **DJ Newport** through the Northwest Special Recreation Association (NWSRA). Mike started his career as an auditor with Arthur Anderson & Co. in 1988 and since then has held multiple CFO roles and achieved significant merger and acquisition experience. Mike lives in Buffalo Grove with his wife, Sandy, and their two children, Jake and Drew, and in his free time he coaches his son's basketball team and volunteers for NWSRA coaching basketball, track, and softball. Thus far, Mike has proved to be an excellent advocate, spending significant time in the business community networking and presenting the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Heather Ritter was voted onto the Board in October; she has worked for the Daily Herald Media Group for 17 years and currently serves as *Human Resources Manager*. She resides in Elk Grove Village with her husband, Mark, and their two children, Grace (9) and Sam (6). Heather took an interest in board membership knowing that her HR knowledge can enhance an organization, but helping this population is a personal passion because her son has developmental delays, ADHD, and a recently-diagnosed hearing impairment. She comments that she can relate to the beginning stages of the journey Countryside parents have been through. "I have felt at ease from the first time I walked through the doors [here]," says Heather. "The environment is welcoming, relaxed and caring...I'm looking forward to using my business acumen to further [your] cause while at the same time connecting with Countryside's clients and parents as much as I can."

Amy Luczkiw recently resigned from her position on the Board and will be missed because her varied experience provided an important perspective to Board deliberations. Amy introduced ideas that helped elevate fundraisers to a new level, serving as Chair of the 1999 *Odyssey Cruise* event. Undoubtedly, Amy's greatest contribution came in a critical period for Countryside during her tenure as Board President. She served on the search committee that helped replace the agency's original Executive Director, and she then guided this transition to new leadership—maintaining open communication with staff, families and other stakeholders. Amy balanced her Board work with her career as a Physical Therapist with *Advocate Home Health Services*. She and her husband Tony have been married for more than 30 years and they have three adult children. From the current Board of Directors: "We wish the best to Amy and Tony."

New On Staff

Countryside Center (CC)

Kamara Taylor, Training Specialist (Part-time)

Lakeside Center (LC)

Tim Christian, Training Specialist (Part-time)

Veronica Jerikova, Training Specialist

Rebecca Mollett, Case Manager

Mike Van Cleve, Training Specialist

Sarah Velasco, Training Specialist

Staff Development Day Awards

Derald Schultz Make a Difference Award

Susan Hall, LC Case Manager

Larissa Olson, Training & QA Coordinator

Dan Puetz, CC Van Driver

Countryside Association Star Award

Michele Fuller, CC Aging Specialist

Karissa Jones, CC Case Manager

Janet Medina, LC Training Specialist

Brandi Smith, LC Training Specialist

Years of Service Awards

15 Years

Mike Frierson, LC Training Specialist

Annette Thomas, LC Program Secretary

10 Years

Abel Cabrerros, LC Case Manager

Harminderpal Girn, CC Training Specialist

Florentin Parada, CC Maintenance

5 Years

Krystyna Bransford, CC Program Specialist

Pat Kowall, CC Training Specialist

Paul Krause, CC Van Driver

Lorenzo Mays, LC Van Driver

Nichole Visconti, CC Intake &

Programming Coordinator

Stephanie White, CC Employment Specialist

Estate Plans Ensure Continued Success

Steve P. has a Bright, Busy Future!

The Poyner Family has benefitted from Countryside's services for years and truly understand the agency's value in their lives. Their decision to include Countryside in their estate plans will ensure that Steve is able to receive services and continue working at Countryside for many years to come.

"We are very pleased to have Steve going to Countryside. He has progressed to become more independent and he enjoys attending. We want to thank Countryside for their dedicated staff because we feel Steve is very safe and happy there."

Your support of Countryside can take several approaches, including through your estate. Incorporating the agency into your plans will not only assist you in reaching and achieving your own philanthropic giving goals, but it will also allow Countryside to continue supporting people with disabilities in their efforts to live and work successfully in their community.

There are many planned giving options available to you. For example, you can make a planned gift to Countryside by naming it as a beneficiary of your last will and testament, life insurance policy or retirement plan. You can also name the agency as a beneficiary of a charitable trust. Your attorney or financial advisor can advise you of the various options and assist you in establishing one tailored to your personal needs. Some of these strategies may have a greater tax benefit to you than others, so please consult with your attorney or financial advisor on which strategy would work best for you.



"We are very excited and looking forward to the new addition for our children. Through donations and future estate planning, Countryside can continually provide services for people with special needs in the future."
— H.D. & Sarah Poyner, Parents of Steve (Participant since 2007)

Attention Retirees: Earn Income by Giving

Just about everyone could use some extra income these days and, with interest income from a certificate of deposit or money market fund offering so little, retirees are often looking for alternatives. One possible solution is donating the principal to Countryside Association in the form of a "charitable gift

annuity" in exchange for a lifetime of fixed annuity payments.

The rate of interest is determined by the donor's age. For instance, at this time for example a charitable-gift annuity set up by a 65-year-old couple would yield 4.7%. For a couple at 75 the rate rises to 5.7%. Are you a single donor? The rates are even better—5.3% at 65 or 6.5% at 75.

Countryside benefits because any remaining principle goes to the agency when the donor passes away—though it is possible to earn more on the annuity than the original principle. Donors who plan to leave some of the principle to any heirs could use a portion of their income from their new annuity payments to purchase life insurance that makes up the difference.

We encourage you to determine if this method of gifting is right for you. Circumstances vary from person to person as do rates and types of "gift annuity," so you should have a discussion with your financial planner about the various benefits of charitable-gift annuities.

Charitable gift annuities can be a good way to get an upfront tax deduction, so help Countryside continue its mission and receive a predictable stream of income for the rest of your life!

*Shown on left: **Nacho L.** works on his understanding of calendars and his personal schedule with Home-Based Support Case Manager **Abel Cabrerros.** As long as he is able to receive services from Lakeside Center, Nacho is sure to thrive.*



Community Employment Services from Preparation to Paycheck

Colonial Café: New Location & New Employee

Benjamin L. (age 21) is a graduate of Crystal Lake H.S. and part-time student at McHenry County College. He came to Countryside with the goal of finding a job in the areas of retail, food service, or general labor. He said his ideal employer was McDonald's—because he likes their fries—but he is also a regular customer of **Colonial Café** in Crystal Lake... Also, Ben's transportation options were limited so he was looking for a job that he could bike or walk to and the Colonial Café was perfect!

With the help of his Employment Specialist, **Robin Rhode**, Ben created a résumé, compiled a list of references, and practiced his interviewing skills. Robin connected with Colonial in March 2011 but, given an impending restaurant relocation, they wanted to wait until the new location opened before formally hiring Ben. He started his job as a *Dishwasher* on September 13 and for 6 hours per week he has many responsibilities:

- Unload dishes, pans, and utensils from automated washer
- Put away items in many locations throughout the restaurant
- Monitor items for cleanliness and rewash as needed
- Unload full bus carts from dining areas
- Sort silverware into containers for proper sanitation

Robin went through the job orientation with Ben and coached him during his first 4 weeks on the job. Initially, his supervisors were concerned that he may not be able to keep up with and handle the stress of the fast-pace of the job during busy



mealtime hours. However, his manager reports that Ben is doing a great job and they are very pleased with the support he provides during their "rush hours." Way to go, Ben!

If you know a business that would be interested in hiring a hard worker like **Ben**—or someone who is *seeking* employment—please refer them to Countryside by calling (847) 540-3741.

Clothes: Fridays in Jan.

Drop off slightly used clothes (name brands welcome) every Friday in January 2012 at Lakeside and Countryside Center.

Aluminum: Ongoing

Every can helps! Recycle your aluminum at our Centers and help our folks raise money. They have already collected \$265!

Upcoming Recycling Drives

Electronics: Jan. 6

TVs & Monitors accepted w/ \$10 donation—all other items free of charge. Pick-ups are possible for more than 8 items.

Tennis Shoes: March

Old and unwanted tennis shoes in any condition will be accepted in March (*date TBD*). We must collect 500 pounds to receive funds!

Recipe for Success Cooks Up a Fabulous Evening



On Monday, October 24, around 375 attendees gathered at The Meadows Club for the 7th annual *Recipe for Success* fundraiser. This year's event far surpassed 2010, yielding an additional 100 guests and a gross revenue of \$52,000 (an increase of 9%).

Twenty-seven restaurants, wonderful live and silent auction items, a wine raffle, and the music of the Bruce Blanck Quartet set the stage for a banner event. Lead sponsor **BMO Harris Bank** helped make it possible to hold this event and award two contractors with meaningful awards. **Assembled Products** was recognized for providing essential employment opportunities to Countryside individuals for the past 3 years and **Accu-Fab, Inc.** received an award thanking the company for its new work contracts with the Association during the last year.

Event Co-Chair and Foundation/Association Board Member **Rick Wrona** commented that "*Recipe for Success 2011* was an event that will be remembered for years to come! I would like to thank the 360 plus supporters of Countryside who attended *Recipe* as well as all those who made donations. Your loyal support definitely makes a difference in the lives of our clients at both our Palatine and Waukegan locations. Thank you and we hope to see you next year!"

On left: Executive Director Wayne Kulick presents an award to Pat Erickson of Accu-Fab, Inc. alongside Senior Operations Manager Dory Cooper.



Countryside Association

for people with disabilities

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Our Mission

To advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities and their families and to support them in their efforts to live and work successfully in their chosen community.



Electronics Recycling Drive: January 6

Questions? Contact Us at (847) 540-3741 or info@countrysideassn.org!

Small Checkout Donations Make *Big* Impact

Countryside Association received word in mid-September that they would receive **\$5,000** through the Dominick's *People with Disabilities Campaign* that took place this past April. Each year, this campaign supports *Easter Seals Illinois* and *Special Olympics of Illinois*, but Dominick's employees are also afforded the opportunity to choose 5 local community organizations "that show continued support of people with special needs through job training and placement programs," says **Janet Alikपाला**, Public Affairs Manager for Dominick's.

This gift, of course, is part of a much larger total collected simply by patrons opting to add a small donation amount to

their transaction total. But what does this \$5,000 mean for Countryside participants? Well, consider the following...

- \$25** — Provides 2 hours of support for an individual to learn the skills necessary to complete a new job or learn daily living skills.
- \$50** — Provides 4 hours of on-site job coaching with an individual to assist them in understanding and performing their job duties.

On hand to accept the check on September 23 were Executive Director **Wayne Kulick**, On-site Director of Countryside Center **Kathy Deka**, Community Employment Services Coordinator **DJ Newport**, and program participant and *advocate* **Brian H.** Brian had a blast parading the giant check around so that his peers could see the generosity of the Palatine community!



Mark Your Calendar to Attend or Volunteer

- December 9, 2011 — Friday**
Countryside Holiday Dance & Parent Potluck — 5:30-8:30 PM
- December 16, 2011 — Friday**
Lakeside Holiday Party — All day
- June 3, 2012 — Sunday**
Opportunity Walk
- June 11, 2012 — Monday**
Clipped Wings® Golf Outing

www.countrysideassn.org