

# LIFESTYLE

Your guide for living the good life

## PET OF THE WEEK

As the weather cools, cuddle up with Cabo, or any of the other cute cats and dogs available for adoption at Save-A-Pet.

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# Country living

## Facility offers job training and support for people with disabilities

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For adults with developmental disabilities, Countryside Association offers them a place to work, socialize and learn.

Eugene Raczkowski, 78, is one of about 150 adults at the organization's Lakeside Center in Waukegan. He is picked up at his assisted-living home in Winthrop Harbor, along with his wife Marylou, and spends the day at the Waukegan site working on writing his name, counting and communication skills with about seven other seniors.

"I meet lots of friends," Raczkowski said.

He likes watching movies at the center too and showed off a DVD of "Bonanza" that he got Friday for his birthday.

"I love the cowboys," he said.

Raczkowski has a mild developmental disability, and used to do some light assembly work at the center when he was younger.

Countryside, based in Palatine, contracts with about 15 to 20 companies each year, including Abbott Laboratories, Illinois Toolworks and Chicago Metallics, to do light assembly and packaging. The clients earn a paycheck on a piece rate. The Waukegan site also operates a confidential document destruction service with an industrial shredder.

Activities are based on the wants and needs of each client. The number of seniors is growing at both sites in Waukegan and Palatine where there are about 25 people in the senior program, said Wayne Kulick, executive director of Countryside.

"There are not a lot of options for people that are older and have a developmental disability," Kulick said. "We would like to continue to expand services to both the seniors and the large population in the state of Illinois because of funding."

Countryside receives about 70



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Marylou and Eugene Raczkowski spend their time at Country's senior program. The couple, who live at the Anixter Center in Winthrop Harbor, have been married since 1979 after meeting at a group facility in Chicago.

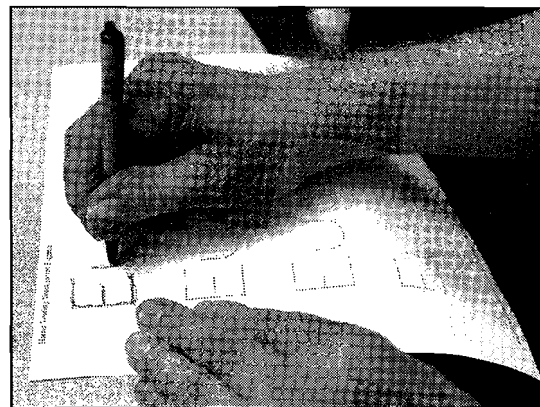
percent of its funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services, which is a mixture of state funding and federal Medicaid dollars.

Under the proposed budget, this marks the third year in a row that the organization has not received an increase in state funding, Kulick said.

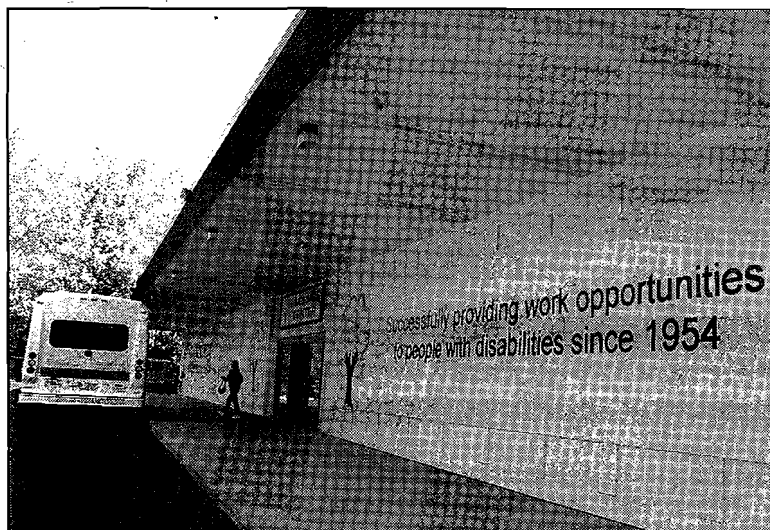
Countryside serves about 650 people total in all its programs. The majority, about 350 adults with disabilities, are in the two vocational centers in Waukegan and Palatine where they receive training and vocational opportunities. With the help of a job coach and job training, some work in a supported employment program at local businesses.

The centers also offer a day program to assist individuals with severe developmental disabilities. Activities combine daily living skills instruction, community trips, vocational training and recreation.

Other programs include family support to help adults with developmental disabilities remain at home with family or to live semi-independently. The organization also offers in-home respite which is designed to help maintain children or adults with disabilities in their home environment as an al-



Eugene Raczkowski spends some time practicing writing his name. He also enjoys watching westerns on TV.



Countryside Association's Lakeside Center for people with disabilities is located on Lewis Avenue in Waukegan.

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Countryside Association for People with Disabilities relies on the support of thousands of individuals, businesses, foundations and community organizations each year.

Ways to contribute:

Making a tax-deductible cash contribution.

Including Countryside Association in your will.

Donating an item or service to any of the programs or to one of its fund-raising events.

For more information, call Countryside's administration office at (847)438-8855.

ternative to residential placement.

Some clients have been with Countryside for more than 35 years, Kulick said.

"They want to be just like ev-

erybody else. They want a place to go during the day to be productive and earn a paycheck if they want, or a place to be with friends. You can't do that when you're at home," he said.