

Choices & Opportunities



SPRING 2011

Diverse Options for Every Personality

Personal Experiences ■ Volunteer Variety ■ Benefits of Hiring Our People

Cardinal Health: A Dozen Years of Support

Countryside excels at providing paid work opportunities to people with disabilities, the majority of which occur at Countryside Center in Palatine and Lakeside Center in Waukegan. The Community Employment Services Department extends the agency's impact by helping individual job candidates secure positions at a wide range of businesses. Additionally, Countryside also offers a different kind of staffing solution: Mobile Work Crews, at times called "enclaves."

For more than 12 years Countryside has partnered with Cardinal Health in McGaw Park, Illinois. Ten Countryside individuals work on-site at a Cardinal Health facility for five hours a day, five days a week. And, every day for the last 4 years, **Amelia Neal**, Training Specialist, has transported participants from Lakeside Center to the Cardinal Health facility to supervise the enclave in their work. On-site at Cardinal Health, the enclave is responsible for sorting and processing excess inventory—helping to prepare the product for donation to humanitarian organizations or for recycling, re-sale, or proper disposal.

"Sorting this product is an important part of our operations, and the Countryside team is providing a valuable service," says **Mark Lubbock**, Engineering Manager at Cardinal Health. "Equally important as the work, though, is the relationship we've established within our community. According to Lubbock, the efforts of these individuals were also an important contributing factor in the company receiving the Illinois Governor's Pollution Prevention Award for 2005.



Mike G. enjoys the time he spends working at Cardinal Health each day.

The Lakeside participants that work at Cardinal Health every day have clearly adjusted well to the fast pace of a manufacturing operation. Cardinal Health is a valued community partner and we thank them for their investment in Countryside!

Countryside Center Expansion Update

In March 2011, the Countryside Foundation concluded a lengthy series of building contractor interviews to help identify builders who have the expertise to build a quality addition to our Palatine Work and Training Center. The Foundation was also interested in builders who are flexible and understand that Countryside cannot cease operations and wants to maintain our good safety record. Six such contractors were identified.

Carlson Architecture, Ltd. has concluded developing both the site and building plans, which have been submitted to the county for permitting. The completed building plans have also been distributed to the identified contractors with a return date in May 2011. Assuming that permits are acquired and a contractor identified, we hope to begin the project in June-July 2011 and a 6-8 month build time is anticipated.

Do you have an interest in helping with this project? Personal as well as company sponsorships are welcome! We have many internal fit and finish projects that would help us extend the funding we have raised and make the addition a special place for everyone. Contact **Wayne A. Kulick** at (847) 540-3701 for details.

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...and more

Message from the Executive Director

One size fits all? Not at Countryside!

Very few of us enjoy being treated like a number, wear the same clothes every day or work on the same task for years. When people with an intellectual disability seek traditional supports, they often face service systems that categorize, group or label them. It is easy for personal goals, strengths and needs to get lost in such a system. Too often these people experience life as a series of plans and decisions made without their input.

But this is not Countryside! Highly individualized services and activities are the norm. We value plans and services that focus on the desires and strengths of each person, access to and use of community-based services, and methods of evaluating the satisfaction of persons served.

This issue highlights a few of the various ways our folks can experience their world: whether on a job in one of our Centers, volunteering in the community, learning a new skill or just having fun. Explore the diversity of service options that mirrors the diversity of those we support—there is no one size fits all at Countryside!

Sincerely,

Wayne A. Kulick
Executive Director
(847) 540-3701

Hundreds of Individuals, All Different Experiences

During the agency’s last fiscal year, Countryside Center and Lakeside Center were open 248 days, providing services to individuals with disabilities. You might think that it’s the same thing day in and day out but you would be wrong! The tremendous variety in available work, program classes, recreational activities, and community connections ensures that no one’s day at Countryside is quite the same. And that’s *after* they arrive at our door in the morning. Did you know that Countryside operates about 23 different transportation routes?!

Varying Jobs on the Work Floor

Across the agency and on any given work day Countryside offers 8-10 different jobs for participants to work on and earn a paycheck. Some of the jobs involve packaging materials and others entail basic assembly tasks. People can complete their work single-handedly or production work can be split into multiple steps so participants can work as a team. The work each person completes is the result of personal choice, and when someone wants to make a change or try something new, Countryside staff are there to assist with the transition and learning process.

For many, the day is filled with work and socializing. But many participants have their own schedule, engaging in various classes or volunteer opportunities.



Adrienne D. receives some help from Program Specialist Shawn Briggs during a Money Skills class. Also shown: Theresa C.

Program Class Variety

Both Centers offer a wide variety of programming classes to individuals served, for the purpose of learning new skills and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Our program curriculum is constantly changing to offer new and exciting classes. Many people want to work on their purchasing skills and currency identification, so a *Money Skills Class* has been offered periodically. *Exercise & Nutrition* classes were recently supplemented by a *Mental Health & Wellness* class that has been very popular thus far. Both Centers offer *Reading Skills* programs and occasional *Sign Language* classes, and *Typing Skills* opportunities are provided by Case Management staff. Lakeside Center also proudly offers a *Cooking Class* and a monthly *Self-Advocacy Meeting*, with varying themes.

All that’s mentioned above says nothing of the diverse activities offered in Countryside’s *Golden Opportunities* program for seniors, which does involve some paid work but focuses on providing leisure activities to aging participants. A true understanding of the variety of activities that take place in each Work and Training Center is a bit overwhelming, but even that is not the entire picture of our services because participants are out in the community every day as well!

Volunteer Crews & Enclaves

An abundance of volunteer opportunities are available to individuals through Countryside Association. This includes locations like the **Palatine Food Pantry**, **JCYS Camp Red Leaf** (Ingleside), **Equestrian Connection** (Lake Forest), **Wings Resale Shops** (Niles & Schaumburg), and **Orphans of the Storm®** animal shelter (Riverwoods). Paid work sites include **Cardinal Health** (McGaw Park), **Lavelle Law** (Palatine), and **Cole Parmer** (Vernon Hills).

Lakeside Arts & Crafts Fair Seeking Donations

On June 16 and 17 Lakeside Center will be hosting an *Arts & Crafts Fair* that both features unique works made by Center participants as well as an assortment of holiday-themed and household knick-knack decorations. If you have items you would like to contribute, please contact **Annette Thomas**, Program Secretary, at (847) 336-1700.

All of the proceeds from this event will support the programs and future events of Lakeside Center.

From Program to Paycheck: An Experience at Lakeside Center

When he started at Lakeside Center in August 2007, **Brock B.** spent his time in Habilitation Services, a program designed to provide simulated work opportunities and teach skills individuals can someday use on the work floor. In “Hab. Services,” Countryside staff gave special attention to Brock’s behaviors and his limited mobility with one of his hands. Over time and with his determination to work, he was able to transition to the South Production Floor at Lakeside.

In January 2011, Brock started earning a paycheck from Countryside Association and his favorite jobs to work on are the “Tootsie Pop Job” for **USA Blue Book**, which involves collating a thank you note and some tootsie pop candies. Brock also likes assembling screws for **Sloan Valve**. The screws job is one that requires some fine motor skills, but Lakeside staff constructed a “fixture” that enables him to complete the job easily. Fixtures are props or aids—generally constructed out of wood or other common materials—that assist individuals who may lack a particular necessary motor skill. Thankfully, it helps Brock to work on a job he enjoys!

“Brock loves to work. He works hard and is consistent with his work,” says **Naomi Dempsey**, Training Specialist. And, although his area has changed, he continues to work on other goals that will help with his independent living skills, such as cleaning up his trash after meals without prompting.

Given the more relaxed afternoon atmosphere at Lakeside Center and because of other interests he has, Brock receives services from Lakeside and works hard during the morning hours and then he spends his afternoon on his hobbies. He takes the noon shuttle home to Kiley Developmental Center, where he enjoys watching soap operas. Brock is also a big baseball guy—he is a fan of both the Chicago Cubs and White Sox. In fact, calendars for both teams are posted at his work station. And, with his schedule, he’s able to watch a game almost every day!



Training Specialists—At the ❤️ of it All

Training Specialists are at the core of all work services provided at Countryside and Lakeside Center—they provide direct training to individuals served through contract work and non-work activities. Through their constant supervision, they assist people with daily personal needs (restroom use, dietary needs, etc.) as well as meeting goals outlined in their service plan.

In their words...

What attracted you to this field of work?

“I have been working in this field for almost 8 years and I like the challenge.” — Edwin Maldonado (<1 yr. at Lakeside)

“I am a mother of a developmentally disabled daughter, who is the love of my life!” — Nancy Zachmann (3.5 yrs. at Lakeside)

What is your favorite thing about what you do?

“Helping the clients achieve their goals and seeing the big smiles on their faces when it’s payday.”

— Lisa Holleran (10 yrs. at Countryside)

“Hearing about what the clients think and what they’re up to. It is funny when they pick on me.”

— Kathryn Faber (2.5 yrs. at Countryside)

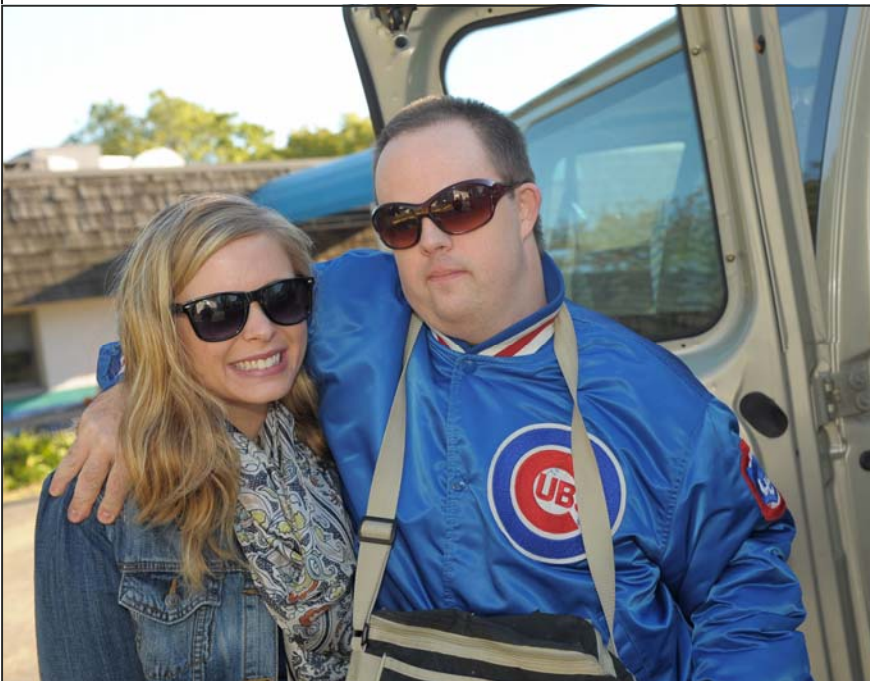
What is a moment you are proud of so far?

“In a short time I had the privilege to witness one of my former clients transition from work at Lakeside Center to full-time community employment at Cardinal Health.” — Bev Heyward (1 yr. at Lakeside)

“Seeing different individuals accomplish work skills through training and being able to apply it in their daily lives.” — Michael Frierson (15 yrs. at Lakeside)

“I like to see the sense of pride on someone’s face when they are able to complete a task/job that was difficult for them.” — Melissa Garcia (10 yrs. at Lakeside)

Countryside Center Training Specialist **Kathryn Faber** greets **Gregg H.** at the start of a work day.



Opportunity Walk 2011 — The Easy, Fun, & Impactful Way to Support Countryside in 2011

On Sunday, June 5, Countryside will host its 6th annual *Opportunity Walk* at Independence Grove in Libertyville, IL. This 5K walk/run is Countryside's biggest fundraiser and the best way for supporters to spread the word about Countryside!

Last year's event raised an astonishing \$54,000 for the agency. Part of that success stemmed from outstanding participation by staff, Board members, and service recipients' families as well as the implementation of personalized online fundraising web pages for participants. This year we are again offering a "DonorPage" (see image below) to anyone interested in raising funds for and awareness of Countryside.

Through your DonorPage, you can tell *your* story and say why Countryside is a cause you support. You can also upload a photo, set a personal or team fundraising goal, and send out requests for support using quick links to Facebook and Twitter as well as suggested text for email messages—a real time-saver! All of the tools you need are already built in, including links for visitors to your page to easily learn about Countryside.

The majority of people are uncomfortable asking others for money but they are happy to share why they support a cause. Your unique relationship with Countryside is a wonderful story and you are encouraged to tell it to everyone you know! It probably goes without saying that people are more likely to give when asked by someone they know, but did you know that the number one reason people give for not participating in a fundraising event or campaign is because *they were not asked?!*

Please consider participating in this year's event. Even if you cannot attend on June 5, you can still support Countryside by raising money and telling others about the supports provided each day. **Register online** today and your contribution—no matter how small—will become the first gift on your DonorPage, and the first step towards your fundraising goal.

Thank you to the wonderful participants who have already registered to participate and the generous donors supporting them! Wonderful things are happening thanks to you.

If you aren't comfortable raising money online, we've put tools in place to help you spread the word: *Fast Facts 2011*, *Pledge-raising Pointers*, and pledge forms.

Cardinal Health Swoops in to Help Lakeside

On March 11, eleven employees from Cardinal Health, long-time community partner with Lakeside Center, visited the Center to spend the day painting and give the facility a fresh look. In 2010, another group visited to paint three classrooms.

When asked about the best part of the day, responses ranged from "getting something great accomplished, and interacting with everyone along the way" to "being appreciated for my efforts; the clients and staff were so friendly it made me happy." Thank you, Cardinal Health, for your dedication to Countryside Association. We hope to see you in to 2012!

If you think a volunteer day would be a great opportunity for *your* employer please contact **Amy Barker** at (847) 540-3706.

Companies Who Share Resources with Charities...

- Experience more productive and satisfied employees
- Benefit from a better bottom line
- Receive an improved standing in the community
- Generate notable boosts in employee morale



During a tour of Lakeside Center **Larry Winn**, Support Services Administrator, and a group of volunteers from Cardinal Health look on as **Harry** works hard on a job for the Quill Corporation.

He's a Shoe-In: An Experience at Countryside Center

Daniel B. started at Countryside Center in June 2010 as a participant in our high school transitions program, *Bridging Transitions*. Previously, Daniel was a student at Palatine High School when his family sought services that would assist him with employment planning and preparation for life after high school. His transition lasted a few months and he started full-time work at Countryside in early November.



At Countryside, no individual's day is exactly the same and Daniel is a perfect example of this. From jobs he completes, program classes he participates in, and community connections he makes, Daniel is always doing something different. His mastery of jobs on the work floor range from springs for **Assembled Products** to "o-rings" for **Sloan Valve**. He also likes working on the baking cups for **Distinctive Foods** and cake pans for **Chicago Metallics**.

Daniel has several goals this year and one is to participate in 3 paid enclave or volunteer opportunities per month. So far, he has met this objective through periodic participation in the Center's *Mobile Work Crew* and his volunteerism at **Camp Red Leaf** and the **Palatine Food Pantry**.

He also expressed a desire to participate in an exercise class, which led to his experience of *Zumba*, a new dance fitness craze taught to staff and Center participants in March. And Daniel's third goal also involves a programming class: to correctly count change from a purchase of no more than \$5. He is fulfilling this goal through the Money Skills & Purchasing class.

Daniel is steadily improving his production rates and earning more money, which recently helped him to make an important purchase: a new pair of shoes for his work at Countryside. Now *that's* dedication! Daniel lives in Inverness with his parents and when he's not at work, he enjoys participating in Special Olympics activities, playing Wii video games, and listening to music.

Board Member Resigns After Years of Service

John Ginascol, Board Member for 6+ years, recently resigned as President. As the Divisional V.P. for **Abbott Laboratories**, he came to know Countryside through Abbott's subcontracting work with the agency. A long-time advocate for those with disadvantages, he arrived during a critical time of change: a new Executive Director had been hired and the agency was experiencing many challenges to its long history of public support. Mr. Ginascol gave direction to many significant accomplishments, including conversion of programs from grants to fee-for-service, supervisory training for all managers, a rewrite of board bylaws and governance policies, and significant renovations at Lakeside Center.

It was during Mr. Ginascol's tenure that Countryside obtained its first national accreditation status for governance (board) policies and procedures. His departure is due to increased demands of his career, and we will miss his steadfast direction and oversight. Mr. Ginascol is succeeded by **Mr. Rich Martin** as Board President.



Winter Newsletter Correction

Page 7 of the Winter 2011 issue of *Choices & Opportunities* contained a misprint that omitted the very generous contribution from **ULINE** to Lakeside's holiday party. Please accept our sincere apologies if anyone was offended by this mistake, and thank you, **ULINE!**

New On Staff

Countryside is pleased to welcome new employees who are already having a positive impact on the lives of individuals served and their families.

Countryside Center

William Lynn, Van Driver

Lakeside Center

Joseph Medina Jr., Van Driver

Recent Major Gifts

Anonymous (1)
Alpine Foot Specialists
Barrington Area United Way
Todd & Leigh Carlson *
Carlson Architecture, Ltd.
Clipped Wings—O'Hare Chapter
Enterprise Holdings Foundation *
Exelon Generation Company, LLC
John Ginascol
W.W. Grainger
Denise Stefan
Hanover Township Mental Health Board
Kiwanis Club of Palatine
Knights of Columbus #3788
Knights of Columbus #3954
Knights of Columbus #4837
Knights of Columbus #731
Marquardt of Barrington Buick-GMC
Northrop Grumman
Rotary Club of Palatine
John & Dianne Welda
Kathleen Young

* Gift to *Building Opportunities* Capital Campaign

Contact Us!

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Printed By: **BRIDGE® Printing & Promotional Products, Inc.**

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by contacting Amy at
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View this issue online at
www.countrysideassn.org

Match Your Gift ■ Volunteer Crews ■ Ability Works!

Support Countryside Without Giving More

Double or Even **Triple** Your Support

Did you know there are more than 16,500 companies in the United States that offer some sort of matching gift program, whereby a gift to a qualifying charity from an employee is amplified by matching support from the company? Some companies will even match gifts made by retirees and spouses of employees!

Santiago R., father of Countryside Center participant **Lisa** (shown on left at the Spring Dance), knows firsthand the impact these programs can have. He works for **Grainger**, a company that has a 3:1 match for its employees' gifts. Every month he sends his pledge donation to Countryside and soon after a gift three times as big is sent from his employer! All it takes is his effort to fill out a simple matching gift form from Grainger. Through his commitment to involve Grainger in his charitable giving, Santiago tremendously leverages his support of the services Lisa receives every day.

To find out if your employer has a matching gift policy, check in with your Human Resources Department or contact **Amy Barker**, Development & Communications Officer, at (847) 540-3706. All it takes is one form from your employer; send the completed form in with your gift and the impact of your gift may be doubled or possibly tripled! So, if you think about it, your gift—no matter how small—can have a much bigger impact *at no cost to you!*



Matching Gifts: Did You Know?

- 1 in 10 gifts is matching eligible
- About 50% of corporate 500 companies have matching gift programs
- Matching gifts make up an estimated 9% of corporate giving

Many Cat-egories of Volunteer Opportunities

While they differ in many regards, many of the other community volunteering opportunities available to Center participants involve moderate physical labor, such as maintaining outdoor furniture and painting at **JCYS Camp Red Leaf** (Ingleside) or grooming horses and assisting with special cleaning projects at **Equestrian Connection** (Lake Forest). There are also opportunities to stock and organize shelves at the **Palatine**

Food Pantry or organize and price merchandise at the **Wings Resale Shop**. But volunteerism that entails physical labor is not something that everyone can do or wants to do.

As a result, and at the request of an individual served, a new volunteer opportunity was added to the mix at Countryside Center in January 2011. Every week a small group of individuals—from a rotation of roughly 15 interested participants—pays a visit to Orphans of the Storm® shelter to socialize with the animals there. Orphans of the Storm® (Riverwoods) takes in, cares for and finds good and loving adoptive homes for thousands of stray and abandoned dogs and cats each year.

Aside from the benefits the animals receive through this temporary companionship, the Countryside volunteers love it, too! Spending time with animals can be very therapeutic because they are: warm and fuzzy, nonjudgmental, trusting, good listeners, and they help people feel needed and important.

Regarding a visit in late March, Case Management Coordinator **Shannon DuLaney** said, "The ladies were smiling from ear to ear the whole visit with the cats! They were petting all of them. Kathleen B. even got down and let them sit on her lap while she pet them! It was great to see them all so happy and engaged!"

For more information about Orphans of the Storm®, visit www.orphansofthestorm.org.

***Kathleen B.** takes a break from her work day to spend time socializing with the animals at Orphans of the Storm.*



Community Employment Services Benefits to Local Businesses

Why Hire Individuals with Disabilities?

Since 1987, Countryside has created and sustained relationships with local businesses. Employment Specialists help job candidates find and secure a position that aligns with their work interests and abilities. When a job offer is accepted, Countryside provides support to the employer and employee, ensuring a new hire's success in meeting job requirements.

This is truly a staffing solution that is smart for the employer and good for the community. But, aside from gaining a new employee, there are many unseen benefits.

Choosing this staffing solution enables businesses to:

- Benefit from high employee retention & low recruiting costs
- Gain access to loyal employees with high attendance rates
- Communicate a positive & socially responsible corporate attitude in the community
- Increase diversity in the workplace and gain higher company morale
- Save money through economic tax incentives
- Accommodate & serve customers with disabilities, diversifying their customer base

Working Hard as a Dog

Emily A. (shown on right) started with Countryside in mid-February 2011, seeking a daytime job where she could work with animals for about 20-24 hours each week. Thanks to the efforts of **Annie Svach**, Employment Specialist, Emily received assistance in building a résumé, meeting with various businesses, and working on interviewing skills.

Annie very quickly identified a great opportunity for Emily: becoming a *Doggie Caregiver* at **A Dog's Day Playhouse** (Schaumburg). It was clear that transportation was a concern, though, since Emily cannot drive. But Annie was there to provide Emily and her family with information on the *Dial-a-Ride* service offered through Pace. Since starting work in March, Emily now utilizes this door-to-door service to get to work on-time, Monday through Friday.

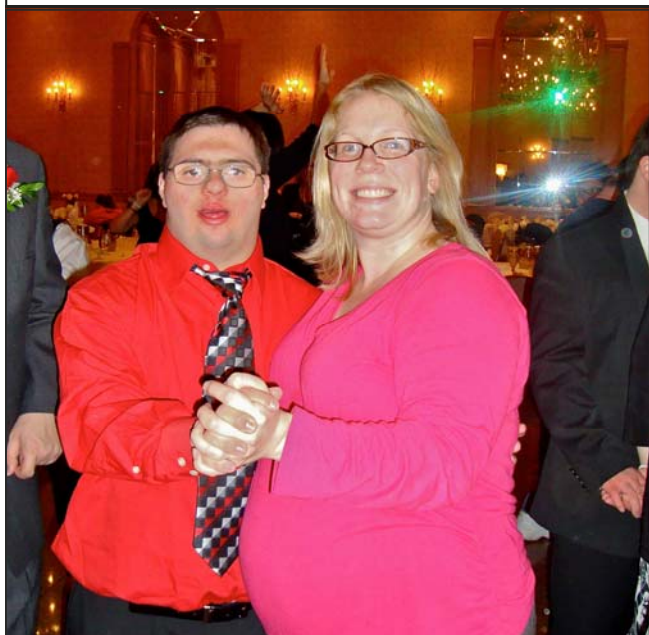
On the job, working independently and also with co-workers,



Emily is responsible for the well-being and care of the dogs that come to the daycare. She makes sure the facility is clean and that the animals play nicely with one another. Initially a support to Emily and her boss, **Barbara Newberne** (Daycare Owner), Annie coached Emily on the job to make sure she was comfortable. Now Annie only visits 3-4 times each week for just 30 minutes to make sure she is doing well and see if any issues or concerns need to be addressed.

Now that she is working hard during the week, Emily surely has a newfound appreciation for her free time, when she enjoys skiing, horseback riding, and "Friday social nights." Emily also enjoys spending time with her friends and her boyfriend.

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



Countryside Center "Spring" Dance

Despite the cool temperature and spring storms, Countryside Center participants got all gussied up on April 15th to dance the night away at *Meridian Banquets* in Rolling Meadows. This highly anticipated event is atypical in that it occurs on a Friday night at an off-site location, but it continues many years of providing fun, social opportunities for our folks.

Co-workers and friends relish the chance to eat a delicious meal, socialize and party away from their workplace, wearing clothes that would generally be considered too formal for everyday work. It is, of course, a fabulous departure from the hard work these people put in every week to meet production goals and volunteer in the community.

As always, many thanks to our dedicated volunteers as well as the **Friends of Countryside**, who covered the costs for the venue, photographer, and music by DJ **Roger**, husband of Case Manager **Jen Kulpa**. Everyone had a great time and is already looking forward to the next opportunity to dance!

Anthony Z. takes a spin around the dance floor with Nichole Visconti, Intake & Programming Coordinator.



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.



June 5th: Opportunity Walk

Questions? Contact Dee at (847) 540-3705 and register online *today!*

A Dream Come True at Lakeside

Cody B. started attending Lakeside Center in June 2010 and attends 4 days a week. Since then he has gained competency in every job that he has tried. Cody's production level for his work is very consistent and lately he has been hard at work on the assembly of actuators or screws for **Sloan Valve**. He likes to listen to his iPod while he works, and he has a number of visual reminders in his work space to help him remember the daily schedule and ways he should deal with stress.



"Cody is a hard worker, and he is very friendly—especially with staff," says Case Manager, **Susan Hall**. One of his goals for this year is to continue working on his production skills and take initiative to find constructive activities when work is slow. Cody also wants to develop more social relationships at work, which he is working on by participating in Lakeside's Self-Advocacy Meetings.

Cody lives at home with his parents, who are very supportive and encouraging. In his free time, he enjoys eating pizza and loves Disney movies. In fact, he can describe characters from any movie in great detail!

Cody used a recent paycheck to purchase the new Disney movie "Tangled," which was released earlier this year.

Mark Your Calendar to Attend or Volunteer

- June 5, 2011** — Sunday
6th Annual Opportunity Walk
- June 6, 2011** — Monday
Clipped Wings® Golf Outing
- June 16-17, 2011** — Thurs. & Fri.
Lakeside Arts & Crafts Fair
- June 24, 2011** — Friday
Countryside Center Annual Picnic
- July 1, 2011** — Friday
Lakeside Center Fun Fair
- July 22, 2011** — Friday
Countryside Under the Stars
- August 5, 2011** — Friday
Art in the Countryside
- August 26, 2011** — Friday
Lakeside Recognition Banquet
- October 24, 2011** — Monday
Recipe for Success

www.countrysideassn.org