



## A word from our Board President...

This is an exciting time to work in the field of disabilities services.

Never before have Americans with disabilities enjoyed the opportunities that have been created over the past generation. From integrated education to handicap-accessible buildings, those with disabilities are able to live and to learn with increased freedom.

It's also an exciting time because technology allows the opportunities for those with disabilities to navigate their world like never before. The phrase, "there's an app for that!" is especially true in this field.

Between smart phone apps and GPS systems, those with intellectual disabilities can let family know where they are or if they're in trouble at just the touch of a button. Smart apartments sense when a person has left, monitoring stove tops or space heaters that may have inadvertently been left on. Smart phone apps can now tell individuals how to walk to the nearest bus stop, which bus to board, and when they should signal to get off.

But with all these new-found freedoms of navigation and communication, there is still so far to go. Many in society are still not used to seeing people with disabilities in the places they frequent – work, restaurants, even their neighborhood. There is no app that magically makes you and I more comfortable around people who seem different than us. That's something that simply takes time. Time and intentionality.

This is an area where I feel the Village of Progress has worked so diligently over the past couple years. Every day of the week, the Village is encouraging the men and women it serves to be involved in the community. Eating out at restaurants for lunch, working alongside people without disabilities, enjoying the parks and libraries and bowling alleys along with others.

This past year, the Village conducted a shared story time with a half dozen lower-elementary school children. They read together a book about disabilities. How good it feels to be included; and how sad it can feel to be excluded. My hope is that this experience plants a seed for them to be more courageous in befriending someone not quite like them. Then finding out how much like them their new friend truly is.

Its an exciting time. There is much still to do. The Village of Progress is privileged to not only serve in the present, but work toward the future.

Thank you

*Jeff*

Jeffery E. Glen

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# VILLAGE OF PROGRESS



## Village of Progress, Inc. Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report

Celebrating over 50 years of service to those of Ogle County who have a disability.





# VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

There is nothing more powerful than a person with a dream.

Before there was a Village of Progress, there were a group of local parents who had a dream. Their dream – that their children, born with disabilities, might one day have the same opportunities in life that they saw other children having every day.

In 1969, their dream took a major step forward when the Village of Progress was formed. The Village provided an opportunity for their sons and daughters to work, play, and socialize in a safe and friendly environment.

In the early 70s, the dreams of similar parents across the nation took a major step forward when the Education of the Handicapped Act was passed. The EHA ensured that all children with developmental disabilities would have the right to a public education – just like other kids enjoyed.

Since that time, school children with disabilities now attend regular classes, participate in sports, and enjoy a variety of clubs and activities. In fact, its no longer unusual for children with disabilities to be seen leading cheers on the football field or active in school chess or bowling teams. The list goes on.

None of this started because government woke up one day and said, “Maybe we should be more inclusive...”



ALL of it started because parents went to local and national leaders, advocating for a better life for their sons and daughters.

Over the past 53 years, the Village of Progress has continued to move forward, motivated in large part by the dreams of parents and siblings of those with disabilities.

In 2017, the Village Bakery was born after it became apparent that there simply were not a lot of opportunities for people with disabilities to gain real-world work experience in the community. “There has to be a better way....” was the dream that fueled that project.

Today, the Village Bakery has celebrated its fifth anniversary. It provides regular-wage jobs to over a dozen people with disabilities. It garners a 4.5 star rating on Google and a 4.8 star rating on Facebook.

In 2021, the Bakery was one of only 30 businesses in the State to earn the Illinois Made Award – a recognition of its innovation and commitment to quality.

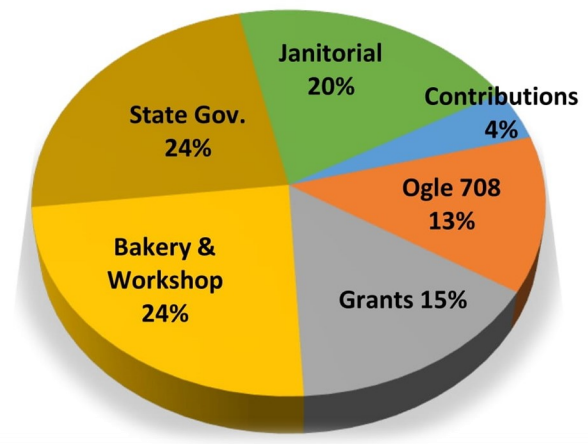
But the Village hasn’t stopped there. Over the past year the Village has partnered with Crest Foods in Ashton. Together, we provide 10-15 workers with jobs five days a week at Crest Foods packing facility.

Work crews regularly visit other local businesses to provide cleaning services and engage in a wide variety of recreational activities.

Truly, the Village has come a long way from the days when it was simply a “sheltered workshop.” It has come out of its shell and is now alive and active in the community -- exploring all facets of the great wide world around them.

And it all began with a dream from people who cared. People just like you. Thanks for partnering with us as we continue to live the dream.

**FY '22 Income = \$3,255,796**



**FY '22 Expenses \$2,910,372**

