



VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

SERVING ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FOR OVER 50 YEARS

The Village View - Spring 2025

Volume LVIII Number 2



Director's Note:

In a recent book called *The Connection Cure*, Julia Holz talks about a new approach to helping people get, and stay, healthy. In at least 30 different countries, health professionals have started asking some of their patients a new question. Instead of asking them, "What's the matter with you?" they instead ask their patients "*What matters to you?*"

What they're seeking to learn is what brings their patients a sense of joy and purpose. Doctors who have practiced this fresh approach have found that there are five core ingredients that contribute to better health.

First is **movement**. Obviously, this includes exercise. For example, a doctor had a patient who was overweight, had high blood pressure, and was borderline diabetic. When asked, "what matters to you?" the patient recalled that in his youth he really enjoyed riding bikes. The doctor wrote him a prescription for a new bike and group bike classes. The patient followed his doctor's orders, gained greater health, and now has a group of friends he can ride with any time.

Second is **nature**. Just getting outdoors can lead to increased mental and physical health. Walking through a neighborhood instead of walking on a treadmill in a basement or gym, for example, brings much greater health benefits.

Third is **art**. For many, connecting with art (whether fiction, paintings, theater, etc.) can bring great joy.

Fourth is **service**. As most of us intuitively know, having a job, volunteering at a nonprofit or a church, even helping to babysit grandkids, can give us a sense of worth and purpose. A reason for getting up in the morning.

And finally, there is **community**. Many studies have found that connecting with others on a regular basis leads to better mental health. Whether it's a club, church attendance, or inviting friends over regularly...community is vital to staying sharp and keeping a positive outlook on life.

THE VILLAGE VIEW

A quarterly publication of
the Village of Progress, Inc.
PO Box 418, 710 S. 13th St.,
Oregon IL 61061

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Director's Note continued:

As I was learning about this, it occurred to me that these five factors are exactly what the men and women we serve receive from the Village of Progress.

Every year, they meet with staff who ask, "What matters to you?" and "Who matters to you?"

And over the course of each year, we seek to provide programs and activities that fit them. In the area of *movement*, we provide Special Olympics, weekly bowling, activities at the Oregon Park District, line dancing, and chair yoga. The list goes on.

When it comes to *nature*, we offer a hiking club, biking club, nature-related science classes (a dozen chicken eggs are in an incubator in one of our conference rooms as I write this), a special 4-H chapter.

We also offer *art* classes, provide regular trips to different museums. We go to the movies and even, on occasion, go to see live concerts.

For *service*, we offer community-based employment, a variety of volunteer opportunities, work at the Village Bakery and Village Cleaning Service, and other supported employment.

And finally, there is *community*. For me, the Village's fostering of community is the deepest and most meaningful part of what we do. Regularly state auditors and visitors remark about how easily our staff and our clients interact with each other. At the drop of a hat, you'll find us throwing pizza parties, grilling outdoors, making and sharing treats, throwing birthday parties, and going out for lunches and picnics.

People with developmental disabilities cannot be "cured" of their disability. But they can be provided opportunities and support to help them be healthy in just about every meaning of that word.

We may not be in the business of curing people. But we do excel at healing.

Brion Brooks

New Faces at VOP



Dylan Nagy - Join us in giving a warm welcome to Dylan! He became part of Village of Progress in April 2025 and currently lives in Oregon, IL, with his mom and stepdad. He enjoys staying active and hands-on - whether it's through reading, watching anime, playing video games, or riding his bike. Dylan brings a positive attitude and a willingness to help wherever he's needed. We're thrilled to have him as part of our community!



Ethan Holeman - We're excited to welcome Ethan to the Village of Progress! Ethan joined the Village in April 2025 and comes to us from Rochelle. Ethan lives in Rochelle with his mom and brother. He enjoys spending time outdoors, creating art, watching YouTube, and playing video games. Welcome aboard, Ethan!

Rob Zimmerman — New Facilities Supervisor



On April 1, the Village welcomed Rob Zimmerman as its new Facilities Supervisor. He is only the second facilities supervisor in the Village's history, replacing Denny Arjes, who retired May 2nd after 47 years of service. (See the accompanying article about Denny.)

Rob brings with him a wealth of experience from the maintenance and construction fields. Before working for the Village, Rob owned his own remodeling business for thirty-five years. Rob will be a great fit as he is comfortable with all aspects of construction; mechanically inclined; and enjoys vehicle maintenance.

Rob is a lifetime resident of Oregon, where he resides with his wife Gwen and daughter Candice. He enjoys trap shooting and spending time with the grandchildren.

The Village is excited to have Rob join our team. If you happen to stop in, be sure to offer him a warm welcome.

Please help us spread the word on this free activity!

Inclusive Play

with Village of Progress

Sponsored by


Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 am
FREE! Registration not required
Location: Varies (see below)
Rain location: Nash Rec Center Gym

Inclusive Play encourages people of all ability levels to have fun, stay active, and create summer memories together! Join us for an hour of **free play** featuring a variety of games, activities, and park locations. **No registration and no cost**—just come for fun and games!

May 29th Kickball at Fairground Park	June 26th T-Ball at Lions Park
June 5th Four Square, Shuffleboard, & Basketball at Park West Basketball Courts	July 3rd <i>Program not in session</i>
June 12th TORO & Beanbags at Park West Volleyball Court	July 10th Four Square, Shuffleboard, & Basketball at Park West Basketball Courts
June 19th Racket Sports at Park West Tennis Courts	July 17th Lawn Games at Mix Park
	July 24th Kickball at Fairground Park



IMPORTANT DATES

AT
THE VILLAGE OF
PROGRESS

THE JOHN
HERRMANN GOLF
PLAY DAY

JULY 14, 2025

PRAIRIE VIEW
GOLF COURSE

BYRON, IL

TOSOC
TOUR OF SCENIC
OGLE COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

CYCLING EVENT
AT THE VILLAGE

ANNUAL BANQUET

OCTOBER 22, 2025

AT 5:30

ST MARY'S
LEARNING CENTER
OREGON

Denny Arjes Retires



At the end of April, Denny Arjes announced his retirement as maintenance and facilities supervisor from the Village of Progress. Denny had served the Village for 47 years.

Denny began working for the Village in February 1978. Shortly afterwards, Denny took on the additional responsibilities of overseeing the newly-created Village Cleaning Service. Under Denny's management, the Cleaning Service steadily grew. By 2014, gross sales reached over \$1M, a little more than a third of the entire agency's gross income.

In 2017, Denny stepped down from managing the cleaning service to focus on facilities maintenance and the upkeep of our paratransit bus fleet. That was also the same year the Village launched the Village Bakery.

Brion Brooks, the Village's Executive Director, commented about Denny's commitment to the agency. "Night or day, you could count on Denny to tackle any emergency that arose." When the Village experienced a major floor in 2017, resulting in a foot of water through the entire building, Denny was the first to respond, making sure the power was disconnected and creating a safe place to start the cleanup efforts.

A tireless worker, upon his retirement Denny has now handed the responsibilities over to Rob Zimmerman. Denny states that he has a long list of projects he wants to tackle (along with another list created by his wife!).

If you see Denny around town, please join us in thanking him for his long commitment to the Village.

Harlene Alderks Obituary



Harlene "Bean" D. Alderks, 59, of Polo, passed away Friday, April 25, 2025, at her home surrounded by family.

Harlene was born, October 16, 1965, in Dixon, IL, the daughter of Harlan J. and Mary (Suter) Alderks.

Harlene will be missed by both her biological family and her Village of Progress family. She enjoyed having fun, riding on dual bikes, singing along to Shania Twain, and giving everyone she knew a big hug with a smile. Harlene spent time coloring pictures, giving them to her friends to brighten their day. She was a true representation of what unconditional love looks like.

Donations to the Village of Progress & Foundation



Village & Foundation

Nareman Abdallah • Rehanna Abdallah • Mary Agree • Anonymous • Carol & Richard Anderson • James & Eileen Bone • Charles & Carolyn Bradford • Gerard & Marie Bueche • Kevin Brehm • Robert & Cindy Byrd • Byron Knights of Columbus • Roger & Julie Cain • Craig & Luanne Cann • Larry & Sara Carr • Jeffrey Cates • Charities Aid Foundation • Janice Christ • Jean

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Wirth • Cheryl Wolff • Larry & Kathy Yocum • Karen Young •

In Kind: Methodist Church food donation • Chris Bredeson - golf clubs for Special Olympics

In Honor of: John Chase's Birthday • Pat Donahue's Retirement

In Memory of: Harlene Alderks • John David Bell • Ralph & Edith Davis • Pam, Bob & Bernice Hammer • Virginia Heckendorn • Lorretta Sigler • Nina Whetsel •

THANK YOU.... Our ability to maintain meaningful and effective programs for Ogle County adults with disabilities depends on your donations & volunteer efforts!

Exploring Our Community!

In an effort to increase our exposure in the community, the Village of Progress continues to create a variety of small group outings. Our goal is to promote and improve self-advocacy, informed decision making, budgeting/money skills and greater life experiences. Everyone is able to choose the activities they want to participate in each time.



The Village is funded in part by the
Ogle County Community Mental
Health (708) Board), United Way,
Etnyre Foundation & Rochelle Area
Community Foundation



**THE
VILLAGE
BAKERY
IS OPEN
7AM — 2PM
7 DAYS A
WEEK**



TōSoc
tour of scenic ogle county

September 27, 2025

**HISTORIC SITES
BEAUTIFUL SCENERY
WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS**

Village of Progress
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33RD ANNUAL JOHN HERRMANN MEMORIAL GOLF PLAY DAY

Village of Progress
Foundation, Inc.

Larry Young
& Friends Charities

Monday, July 14, 2025

At Prairie View Golf Course in Byron, IL
12:30 p.m. shotgun start.

REGISTRATION FORM

Organization: _____
Contact: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ email: _____

☐ ***I want to sponsor a hole or tee***

Numbers of holes and tees: _____

Name of Business: _____

Our check for \$ _____ (\$200 per hole/tee) is enclosed.
_____ Please bill us.

Please mail this form to:
Village of Progress Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 418
Oregon IL 61061
Or fax to 815-732-3228
Checks payable to
Village of Progress Foundation

Join us for a great day of golf,
food, and prizes. And help the
Village of Progress continue to serve
Ogle County adults with
developmental disabilities.

18 holes of golf, cart, goodie bag,
drink tickets, steak dinner,
raffle and silent auction.

☐ ***I want to sign up a Foursome***

Golfer #1: _____

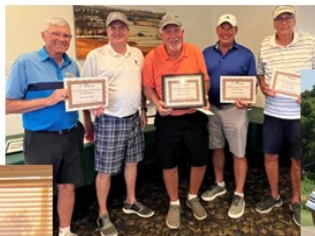
Golfer #2: _____

Golfer #3: _____

Golfer #4: _____

____ Our check for \$500 is enclosed.

____ We'll pay at the event.





SUMMER THRIVE

This engaging summer initiative is designed for adults aged 18+ with developmental disabilities who reside in Ogle County.

Whether you're on summer break from school or simply curious about what VOP has to offer, this program is the perfect opportunity to connect, learn, and have fun!

June 9-13 9a-2:30p

Monday: White Pines Hike & Cookout

Tuesday: Volunteer Day

Wednesday: Niabi Zoo

Thursday: Sports in the Park & Cooking Project

Friday: Bowling & Golf Driving Range

July 7-11 9a-2:30p

Monday: Movie Day - Jurassic World

Tuesday: Badger Mine & Museum Tour

Wednesday: Starved Rock Hike

Thursday: Sports in the Park & Gardening

Friday: Bowling & Craft Project

August 4-8 9a-2:30p

Monday: Historical Tour - Old Joliet Prison

Tuesday: Lake Day and Cookout

Wednesday: Kickball Tournament and Cookout

Thursday: Sycamore Steam Show

Friday: Fun Day at VOP - Cookout, games, music

RESERVE YOUR SPOT!

Ready to sign up or learn more?

Contact Mark Probasco at 815-732-2126.

Let's make this summer unforgettable!



VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

