



VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

SERVING ADULTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES FOR OVER 50 YEARS

The Village View - Summer 2025

Volume LVVI Number 3



Director's Note:

"When I was young, I admired intelligent people; as I grow older, I admire kind people." — Abraham Heschel

In his book, *Fully Alive; Discovering What Matters Most*, Timothy Shriver talks about how his life serving those with intellectual disabilities has changed him. Shriver said he started out with:

"a misguided expectation that I would serve 'them,' but my expectations were turned inside out—and I began to see that the whole ethic of 'serving the needy' could itself be an obstacle to opening my eyes.... I found myself over and over again confused by the strength of people who seemed to be experiencing both pain and triumph at the same time."

What he realized through serving those with disabilities is that we are all vulnerable, but we are also all valuable.

Shriver's experience is similar to those of many who have worked and volunteered here. One bike club volunteer told me that when she started, she assumed she'd simply be helping the Village's clients. But after only a couple bike rides, she saw how much more she was receiving than she was giving.

The point I'm about to make may seem arrogant, and possibly even shocking, but I believe in its truth. And it is this: Agencies like the Village of Progress are vital to communities like Ogle County; they are vital because they help people in the communities learn kindness and humility.

Places like the Village do the work of helping the community see others, and more importantly to see themselves, as simultaneously vulnerable and valuable, both broken and loved. These are not lessons that can be learned in a classroom or a worship service. They can be grasped only through face-to-face encounters.

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'm closing out my last few months at the Village, I want to again express my gratitude to the many, many men and women, churches, service clubs, and local governments, who have supported our work.

But I so desperately want you to see something more important – that in helping agencies like the Village, you are making Ogle County a healthier, more compassionate place. A place that is kind. And that is price-

less.

Brion Brooks

Special Olympic Tennis

In July, the Village of Progress participated in our first Special Olympics Tennis Skills Competition. It was held in Oaklawn, IL. We ended up with two golds, three silvers, a third, and a fourth. Congratulations to everyone that participated!



The John Herrmann Memorial Golf Play Day



Congratulations to the Cacciatore team for winning first place at The John Herrmann Golf Play Day!

Enthusiastic golfers and supporters helped us raise almost \$20,000 for the Village of Progress Foundation. Generous sponsors and donors along with fun participants and volunteers were the key to a successful day.

Those who attend the Village are truly fortunate to have such supportive friends. We would like to give special recognition to the Cacciatore team who won

and graciously donated winnings back to The Village of Progress.



We can not brag enough about our top notch sponsors, volunteers and donors, they make the difference every year in how successful our golf play day is at raising funds for the

Attendance Grant Program. **Anderson-King LTD • Assured Partners • Bauer Family • Byron Wealth Management • Cacciatore Family • Constellation • Country Financial– Mike Guzman • Gary & Susan Davis • DD Homes • Don & Nancy Etnyre • FN Smith Corporation • Doris & Gary Ferb • Gallagher Global Brokerage • Bill Geist • Gray Hunter Stenn LLP • Larry & Joyce Groenhagen •**

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We would also like to give a huge shout out to a few folks that help us out with our auction and raffle table items - Jim Kaufman at SuperValu in Oregon - Tom Larson with Youngberg Industries - Kelly Wirth - Dan Manning - Brett Herrmann with Bergstrom - Butch Peters - Jeff Carr. These folks help donate almost everything you can win by raffle or bid, along with organizing many foursomes. They are responsible for generating thousands of dollars for the Attendance Grant Program.

The Attendance Grant Program is a unique benefit provided by the Village of Progress. It lets individuals who are on the state's waiting list attend the Village on a part-time basis—free of charge. To learn more about our Attendance Grant Program or our John Herrmann Golf Play Day visit our website— <https://villageofprogress.org>.

TOSOC

tour of scenic ogle county

**10th
ANNUAL!**

September 27, 2025

ROUTE 1 :: 10 MILE ROUTE

ROUTE 2 :: 32 MILE ROUTE

ROUTE 3 :: 62 MILE ROUTE

Register online and
search TOSOC Bike Ride

www.Bikereg.com



Check us out on Facebook
by searching TOSOC Bike Ride



All proceeds from TOSOC benefit the Village of Progress Attendance Grant Program. The Attendance Grant Program lets individuals who are on the state's waiting list attend the Village on a part-time basis—free of charge.

IMPORTANT DATES AT THE VILLAGE OF PROGRESS

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**

WINTER BREAK

**DECEMBER 24 -
JANUARY 2**

**SPRING BREAK
MARCH 30—APRIL 3**

Dave Bakener Retires



Dave Bakener, who joined the Village of Progress in 2014 as its accountant, put away his pencils and spreadsheets for the last time on July 25.

Dave's retirement brings to a close his long and accomplished career in finance.

After graduating from Northern Illinois University with a degree in accounting in 1971, Dave joined Kable Distribution Services as its Treasurer. In that position, Dave oversaw virtually all aspect of Kable's financial and accounting functions.

When Bob Gilmore, the Village's former accountant, announced his plans to retire, Dave applied for the position and was hired in June 2014.

The Village's Executive Director, Brion Brooks, said, "Dave was the first new member of the administrative staff that I had the privilege of hiring. And I couldn't be happier with that decision. He's been such a selfless and dedicated worker for the Village."

Dave has commented that his experience at the Village has been both "wonderful and event filled." Dave cited the opening of the Village Bakery, the flood of 2017, the Covid pandemic, and shepherding the agency through two different accounting systems as among the most significant professional accomplishments and challenges.

When Dave was asked to summarize his experience here, he said, "My ten years at the Village of Progress have been the best years of my work life. That's because the Village oozes with mercy and compassion for their clients and each other. It's not just the employees, but the volunteers, Board of Directors, contributors, etc."

Dave's successor is Kathy Groenhagen, who brings with her 18 years of nonprofit financial leadership.

A New Face



We are excited to announce that Kathleen (Kathy) Groenhagen has become the Village of Progress' next accountant.

Kathy started on July 1st. She has been working alongside Dave until his last day on July 25th.

Kathy earned an MBA in Business Administration and Finance in 1999. Prior to joining the Village, she worked at Serenity Hospice & Home as the CFO since 2007.

Kathy commented, "I am excited to be part of such a respected organization. The Village of Progress offers so many valuable services to our community."

Please join us in welcoming Kathy to the Village of Progress family.

Donations to the Village of Progress & Foundation



IN KIND - Oregon Park District in partnership with the Northern Illinois Food Bank and several Churches – donated food & box lunches • Patty Powers – made and donated clothing protectors • Merlin's Greenhouse donated flowers.

VILLAGE & FOUNDATION - Nareman Abdallah • Rehanna Abdallah • Brad & Ann Auker • Karen Bonnell • Kevin Brehm • Craig & Lu Anne Cann • Joanne & Kevin Carr • Constellation Matching Grant • Randy & Terry Criddle • Larry & Deb Drew • Randy & Sandie Ebert • Kristen Eckardt • Don & Nancy Etnyre •

Teresa Fearer • First Presbyterian Church of Rochelle • Dennis Flanagan • Don & Myrle Fuller • Dave & Cindy Gesin • Larry & Joyce Groenhagen • Jason Hammer • Robin Henry • Erin Herrmann • Greg & Vickie Hilliard • Steve & Yong Cha James • Reuben & Kay Johnson • Tamara & John Koebler • Tom Koebler • Cynthia & Ronald Koehler • Roger & Connie Kohlmier • Mike & Sharon Kohlstedt • Bernard Kopp • Karen & Ron Larson • Tim & Kathy Leary • Rebecca



Little • Julie Mann • Tom & Becky May • John Moehle • Phil Nye • Oregon Mercantile • Nancy Miller • Neal Pavlus • Patricia Piwonka • Pine Creek Christian Church • Polo Lions Club • Jan Prose • Rock River Multisport • Rockvale Township • Jennifer Rodriguez • Barbara Rosenbalm • Carrie Schier • Levi Schier • James & Karen Schmidt • Michele Schnorr • Terry Schuster • Second Hand Rose • Susie Smith • Barbara Snyder • Richard Stegemann • Joan Sundvall • Sharon Thunberg • Benjamin Wagner • Jim & Connie Whetsel • Margaret Wolf • Sheryl Wolff • Karen Young • Larry & Joan Young •



PLAYDAY - Andersson –King • Assured Partners • Bauer Family • Byron Wealth Management • Cacciatore Family •

Constellation • Country Financial - Mike Guzman • Gary & Susan Davis • DD Homes • Don & Nancy Etnyre • FN Smith • Gary & Doris Ferb • Gallagher Global Brokerage • Bill Geist • Gray Hunter Stenn LLP • Larry & Joyce Groenhagen • HA International • Herrmann Family • Paul & Kathryn Lieving • Dan



Manning • Martin & Co. Excavating • Chris Mueller •

Butch Peters • Prescott Brothers • Rochelle Community Hospital • Jim Sibigroth • Smith Law Group, P.C. • Stillman Bank • Mark & Kathi Tremble • Wills Family • Kelly Wirth • Woods • XCEL Orthopedics • Larry Young • Youngberg Industries • Jim & Vicky Zalzalah •



In Memory of: Harlene

Alderks • Thomas Cooper • David Snyder •

In Honor of: Bob Groenhagen's Birthday • Tim Koebler •

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.



Badger Mine Tour



Cycling Club



Special Olympic Torch Run



Hiking Club



Golf Play Day



Rockford Rivets



Making Music @ Park West



Oregon Parks Volunteer Day

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
PO Box 418
Oregon IL 61061
Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Oregon IL 61061
Permit No. 17



SPONSOR FORM—ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR _____

Business Name: _____

Contact: _____

Business Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Business Sponsor or Individual/Family Sponsorship \$150

Mail your sponsorship checks to :
**Village of Progress -
PO Box 418
Oregon, IL 61061**

Your company name or logo (whichever you prefer) will appear on a large sponsor board where the ride begins and on the back of the long sleeve shirt. Sponsors will also be recognized on Facebook and in newsletters. Logos can be emailed to: segan@villageofprogress.org.

**In addition sponsors are encouraged to welcome cyclist on their business signs.
Cyclists are encouraged to stay in the community after the event.**



Scholarship Awards

For over 25 years the Village of Progress Foundation has presented two educational scholarships to folks in Ogle County. Applicants must be a resident of Ogle County and a high school senior or full-time college student who either has a disability or is majoring in an area that serves those with disabilities.



One of the scholarships, in the amount of \$1,000 is made through the generosity of the Pete & Wanda Cacciatore Family. The Cacciatore's have been long time supporters of the Village of Progress.

Wanda was a member of the Village of Progress Board of Directors for 10 years beginning in 1988 and has served on the Foundation's Board for over 25 years. Her husband, Pete was also an enthusiastic supporter of the Village. Pete passed away in the fall of 2014, leaving behind a legacy of commitment to the Village and its mission.

This year a scholarship through the Cacciatore Family was given to Nora Hammer. Nora plans to attend Illinois State University. After graduating with a degree in special education, her goal is to return to Oregon/Mt. Morris Community and make a positive impact on the community that shaped her, by teaching in the district that shaped her. She hopes to give back by supporting students with special needs and creating an inclusive environment where every child can thrive.

Pictured: Nora Hammer, Mt Morris, IL with Pete Cacciatore, Grandson of Pete & Wanda Cacciatore, receiving a check for \$1,000 from the Village of Progress Foundation made possible by The Cacciatore Family.



The second scholarship, in the amount of \$1,000, is made through a gift from Larry Young & Friends Charities. Larry Young & Friends Charities partner with the Village of Progress Foundation to help make our annual golf outing a success. Larry Young also serves on the Foundation's Board of Directors.



This year a scholarship through the Larry Young & Friends Charity was given to Riley Jamison. Riley also plans to attend Illinois State University. Riley worked at The Village Bakery during high school and commented on how the bakery deepened her understanding of the importance of being inclusive in a workplace. She hopes to operate a business someday that is inclusive, but will strive to create opportunities for individuals of all abilities no matter where she works upon graduation.

Pictured: Riley Jamison, Oregon, IL. with Chris Martin, Board Member of The Village of Progress Foundation receiving a check for \$1,000 from the Village of Progress Foundation made possible by Larry Young & Friends Charity.