

The LIFE*Designs* Letter

Fall 2013

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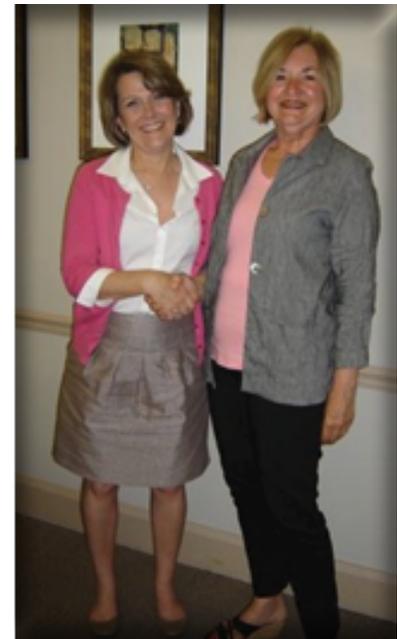
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LIFE*Designs* Holiday Party

Thursday, December 12th - 5pm to 7pm
Bloomington Moose Lodge

Our Forever Home

LIFE*Designs* took a big step this summer to more permanently establish our roots in south-central Indiana. Earlier this year we opened an office in Columbus to expand our presence there. Since then, we have purchased our office building in Bloomington on Winslow Road. We are excited about the opportunity this presents for us, saving money on operations and giving more flexibility around how the building is used. As good stewards, we will utilize the office to secure the future for the services we provide. Thanks to Becky Wann, LIFE*Designs* Board Member and RE/MAX realtor, for working pro bono for us on this sale! We appreciate you!



2013 United Way Campaign

Show your support to the United Way by making a donation to the 2013 Campaign. As a United Way agency in Monroe, Lawrence and Bartholomew counties, we appreciate all they do for us. We're participating with Jeans for a Cause & Penny Wars!



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Our Letter to the LIFE*Designs* Community

LIFEDesigns...Built to Last

At LIFEDesigns, our mission is to partner with people of all abilities to lead meaningful and active lives.

Over the past 30 years we have worked with thousands of people to ensure our communities are open and have sufficient resources to support people in homes, jobs and everyday life. We support hundreds in south-central Indiana to lead those ordinary lives that many of us take for granted.

Over the past few years, the agency has been looking at ways to sustain those essential services that make this possible. Recently, for example, we purchased the Winslow office in Bloomington for LIFEDesigns. This change ensured reduced ongoing costs and more stability in future expenses. As a result we were able to lower administrative expenses, something we constantly work to do so that we can place more resources behind direct service. But we have so much more to do.

With this newsletter we are announcing two more initiatives to support LIFEDesigns' future. We are launching our "Deep Roots, Strong Fruit" capital campaign to upgrade our facilities across the board and participating in the Matchstick program through the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County to grow our endowment with their 1:2 match.

The following are a few reasons why you may want to invest in LIFEDesigns through these campaigns in addition to making your annual gift:

1. With your help, lives are changed. People with disabilities are two times more likely to be poor, have the highest unemployment of any minority, have lower rates of education, more limited access to transportation, and are less satisfied with their lives. Our support changes that. Our customers have higher than average rates of employment, community access, and satisfaction.

2. Our services and customers rely on you. Medicaid provides 90% of the funding for the services LIFEDesigns provides. Since 2009, Medicaid has cut rates by an average of 7% - a loss of \$1.2 million in revenue for our agency alone. Without local support we would not be able to provide many services, like respite for families and employment support.

3. You make possible critical discoveries and new programs. Our funding is tied directly to providing services; it does not allow for the research and development of new ideas and technology that we know will benefit the people we serve. It is only through your generous gifts that we were able to:

- Develop affordable housing services for people with disabilities
- Implement enhanced electronic monitoring services so people could be independent
- Support businesses to provide internships for those just figuring out where they want to work
- Secure a state of the art training program for direct support professionals and employment support.

4. Our community is better because you support our services. Our community benefits from the participation of the people we support in a number of ways: they volunteer, they pay taxes and they are neighbors, friends and family. Being in the community is also a cost effective way to provide these services, which saves taxpayers. Many of the people we support risk institutionalization, which is a much higher cost alternative.

5. By helping build LIFEDesigns to last, your gifts will be felt for generations to come. Through our "Deep Roots, Strong Fruit" capital campaign, you can help us to preserve and maintain our facilities and infrastructure to strengthen the foundation of the services we provide. When you contribute to our endowment at the Community Foundation between November 2013 and September 2014 your support will be matched by the foundation 1:2, growing our endowment to ensure services well into the future. In both cases, decades from now, your legacy of generosity will live on through the people and programs your gift supports.

Please consider giving to our general fund this year and also making a gift to one or both of our long-term campaigns to make a difference for the people we support now and for those we will serve for years to come. All gifts make a difference. Thank you for the gift you choose to give.

Find out more about how you can help at lifedesignsinc.org/donate



Susan Rinne

Susan Rinne,
Chief Executive Officer



DSP Appreciation Week

September 8-15 was Direct Support Professional Appreciation Week! We celebrated with sponsorship by Williams Bros. Long-Term Care Pharmacy. We hosted an "I Love My Job!" contest to send the winner to the DSPIN conference in Indianapolis. We also asked customers and their parents, guardians and loved ones to write letters to our DSP's. Thanks for your response to that request! We held a raffle with over 40 DSP's winning prizes. Office staff and managers signed a "LIFEDesigns Loves Our DSP's" banner that hung on our building. Office staff also held car washes in Spencer and Bloomington to wash DSP's cars. We ended the week with our picnic in Columbus. Even though DSP Appreciation Week is over, Suzi said it best, we appreciate our DSP's EVERY day for the work they do. Thank you to all of our DSP's! We think you're great!

A Home for Chris

In September, our friend Chris Schaaf received the keys to his new home as a part of the Whirlpool and IU Habitat for Humanity build. Chris, a champion golfer in Special Olympics, works as a bagger at Marsh supermarkets and is a regular volunteer at the Habitat ReStore. His parents, Linda and Larry, said they have always encouraged Chris to be self-sufficient and look beyond what others might see as a disability. When Chris shared his dream of home ownership, they had to find a way of making it happen. Linda said, "We say focus more on the ability than the disability. Nothing is impossible in this world, and Chris is proof." This story epitomizes LIFEDesigns' vision of building inclusive communities where everyone, regardless of ability, is supported. We are so proud of Chris and are happy he now has his own home! See more of this story at Habitat's website: monroecountyhabitat.org.



LIFEDesigns Halloween Party

The LIFEDesigns Halloween Party was a huge success! Thanks to the Dance Machine for rocking the party. There were three lucky winners of the 2013 United Way Penny Wars contest and a pie-in-the-face: Curtis Mannen, Jessica Lewis and Janessa Gerber! Thanks to Pizza Hut for donating the pizza and thank you to our volunteers from ServeIT and Chi Delta Phi for their hard work. See pictures on our Facebook page.

Crawford: Home at Last

On August 30th, a group of volunteers came to Crawford Apartments to set-up homes for more than 25 individuals with disabilities who were homeless. The Herald Times wrote a wonderful article on the event that appeared on the front page September 1st. On September 6th, a ribbon cutting took place at Crawford led by City of Bloomington Mayor, Mark Kruzan. A group of over 60 people gathered for standing room only as this collaborative project was celebrated and all those involved in its success were thanked. For more on this story and to follow the progress of the residents, go to our website: lifedesignsinc.org.



LIFEDesigns Annual Picnics

There were two LIFEDesigns Picnics this summer and both were a ton of fun! In Bloomington, nearly 150 people attended the picnic at the Karst Farm Park by the Splash Pad in August. The Columbus Picnic was held at Donner Park and capped off DSP Appreciation Week in September, with nearly 50 people in attendance. Thanks to the All-Star Jam Band who played both picnics for us and to everyone who pitched in and brought food!



Summer FUNdraisers!

We held two FUNdraisers this summer, a benefit concert at Kilroy's Sports Bar featuring the band 8-Track Mind, and a Dine-to-Donate event at Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt. Between the two events, we raised over \$500, and raised a lot of awareness about LIFEDesigns and the people we support. Thanks to our event hosts and to everyone who was a part of these events!



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Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:  

www.lifedesignsinc.org



Employment Services
Community Services



Member Agency

OUR MISSION: LIFEDesigns partners with people of all ages and abilities to lead meaningful and active lives.