



PAT THIES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUMMER 2025

WORD AROUND Blue Cap

A NEWSLETTER FOR FAMILIES OF THE PEOPLE WE SERVE



Happy Summer, Everyone!

As I write this, TGIF Picnics are beginning. The people we serve are vendors at the picnic, selling items they've made throughout the winter months. TGIF Picnics are held at the park on the corner of York and Western in Blue Island. Each week throughout the summer, there are vendors selling wares and food. Come out and support!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR BLUE CAP

The Blue Cap Family & Friends Rose Walk returns on September 7 at our 1962 Broadway location. It's always a great time, and you don't have to walk to be part of it—just come enjoy the day and connect with other families and Blue Cap supporters. Proceeds directly fund meaningful community outings for the people we serve, like **The 2nd Annual Blue Cap Games—See page 2!** Don't forget—Tag Days are coming up on October 4, followed by the Blue Cap Auction on November 7. Your support truly makes a difference!

THURS NIGHT FUN CAMP

Meanwhile, Rashanda Hassel, QIDP, in our Home-Based Department is hosting a Thursday Night Fun Camp at 1962 Broadway throughout June and July. Inclusive activities have included, 90's musical bingo, corn hole, double dutch lessons, and hula hoop competitions! Follow us on Facebook to see photos from many of these events!



ORDER BY
8/20/25



REGISTER FOR ROSEWALK 25

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@bluecapcharity

A WORD FROM *PAT THIES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*



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Standing Together for Medicaid!

The Illinois state budget has been finalized for now, but there may still be changes after the summer session. One area of concern is funding for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Current plans call for a 35% reduction in reimbursable hours of support, even though hourly wages are increasing by 80 cents per hour. Medicaid funding helps support community-based programs like those offered by Blue Cap.

What can we do?

We don't have all the answers, but we know this: **advocacy matters**. When families, staff, supporters, and the people receiving services speak up together, lawmakers listen.

Please consider calling your Senators and Representatives—and encourage others to do the same.

Here's the message to share: Protect Medicaid funding for community-based programs that support people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Together, we are stronger to help protect the supports that so many rely upon.

Quick & Easy Advocacy

Scan the QR code to instantly email your IL legislators—just add your name and hit send!



SCAN TO ADVOCATE FOR MEDICAID

BLUE CAP GAMES ARE BACK!

After an incredible debut in 2024, The Blue Cap Games return this August! We're excited to bring back this day of inclusive recreation, designed to unite our community through movement, teamwork, and fun.

As part of our expanding Wellness in Motion Recreation Therapy Program, this year's Games will be held on Thursday, August 21, 2025 at Mount Greenwood Park (3721 W. 111th St., Chicago, IL 60655) from 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM, and will feature: Beep baseball (adapted for individuals with visual impairments), wheelchair basketball, races, pickleball, lunch, and commemorative t-shirts for all participants.

Medals will be awarded again this year. The event will be led by Recreation Therapist Gerry Henaghan, with support from Jenay Harrington, who recently joined Blue Cap's Recreation Therapy team.

This event is proudly sponsored by the Blue Cap Family & Friends Association.

Interested in volunteering?

Helpers are needed from 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

Please email Gerry.Henaghan@blue-cap.org by August 10, 2025, to sign up.



02/03



WELLNESS TAKES ROOT

As part of our Life Enrichment Program, participants are gardening this summer to promote healthy habits and add more nutritious foods to our diets. We're growing vegetables and herbs in the Blue Island community gardens, on-site at Blue Cap, and in a new space east of 2155 Broadway. Gardening supports well-being through movement, peaceful time outdoors, and a stronger connection to the food we eat. We're excited to share the harvest through our Food Pantry and with the individuals we support.



ABILITIES EXPO 2025

With warmer days here, the individuals we support have been making the most of community events! A recent highlight was attending the Abilities Expo in Schaumburg, where they participated in a chair yoga session—one of many inclusive activities offered throughout the day.

The Expo also featured adaptive sports, assistive technology demos, sensory-friendly spaces, and plenty of hands-on exhibits. It was a great opportunity to explore new resources, connect with others, and celebrate all forms of ability. Everyone came away feeling energized, inspired, and ready for more summer adventures.



They've also been enjoying sporting events like Cubs and Sox games, music programs at the Beverly Arts Center, visits to the library and various Chicago museums, local festivals like Gaelic Fest, hiking trips to nearby forest preserves, beaches, and weekly art and knitting classes.