

Helping the Helpers: Clearbrook staffers push to protect residents as day services shut down

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Some of the Clearbrook staff did a drive-by parade to the CILAs (community integrated living arrangements) in Arlington Heights, Mount Prospect and Rolling Meadows, as well as the Lattof Commons, Clearbrook's 85-resident intermediate care facility. Individuals living in the homes went outside to enjoy the parade or watched from the windows. (*Courtesy of Clearbrook*)



Susan Klovstad

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Founded in 1955, Clearbrook is based in Arlington Heights, but it serves people with disabilities all over the suburbs.

The pandemic has challenged the agency in its goal of creating opportunities and supports for the people it serves. The Daily Herald spoke to Juliann Carlson, director of marketing, to learn more about Clearbrook's needs.

Q: Who does Clearbrook serve, and how do you serve them?

A: We serve more than 8,000 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as their families, in 160 communities, 15 counties and 60 locations. Clearbrook provides personalized vocational, home-based, community day, residential and clinical services across a range of disabilities, from birth to end of life. We empower our individuals to live the fullest lives possible.

Q: From where do the majority of your donations come? Is there an annual fundraising event?

A: Clearbrook hosts close to 20 fundraising events per year, including an annual 5K run/walk (Step It Up for Clearbrook), the Shining Star Ball, and Candy Days (formerly known as Jelly Belly Days). We also receive funds from generous donors and sponsors.

Q: How has the COVID-19 crisis affected your organization and its ability to help those in need?



Clearbrook staffers go the extra mile during the pandemic for residents. To celebrate Daniel's birthday, staff and family had cake together virtually. They decorated the home with streamers, baked a cake, and the family put windmills on the lawn. The home's QIDP (Qualified Intellectual Disabilities Professional) made a "Honk, it's your birthday" sign and much more. - Courtesy of Clearbrook

A: At Clearbrook, Community Day Services have been temporarily shut down, major fundraising events canceled and, like others, we've experienced an unprecedented need for extra precautions to ensure our staff and those in our care remain safe and healthy.

As one of the largest providers of programs and services for adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Illinois, Clearbrook is essential to the lives of an at-risk population. Our

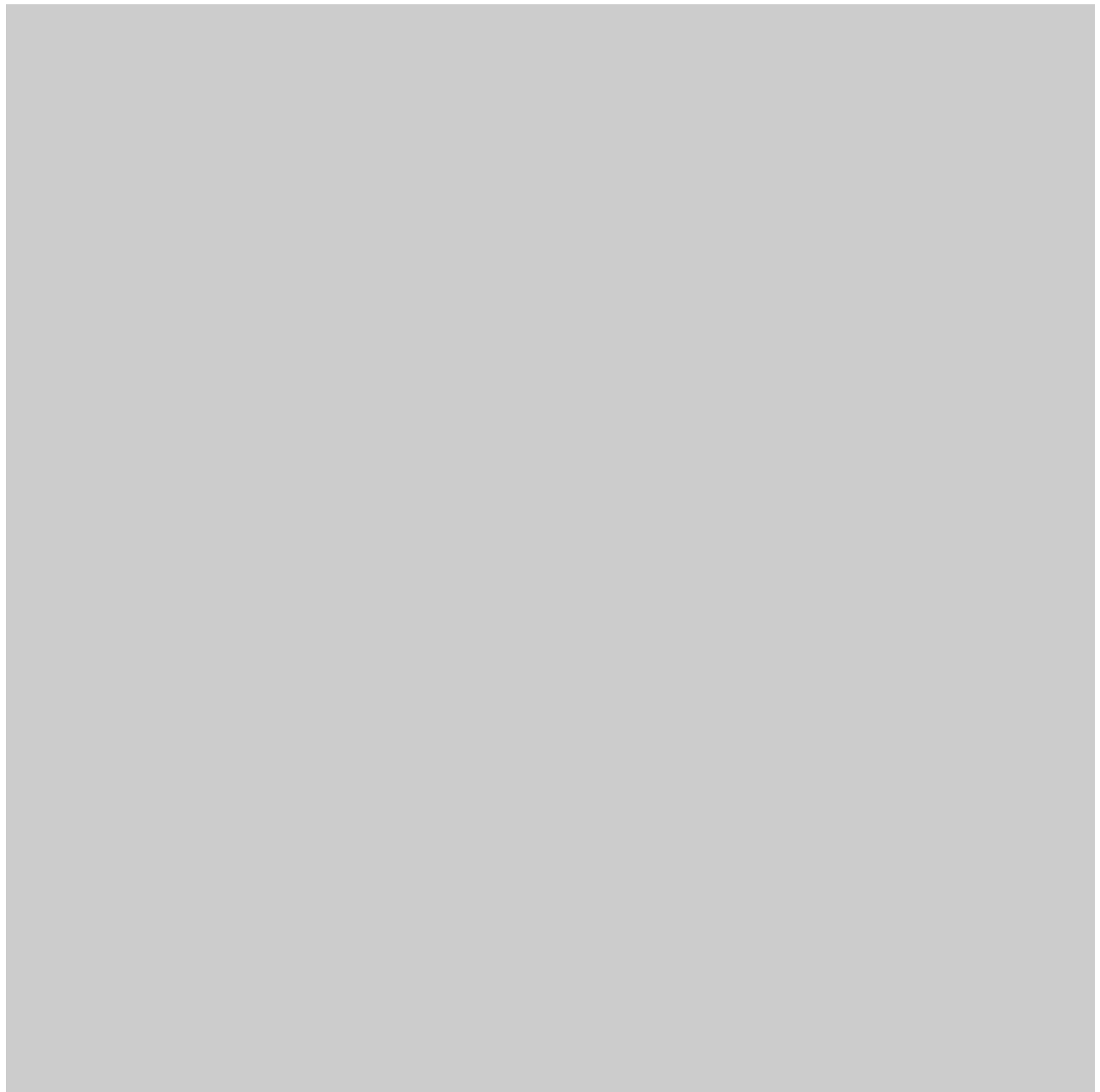
individuals, some with very complex medical needs, cannot live independently.

Even with temporarily stopping community day services, we still have 400-plus individuals in our residential care. Program staff have been diverted to group homes, triage centers have been created in the event of a diagnosis, visitors are no longer allowed at any location, and we've experienced an increase in the cost of groceries and activities for each of the 60 homes.

Clearbrook has also purchased additional technology so our individuals can stay in touch with loved ones, as well as PPE, masks, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and thermometers.

Like so many of us, our individuals are struggling with the new normal of social distancing, not being able to go to work or daily activities, and miss seeing loved ones. Our staff, the true silent heroes, are doing a phenomenal job providing high quality care and helping them navigate such drastic changes to their routines.

Q: How have staffers adapted to the pandemic?



One of Clearbrook's CILAs decorated its van with positive messages, then drove to downtown Chicago to spread positivity. - Courtesy of Clearbrook

A: Our staff have been amazing throughout all of this. They have, and continue to do so, gone above and beyond.

Their response has been immediate and nothing short of awe-inspiring. From planning at-home birthday parties and holiday celebrations, to cooking lessons and creating fun videos to make our individuals smile, they have done so much for those in their care without complaint.

They are what makes Clearbrook so exceptional and we couldn't do this without them or the unwavering support we've received from the community.

Q: How can the community help?

A: There are several ways in which readers can help:

- Make a donation at [Clearbrook.org/Donate](https://www.clearbrook.org/Donate).
- Create a fundraiser for Clearbrook on Facebook.
- Post to our social media or send us a message of support and positivity to help brighten our staff and individuals' day (Facebook: @clearbrook Twitter: @Clearbrook1 Instagram: Clearbrook_il).
- Make masks or donate supplies. Although we've purchased supplies, we still face a critical shortage.

Q: If someone is in need of your organization's help or has further questions, what should they do?

A: Visit www.clearbrook.org/contactus/ (<http://www.clearbrook.org/contactus/>) for a list of options. For financial contribution or donation questions, contact Annie Palubicki at apalubicki@clearbrook.org or (847) 385-5005. For questions about donating supplies, contact Bobbi Drews at bdrews@clearbrook.org or (847) 385-5019.

About this series

"Helping the Helpers" is a series of short stories on how you can support suburban social service agencies impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Know

of a nonprofit or agency we should feature? Email sklovstad@dailyherald.com.

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