



# COMMUNITY CHOICES

ANNUAL REPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2024

# LETTER *from* *The* EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In this world, we depend on each other. Within the disability community, this is often in stark focus. We depend on services, we depend on funding, we depend on systems, and we depend on families to pick up the slack. What's often overlooked is also the most critical and most universal piece of this. We depend on community.

Lifelong activist Grace Lee Boggs said, "The only way to survive is by taking care of each other". I think this quote, more than anything, sums up how I feel about Community Choices and the work that we are doing. It is a reminder that care and support are not one directional. We depend on our members for ideas, collaboration, and guidance just as our members depend on us to use that insight to work to make their lives better. We depend on our staff to offer support and council, just as our staff depend on the organization to be a means to support themselves and their families. We depend on the broader community to

be a welcoming space for our members to seek connections, jobs, housing, and the full rich lives that we know they deserve.

The community depends on us as well. It is a stronger place when it includes the voices of people with disabilities and all other undervalued peoples. If we survive by taking care of each other, it means that people with disabilities hold the same responsibility to our community as anyone else – not as consumers of service, but as full and autonomous people with gifts to offer others. It is this belief in interdependence that sets us apart. This ideal welcomes you and every other member of our community into its reach. Because we depend on you, and you can depend on us.

With Gratitude,



Becca Obuchowski  
Executive Director

CO  
MM  
UNITY  
choices

CHOOSING  
COMMUNITY

CHOOSING

*Each Other*



## FISCAL YEAR 2024 A Year, A Community, To Celebrate

**COMMUNITY CHOICES HAS BEEN SO  
MANY THINGS TO OUR FAMILY:**

**FRIEND, CHEERLEADER, CONFIDANT,  
EDUCATOR, THERAPIST, ADVOCATE,  
SOUNDING BOARD, NAVIGATOR, AND  
MOST OF ALL CONSTANT SUPPORT OF  
OUR DREAMS.**

*- Jeanne Murray, parent*

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# TRANSPORTATION

## Inclusion starts with being able to show up - We're giving rides

Our First-Of-Its-Kind Transportation program addresses one of the most fundamental aspects of inclusion - the ability to show up.

Our new and innovative program addresses a critical barrier for people with I/DD and allows our members to have easy, free, and dependable access to their jobs, appointments, meet-ups with friends, and lots more.

It's having an impact.

Here are a few of the many successes that the program has created:



"CC transportation services have helped my family tremendously. As a Mother, I truly appreciate the support. I feel extremely grateful for the drivers for transporting my daughter weekly to volunteering and work. They are kind and professional. My daughter enjoys riding with both of them. They are helping her socially and making connections with others in the community."

"It has made getting a ride easier and my family doesn't have to leave their jobs to get me places. It has helped me to be independent and get to where I need to go."

"With Community Choices Transportation I am now able to attend Parkland College classes and work."

"CC's rides allow me to go to work, attend training and enjoy social activities when my parents are not available. Later in life when my parents have passed this service will be essential to my everyday living."

# INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## A new chance at Community Life - Mike & Marcy have their own place.

Mike and Marcey are among our newest Community Choices members and newest participants in our Inclusive Community Supports. They came to us on an unusual path. Until recently, Mike and Marcey had been living together in an area nursing home. With the help of a community advocate, they were able to move into their own apartment after over a year in a segregated setting.

Mike and Marcey now have their own space and are able to be in full control of their lives and day to day activities. With the support of Community Choices Transportation they are able to get around town and participate in events they are interested in. Our Community Support team visits them regularly and supports them to

learn skills and strategies to manage their home, helps them attend appointments and run errands, and acts as a support when they might need some troubleshooting.

Living in the community often takes a community. Mike and Marcey are getting the life that they deserve and it took a community to get them there! Three cheers to their advocates, to the services that support their independence, and especially three cheers to them! Hooray for this duo!



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

WE PROVIDE 1:1 SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE TO FIND AND KEEP COMMUNITY-BASED HOUSING, BUILD SKILLS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING AND CONNECTIONS, AND TO NAVIGATE OUR STATE'S COMPLEX WEB OF SOCIAL SERVICES.

- 65 people with I/DD served with 3700 hours of individualized support.
- 80% of family members felt that the program had improved their quality of life
- Personal Achievements: 93% of our participants made progress on their personal goals
- Now a real option for community-based living when parents are no longer able to support
- Personal Development Classes on topics such as: Navigating Conflict in Friendships, Baking 101, Safety in the Community, Tech Safety, & Making Sense of Public Benefits



51 SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES, 4 CO-OP PARTIES, 12 FAMILY SUPPORT AND CO-OP MEETINGS



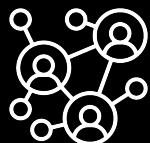
SUPPORT FOR 35 PEOPLE LIVING IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITY HOMES

## CONNECT

WE ARE A HUMAN SERVICES CO-OP THAT SUPPORTS PEOPLE WITH I/DD AND FAMILIES IN FINDING OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT TO FRIENDS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND NEW INTERESTS.

- We reached a record number of members offering 1800 hours of support for relationship & community building
- 100% of our members reported that we provided them with a Supportive Community.
- Our Co-Op is participating in a worldwide, 5 year long study exploring the experiences of people with disabilities and their families balancing formal and natural supports.
- Our Human Rights and Advocacy group is sharing the stories of people with I/DD at local orgs and university classes.

OUR CO-OP: 92 MEMBERS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR 148 FAMILY MEMBERS & AN ADDITIONAL 80 NON-MEMBER PARTICIPANTS



# TRANSPORTATION

**NEW THIS YEAR! WE PROVIDE DOOR TO DOOR RIDES FOR PEOPLE WITH I/DD TO GET TO WORK, RUN ERRANDS, GET TO THE DOCTOR, AND HAVE A FULFILLING LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY. INCLUSION IS BEING ABLE TO SHOW UP.**

- 31 People with I/DD got regular rides to where they needed to go
- Over 80% of the program's participants felt that our transportation services improved their overall quality of life, access to the community, and sense of control and respect in the world.
- In their own words: "The rides were for work only and this is the most reliable transportation my son has received in the 10 years he has been at his job."

**15,173 MILES DRIVEN TO HELP OUR MEMBERS ACCESS THE COMMUNITY**



**1244 RIDES PROVIDED IN THE FIRST YEAR**

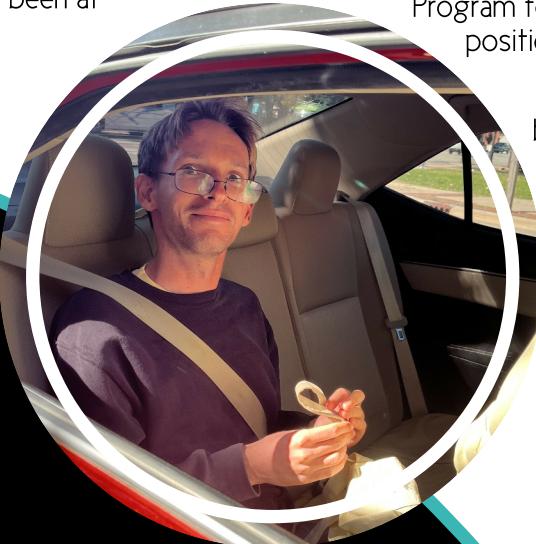


**17 NEW JOBS & 36 ONGOING POSITIONS IN THE COMMUNITY**

# CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

**WE PROVIDE 1:1 SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH I/DD TO FIND AND KEEP COMMUNITY-BASED JOBS BASED ON THEIR SKILLS, INTERESTS, AND TALENTS.**

- 70 people with I/DD use our support for community employment.
- 3500 hours of personalized support for job development, interviews, and job coaching
- 80% of people we've supported to find employment since 2023 are still at their jobs.
- Participants in our Workforce Empowerment Program for first-time job seekers found positions in less than 6 months
- 200: The number of businesses trained on the benefits of inclusive hiring through the LEAP program since it started 9 years ago



# CONNECT

## Our Co-Op in Action – Caleb’s Coffee Club: Friends coming together

For many of us, one of the most meaningful parts of our lives are our close friends. This important part of life is often forgotten by other I/DD services and systems.

But at Community Choices, supporting our members to build these connections is one of our most fundamental goals. One of the best examples of this is of our member-lead Coffee Club.

The Coffee Club is led by one of our members – Caleb. With some support from us and his parents, he brought together a group of acquaintances that soon grew to be great friends.



How did this happen? Through a bi-weekly meet up at a local coffee shop. Here, this group has a chance to talk, laugh, and build the types of bonds that bring us all joy and meaning – and it’s been going strong for over three years! This past year, the group continued to grow and welcome members who were new to our local community.

This Club has sustained because of the genuine connection and friendships that the members have built. But it’s been made much easier with the support that Community Choices has helped to provide. Our Transportation program makes it much easier for members to get to the group. Our cooperative network has allowed the group to meet new members. And our staff are a resource to help with logistics and any troubleshooting that might be needed.

Looking ahead, we’re working with even more members to build their own clubs and forge ongoing friendships.

# CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

From a young age, Taryn knew she wanted to bake for a living. She made her first batch of chocolate chip cookies when she was in middle school and continued to expand her skills from there on out. She likes to bake traditional desserts but experiments with different flavors and recipes, sometimes putting her own unique spin on them.

When she was first ready to hit the job market as an adult, Community Choices helped her find a job with Crossmark where she

prepared samples and got some experience in food service. She was great at this job but was eager to find an opportunity where she could actually bake. Her dream job was to find a full time position in a small local bakery where she could utilize the skills she had and learn new ones.



## Success after a long Job Search – Taryn’s Baking!

We set out partnering with Taryn to make her baking dreams come true, but there were some challenges. The COVID pandemic slowed hiring at many businesses and there were only so many small bakeries in town. But Taryn persisted for more than a year and found just what she was looking for when Regcakes Gluten Free Bakery offered her a baker position in November of 2023. She has been working full time ever since and has learned a lot about gluten free and dairy free baking.

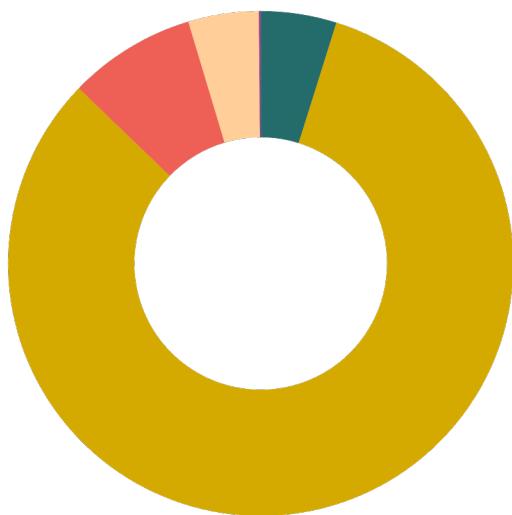
She loves her job as a baker. Taryn said,

**“WORKING AT REGCAKES GLUTEN FREE BAKERY IS A SWEET GIG MAKING DOUGH BY MAKING DOUGH, IT’S THE YEAST I CAN DO.”**

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

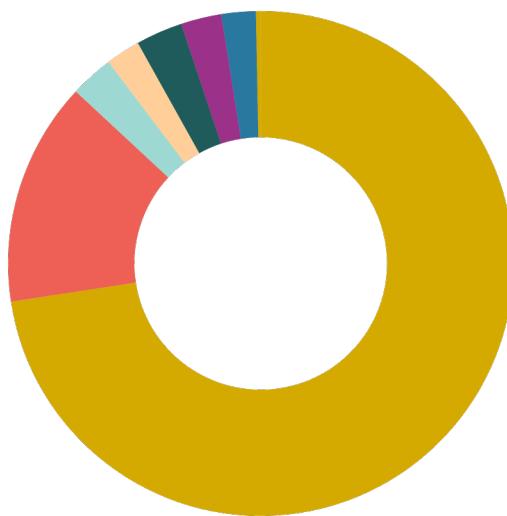
JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024

REVENUE \$940,864



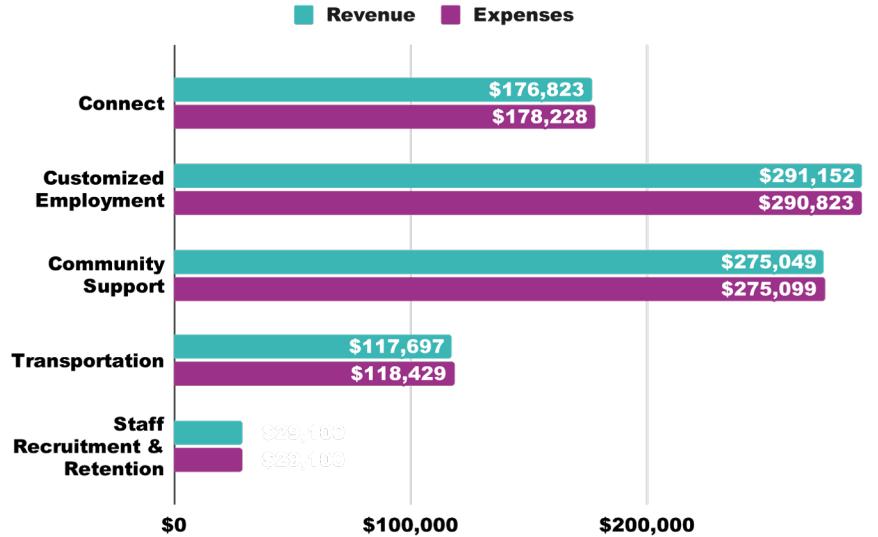
- Contributions & Events - \$45,591
- CCDDB - \$774,845
- IL - Home-Based Services - \$76,824
- IL - Employment Services - \$42,504
- Private Pay & Consulting - \$1,100

EXPENSES \$895,386



- Employee Wages - \$649,849
- Employee Taxes & Benefits - \$128,487
- Professional Fees & Training - \$24,859
- Supplies & Consumables - \$19,762
- Occupancy - \$26,762
- General Operating - \$23,218
- Transportation - \$19,723
- Fundraising Expenses - \$2,726

## PROGRAM COST BREAKDOWN



\* CCDDB - Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board

"COMMUNITY CHOICES HAS HELPED ME MAKE FRIENDS AND ALSO SUPPORTS ME TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY. AND I LIKE BEING ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WHERE I HAVE LEARNED HOW THE FUNDING AND SERVICES WORK AND GET TO GIVE FEEDBACK AND INFLUENCE PROGRAMS!"

- Elizabeth Chippewa,  
Self-Advocate Board Member



CC- COMMUNITY CHOICES  
CC- CARING COMPASSION  
CC- CLOSE CONFIDANTS  
CC- CHARITABLE COURAGE

- Debbie Wood,  
Parent, Board President

**ADVOCATES (\$300-\$999)**

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 Holly Clemons  
 John & Tina Colombo  
 Susan Fowler  
 Janice Gill  
 IL International Order of the Rainbow for Girls  
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 Michelle Haug  
 Laurie Howard  
 Tim & Amy Hughes  
 Mike Ingram  
 Carol Lichtensteiger  
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 Ruth Rhodes  
 Georgiana Schuster  
 Dan & Linda Tortorelli\*  
 Katie Voss  
 Lee Whitacre  
 Tim & Debbie Wood\*

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 Linda Atherton  
 Hagen Barker  
 Wendy Barker  
 Diane Bates  
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 Louis Bergonzi  
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 James & Julie Tortorelli  
 Matthew Turino  
 Katie Voss  
 Kaitland Walworth  
 Anita Stein\* & Harvey Welch  
 Laura Wheaton  
 Amy Woods  
 Nancy Yeagle  
 Daniel Zolfo

\* - Community Choices Board Member

**CHAMPIONS (\$1500+)**

Rich & Karen Eisenmenger  
 Community Shares of Illinois  
 Marc Knowles  
 Philip & Sheila Krein  
 Mike & Alicia Mangham  
 Dan & Linda Tortorelli\*  
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana Champaign  
 Joyce Wakeland

**BENEFACATORS (\$1000-\$1499)**

David & Jamie Cox  
 Marcia Crisp  
 John & Melinda Dabrowski  
 Jen Knapp & Kyle Raymond  
 Joe Lamb of Evergreen Roadworks  
 Orange Krush Foundation of UIUC  
 Tim & Debbie Wood\*

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choices  
YOU  
MAKE  
THIS  
POSSIBLE

Thank You

JOIN US  
TODAY

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[www.communitychoicesinc.org](http://www.communitychoicesinc.org)

