



# Advocates for Access

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***Winter  
2015***



*The staff at Advocates for Access would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year!*

Front Row: Stephanie McGinnis/Youth Services Coordinator, Jeannine McAllister/Executive Director, Ben Gauwitz/ Direct Services Coordinator, Erin Bowen/Office Assistant,

Back Row: Mary Curry Office Manager, Jodi Scott/Director of Operations, Connie Kindade/Transition Coordinator, Amanda Dudgeon/Independent Living Coordinator, Thane Hunt/Personal Assistant

*Empowering people with disabilities to live independently in the community.*

## Advocates for Access Part of Pilot to Keep Individuals out of Nursing Homes

Advocates for Access has joined with the Human Service Center and the Central Illinois Agency on Aging in a pilot program through the State of Illinois Department on Aging. Through this federal initiative called the Balancing Incentive Program (BIP), states are changing their support from institutional care to community-based services and supports. This shift provides more welcomed, effective care in the community for individuals able to remain in their homes. This also results in decreasing costs, which results in a winning solution all the way around!

The organizations involved bring support and services that will help avoid nursing home placements. Some of the services we will provide as a pilot group include:

- Pre-discharge Planning (from the hospital to determine those at risk of nursing home placement)
- Person Centered Planning and Counseling
- Environmental Home Modifications
- Housing Coordination
- Assistive Equipment
- Mental Health Services
- Seamless Referral Systems



This pilot project fits perfectly with Advocates for Access Mission: **“Empowering people with disabilities to live independently in our community”**.

## The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

On July 22, 2014 President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law. The act will have many positive impacts on individuals with disabilities. The act will make improvements to employment and independent living. The purpose of the WIOA is to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, for competitive integrated employment, increase employment opportunities and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. This will be done by encouraging meaningful collaboration between employers, employees and employment programs to increase successful employment placement strategies.

WIOA also places on emphasis on independent living. For the first time in history, Independent Living will have its own administration, the Independent Living Administration (ILA) which will be moved to Health and Human Services under the Administration on Community Living. One of the most exciting pieces for Advocates for Access and other Center for Independent Living around the county is the addition of a 5th core service focused on transition.

Advocates for Access is in need of additional **Personal Assistants** in Woodford and Fulton Counties. If you are interested, or know of a wonderful Personal Assistant that would work in those counties, please contact the office at 309.682.3500.

## Applause....Applause

Advocates for Access would like to thank **Professional Therapy Services (PTS)** for making us their Christmas Charity. **PTS** raised \$3200 to donate to Advocates for Access. These funds help ensure the ongoing availability of our services and programs. We are also excited about our on going collaboration with PTS in assisting individuals with disabilities to receive the necessary services to allow them to live independently in the community.

***THANK YOU PTS!!***

If you are interested in becoming a member of Advocates for Access , you may visit our website at [www.advocatesforaccess.com](http://www.advocatesforaccess.com) or phoning the office at



Advocates for Access continues to work toward providing the opportunity for people to move out of the Nursing Home into their own apartment. Recently, a team from our office, the local Transition Engagement Specialist, with the Central Illinois Agency on Aging, and the Transition Coordinator for Mental Health, with the Human Service Center, gave a presentation at Tazwood, Mental Health Provider, in East Peoria. The presentation explained the collaboration that takes place between the agencies working with people with physical and mental health issues. Tazwood was eager to learn about the steps involved in the program and the support we provide. The future looks promising to have Tazwood as an active participant in reintegrating people back into the community!

The eligibility requirements for this program are:

- The individual has a disability and is between the ages of 18-59
- The individual has lived in a nursing facility for at least 90 days
- The individual meets income guidelines and is found eligible based on a Determination of Needs Assessment

Advocates for Access is looking to enhance one of our Core Services, **Peer Mentoring**. The Independent Living Definition of Peer Counseling/Mentoring is, “Counseling, teaching, information giving, and similar kinds of contact provided by other individuals with disabilities.” If you are interested in being a Peer Mentor, or would benefit from a Peer Mentor, please contact Ben Gauwitz at bgau-



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For the Hard of Hearing  
(1 free phone every 4  
years)



Are you a hunter, but have not been able to hunt due to accessibility limitations? Thane Hunt, the Personal Assistant Coordinator, is collaborating with a couple to allow for accessible hunting trails for individuals with physical disabilities. The couple has land in southern Fulton County and hosted a Dove hunt this past fall. They are looking to host a Turkey hunt in the spring. No hunting experience is necessary to participate in the hunt. If you are interested please contact Thane at [thunt@advocatesforaccess.com](mailto:thunt@advocatesforaccess.com).

**Alternate Formats Available Upon Request**

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**Staff Members**

Jeanine McAllister.....Executive Director  
Jodi Alwan.....Director of Operations  
Erin Bowen.....Office Assistant  
Mary Curry.....Office Manager  
Amanda Dudgeon.....Independent Living Coordinator  
Ben Gauwitz.....Direct Services Coordinator  
Thane Hunt.....Personal Assistant Coordinator  
Connie Kinkade.....Reintegration Coordinator  
Stephanie McGinnis.....Youth Services Coordinator

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