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Mission

We exist so that our members and people with developmental disabilities can be fully included in the community, achieve personal success and enjoy a good quality of life.

Vision

We see a future where every person with a developmental disability is an equal, valued and contributing member of the community.

Core Values

L.I.F.E.

Leadership: We work hard, forge new paths and are leaders (not followers) in the field.

Integrity: We are transparent and accountable for our actions; we have integrity and deliver on our promises.

Fun: We promote positive energy and mutual respect in a warm and welcoming community; we like to have fun and enjoy a balanced life.

Empowerment: We are member-centered and seek every opportunity to empower our members to make their own choices and direct their own lives.

Naming Convention

The Center for Enriched Living, on first use; CEL or The Center afterwards

Background

The Center for Enriched Living (CEL) has been in existence since 1968 to provide people with developmental disabilities opportunities to connect and belong. Since our beginning, CEL has always been ahead of the curve, pushing for inclusion and equality when the social norm was exclusion and isolation for people with developmental disabilities.

Today, our more than 450 members – not guests, not clients – find community and a sense of belonging. Our members of all ages – between 13 and 87 – come from every walk of life, from more than 49 communities throughout Chicagoland. They actively participate in choosing their activities through social, recreational, educational and vocational programs. At CEL, our members are empowered to advocate for themselves and build meaningful relationships with friends and expand their social world.

So often people with disabilities aren't given choices. At CEL, we encourage members to find their voice and make decisions for themselves. We want our members to live their most self-

sufficient, fulfilled life as possible. We are a conduit to connecting them to community resources and learning skills for greater independence. Our members achieve and define their own success, beginning when they choose from a variety of innovative programming and then further determining what they want to gain out of each activity. We watch our members thrive when they are given the opportunity to make choices for themselves.

People with developmental disabilities are people first. People who happen to have a disability. They make friends, fall in love, get married, volunteer, work and some live independently. They don't need or want pity, but rather the opportunities that will help them lead their best lives. We are committed to using people-first language, language that never belittles or demeans, and always puts the whole person before their disability, on a daily basis. We do not define our members by their level of ability and we always see the possibility and potential in everyone who comes to CEL. We strive to provide opportunities for our members to lead that rich and full life.

Brief History

- 1968 Founded by Young Men's Jewish Council at the Deborah Boys Club in Albany Park. Staff social worker Lynne Albanese, integrates two children with developmental disabilities in the program.

- 1984 CEL is at the Kennedy School in Highland Park. No longer under auspices of Young Men's, Center becomes an independent 501 (c) 3 agency. CEL formed a board of directors, planned fundraising strategies, and continued programs without interruption. Agency budget is \$150,000.

- 1987 Moved to 1321 Wilmot Road in Deerfield. Membership grows and CEL serves a broad geographic area. Programs serve children, adults, and seniors with developmental disabilities.

- 1996 Completed our first long range strategic plan, Vision 2000. Directive to find a permanent home for CEL

- 2000 Moved to our 20,000 square foot building at 280 Saunders Road in Riverwoods. Participation has 20 programs throughout the week.

- 2003 Lynne Albanese, the founding Executive Director of CEL retires. Harriet Levy becomes the new Executive Director.

- 2004 CEL remains one of the few life enrichment centers in the country for people with developmental disabilities.

2008	CEL implements a 5-Year Strategic Plan. CEL provides more than 30 programs a week.
2009	CEL partners with the North Suburban Special Recreation Association to start the Enriched Lifestyles for Adults (ELA) program which leads us to create the REACH Day program with 3 members
2014	The Agency budget for FY15 is \$2.5 million dollars. REACH Day Program is almost at capacity with approximately 29 members daily. We serve 515 members total in more than 50 programs a week.
2015	Opening the Doors Capital Campaign to integrate Universal Design throughout the building successfully raises \$3.875 million dollars. Renovation will begin September, 2015

FAQs

What is a developmental disability?

A developmental disability is a severe, lifelong disability attributable to mental, physical and/or sensory impairments, manifested before age 22, including autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Fragile X and others.

How many people in the US have developmental disabilities?

There are approximately 4.5 million individuals with developmental disabilities in the United States.

Where does Illinois rank in providing for people with developmental disabilities?

According to the 2014 Case for Inclusion Report, Illinois ranks 44th in the nation in how well state Medicaid programs serve Americans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Where does CEL receive its funding?

CEL receives no state or federal funding. Approximately, 70% of our funding comes from donations from individuals, major gifts, foundations, corporations, community and civic grants, as well as special events and projects

How many programs does CEL run?

In FY15, CEL ran 63 social and skill programs.

Does CEL provide scholarships?

Yes. Our scholarship fund provides members who ordinarily would be unable to attend programs, the opportunity to participate.