

mission spotlight corner

Willows Way

By Jennifer Beidle

Willows Way, a non-profit organization in St. Charles, has been empowering adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1989.

Founded on the core values of teamwork, respect, integrity and person-centered support, Willows Way provides adults of all abilities with the opportunity to experience a sense of home, a feeling of security and an avenue for personal growth and independence through a variety of programs and services, including:

- **REALITIES** - Realities provides up to eight hours of individualized service weekly to approved adults. Services are designed specific to each client and often include support with budgeting and bill payment, menu planning, comparison shopping, roommate and house searches, help with doctor's visits, advocacy and problem solving supports.

• INDIVIDUALIZED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNITY

INTEGRATION - Individualized Skills Development offers services primarily designed for clients not yet living independently. Many clients also receive Community Integration services with this program. Together, these wraparound services support the individual to build independent living skills while developing friendships and community connections.

- **INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORTED LIVING** - Individualized Supported Living provides customized in-home services for up to 24 hours a day, seven days per week. Supports are developed based on each individual's needs and focus on many areas such as skill development, recreation, social skills building, medical and personal care supports, transportation and household financial supports.

• REACHING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH SOCIAL

ENGAGEMENT (RISE) - RISE offers weekday classes that are designed by participants and qualified staff and focus on social, educational and physical activities that can be accomplished within the local community.

- **PROJECT HEART** - Project HEART provides evening educational classes that focus primarily on health and/or safety-



related topics and may include: cooking and nutrition, exercising, personal hygiene, driver's education, healthy relationships, problem solving, health and the human body, and internet security and privacy issues, to name a few.

Willows Way also supports a variety of clubs that promote social interaction and creativity, including:

- St. Charles Photography Meet Up Group
- Arts & Crafts Club
- Wednesday Walkers Meet Up Group
- Mentor Arts Program



Erin with Photography Club
Mentor Lori (standing)

Participants in the Mentor Arts Program and Photography Club are given the opportunity to showcase their paintings and photographs at Willows Way's annual "Art of Wine" fundraising event in the fall. Art of Wine attendees can view and purchase original art pieces by Willows Way's clients, with the artists receiving 100% of the proceeds from their art sales.

Willows Way is operated by a dedicated staff of employees and volunteers. For more information about Willows Way, visit www.willowsway.org.

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