

Developmental Disabilities Giving Circle



The Giving Circle's mission is "Promoting Innovation and Possibilities." Members are focused on making the world better for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) 18 and older who have completed school. By channeling our collective energy and maximizing our advocacy and experience, we believe we can create change to help our loved ones live the best lives possible.

What is a Giving Circle?

A giving circle is a group of like-minded individuals who pool their money each year and decide together how it should be distributed.

For the DD Giving Circle members, it's about more than writing a check. Parents and family members are facing more concerns than ever before: An increased demand for services; changes in government funding, the aging of family caregivers coupled with longer lifespans for people with I/DD; and the unique challenges and stressors of raising a child with I/DD.

The Giving Circle provides an outlet to collaborate with and learn from other parents and have a say in where money raised by the group is directed. It also includes social,

educational, and engagement opportunities that connect family members and friends of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and provide a more thorough understanding of philanthropy and community issues.

A group of parents, siblings, and advocates of individuals with I/DD approached the Community Foundation about establishing a Developmental Disabilities Giving Circle, which was approved by the Foundation board of directors in February 2014.

Our Grants

The Giving Circle wants to support innovative projects and programs with new approaches to solving existing problems through more effective products, processes, services, technologies, or service models. Since its start, the group has awarded \$151,616 to local nonprofit organizations (see *below*).

Starting in 2020, the Giving Circle embarked on a multi-year project to bring Customized Employment to Rochester so that individuals with I/DD are not left out of the workforce. Customized Employment is competitive, integrated employment for individuals with a significant disability that is based on their unique strengths, needs, and interests. It is designed to meet both the needs of the individual and the employer.

The Giving Circle has hired an experienced consultant from Job Path NYC to train and provide technical assistance to a local nonprofit agency that has the capacity to implement this innovative employment program. The Arc of Monroe was selected by the Giving Circle. By the third and final year, Arc of Monroe will have completed a pilot for a diverse group of individuals with I/DD, developed an operational plan to sustain Customized Employment, and be positioned to expand this innovative opportunity into our region.

Here are grants awarded by the Giving Circle in its first five years:

2019 (\$17,261)

- **Greater Rochester YMCA:** The Connecting All Abilities swim lessons will provide inclusive lessons for 50-plus adults with I/DD at five locations and identify best tools and techniques. The YMCA will connect with current partner agencies in the I/DD community to spread the word about this opportunity. An external consultant will assist YMCA in becoming more accessible and welcoming and establish inclusive member engagement strategies to increase participation in swimming and other recreational, fitness, and wellness activities. \$11,261
- **Livingston Wyoming ARC:** The agency will print and disseminate Comfort And Support Team (CAST) Dragonfly materials and will train 20 agencies that serve individuals with I/DD in Western New York to use the person-centered, end-of-life planning method that it developed. Up to 400 aging individuals with I/DD will be served. \$6,000

2018 (\$41,500):

- **AutismUP:** LinkUp is a career vocation program for 16 individuals that combines soft skills training, professional career consulting, job skills training, and 'Autism 101' training for employers, with live action volunteer work at an employer's location. Eight participants will receive 1:1 support. \$5,000
- **Monroe Housing Collaborative:** The Housing Navigation Program will provide 15-20 adults with I/DD the opportunity for increased independence by developing a comprehensive Person-Centered Individualized Housing Plan and providing training in skills necessary for successful independent living. \$16,500
- **Rochester Rehabilitation Center:** The Tech/Doc Enrichment

Institute will provide 20 adults with I/DD with job-readiness training and career exploration in the emerging document management industry. \$20,000

2017 (\$18,075):

- **Greentopia:** To hire and support two people with I/DD to work in the Green Visions workforce development program from April to October. \$8,000
- **Rochester Accessible Adventures:** To introduce the Pathway to Inclusion training program to local businesses to help them understand how they can be more inclusive so that individuals with a variety of disabilities can participate in active, healthy lifestyle opportunities. \$10,075

2016 (\$51,650):

- **ARC of Livingston-Wyoming:** To introduce the technology of TouchStream Solutions to residents of group homes to help them independently manage their time, appointments, and medication. \$6,340
- **Catholic Charities Community Services:** To implement the Stepping Stones to Employment program that will help as many as 35 individuals explore employment options and technical skills while waiting for long-term employment. \$16,890
- **Prevention 1st:** To develop and launch the Safe at Home project curriculum that will teach targeted skills related to fire prevention and kitchen safety to six to 10 individuals. \$17,240
- **Seneca Cayuga ARC:** To establish a computer assisted art and design lab that will provide up to 40 individuals with physical disabilities the opportunity to create art using specialized software and hardware. \$4,300
- **Wayne ARC:** Introducing the TouchStream Solutions technology to individuals served by the Residential Services department to allow them to live more

independently. \$6,880

2015 (\$23,630):

- **Heritage Christian Services:** To purchase software, hardware, support services, and training from TouchStream Solutions to assist 10 individuals to become more independent with daily living skills. \$10,000
- **School of the Holy Childhood:** To purchase 10 iPad minis and related software to assist 10 to 20 individuals to assess their abilities, skills, and interests, and pursue paid employment in the community. \$7,380
- **Lifetime Assistance:** To purchase TouchStream hardware, software, and support services to assist individuals who live in group settings with daily schedules and health care management. \$6,250

Our Leadership

The Developmental Disabilities Giving Circle is led by a Steering Committee that includes **Mary Holleran, David Krusch, Caitlin Weir, and Joyce Weir.**

Become a member to make a difference in the lives of people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Join before January 31 at any level (*see below*) and you can have a vote in the Giving Circle's grantmaking in the Spring of that year.

Voting Membership Levels

- **Leadership** (\$1,000 or more): Have the option to become a member of the Steering Committee to help lead the decision-making for the group and participate on committees (Grantmaking, Membership or Marketing).
- **Supporter** (\$750): Join one of the committees to learn more about the circle and vote on grants.
- **Sibling/Friend Under Age 40** (\$250): Family members and

friends of individuals with I/DD can join at this rate to vote on grants and serve on one of our committees.

- **Individuals with I/DD (\$100):** Join one of the committees or the Steering Committee to play an integral role in giving circle grantmaking and other activities. At this level, some scholarships are available.

Non-Voting Membership Levels

- **Business/Individual:** If you or your company/organization would prefer to support the Giving Circle by making a donation or giving a gift in memory or honor of someone, it can be in any amount.

All contributions will be used to help individuals with I/DD lead fulfilling, productive, and meaningful lives.

Send a Check: Mail a personal check made out to Rochester Area Community Foundation and Developmental Disabilities Giving Circle in the Memo Line to Rochester Area Community Foundation, 500 East Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607.

Donate Online: Use our secure and easy online form.

All contributions to the Developmental Disabilities Giving Circle are tax-deductible.

Get Involved

The Giving Circle is looking for members who would like to be actively involved in reviewing grants and growing membership to spread the word about the group. To find out more, email Mary Holleran, senior vice president of communications, or call her at 585.341.4351.

The Developmental Disabilities Giving Circle wants to support innovative projects and programs that help adults age 18 and older with intellectual/developmental disabilities

lead fulfilling, productive, and meaningful lives.

Programs or projects receiving support must be measurable, sustainable, widely applicable, and meet the Giving Circle's grant priorities, which are determined by members and can change from year to year.

At this time, the Giving Circle is not accepting applications for grants. Instead, it is working solely on a multi-year Customized Employment project.