

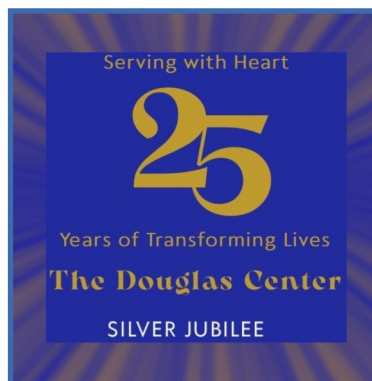


# An Evening of Gratitude and Celebration: Highlights from The Douglas Center's 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Benefit

On the evening of May 8, 2024, The Douglas Center marked a significant milestone with our 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Benefit at the Evanston Golf Club. This unforgettable event was a testament to our quarter-century journey of empowering individuals living with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. Thanks to the unwavering support of our friends, donors, and community partners, the evening was a resounding success, filled with gratitude, celebration, and a shared vision for the future.

The evening began with a warm welcome to approximately 200 guests who gathered to honor The Douglas Center's remarkable journey. Our theme, "Serving with Heart: 25 Years of Transforming Lives," resonated deeply as we shared stories of resilience, growth, and the profound impact we've made in the Chicago metro area.

From our humble beginnings with just two professionals in a 2,500-square-foot facility, The Douglas Center has grown into a cornerstone of support with a team of over 50 dedicated staff members, consultants, interns and volunteers, serving over 100 individuals daily. Our comprehensive community day services, vocational training, developmental rehabilitation, and life skills training have empowered countless individuals with special needs, providing opportunities and choices that were once out of reach.



## Highlights of the Evening:

**Reflections of the Heart:** Our CEO and founder, Rifath Khan, shared heartfelt reflections on her journey and her vision for a program that offers choices and opportunities, empowering individuals with special needs to live more independently with an enriched quality of life. The evening was marked by inspiring speeches and heartfelt testimonials by local dignitaries, including Skokie Mayor George Van Dusen, Board Member David Putrus, Niles Township Trustee Mark Collins, and Omar Khan, Director of Health/Wellness/Administration/Development.

**Entertainment and Engagement:** Attendees enjoyed vibrant performances from the Niles North High School string trio and a moving video presentation highlighting the transformative impact of our services.

**Fundraising Success:** We are thrilled to announce that our "25 Years, 25 Days, \$25,000" campaign, which culminated on the day of the event, was a great success. Alongside this campaign, our silent auction added to the excitement and significantly boosted our fundraising efforts. The combined generosity of our supporters has made a tremendous impact, ensuring that we can continue to provide essential services to those we serve.

**Opportunities and Choices:** A display showcased the many programs, services, and opportunities The Douglas Center offers to our program participants.

**Community Partnerships:** A display highlighted the numerous community partnership collaborations that we engage in to better serve our community.

## Our Heartfelt Thanks

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made this evening possible, especially our sponsors, donors, silent auction donors, and volunteers. A very special thank you to our 25th Anniversary Planning Committee, who worked tirelessly over many months to make this event a great success. Your support and generosity are the lifeblood of our mission. Whether you attended the event, donated, or spread the word, you have made a difference in the lives of our participants.

Our sincere thanks to State Senator Ram Villivalam who presented a proclamation of the State of Illinois honoring The Douglas Center on our 25th Anniversary.

## IN THIS ISSUE

An Evening of Gratitude and Celebration: Highlights from DC 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee	1 & 2
From Social Work to Employee: Promoting the Next Generation	3
Join Us as a Volunteer for our "Art From The Heart " Creations program	4
Save the Date for DC Open House: August 23rd	4
DC Superstars	5
Save time, money and fulfillment costs	6

## The Douglas Center Closing Schedule

- Independence Day: July 4th and 5th
- DC Program Participant Annual Picnic: August 9th
- DC Open House: August 23rd
- Labor Day: September 2nd

(Continued on Page 2)

## An Evening of Gratitude and Celebration (cont'd)

(cont'd from page 1)

Throughout the evening, it was clear that the true celebrated heroes of the past 25 years are our program participants, whose determination and spirit inspire us every day.

### Looking Ahead

The success of our 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Benefit is not just a celebration of our past but a catalyst for our future. With your continued support, we are poised to expand our reach and deepen our impact, providing even more opportunities for empowerment and growth.

Together, let's continue to transform lives and build a future of inclusivity and empowerment. Stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to get involved. Thank you for being an integral part of The Douglas Center family.

For more information about our ongoing programs and how you can support our mission, please visit our website: [www.thedouglascenter.org](http://www.thedouglascenter.org)



*The Douglas Center Celebrates 25 Years of Serving with Heart and Transforming Lives*



*The Douglas Center Staff*



*The Douglas Center 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Planning Committee*



*The Douglas Center "Art From The Heart" Creations Product Display*



*"Expressions of the Heart" Hand-Painted Wood Sculpture by The Douglas Center Program Participants*



*Music by: Members of the Niles North High School Orchestra*

## From Social Work Intern to Employee: Promoting the Next Generation

The Douglas Center is proud to announce the hiring of two of our exceptional social work student interns as full-time Case Managers. Sundus Wahdan and Lucy Yunker have been integral parts of The Douglas Center Social Work Internship Program, under the guidance and leadership of David Banas, LCSW, our Director of Program & Clinical Services. Now in its fourth year, this program has successfully nurtured the talents of twenty remarkable individuals who have completed their internships with us. Our commitment to developing the next generation of social workers includes mentorship, close supervision, and field instruction. Our interns work directly with our program participants, gaining invaluable real-world experience in a variety of roles.

### Meet Our Newest Team Members...

#### Sundus Wahdan

Sundus completed her undergraduate degree at UIC with a bachelor's in Applied Psychology. She graduated from Loyola University of Chicago in May 2024, with a Master's in Social Work, specializing in Advanced Micro Clinical Practice. "I chose The Douglas Center as my internship site because I wanted to advance my social work skills with new populations and learn to apply clinical and case management skills," stated Sundus. "I started my internship at The Douglas Center in September 2023 and was recently hired as a full-time Case Manager. It has been a fantastic experience working with The Douglas Center community and learning so much about the team."

#### Lucy Yunker

Lucy graduated from Loyola University of Chicago in May 2023 with a bachelor's degree in Social Work and completed her Master's in Social Work with a specialization in Advanced Micro Clinical Practice in May 2024. "I picked The Douglas Center for my internship to expand my skills in case management, 1:1 engagement, counseling, group work, and gain more experience working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Lucy. "I interned at The Douglas Center for my second-level placement and transitioned to an employee in January 2024 when a Case Manager position became available. I accepted the position because I enjoy working with the participants, supervisors, colleagues, and the overall environment. A fun fact about me is that I have four cats with sushi-themed names. Also, I was a barista for over seven years, which explains my love for coffee."

#### About Our Internship Program

The Douglas Center Internship Program continues to thrive through partnerships with esteemed local universities, including Loyola University, Northeastern University, Northwestern University, University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Dominican University and Capella University. We are currently accepting applications from students attending these universities.

Social Work interns are vital members of our team, contributing significantly to The Douglas Center's mission of enhancing the lives of adults with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities by improving their independent living skills and enriching their quality of life. Our internship program offers interns invaluable hands-on experience, enabling them to apply their academic training while working alongside seasoned professionals. This approach allows them to meaningfully contribute to our mission while developing essential skills that will shape their future careers and personal interests.

We welcome BSW and Master-level Social Work students eager to gain hands-on experience working with adults living with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. Our internship curriculum covers key areas of practice within the social work field, providing students with opportunities to refine and apply their knowledge and skills. If you or someone you know is interested in applying for an internship with The Douglas Center, please contact David Banas, Director of Program & Clinical Services, at [dbanas@thedouglascenter.org](mailto:dbanas@thedouglascenter.org) for more information.

Join us in congratulating and welcoming Sundus Wahdan and Lucy Yunker to The Douglas Center team!



*The Douglas Center welcomes two of our exceptional social work student interns to our team!*



### *We are Social Workers*

WE PERSIST WHEN OTHERS GIVE UP. WE BELIEVE IN GROWTH EVEN WHEN IT DOESN'T APPEAR ATTAINABLE. WE ADVOCATE FOR THOSE SOCIETY NEGLECTS. WE SEE PEOPLE AS THE HUMAN BEINGS THEY ARE.

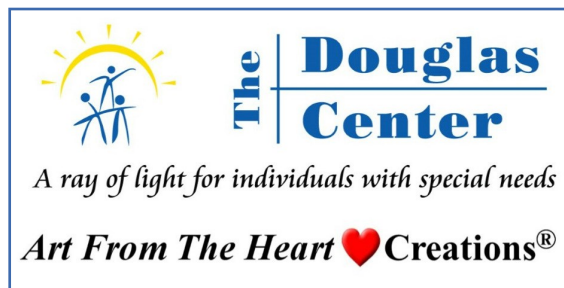
## Join Us as a Volunteer and Make a Difference in the Art From The Heart ♥ Creations

At The Douglas Center, our volunteers are the heart and soul of our “Art From The Heart” Creations program. We thrive on the unique skills and capabilities each volunteer brings to our community, and we are always in need of more dedicated individuals to join our team.

### Why Volunteer with Us?

As a volunteer, you will:

- Assist our facilitators in the studio with the art-making process.
- Learn new art skills and guide our participants living with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities in mastering these skills.
- Help with prep work, clean-up, one-on-one assistance, special projects, and much more.



### Volunteer Opportunities:

- Open to adults 18 years or older.
- Volunteer hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 or 3:00 PM in the Art program.

We are looking for volunteers who share our passion for helping our participants expand their creativity and produce beautiful works of art from the heart.

**How to Apply:** Become one of our valued volunteers and make a meaningful impact. For more information, please contact our Office Manager, Anna O'Dwyer at [aodwyer@thedouglascenter.org](mailto:aodwyer@thedouglascenter.org) or 847-674-1921 x 229 .

### About Art From The Heart ♥ Creations®

“Art From The Heart” Creations® is a participant-based program launched by The Douglas Center. It provides individuals living with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in creating, producing, and selling their own products. This program helps participants develop marketable skills essential for their business endeavors while creating unique products for sale.

## Save the Date: The Douglas Center Open House: 2024

**SAVE THE DATE:** We invite the public to The Douglas Center Open House on Friday, August 23, 2024, from 9 AM to 3 PM at 3445 Howard Street, Skokie, IL 60076.

- Learn about the many challenges faced by people with special needs and the achievements made in working toward living an independent life.
- Learn firsthand how The Douglas Center has for the past 25 years and continues its mission of transforming the lives of those living with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities.

Save the Date and Stay Tuned for Further Details!

*Open House*

## ★★★ *The Douglas Center “Super Stars”* ★★★

The Douglas Center is proud to announce the six staff members who have earned the recognition of DC Super Stars for the past year.

Each year, The Douglas Center presents its Star Performers Awards to celebrate outstanding performances by our dedicated staff members. The Douglas Center has a monthly program, “DC Bucks”, which tracks the punctuality, attendance, and paperwork completion of each staff member. Staff who meet the criteria in all three categories receive DC Bucks for the month, which can be redeemed for cash. At the end of the year, staff members who have met the criteria consistently throughout the year are awarded a “Star Performance” pin and an additional monetary award.

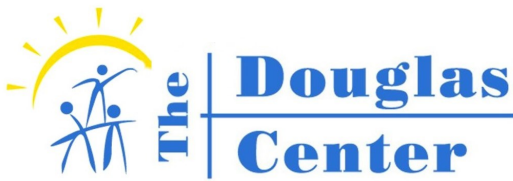
This year’s DC Bucks award recipients are:

- David Banas, Director of Program and Clinical Service
- Vincent Pacis, Case Manager
- Maria Bernardo, Program Coordinator
- Toluwalope Feyisitan, Program Coordinator
- Modinat Akorede, Sewing Supervisor, (DSP)
- Awobusuyi Adebukola, Direct Support Professional (DSP)



**CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE. YOUR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION ARE TRULY APPRECIATED AND INSPIRE US ALL!**

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A ray of light for individuals with special needs

Established in 1999

3445 Howard Street, Skokie, IL 60076  
P: (847) 674-1921; F: (847) 679-1823  
[www.thedouglascenter.org](http://www.thedouglascenter.org)



The Douglas Center serves to assist adults living with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities in improving their independent living skills and enrichment of their quality of life.

OUR MISSION

## SAVE TIME, MONEY & FULFILLMENT COSTS

The Manufacturing Division at **The Douglas Center** procures piecework contracts in partnerships with manufacturers, businesses and individuals in the Chicago metro area. Rest assured, all work is carefully inspected by quality control specialists prior to each shipment. The special needs adults in our program improve their work skills, while providing a valuable service.

The Commercial/Industrial Sewing Division is an efficient option for many industrial and personal sewing ventures. The Douglas Center, in partnership with the AbilityOne program has held sewing contracts with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) in addition to an increasing number of sewing contracts from the private sector.

Our Work Center offers a variety of services that might otherwise be costly. We welcome the opportunity to discuss your needs and to provide a free quote.

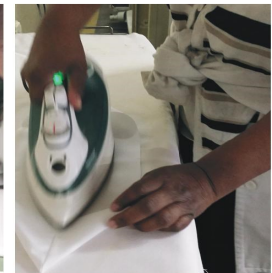
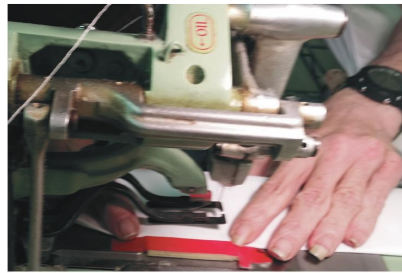
**Call us to find out how we can help you save on manufacturing and fulfillment costs.**

**Contact Samantha Pieroni, Employment Development Specialist at**

**[spieroni@thedouglascenter.org](mailto:spieroni@thedouglascenter.org) or via phone: 847-674-1921**



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### A FEW OF OUR SERVICES:

- > Poster Rolling
- > Packaging
- > Assembly
- > Labeling
- > Sort & Collating
- > Shrink-wrapping
- > Commercial/Industrial Sewing
- > Custom Specialty Projects



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