



A Newsletter from The Douglas Center: Spring 2022

# The Douglas Center Honored to be Key Partner in Coming Together 2022: Sharing Experiences of Disability

Coming Together, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> season, is a community partnership in Niles Township among organizations in Skokie, Lincolnwood, Morton Grove and Niles, Illinois. The project builds bridges of knowledge and understanding among people of different groups and ages. Each year Coming Together highlights a different topic, with an emphasis on literacy, cross-cultural awareness and community-building. In the 2022 Coming Together season, The Douglas Center will join forces with community members and expert organizations, to bring focus to the voices, experiences and talents of members of the community with disabilities across Niles Township, as well as advocacy and support resources available to all community members.

## About Coming Together 2022: Sharing Experiences of Disability

For nearly one out of every five Illinois residents, disability is a part of everyday life. Yet, the experiences, challenges and successes of people with special needs goes virtually unnoticed. Through multimedia platforms and a variety of public events, Coming Together 2022 will explore four broad categories of disabilities: learning disabilities, physical disabilities, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and mental health disabilities.

The American with Disabilities Act celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the first few months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, people with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19. This community has experienced a rise in reported harassment, assault and false representation of the disability community. Coming Together 2022 is focused on building a community in which every person can live their fullest life. Niles Township is fortunate to have professional organizations dedicated to assisting its residents with disabilities in leading meaningful and productive lives.

## The Douglas Center Ability Lab: March 25, 2022

The Douglas Center is honored and proud to be a key partner for Coming Together 2022. Disability is a commonly used word when describing individuals with intellectual or developmental impairment and/or delay. At The Douglas Center, we have cultivated an environment that highlights the world **ABILITY** within the word **DISABILITY**. On March 25<sup>th</sup>, we invite the public to our center for a hands-on experience showcasing what many of these ABILITIES may look like. Our Ability Lab will provide an opportunity to understand and experience the many challenges our community faces and how they can work toward living a more independent life.

### The Douglas Center Ability Lab

Date: March 25, 2022

Time: 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

(Tours and hands-on activities available throughout the day. Attend at your convenience)

In 2020 the US. Bureau of Statistics recorded a further decline in the employment rate of people with disabilities to 17.9%. Imagine living in a world where your chances for a meaningful life with meaningful work seemed out of reach. Our participants come to us with expectations of learning new skills, employment and income opportunities, developing new friendships, feeling respected and of achieving their own level of independent living. Upon arrival, many are disengaged socially and productively. However, because of the varied programming provided by The Douglas Center every day our staff is heartened to witness the many examples of growth and courage in the lives of those we serve.

## IN THIS ISSUE

DC Key Partner in Coming Together: 2022	1 & 2
DC Expands Impact of Our Mission	2
DC Abilities Lab	3
DC Participants Giving Back	4
DC Celebrates 23rd Anniversary	5
DC Hosts "Spring Art Fair"	5
DC Announces Employee Promotions	6
DC Electronic Recycling Program	7



The Douglas Center Key Partner in Coming Together 2022:

## The Douglas Center Closing Schedule

- Closed for Participants: March 25th
- Good Friday: April 15th
- Memorial Day: May 30th
- In-Service Day: June 17th
- Independence Day: July 4th
- In-Service Day: August 26th



## The Douglas Center Honored to be Key Partner in Coming Together 2022: Sharing Experiences of Disability

*(continued from page 1)*

Participants of The Douglas Center are able to experience fuller lives, enhanced and enriched by the programs and services our center provides including employment opportunities and training, community and social integration, relationship building and so much more! At The Douglas Center lives are being changed every day.

Join the virtual "Coming Together" Opening Ceremony on Thursday, March 6, 2022 on the [Coming Together YouTube channel](#). For more information on Coming Together 2022: Sharing Experiences of Disability, visit their website: <https://www.comingtogether.in/>

**To attend The Douglas Center Ability Lab event please register at:** <https://forms.gle/i1xs1VqdyCWFPfEZ9>. **For additional information on this event contact:** [omar@thedouglascenter.org](mailto:omar@thedouglascenter.org)

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## The Douglas Center Expands the Impact of Our Mission

The Douglas Center mission illustrates our commitment to assist in the improvement and enrichment of lives of those with special needs. In keeping with our mission, we are pleased to be able to support another segment of our community in urgent need...the refugee population crisis. Our center is honored to have welcomed several refugees from various organizations by providing them with an opportunity to work in our sewing department. This opportunity will provide them with employment and a place to increase their skills in order to improve their lives while they are in the process of resettling. The Douglas Center is delighted to partner with several local refugee assistance organizations.





**THE DOUGLAS CENTER**  
**PRESENTS**

A "COMING TOGETHER" EXPERIENCE

# ABILITIES LAB

Highlighting the ABILITIES in the word DISABILITIES

Welcome to people of all ages and abilities

**Raffles and prizes will be available!**



**MARCH 25TH, 10 AM TO 6 PM**

**AT THE DOUGLAS CENTER**

**3445 W HOWARD ST, SKOKIE, IL 60076**

Come enjoy a hands-on Douglas Center experience!

Register for the event



Check out our Website



\*Co-Sponsored by the Village of Skokie's Human Relations Commission

## Participants of The Douglas Center Giving Back

The Douglas Center continually seeks out new opportunities and collaborative projects within the community for our program participants. These collaborations include volunteering, art projects, civic work opportunities, etc. Assisting in the community provides our participants with a sense of pride, responsibility and service. The following are examples of some of the many opportunities undertaken by our program participants.

### Volunteering at Niles Township Community Clothing Closet

Our program participants volunteer every Monday morning at the Community Clothing Closet to help organize, fold, sort, hang coats and clothing that have been donated. In giving back, they have an opportunity to practice the retail job skills they have learned and can add to their resumes for future employment within the community.



### Niles Township Food Pantry

Our participants volunteer every week at the Niles Township Food Pantry to assist in stocking shelves, unpacking boxes of grocery items, sort and bag vegetables as well as cleaning the shelves and breaking down of empty boxes.



### Lauth Park

The Douglas Center has assumed responsibility for Lauth Park located at 8031 Keystone Avenue in Skokie. Each week from May through October, our program participants travel to clean up Lauth Park and contribute to keeping it beautiful. Clean-up may include litter pick-up, spreading mulch, etc. All needed tools and materials are supplied by the Skokie Park District.

### Skokie Public Library Homebound Book Delivery

In collaboration with the Skokie Public Library our program participants serve the community by assisting with the delivery of books, CDs and DVDs to homebound residents in the Village of Skokie.



### Maintaining our On-site Library

Our participants maintain our on-site library by categorizing and color coding them prior to being shelved. Books are organized by color according to reading level and then by the author's last initial. This system provides everyone an opportunity to assist in keeping our library organized. In addition to reading, our library is a place to share stories and spend time with their peers.



# The Douglas Center Celebrates 23 Years of Service in the Community

The Douglas Center is celebrating its 23rd Anniversary of service in providing community day programs and services to individuals with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. Since its inception on March 8, 1999, the center has held to the initial vision of Founder and CEO, Rifath Khan for a program that provides people with special needs with choices and opportunities tailored to the individual needs of each participant. As a result of the dedication and commitment to this vision, The Douglas Center has witnessed the growth and development of countless individuals it has had the privilege to serve.

One example of the many success stories of The Douglas Center is William D. William came to The Douglas Center in 2001. Through hard work and perseverance, he has worked in our Work Center and progressed to our Commercial Sewing Division. Today, William works in a local Walmart store in the community. "I was very excited to get this job," stated William. "Working at The Douglas Center helped me to prepare for working in the community". When asked what he would want people to know about adults with disabilities, William commented, "Just treat everyone the same. It is helpful when people are patient and understanding when they interact with persons with disabilities in the community."



*William D. acquires his first job in the community*



The Douglas Center would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supporters and donors. Your continued support of our mission and work has created a better world for William and for every program participant of The Douglas Center. Over the next few weeks, we will reach out via phone to personally thank our current and past donors for their generosity through the years.

"I am so humbled to have had the privilege of doing this work for the past 23 years. It has been my honor to lead the center in its mission and growth. I am grateful to all who have been a part of The Douglas Center through their support of our mission," stated Rifath Khan, CEO.

## The Douglas Center Hosts Annual "Spring Art Fair"

The Douglas Center is hosting our annual "Spring Art Show and Sale" ...and just in time for spring planting, Mother's Day, Teacher Appreciation gift giving...and perhaps a little something for yourself! Our art show will feature beautiful works of art made by program participants in "Art From The Heart" Creations program.

**April 25 -29<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**9 am to 4 pm**

**Location: The Douglas Center:**

**3445 Howard Street; Skokie, Illinois 60076**

Come see our latest selection of products including handmade mosaic pots and mirrors, greeting cards, succulents in mosaic planters, coasters and so much more!

"Art From The Heart" Creations is program participant-based business launched by The Douglas Center. This program provides participants living with disabilities hands-on experience in the creation, production and selling of their own art products. This venture enables the participants to earn income from the sale of their artwork, attain a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem and assistance in achieving greater independence in life. **A portion of the proceeds of these art creations goes directly to the individual that created it.**



The public is invited to attend our Spring Art Show and Sale. The beautiful pieces on display would make a wonderful gift for you or someone special. Stop by and browse our show for a great gift! For more information please contact The Douglas Center at 847-674-1921.



# The Douglas Center Announces Employee Promotions Expanding its Leadership Team

## *Congratulations* On Your Promotion!



*Rifath Khan, MS, QIDP  
Founder, President, CEO*



*David Banas, LCSW, QIDP  
Director of Program &  
Clinical Services*



*Elizabeth Kristiansen, BS, QIDP  
Director of Administrative  
Services*



*Omar Khan, MD, QIDP  
Director of Health & Wellness,  
Administration & Development*



*Maria Bernardo  
Program Coordinator*



*Tolu Feyistan  
Program Coordinator*



*Anna O'Dwyer  
Office Manager*



**The Douglas  
Center**

*A ray of light for individuals with special needs*

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

# DO YOU HAVE OLD ELECTRONICS?

**Bring your electronic waste to  
The Douglas Center  
and we will dispose of it safely and  
responsibly.**

**Drop off your electronic items at our location:  
3445 Howard Street, Skokie Illinois 60076  
Monday—Friday: Call for Drop-Off  
Appointment**

*Please note: We do not accept CRT monitors or televisions.*