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# CIDSO NEWS

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## Kristen's Country Success Story

Kirsten comes to work as a beacon of springtime. She is full of energy and enthusiasm, and is ready for her weekly touch base meeting. In the summer of 2012, Kirsten began working at COUNTRY Financial as an intern the Brokerage Department. Before coming to Marcfirst Supported Employment, Kirsten had little to no work experience. She received this internship through the HALO program at Heartland Community College, a two year certificate program for adults with disabilities at Heartland Community College, and was supervised by Marcfirst job coaching. This coaching continued the successful and flourishing relationship that Marcfirst and COUNTRY have shared since 2009. Kirsten was so successful during her summer internship that COUNTRY offered her a permanent position in January 2013. "She fits right in here," says Macaria, a manager of Customer Service Operations at COUNTRY Financial.

Kirsten's other managers at COUNTRY are just as happy to have her as a member of their team. The group is not afraid to testify to her great qualities. They describe her as entertaining, a quick learner, inspirational, smart, organized, and great for the area. When COUNTRY partnered with Marcfirst to hire Kirsten, she was provided with a daily job coach to ensure that she continues to shine at her job. During her 20 hour work week, Kirsten can be found in the office doing an array of tasks. She takes care of late fee waivers for COUNTRY policy holders, opens, sorts, and delivers mail, completes data entry tasks, and anything else assigned to her.

When asking Kirsten what her favorite part of working at COUNTRY is, she cannot choose just one thing. "I like everything," says Kirsten, "I love my work, meeting new people and getting dolled up." Her energy seems to be contagious around the office. Not only does she work at COUNTRY, but she volunteers in the community including the Discovery Museum, and participates in local SOAR activities.

Through Marcfirst's partnership with COUNTRY Kirsten is able to be an inspiration in both the workplace and the community, making her an excellent example of a Marcfirst Supported Employment success story. She appreciates the respect that she is given in at her workplace and is very grateful for her supporters and the opportunity to continue working at COUNTRY after her internship. "I just want to say thank you for all the support I get from the community," Kirsten says with a smile.

If you are interested in learning more about Marcfirst's Supported Employment program, you can visit contact Jacob Thelander at [jacobthelander@marcfirst.org](mailto:jacobthelander@marcfirst.org)



Join us for the sensory friendly movie, “Epic” on Saturday, June 8 2013 at 10:00 AM. This “sound down/lights up” movie is hosted by the Starplex Theater in Normal. Starplex offers one **child’s** admission free with every paying adult. Paying adults and children’s ticket prices are \$6.00 each.



The Penguin Project of McLean County will be presenting “Peter Pan” this June 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00PM and June 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00PM. All performances are at Stroud Auditorium at University High School in Normal. This unique theatrical experience combines artists with special needs and their same aged peers for a production that is sure to impress!

## In Honor of our Dads

I have been searching high and low for some touchy/feely feel-good kind of article to share in honor of our wonderful Dads this Father’s Day. You will all be relieved to know that I could not find any. In honor of our “get ‘er done” kind of Dads, here are some websites devoted to Dads. No discussion of feelings, just some practical “how to” information.

### D.A.D.S. Dads Appreciating Down Syndrome

The 3 foundational pillars of D.A.D.S. are Support, Action and Fellowship. You won’t find us in a church basement drinking warm coffee and whining about having children with Down syndrome. Instead, you’ll find us out in the community coaching our kids’ sports teams, participating in our children’s IEPs, volunteering at local Down syndrome fund-raising events, and even sponsoring fund-raising events of our own. [www.dadsnational.org](http://www.dadsnational.org)

### All Pro Dad

All Pro Dad is Family First’s innovative program helping men to become better fathers. All Pro Dad has 50 NFL spokesmen, multiple events with NFL teams, 1,000 All Pro Dad’s Day chapters, and Play of the Day daily emails that reach 40,000 fathers each day. [www.allprodad.com](http://www.allprodad.com)

### The Father’s Network:

#### A Powerful Voice for Fathers and Families of Children with Special Needs

The Washington State Fathers Network (WSFN) connects men with other dads, resources, information and education, plus opportunities for “all family” celebrations. Focus is on assisting fathers as they become more competent and compassionate caregivers for their children with special needs. WSFN is the only regional program in the United States and Canada fully devoted to fathers of children with special health care needs and developmental disabilities. Since 1986 it has opened new doors of hope for thousands of men and their families, providing them with support and resources to be effective, nurturing dads. [www.fathersnetwork.org](http://www.fathersnetwork.org)

### D4SK: Dads 4 Special Kids

An organization dedicated to helping men that have a child with special needs in their lives. We provide an array of on-line resources, coupled with group activities that include real life personal experiences from other men. We offer invaluable information, encouragement and support to men who are striving to improve, enrich, and heal their own lives, and who are determined to provide their best to a child with special needs. Our specialty is providing Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan training and ongoing support. Contact us to learn how you can get involved and start making a difference in the lives of the people you love most. [www.dads4specialkids.com](http://www.dads4specialkids.com)



## Aging and Down Syndrome: A Healthy & Well-Being Guidebook

Put together by the National Down Syndrome Society, this is a beautiful resource for families, professionals, direct caregivers or anyone concerned with the general welfare of an adult with Down syndrome.

If you would like this publication at no charge, please send your name, address, and number of copies you would like to: [info@cidos.org](mailto:info@cidos.org)

## Coming Soon!

CIDSO Open  
June 1<sup>ST</sup>

Playgroup at the Zoo  
June 1st

Penguin Project's *Peter Pan*  
June 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>

Sensory Friendly Movie  
Starplex Theater  
June 8<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 am

CIDSO Board Meeting  
July 1<sup>ST</sup> @ 6:30 pm

CIDSO Picnic  
August 25<sup>th</sup>

CIDSO Buddy Walk  
September 28<sup>th</sup>

CIDSO Board Meeting  
October 7<sup>th</sup> @ 6:30pm

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### We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.cidso.org](http://www.cidso.org)

## About Our Organization

The Central Illinois Down Syndrome Organization (CIDSO) is a not-for-profit organization of families and interested persons working to increase public awareness, support families, and improve opportunities for those touched by Down syndrome. Established in 1974 to act as a support service, we serve Bloomington, Normal, and the McLean County area. Our organization is the oldest Down syndrome parent group in Illinois and the second oldest in the nation.

## New Parent Outreach

The process of acceptance begins as soon as Down syndrome is suspected. To support parents and extended family during this time, a parent outreach member will gladly make hospital or home visits. Informational packets are also available to new parents. Parent Outreach Members, *Brenda & Kevin Harms*, (309) 378-2388 and *Rick & Jennifer Bauersfeld*, (309) 874-2038, can be contacted any time.

## Enrichment/Participation Fund

This fund is designed to enrich the lives of those born with Down syndrome and promote community involvement/participation. It is available to any person with Down syndrome regardless of involvement/participation in CIDSO. Applications are reviewed at the quarterly board meetings and must be received by CIDSO at least 10 days prior to the board meeting. Additional details and applications can be found in the "Resource" section of the CIDSO website. <http://cidso.org/resources.asp>

## Disclaimer Policy

The editor of this newsletter writes as a non-professional. CIDSO does not promote or recommend any therapy, treatment, institution, political affiliation or professional system and any information contained herein shall not imply such. Please discuss specific concerns with a professional.

