



# INDEPENDENCE HEALTH & THERAPY

## From Volunteer to Client: Clare's Inspiring Journey to Independence with Independence Health & Therapy

For 56 years, Clare served as a dedicated nurse at a local hospital system, and periodically volunteered for Independence Health & Therapy. However, a few years ago, life threw her a curveball when a personal injury left her paralyzed from the waist down. When she left the hospital, she couldn't even wiggle her toes. Her husband had to move her with the help of a device called a sit-to-stand lift. She needed assistance with everything from bathing to using the bathroom. Clare had gone from being a caregiver to needing care herself.

Clare faced roadblocks in her recovery journey, dealing with organizations unwilling to help due to her wheelchair-bound status or reluctance to work with Medicaid clients. In March 2022, Clare found a supportive ally in IHT.

IHT's physical therapists set thoughtful and challenging goals for Clare, supporting her while respecting her limits. Clare emphasizes the positive atmosphere at IHT, saying, "The staff are wonderful people. They listen, they are kind and compassionate, and they're very encouraging."

Her family is so pleased with how far she has come. "This facility has helped me to become more independent," she says. She can now shower, transfer to bed, use the bathroom, and cook independently again. Clare donated her sit-to-stand lift back to IHT, where it has found a new purpose in helping a pediatric client.

Now Clare can walk over 100 feet in six minutes using two canes. Her goals now include leaving her wheelchair behind and walking with just one cane. She wants to debunk misconceptions about organizations accepting public aid, assuring others that IHT is clean, equipped with quality gear, and boasts a top-notch staff.



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Beyond therapy, Clare values the friendships she has formed with IHT staff. She shared a story about PTA Shannon volunteering on her day off to help Clare navigate two steps at an offsite function.

Clare has become a passionate advocate for IHT, sharing her story in the community. Her journey showcases IHT's commitment to promoting independence and well-being, proving that with the right support, transformative recoveries are possible.



## Save the Date for the Masters-- Full Viewing Event

"Masters Full"  
Viewing Event

INDEPENDENCE HEALTH & THERAPY  
PRESENTS THE ANNUAL

*Masters-- Full Viewing Event*

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024  
12:30-5:00 PM

Held at Bull Valley Golf Club

Independence Health & Therapy

## A Message of Gratitude from John Buckley

Friends, we are overwhelmed with gratitude and joy for the incredible support we've received during our year-end fundraising campaign. Your generosity has made a profound impact, and we are delighted to share the remarkable news—we have raised nearly \$20,000!

This achievement is a testament to the compassion and kindness within our community, and it reinforces our shared commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve. Your contribution will play a vital role in enabling Independence Health & Therapy to continue our mission of promoting independence, improving lives, and providing comprehensive care, education, and advocacy.

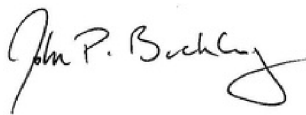
Whether you've been a longstanding supporter or joined us recently, please know that your belief in our cause has a direct and meaningful impact. The funds raised will support our diverse range of services, including adult day programming, memory care services, behavioral health services, and various therapies. Furthermore, your commitment to inclusivity, allowing us to extend these services regardless of our clients' ability to pay, is a beacon of hope and accessibility in our community.

Independence Health & Therapy would not be where it is today without the incredible support of donors like you. Your generosity fuels our efforts, and we are inspired by the positive change we can create together.

As we embark on a new year filled with possibilities, please accept our deepest thanks for being an integral part of our journey. Your kindness is a gift that truly keeps on giving, and we look forward to sharing the impact of your support in the months to come.

Wishing you a joyous and fulfilling new year!

With heartfelt appreciation,



John P. Buckley  
Executive Director

Thank You



## Navigating Winter Blues: Expert Tips from Behavioral Health Manager, Dr. Shannon Hart

As we find ourselves deep into months of cold and snow, our Behavioral Health Manager, Dr. Shannon Hart, PHD, LCSW, shares expert insights to overcome the challenges of the season. Emphasizing the importance of fresh air, natural light, and engaging activities, Dr. Hart provides practical tips to support our mental well-being during the long winter days in Illinois.

**1. Embrace the Winter Air:** "In the winter months, we are tempted to stay inside, wrapped in a blanket. Try to get out into fresh air at least once every day! You don't need to run a marathon—a walk around the block (be careful of ice and snow!) or even just a walk to the mailbox can help. When you are outside, take some deep breaths to give your lungs some fresh air."

**2. Light Up Your Days:** "If you need to stay inside due to weather or physical limitations, consider using a lightbox or full-spectrum light bulbs. They are available in most stores and online. Time in front of them each day can make a significant difference."

**3. Maintain Sleep Routines:** "Try to keep your typical sleep routines, even when it's dark in the morning. If you can sleep with your curtains open to allow the natural light to wake you, it will keep your circadian clock on schedule. And if it's sunny—open those curtains and let all that sunlight in! Our brains need to have as much light as we can give them. And speaking of sunshine—on those sunny days (they do happen!), get outside as much as possible to allow for some Vitamin D. Standing on your patio or driveway and just breathing on a sunny day can make a huge difference!"



**Dr. Shannon Hart, PHD, LCSW**

**4. Keep Your Brain Active:** "If you are stuck inside, try a new hobby or one you haven't done in a while—remember how much you used to enjoy... needlepoint? Oil painting? Commit to reading a new book every month...keeping our brains busy is the key to keeping them healthy."

**5. Reach Out and Connect:** "As always, if you find yourself feeling down or losing energy or at all hopeless, please remember to reach out to someone! 988 is the number to call if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Otherwise, call a friend or relative or seek help from a counselor or support group. Don't let the winter months make you feel isolated—you aren't alone!"

Try out some of Dr. Hart's tips and see what impact they have on your mood and energy levels. Taking proactive steps for our mental health empowers us to embrace the season with a positive mindset.

## Adult Day Program Updates

### Compassionate Touch Workshop

In keeping with our value of **radical collaboration**, Independence Health & Therapy hosted a guest speaker from Mercy Health Hospice to teach a workshop on Compassionate Touch® to our therapies and Adult Day Program staff. Compassionate Touch® is an approach combining skilled touch and specialized communication shown to prevent stress reactions for people living with dementia and enhance quality of life for those in later stages of life. One staff member commented, “That was really good! It was very informative and I learned new strategies to put in my ‘toolbox’ to assist me in caring for our clients.”



### Dementia Education Series

Independence Health & Therapy has joined a coalition of community organizations seeking to work collaboratively to share knowledge and educate about dementia. Our Day Program manager Christina Murphy previously spoke at this series on the topic of Communication in Dementia. The group will be expanding its reach and has plans for future sessions.



### Expanded Hours and Locations for Caregiver Support Groups

A core value of Independence Health and Therapy is **care for the family as well as the client**. As such, IHT now offers four unique caregiver support groups, all with newly expanded hours. These groups are offered free of charge to anyone in the community providing care for a loved one and are led by an IHT mental health provider. Groups are held in:

- Crystal Lake (New!)
- Huntley
- Woodstock
- Sun City Huntley (Residents-only group)

Visit our website for more details.





Independence Health & Therapy  
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## Upcoming Mental Health Funding Referendum

We want to share an important advocacy alert with you. There will be a referendum on the March 19 primary election in McHenry County to change the way the Mental Health Board is funded. If it passes, it could lead to a \$2M+ increase annually in funding for mental health, disability, and substance use services, and is expected to increase over time. This will directly and positively impact Independence Health & Therapy's funding. Please register to vote by February 20 and VOTE YES for Mental Health on March 19!

The referendum will remove the Mental Health Board portion of property taxes (\$10.8M) and add a 0.25% mental health sales tax county-wide. This would mean an extra \$0.25 for each \$100 spent on certain purchases. Items such as food and medicine will NOT be included in this sales tax.

Please vote, and spread the word to your friends, neighbors, and other connections in McHenry County!



### VOTE YES FOR MENTAL HEALTH on March 19!

- Support this **bi-partisan** referendum for mental health!
- Voting yes will **remove funding from property taxes** in McHenry County - \$10M annually
- Funding services with a sales tax will **increase funding and sustainability for mental health, disability, and substance use disorder services**
- Register to vote by February 20 and **VOTE YES on March 19!**

Scan the QR code to read the official FAQs on the McHenry County website



**Independence**  
HEALTH & THERAPY

[www.IndependenceHealth.org](http://www.IndependenceHealth.org)  
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