



WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025



**JENNIFER
BERTINO-TARRANT**
WILL COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dear Residents,

This month we're celebrating an important milestone for the **Imagination Library of Will County**, as parents and children who registered for the program in July are receiving their first free books in the mail! As I attend events throughout the county, I keep hearing stories from parents as they share the joy their children experienced receiving their first book and the excitement of having *The Little Engine That Could* read to them.

Since launching, we already have over 3,700 children registered for this impactful program. I'm grateful for all of the parents and guardians who are registering their children (from birth to age 5) to receive free, high-quality, and age-appropriate books. This literacy program helps young children get excited about reading and research has repeatedly demonstrated that it supports their continued education.

Both the Will County Center for Economic Development and I thank everyone who helped make this program come to life. We look forward to continuing to grow the program, expand registrations, and create meaningful pipelines between children and other local reading resources.

Please consider joining us on this mission, by either spreading the word, volunteering, or sponsoring a child to receive one free year of books. Learn more at WillCountyImaginationLibrary.org.

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant

Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant | Will County Executive



INVESTING IN PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

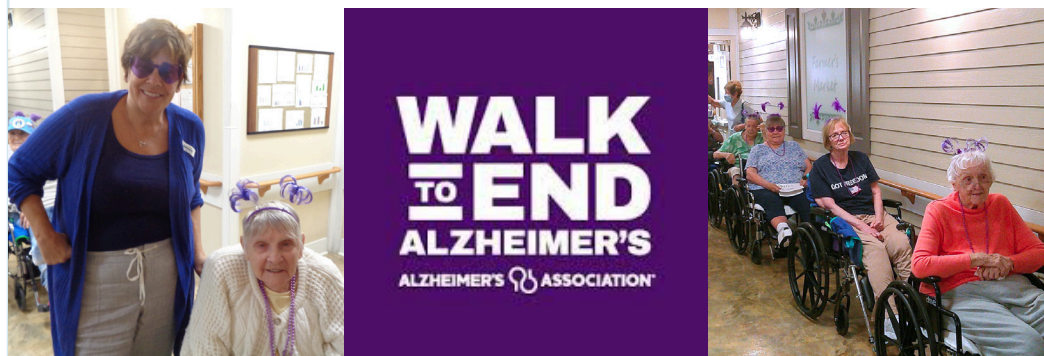
Will County Allocates Funding to Fight Opioid Epidemic

Will County has allocated \$596,265 in grant awards to support initiatives addressing the opioid epidemic and assist people affected by opioid use. Seven Will County entities have received funding to support programs focused on prevention, recovery, and law enforcement efforts aimed at curbing drug trafficking.

Funds were made available as part of a settlement agreement following a series of state and federal lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies. As part of the agreement, Will County collects settlement dollars received by the State of Illinois from companies producing and distributing opioids. The Will County Board voted to utilize these funds to create a grant opportunity to remediate the impact of the opioid epidemic and treat Opioid Use Disorder and Substance Use Disorder.

Funded initiatives range from senior and youth education aimed at preventing opioid misuse; recovery support programs for those affected by substance use; distribution and training for life-saving Naloxone to prevent overdose deaths; and targeted law enforcement efforts aimed at drug traffickers.

Funds have been awarded to the Peotone Police Department, Plainfield Township, The Recovery Community Center of Joliet, The Second Story Foundation, the Manhattan Police Department, Wheatland Township, and the Wilmington Coalition for a Healthy Community.



Sunny Hill Hosts Walk to End Alzheimer's

Joining more than 600 communities across the country, Sunny Hill Nursing Home of Will County hosted the Walk to End Alzheimer's on Friday, Sept. 19. County Executive Bertino-Tarrant joined the festivities at Sunny Hill, which included decorations and trivia organized by the Friends of Sunny Hill Nursing Home.

Surrounded by an incredible turnout of residents, families, volunteers, and staff who came to show their support, the event raised \$2,000 to go towards Alzheimer's care, support and research. The Walk to End Alzheimer's, organized under the umbrella of the Alzheimer's Association, is the world's largest fundraiser for Alzheimer's care, support, and research.

Thank you to everyone who participated in one of the hundreds of Walk to End Alzheimer's across the nation!



ARPA Spotlight – Empowering Communities

Will County's allocation of \$134 Million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars has empowered community services throughout the county, ensuring that local non-profits have the resources they need to continue their important programs and services.

Below are updates on two local grant awardees who are making a positive impact in their communities:

F.O.C.U.O.S.

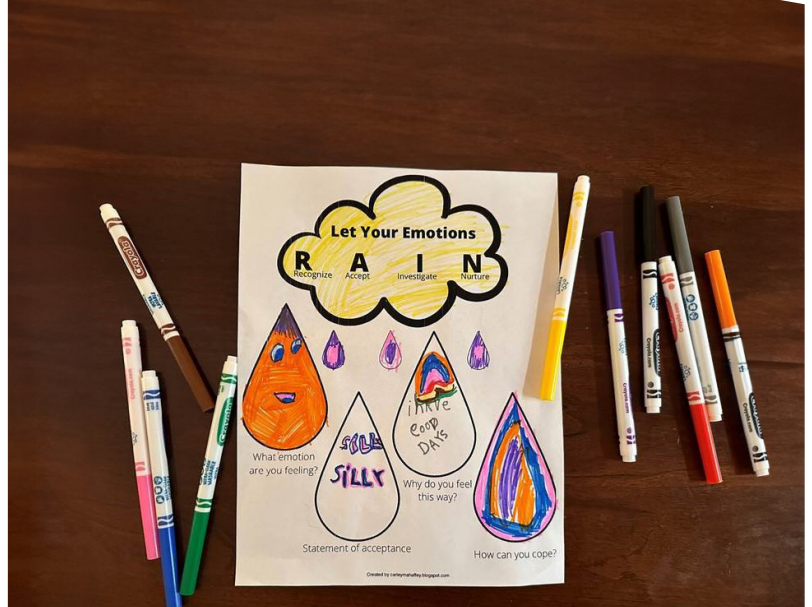
A non-profit based out of DuPage Township, F.O.C.U.O.S. was awarded funding to purchase a 16-passenger van, which has been instrumental in transporting adolescents, youth, and young adults to workshops, trainings, discussions, and outings. This is empowering their efforts to connect underserved and at-risk young people with the skills to reach their full potential and develop important life skills.

[Learn More: willcountyillinois.org/f-o-c-u-o-s](https://willcountyillinois.org/f-o-c-u-o-s)

Bridges to a New Day

Will County ARPA dollars ensured that Bridges to a New Day, a counseling agency in Crest Hill, did not have to cut back on clients and programs in the face of rising costs. With a \$256,918 grant, Bridges to a New Day was empowered to continue providing affordable counseling to the community. This includes their Insurance Counseling program, free domestic violence counseling, and a reduced fee counseling program.

[Learn More: willcountyillinois.org/bridges-to-a-new-day](https://willcountyillinois.org/bridges-to-a-new-day)



Whiskers at Work Program a Success!

The Will County Animal Protection Services (APS) Whiskers at Work program has experienced a successful year of cat placements, with 56 feral cats finding new homes and "employment" at farms across the county!

The program, launched in 2023, adopts out feral cats to residents and business owners in agricultural-zoned areas of the county. The cats, who prefer to live outside and away from people, are utilized to assist with rodent control in barns or other large spaces.

APS has increased outreach for the program in 2025, seeing a massive increase from 23 placements in 2024. If you're interested in adopting/hiring a Whiskers at Work feral cat, please contact WCAPS at WCAPS@willcounty.gov or (815) 462-5633.