

Donation, Volunteer Drive for LWSRA at Town Center Bank through April 30th
TCB hosts drive for wish list items, financial donations and “plugging in”

When the Lincolnway Special Recreation Association opened the doors to its own facility in New Lenox in 2014, it marked an end to nearly 40 years of moving in, moving out, sharing space, giving up space and accommodating schedules. “Now,” says Keith Wallace, Executive Director, “we have a place to call home.”

“We now have an increased ability to offer all kinds of programs,” says Wallace. That includes sporting lessons and competitions across the spectrum, from tae kwon do to wheelchair softball. It means creative arts like music, theater and visual arts. LWSRA provides adult disability daycare and after school care for children with disabilities - the first program of its kind in the region. There are five wheelchair basketball teams, divided by ages. There are six Special Olympic teams. There are cooking programs, service projects and music therapy.

LWSRA cooperates with South Suburban Special Recreation Association, sharing participant space for programs that aren’t duplicated at the other association. “We don’t turn anyone away,” says Abby Billips, Superintendent of Recreation at LWSRA.

Now, as a way to welcome LWSRA to its own facility, Town Center Bank in Frankfort and New Lenox is hosting a donation drive. “LWSRA really impressed me when I visited,” says Gina Persiani, Assistant Vice President ,Mortgage Lending at Town Center Bank. “The facility is fully ADA accessible and they offer programs for all sorts of special needs, including autism and other challenges, beyond just physical disabilities. It’s a place of joy for the participants and their families.”

Through April 30th, Town Center Bank will be collecting items to benefit the LWSRA facility. Persiani says, “Our customers and neighbors are overwhelmingly generous when the Bank holds donation drives for local organizations. Community support has always been very successful, whether for food, toys or eyeglasses. After learning more about LWSRA, the Bank committed to using our resources to communicate what makes LWSRA special in our region and why this donation drive is so important.”

“We’ve been so blessed,” says Wallace. “But there are still a great deal of things we need.” The wish list can be found on Town Center Bank’s Facebook page. It includes items as varied as measuring tapes and batting helmets to crayons and iPads. Donors are strongly encouraged to donate new items.

Town Center Bank’s drive also accomplishes what both Billips and Wallace consider most important of all - community participation. “We really want people to plug in,” says Wallace. By hosting, advertising and promoting the drive, Town Center Bank is not only plugging in as an organization, but the message also encourages individuals to get involved.

The Bank’s message of volunteering at LWSRA is especially important. “We host events of all types here at LWSRA,” says Billips. “We welcome volunteers to serve food, chaperone a dance, be a door monitor.” Wallace agrees. “Sharing a special talent is almost better than a financial donation. When volunteers teach knitting, painting, crafting or cooking - that’s what we really want - to be a real part of the whole community.”

Town Center Bank is encouraging the community in their advertising and through social media to not just donate, but to email Billips at abillips@lwsra.org and ask about volunteer opportunities. Persiani says, "Yes, plug in. Town Center Bank sees what a fabulous difference LWSRA is making in the lives of our special need neighbors and their families. Get over there to be a part of helping everyone achieve their dreams and goals." She smiles, "And, of course, donate to LWSRA at the Bank too."

Donations are being accepted through April 30th at branches in Frankfort at 20181 S LaGrange Road and in New Lenox at 1938 E Lincoln Hwy. For more information about the drive, call 815-806-7001 or visit Town Center Bank's Facebook page.

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