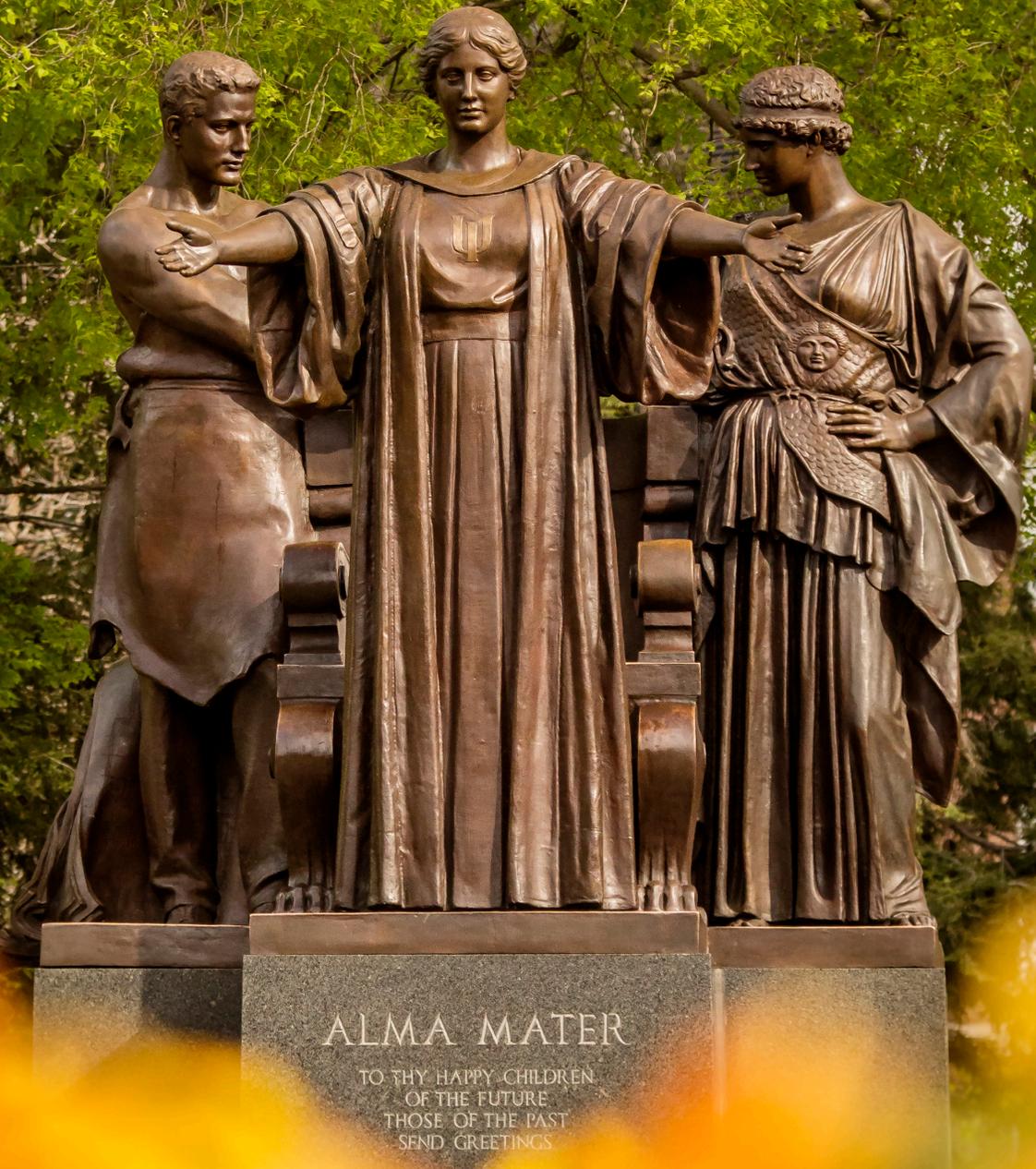


# BECKWITH *News*

A Newsletter of Beckwith Residential Support Services | Fall 2019



**Teamwork**  
*makes the dream work*

# BRSS Relies on Teamwork

by Susann Sears, Beckwith Director



**“We cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together.” – Bill Richardson**

For each and every community member of Beckwith Residential Support Services (BRSS), the successes experienced in a given year are due to effective and productive teamwork within all aspects of BRSS; ranging from individual, to the campus and even nationally. Our program simply cannot exist without teamwork, as one aspect of our program relies on the responsibility of another for things to properly function. Each and every community member has a significant impact on what takes place within our community. Also, we are proud of our ongoing partnership with our University Housing colleagues that shares the vision of providing the most comprehensive residential services to students with significant physical disabilities which exceeds a decade!

Below are some highlights demonstrating a number of exciting ways in which teamwork was exhibited this past year from a variety of individuals and departments:

- First year residents learned to work cooperatively with PAs during scheduled shifts their first week on campus. This happens every year, but the leap of faith that this requires for both our residents and PAs is tremendous. The resident/PA teamwork demonstrated throughout the year is the heartbeat of our program!
- Our BRSS professional staff came together and immediately responded to staffing needs to accommodate our students during the fall semester. I do not know individuals more committed to BRSS than Paige and Jason. They are truly passionate about what they do.
- Our live-in PA staff and current residents teamed up together to have weekly painting nights in the BRSS Instructional Kitchen. The artwork is simply amazing, and most importantly, our artists were able to explore and realize another side of their natural talents!

- Our Nugent RA, Mariel Galvan, teamed up with BRSS residents in the planning and execution of the 8th Annual Disability Awareness Program (DAP), where we had record numbers of students in attendance this year!
- Jodi Adams, an Occupational Therapy Assistant student from Parkland College, interned with Rachel Graddy in providing OT services to the BRSS community. We are the only campus nationally to offer this service to college students with disabilities.
- Our BRSS Interns, Daniel Gilbert and Bianca Madden, teamed with Cherise Marks from Campus Recreation, and Kate Donaldson from McKinley Health Center to create two additional evening programs for the BRSS community. One was on nutrition and meal prep and another was on sexuality and disability.
- We collaborated with the College of Media and Professor Stretch Ledford to co-sponsor Christopher Capozziello, an award-winning photojournalist, to provide him the opportunity to connect with BRSS/DRES students to discuss disability identity and its relationship with other family members who may not have a disability.

None of these highlights would have been possible nor as impactful without the presence of teamwork. What I presume to be the most impressive part of teamwork is that it requires each of us to step outside of ourselves to view the world from another perspective. It may also require each of us to put aside our differences to achieve a shared vision or goal.

Most importantly, the foundation of teamwork must start with trust. The shared vision of BRSS in moving forward involves identifying other ways in which we foster trust within our community, so that we can continue to effectively address their needs. Our goal is that each of us can continue to present the best version of ourselves moving forward. I am tremendously excited for what is ahead for BRSS.



## Without Judgment

by Dr. Patricia Malik, DRES Director

### “Those Who Say It Can’t Be Done Should Not Interrupt the Person Doing It” – Chinese Proverb

Those who know me know this is one of my all-time favorite quotes. Yet as I reflect on this year’s theme about the importance of teamwork, it made me pause and realize that the “person doing it” is probably part of a powerful team ensuring that things once thought impossible – aren’t.

As you read these articles you will find nuggets of insight, authenticity and why none of us should ever interrupt someone working toward their dream – regardless of what we think is possible. Here are only a few that get at the heart of what teamwork is all about.

*“Beckwith has taught me that teamwork isn’t about competition or recognition, but about being the best at what you do for your cause, while collaborating with other people with the same goals.” – Bianca Madden, BSW intern*

*“Being part of Beckwith this year has felt like so much more than being part of a team, it has truly felt like being part of a family.” – Addie Hakes, disability advocate*

*“. . . I will always acknowledge and appreciate how much work it takes to be successful, and how much the team I have behind me has helped me to make things work.” – Lauren Bryant, 3rd-year resident*

*“Beckwith has taught us that a key component of teamwork is human understanding . . . understanding of the other person’s needs, preferences, and struggles.” – Annie Mokate and Lauren Mueller, personal assistants*

*“Once I started to realize that for almost any problem or issue I would come across, I either knew someone personally who could assist me or knew someone who knew someone who could help; I could really ease into my new surroundings.” – Matt Ludolph, 1st-year resident*

Personally, I have had the distinct honor and privilege to serve as the director of BRSS from 2005 – 2014.

In 2014, I became the interim and then director of the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES). As I write this article, I find myself moving into retirement. I will be forever thankful to have been part of such powerful teams that moved huge obstacles while working toward goals of personal empowerment – working on changing not only attitudes, but actions for a more inclusive campus and as such, making our world a more accepting, and inclusive place to live for ALL persons.

It is important to continue to embrace those who may move or do things differently knowing that their contributions to the community and the world at large make the world better for all of us. I have learned much over the past 14 years with my BRSS/DRES team and family of students and staff. I leave knowing that no accomplishment was ever done alone. Moreover, it is far more enjoyable to celebrate the successes and handle the setbacks together. As long as each member of the team looks to – doing the next right thing – nothing is impossible.



Pat and Katy reliving memories from Beckwith Hall.

## **Teamwork = Victories!**

by Dr. Rachel Graddy, OTD, OTR/L



Over the past 5 years of my involvement in Beckwith I've heard the phrase "teamwork makes the dreamwork" more times than I can count, and I can think of no other place that embodies this fact so completely. This year, the true power of teamwork has become apparent. Since the last time I wrote for the annual newsletter, I have had the distinct privilege to realize my professional dreams, and become even more integrated into the Beckwith community. I couldn't be happier that my continued involvement has expanded as a result of having students and staff on my team!



Rachel and Jodi during an OT session with Lauren.

This past year we have grown together immensely. The Beckwith community is finding more benefit than ever in occupational and physical therapy services. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for all of the students' hard work and for allowing me to be part of their team. Together, we celebrated both academic and functional victories, including passing hard classes, learning to tie shoes, putting on jackets, and making smoother and safer transfers, just to name a few.

Thank you for allowing me to further expand the reach and role of occupational therapy by welcoming my occupational therapy student assistant, Jodi Adams, into the community for her 16-week rotation in the spring. I know so many of you enjoyed working and connecting with Jodi and her mindfulness and yoga-based practices. Jodi hopes to remain a part of the Beckwith community professionally next fall. However, regardless of her professional trajectory, Jodi has shared with me that she is forever changed by her experiences here at Beckwith and so grateful to have been a part of the strong and unique team that is the Beckwith community.

Only here, and only within Beckwith are we able to create these unique bonds and celebrate these incredible victories. Beckwith listens, grows, and adapts like no other community I know. My continued involvement here is a testament to that fact. It is a true privilege to be a part of your team as you strive to achieve and accomplish your own dreams.

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***"I cannot tell you how grateful I am for all of the students' hard work and for allowing me to be part of their team."***

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## *Teamwork is Human Understanding*

*by Annie Mokate and Lauren Mueller*

**W**orking as personal assistants/floaters at Beckwith Residential Support Services has been far more influential than we ever could have imagined. It has helped us build our futures and develop into the people we are. This powerful impact has, we believe, been mutually beneficial for us and for the students with whom we work, largely because of the vital role collaboration plays in our jobs.

Teamwork and communication are absolutely integral aspects of Beckwith. As personal assistants and floaters, we help our fellow students with extremely personal tasks. Therefore, it is essential that we effectively communicate to ensure that we are comfortable and safe. Also, because every student has different abilities, they have to let us know what they are and are not capable of doing. Through empathy, we are able to be as efficient as possible. We work together to make the shifts as easy as we can and are sure we are always considerate of each

other's time and needs. This mutual understanding is a fundamental element of the Beckwith community.

An impactful lesson that the Beckwith community has taught us is that teamwork is as challenging as it is rewarding. We are able to lean on each other on our bad days and celebrate with each other on our good days. We know the little things about each other (whether we're morning people or night-owls, for example), and we know the big things, such as how to tell if one of us is stressed about an exam. Beckwith has taught us that a key component of teamwork is human understanding... understanding of the other person's needs, preferences, and struggles.

Aside from helping us develop professional and personal skills, working at Beckwith has been a fun, social experience with great people. We've met people here that will cheer us on and support us for the rest of our lives, and we will do the same for them.



*Annie and Lauren chatting.*



*Lauren discussing final preparations for the 8th annual Disability Awareness Program.*

# Relying on Your Team

by Matt and Natalie Ludolph



## Trust – The Critical Element of a Team by Matt Ludolph

As an incoming first-year resident of Beckwith, the impending move to Champaign-Urbana was especially daunting. I spent the majority of last summer bouncing back and forth between excitement and dread about the upcoming year, but as moving day got closer, dread was more prominent. Like most first-year students, I relied on a small team of familiar people to ensure that all my needs were met, whether they be ADLs, academic, or otherwise. The idea of my support system ballooning that much was terrifying, especially when considering that I would need to be doing things like career development as well. Very shortly into my first semester, I learned that even though I was very apprehensive about the new support team, this large team was by design and was a feature rather than a bug. Instead of relying on a few people for almost everything, there were now many people with many resources all at my disposal.

My first week or two in Beckwith felt very touch and go, and from what I can gather from other residents, this is not an uncommon experience. Between adjusting to new PAs, new schedules, and a new environment, it was hard to find a sense of stability. I was still trying to lean heavily on my family at home for support while learning how to navigate life and classes with the new support system at Beckwith. Between the admin team, the disability advocates, the personal assistants, and family and friends at home, I had all the support I needed to successfully make the adjustment from living at home to living on campus. And this doesn't even touch on the academic support team in place between the University itself and more specifically, DRES.

Once I started to realize that for almost any problem or issue I would come across, I either knew someone personally who could assist me or knew someone who knew someone who could help. I could really ease into my new surroundings. This has turned into one of the best years of my life and I couldn't be happier with the decision I made.



*Hanging out at Curtis Orchard.*

## The Big Picture by Natalie Ludolph

Growing up, Matthew and I were never really close. There was only a 4-year age gap between us, but we had very different personalities and agendas. As time went on, circumstances seemed to disconnect us further until his injury in July, 2012. I was 15 at the time and although we weren't super close then, I made a conscious decision to do absolutely everything I could to help out him and our family. I knew this would be a journey that would need support from everyone at all times, and I was more than prepared to be a positive and encouraging driving force in our transition to a very different lifestyle.

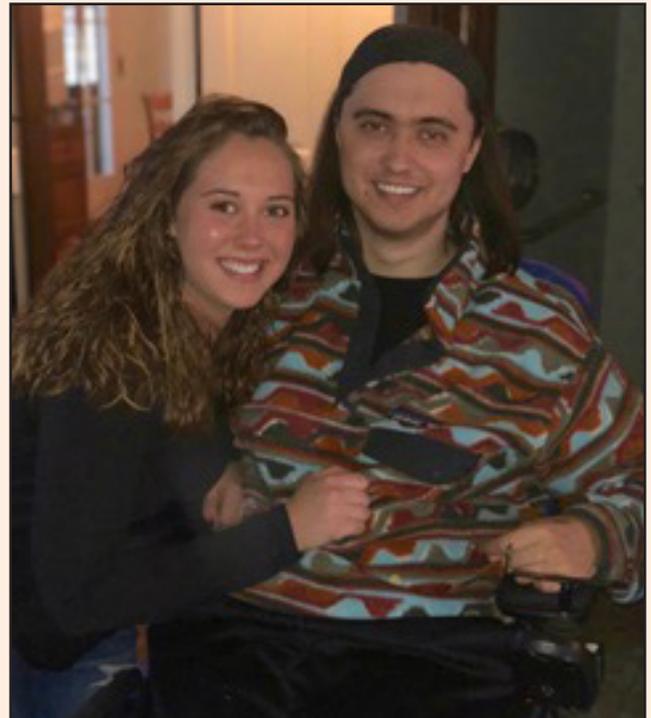
With Matthew's injury occurring later in life, it allowed for a unique view of progress and success in this relatively new normal daily life. Between our parents, grandparents, and a handful of excellent friends, we felt confident in our ability to handle the unexpected change of pace. If Matthew needed assistance, there was almost always someone who was able and willing to do whatever was necessary. This was certainly true while Matthew was living at home with us, but it has definitely held up while we helped Matthew make the transition to the University of Illinois.

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***“Matthew has done an immaculate job of adapting to the challenging environment that a rigorous college program has provided for him. I truly believe the Beckwith community has been a wonderful environment for Matthew’s growth and wellbeing.”***

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If Matthew needed us on campus for whatever reason, we were there. We knew that it wouldn't be easy for Matthew to be more than three hours away from home, but as long as we were willing to work together to be supportive of this new chapter in his book, then we knew he would succeed. He's had his ups and downs while trying to navigate life again on a college campus, and that was to be expected. However, as a whole, Matthew has done an immaculate job of adapting to the challenging environment that a rigorous college program has provided for him. I truly believe the Beckwith community has been a wonderful environment for Matthew's growth and wellbeing.



*Matt and Natalie at home.*

# A Year at Beckwith...



Having a splash at the annual pool party.



8th annual Disability Awareness Program Student Panel.



Adam acknowledging his first day at Illinois and Beckwith.



The annual ice skating party is a great study break!



Kelly talking with employers at the DRES Networking Event.



Instagrammable foods coordinated by Dan, our iHealth intern, using the ARC's instructional kitchen.



*Avery & Zain sporting Lovie beards at a home football game.*



*Luis celebrating his commencement and moving into the next phase of his life.*



*Don't mess with the dynamic duo.*



*Nicky hanging out in the pumpkin patch.*



*Panel discussion with Chris Capozziello about disability identity and its relationship with other family members who may not have a disability.*

# Trust Yourself and Your Fellow Soldiers

by Hannah Foley



I wonder what goes through a soldier's mind when they get deployed and meet their comrades. Maybe it is, "Boy, do I really trust these guys to watch my back and be on my side?"

I don't wish ever to be deployed in a literal sense. I like the beautiful cornfields in Central Illinois. Realize it or not, we have all been deployed to battle at some point, praying that we will survive and make it back home to safety and the comforts of our own home and the unconditional support and love of our closest friends and family. Ultimately, what you can trust most is yourself and your fellow soldiers. That's frightening to most! But sometimes you just have to run onto the battlefield!

As the school year comes to an end and I reflect on how much I have changed over my three years in Beckwith, I am amazed at the power of teamwork. I cannot take all the credit for getting myself to where I am today. My success thus far is a product of a group effort of my personal assistants, my family, BRSS professional staff,

and me. I am eternally grateful for the BRSS program for helping me grow personally and professionally over the last three years. From teaching me the power of teamwork to pushing me out of my comfort zone so that I had adequate opportunities for growth, Beckwith is a place for learning how to navigate the crazy ride of life and realizing that we are not alone. We teach and support each other through a strong sense of community. It is one of the places where you know that your fellow soldiers will look out for you in battle.

I am thrilled to receive the David S. Mundy Scholarship, which recognizes the pursuit of personal independence and responsibility for transitional disability management. As I prepare to leave the BRSS community, I am confident that I have been given all the ammunition necessary to thrive in the next chapter of my college journey and beyond. As Mattie Stepanek once said, "Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."



Hannah and her family at their annual Foley Fest tailgater.



Hannah and her PA, Gina, enjoying the semi-formal.



## What's Gonna Work? Teamwork!

By Lauren Bryant

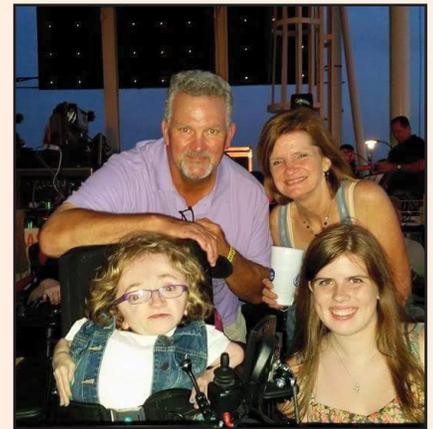
When my youngest cousin was little, she was in love with the kid's television show *Wonder Pets*. This show, like almost any kid's show, involved lots of music and singing. A few of the songs have wormed their way into my brain, and they pop up every now and then even though I haven't seen the show in forever. One of them features the line, "What's gonna work? Teamwork! What's gonna work? Teamwork!"

Living with a disability is definitely a team effort. From PAs helping us in and out of bed to the admin team making sure things run smoothly, life in Beckwith is an example of how much teamwork can accomplish. Without a whole team of people behind me, I would never have made it to U of I.

My parents were the first to help get me on the road that led me here by helping with my application. Once I got accepted and started communicating with the Beckwith team, they were added to Team Lauren. Then came Rachel and the rest of DRES. Once on campus, my professors and Beckwith floormates joined my little team. As the years have gone on, I've only added members to my personal team, including Jodi, Rachel's occupational therapy student intern, who was a joy to work with this semester!

Without the support and encouragement from this group, I may never have decided to major in communications and begin to plan for a career in disability advocacy, or apply for and be accepted as a housing network technician this year.

Without my team, I would likely not have been chosen to be Nugent's multicultural advocate for the 2019-2020 academic year. I may be fiercely independent, but I will always acknowledge and appreciate how much work it takes to be successful, and how much the team I have behind me has helped me to make things work. That is why I'm honored to receive the Matthew Allan Odelius Award advancing the involvement of students with disabilities in all aspects of academic and co-curricular life.



*Lauren and her family.*



*Kevin Fritz, BRSS Alum and 2018 Harold Scharper Award recipient, stopped by to chat with residents about his career and independent living.*

# Teamwork of Sisters, Self-Advocacy and Staff

by Brianna Silveira



One word that sums up my experiences this year is “sorority.” Last fall, I went through the formal recruitment process and joined Alpha Gamma Delta. Being a part of the sisterhood has given me so much more than I ever imagined and made this the best year of my life. However, I couldn’t have joined or stayed in the sorority without the support of my personal assistant staff, my sisters, and the Beckwith community.

My PA staff has been instrumental in my success in the sorority. During the recruitment process, many of my

staff members got up earlier than usual on weekends so I would be ready for events on time. They were flexible with shifts so I could participate in the process. This flexibility allowed me to attend social or required events this year without worry.

Last November, my wheelchair broke down and I had to use a manual chair until Fall break. Many of my sisters stepped up to push me to and from class, exams, or events during initiation week. Without them, I would not have been able to go to class or events that were required.

Finally, the Beckwith community has instilled in me an ability to advocate for myself and understand what I need for accommodations. I felt comfortable asking for accommodations during the recruitment process and keeping open communication with my sorority about my needs. Before college, this would’ve been something I’d be uncomfortable doing, but Beckwith has given me the tools to do so.

My PA staff, the Beckwith community, and my sorority sisters played key roles in the process of my joining Greek life. In my opinion, teamwork isn’t measured by being on a sports team or something of the sort. Collaboration is present wherever you go. It’s friends helping each other out, an administrator instilling the skill of self-advocacy, and personal assistants being flexible with shift times. I can’t wait to see what’s to come with my sorority. I know I will continue to rely on the skills of others in my journey which is why I’m honored to be the recipient of the John S. Fine Scholarship awarded to a student in a transitional living environment such as Beckwith.

*Brianna at an AGD sorority event.*





## The Power Behind Teamwork

by Bianca Madden

Teamwork has played such an integral role during my internship at Beckwith this semester. Social work by nature is all about collaboration and sharing resources with one another, and I feel that Beckwith is the perfect environment to practice those skills. From REHB 199 TAs offering their insights to first-year residents to the BRSS admin team's open-door policy, Beckwith is an environment of outstretched hands just waiting to support and uplift one another.

The diversity of the projects and programs I was involved with provided me an opportunity to work regularly with the Beckwith administrators, residents, alumni, PAs, DRES career resources, McKinley Health Center, and the Illinois Leadership Center. I was able to see that partnering with others is what made these organizations so strong. As I wrap up my undergraduate career, one thing I have definitely learned is that making the commitment to work as a team to accomplish things makes doing them so much easier and more effective than doing it alone.

Finally, I think the mentoring program I facilitated this semester is a great example of furthering this ideal of teamwork. Two BRSS residents worked with me to improve their ability and confidence to mentor high school students this summer and prepare them for the transition to college. I thought it was great that despite their full schedules as college students, they wanted to reach out to and be a resource for potential students. They did it because they remember having questions before starting college and not feeling prepared. Their only personal gain is knowing that they are helping students to learn skills that they wish they had known themselves. Beckwith has taught me that teamwork isn't about competition or recognition, but about being the best at what you do while collaborating with other people who share your goals. I know that with each

coming year, the network will grow wider and more students will be reached. I'm so glad I got to be a part of this team.



*Bianca and Lindsay setting up the DRES Networking Event.*

## My Beckwith Family

by Addie Hakes



I approached my position as a disability advocate wanting to build bridges, but I'm leaving having done so much more than that. There is so much strength in this community, so many people who are willing to work toward a collective good, and I feel honored to have been a piece of that this year. I have learned so much from being a part of this beautiful, unique, funny team. I learned how to laugh through stressful days, how to problem solve through any kind of situation, and how to embrace each aspect of my identity with love.

What I will miss most is the feeling of being home, being able to enter the floor and engage in long conversations about our days, our lives, our stresses, and our triumphs.

One of the most rewarding pieces about this work is watching the community grow in exponential ways from the beginning of the year to May. Watching students come into their own in different ways is a rare gift that I do not take for granted. I have seen students move forward together and help each other toward success.

Being a part of Beckwith this year has felt like so much more than being part of a team; it has truly felt



*Barrett, emcee, and Addie celebrating another successful Disability Awareness Program.*

like being a part of a family. I will look back at my time in graduate school and I won't remember exactly what professors said in class or what papers I had to write, but I promise I will remember our laughter, deep conversations late into the night, cramming into the kitchen for programming events, and feeling so fulfilled to be a part of this family. I am so thankful to know what it feels like to truly put my heart into something. I will miss you all so much.



*Emily and Addie at Curtis Orchard.*



## ***Reciprocity!*** ***The Benefit of Teamwork*** *by Emily Bone*

**I** firmly believe in the necessity of teamwork and community. In reflecting on my own successes in life, I cannot think of a single instance when I did not need the support of others. To put it plainly, I believe that we all need people standing behind us to help us move forward toward all that is ahead of us. At face value, some of my successes may seem to have been achieved independently, but there was always support acting as a firm foundation. Sometimes this foundation is simply a word of encouragement from friends and family or just being together; other times it is a complete partnership.

While teamwork and support are central to life itself, I also believe that they are the heartbeat of the Beckwith community. Beckwith provides staff and students with an array of unique people that contribute to the

quality of our lives in various ways. However, being part of a community creates a call to action for us as well. Community involves reciprocation. As we receive the benefits of teamwork and care from those around us, we must also be willing to contribute our unique perspectives and experiences to their lives.

When I began my position as a disability advocate, I imagined all the ways I could contribute to each member of the community's college experience, but I could not have predicted the fulfillment I would receive in return. Giving of your time and energy can sometimes feel risky, as we must ensure that we take care of ourselves. However, I can assure you that as you give of yourself for the good of those around you, you'll get something worthwhile back.

### ***In Memorium***

**W**e celebrate the lives of Daniel Escalona (B.S. '17 and M.S. in Journalism '18) and Michael Gorman (B.S. '05 in Business with a concentration in Finance) for their appreciation and commitment to the notion of "Teamwork makes the Dreamwork." While Beckwith residents, both Dan and Mike took advantage of the vast opportunities and resources available campus wide and those specific to the DRES and/or Beckwith community.

If you were to read their articles in past publications, they refer to how their confidence grew throughout their college experience because of their extracurricular pursuits, networking and lessons learned in Beckwith. Their pursuit to improve the lives of people with disabilities, educating those without disabilities, and efforts to find a cure for Muscular Dystrophy are known, yet their unyielding commitment and positive impact upon their family and friends is how they will always be remembered.



*Daniel Escalona*



*Michael Gorman*

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