



2008 Annual Report



HISTORY

The history of our organization begins in 1946. At that time the local Community Chest (now called United Way of Allen County) asked the Social Planning Council to conduct a study to determine if services for the blind should be carried out by a part time employee who worked for the Community Chest, if it should be merged or coordinated with other existing services in the community, or if the community needed a new non-profit corporation to serve people who are blind.

The Social Planning Council completed their study in 1948 and recommended that a new non-profit agency for the blind be started. The Council also recommended that an interim committee be established to set up the new agency. This committee, known as the Allen County Committee for the Blind was established in 1948. This interim group **brought Helen Keller to Fort Wayne in 1949** to challenge the community to address the needs of the blind, and help raise the needed funds for the League's first two year operating budget. The Junior League of Fort Wayne voted to give money for a two year demonstration period and spent many volunteer hours establishing the agency. The League was incorporated in October 1950, began operations in February 1951, and obtained its non-profit, 501(c)(3) status in July 1951.

The League operated as a completely self-contained organization until 1961. From 1961 to 1981 it co-located, and was administered by the Community Coordinating Council (which later became AWS). During this 20 year period, the League maintained its non-profit corporate status and was governed by its own Board of Directors. In 1981, it received a federal Centers for Independent Living grant, **became the first Center for Independent Living in Indiana** and separated all ties with the Community Coordinating Council.

This event had a major impact on the agency's philosophy and operations. The League grew to serve eleven counties in Northeast Indiana, and opened eligibility to all people with severe disabilities while maintaining specialized services for people who are blind. The League established a commitment to "consumer control" and put this commitment in action by **requiring that the majority of its staff and Board members be qualified people with disabilities**. A new organizational emphasis was also placed on addressing systemic barriers that people with disabilities encounter as they seek to be included in community life.





In 2000, the agency acquired the former Work Force Development Building through a donation from the State of Indiana which allowed the agency to add new programs and services. In 2006, the League acquired DeafLink from AWS and established this new division as the only non-profit sign language interpreting and case coordination provider in Northeast Indiana. In 2009, the League created an In-Home Care Division to help people receive the homemaking and attendant care services they need in order to remain in their own home and community. Community rooms were also built in the facility for use by worthwhile organizations that needed meeting room space. This latter addition established the League as a community wide resource.

Today, the League continues its tradition as a direct service provider and advocate through commitment to its **mission to provide and promote opportunities that empower people with disabilities to achieve their potential**.

BUILDING ON THE STRONG FOUNDATION

There is an old English proverb says, "a good beginning makes a good ending." At the League we believe this. Over the last several years we have been strengthening our foundation by clarifying our vision and mission, identifying our values and beliefs, developing strategies for success, and creating new partnerships.

In 2008, with these pieces in place, we began a move from strengthening the foundation to building on it. That has resulted in some very exciting new things at the League! For example, during the last year we:

-  Launched a new AgrAbility program in partnership with Purdue University to serve agricultural workers and people in rural areas who have disabilities.
-  Established DeafLink as a new division of the League with its own supervisor and additional staff.
-  Created a new In-Home Care division to provide the homemaking and attendant care services that people need to stay in their own home and avoid nursing home placement.
-  Initiated a comprehensive long range facility and property master planning process to house our dreams for the future.

We will continue to build on this solid foundation as Frances Ganaway moves into the role of Board Chair in 2009. And as we do, we look forward to a bright future with a sense of assurance. Because as Eleanor Roosevelt once so rightly said, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." Thank you for joining us in our work to build a community that includes people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. It's truly a beautiful dream!



Michael A. McKay, AIA
Board President

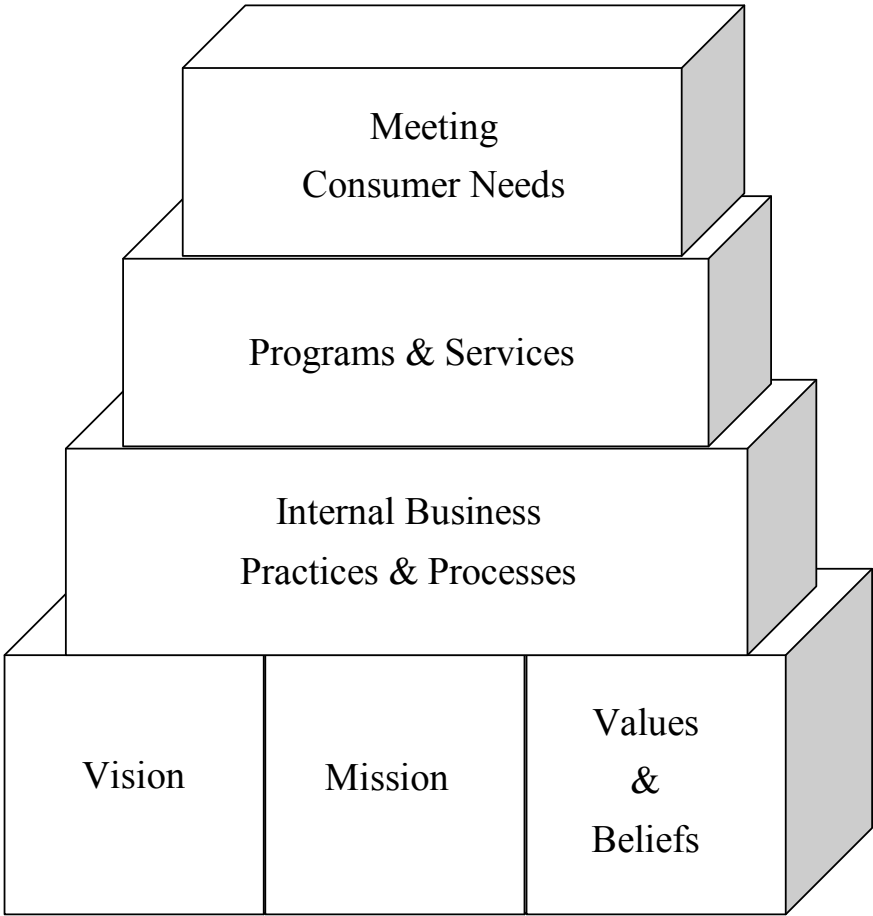


David A. Nelson, CRC
President/CEO



LEAGUE FOUNDATION

At the League, we use the term “*foundation*” frequently. We refer to **strengthening** the foundation and **building** upon it. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines foundation as “a basis (as a tenet, principle, or axiom) upon which something stands or is supported.” Here is a brief explanation of the League’s foundation and its components.



LEAGUE VISION

The full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

LEAGUE MISSION

To provide and promote opportunities that empower people with disabilities to achieve their potential.

VALUES, BELIEFS AND ACTIONS

At the League for the Blind & Disabled, we:

Value people with disabilities and,

Believe that people with disabilities are the true experts in issues that affect their lives.

Therefore, in all of our interactions, *we respect people with disabilities as service consumers* instead of as patients or clients who need to be “fixed”, “rehabilitated” or cared for by providers.

Value consumer control and,

Believe that people with disabilities are entitled to control over the decisions that affect their lives.

Therefore, *consumers provide the direction for the League services that they receive, constitute the majority of the League’s Board of Directors and staff*, and are encouraged to participate in other decision making bodies that are relevant to their issues.

Value equal opportunity and,

Believe that all people should have the opportunity to use their strengths and abilities to achieve their potential.

Therefore, *we work* at individual and systemic levels *to promote equal access to opportunities in society* that people with disabilities need to achieve their potential.

Value diversity of thought and ideas and,

Believe that this diversity stimulates innovation, creativity, knowledge, and understanding that makes the League a more effective organization.

Therefore, we actively *work to include people from diverse backgrounds and cultures* in the League’s Board of Directors, staff, and consumer service population in order to have access to the widest possible range of thoughts and ideas.

Value the community and,

Believe that we have a responsibility to contribute to the overall quality of life in the community.

Therefore, we *share our knowledge, expertise, and physical facilities with others* for the betterment of the community.

Value quality and,

Believe that consumers, funders and communities in which we operate are entitled to nothing less than our best efforts.

Therefore, we hold ourselves accountable for providing *quality programs and services*, managing our resources in a fiscally responsible manner, and reflecting this commitment to quality in action and appearance.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

1. INDIVIDUAL & SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY SERVICES

Advocacy is conducted by all staff members and is what truly separates Centers for Independent Living from other programs for people with disabilities. Individual advocacy services assists people with disabilities exercise their basic rights and responsibilities and teaches personal advocacy skills. The League also works at local, state, and national levels to ensure that needed supports are available and that discriminatory practices and barriers to independent living are removed.

2. INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES

Information and referral (I&R) services are provided by all staff members. The basic purpose behind the provision of these services is to ensure that information relating to rights, options, issues and resources are available to any individual, organization or business in need of these services. Staffed by a full time I&R Coordinator, the program maintains an internet based set of local, state and national disability related information, sponsors distance learning opportunities, and conducts information research activities for individuals, organizations and business.

3. INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TRAINING

This program provides daily living skills instruction to consumers, including home and personal management, as well as communication skills training. These are often the skills needed by individuals to remain in their home after the on-set of a disabling condition.

4. PEER SUPPORT SERVICES

This program is designed to promote personal independence for people with disabilities by providing opportunities for them to meet experienced mentors with a similar disabilities or experiences. The purpose of the service is to provide practical, real life solutions to everyday problems encountered as a result of a new disability. This program also includes peer support group activities.

5. ORIENTATION & MOBILITY TRAINING (O&M)

The purpose of O&M is to provide consumers with the skills needed to travel independently. Services include white cane travel training and public transportation travel training.

6. ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT SERVICES

The Adaptive Equipment Program maintains an inventory of independent living aids and adaptive technology used to provide equipment demonstration and loaner services for consumers and the community at large. This type of equipment often enables people with disabilities to perform personal, work, recreational and social functions that would otherwise not be possible. Individuals can also acquire some items through the League at no cost, prorated cost or at the League's cost, depending on their ability to pay.

7. YOUTH SERVICES

This year round service to children, youth and their family members was established in 1995 as an expansion of the League's Summer Youth Program. It emphasizes integrating children and youth with severe disabilities into existing age appropriate, community based summer programs with individualized support from League staff members. It also includes advocacy training and assistance, parent support services, youth peer support opportunities, and adult/youth mentoring services.

8. BRAILLE SERVICES

The League produces materials in braille using a computerized braille printing system. Braille materials are produced on a fee for service basis for government and private sector organizations.

9. SENIOR BLIND SERVICES

This program provides daily living skills training, adaptive equipment, orientation and mobility instruction (travel training), and other independent living services (individual advocacy, peer support, information and referral assistance, services to family members and followup services) to people age 55 and above who are blind or visually impaired. The purpose of the program is to help these consumers maintain a high quality of life and live independently in their own homes and communities.

10. VOLUNTEER SERVICES

This program recruits and coordinates community volunteers to provide group meeting transportation, reader services, home visits, pre-school vision services, recreational services, adaptive equipment services and office support at the League. Over 120 volunteers donate over 8,000 hours per year to the community through the League.

11. DEAFLINK

DeafLink is a program of the League that provides sign language interpreting and case coordination services for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing throughout northeast Indiana. Interpreting services are provided on a fee-for-service basis by an on-staff and private contract interpreters. Fees are paid by businesses, government entities and other third party payers who need assistance in communicating with people who are Deaf.

12. AGRABILITY PROGRAM

Through a partnership with Breaking New Ground at Purdue University in West Lafayette in 2008, the League provides case coordination services, conducts outreach, and provides public education services for people with disabilities in agriculture and communities in rural areas.


13. IN-HOME CARE

In-home care is the League's newest service and includes homemaker, attendant care, and respite care services. These are provided in the residential setting of those served and enable consumers to stay in their homes and community. This is a fee-for-service program.


14. COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

The League provides large and small meeting rooms at no cost to organizations that make positive contributions to the quality of life for all citizens. Meeting rooms are scheduled on a first come, first serve basis.


ACCOMPLISHMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2008

 Provided in-depth services to **518** consumers, for an increase of **11%** as compared to *FY 2007*. Of those who received services and responded to an agency evaluation survey:

92% reported that they maintained or increased their independence
75% reported gaining more control over the decisions that affect their lives
60% reported maintained or increased participation in community life
70% of all personal goals established by consumers were achieved


 Responded to **1,888** information and referral inquiries (I&R), for an increase of **37.4%** as compared to *FY 2007*. Of those surveyed who received advocacy alert information:

100% reported gaining new information on current advocacy and/or legislative issues
50% reported that they expressed their views on issues by taking action

 **84%** of active consumers and I&R consumers gained access to previously unavailable transportation, health care and/or adaptive equipment for an increase of **5%** as compared to *FY 2007*.


 Devoted **1,743** staff hours to **community capacity building activities**. Examples of community capacity building activities include:


- ☒ Partnered with Northeast Indiana Disability Advocacy Coalition to conduct 2 disability related candidate forms in October 2008.
- ☒ Met with staff of Dupont Hospital and trained them on how to use a text telephone.
- ☒ Collaborated with NEIRRS to produce Vision Talk, a series of 3 talks to inform the community about the services and devices available to people with vision loss


 In *FY 2008* the League provided public education activities using **397 staff hours** and contacted **11,624 people**, for an increase of **37.1%** more people compared to *FY 2007*.


- ☒ Conducted meeting with nursing home staff to increase knowledge of Olmstead decision.
- ☒ Presented on disability awareness and League services at the Optimist Club.
- ☒ Disability awareness Presentations at Lions Clubs, Kiwanis Club and schools

 Initiated development of medical certification program for sign language interpreters. Phase I of III was completed on August 7, 2008.


 Launched a new **AgrAbility** program in partnership with Purdue University in March 2008 to serve agricultural workers and people in rural areas who have disabilities, creating a new position of AgrAbility Coordinator.

 Started a new **In-Home Care division** in April 2008 to provide the homemaking and attendant care services that people need to stay in their own home and avoid nursing home placement.


 Established **DeafLink** as a new division of the League in June 2008 with its own supervisor and additional staff.

 Established a **new support group** in Kendallville (Noble County) and **restarted a group** at Woodview Health Care in Fort Wayne. The total number of support groups is **10**, with **5** of those groups in outlying counties.


 Provided free meeting room space for **151 non-League events** for groups working to improve the community for an increase of **109.7%** compared to *FY 2007*. In addition, **63 fee-for-service groups** used the meeting room space.


 Continued to promote quality programs by supporting **49 different training activities** for staff for an increase of **40%** compared to *FY 2007*. Examples of staff training include:


- ☒ National leadership training program relating to transportation issues for people with disabilities in Washington, D.C.
- ☒ National Employment Law - ADA Workshop
- ☒ Indiana Youth Transition Conference


 In the first year of the transition/diversion program, **6 consumers** were kept out of institutions (**diverted**) and remained in the community, for a taxpayer savings of **\$121,440**. During the year, **5 consumers** moved out of institutions (**transitioned**) and into the community for a taxpayer savings of **\$75,900**.


 League volunteer, Lois Kadi, received the 2007 Frank Celerik Award from the Fort Wayne Central Lions Club on November 7, 2007.


 Volunteers donated **8,099** hours in *FY 2008*. The value of these volunteer hours from The Bureau of Labor 2007 statistics is **\$17.16** per hour, which is a donated value of **\$138,978.84**.

 In *FY 2008*, **52.9%** of the members of the Board of Directors were **people with disabilities**, and **17.6%** of the Board members were individuals from **racial minority groups**.

 In *FY 2008*, **72%** of the League staff members were **people with disabilities**, and **40%** of the staff members were individuals from **racial minority groups**.

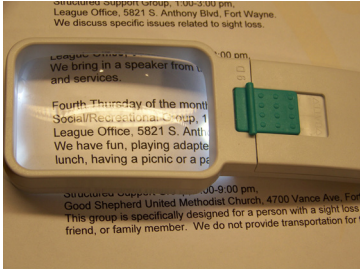
 Increased charitable donations by **8.2%**, and fee-for-service revenue by **53.1%**, as compared to *FY 2007*.

 Successfully advocated for inclusion of a line item in the state budget to support Centers for Independent Living in Indiana.

 Received donation of land from the county that is located south of the current League's property.

The League provides services to any person with disabilities who wants and needs to build their individual foundation of strength and independence. During 2008, League program highlights included:

Adaptive Equipment Services maintained an inventory of independent living aids and adaptive technology to provide equipment demonstration, loaner, and acquisition services. The program experienced tremendous growth, serving **299** people this year, an increase of **105%** over **FY 2007**.



An Adaptive Equipment catalog featuring all the independent living aids and adaptive technology available from the League was created in **FY 2008** and distributed to consumers, organizations and businesses.

Advocacy efforts promoted the full inclusion of people with disabilities into all aspects of community life. In **FY 2008**, the League helped **103 individuals** with advocacy issues, an increase of **51%** over **FY 2007**. Staff members devoted **253 hours** to **29 system wide advocacy activities**, and reached an audience of **220 people**. In addition, the program advocated for **11** systems improvements to increase the availability and quality of community based programs and equal access and/or options for people with significant disabilities. Some of the advocacy activities from this year include:



- Met with Aboite Library personnel about accessibility of their entrance and parking lot.
- Worked with Senior Park Apartments to remove architectural barriers at the entrance.
- Helped provide solutions for the Allen County Juvenile Center to improve accessibility of the parking lot and entrance.

AgrAbility Program is a partnership with Breaking New Ground at Purdue University in West Lafayette. In **March 2008**, a case coordinator was hired to provide outreach and case coordination services to disabled farm workers and people in rural northeast Indiana counties.

Braille Services produced **50,114 pages of Braille** materials on a fee-for-service basis for government and private sector organizations in **30 different states** in **FY 2008**.



Community Support Services provided free meeting space to organizations that make positive contributions to the quality of community life. Usage of this free meeting space skyrocketed to an all-time high of **151 non-League events** in **FY 2008**, an increase of **109.7%** compared to **FY 2007**. In addition to the free meeting space provided, **63 fee-for-service events** were held during the year.



DeafLink was established as a new division of the League with its own supervisor and additional staff in June 2008. **Sign language and interpreting services** were provided for **115 consumers**, and **case coordination services** provided for **30** consumers. DeafLink staff have provided many community public education awareness activities including:



- Trained Dupont Hospital staff on the use of a text telephone.
- Worked with consumers to improve the effectiveness of sign language interpreting communication and when to ask for an interpreter.
- Contracted with two nationally certified interpreters to establish a medical certification program for sign language interpreters.

Independent Living Skills Training provided daily living skills instruction, including home and personal management as well as communication skills training to **164** consumers, an increase of **66%** compared to **FY 2007**.

Emphasis was placed on consumers living independently in their own homes rather than an institution in **FY 2008**. The program assisted:

- 6 people to stay out of institutions (diversion)**, for a taxpayer savings of **\$121,440**.
- 5 people moved from an institution into the community (transition)** for a taxpayer savings of **\$75,900**.

Information and Referral Services responded to **1,888** inquiries and provided these individuals, organizations and businesses with the information they needed regarding disability-related rights, options and issues. These efforts reflect an increase of **60%** when compared to **FY 2007** service levels.

In addition, **36** Advocacy Alerts were disbursed covering **135** different issues, prompting **50%** of those receiving them express their views by taking action.

In-Home Care is the League's newest division and includes homemaker, attendant care, and respite care services. These are provided in the residential setting of those served and enable consumers to stay in their homes and community. This is a fee-for-service program.

Orientation & Mobility Training helped equip **43 individuals** with the skills they needed to travel independently, including white cane travel training and public transportation travel training.



Peer Support Services served **30** consumers through individual peer support services and worked with **250** consumers and family members through **10** support groups. In response to consumer needs, a **new support group** was established in Kendallville (Noble County) and a group was restarted at Woodview Health Care in Fort Wayne.



Senior Blind Services provided daily living skills training, adaptive equipment, and other independent living services to **118** blind or visually impaired people age 55 and above, an increase of **25%** over **FY 2007**.

Volunteer Services recruited and coordinated **167** volunteers to provide support group meeting transportation, adaptive equipment services, reader service and office support. In **FY 2008**, our dedicated volunteers:



- Donated **8,099** hours to the League
- Value of these 8,099 hours at \$17.16 per hour = **\$138,978.84** (Bureau of Labor 2007 statistics)
- Conducted pre-school vision screenings for **696** children.

One of our dedicated League volunteers, **Lois Kadi**, received the **2007 Frank Celerik Award** from the Fort Wayne Central Lions Club in November 2007.

Youth Services provided parent advocacy training, family and peer networking opportunities and advocacy assistance for young people with disabilities. Through the year, **155 youth** were served by the program. Two family networking activities, held at Georgetown Bowl and Putt Putt Golf were attended by **87 people**.

A key component of the Youth Services program is to place young people with significant disabilities in inclusive, age appropriate, community based programs of their choosing. The Youth Services coordinators gave staff training and/or provided individualized technical assistance to community based organizations so that youth with disabilities could participate in inclusive summer camps with other youth in the area. The League connected **61 boys and girls** to **13 different community involvement opportunities**, like Science Central, MASTer Camp, Camp Potawatomi, and McCracken Basketball Camp to name a few.



LEAGUE FOR THE BLIND AND DISABLED, INC.
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2008
WITH COMPARATIVE TOTALS FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

	2008			2007	
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL	TOTALS
REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT					
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	\$ 534,657	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 534,657	\$ 418,500
UNITED WAY	65,860	0	0	65,860	54,700
CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTS	276,124	154,100	0	430,224	299,712
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS	0	0	390	390	780
PROGRAM FEES AND SUPPLY SALES	349,369	0	0	349,369	311,947
INVESTMENT INCOME (NET OF TRUSTEE FEES OF \$19,261 AND \$18,026)	80,787	0	0	80,787	243,634
UNREALIZED (LOSSES) GAINS	(294,897)	0	0	(294,897)	133,757
(LOSS) GAIN ON SALE OF ASSETS	5,170	0	0	5,170	(1,257)
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM RESTRICTIONS	103,835	(103,835)	0	0	0
TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT	\$ 1,120,905	\$ 50,265	\$ 390	\$ 1,171,560	\$ 1,461,773
EXPENSES					
PROGRAM SERVICES:					
CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING	\$ 1,091,005	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,091,005	\$ 1,082,840
SUPPORTING SERVICES:					
MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL	\$ 86,738	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 86,738	\$ 50,567
FUND RAISING	43,309	0	0	43,309	9,606
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES	\$ 130,047	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 130,047	\$ 60,173
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 1,221,052	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,221,052	\$ 1,143,013
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET ASSETS	\$ (100,147)	\$ 50,265	\$ 390	\$ (49,492)	\$ 318,760
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING	3,923,649	497,465	373,661	4,794,775	4,476,015
NET ASSETS - ENDING	\$ 3,823,502	\$ 547,730	\$ 374,051	\$ 4,745,283	\$ 4,794,775

LEAGUE FOR THE BLIND & DISABLED STAFF MEMBERS



Sylvia Adams	Adaptive Equipment Coordinator
Juanita DeLeon	Home Care Director
Nancy Gasparini	Independent Living Director
Nancy Gerding	Braille Services Coordinator
Cheryl Gillespie	Development Director
Beverly Harding	Advocacy Coordinator
Mike Hines	Agrability Case Coordinator
Pat Howard	Information & Referral Coordinator
Kevin Hughes	Youth Services Coordinator
Wendy James	Orientation & Mobility Specialist
JJ Johnston	DeafLink Case Coordinator
Glenda Kendle	Office Manager
Sharon Lengacher	Bookkeeping & Braille Services Assistant
Laura Lindsay	Independent Living Skills Coordinator
Annie Moorman	Janitor/Maintenance Technician
David A. Nelson, CRC	President/CEO
Carlos Parra	Driver/Assistant
Jodie Pennell	Interpreter Scheduler
Diana Roach	Business Manager
Patrick Robinson	Administrative Assistant
Linda Scribner	Senior Blind Services Coordinator
Garth Sponseller	DeafLink Director
Carmen Terrell	Youth Services Coordinator
Mark Williams	Volunteer Coordinator

LEAGUE FOR THE BLIND & DISABLED BOARD MEMBERS



Back row L to R: Nathan Strange, Eric Ellet, Frank Moore, Warren Wilhelm, Randy Collins
Front row L to R: Frances Ganaway, Lisa Poole, Donald Dunten, Tom Locke, Mike McKay, Sheri Mutch, David Strater

2008 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike McKay, Chair
Frances Ganaway, Vice Chair
Susana Worth, Secretary
Jeff Sprinkle, Treasurer
Thomas S. Locke, Esq., Immediate Past Chair

James Clifford
Randy Collins *
Marcia Gevers *
John Guingrich
Karl LaPan
Frank N. Moore
Sheri Mutch
Lisa Poole
Timothy M. Schriver *
Nan Steinbach
Nathan Strange *
David Strater
Warren Wilhelm

* New board members



Serving people with disabilities in the
following counties in Northeast Indiana:

Adams
Allen
DeKalb
Huntington
Jay
Kosciusko
LaGrange
Noble
Steuben
Wells
Whitley

5821 South Anthony Blvd

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