



# *Bridges*

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## **FashionAbility a Winner!**

FashionAbility 2016, held on February 18, was again a highlight for Inclusion Connections! Attendees enjoyed great food, trendy fashions, and bidding on silent auction items which featured something for every taste and budget. Our supporters also learned about the hopes and dreams of our members, and responded by making our Fund-a-Need auction absolutely fantastic. Thank you! It is only with the help of IC and YOU that these deserving young people can live fulfilled lives which include an active social life, extended learning opportunities, satisfying jobs and making the transition to living as independently as possible. Proceeds from this annual fundraiser stay right here in our community, making a huge impact on the individuals we serve. Thanks to our wonderful community sponsors, donors, and volunteers who helped us make FashionAbility an amazing evening for our members, peers, families and friends! Plans for next year's gala are already underway. We hope to make the event bigger and better than ever!

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## Building on Success

Inclusion Connections continues to grow and improve programs, expecting to offer 1,000+ hours in 2016, including a seven-week summer camp. We are serving more than 100 individuals with developmental disabilities, and have trained 300+ teens as Peer Mentors. Programs include Healthy Living, CreateABILITY (arts & theater), and EmployABILITY to help with job skills. IC also offers a Service Dog Training Program which helps our members improve communication skills, stressing teamwork and responsibility. Our mission of offering inclusive opportunities is today's reality, and we continue to need and value our community's support. This year promises to be one of many successes. We invite you to be part of the excitement!

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**Our Mission is to strengthen the lives of individuals with disabilities by creating inclusive opportunities for community involvement, access to meaningful employment and better options for independent living.**

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## Summer Camp

Summer Camp 2016 is one of the ways that Inclusion Connections continues to serve our families and members. Summers can be a time of isolation for our members who don't drive, and families who are busy working. It is vital that we offer our members opportunities to be active, to learn and to become more independent. IC is meeting that need in a big way, offering seven weeks of fun and education. Theater and art classes, jobs skills training, and trips to local parks and other venues give our members and peer mentors the chance to play sports, have lunch together and build real friendships. This is just some of what makes IC's Summer Camp great! This year, we will offer camp at our Activity Center in Olathe, and also a mini-camp in Liberty.



# FOREVER FRIENDSHIPS

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## Dog Treat Business

IC is excited to be launching a dog treat and toy business in the fall. Members

will be involved in every aspect of this business, from planning recipes, shopping for supplies, baking treats and making toys, sales and marketing, and delivering our products. Initial plans include marketing to local businesses and individuals. If you'd like to volunteer to help with our new venture, or would like to buy our products, please [sign up here](#).

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## Current Needs

We currently have a number of pressing needs! At the top of our list is technology, including laptops, tablet/iPads, a copier/scanner and a video camera. This equipment is necessary for our program classes, particularly for our employment classes. Our members need to be connected to the Internet in order to succeed in today's world, whether it's creating a resume online, having access to the latest curriculum designed just for individuals with disabilities, or living independently with success. Today's technology can be utilized in so many exciting ways: laptops and tablets can help track and promote our members' health and fitness for the Healthy Living program, videos of play practices can help members learn lines for CreateABILITY theater program, we can film members in mock job interviews to help critique job skills for EmployABILITY program, or for self-advocacy training, and we can keep track of supplies, customers, and sales for our dog treat business.

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## Interested in Leadership?

**IC is searching for individuals interested in our mission to serve on our Board of Directors. Meetings are held the second Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in Olathe. Board members help establish goals, oversee program planning and evaluation, promote Inclusion Connections, and provide financial oversight. Contact us at [info@lCkc.org](mailto:info@lCkc.org) if you'd like more information about serving on our Board.**

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## In the Spotlight

We'd like you to meet Claudia Freeman, one of our members! Claudia is 16-years-old and a junior at Blue Valley High School. Claudia is passionate about horses and rides twice a week. She loves Zumba class at IC and enjoys making dog treats and toys for IC's dog treat business. Her favorite class is training service dogs with our, Paws for Freedom. To say Claudia loves animals is an understatement!



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## How YOU can invest in Inclusion Connections

- Become a monthly donor, or give a one-time donation at [ICkc.org](https://ICkc.org)
- Ask your employer to match your donation
- Teach a class using your gifts, hobbies, talents
- Host a fundraiser at work or in your neighborhood. We'll show you how!
- Choose Inclusion Connections as your charity for Amazon Smile

Email us at [info@ICkc.org](mailto:info@ICkc.org) today, and we'll help you invest in our kids' futures!

Connect with us at [ICkc.org](https://ICkc.org)!



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