



A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY WHERE ADULTS  
WITH INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES CAN THRIVE



INCLUSION  
Connections  
PawsAbilities

SINCE 2013, INCLUSION CONNECTIONS HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (I/DD) IN JOHNSON COUNTY, KS

Our primary goal is to enhance the lives of those we serve by creating inclusive opportunities for community engagement, meaningful employment, and better options for supportive living, all aimed at fostering independence.

Our programs, centered around Education, Employment, and Independent Living, are both innovative and successful. The PawsAbilities Workforce Development Program provides valuable skills training, where students handcraft dog treats and other products to be sold online, in our retail store, and mobile popups. Our Employment Specialists carefully matches individuals with community-based jobs that align with their skills and preferences, offering ongoing support through job coaching and transportation services (as none can drive). Additionally, our Transition Academy offers classes to prepare students to successfully transition from school to the workplace and supportive living.

In 2024 we served 250 individuals, aged 16-40, with developmental disabilities such as Autism, Down syndrome, and Cerebral palsy. Each student encounters challenges, including negative physical, psychological, and economic outcomes associated with their disabilities.

As our model and strategies continue to evolve, Inclusion Connections consistently tackles unmet needs efficiently and effectively. We strongly advocate for the rights of adults with I/DD, emphasizing the need for housing, friendship, romantic relationships, employment, a faith community, and leadership opportunities. BelongKC addresses the diverse support needs and preferences of individuals in the Kansas City community, offering choices and ensuring they are treated with the dignity they deserve for the unique contributions they can make.

“We have been so inspired by working with organizations in KC who serve individuals with special needs. Our family has prioritized this important work as we feel strongly that everyone, regardless of their ability should have a chance to live as independently as possible and enjoy the satisfaction of earning a paycheck. Inclusion Connections is a tremendous resource and the groundbreaking of BelongKC is going to be transformational.

- DOUG AND NAN SMITH



JANAE, CADE & LEXI

# THE NEED

## INDIVIDUALS WITH I/DD FACE MULTIPLE, INTERSECTING CRISES

*“I worry about what would happen to Sam if something were to happen to me. I can’t imagine him losing me and having to move in with strangers in a group home all at the same time.”*

- SAM’S MOM

### THERE IS A LACK OF AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING, RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION, AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

While people with I/DD are supported as children and into young adulthood via family, caregivers, and school programs, these supports drop off dramatically after high school graduation. From there, families with an adult with a disability must either place their child in a group home or manage supports in their own home, often placed on a waiting list for years to receive services. There is not just a gap in available supportive housing, but a genuine housing crisis for low income individuals with I/DD. This is coupled with a national crisis facing families across the United States: the rising number of adults with I/DD who are living with aging caregivers. Most adults with disabilities will outlive their parents and caregivers, resulting in forced emergency placements.

BelongKC envisions a Kansas City where all individuals are treated equally, regardless of ability, and have the resources and accommodations needed.



SAM



# OUR IMPACT

AN INNOVATIVE, AFFORDABLE, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY  
WHERE ADULTS WITH I/DD CAN THRIVE



- Individual Apartments
- Community Dining Hall
- Fitness Center
- Transportation Hub
- Employment & Health Focus

## INDEPENDENT AND SUPPORTIVE LIVING

Through their Medicaid Waiver, residents can receive supportive living services such as financial management, cooking, cleaning, shopping, personal care, personal relationships, and community trips. These supports are customized to meet the unique needs of the individual, not a group.



## JOIN US IN BUILDING A COMMUNITY WHERE INDIVIDUALS WITH I/DD BELONG & THRIVE

BelongKC will give people with disabilities a place to call home where they can lead full participatory lives. It will serve as a model site for education, training, and thought leadership focused on expanding choices for affordable, quality housing options across the KC region.

Your gift will:

- Build an independent living community for individuals with I/DD in Kansas City
- Provide holistic services and supports that encourage the development of improved health outcomes, flourishing social relationships, & meaningful, sustainable employment
- Create a hub for partnerships benefiting the I/DD community
- Provide a choice of where to live, removing the burden from aging families

**\$20 MILLION BELONGKC CAMPAIGN  
GOAL TO BE RAISED BY 2025**

## 350 PEOPLE SERVED ANNUALLY

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING/JOB, TRANSITION ACADEMY,  
HEALTH INITIATIVES & SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES



RACHEL



# OUR APPROACH

## SUPPORTS FOR INDEPENDENCE & COMMUNITY INCLUSION

### CONSUMER DIRECTED APPROACH

BelongKC is taking a holistic support approach by allowing residents to bring their own supports through the Medicaid Waiver supplemented with our Concierge services which will integrate housing, employment, transportation and more. This successful model of care will serve as a national framework supporting individuals with I/DD and their families.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Careers are a pathway to a healthy, fulfilled life and independence. People with I/DD can be employed alongside people without disabilities, earning competitive wages.

Through job training, soft skills coaching, and real-work experience at PawsAbilities, we're getting individuals ready for and placing them in competitive jobs and supporting a growing workforce. Access to transportation services and job coaching eliminate significant barriers to employment.

### HEALTH INITIATIVES

Social and economic factors, such as housing and social isolation, are critical factors in determining a person's wellness. By engaging community partners, BelongKC will offer annual physical and mental health screenings, access to supervised fitness programs, nutritional meals accommodating special diets, and a Resident Advisory Council which will closely monitor needs and onsite services.



MATTHEW



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Special Olympics Kansas and Inclusion Connections have a long history of partnering with local organizations with similar missions and are proud to partner together on the BelongKC initiative. Special Olympics Kansas is dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit and will lead health and fitness programming at BelongKC.

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*The vision of BelongKC not only addresses the housing crisis our athletes face, it also puts in place critically needed support (unlike any other place in Kansas). Our community becomes stronger when those with the greatest needs are lifted up.*

*BelongKC will do just that! This is an opportunity for the state of Kansas to demonstrate it values our citizens with disabilities and shows the commitment to this most worthy project.*

- JOHN LAIR CEO Special Olympics Kansas



CAROLINE

INCLUSION  
Connections  
PawsAbilities



JOIN US

BY CONTRIBUTING TO  
BELONGKC TODAY!

BelongKC 

**DEBBIE HORN**

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