

Charity is our #1 Principle

Through our Charities programs and events, the Illinois Knights of Columbus help thousands who are in need of a helping hand.

The number one principle of the Knights of Columbus is Charity.

Whether the efforts are to benefit the mentally challenged, Catholic Newman Centers on college campuses, Catholic Vocations, or those suffering hardship, the Knights of Columbus are there to assist.



Knights of Columbus volunteer at Special Olympics events year round.

Special Olympics

Our partnership with Special Olympics began with the first Special Olympics game in Chicago's Soldiers Field. Sargent Shriver, a Brother Knight, and his wife Eunice were key organizers. That humble beginning ushered in a movement that expanded to what now includes world-wide participation.

Local councils collaborate with Special Olympics coordinators in their area to provide a variety of hands on support that ranges from encouraging the athletes to serving food in snack tents at various events. Councils also designate their locally collected funds to support their local Special Olympics programs.

Illinois is the first area in the world to provide a training facility for educational programs supporting the Special Olympics objectives. This facility, located in Normal, Illinois, is a center for both athletes and supporters of athletes to learn skills to be better athletes. One exciting development is the Global Messenger. Athletes are trained in communication skills to make presentations on behalf of Special Olympics programs. Another development is Tribute Park located just outside the training facility. The Illinois Knights of Columbus are key contributors.

For more information write or call us.

*Illinois State Council
Knights of Columbus*

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*Illinois State Council
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Championing the Abilities of Those with Mental Challenges



**We are one family:
In Service to One,
In Service to All**

Illinois Knights Spark the Cause and a long time partnership!

Brother Knights from Father CC Boyle council in Tinley Park started a program in 1970 to support a cause that grew beyond their wildest imaginations. They recognized that our special citizens with intellectual disabilities had more abilities than disabilities; and that they needed our help to realize their potential. To support this cause, they developed an idea to collect donations in exchange for a favorite American confection: the Tootsie Roll. The project was successful enough that it expanded throughout Illinois and ultimately became an Order-wide program being conducted in 47 jurisdictions! From that humble beginning, the Knights of Columbus were welcomed into the family of special citizens whose abilities are recognized. Our partnership was witnessed at the first Special Olympics games held in Chicago's Soldiers Field and continues worldwide. Also, through the generosity of the Illinois Knights of Columbus, zero interest loans are offered to 501(c)3 organizations that build Group Homes allowing those with intellectual challenges to live independently.

How We Raise Funds?

One of the most popular and successful programs conducted by the Knights of Columbus state and local councils to benefit Special Olympics and other organizations is a fund-raiser under which Knights and their families collect donations outside of stores and on street corners. During the MR/LD Drive, contributors are usually offered a Tootsie Roll in appreciation for donations. Many councils have additional innovative ways to raise funds to support this cause which they run throughout the fraternal year.

Group Homes

Experts who lead the effort on education and coaching focus on abilities of individuals versus disabilities. Developing the proper skills to lead a more independent life is a goal of many organizations we support. To help in this cause, the Illinois Knights of Columbus has a program in place to provide interest-free loans for 501(c)3 organizations to build community-based Group Homes. These homes provide a living environment that allows the residents to continue to learn and grow, through academic, social, and vocational opportunities. As of 2007, the Illinois Knights of Columbus has provided over 60 interest-free loans since the program's inception in 1985. This support is made possible through the 10 percent portion of all donations collected by councils in the year.



Group Home in Bartlett, Illinois displaying Illinois Knights plaque.

How Are Funds Used?

The over 450 councils in the state of Illinois raise funds as representatives of Illinois Knights of



Knights Promote the Annual MR/LD Tootsie Roll Drive

Columbus Charities, Inc. a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. 90% of all funds collected are returned to local agencies through the

local councils. The remaining 10% of funds are used to cover administrative costs, and to fund donation by state council on behalf of all the councils in the state. The largest single recipient is Illinois Special Olympics, with whom the Illinois Knights of Columbus is a partner. In recent years, the state council has donated over \$250,000 annually to Illinois Special Olympics. In 2007, the state council unveiled a statue, commemorating the family, in Tribute Park in Normal, Illinois.

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