

# Executive Director Update

Eric Huffman



*We are dedicated to increasing the quality of life for people with physical disabilities through the creation of affordable, accessible, barrier-free housing solutions and resident services that encourage independence.*

## Happy September to all our OTR Supporters!

Thank you for all the support you have given to OTR through your participation, donations, and advocacy.

The past couple months, we have focused on our upcoming buildings and events, but this month I wanted to shift the focus to a special resident- one of the many great people who live with us. He is an inspiring gentleman and amazing advocate for OTR. I hope you enjoy his story.

Thank you again for allowing us to continue to do what we do best- build homes and independence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric".

## Resident of the Month - Chris Krystyn



Chris came to OTR about 12 years ago in hopes of gaining independence and moving closer to his family. Before Chris became a part of the OTR community, he went through a traumatic experience that led him to where he is today.

When Chris was 16 years old, he was with friends near a local swimming hole when everything changed. He was diving into the water to catch the Frisbee from his friend, when he hit his head on an unknown object, and it left him unable to move, face down in the water. After the accident, Chris

## September 2015

### Upcoming Events!

#### September 20, 2015

*8th Annual Rainbow Challenge  
Tour*

All Day

Evanston Ecology Center  
2024 McCormick Blvd.  
Evanston, IL 60201

[REGISTER HERE](#)  
[SUPPORT HERE](#)

#### November 7, 2015

*26th Anniversary Celebration*

*Concert*

*7:00 pm*

*with cocktail reception after show*

Pick Staiger Concert Hall  
50 Arts Circle Drive  
Evanston, IL 60208

[BUY TICKETS HERE](#)

#### October 9, 2015

*Gallery OTR*

*Artwork by Kate Comperolle*

*5:00 pm- 8:00 pm*

Hill Arboretum Apartments

2040 Brown Avenue

Evanston, IL 60201

Free to the Public

### Upcoming Developments!

OTR is planning on building in Des Plaines! Below is a rendering for OTR's newest proposed apartment community! We are currently working on City approval!

had many fears about his future, his school opportunities, and relationships.

Chris began his recovery process at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and his recovery continued for about 2 years until he was able to work in a set routine. He finished high school, attended Illinois State University and graduated with a degree in Communications.

After college, Chris was living far from his home and family when his parents heard of Over The Rainbow Association. Chris lived at the Hill Arboretum Apartments for about 8 years until his career moved him to OTR's Belden Apartment Community, where he currently resides.

Chris's career began as a mentor at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago for people going through traumatic experiences like his own and even worse. His first full-time position with R.I.C. was doing data extraction with the knowledge he learned from ISU and OTR's Business Center. Now, Chris also helps with Education Services for spinal cord injuries, showing individuals the resources and services available to them, and will soon be serving on an RIC Advisory Committee.

When talking about what OTR, living at the Hill Arboretum Apartments and Belden Apartments has meant to him, Chris had one word to describe it- opportunity! Chris explained how living in a barrier-free environment has given him the chance to live successfully in the community. Chris's accident happened before the ADA went into effect, so he has seen first hand all the accessible changes that have been made. He expressed how thankful he was for OTR and the ADA for making things more accessible and giving him the comfort and dignity of a barrier-free lifestyle.

In the future, Chris hopes to one day go on vacation and travel. He plans to continue mentoring and be a part of RIC, promote Over The Rainbow, and help others who have lived through trauma to find opportunities. Chris has become part of the inspiration for a new song written by former member of the rock band, Survivor, Bill Syniar, which is set to be released next month! Check out the [Story behind "Beautiful"](#) featuring Chris and Bill Syniar!

Thank you Chris for your story and continued inspiration!



OTR plans to break ground in 2016!

## OTR in the News!

Last week, OTR was featured in Make It Better Magazine's weekly Better Letter!

### [Read the Article Here!](#)

Please click and share the article! The more clicks OTR and our article receive, the more likely the article will be featured in the magazine!

Click and Share to help spread the word about OTR!

## Contact Us

Over The Rainbow  
[info@otrassn.org](mailto:info@otrassn.org)  
847-328-6633  
[otrassn.org](http://otrassn.org)

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