

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-08

**VILLAGE OF YORKVILLE
RACINE COUNTY, STATE OF WISCONSIN**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CREDENTIALING OF SHEPHERDS COLLEGE
TO ALLOW ACCESS TO PELL GRANTS AND FEDERAL WORK STUDY
OPPORTUNITIES**

**THE VILLAGE BOARD OF THE VILLAGE OF YORKVILLE, RACINE COUNTY,
STATE OF WISCONSIN, RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

WHEREAS, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are an underserved group with unrealized potential due to the lack of suitable and effective training programs and meaningful opportunities to contribute to society, and

WHEREAS, established in 2008, Shepherds College provides accredited occupational training for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a specifically designed learning environment, and

WHEREAS, Shepherds College serves students with intellectual and developmental disabilities from Racine County, the State of Wisconsin, and across the United States (students from 36 states to date), and

WHEREAS, Shepherds College graduates are gainfully employed at a rate of over 80%, four times the national average for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and

WHEREAS, the Shepherds College experience has empowered hundreds of graduates to live more fulfilling lives, which involve gainful employment, appropriate independent living, community involvement, participation in a faith community, and service to God and others, and

WHEREAS, Shepherds College is becoming a more prominent member of Racine County, with partnerships and stakeholders throughout the county, and

WHEREAS, as a specialized post-secondary school, Shepherds College cannot qualify as a Comprehensive Transition Program and thereby provide its students with intellectual and developmental disabilities access to Pell Grants and Federal Work Study opportunities, and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Shepherds College was deemed eligible to participate in Federal Student Aid by meeting the requirements of securing state authorization and attaining accreditation through a U.S. Department of Education authorized accreditor, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Education has now reversed their decision of 2011 and determined that Shepherds College and its students are no longer eligible to participate in Federal Student Aid, and

WHEREAS, we commend the State of Wisconsin for allowing students of Shepherds College to utilize IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct), Family Care, and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) funds for the purpose of postsecondary education at credentialed, specialized schools like Shepherds College, and encourage the continuation and expansion of such support.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Yorkville Village Board respectfully requests that U.S. Representative Bryan Steil and his fellow congressional representatives pursue the creation of a pathway for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who attend Shepherds College and similarly credentialed specialized post-secondary schools and programs across the nation access to federal grant opportunities as a means of financial assistance for their continued education and the personal pursuit of their hopes and dreams of a meaningful and fulfilling life.

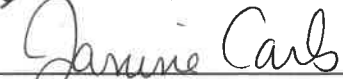
This Resolution was adopted by the Yorkville Village Board on April 8, 2024.

VILLAGE OF YORKVILLE

Ayes: 5

By: 
Douglas Nelson, President

Nays: 0

Attest: 
Janine Carls, Clerk

Abstentions: 0

Absences: 0

VILLAGE OF YORKVILLE

925 15th Avenue, Union Grove, Wisconsin 53182

Phone: (262) 878-2123

Fax: (262) 878-1680

michael@villageofyorkville.com

Douglas Nelson
President

Robert Funk
Trustee

Daniel Maurice
Trustee

Cory Bartlett
Trustee

Steve Nelson
Trustee

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Representative Bryan Steil
United States House of Representatives

Dear Representative Steil,

The Racine County Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (RCICC), comprised of Racine County's municipal heads of government, expresses its collective support and advocates for the rights and opportunities of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It has come to our attention that an invaluable resource in our community, Shepherds College, has been negatively impacted by changes in policy regarding their eligibility for Federal Student Aid, including Pell Grants and Federal Work Study opportunities.

Since its establishment in 2008, Shepherds College has been at the forefront of providing specialized, accredited occupational training for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This institution not only serves our local communities but attracts students from across the country, with alumni from 36 states to date. The success of Shepherds College is clear in its graduates' employment rate, which stands at over 80%, significantly surpassing the national average for individuals within this underserved demographic.

Regrettably, the U.S. Department of Education's reversal of its 2011 decision regarding Shepherds College's eligibility for Federal Student Aid has placed undue strain on the institution and its students. This decision not only undermines the college's efforts to serve students with intellectual and developmental disabilities but also limits these students' access to essential financial resources needed for their education and personal development.

Moreover, we wish to acknowledge and commend the State of Wisconsin for its continued support, allowing Shepherds College students to utilize IRIS, Family Care, and DVR funds for their postsecondary education. This state-level support is invaluable, yet the need for federal financial assistance remains critical for the sustainability of such specialized educational programs.

Therefore, **we respectfully urge you and your fellow congressional representatives to consider creating legislation to enable Shepherds College and similar institutions across the nation to qualify for Pell Grants and Federal Work Study opportunities.** This change would significantly enhance the accessibility of postsecondary education for students with intellectual

and developmental disabilities, thereby supporting their aspirations for a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Your leadership in addressing this issue could open new doors for countless individuals, empowering them to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to our communities. We look forward to your support and are available for any further discussion or information.

Thank you for considering our request. We hope for your advocacy on behalf of this important cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. McKinney', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael McKinney
Administrator
Village of Yorkville