



Orchard Village ([www.orchardvillage.org](http://www.orchardvillage.org)) has been a member of the Skokie community since 1972. The organization provides a variety of services that empower adults and children with disabilities to live, learn, work and play in their communities. Orchard Village serves individuals and families throughout the North Shore and in the City of Chicago.

The “Council on Quality and Leadership”, an international accrediting organization, ranked Orchard Village in the top tier of organizations that provide services to people with disabilities. Key to this accomplishment is the agency’s commitment to building relationships in the communities where its clients live and work. Orchard Village Staff ensure that each person is involved in their environments, are connected to family and other supports, choose and use local neighborhood services, and assume meaningful social roles in the community.

Orchard Village has come a long way since a group of Skokie parents with children with disabilities founded the Orchard School Parents Association to secure services for their children. Their efforts resulted in the establishment of the Julia S. Molloy Education Center serving Niles Township. Some of the original members of Orchard School Parents Association later established “Orchard Association of the Retarded” a separate non-profit organization that purchased a large parcel of land in the far southwest corner of Skokie where Orchard Village still operates. As the original residents grew up, Orchard Village expanded its services to include vocational and respite care services.

In 2007, Orchard Village opened Orchard Academy. Orchard Academy ([www.orchardacademy.org](http://www.orchardacademy.org)) is an innovative and unique educational program that teaches students, ages 17 to 22, how to apply their knowledge and develop the skills to transition into successful and fulfilling lives after high school. The curriculum includes community-based experiences in all areas from job placement to independent living and social skills. The small student to teacher ratio allows staff to provide the best support possible to each student based on his or her own goals. Orchard Academy is only one the three schools of its kind in Illinois.

In 2008, Orchard Village opened its first transition home for young men who are building social, vocational and independent living skills. The agency also provides home-based support services to individuals with disabilities which make it possible for them to live with their families.

Today, Orchard Village serves approximately 300 clients annually. The agency supports clients in a variety of settings including group homes with 24-hour staff support and supported living environments for clients who are able to live more independently. The agency also operates a respite care program providing 25 families with a break from the sustained demands of parenting a child with disabilities. Orchard Village provides a comprehensive vocational training program that supports over 140 people in securing and maintaining competitive employment. Orchard Village works with its clients to develop and execute a career plan. The agency offers a comprehensive array of services including vocational classes, job placement, job retention seminars and job coaching. Eighty per cent of Orchard Village clients work and earn a competitive wage.