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*"CEL has brought out  
Lulu's strengths.  
I never expected nor  
dreamed I'd see  
the kind of progress  
she has made."*

*-Lulu's dad*



*Like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon, the real Lulu emerged. She became a teenager who is always smiling.*

# Meet Lulu

Lulu is 17 years old and a typical teenager. She loves cheerleading, listening to music, dancing, and shopping. She giggles when you mention Justin Bieber – whom she, with unwavering conviction, refers to as her boyfriend. Lulu, who has Down Syndrome, would like to work in a shoe store when she is older.

It's difficult to imagine that just two years ago Lulu would barely make eye contact or respond to questions. When she tried speaking up, she was difficult to understand. It was clear that Lulu was not a thriving and happy teenager. Something was missing that made her withdraw into herself.

That something – crucial to the well-being of all teenagers – was a strong and supportive community of peers and friends. Lulu needed a social life. Though she has a wonderful family who gives her the love and support she needs, the social isolation that Lulu experienced was diminishing her spirit, self-worth, and even her hope for the future.

Lulu lives in a community with few resources. Lulu would go to school and come home with little else to look forward to. She was missing the essentials to a happy teenage life – engaging and fun activities that would give her experiences from which to learn and, most importantly, friends.

Two years ago, Lulu's life changed. The Center for Enriched Living started an afterschool club in Lulu's school, situated in one of the most underserved communities in the Chicago area. Within a year in CEL's afterschool program, Lulu had come into her own.

If you meet Lulu today, you'll encounter the happiest of teenagers: the bubbly and personable Lulu; the silly and fun-loving Lulu; and the Lulu who is always the life of the party.

This is the Lulu her family has waited a very long time to see.

And tomorrow, who knows? Lulu may well achieve her dream of selling shoes. After all, she certainly has the winning personality and confidence to follow her dream.



Established in 1968, The Center for Enriched Living (CEL) exists so that people with developmental disabilities can be fully included in the community, achieve personal success, and enjoy a good quality of life.

280 Saunders Road, Riverwoods, Illinois 60015 | 847.948.7001 | [www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org](http://www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org)