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**CONTACT:** April L. Booze  
Marketing Communications Manager  
[April@CenterForEnrichedLiving.org](mailto:April@CenterForEnrichedLiving.org) or 847.948.7001

## **The Center for Enriched Living Partners with Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Department for Blood Drive and Disability Training Event**

Riverwoods, Illinois, April 9, 2014 – The Center for Enriched Living (CEL), a nonprofit serving individuals of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Department (DBFD) are partnering up later this month for two events that will have an enormous impact on the community.

Wednesday, April 16 – Friday, April 18, CEL and the DBFD will offer a two-fold training event at CEL’s facility in Riverwoods. This training, the first of its kind in the area, will mutually benefit both CEL’s members and the first responders in attendance. “What makes this training unique is that our members will have an opportunity to see the equipment that is used in emergency situations,” said Melissa Juarez-Ehlers, Director of Program Services. “Our members will be able to interact with the equipment – from the blood pressure cuff to actually seeing the back of the fire truck and the inside of ambulance – in a non-emergency situation. So in the event of a real life emergency, they will understand the situation and be less likely to panic.”

The second half of the training will be a general disability awareness training by CEL’s staff to help the DBFD know how to better handle calls when the victim has intellectual or developmental disabilities. “This training is so important in the work we do,” said Micah Montondo of the Fire Prevention and Education Bureau of the Deerfield-Bannockburn Fire Department. “Having a better understanding of what to do when you walk into a situation where a person may not be able to communicate and ensure that the situation doesn’t escalate, is critical.”

“Educating first responders about ways to ease people with developmental disabilities’ fear and anxiety is critical to ensure they receive proper care,” added Harriet Levy, Executive Director. “This training will go far in providing a mutual understanding and respect between first responders and our members. We are so proud to have this opportunity and hope that in the future we can open this training up to additional area fire departments.”

Secondly, CEL will host a Blood Drive at its facility in Riverwoods on Thursday, April 24 with the DBFD. This Blood Drive in partnership with Life Source, honors the daughter of Highland Park Fire Fighter, Nathan Abbot’s, Kyla who at her 1-year check-up was diagnosed with high risk stage four neuroblastoma. Don’t miss your opportunity to make a difference by donating blood – log on to [www.lifeforce.org](http://www.lifeforce.org) to make your appointment. Select Donate Blood; Make an Appointment; scroll down and search by Group Code: 309D.

For more information on both of these events, contact Melissa Juarez-Ehlers at 847.948.7001.

### *About the Center for Enriched Living*

*The Center for Enriched Living exists to enhance and enrich the lives of people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities – from youth through adulthood. CEL programs provide opportunities for our members to make new friends, learn social and practical skills, and become vital participants within their communities. More information available at [www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org](http://www.CenterForEnrichedLiving.org)*

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