

Upcoming Events to Support Illinois Center for Autism with Live Music, Fashion Show, More

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
November 1 2023 4:45 PM



ST. LOUIS - The Illinois Center for Autism (ICA) helps hundreds of families every day, and now you can help them by supporting one of their many upcoming fundraisers, complete with bands, vendors, raffles, a fashion show and plenty more.

On Friday, Nov. 3, 2023, the music festival “Tracy’s Song 2.0” at The Heavy Anchor in St. Louis will serve up four bands and plenty of basket raffles from indie St. Louis shops. Then on Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, ladies can lunch at the center’s “Women, Wine and Wardrobes” event with special guest speaker Congresswoman Nikki Budzinski. All proceeds from both events will go toward the programs at ICA, which have been helping families across nine Illinois counties for 45 years.

“We’re kind of a hidden gem,” explained Rachel Newsome, ICA’s communications officer. “Unless your family is experiencing the challenges of autism, a lot of times you might hear the name but you don’t know what we do or who we are. We’re over 45 years old and we’ve been serving children and adults with autism spectrum disorder.”

The center has three primary programs, including their [client/family support services](#) and [an adult program](#) with vocational and life skills training. The most popular program is their [Special Day School Program](#) for ages 3–21, with locations in Belleville and Fairview Heights and four satellite classrooms in Granite City Community Unit School District #9.

For Scott Anthony, the organizer of Tracy’s Song 2.0, it was an easy decision to support ICA. Anthony’s sister passed away in 2020, and she was “very passionate about autism and autism awareness.” Anthony has worked with his nephew, who has autism, and his friends in the St. Louis music scene to create Tracy’s Song 2.0.

“It’s a great way to celebrate the memory of my sister while raising awareness,” Anthony said. “This show is 100% nonprofit with everything going to the Illinois Center for Autism...I can’t think of a better group to work with.”

Doors open at 7 p.m. and the show starts at 8 p.m. on Nov. 3, 2023, at [The Heavy Anchor](#). Local bands [Death and Memphis](#), [Modern Angst](#), [Boss Battle](#) and [NoPoint](#) have agreed to play for free, and indie business owners have donated several items for the basket raffle. Attendees can also purchase Tracy’s Song 2.0 merch. The show is 21+ and the cover is \$10 at the door. All proceeds go to ICA.

“I’m very, very fortunate to have the friends that I have in the music community,” Anthony said. “What’s great about the St. Louis community, whether it’s the owners of small businesses or the musical artists — everybody supports everybody. The whole thing has been a blessing. It’s surreal, almost.”

If punk isn’t your preference, you can also check out ICA’s Women, Wine and Wardrobes event on Nov. 19, 2023. This event will be held from 12–4 p.m. at the Regency Conference Center in O’Fallon.

A seated luncheon will kick off the afternoon, followed by a fashion show and an opportunity to get a headstart on your holiday shopping with several local vendors. Newsome is particularly excited to bring in Budzinski as the guest speaker.

“She’s very big in this area, followed in this area, and has done a lot for the area,” Newsome said. “We’re pretty excited to have her there just to talk about her life and talk about being a woman in any kind of professional field and what the challenges are and that kind of thing. I think it’s going to be a great afternoon.”

Tickets for the Women, Wine and Wardrobes event are \$75 and [can be purchased online](#). ICA is finalizing their vendor list, and any interested vendors can contact them at the [official Women, Wine and Wardrobes webpage](#). Tickets must be purchased by Nov. 13, 2023.

ICA is also holding a food drive through Dec. 12, 2023, to help the families who utilize their services. According to Newsome, statistics have shown that raising a child on the autism spectrum typically costs three to four times more than raising neurotypical children. She estimates that their annual food drive supports 50–60 of the families they work with.

“A lot of our families are really hurting,” she said. “There’s a lot of need out there.”

You can drop off nonperishable and canned food at any of the ICA campuses, including their main office at 548 South Ruby Lane in Fairview Heights. You can also send a monetary donation [here](#).

Newsome noted that ICA would not be able to operate like it does without the support of people in the community, including Anthony and those who will attend the events on Nov. 3 and 19. She said these fundraisers and donations “take a lot of pressure off” so ICA can focus on what matters most: helping people.

“We would not be able to provide nearly the services we provide to both the students and the clients,” Newsome added. “These events directly impact how we can pay our staff, how we can afford things that we wouldn’t normally be able to get offered to our clients and our students. Yeah, it makes all the difference in the world.”

For more information about the Illinois Center for Autism, visit their [Facebook page](#) or [official website at IllinoisCenterForAutism.org](#).