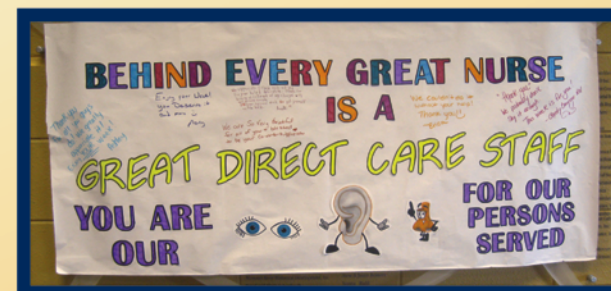


Celebrating OU Staff

OU proudly honored our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) the week of September 12-16. Organizations throughout the country recognize the good work of these important individuals through Direct Care Staff Appreciation Week, held the second week of September each year. Throughout the week, there were various events and activities to celebrate our staff and the contributions each member makes to the organization and persons served.



Various departments also demonstrated their support by creating posters that were displayed throughout the community center; each was unique with a special message of appreciation. Jennifer McCabe, President and CEO shared, "We would not be able to provide the valued services we offer without these great team members. Our direct care staff are essential to what we are able to accomplish at OU!"



Unmasking Brain Injury

The Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa (BIAIA) launched a program earlier this year, Unmasking Brain Injury, of which OU was pleased to participate. This project was designed to promote awareness of the prevalence of brain injury and give survivors a voice while also educating others. The BIAIA provided plain white masks and a variety of paints and brushes to allow persons served to paint their own mask. This project was led by OU's therapy team and turned out to be more effective and cathartic than ever anticipated. Persons served not only enjoyed this artistic project, but it became yet another outlet to share their story and feelings regarding their brain injury. Upon



completion of the project, masks were displayed at ArtSplash in September, and then sent to Des Moines where they will be displayed with other masks from around the state. While at ArtSplash, the masks served as inspiration for the interactive art project that invited community members to contribute to the canvas. While adding their special touch, community members were able to learn more how art therapy is important to individuals and allows those with brain injuries to also help with therapeutic supports such as expression and range of motion. The completed canvas will be displayed at the OU Community Center and will serve as a reminder of the community support at ArtSplash. For more information on Unmasking Brain Injury, go to www.biaia.org.

Family Day at OU

Each year OU brings persons served, community members, staff and families together for Family and Community Day. This annual event is a wonderful time to unite loved ones together for a few hours and enjoy a nice meal, activities, and time for fellowship. For those who are not able to spend much time at OU, this event allows an opportunity to access our facilities, learn more about the organization, and ultimately engage in a day that is special to many. Some of the favorite activities include BINGO, cookie walk, face painting, bouncy house, and carnival games. With a donation provided by Thrivent Financial, persons served and guests were able to benefit by winning great prizes throughout the day. This year, some special guests surprised many with their appearance. Darth Vader and his entourage made their debut, allowing for photo opportunities for Star Wars fans! Thanks to all for joining us for Family Day 2016 and to all the volunteers who helped to make the day a success!



Community Garden

The therapy department of OU has personally taken on a new project – the implementation of our community garden! This project began with an idea by Jenn Barcus, Therapy Coordinator, who partnered with Siouxland District Health for a community garden grant. After learning that OU was awarded the grant, Jenn brought in other team members with the design, construction, and planting phases. Tory Norby, Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), happens to have many skills beyond that as an SLP, and designed the garden to be wheelchair accessible and large enough for many to access at a given time. Tory found time over the summer months to construct the garden, and also worked with volunteers to have this fully open and accessible. Brooke Hindman, Occupational Therapist, worked with Jenn to help plant and maintain the garden for its inaugural year. “This will benefit staff and persons served for years to come. We’ll be able to use this for our like skills class and other programs for our clients.” stated Jenn Barcus. The first year did not produce a full crop, but with community members and volunteers next year we’re anxious to see what is produced!



Upcoming OU Events....

Opportunities Unlimited is excited to announce dates for the upcoming events; please mark your calendars for the following dates:



Trunk-or-Treat will be held on October 27 from 5:30 - 7:00 in the OU parking lot. For the third year, staff members and special friends of OU will pull their cars into the parking lot, decorate and open their trunks filled with treats, and wait for persons served, children, and their family members to arrive! This OU event provides a safe way for children to trick-or-treat, and the OU team enjoys decorating and making this holiday fun for so many!



In November the annual Thanksgiving campaign will kick off. The entire Opportunities Unlimited family is very thankful to be a part of such a giving and inclusive community. Due to the generosity of individuals and businesses throughout the Siouxland area we are able to provide and improve upon the services we perform each day. As the year draws to a close, we ask that you remember Opportunities Unlimited in your year-end charitable giving. All gifts, in any amount, are greatly appreciated and will allow us to continue to excel and expand our services to individuals and families supported by OU.



#GIVINGTUESDAY™

11.29.2016

On **November 29th** OU will be participating in “Giving Tuesday”. Last year OU launched the first “Giving Tuesday” initiative and hopes to build upon it in 2016. This is a national campaign that seeks to draw focus and financial support for non-profits across the country during the holiday season. This event follows “Black Friday” and “Cyber Monday” where retail and online shopping run wild through the nation, “Giving Tuesday” is a time to reflect on the causes and non-profits that you cherish and to make a contribution to those causes.

We appreciate all of the support and contributions our employees and community members provide, as a non-profit OU relies on this generosity to help us be able to continue providing excellent services.