

# LEADER

A Quarterly Publication of Opportunities Unlimited

*"Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living"*

## Calling the Siouxland Community

Opportunities Unlimited (OU) is preparing for the **22nd Annual Golf Tournament** and we are asking for your support! The tournament is OU's primary fundraising event and is scheduled for Friday, July 19th at the Sioux City Country Club. This tournament is the ideal time to partner with OU and share with the community your commitment to our organization. Your support enables OU to continue supporting our mission, *"Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living."*

As a non-profit organization, OU strongly relies on the Siouxland Community to help support our mission; one that allows us to continue to improve and excel in the rehabilitation and therapeutic services we provide. We are humbled by the continued support and enthusiasm we see from the community. Through this fundraiser, we love to offer Sioux City businesses the opportunity to sponsor or donate to the event.

We hope you will support OU in the **22nd Annual Golf Tournament**. For more information, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Vondrak at (712) 277-8295 or [svondrak@opportunitiesunlimited.com](mailto:svondrak@opportunitiesunlimited.com).



## OU Expansion: Community Based Neurobehavioral Home

Opportunities Unlimited is pleased to offer a new service to the Siouxland Community, which caters to individuals diagnosed with a brain injury and their transition back home. OU's new Community Based Neurobehavioral Program focuses on teaching life skills and strategies for independent living and community integration, while simultaneously supporting and managing neurobehavioral challenges of the individual. The neurobehavioral residential team, made up of 30-plus Certified Brain Injury Specialists, are there to provide individualized support and services to our persons served, as well as ensure a successful transition to their home and community. Some of the rehabilitation services include, physical, occupational, and speech therapy that take place in the newly renovated Oakshire home and at the OU Community Center.

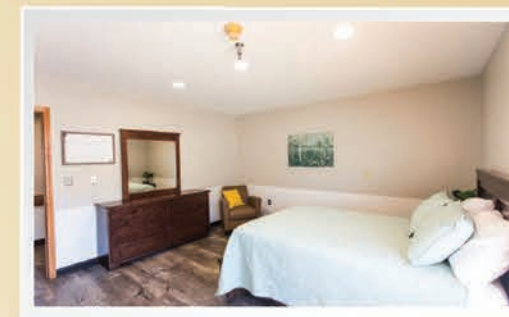


What makes OU's Community Based Neurobehavioral Program unique to the Siouxland Community is it being only one of two neurobehavioral programs offered on the western-side of Iowa. Having such a valuable resource in Sioux City creates more opportunities for those affected by brain injury to stay closer to friends and families while undergoing rehabilitation.

Before the program launch, the Oakshire home underwent major renovations to accommodate our new persons served. The renovations included: new interior paint, laminate floors, kitchen cabinets, counter-tops, as well as new furniture throughout the home. The comfort,

privacy, dignity, and accessibility of our persons served were all major factors that contributed to the remodeling stage.

The home's new renovations were also featured in Volume 5, Issue 4 of the Siouxland Woman Magazine. OU is grateful for Melanie Olsen for writing a thoughtful and informative article about the new Oakshire residence and thankful for Shane Monahan for capturing Oakshire's beauty. Together, they presented both a descriptive and visual story of the Oakshire home and its importance to the Siouxland Community.





# OU Supports Brain Injury Awareness and Prevention

Brain Injury Awareness is nationally recognized every March and Opportunities Unlimited showed its support in many ways. For over 25 years, OU has been caring for individuals affected by brain injury and is dedicated to spreading awareness while also trying to help with prevention. Some of the events in 2019 supporting awareness and prevention included:

**Proclamation and Balloon Send Off** – Mayor Pro-Tem Dan Moore joined persons served and staff at OU’s Community Center on March 13th for a gathering where he read a proclamation declaring March as Brain Injury Awareness Month. Jennifer McCabe, President & CEO also shared statistics regarding brain injury and the impact they have within our state as well as nationally. All guests enjoyed cake and refreshments followed by the always anticipated balloon release on Friday, March 15th. OU Staff members also participated in the City Council meeting on March 4th where Mayor Bob Scott recognized OU for its dedication to serving those affected by brain injury and read the proclamation declaring March as Brain Injury Awareness Month.



**Brain Injury Conferences** – A total of seven OU team members participated in the Iowa and Nebraska State Brain Injury Conferences, held in Des Moines, Iowa, and Kearney, Nebraska, respectively. As exhibitors of both conferences, OU personnel were able to connect with attendees and provide information on the various services Opportunities Unlimited offers. Both conferences feature guest speakers and breakout sessions that are essential to the continuing education required for staff members, help develop best practices, and provide networking opportunities with other professionals in the brain injury community.

**Purple Thursdays** – This year the Brain Injury Alliance encouraged providers, survivors, and families of brain injury to wear the color purple each Thursday during the month of March to show support and recognition of brain injury awareness month. OU team members and persons served joined hundreds of others in recognition of Brain Injury Awareness month!



**Young Professional of the Year** – At the 27th Annual Best Practices in Brain Injury Services Conference in Iowa, Ray Spates (Direct Care Professional at OU) was awarded the “Young Professional of the Year” award! Each year, the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa recognizes a handful of individuals or organizations for their accomplishments. Ray has been employed for over a year at OU and is a dedicated team member who supports those with brain injuries in our Residential Program. It was an incredible to have Ray recognized for his impact in this field, considering the thousands of caregivers who are dedicated every day to making a difference! Ray was recognized during the award ceremony at the conference and provided a plaque in celebration for his achievement.

# OU Leads Brain Injury Prevention Program

Each year, Opportunities Unlimited’s Gotta Brain Getta Helmet program donates bicycle helmets to Sioux City second graders. In addition to providing students with helmets, we also partner with local educators to provide valuable brain injury prevention curriculum that highlights the importance of bicycle safety and wearing protective equipment. On average, OU distributes 300 helmets per year. However, with the help of grant funding from local Sioux City businesses and organizations, OU will be able to provide every second grader in the Siouxland Community a helmet!



The success of Gotta Brain Getta Helmet 2019 campaign would not be possible without the kindness and generosity of the Sioux City Dairy Queen’s Smiles & Stories grant, which allotted \$12,500 toward the purchase of youth bicycle helmets. In addition to DQ’s grant funds, Opportunities Unlimited also received generous contributions from Scheels and the Siouxland Community Foundation that will also go toward the purchase of youth bicycle helmets. OU is grateful for these three organizations who recognized the importance of brain injury prevention and keeping our children safe. Again, thank you Sioux City Dairy Queen, Scheels, and the Siouxland Community Foundation for making OU’s long-term goal a reality.

# Congratulations to our Graduates!

OU has employed a number of students throughout the years. While some will continue their careers at OU we also want to wish the best to those who are pursuing their next adventure. Congratulations on your achievements!

- Tara Meinen – Morningside College
- Taylor Pruett – St. Luke’s College
- Taylor Beaulieu – Briar Cliff University
- Riley Rieschling – Morningside College
- Bailey Weeks – University of Missouri – Columbia
- Maddi Medbourn – University of South Dakota
- Mikayla George – Morningside College
- Dani Lane – Northeast Community College
- Jennifer Thiemer – Western Iowa Tech Community College
- Holly Pinney – Western Iowa Tech Community College



# Join the OU Team!

Come and work at Opportunities Unlimited where you will cultivate, rebuild, guide, mend and positively impact lives. As Opportunities Unlimited continues to expand its programs and services, so does our incredible team of dedicated, hardworking professionals. In the recent year, OU has opened a new waiver home and launched two new programs, a Day Habilitation Program and a Community Based Neurobehavioral Program. If you are interested in a career that impacts the lives of others, apply to OU today! For more information visit [www.opportunitiesunlimited.com](http://www.opportunitiesunlimited.com)