

LEADER

A Quarterly Publication of Opportunities Unlimited

"Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living"

Grants Awarded to OU

OU was the recipient of the Variety – The Children’s Charity Grant, which supports organizations who provide care and assistance to individuals with special needs. OU received \$12,454 towards the purchase of a new minivan. Considering the number of community-based services provided, a new vehicle was certainly beneficial to provide the needed transportation for our persons served.



Dairy Queen announced the recipients of the DQ Smiles and Stories grant program, which committed \$100,000 to various organizations throughout local communities served by Dairy Queen. OU was one out of the twenty-one non-profit organizations to receive a portion of the grant. OU will receive \$13,000 that will go towards their Gotta Brain Getta Helmet program, which promotes bicycle safety in the Siouxland Community while promoting brain injury awareness. This generous gift will make a direct impact on the youth of our community!

OU Salutes Our Graduates

High School

- Belicia Camberos - North
- Cali Cook - Bishop Heelan
- Emily Payer - Bishop Heelan
- Lesley Diaz - North
- Natahlia Hernandez - North
- Taylor Worrell - Bishop Heelan



College

- Cassandra Stowe - Western Iowa Tech
- Claire Schaefer - Briar Cliff University
- Morgan Talbert - Western Iowa Tech
- Rebecca Riley - Morningside College
- Thomas Medbourn - Morningside College

OU’s Newest Therapy Equipment

Brain injuries are dynamic, and no two brain injuries present the same. For this fact, brain injuries can be difficult to treat. Our physical, occupational, and speech therapists are constantly looking for proven evidence-based practice interventions to provide the best rehabilitation services to the individuals we serve. Our therapy team identified a piece of equipment called the Dynavision D2 that has been on our wish list for many years due to its proven success with individuals with brain injuries. Opportunities Unlimited, with the assistance of a MRHD grant, was able to purchase a Dynavision D2.

The D2™ is used to evaluate and train visual, cognitive, and motor function across all ages, stages, and conditions. The D2™ is utilized in clinical rehabilitation by PT, OT, and ST to address underlying visual, cognitive and motor deficits including visual-motor reaction time, peripheral visual awareness, hand eye coordination, cognitive processing ability, neuro-cognitive abilities, gross motor skills, executive functions, active range-of-motion and dynamic balance, improving their overall functioning with daily tasks. The D2 is highly customizable and can be adjusted to meet individual needs in multiple areas during every step of the rehabilitation process.

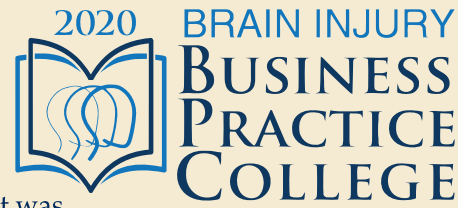
OU’s therapy team is using the Dynavision with multiple persons served. The team is seeing noticeable improvements in coordination, reaction time, balance, and visual motor skills. However, the most exciting thing we are noticing is the confidence grow in the individuals we serve. The D2 is able to record the score of each intervention, so our persons served are constantly competing against themselves. This allows each individual to use this data to ensure that each day is a little better than the day before and that skills improve daily. These reports allow our individuals to see the progress they are making, that may have gone unnoticed or difficult to identify in the daily tasks they complete. Increased motivation and participation lead to increased results. The D2 is allowing our team and our persons served to realize that all the active treatment and daily work they complete is making a difference in their rehabilitation journey.



Brain Injury Awareness Events

2020 Brain Injury Business Practice College

Opportunities Unlimited's President & CEO, Jennifer McCabe, participated in the 2020 Brain Injury Business Practice College January 22-24, 2020 in Palm Harbor, FL. Hosted by the Brain Injury Association of America, this event brought together leaders from around the country who operate facilities caring for those with brain injuries. Some of the topics included working with payor relations, developing neuro rehabilitation offerings, and CARF standards. "As an ICF and RCF provider supporting those affected by brain injury, it was beneficial to connect with other leaders throughout our country who are facing the same challenges and working to identify the best practices in leading successful organizations," stated McCabe. This is the second time Opportunities Unlimited participated in the Business College, which was just one of two organizations representing brain injury facilities from the state of Iowa.



Hill Day

Persons served and staff of Opportunities Unlimited participated in the 2020 Brain Injury Alliance Hill Day at the Iowa State Capitol on February 5, 2020. This annual event allows brain injury survivors along with their families, supporters, and providers to speak with state legislators about services and legislative requests. Some of the BIAIA's 2020 legislative requests include protecting Iowa youth by requiring helmets while riding mopeds and motorcycles, \$1.2 Million dedicated funding for a stroke and community care program, increase funding for the Medicaid HCBS waiver waiting list, and support efforts for higher wages, training, and a centralized information system for Direct Care Professionals. OU persons served and their staff have participated in this annual event for several years and look forward to the day where they can advocate for themselves and the services needed.



"As a provider supporting those affected by brain injury, it was impactful to participate in Hill Day and encourage our persons served and staff to be advocates for these valuable services and needed supports," stated Jennifer McCabe, President & CEO of Opportunities Unlimited. "We're pleased that we can provide services through our ICF, CNRS, and HCBS programs." For more information on the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa or Opportunities Unlimited, go to www.biaia.org and www.opportunitiesunlimited.com respectively.



Proclamation and Celebration

In honor of our persons served, OU hosted an event which featured Sioux City Mayor Pro-Tem, Dan Moore, who read a proclamation declaring March as National Brain Injury Awareness Month. This long-standing tradition is open to persons served, staff, and community members to help bring awareness and advocacy to those affected by brain injury. Following Moore's reading of the proclamation, a few employees shared some additional information including brain injury statistics and purpose of advocacy. The event was made complete with a cake reception and balloon release.



Community Members Talents & Gifts

We are grateful for community members who recognized the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and began making face masks on our behalf. Thank you to all the wonderful people who have donated their time and talents to help OU in our time of need by making these awesome face masks. They are being used daily by our staff as an added measure to help with protection during the time of COVID-19. We also are grateful to those who have also donated some of the coveted N95 masks which have been extremely hard to acquire. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated!



Brooklynn & Shannon Griffin of Georgia

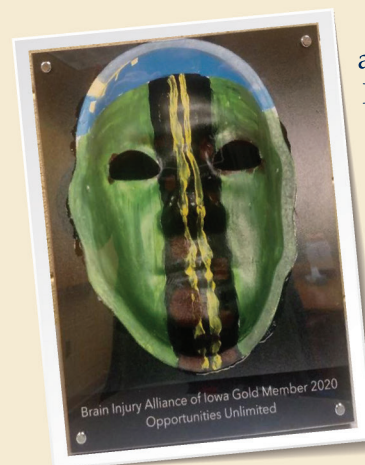
Jacque Conrad
Mary Ann Pfister
Mary Shanahan
Doris Christianson
Patty Biven

Carol Mackey

Chris Kuchta
Vanessa Norby & Audrey Norby Williams
Joan Ratley
Bekins Fire & Safety
Anonymous Givers

If others would like to help make these for our organization, please reach out to us! Thank you!!

BIA Conference



Three individuals from OU attended the 28th Annual Best Practices in Brain Injury Services Conference on March 5th and 6th in Des Moines, Iowa. The theme for this year's conference was "Recovery, Resilience, and Reinvention". Hosted by the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa, the alliance was pleased to be celebrating 40 years of supporting those affected by brain injury.

"Purple Thursdays"

Persons served, staff, and families are encouraged to wear the color purple on Thursday's to help promote brain injury awareness throughout the month of March. Many of our leaders took part in this promotion to show their support.



OU Golf Tournament

Here is something to look forward to! We are thinking about green grass and sunshine as we are preparing to launch our 23rd Annual Golf Tournament on July 17, 2020, at the Sioux City Country Club. This tournament serves as OU's signature fundraising event each year. Thirty-six teams made of 144 golfers and nearly 100 volunteers will enjoy a spectacular day of golf, door prizes, lunch, dinner, drinks, and snacks. The course includes the chance to win various prizes, ranging from a sleeve of golf balls to a new car! The OU golf tournament has become one of the premier charity golfing events in Siouxland. Golfers and sponsors alike come back year after year, excited to enjoy a fun filled day and support a great cause. Funds raised from the shootout support OU's mission and excel in the services it provides to individuals with brain injuries and other special needs. We are extremely excited to have this level of community support for our annual tournament. On behalf of persons served and staff, we would love to have you be a part of the 2020 Golf Tournament!



For more information, please contact Susan Vondrak by email at svondrak@opportunitiesunlimited.com or call at 712-277-8295, extension #143.

