

# LEADER

A Quarterly Publication of Opportunities Unlimited

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

## Edward "E" Henry Honored by IACP

The Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP) reached out to community providers in the state for nominations for extraordinary direct support professionals who go above and beyond to provide excellent care to individuals in need. Of 176 nominations statewide, Edward "E" Henry was chosen as one of the ten winners for the IACP Annual DSP Award.

E was nominated by Brooke Hindman. Here are some of the things she had to say about him; *"E continually strives to empower our persons served to reach their highest potential. He encourages them to take responsibility in their rehabilitation, whether it is encouraging the individuals to initiate the task or assisting them in learning methods to further push themselves. Our persons served and families gravitate to him because of his uplifting and motivating personality. He is someone who continuously asks to take individuals to appointments, as he understands their needs and will advocate for what is best for our individuals."*

*E oversees our Exercise Therapy department. He is constantly thinking of further interventions and ideas to help each individual work on reaching their personal rehabilitation goals. He finds tasks that are meaningful to our individuals, and he uses that to motivate each person to push themselves to be the best versions of themselves. He will change his approach based on the individual. E also provides training to all OU staff through teaching courses and other indirect methods in order for all staff to understand and demonstrate the best possible methods for providing care to our individuals."*

Opportunities Unlimited is lucky to have E on our team. He is appreciated by all OU employees, families, and persons served more than he knows. Congratulations, E. You are very deserving of this honor!



## Fun in the Fall!

Persons served have been taking full advantage of the activities available to us in the Siouxland Community! Halloween is certainly one holiday with a long history of celebration at OU. In addition to a costume contest for persons served and staff, there are a number of activities held that day to engage our persons served. It's always a treat to see the involvement of our team members to make the most of this holiday!

For the 6th year, OU has also led a community "Trunk or Treat" event at the Community Center on October 24th. What began as a typical outside event for thirty individuals has grown to an inside event with approximately twenty separate "trunks" and a few hundred guests! Several staff and other organizations with connections to OU support this event; each

with a decorated theme including interactive games, prizes, and treats. "We look forward to this annual event which is inclusive of all children of any age and ability," stated Heather Laumann, Residential Manager. This safe venue includes the teal pumpkin and other gifts including non-food items. The safe venue provides a spin on typical trick-or-treating and allows another way for OU to unite community members with persons served.

Our Home and Community Based Services department, through their Day Hab and SOUper Saturday programs have taken every opportunity to be involved in the community. Their activities have included trips to Scarecrow Farms, Heelan's "Memorial Field Fun Day", nature hikes along the trails, outdoor picnics, Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, YMCA for swimming, and geo-caching – just to name a few. The best part is that persons served are highly involved in determining the activities that they participate in. We often hear that "OU Time" is the "best time" for many of our persons served!



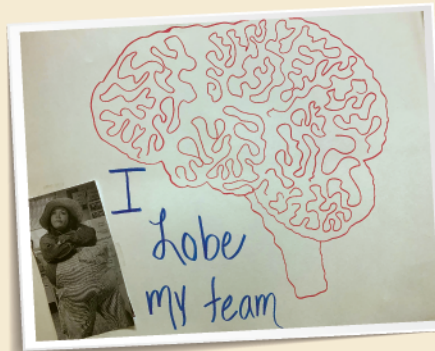
## OU Family Day

OU Family day is an annual event that both persons served, and their families enjoy at OU. This year Family Day was held on Sept. 28th. We were fortunate to have a day of beautiful weather, especially for those family members who traveled to join us. The activities that day included a cake walk (with amazing cakes and cookies donated from numerous bakers around the area), bingo, a craft table, ring toss, and the popular bouncy house. Families and persons served were able to enjoy lunch together, spend time playing games, and talk to the many staff that were also in attendance for the day. This is one day of the year that everyone looks forward to; it's a chance to just have a fun day and spend time with family. A number of families commented on how nice it was to see other families and catch up with one another as this may be one of the few times of the year they are able to see one another. The staff did an amazing job of organizing another successful family day!



## Celebrating DSP Week

On behalf of OU's leadership team and Board of Directors we would like to recognize and thank our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) for their hard work and dedication to our persons served. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge the complex skills and professional values it requires to be an effective DSP - one of the most challenging yet rewarding occupations in the country. We celebrated them throughout DSP Week, held September 8-15. We had special treats and activities available each day of the week as just one way to honor them. We value all the great work they do to improve our persons served lives and reach their personal goals. We are very lucky to have such amazing people working with us and here to support our mission. Thanks for all you do!



## Siouxland Big Give

For the first time, Opportunities Unlimited participated in the Siouxland Big Give, led by the Siouxland Community Foundation. The Siouxland Big Give is a 24-hour time of giving where Siouxland area supporters are invited to give back to their favorite local charities. This year the event was held on Tuesday, October 1st. The goal is to match the passions and generosity of local supporters with local non-profit organizations. 100 organizations were featured in this event, and OU identified their Annual Angel program as the specific reason for fundraising. OU's Annual Angel program is both an internal and community program. Funds raised by this program go directly to the needs of our persons served. Several of our persons served have limited budgets, and Annual Angels helps them acquire necessities such as clothing and personal care products, as well as participate in community activities of their choosing. OU set a goal of \$5,000, and we are pleased to announce our goal was met! We've already begun to use these funds to acquire some needed items for our persons served. Thank you to everyone who participated and supported their favorite cause! If you'd like to support OU's Annual Angels program, please go to our website at [www.opportunitiesunlimited.com/annual-angels](http://www.opportunitiesunlimited.com/annual-angels) to learn more.



## Service Day Projects

We love our volunteers! Once again, our organization was fortunate to be on the radar of various school initiatives that promote community and service day projects. This year we had students from Briar Cliff University, Morningside College, Heelan, and Sacred Heart lend their time and talents to tackle various projects and also spend precious social time with persons served. These acts of kindness make a direct impact on the lives of our



persons served and staff. We offer our sincere gratitude to the students and community members who go above and beyond to make OU a better place.



## Healthiest State Initiative

OU staff and persons served participated in the Healthiest Walk, part of the State of Iowa's Healthiest State Initiative. This promotes physical, mental, and social health; all of which are important to persons served and team members of OU. Walking improves cardiovascular health, relieves stress, and connects us with others.

Although the weather did not cooperate for the outdoor walk as we had planned, we're fortunate our 75+ walkers who participated were able to use the OU gym. The 30-minute lunchtime stroll left our persons served and staff feeling healthier and happier. #WalkMoreConnectMore

