

LEADER

A Quarterly Publication of Opportunities Unlimited

"Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living"

You've Been Ticketed

Opportunities Unlimited is pleased to once again partner with the Sioux City Police Department and the local Siouxland Dairy Queens through the "You've Been Ticketed" program. For six years, these organizations have supported helmet safety through this joint venture. As an extension of OU's "Gotta Brain...Getta Helmet" program, this summer program is designed to encourage children to wear helmets while riding their bikes. If children are seen wearing their helmets while riding bikes, scooters, skateboards, etc. by either Sioux City Police Officers or Volunteer Trailblazers, they will receive a ticket for one free DQ ice cream cone.



This partnership benefits all involved. OU is able to support their brain injury prevention campaign, children who are practicing proper bicycle safety are rewarded with a sweet treat, Police Officers can connect with children in a positive and supportive manner, and Dairy Queen promotes community outreach.



Surviving the Global Pandemic

COVID-19 has impacted everyone in multiple ways. Opportunities Unlimited has certainly had to adapt its' services along the way to ensure the safety of persons served and staff while mitigating risk and providing needed services. While supporting individuals with brain injuries and other special needs, we realize the vulnerable populations we serve and the need to take every safeguard and precaution that is recommended. Although this is a stressful time for everyone, it has also been amazing to see the resiliency of our employees and the support of the community.

With very little time to plan for face masks, a plea to the community resulted in over 600 cloth face masks donated by over twenty individuals! These masks have continued to be part of our new "uniform" and worn by all staff at all times. Cleaning supplies, craft projects, and snacks have been generously donated by church groups and businesses who have organized their own "drives" on behalf of OU. These groups have also recognized the important work of our essential employees and contributed gift cards and cash donations to also provide support for the staff who have been so reliable and caring for our persons served during this global pandemic. We have called our staff our "OU Heroes" as they have adjusted to every safety precaution that has been asked of them while providing services to our persons served in their homes.



Our leadership team, always grateful for the staff dedication and also empathetic to all who have had to stay in their homes for such an extended amount of time, have tried to show appreciation in a few different ways. Whether it's surprising the team with random treats or gifts, we have also shown our appreciation by occasionally making a meal for them and delivering to their homes.

The creativity of our staff members is another area which has really made a difference. Staying in one's home for an extended period of time can become rather boring and monotonous, our staff members have initiated many different craft projects and games in an effort to find some ways to break up the day. Of course, for some, the additional downtime and reduction of other planned schedules has been quite welcome too! We all look forward to life involving community activities and ability to interact with others.

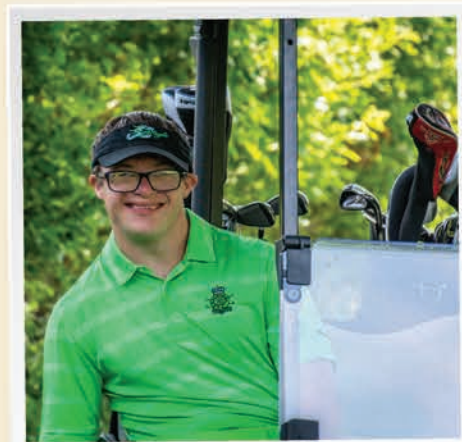
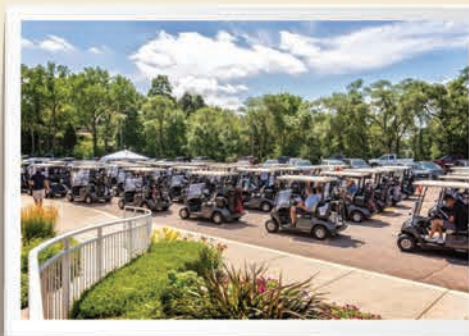


If you or others you know would like to support OU with activities and needs of our persons served, or even send a message of appreciation to our staff, please go to www.opportunitiesunlimited.com/coronavirus.



23rd Annual OU Golf Tournament

The 23rd Annual OU Golf Tournament was held on Friday, July 17th at the Sioux City Country Club. It seems that inevitably it is one of the warmest days of the year but does not stop our golfers and volunteers from having a great day! This year we were uncertain as to the interest and involvement of the community due to COVID-19, but we were thrilled with the community response. We had several returning teams and a wide spectrum of supporting organizations who golfed with us, sponsored a hole or team, and donated prizes for our golfers. Riverside Technologies, Inc. (RTI) supported OU as our Title Sponsor for the tournament, while Northwest Bank sustained their Cart Sponsorship. We were fortunate to have multiple Birdie Sponsors, including Coffee King/Caturra Roasting, Cottingham & Butler, Prestige Collision Repair Centers, Gelita USA, and New System Janitor Service. Our Contest Sponsors included Avery Brothers, Cain Ellsworth, Chesterman, CW Suter, Echo Electric Supply, Family Healthcare-South Sioux City, FiberComm, NAI United, the Stuck-Bivens Rose Group at R.W. Baird, and Unity Point Health.



Our tournament is well known for the incredible group of volunteers that we have each and every year. It is not uncommon for us to have upwards of 50 volunteers, most of whom are our own team members. Due to the pandemic, we felt it necessary to minimize the risk of our staff and golfers and had a much smaller group of volunteers to help with the tournament. This dedicated group of volunteers was busy helping with set-up and “behind the scenes” activities in addition to greeting our guests on each



of the six contest holes. The Sioux City Country Club does an excellent job of running an efficient tournament under the leadership of Billy Keane.

OU is forever grateful for the continuous support from the Siouxland Community who help OU achieve our mission of Maximizing Personal Potential Through Dignified and Purposeful Living. The funds from this event will go towards a new vehicle and therapy equipment. Tournament Director, Susan Vondrak, stated, “It was refreshing to be able to hold our golf tournament; it felt like a piece of normalcy in these trying times. We are blessed to have golfers who are interested in the part each staff plays at OU, they understand our Mission and are genuinely here to show support for the individuals that we serve. Thank you Siouxland, all of our sponsors, the businesses that provided donations and the golfers who made a hot, hot day a lot of fun.”



Adopt-A-Home

OU’s leadership team took on a new assignment this spring, by having individuals assigned to various OU homes to help with landscaping projects. OU’s maintenance department does a nice job keeping up with 11 homes as well as the community center, but without the help of some of our “summer maintenance staff” we knew there was a need for others to assist. Our leaders eagerly stepped up and took on their assignments with great pride. It was exciting to see the “before” and “after” appearance of each of the completed homes. Persons served also appreciated the additional attention to their homes and offered some supervision and guidance along the way!



Sensory Garden

OU’s sensory garden has flourished and has been full of beautiful flowers again this year. This special project started a few years ago as a way to honor the memories of loved ones while also providing a special place to enjoy nature at it’s best. An assortment of plants and flowers add to the beauty, which also attracts a variety of butterflies and birds. The careful planning of different plants and mulch has allowed for many senses to benefit from our OU sensory garden. We are humbled and honored to be able to recognize the lives of individuals important to our organization through this garden which is located at OU’s Community Center.



Therapy Adaptations for Persons Served

Opportunities Unlimited constantly is looking at ways to make life skills easier for the individuals we serve. During the most recent renovations to the residential homes, counter and sink heights were lowered and the kitchen environment was adjusted to make cooking easier for individuals of all abilities.

Cooking is a major life skill that is impacted after brain injuries due to cognitive and physical limitations that injuries can cause. Physical disabilities pose challenges to independence but also lead to many problem-solving opportunities and creative thinking to make cooking with less support a reality. Musculoskeletal issues such as hemiplegia, poor grip strength, and decreased coordination are concerns that therapists observe and work to compensate to increase independence with our persons served.

Adaptive equipment is used to compensate for deficits while cooking. Things such as utensils with built up handles, cutting boards that spear items for ease of cutting, rocker knives, and much more are available to combat physical limitations in the kitchen. Our therapy staff works with individuals while using this adaptive equipment to ensure they are maximizing their potential while enjoying the cooking experience in their home environments. Empowerment during the cooking process leads to increasing confidence and further independence during the rehabilitation process.

