

LEADER

A Quarterly Publication of Opportunities Unlimited

"Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living"

2018 Heart of the Mission

Each year, Opportunities Unlimited honors an employee that has consistently gone above and beyond their typical job duties to provide exceptional service to our persons served. The award also takes into account someone that lives the OU mission, "Maximizing Personal Potential Through Dignified and Purposeful Living" and shows respect to and is respected by his or her fellow co-workers.

We're thrilled to announce that 2018 Heart of the Mission winner is Aida Guzman. Aida has been employed with OU for eight years, serving as a direct support professional in our residential rehabilitation program. This program supports persons served who have been affected by traumatic brain injury and other special needs. Placing persons served first is natural to her and she truly embraces OU's mission. This presents itself in her everyday manner of using a consistent approach with persons served, utilizing active treatment that allows everyone to be involved, being engaged at all times in purposeful activities, and making certain that dignity is maintained. She is dedicated in many ways. She understands the importance of being there for persons served and will assist in all homes and all shifts.

"Aida is a true team player and you'll never hear a complaint from her. She seeks out solutions and cares about her co-workers. She is great at building relationships with other staff and helping them meet training guidelines. She avoids the drama and is positive at all times. Her advocacy for our persons served is second to none," stated Heather Laumann, Residential Manager.

Upon learning she had been awarded the "Heart of the Mission" award, Aida stated she was very surprised by this honor and she is just doing a job she loves and caring for those who are important to her. Aida was presented with a crystal paperweight and a monetary award for her dedication and service.



Day Habilitation

For several years OU has worked on creating a Day Habilitation (Day Hab) program catered to helping persons served develop social skills through community engagement and activities. We are pleased to announce this dream has finally become a reality! In January of 2018, OU launched its newest waiver program spearheaded by our Employment Services Department. The program's intended goal is to provide wrap around services to individuals receiving community employment through OU's Employment Services program. We want to ensure these individuals have a chance to work on meaningful goals, socialize with their peers, and stay active in our community while maintaining their employment.

At the beginning of each month, Day Hab staff and persons served come together to plan group activities both meaningful and purposeful to each participating individual. This collaboration ensures the individual's interest is identified and met throughout the month. The organized activities either take place at OU's Community Center or in the Siouxland Community with the intention of challenging persons served on their personal or social goals. This past year, our Day Hab group participated in various activities such as bowling, volunteering, yoga, and touring local businesses and organizations around Sioux City.

Since the program's debut, services have doubled from twice a week to four days a week. In addition, the number of persons served receiving Day Hab services increased from four individuals to seventeen individuals. We are excited to see the Day Hab program grow and watch our OU Team continuously looking for new and innovative ways to keep persons served engaged in the Siouxland Community. We also welcome new individuals interested in accomplishing social goals while being an active member in the Siouxland Community!



NAIA National Volleyball Tournament

In November, Opportunities Unlimited partnered with Baird's Financial Advisors Group to host Marian University's Women's Volleyball Team in the 2018 NAIA National Tournament. Our persons served and staff took full advantage of the week-long tournament cheering on the Marian Knights and other fan favorites. Between matches, the team stopped by Opportunities Unlimited to tour the Community Center and meet with persons served. Although the team did not advance to the single elimination championship



play, they did accomplish an impressive win against No. 8 ranked Northwestern. It was an honor hosting the Marian Knights in the NAIA National Tournament and we wish them the best of luck in their 2019 season!

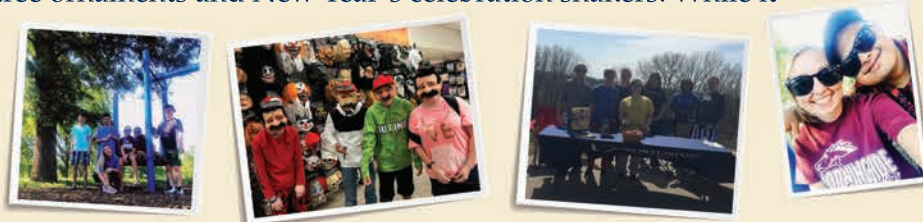


sOUPER SATURDAY

"sOUper Saturdays are the best!" *"I love being with all the people!"*
"I can't wait for Saturdays because I get to see my friends, and we get to do fun stuff!"

These are just a few statements our person served have said about sOUper Saturdays! In May of 2017, OU's HCBS department created sOUper Saturdays with the intention of providing families and caretakers a break from their loved one while offering fun activities and events for persons served to participate in. We are excited to announce that since the start of the program, participation has doubled, now averaging 8-10 individuals every Saturday. Those who attend our events are always happy when they arrive, eager to participate, and excited to spend time with their peers.

This winter sOUper Saturday activities included going to the movie theaters, Pickled Palette, and local sporting events, such as Morningside College football games and Sioux City Bandits football games. Other activities included visiting the Plymouth County Fair, Annual Scarecrow Festival, Annual Autism Awareness Walk and Siouxland Habitat for Humanity's Bacon Fest! We also hosted several craft days and baked cookies during the holidays, which included making trick or treat bags, Christmas tree ornaments and New Year's celebration shakers! While it is sOUper that our persons served get to spend time with peers and have fun, these events also offer a time to grow socially and build relationships that will be remembered for a lifetime!



OU Celebrates Employee Anniversaries

Opportunities Unlimited honored team members celebrating significant employment anniversaries during their annual Christmas Party and Mission Meeting. For over twenty-five years, OU has supported persons served affected by brain injury and other special needs. The direct care staff and extended team members are critical to the delivery of quality services that OU has long been recognized for.

The OU Staff who were honored during this celebration for their dedication and commitment to the organization are:

- Kela Tonga, Employment Services Coordinator – 5 Years
- Thomas Medbourn, HCBS Direct Support Professional – 5 Years
- Shonna Butler, Direct Support Professional – 10 Years
- Britney Cooper, Director of Residential Services, SLP – 10 Years
- Stephanie Mugge, Direct Support Professional – 10 Years
- Melody Rich, Direct Support Professional – 10 Years
- Leasa Vargas, Direct Support Professional – 10 Years
- Jenny Cason, Direct Support Professional – 15 Years

Jenny Walrod, Employment Services Direct Support Professional – 20 Years

"Our employees are our most valuable resource," stated Jennifer McCabe, President and CEO. "The employees we recognized for their five, ten, fifteen, and twenty-year anniversaries have been critical to the success of our organization and delivery of exceptional services. We look forward to celebrating such milestones with many of our team members!" Those honored for their service were presented with an award and OU gear and/or engraved watch.

Helping Hands from Hopesprings Church

Michael and Summer Amman of Hopesprings Church truly embodied the season of giving this Christmas as they volunteered their time and talents towards the OU Staff Christmas Party. Together the couple transformed the already beautiful Sioux City Art Center into an elegant and unforgettable venue. Summer provided the event's décor by creating exquisite floral arrangements made up of fresh pine trimmings, red roses, and ornaments that lined the dining tables. Michael along with Tyler Embke, another Hopesprings Church member, provided the evening's entertainment by singing and playing Christmas carols on the guitar. The combination created a festive atmosphere for our staff to relax and enjoy the past year's accomplishments. In addition to offering their talents, Hopesprings Church also donated a check to help cover costs of the Christmas party and Stone Bru gift cards to every OU staff member attending the Christmas party. This thoughtful and generous gift was highly received among the entire organization. We would also like to recognize two other Hopesprings Church members, Darin and Diane Daby, who helped clean up after the party.



We are grateful for Hopesprings Church and its community members' abundant generosity during this event and throughout the year. Each quarter, the church holds a service at OU giving our persons served an opportunity to participate in a meaningful ceremony followed by a pizza party. They also are dedicated to taking care of our hard-working staff. Last year, the church provided gift cards and hired a massage therapist to come to OU and give staff a well-deserved pampering. OU is truly blessed having such a wonderful community supporting our organization. On behalf of all OU staff members and persons served, we would like to extend our utmost gratitude to the Amman's and the members of Hopesprings Church for their kindness!



Festival of Trees

Ashley Simpson and Christy Braunger were the two creative masterminds behind Opportunities Unlimited's participation in the 2018 Festival of Trees. Both OU nurses designed and decorated the "Whoville" inspired Christmas tree auctioned off for \$400.00 at the event. What made this year's tree extra special was the notorious Grinch hiding among the tree branches and presents waiting to steal Christmas.

OU enjoys contributing to the Festival of Trees because all proceeds from the event go toward a charity or non-profit of the organization's choice. This year the Festival of Trees selected Mary J. Treglia Community House as the festival's recipient. As a fellow non-profit, we appreciate the Siouxland Community's generosity toward local organizations who rely on the support of community members to achieve their mission. We cannot wait to start planning next year's tree and encourage any Siouxland organizations interested in supporting local non-profits to invest their time in the Festival of Trees.

