

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

## Notice to OU Supporters:

At OU we're always looking for ways to enhance our services to our persons served. As part of that effort we look for ways to save money on our expenses so that more of our dollars can directly benefit those that we serve.

If you would like to receive an email notification in the future when this publication is available online and to stop receiving a print copy to help us reduce our print costs please send an email indicating that you no longer wish to receive a print copy of the OU Leader and provide us with a valid email address where we may send you notifications and updates about OU.

Email to: [development@opportunitiesunlimited.com](mailto:development@opportunitiesunlimited.com)

Thank you,

The OU Team

## OU Community Center Available for Rent



The Opportunities Unlimited Community Center is available for hosting birthday or anniversary celebrations and other events. We also rent out our gym and our exercise facilities are also available for use for the Siouxland community.

Our facilities are immaculately maintained and can be accessed year round. If you'd like more information about utilizing the OU facilities call or visit:

3439 Glen Oaks Blvd.  
Sioux City, IA 51104  
Phone: 712-635-8620

## What a Year We Had



While reflecting on 2014, Opportunities Unlimited has been blessed by being able to impact so many individuals within our community. Our persons served continue to access services in the manner in which they choose, learning and developing skills to aid in their independency. Our mission, "Maximizing Personal Potential Through Dignified and Purposeful Living" continues to drive our organization and the services we provide.

Through our residential program, we proudly serve 38 individuals who have been affected by brain injury and our therapeutic and residential teams are committed to helping them live full and meaningful lives.

Our Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) program has expanded and in an effort to provide a continuum of care, OU opened its first Waiver home, which has allowed for four individuals to live within our community, learning the skills of independency with the proper level of supports to guide them through this transition.

It's been terrific to see these young adults flourish and take on the responsibilities of living on their own!

In addition to expanding our residential services through the state's HCBS program, OU has also expanded its vocational department, serving more individuals than ever before!

Vocational training not only occurs at the OU Community Center, but our contract work with local businesses also continues to be developed, offering persons served the opportunity to positively impact these businesses with the vocational skills they are developing.

Our persons served, and OU personnel, want to positively impact the Sioux City community and are committed to making their mark – whether it is providing vocational services to businesses, supporting local restaurants, shops, and businesses for OU needs, providing learning opportunities, or volunteering services and being involved in community activities.

We love this community and enjoy being strong contributors!



## OU Awards Annual "Heart of the Mission" Award

Each year, during the staff holiday party, 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 this year's winner is Heather Laumann.

Heather has worked at OU for 3 years. She began as a Residential Counselor and soon became a Mentor Professional to her fellow co-workers. Heather later transferred to the Vocational department. In her 3 years with OU she has earned certifications as both a Certified Brian Injury Specialist and as a Certified Job Development Specialist.

When asked about her favorite parts of her job Heather said, "Seeing the individuals improve in life skills and their improvements in living more independently."

Upon learning she had been awarded the "Heart of the Mission" award Heather said, "I was shocked and grateful at the same time. I am glad that, hopefully, I am doing my job to the best of my ability and I'm happy that others are pleased with my performance."

Heather says that her current role in the Vocational Department has been her favorite, however, ever dedicated, Heather still finds time to work 2 shifts a week in the Home and Community Services Department and she continually steps in to pick up shifts, no matter



the time of the day, in the Residential Department when the need arises.

Heather says her favorite part about working with the persons served is building relationships with each person by understanding each unique personality. "Because," says Heather, "I feel I have a unique personality myself."

One of her favorite moments, thus far at OU, highlights her unique report with the persons served. "I was eating a cookie. The cookie was in my hand on its way to my mouth when it was snatched from me. The person served ran into the bathroom locking the stall door behind them, knowing I couldn't get to the cookie. I thought this was pretty clever. This," Heather continued, "has happened more than once."

Heather was presented with a plaque and a monetary award for her dedication and service and we're thrilled to have her as part of the OU team.

## OU Gives Back During the Holiday Season

As a non-profit organization, Opportunities Unlimited provides world-class care for our persons served. We also strive to be great community partners. Our employees and persons served spend time in the community volunteering and participating in fundraisers to help make Siouxland a great place to work and live.

This year's Festival of Trees at the Ho-Chunk Center raised more than \$19,000 for GiGi's Playhouse. OU contributed a unique and whimsical tree to the annual festivities.

In the weeks and months leading up to the final decorating of the tree our persons served worked on "art themed" decorations during their art therapy classes at the Sioux City Art Center.

The art themed decorations included Chihuly glass inspired ornaments, Jackson Pollock inspired garland, "icicle paint brushes", Jackson Pollock inspired "spirals of color", mini Christmas themed canvasses and the tree was topped with paint brush star.

The OU staff also held a food drive leading up to the holidays. Prior to Christmas, OU staff and persons served delivered 235 pounds of food to the Siouxland Food Bank and were treated to a tour of the facility by Executive Director, Linda Scheid.

"This isn't unique to this time of year," said Jeremy Pigg, Marketing & Community Relations Director at OU. "Throughout the year we participate in walks, fund drives, and a host of other activities to both support other local not-for-profit organizations and to increase the community integration for the individuals that we serve."



## Giving Tuesday

This year OU launched a "Giving Tuesday" initiative. "Giving Tuesday" is a national campaign that seeks to draw focus and financial support for non-profits across the country during the holiday season.

The concept seeks to piggy-back on the consumerism of the season and refocus people's attention to organizations that do good and make a positive impact in the communities in which they live.

Following "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday" where retail and online shopping run wild through the nation, "Giving Tuesday" is a time to reflect on the causes and non-profits that you cherish and to make a contribution to those causes.

We would like to thank everyone that contributed to our first year's efforts and hope that this concept gains momentum throughout Siouxland for many organizations for many years to come.

