

LEADER

A Quarterly Publication of Opportunities Unlimited

Individuals from OU Shine at State and National Special Olympics



Opportunities Unlimited would like to congratulate three of its persons served on their successes in recent Special Olympic competitions.

At the National level, Mitchell B. won the gold medal in the deadlift with a personal best effort of 375 pounds. Mitchell also received silver in the bench press and fourth-place in the squat. He finished with the bronze medal overall. The competition was in New Jersey.

Chelsea P. took part in the javelin throwing at the state competition in Ames, IA in May and placed 1st in her section and 4th overall. In order to reach the state competition, Chelsea had to compete in April at the Regional competition in Sioux Center, where she placed 1st.

Jessica C. also took part in the state competition in Ames, IA. Jessica won 2nd place in Bocce Ball and finished 2nd in a run on the track. She also competed in the basketball skills competition.

Opportunities Unlimited (OU) provides residential rehabilitation and therapeutic services for 38 individuals who have sustained a brain injury, a spinal cord injury or other physical disabilities. Opportunities Unlimited also provides support services to over 140 children with special needs as part of the Waiver Program. As a non-profit organization, Opportunities Unlimited relies on the community to help us continue our mission of "Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living".

Upcoming Special Olympics events:

July 19, Softball Skills in Muscatine, IA

July 22, Athlete Golf Clinic, Sioux City, IA

August 9, Davenport Unified Golf Tournament,
Davenport, IA

August 17, Spencer United Golf Tournament, Spencer, IA



Daisy Lane



We are always excited to welcome in more members to the OU family. We also strive to live out our motto and mission statement, "Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living." In early May, we were able to do both by opening our first Home and Community Based Services home, Daisy Lane.

This expansion to our housing services has allowed three more of our persons served to take the next step in their lives. Daisy Lane is a stepping stone for our HCBS persons served who are ready to move away from home and live semi- independently while continuing to work on the skills necessary to live as a completely independent adult. This living option not only allows them to continue to hone those skills, but it also allows them to take on the responsibilities they will need to adopt when they become completely independent.

These range from cleaning, to making more of their own meals, to managing money and balancing budgets, and so much more. Learning all of these important lessons will help them when they move on to the next phase in life.

We treat everyone as family at OU and because of that we do what we can to help and support each other. This being said, the persons served were also incredibly happy when staff brought them house warming gifts to make them truly feel at home in their new community and as part of the OU family. To show their thanks, Daisy Lane in turn made a beautiful thank you poster, which was proudly displayed at the center for everyone to see.

As we continue to expand our services, we are even more committed to providing the quality service and standards that we have invested in. We also are elated to have our OU family grow and look forward to it growing for years to come.

Congratulations to the OU Graduates

Opportunities Unlimited has long been known for being a teaching and learning organization, and is dedicated to supporting individuals while they further their education. Several of our employees have continued their educational paths while working at OU. This year, Opportunities Unlimited would like to extend congratulations to all of the graduates of the class of 2014 and wish them the best as they continue with their next adventure both in and out of OU.



Frankie Schmidt,
– *Morningside College*

Kayla Frey,
– *Morningside College*

Christine Madsen,
– *Morningside College*

Maggie Vondrak,
– *Morningside College*

Jennifer McCormick,
– *Morningside College*

Megan Heath,
– *North High School*

Stephanie Engle,
– *Briar Cliff University*

Jocelyn Perryman,
– *Briar Cliff University*



Vocational Services in the Community

Throughout the years, Vocational Services at Opportunities Unlimited has supported several individuals receiving services at OU and has been able to help individuals learn the skills required in the modern day workplace. Vocational Services also contracts with businesses to offer meaningful employment opportunities to individuals at OU.

Currently, the Opportunities Unlimited Vocational Services department is looking to expand upon their group services. The department is looking for churches, motels, and other businesses to help grow their cleaning and sanitation services in Siouxland.

The individuals who access Pre-Vocational Services at OU can look forward to honing their job skills in an environment that allows them to work on various local contracts. Contracts that individuals are able to support include laundry for large local medical centers, church organizations, office work for various local businesses, and cleaning jobs throughout the community.

Persons served do an exceptional job cleaning the OU Community Center along with washing, drying, and folding laundry for a number of medical facilities, for whom they have been providing services the past few years.

Last April, the vocational department began working with Deanna Leech with the cleaning of her dog care center, Palace for Paws, in Jefferson, South Dakota. A group consisting of three persons served and one staff member go out weekly to keep the Palace for Paws in tip top shape. Persons served provide a variety of services from vacuuming and mopping, to cleaning/sanitizing kennels, food and water dishes. They also look forward to a short session with the dogs after all cleaning is finished.

"To be able to go out into the community is a great advantage and learning experience for those involved. They take the skills they have acquired cleaning at OU and learn to take as much pride in their cleaning at the Community Center and put it into the work they do for others," said Jason Brockhouse, Director of the Vocational Services department.

The mission of Opportunities Unlimited is to

"Maximize Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living" while providing individualized services to assist one to achieve their vocational goals. These goals may be to develop commitment to job, develop task related skills, enhance personal values, problem-solving and decision-making skills, enhance maturity, develop relations with others, communication and knowledge of safe situations. Collaboration between an individual served, OU and other entities is essential in developing job skills for all persons working.

Opportunities Unlimited Pre-Vocational Service Program is available to individuals who qualify for services within the State of Iowa or who choose to privately contract for services. With the variety of vocational opportunities available at OU, individuals are able to hone their skills in a variety of ways! For more information, contact us at (712)277-8295 or www.opportunitiesunlimited.com.



Pollock In Place

Sioux City, IA is back on the map as we get ready for the big reveal of Jackson Pollock's 1943 painting, Mural, for the 100th Anniversary of the Sioux City Art Center. Originally painted for the wealthy art collector Peggy Guggenheim, this painting is noted as the turning point for Pollock's career and the art world. This 20-by-8 foot piece is worth nearly \$150 million dollars, making it the biggest and most expensive piece to land in Sioux City, IA. Mural has been undergoing an extensive restoration for nearly a year and on July 12th, the Sioux City Art Center is ready to reveal this incredible piece of history to the public. Opportunities Unlimited has partnered with the Sioux City Art Center to provide tea and lemonade for several months throughout the Pollock stay. Please refer to our Facebook page for the dates and time of when we will be at the Art Center.



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OU Receives the “Above and Beyond” Award

For the second time, Opportunities Unlimited (OU) has received the “Above and Beyond” Award from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR).

The “Above and Beyond” Award is given to recognize employers at the local level who have gone above and beyond the legal requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) by providing their Guard and Reserve employees additional, non-mandated benefits such as differential or full pay to offset lost wages, extended health benefits, and other similar benefits that they may incur due to training or deployment overseas.

“OU was very supportive during my multiple deployments during my 8 years at OU,” said Dawn Keatts, OU’s former Director of Nursing. The award is given in limited numbers by state committees to employers who have had at least one of their supervisors/managers recognized with a Patriot Award, and who have signed or agree to sign a statement of support (SoS).

“I felt supported throughout all of my deployment periods. Everyone stayed in touch

with me. It’s always nice to have that employer support because when you’re overseas you are focused on the job at hand it’s important to know that your job at home is being supported,” stated Keatts.

“We are thrilled to once again receive recognition from the ESGR as an organization,” said Jeremy Pigg, Director of Marketing and Development at OU. “As an organization that provides services to military Veterans we whole heartedly support our employees in the Guard and Reserve and we are proud of their service to both OU and to our nation.”

The “Above and Beyond” Award is one of only seven given by the ESGR each year and was created by ESGR to publicly recognize American employers providing extraordinary patriotic support and cooperation to their employees, who like the citizen warriors before them, have answered their nation’s call to serve.



Working at OU

Holly Chartier began her Opportunities Unlimited career 19 years ago as a Residential Counselor, helping persons served to become as independent as possible while living in their homes. She has become a Certified Mandt Instructor, Certified Brain Injury Specialist, and Certified Job Coach in her time at OU. She says, over time, basic duties of employees have stayed the same while some of their specific responsibilities have changed and evolved. After graduating from East High School in Sioux City, IA in 1972, Holly spent 20 years in

the Army Reserve where she gained leadership abilities and served her country. While working at OU, Holly has learned to look inside herself and help others gain abilities from searching within. Little moments, or times when individuals realize they can complete a task for the first time are what she enjoys most about working at OU. Holly shared that it’s hard to sum up OU’s role in her life after 19 years but she has grown as a human being and enjoyed being a part of someone else’s life in a positive way.



"Maximizing Personal Potential through Dignified and Purposeful Living"

Prevent Sunburn This Summer

With summer upon us, we in the Nursing Department at Opportunities Unlimited would like to wish all our staff and persons served a safe summer. Sunscreen would be on the top of the list of things to have available. There is nothing that will make you more miserable for a day or two than a severe sunburn.

So, how does sunscreen work you may wonder? Sunscreen contains products combining several ingredients that help prevent the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation from reaching the skin. Two types of ultraviolet radiation, UVA and UVB, damage the skin and increase your risk of skin cancer. Sunscreens vary in their ability to protect against UVA and UVB. Sun Protection Factor (SPF) is a measure of a sunscreen's ability to prevent UVB from damaging the skin.

Here's how it works: if it takes 20 minutes for your unprotected skin to start turning red, using an SPF 15 sunscreen theoretically prevents reddening 15 times longer – about five hours. Most sunscreens with an SPF of 30 or higher do an excellent job of protecting against UVB. A tip for allotting sunscreen is to apply a generous amount of sunscreen to your body at least 20-30 minutes before

going outdoors.

Be sure to cover all areas that will be exposed to the sun including ears, lips, hands, legs and feet. Make sure the skin is well-coated and the sunscreen is rubbed in thoroughly. The recommended amount to use is about one ounce or 30 milliliters. Sunscreen doesn't last forever, so reapply it every two hours and reapply it after swimming or sweating profusely. Make sure children as young as six months old are wearing sunscreen or, if younger, are kept in the shade. The sun's rays are always beaming down on Earth, whether it's the middle of summer or the dead of winter, so always wear sunscreen even if the temperature is a bit cooler.

Even though wearing sunscreen is a great way to protect your skin, it's not the only way and works best when combined with other measures such as wearing protective clothing and hats, and staying in shaded areas during the sun's peak hours of 10am to 4pm when possible. Let us all strive for a sunburn free summer!

