

## Caring throughout COVID

*Your support means we can continue our vital work*

Just when it seemed like much of the world stopped as the pandemic began, the caring support from Opportunity Partners' Residential teams shifted into high gear. Realizing the gravity of what this meant for people we serve, our Residential teams quickly pivoted to provide even more critical supports to people who were now at home.

"Our staff have been working incredibly hard this entire time," said Aimee Barbeau, OP's Vice President of Residential & Community Living. "People who would typically go to day programs were suddenly home all day," she said. "But as difficult as this has been, the pandemic has also brought out the very best in our hard-working, dedicated staff."

From gathering Personal Protective Equipment, cleaning supplies, groceries and personal items, to learning new health and safety protocols, team members first ensured everyone was safe. And from getting creative with stay-at-home activities and eventually going on outings, they have done their best to keep people happy too, Aimee said.

When remaining home started to get dull, Amanda Weimar, Assistant Program Manager (APM) at OP's 12th House in Richfield arranged manicure parties, hair makeovers, indoor herb planting and virtual "vacations". As stay-at-home orders began to loosen, she organized rides to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum or to cemeteries where loved ones are buried. "I try to keep everyone busy and give them choices



*Above: Denise enjoyed the "State Fair" at home, including face painting. Below: Bethany shows off her new manicure she got at home, thanks to staff.*



of things to do," she said. "And, with so many things out of our control and unpredictable, it's also nice to keep somewhat of a routine."

Dawn Timmons, who supports people in

their homes through OP's Semi Independent Living Skills program, helped Carol through the painful process of putting down her beloved cat last summer. When Carol felt ready, Dawn helped her research and adopt a playful new kitten to ease the loneliness that was even more difficult due to the pandemic. "Carol is so happy now," Dawn said. "You can see the light in her face. It made me feel amazing because I know the benefits of what pets do for people."

At OP's Columbus House in Richfield, APM Bob Kirchmaier created a makeshift "Columbus House State Fair" that included games, face painting, prizes, Pronto Pups and Sweet Martha's cookies so the residents wouldn't completely miss out. "It gave the ladies

something to look forward to," Bob said "The men from OP's Keith's Place joined in the fun, and everyone enjoyed the afternoon."

We are so grateful for all of our hard working Residential staff who have made being at home during the pandemic easier!



*Carol with her new kitten Oreo that she acquired during the pandemic with OP's help.*

# A message from the CEO

Bill Schultz



It is such an honor and privilege to be the next President and CEO of Opportunity Partners. Five years ago, moving from the for-profit sector, I knew I wanted to help make a difference in people's lives. My niece is on the autism spectrum, and she receives services from Opportunity Partners. Not only was this organization a great fit for me and my skills, but I've also seen firsthand the amazing impact OP can have on a person's life, and how important that can be to families.

In 2015, I joined OP to lead our Business Services Department. I began working closely with programs and administration, and focused on driving strategic initiatives. My career prior to OP has been in technology companies, leading engineering, sales, marketing, and product management teams.

OP has drawn me into this community in so many ways. I never anticipated how much I would learn from the people we serve and those who support them. The persistent joy from people served, and the caring and compassion our staff demonstrate on a daily basis is incredible. I am thrilled and honored to be the new CEO, and eager to lead and support a truly amazing group of people.

# Thank you for supporting our fall fundraising campaign!

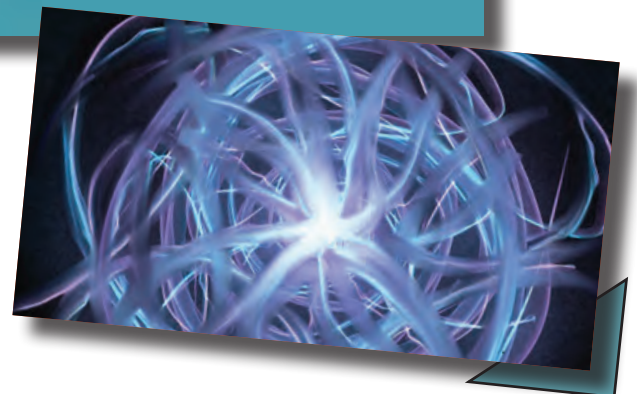
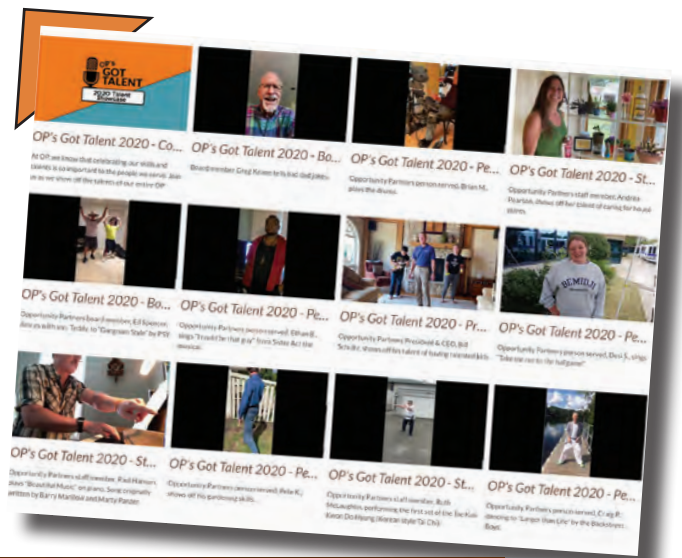
From singing our hearts out to growing a beautiful garden, talents come in all forms. Since 1953, Opportunity Partners has celebrated talents, provided opportunities and grown the confidence of so many. All of this is possible because of you!

This year, we had a critical need to raise funds from our annual Gala, which was unfortunately canceled. But with our incredible sponsors, donors and friends, we raised almost \$300,000!

If you missed our talent showcase, check it out at [opportunities.org](http://opportunities.org).

Because of your generous support, we can continue to provide important services so people with disabilities can truly thrive. Thank you!

Top image: Web gallery at [opportunities.org](http://opportunities.org) filled with talent. Middle image: Compilation video on YouTube. Bottom image: Light painting done by staff Jay McKibbins.





# Long-time partnership with Lunds & Byerlys

The collaboration between Opportunity Partners and Lunds & Byerlys goes back more than a decade. The local grocery store company, with roots spanning three generations, recognizes the value of hiring employees with disabilities. At six different locations, individuals from OP have worked several integral positions such as stocking, courtesy and check-out.

Lunds & Byerlys was recently named an "Outstanding Employer" of people with disabilities through the Minnesota Organization of Habilitation & Rehabilitation (MOHR) for their commitment and support. Opportunity Partners nominated Lunds & Byerlys for the award.

When the pandemic hit, Lunds & Byerlys offered its team members flexibility to take time off if desired and has enacted comprehensive health and safety measures to keep employees safe on the job.

"We are so remarkably proud of our entire family of Lunds & Byerlys employees for the way in which they have delivered an even added level of care and comfort to our customers during these uncertain times," said Tres Lund, President and CEO of Lunds & Byerlys. "And the reality is every member of our staff has remarkable abilities that allow us to deliver on our mission of creating sensational working and shopping experiences."

Thank you, Lunds & Byerlys!



David working the check-out at Lunds & Byerlys pre-pandemic.

## Thank you, Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation!

Thank you to the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation for awarding Opportunity Partners' Community Living Program a \$25,000 grant in its Fall 2020 Grant Cycle. This program supports 160 people with disabilities who live independently by providing assistance in their homes and in the community. The individuals we serve do not require (or want) the higher level of support offered in a group home, but can thrive with typically four to eight hours per week of OP staff support. Teams generally focus on developing a routine with laundry, cleaning, budgeting, medical appointments, grocery shopping, and cooking.

We have seen how independent living enhances quality of life and promotes inclusion in a person's broader community. The financial model for this sought-after program requires we ask our community for support. Thanks to the Schulze Family Foundation and our generous donors, we can continue to provide this needed program.



Anne Stanton, Program Manager, and Mia enjoy a picnic lunch and bird watching at Bunker Hills Regional Park.



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**\$100** A semester of art supplies for a class



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**\$500** Technology to connect isolated people



As we've begun to reopen our various centers and programs, your support is critical so we can again offer a full array of enrichment and employment options to people with disabilities. Thank you for your generosity!