

## Your support inspires us

### *Staying positive during the pandemic*

We've all been impacted by the pandemic in some way, including the people who rely on Opportunity Partners services. With our five day programs temporarily closing March 18, we have focused on keeping people safe and happy at home, and supporting those who are still working in essential community jobs.

We also reassigned staff from our day programs to help with our on-site packaging work for customers counting on us, and to provide coverage in our group homes and apartment programs. With people we serve suddenly home all day with no day programs to attend, staffing needs quickly escalated.

While none of this has been easy, we've been encouraged by the resilience of our staff and the people we serve who've adapted and stayed positive. The kindness of our community – friends, donors, business partners, neighbors, and even strangers – has continued to lift our spirits.

**See inside for  
details on our  
reopen plans.**



## Your support sustains us

With large events forced to cancel everywhere, our planned May 2 Gala was rescheduled to October 2. But we couldn't wait until fall to ask our community for support, especially as our costs increased in our residential programs. We launched an online fundraising appeal during the month of April, and are so thankful for the outpouring of community support. As of mid-May, we have raised more than \$95,000! With the Gala budgeted to bring in an essential \$400,000, we still face a significant gap. We truly appreciate everyone who has been so generous during these unprecedented times, and we will continue to reach out with ways you can help.

## You lift our spirits

When Jackie Vallette Uglow and her husband Ron took their daily walk near OP's Asplin Center in Plymouth, they noticed the empty parking lot and bare, untended garden plots. With OP's day programs closed, no one had been on site to get the gardens going – an activity that people served would typically enjoy. So Jackie reached out to OP to offer her green thumb! She even rounded up a few of her neighbors, and Butterfly Gardens Flower Mart in Maple Grove donated some of the plants. This incredible kindness has warmed our hearts! We know the people we serve at Asplin will be delighted to meet these kind neighbors when they return.

## Thank you for the masks

Like many organizations, we put out a call for cloth face masks to protect residents in our group homes and apartment programs,

and to be prepared for when our day programs reopen. As of mid-May, we had acquired more than 2,000 masks in every color, style and type imaginable! Thank you for putting your sewing skills to use for our people served and staff. We are still accepting masks at

our main office at 5500 Opportunity Court, Minnetonka. They can be dropped inside the doors at our E-1 entrance. Thank you for helping us stay safer!



*Zach Thuleen and his mom Katy made masks for OP.*

**For updates on Opportunity Partners and more ways you can help, visit [Opportunities.org](https://www.opportunities.org) or call 952-938-5511. Stay well, and thank you again!**

# Camacho's Corner

President & CEO

Armando Camacho

The pandemic has tested us all. Opportunity Partners and organizations like ours face serious financial hurdles the longer we must keep our day programs closed. At OP, 60% of our revenues come from our day services, resulting in \$1.3M in losses in April alone, requiring us to furlough just over half of our employees. Due to the size of our organization, we have not qualified for financial supports like Payroll Protection, Small Business forgivable loans, or the federal healthcare grants.

In spite of these challenges, I remain hopeful and am continuously reminded of our four organizational values of Impact, Choice, Heart and Partnership. Even during such difficulties, our values provide the direction we need to keep moving forward. We have to be here for those who rely on our supports, so we are planning and preparing to reopen as soon as it is safe. I hope our newsletter provides you a balance of inspiration and information in this rapidly changing environment.



## Welcome, Aimee Barbeau!

I'm pleased to introduce our new Vice President of Residential & Community Living, Aimee Barbeau. Aimee joined Opportunity Partners in March and most recently worked as a senior program manager for People Incorporated. Prior to that, she held leadership positions at Catholic Charities. Aimee oversees OP residential services, serving more than 300 people in our 20 group homes, three hoMEbase apartment programs, and Semi-Independent Living Skills. Welcome, Aimee!



Aimee Barbeau

## Award winning program

OP's Engage with My Community program earned a Life Enrichment Award from the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation & Rehabilitation (MOHR) for providing options for meaningful inclusion, choices, relationships and connections. Engage with My Community was launched in 2019 to provide small groups of individuals more choices in their daily activities within the communities where they live.



# Powering through global crisis

A pandemic can't slow down OP production! In mid-March, we found ourselves without a playbook on working through a world crisis, along with many manufacturers. With none of our persons served working production, our day staff quickly shifted to



Kyle and Alli, both Day Services staff, work on production projects at Koch Campus.

our production floors, and are completing packaging orders for our many customers deemed essential businesses.

**You have responded with gratitude! Here is some feedback we've received so far:**

*"Opportunity Partners is doing a great job! We had a huge order from Amazon on drinking water tablets. We sent an order to OP and got word back that you should finish them this week. Thanks!" - Coghlan's*

*"We really enjoyed working with you! Great job on the project." - General Mills*

*"Thank you all so much for getting through the hot list items - you have all done an amazing job! We really appreciate all that you do during these difficult times and are so happy to be able to still depend on you to get these things done for us. Stay well!" - Rockler*

*"The order you recently assembled for us passed inspection upon receipt. Thank you. I know your staff has worked hard to continue to meet your quality standards under unprecedented circumstances. We remain a committed partner." - QualiTru*

We look forward to the people we serve returning to our workforce soon. In the meantime, we will continue to meet your needs quickly and efficiently.

**Contact us today for a bid on your next project!  
Email Bonnie at [bhagen@opportunities.org](mailto:bhagen@opportunities.org) or  
learn more at [opportunities.org/businesses/](https://opportunities.org/businesses/)**

# COVID-19 health and safety update

*The COVID-19 situation across the world has changed quickly and will continue to evolve. At the time we were going to print with this newsletter, we planned to reopen our day programs as soon as it was deemed safe to do so.*

## Reopen timeline

Although Minnesota's stay-at-home orders began loosening in mid-May, disability day programs like ours must receive approval from the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health before we can reopen. We are actively working on our plans for the return of people served and staff, including developing extensive health, safety and training procedures.

We are planning a phased reopening, meaning not everyone will be able to return at once. Our Koch Campus in Minnetonka and Asplin Center in Plymouth will be the first to open to small groups. Individuals who aren't served at Koch or Asplin may be invited to attend there first.

## What will change

We are planning for day services that will look different than before in terms of health monitoring, social distancing, wearing masks, restricting visitors, limiting movement between activities, frequent hand washing, increasing cleaning schedules, and other changes that will keep us all safer. We are developing training for staff and persons served so everyone will know what to do.

OP staff will begin reaching out to individuals and teams by email or phone about your interest and ability to return to OP, and to adapt to our new health and safety plans and procedures.

## Our residential services

We have been providing 24-7 services in our group homes since the pandemic began, and we've also enhanced our services for individuals living in our apartment programs and for those who live on their own and may be especially isolated.

## Response and prevention

Working with health officials and disability industry partners, we have developed a comprehensive response and prevention plan that details the procedures in place to prevent COVID-19 and how to react if individuals get sick. We will do all that we can to keep our staff and the people we serve safe and healthy!



*Staff member Patrick conducts a temperature check.*

To view our complete COVID-19 prevention and response plan and other updates, please visit our website at [opportunities.org](https://opportunities.org). Note our procedures will be modified as needed with the health and safety of persons served and staff as our top priority. To request a printed copy of our plan be mailed to you, please email [info@opportunities.org](mailto:info@opportunities.org) or call 952-938-5511 to request one.

## Get our most recent updates

The OP website at [opportunities.org](https://opportunities.org) is the best way to access our latest information. On the home page, we have a special area with updates related to COVID-19 and our reopen plans. If you are not currently receiving our emails, please provide your email so we can get you information most quickly. You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter if you use social media. You can also email [info@opportunities.org](mailto:info@opportunities.org) or leave a message at 952-938-5511, which is checked daily.

## Thank you for your support

We need everyone's help in supporting and following all required procedures so we can offer a safe and enjoyable experience in our programs. We are all in this together!

# Spaghetti success!

Our March 5 spaghetti dinner was one of the last times we were all able to gather together!

So much has changed since then, but our gratitude to the Hopkins Noontime Lions Club remains! They have hosted our event for 16 years, and it's always a favorite for the people we serve and families.

This year's dinner raised more than \$1,000! Thank you to the Lions for helping support our mission to advance the quality of life for people with disabilities.



Above: Mark enjoys his salad while sitting with friends.



Left: It was a full crowd at our spaghetti dinner on March 5.



Learn more at [opportunities.org/gala](https://opportunities.org/gala)

## OP Gala – looking forward to fall!

More information to come about our rescheduled Gala. Thank you to everyone who continues to show us such kindness and support during these challenging times.

*Special thank you to our sponsors!*

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**Barbara G. Koch**

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