

Employment success throughout COVID-19

Your support helps more people on the job

A multitude of open job positions across many industries have resulted in new opportunities for people served by Opportunity Partners.

Over the past six months, **more than 60 people** receiving job support through OP have landed new jobs while others have seen promotions or opportunities for more hours. This hiring boon is welcome news for many individuals who missed their previous jobs and routines when COVID-19 hit.

Charlene

OP Employment Specialist Ashton checks in on Charlene at her job at Burger King every week. She has worked there for over two years. "Charlene is a really hard worker," Ashton said. "She's totally focused, and her manager calls her a **rock star!**"

Managers were so impressed with her work ethic that they offered Charlene more hours.

She now works 25 hours per week, handling dishes during the busy lunch rush. "I love the job," Charlene said. "I like the people and hours."



Charlene loves the people and the hours at her job!



Glenn goes out of his way to help others at his job.

Glenn

Glenn, who works at Covenant Living of Golden Valley, has continued to work all throughout the pandemic performing cleaning, sweeping and recycling duties. "I'm a hard worker — I don't miss work, and I show up on time," Glenn said, adding that he likes both his co-workers and the residents.

OP staff meet with Glenn regularly to go through training needs or paperwork, and they've

been really impressed by his work ethic. "Glenn has always been ready to step up, especially during the pandemic. He just **goes out of his way to help** others."



Grace enjoys caring for children at New Horizon Academy.

Grace

Over the past eight months, Grace has excelled in her job caring for infants and toddlers at New Horizon Academy. "Miss Grace," as the kids call her, assists with snack and nap times, leads play activities, and documents care updates for parents.

Amid staffing shortages, Grace steadily increased her schedule to 30 hours a week

to help out her co-workers, demonstrating just how essential her positive attitude and skills are to the New Horizon Academy team. Strong relationships with her co-workers and supervisor make Grace's job something she looks forward to. "We're really all **like a family**," she said.

Amber

Amber has worked at Hy-Vee for two years and has taken on a variety of roles from managing carts and shopping baskets to cashiering and customer service responsibilities. Amber is proud of her ability to learn new tasks and has received incentives at work because of her strong customer service skills. Amber said, "I'm always on time," adding that she works really well with her team.

Amber's positivity and work ethic were so apparent that her supervisor asked her to **take on additional responsibilities** in the last year, including handling the bustle of being a cashier.

OP staff Lisa Marie assisted Amber with training to become a cashier and is proud of Amber's progress. "Amber does a great job advocating for herself to have new opportunities for growth," she said.



Amber excels at her cashiering job at Hy-Vee.

A message from the CEO



Bill Schultz

What a year it has been! When I moved into the role of President & CEO of OP in fall of 2020, I never expected we'd still be talking about

the pandemic and masks more than a year later. While it has been a challenging time, we have adapted and learned a tremendous amount.

We've honed our health and safety protocols to keep people safe. We've learned new technologies, allowing us to expand to virtual services.

We've leaned on our community, building new partnerships. And our amazing staff members have carried us forward with their perseverance and positivity.

As I look ahead with optimism, I'm proud to share a few highlights with you.

Facilities – After several years of planning, we've purchased a new building for our OP-Karlins Center in Plymouth to replace our leased space. I know our staff and the people we serve will really enjoy the bright, flexible new space. After some renovations, we'll be looking at a move in early spring 2022.

Generous support – Thank you to the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation for awarding our Community Living Program a \$26,500 grant in its Fall 2021 Grant Cycle. This crucial program provides four to eight hours of support each week so people with disabilities can live more independently.

Volunteers – We've restarted our OP Volunteer program, with several corporate and church groups among the first to lend support this fall. Thank you, Bell Bank, U.S. Bank, UnitedHealth Group and others. We're thrilled to have you partnering with us!

I hope you have a safe and happy holiday season. I look forward to moving ahead with all of you in 2022!

William A. Schultz

Volunteer program takes off

In September 2021, we welcomed some new faces to our freshly launched volunteer program. Individuals have begun helping in our enrichment classes, and groups of volunteers have already made a big impact - special thanks to Bell Bank, UnitedHealth Group, and U.S. Bank!

Our volunteer program has a wide variety of options for volunteers to connect with people served and our mission. As we continue to navigate the pandemic, alternative options and protocols are in place to ensure everyone's safety. Some current opportunities include:

- Help with outdoor maintenance and clean-up at our group homes
- Assist with in-person or virtual enrichment classes
- Serve on our Gala Committee - silent auction, live auction, and planning
- Teach a skill or hobby in-person or virtually to a small group
- Perform administrative tasks or light maintenance at our facilities

We're excited by the number of people signed up to volunteer with us so far and look forward to growing our volunteer community!



Robin made a creation out of clay with Joan, a volunteer from Bell Bank, during a recent enrichment class.

To learn more, email volunteers@opportunities.org or go to www.opportunities.org/get-involved/volunteer



U.S. Bank volunteers joined us for a clean-up day at three different group homes. They raked 75 bags of leaves, did fall yard clean-up, washed windows, and helped prep for Halloween by painting pumpkins with people served. It was an amazing day of service!



Partnership serves up State Fair success

Thanks to a wonderful 6+ year partnership with OP, Blue Plate Restaurant Company was ready to serve customers at its Blue Barn during the Minnesota State Fair.

Skillfully packaged by our production team of people served, we provided nearly 100,000 pre-assembled food containers ahead of the fair's opening day in August.

Thanks to the OP hard workers, Blue Barn employees were able to focus on preparing food and filling orders during the bustling twelve days of the fair. Aisha Kaylor of

Blue Plate Restaurant Company expressed her gratitude for the time and skills of people served by Opportunity Partners, saying, "Thank you for being able to do this for us. Opportunity Partners always goes above and beyond!"

During the fair, our partnership with Blue Plate Restaurant Company was featured in local news outlets. Congrats to the people served and staff who were a part of the team who got the job done for the great Minnesota Get Together!



Patrick helped line 100,000 food boats with branded paper.



Jessica was among the team members that lined and packed the food boats.

Need packaging or other work done?

Contact us at 952-930-4201 or partner@opportunities.org.

Save the Date – May 14, 2022

Our Gala is OP's largest and most important fundraising event of the year. We rely on the generous support of our community to fund our residential, enrichment and employment services for people with disabilities. We are planning for an in-person Gala with a virtual component.

Location: Opportunity Partners in Minnetonka

- Reception and elegant dinner
- Presentation
- Silent and live auctions
- Entertainment



Sponsorships are now available! Learn more at www.opportunities.org/gala

Give to the Max Day has become Minnesota's annual giving holiday, raising \$220 million in 12 years for nonprofit organizations and schools!



Every year, this tremendous day of giving generates donations and excitement for Minnesota causes that are working to improve the quality of life for so many.

You can help us meet our Give to the Max goal!

Schedule your gift at givemn.org/organization/OpportunityPartners

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Look at what your gift can do!

\$25: One day of an enrichment class



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



\$250: A week of job coaching for an individual



\$500: Two weeks of groceries for a group home



\$1,000: One month of rent subsidies for two people



Your support means so much. Make a gift by December 31st by calling **952-912-7442** or visiting **opportunities.org/donate**. Thank you for your generosity!