

## Like family for many

Opportunity Partners has been like family for **Laura Green** and **Warren John**, two individuals served by OP for a combined 40+ years. Laura and Warren's stories were shared at OP's annual Gala, held May 14 at our Koch Campus.

Over \$460,000 was raised at the event, which was held in person for the first time in three years. OP friends also viewed the event via our livestream, opening access to even more supporters.

**Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a huge success!**

### Warren's story

Warren gave a speech at the OP Gala, describing how OP has helped him for 30 years. Here is an excerpt:

*After graduating from high school, my parents, Wyn and Myrtle, found a home for me through Opportunity Partners. At the time, OP operated a large facility in Minneapolis where I lived until moving to a group home, and later to my own condominium where I receive in-home services through OP.*

*For many years, I worked at the Minneapolis Airport, escorting people for their flights. It was one of my favorite jobs. I even saw Prince at the airport – that was a thrill! Currently **I am working a few days a week as part of an OP team** at Uponor doing light packaging.*

*In my free time, I spend time with my girlfriend Ann and volunteer frequently at community events. **I also have rallied at the Capitol to advocate for higher wages for OP caregivers.***

*Like many people, I had a very difficult time during the isolation of the pandemic. **OP stayed in touch with me and helped lift my spirits.** I really appreciate my staff for helping me with picking up groceries, getting to appointments and making sure I am doing well. They also helped me start OP virtual services where I've reconnected with friends, which has been wonderful.*



FOX 9's Ian Leonard congratulates Warren after his speech at the Gala.

### Laura's story

OP has been a part of Laura's life for more than a decade, enriching her days with art classes, friendships and the opportunity to work and earn a paycheck in a supported environment.

Although Laura has worked since she was a teenager, working independently in the community brought challenges at times. Then her parents, Tom and Cheryl Green, found Opportunity Partners. Over the years, Laura gained confidence and success at OP-Asplin Center, where she was surrounded by peers and staff who care.

**"My favorite part about OP is seeing my friends, working with (my staff) Troy, and getting paid,"** Laura explained.

After the death of Laura's parents and the challenges of the pandemic, OP became even more critical for Laura and her siblings, Heather and Ryan, who share guardianship.

**"OP's coaching and support has really helped Laura shine,"** Ryan said.

**Watch Laura's story of success at [opportunities.org/laura](https://opportunities.org/laura)**



Laura was featured during the Gala for her story of perseverance throughout the pandemic.

**Thank you to both Laura and Warren for sharing their experiences. It has been such an honor to serve them over all of these years!**

# A Message from the CEO

Summertime! I hope you're enjoying the warm weather and getting time together with family and friends – maybe taking a vacation or just relaxing at home.

Speaking of getting together, we were thrilled to have our OP Gala in person last spring, and we'll be holding our Success Celebration this fall at Veteran's Memorial Park in Richfield. Looking ahead, we'll continue to plan other activities and events that we can do safely, and we'll use what we've learned over the last two years to be ready to pivot again if needed.

Many OP staff and persons served who worked during the pandemic were eligible to apply for the frontline worker pay announced in June. I believe this will provide an encouraging boost for those who worked so hard throughout COVID-19. My sincere thank you to those who sacrificed so much in order to keep things running smoothly.

The 2022 Legislative session ended last spring with disappointing news that lawmakers did not prioritize disability waiver services such as what OP provides. We know that our services are critical for people with disabilities, and we urgently need sustainable investments to keep the disability care system from collapsing. Minnesotans with disabilities need and deserve more!

Across the state, waiting lists for day services are climbing and some residential group homes are closing – mostly due to the dire staffing shortage affecting so many industries. We recognize many of you are still waiting for your loved one to return to services. I realize this is causing much hardship and uncertainty. We do hope to see some movement soon as we continue to ramp up our hiring efforts.

Thank you to everyone who responded to our legislative action alerts throughout the session. We will continue to advocate – we know services that help people with disabilities live their best life are crucial. You can help at [opportunities.org/advocate](https://opportunities.org/advocate)

Feel free to reach out to us if you have questions or concerns, or if you would like to be more involved with our important work.



*Bill Schultz*

# Everyone shines at professional photo shoot

OP-Koch Campus held a professional photo shoot to gather new images for updated marketing materials. Staff and persons served showed off their beautiful smiles and everyone had a fabulous time! Photographer Bruce Silcox also visited neighboring company Engineered Products Company (EPCO) and took some great action shots of our work team there.



*Mike and his staff Elizabeth Clark participated in the professional photo shoot.*



*OP President & CEO Bill Schultz and a group of people served by OP pose with SPIRE's Dan Stoltz and Archie the truck.*

# OP featured in SPIRE commercial

OP-Koch Campus became the site of a TV commercial! SPIRE Credit Union, a banking partner of ours, chose Opportunity Partners to be featured in one of their latest testimonials. SPIRE CEO Dan Stoltz spent the afternoon with

OP President & CEO Bill Schultz and a great group of persons served and staff. Everyone got their moment to shine in the front seat of Archie the pickup truck! The ad is expected to run this fall.

# Become an OP Pal!

*Join our new monthly giving program by setting up automatic contributions to Opportunity Partners! Recurring donations leave a meaningful impact by providing OP with a dependable source of revenue and a lasting way to make a difference every month.*

*Learn more at [giving@opportunities.org](mailto:giving@opportunities.org) or call 952-912-7442.*

# OP PALS

## MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAM



# Sven Saw: A long partnership with a rich history

Opportunity Partners recently received a shipment of blades and handles, ready for assembly. The parts make up the Sven Saw® – a portable, folding campfire saw that OP has been assembling since the 1970s. Linnea Swenson Tellekson, President of Swen Products, has carried on the legacy of her father's invention through the family-owned company.

The idea of the Sven Saw was born when Linnea's father, Richard Swenson, was headed to the Boundary Waters with his brother. The pair came across a group of campers, one of which had injured himself with an axe. Seeing the need for a safer, more portable tool, Richard created his own compact folding saw with a blade that's protected by its own handle.

Soon after, he traveled to Seattle for the World's Fair in 1962. He sold six saws to mountaineer Jim Whittaker at Recreational Equipment, Incorporated (REI). Jim

soon ordered 12 more and became the first American to summit Mount Everest a year later.

Since the inception of the saw, the family-owned and operated company's parts are entirely manufactured and packaged in Minnesota.

***"We are very proud that the whole saw is manufactured and packaged in Minnesota," said Linnea.***

While Richard continued his career as an engineer, his sister-in-law Delores ran the new company. Linnea remembers assembling the saws alongside her cousins as a young girl in her aunt's basement before the partnership with OP began.

Through Richard's relationship with Coghlan's founder Norm Coghlan, OP started working with Swen Products to assemble and package the Sven Saws. By 1975, the saws were completely packaged and assembled through OP, and the partnership has continued ever since. In the last 12 months, over 14,000 saws have been packaged and assembled by OP!



*In the last 12 months, over 14,000 saws have been packaged through OP.*



*Sven Saws ready for assembly at OP-Koch Campus.*

***"Being a part of OP's work is an important aspect of full inclusion in our society," said Linnea. "We have always felt like we're a part of the same family."***

## Exciting OP happenings!

- Check out our newly designed website at [opportunities.org](https://opportunities.org)
- View our **Report to the Community** at [opportunities.org/annualreport](https://opportunities.org/annualreport)
- We've opened a **new group home** – Chicago residence – and remodeled our Gunderson Place group home, both in Bloomington.
- Our **new Karlins Center** opened this summer in Plymouth.
- **2022 Success Celebration** – Thursday, September 15 from 10 am-12 pm at Veteran's Memorial Park in Richfield. Watch for more information!
- **Keep up to date** on all OP happenings by following us on social media or subscribing to our E-news at [opportunities.org](https://opportunities.org)

Opportunity Partners




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Together we advance the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Services About

### Opportunities Start Here

Opportunity Partners is one of Minnesota's most experienced and comprehensive providers of employment, enrichment and residential services for adults with disabilities in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan area. Whether you are a person with a disability, a family member or a community partner, we can help you find the right opportunity.

Services	Business Solutions	Job Openings
 Our services help people with disabilities reach their goals in life, develop greater independence and become part of their communities.	 As a nonprofit organization and social enterprise, we provide workforce solutions and packaging and assembly services to businesses of all sizes.	 Join our team and make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. Advance your career, contribute to a meaningful mission, and have an impact - it's more than a job!

Explore Our Services Partner with Us Open Positions

### Gala 2022

THANK YOU!

Our hearts are filled with gratitude for everyone who attended, shared resources, helped and supported our May 14 Gala in any way! Together, we raised more than \$40,000 to support our mission of advancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. We are so thankful for you!

Register Today

Published in the interest of families, friends and supporters of Opportunity Partners, Inc. This newsletter is available in alternative formats by request.

The printing of this newsletter has been generously donated.

*Opportunity Partners is an EEO/AA employer.*

#### Address or name changes.

Do we have your name and address incorrect? Would you prefer to be removed from this mailing list? Kindly contact us at info@opportunities.org or 952-912-7442. Thank you!



# Volunteer with OP!

## Make a difference in our community!

We are looking for volunteers to help with an array of projects and programs in the coming months. Whether you want to volunteer as an individual or a group we would love for you to join us!

- Help with a house clean up
- Support meal prep or activities in residences
- Join our enrichment or day programs
- Lend a hand with event planning or administrative office work
- Make monthly activity boxes for people served



Fill out our volunteer form or contact Alexis at:  
**[volunteers@opportunities.org](mailto:volunteers@opportunities.org)**  
or **952-930-4203** and we will find the perfect fit for you!

