



## Opportunity Partners Celebrates Milestone Year

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MINNETONKA, MN - Celebrating 70 years, nonprofit organization Opportunity Partners (OP) serves 1,200 people with disabilities throughout the Minneapolis/St. Paul area in employment, enrichment and residential services that help people earn income, live as independently as possible and participate as active members of the community.

Founded in 1953 in Richfield, MN by visionary parents who wanted a better life for their teenage children with disabilities, OP has always focused on the abilities of people. At a time when many people with disabilities were institutionalized in state hospitals, OP provided an avenue for people to meet friends, learn job skills and take part in leisure activities.

“We cannot celebrate our 70th year without recognizing the families who had a revolutionary idea at the time – that young people with disabilities could work and be productive members of society,” said Lori Schluttenhofer, CEO of Services. “They demanded inclusion, not separation.”

In 1959, OP became the first service provider in the Twin Cities to place people with developmental disabilities with community employers. In the 1970s, the organization began offering residential services, assisting people as they transitioned from institutions into community-based housing.

Today Opportunity Partners operates four Day Services locations, 20 residential group homes and three supported apartment programs throughout the Twin Cities. It also supports hundreds of people in community jobs.

“We help give people with disabilities a voice and support them in all areas of their life – in working, in learning and growing, in advocating for themselves and in living fulfilling lives in the community,” said Bill Schultz, CEO of Operations & Strategy.

OP will be celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> all year with a number of activities and events, including participating in the Hopkins Raspberry Festival parade on July 16, a staff picnic in August and a Success Celebration for people it serves in September.

To learn more about OP’s 70 years of success, apply for a job or inquire about services, check out [Opportunities.org](https://opportunities.org).

### CONTACTS:

Julia Zerull, Communications & Engagement Coordinator

[jzerull@opportunities.org](mailto:jzerull@opportunities.org)

952-912-7445

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