



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

“Come and take me on, ‘cause I’m ready to become what I’m meant to become!” - Ethan B.

What better way to start off 2024 than with a story about Ethan B., who has been served by Opportunity Partners since 2014 when he moved into our Homebase Westside program in Hopkins.

Ethan attends courses at Cow Tipping Press, a Minneapolis organization that provides people with disabilities a forum to express themselves through creative writing. Cow Tipping accepts their current students in their apprenticeship program, where they mentor and help other people with disabilities with their writing.

Ethan has been involved with their program for over two years and was **recently accepted as an apprentice**, a wonderful recognition and achievement for him! His apprenticeship began in January, with him attending classes there weekly.

This is what he had to say about this acceptance:

“I have been thinking about applying for this apprenticeship for a long time but I was nervous about it. Brian (previous mentor at the Cow Tipping) kept encouraging me to apply so I finally did and I was accepted! I was in the Cow Tipping writing group for two years. My favorite things to write about are fantasy and short stories. During this apprenticeship, I’m going to be helping support new students. I’ll be helping the students bring out their voices in their writing.”



Ethan’s smile and positive energy is contagious!

Bryan Boyce, Executive Director of Cow Tipping Press, shared his thoughts about Ethan,

“He’s a thoughtful, diligent man who takes his writing craft seriously...”

*“We’re thrilled for Ethan to step up his Cow Tipping involvement as a Teaching Apprentice, modeling for others what’s possible when we labor imaginatively to leverage the **many gifts people with disabilities** have to offer all sectors of our workplace and society.”*

OP congratulates Ethan on this achievement; what an amazing opportunity for Ethan to help other people with disabilities and continue his own journey in creative writing!

Learn more about Cow Tipping Press at cowntippingpress.org

“I’ll be helping the students bring out their voices in their writing.” - Ethan B.

Upcoming Events

March: Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Brain Injury Awareness Month

Mar 19: Disability Services Day at the Capitol

Mar 21: World Down Syndrome Day

April: Autism Awareness Month

Apr 2: World Autism Awareness Day

Apr 26: Opportunity Partners Gala

May: Mental Health Awareness Month

May 27: Memorial Day, OP Day Services Closed



A New Year Message from the CEOs



Happy New Year!

We hope your year is off to a great start and you are settling in nicely to 2024.

Here at Opportunity Partners, we are excited about the year ahead and several projects on the landscape, including the opening of two new group homes which will serve the LGBTQ+ community of adults with disabilities, and renovations at a few of our locations to enhance the lives of the individuals we serve.

2024 brings about a continued focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in our work culture as well as to the services we provide to people with disabilities. We have a dynamic community of staff members that

are dedicated to the education and continuation of this endeavor.

The annual Opportunity Partners Gala is fast approaching on April 26, 2024 and we hope you have already saved the date on your calendar to join us for this always exciting and important fundraising event.

Please feel free to reach out to either of us with any questions about upcoming projects, DEI and how you can support OP through gift giving or other means.

Sincerely,

Bill & Lori

Bill Schultz and Lori Schluttenhofer

Give to the Max Day Success!

We would like to thank everyone who helped us surpass our Give to the Max Day goal. With your support, **we raised \$55,701!**

Every dollar donated powers vital work to support the individuals in our community with opportunities to thrive in all areas of their lives. We are humbled and heartened by your generous giving spirits.

Thank you again for your overwhelming support!



The DEI Initiative

Opportunity Partners is proud to continue its mission of offering a work environment and services that are diverse, equitable and inclusive. The leadership team at OP meets regularly to discuss and plan DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity) initiatives and has created committees to address specific areas of interest under the DEI umbrella. We are excited to open these committees to all staff that are interested in participating to further discuss topics that affect how individuals and group dynamics are interpreted in association with race, creed, religion, and sexual orientation. For more information on DEI at OP, please email us at info@opportunities.org



COAL Meetings are Back

After a short hiatus, OP has started up COAL meetings again for the individuals we serve. COAL is an acronym for **Committee on Advocacy and Leadership** and the group meets once a month to gather and discuss issues that are important and relevant to adults with disabilities.

The meeting takes place on the last Friday of the month and generates a lot of buzz amongst both staff and the people we serve; it provides a forum for individuals to express their feelings about current issues, hear from guest speakers and enjoy the fellowship it provides in a safe setting.

Persons served and staff can attend in-person at our Koch location or there is video conferencing available for those who cannot attend. COAL welcomes guest speakers who can educate and inform the people we serve in a meaningful manner.

If you are interested in being a guest speaker or would like more information about COAL, contact **Luke Bourdeaux** at lbourdeaux@opportunities.org



THE 2024 OPPORTUNITY PARTNERS GALA *Inspiring Independence*

Save the Date for this year's annual Opportunity Partners Gala, April 26, 2024! Enjoy an evening of fun, fellowship and a new venue, Radisson Blu at Mall of America. Starting this year, we will be adding a theme to our Gala and we can't think of a better way to kick this off than with the theme, "Inspiring Independence." Keep an eye out for your invite in the mail or register now by scanning the QR code.



We look forward to seeing you on April 26, 2024!



Ben's Hard Work Pays Off

We are thrilled to announce and celebrate the outstanding achievement of Ben Altmann, who has been selected as the **Employee of the Month** at the Riverdale Cub Foods in Coon Rapids!

Ben has been a beloved member of the Opportunity Partners community for over sixteen years. He began at Opportunity Partners attending the Anoka Day Training and Habilitation program for thirteen years. Ben worked with staff on job development training and secured his current position at Cub Foods in September of 2020.

Ben's positive attitude, strong work ethic, and commitment to learning new skills are truly commendable, making him a deserving recipient of Employee of the Month. Please join us in congratulating Ben on his well-deserved recognition. **His achievements are inspiring to all of us at Opportunity Partners and we cannot wait to see his future success in all his endeavors!**



Merry Volunteers

On December 1, 2023, eight U.S. Bank Volunteers hosted a holiday party for over 30 people in OP's Enrichment programs at Koch. Volunteers spent their time connecting with persons served, helping make fun crafts, decorating cookies, and running a game of holiday-themed bingo!

A big "Thank You" to US Bank for their time and commitment to helping



us provide engaging activities to the people we serve!

Want to make a difference in the lives of adults with disabilities? Consider being a volunteer! There are many ways you can volunteer and support the OP community! For more information on how to become a volunteer, contact **Mark Murray IV** at mmurray@opportunities.org

Bobbie's "Birdhouse Bestie!"

Bobbie has been a cherished member of the Opportunity Partners community for many years. Initially engaged in Community Employment at McDonald's, Bobbie has now transitioned to OP's Day Enrichment Services, actively participating in Linda-Mary's classroom for two years.

Recently, a delightful addition to Bobbie's experience has been her newfound friendship with Patty, a dedicated OP volunteer. Every Monday, Patty generously contributes her time to assist Linda-Mary's classroom with engaging activities such as arts and crafts, playing games, and skill development. **Bobbie and Patty quickly became friends** over their shared love for the Minnesota Vikings!

Bobbie recently won a birdhouse during a game of bingo at the volunteer

holiday party. Enthusiastically, she and Patty collaborated on assembling, painting, and decorating the birdhouse. Their finished design, decorated with fake snow and snowflake stickers, was proudly showcased in the classroom for all to see.



Patty (left) and Bobbie (right) enjoy crafting in the classroom together.



Leadership Lends a Hand

Recently, Opportunity Partners' management team volunteered their time at Feed My Starving Children in Chanhassen, MN.

Over 30 staff members helped assemble MannaPack Rice packets that will provide an excellent source of protein, carbohydrates, and key nutrients to children all over the world.

Opportunity Partners appreciated the chance to **give back and make a difference** in a child's life this holiday season!



5500 Opportunity Court • Minnetonka, MN 55343
info@opportunities.org • opportunities.org
952-938-5511

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 90100

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

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THE 2024
OPPORTUNITY
PARTNERS GALA
Inspiring Independence

***Learn more inside
the newsletter!***

SAVE
the
DATE

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