A Promise of We
Together, we are better
Message from the CEO
A Promise of We

I'm pleased that although we closed some of our smaller programs, a number of the impacted individuals were able to transfer into other Opportunity Partners programs. We vow to keep working hard to make the programs the very best that they can be, and I thank you for your support during these changes.

That is the Promise of We. We cannot progress with an "us versus them" mentality. We all do better when we all do better. After all, Opportunity Partners has been around since 1953 and we've always collaborated with people with disabilities, families, staff, donors, businesses, volunteers, and our entire community to meet our mission of advancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. We must continue to work together to keep moving forward.

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Looking ahead to a strong 2019

2019 was a year of transformation for Opportunity Partners. Budget cuts and regulatory changes meant we needed to make some difficult decisions around some of our programs to keep us financially sustainable. Sunsetting programs affects real people and is never easy. However, that were no longer financially sustainable. Sunsetting was in this together. We all do better when we all do better.

But with support of Opportunity Partners’ holdEdge apartment program, Sandy and Alaina’s son Ben is thriving living semi-independently.

Parents of children with disabilities often grow so accustomed to everyday challenges that typical milestones – like getting a first apartment – seem far out of reach.

Getting a first apartment is a big step for him. "I get to be independent and have my own space," he said. "This is a very important event. I hope you can attend and support us at this very important event. Learn more at opportunities.org/gala.

To learn more about A Promise of We, visit opportunities.org.

APROMISEOFEWESTHERETEWEBETTER

Steps toward independence Learning and growing, with your support

For Sandy and Allan Goldstein, watching their adult son move into his own place at age 26 was a milestone they didn’t know if they would ever see.

"We never thought Ben could get his own apartment," Sandy said. "He’s really come a long way."

"Parents of children with disabilities often grow so accustomed to everyday challenges that typical milestones – like getting a first apartment – seem far out of reach."

Sandy said Ben is doing a good job of living semi-independently. He’s happy, he loves having his own space. "I get to be independent and have my own space," he said. "This is a very important event. I hope you can attend and support us at this very important event. Learn more at opportunities.org/gala.

Do you have a success story illustrating "A Promise of We" at Opportunity Partners? Let us know at info@opportunities.org.

Legislative session now underway

The 2019 Minnesota Legislative session began on January 8. Our primary goal this year in working with the bipartisan disability advocacy group Best Life Alliance is to enact reforms that will help address the severe workforce shortage and stable rates for disability services. You can help by contacting your legislators to urge them to prioritize services for people with disabilities. Learn more by emailing info@opportunities.org. We’ll be at the Capitol on March 12 for a rally and meetings with lawmakers. Join us if you can!

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Ben Goldstein enjoys living in his own apartment with support from Opportunity Partners. "I get to be independent and have my own space," he said. "I’m learning how to cook and need to learn how to bake."

During the day, Ben attends Opportunity Partners’ hoMEbase apartment program, Sandy and Alaina’s son Ben is thriving living semi-independently.

At hoMEbase Westside in Hopkins, Ben has his own one-bedroom unit in a regular apartment complex and Opportunity Partners staff have an apartment on-site that is used as an office. Families feel good that staff are on-site to provide support in an emergency, and in supervision, and Ben can participate in group meals and other activities if he would like. Staff on the premises oversee about 100 families, the largest of its kind in the country.

Opportunity Partners is an EEO/AA employer.

Mark your calendar — April 27

Our annual Opportunity Partners Gala is Saturday, April 27. This is the 59th year we’ve held our largest fundraiser at our Rich Campus in Minnetonka, and I urge you to attend this very special event. It is amazing to see the transformation of our production floor to a stunning event venue and hear some incredibly inspiring success stories. I hope you can attend and support us at this very important event.

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At Opportunity Partners, we’re kicking off 2019 with the promise of better. Yes, yes, yes! Thank you for your support during these changes.

Laws, bills, and services for people with disabilities. Learn more by emailing info@opportunities.org.

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Steps toward independence

For Sandy and Allan Goldstein, watching their adult son move into his own place at age 26 was a milestone they didn’t know if they would ever see.

“We never thought Ben could get his own apartment,” Sandy said. “He’s really come a long way.”

Parents of children with disabilities often groan at the idea of transitioning to a typical milestone, such as getting a first apartment.

But with support of Opportunity Partners’ holdBase apartment program, Sandy and Alannah’s son Ben is thriving living semi-independently.

At hoMEbase Westside in Hopkins, Ben has his own one-bedroom unit in a new apartment complex. Sandy and Allan’s Employment Team (SET) partners with Sandy to help Ben learn to be independent.

Ben Goldstein enjoys living in his own apartment with support from Opportunity Partners.

I get to be independent and have my own space - Ben

“Ben’s been doing really amazing,” said Stacy Ramseth, who manages holdBase Westside. “He’s happy, he loves having his own place and his freedoms.”

Ben moved into holdBase last August. His family had helped him prepare for greater independence, which included moving in with them at home to learn laundry, cleaning, shopping and cooking skills. Since moving into his own place, Ben has continued to gain confidence in being alone and has expanded his network of friends.

Ben said he is happy living in his own apartment, “I get to be independent and have my own space.”

During the day, Ben attends Opportunity Partners in Minnetonka, where he works on the production floor and as part of a Supported Employment Team (SET) in the community at Waymouth Farms. His Service Coordinator Leah Schmidt said Ben is doing a good job advocating for himself, including asking for more community work opportunities. “He likes to work and does a great job.”

When he’s not working, Ben participates in many sports including ice hockey for the Minnesota Wild Special Hockey, where he plays goalie, unified basketball and flag football, and swimming under Minnesota Special Olympics. “He always has something going on,” Sandy said. “He’s benefited from a lot of opportunities.”

And while she still sees Ben several times a week, she feels a sense of relief knowing he is capable of living semi-independently. “I know if they would ever see.”

I get to be independent and have my own space - Ben

AP PROMISE OF WE TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER

Save the Date

Opportunity Partners Gala

April 27, 2019

For more information visit opportunities.org/gala
Join us on Tuesday, March 12 for the annual Disability Services Day at the Capitol, where more than 1,000 direct care staff, elected officials, families, and community members converge on the Minnesota State Capitol to urge lawmakers to prioritize disability services. Attendees from across the state will walk all 10 a.m. rally, followed by meetings with legislators. This year’s legislative agenda being introduced by the disability advocacy group Best Life Alliance seeks to stabilize our care system’s ability to effectively address the severe workforce shortage in our industry.

Learn more about the issues on the Advocacy tab at arm.org. Join our advocacy efforts by contacting info@opportunities.org or 952-930-4208.

Rally with us on March 12

Here comes the spaghetti!!

Rally with us on March 12 to address the severe workforce shortage in our industry. Here comes the spaghetti!!

Adults - $8 | Children under 12 - $5 | Families of 5 or more - $35

Tickets:

Where:

When:

Thursday, March 7 | 4:30-7:30 pm

Thank you to the Hopkins Noontime Lions for their support of this event.

Together, we are better

Community activities expand horizons

We value the many community partnerships we have built over our 60 years of existence. Class outings to places like an Eden Prairie Fire Station, The Landing – Minnesota River Heritage Park in Shakopee, a llama farm in Waconia and Best Buy make our community outings a highlight of the year. Our community outings bring together our community members, their families, neighbors and experiences in our communities. If you know of an organization or business that we can visit, let us know at info@opportunities.org.

A family’s legacy

Asplin bequest gift touches hearts

When Swanon “Elly” Asplin died on August 28, 2018, at the age of 94, Opportunity Partners received a generous bequest gift in recognition of the many ways the organization impacted her family and so many others. Elly and her husband Edward “Ed” were long-time supporters and volunteers of Opportunity Partners. Ed, who died in 2005, and son William “Bill” both served on Opportunity Partners’ Board of Directors over the years, and Elly volunteered for countless committees and events. In 1991, Opportunity Partners’ Asplin Pavilion in Plymouth was named for the family in recognition of their years of service and support.

Ed and Elly’s interest in volunteering and philanthropy stemmed from their daughter Sarah, new 65, who has been an important part of Opportunity Partners for more than 30 years. Born in 1953, Sarah was blessed to have a family who cared for her and provided opportunities for her to do her own. “Like a lot of other parents at that time, my mother said how fortunate it was that there was a movement beginning to mainstream children with disabilities,” Bill said. “She felt it was a blessing that they could, through their efforts and the efforts of so many people, provide independent living opportunities for individuals with special needs.”

As a group, we have learned that if you work intentionally at jobs at Perkins, Old Navy and other businesses, Bill saw how pleased they were with her progress. “Every time Sarah took a few steps forward, I could see the pride in my parents.” He said it was important to his father that organizations and other charitable organizations will inspire others. “My parents’ primary goal in life was to do everything they could to make sure Sarah was OK and had everything she needed,” he said. “I believe they felt that of a way they could help other people too, then they would.”

Another gift to Opportunity Partners helps to ensure our critical work continues into the future.

For more information about making a planned gift or to discuss other giving opportunities, contact Brie Geurink, CFRE, Vice President of Advancement, at 952-930-4253 or bgeurink@opportunities.org.

Faces of OP - Meet Jack

Thruing in community work, thanks to you!

Jack Campbell, 26, is shining in his job at Emagine Willow Creek movie theater in Plymouth, where he recently was named Employee of the Month. His Opportunity Partners staff Beth-Kempa describes his passion for the job as amazing. Jack’s manager says he can always be depended on to do his job with great enthusiasm.

Since joining Opportunity Partners in 2015, Jack has participated in a wide range of programs, including taking Carver Path, which focuses on success in competitive, integrated employment. He has also worked on a team at Nordic Ware, and enjoys activities like bowling, cooking and creating art. Jack is proud of his independence at work and at home, where he recently moved into his own apartment. Way to go, Jack!

Teamwork celebration at Life Fitness

Opportunity Partners recently celebrated a year of teamwork with Life Fitness in Ramsey, where a Supported Employment Team (SET) from our Anoka Service Center in Coon Rapids plays an essential role.

Life Fitness is a global leader in commercial fitness equipment. Its 110,000 square foot facility in Ramsey employs more than 400 people and produces more than 270 different commercial strength training units designed to outfit health clubs, fitness facilities, the military professional and collegiate athletic team training centers, among others throughout the world.

Currently, a team of four people from Opportunity Partners and a SET supervisor work each day through Friday at the facility. The team handles recycling and general housekeeping duties, keeping the operations flowing smoothly and freeing up Life Fitness employees for other production duties.

“The Opportunity Partners team has had a seamless transition into the Life Fitness operations,” said Matt Knode, Life Fitness Production Manager. “The team’s always ready to work with smiles on their faces,” he added. “I have seen the two teams become one and highly recommend to other businesses to see if they can create a partnership as we have.”

Contact us for packaging, shrink-wrapping, kitting, collating and labeling at 952-930-4201 or partner@opportunities.org
Join us on Tuesday, March 12 for the annual Disability Services Day at the Capitol, where more than 1,000 direct care staff, volunteer advocates, families and community members convene on the Minnesota State Capitol to urge lawmakers to prioritize disability services. Attendees from across the state will attend a 10 am rally, followed by meetings with legislators.

This year’s legislative agenda being introduced by the disability advocacy group Best Life Alliance seeks to stabilize and raise disability wages and to address the severe workforce shortage in our industry.

Rally with us on March 12
Successful event since 2005, thanks to you!

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Alphin bequest gifts hearts

When Slawen “Elly” Alphin died on August 28, 2018, at the age of 94, Opportunity Partners received a generous bequest gift in recognition of the many ways the organization touched the Alphin family and so many others.

Elly and her husband Edward “Ted” were long-time supporters and volunteers of Opportunity Partners. Ted, who died in 2005, and son William “Bill” both served on Opportunity Partners’ Board of Directors over the years, and Elly volunteered for countless committees and events. In 1991, Opportunity Partners’ Alphin Center in Plymouth was named for the family in recognition of their years of service and support.

Elly and Ted’s interest in volunteers and philanthropy stemmed from their daughter, Sarah, now 65, who has been an important part of Opportunity Partners for more than 35 years. Born in 1953, Sarah was blessed to have a family who cared for her as they could and to provide opportunities for her to learn greater self-sufficiency.

“Like a lot of other parents at that time, my mother said how fortunate it was that there was a movement beginning to mainstream children with disabilities,” Bill said. “She felt it was a blessing that they could, through their efforts and the efforts of so many other people, provide independent living opportunities for individuals with special needs.”

As a group, Sarah and Ted learned to work independently at jobs in Perkins, Old Navy and other businesses. Bill saw how pleased his parents were with her progress. “Every time Sarah took a few steps forward, I could see the pride in my parents.”

He said it was important to his father that organizations like Opportunity Partners helped people land jobs and take a few steps forward, I could see the pride in my parents.

Sarah lived at Opportunity Partners’ former residence, Clara Dover & Lindsay Hall in Minneapolis, and later moved into a duplex with several roommates.

Today, Opportunity Partners continues to support Sarah through Semi-Independent Living Services, and Sarah attends Opportunity Partners’ day program three days per week and volunteers at a nursing home.

Bill said the family appreciates how Opportunity Partners has provided flexible services as Sarah’s needs have changed. “Each person is unique, and individual needs can’t always be met in a cookie-cutter model.”

Bill hopes his parent’s legacy to Opportunity Partners and other charitable organizations will inspire others. “My parents’ primary goal in life was to do everything they could to make sure Sarah was OK and had everything she needed;” he said. “I believe they felt that if along the way they could help other people too, then they would.”

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He said it was important to his father that organizations like Opportunity Partners helped people land jobs and become taxpayers themselves. “He saw the good work that was happening for Sarah and so many other people.”

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- Ben Goldstein

A popular quote from the late U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone is “We all do better when we all do better.” That is the Promise of We. Together, we are better. We all do better when we all do better. A Promise of We means that together, we can make a difference.

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