

Visions

FALL 2018

A LOOK AT THE PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS OF OPPORTUNITY MATTERS INC.

Be the One Video Challenge

Opportunity Matters' recently submitted a short video to the Disability Awareness Task Force's Be the One Video Challenge. The Task Force is a collaboration of local agencies, committed to bringing education and awareness to the public in regards to disability and inclusion, and to break down physical and attitudinal barriers that people with disabilities face. Each year the Task Force has two major events, including "Dinner and a Movie" and "Celebration of Abilities".

As part of the "Celebration of Abilities", the Task Force issued a video challenge open to all community members to create a 2 minute video with the theme #BetheOne. The video must include a message about treating people with disabilities with respect, finding ways to be inclusive of those who have a disability, to end bullying for those with disabilities or use language that empowers people with disabilities.

Once videos are submitted, they are posted on YouTube to be voted on. The more views a video has, the more chance it has to win. Winning videos are selected mid-October and shown at the "Celebration of Abilities" event on October 23, 2018.

Opportunity Matters' Program Coordinator Lindsay Massman took lead on creating the video Opportunity Matters submitted for the challenge. The video includes roughly 13 of the individuals served by Opportunity Matters and focuses on the message of treating people with disabilities with respect. You can view Opportunity Matters' video submission on our website www.opportunitymatters.org starting October 29th. ■

Endowment Fund Provides Opportunities

Brenda Eggerth, Volunteer & Communications Manager



2013 was the first year Opportunity Matters was able to start utilizing the interest from the Jim Christensen Endowment Fund. The endowment fund was established in honor of our former CEO who unexpectedly passed away in 2006. The endowment fund provides extra funds to the individuals that OMI serves to do things they might otherwise not be able to afford, such as; attend camp, take a vacation, or assist with purchasing specialized equipment, personal supplies, or therapies.

This year, the endowment fund enabled an individual, Jacob, the opportunity to attend camp for the first time with Opportunity Matters' staff and individuals. The Program Coordinator applied to the endowment fund to request assistance in sending Jacob to camp. They felt that by attending camp, Jacob would benefit from a change in his routine and increased socialization. Jacob had a great time at camp and said that his favorite part was "riding in the boat and going tubing." He is hopeful that he can attend again next year.

Individuals, OMI staff, and family members can apply for funding for someone served by OMI. A committee reviews the applications and approves funds for requests that match the intent of the endowment fund's purpose and vision. Applications and instructions for submitting a request can be found on the Opportunity Matters' website.

Thank you to the many individuals who donate money to the endowment fund. If you would like to make a donation to the Jim Christensen Endowment Fund, contact Regan Stommes, CEO, at (320) 240-1900. ■

Upcoming OMI Events

OMI's Individual's served Halloween Party

Tuesday, October 30, 2018
4:30pm-7:30pm

OMI's Administration Office

OMI's Individual's served Thanksgiving Meal

Thursday, November 15, 2018
Times to be determined

OMI's Administration Office
Volunteer's needed!

Supporting the Mission

Bridget Mohs, Finance Manager

Opportunity Matters is fortunate to have great employees dedicated to carrying out the organization's mission by providing exceptional care to those we serve. Many also support the organization's mission by giving back financially through a payroll deduction. I asked a few of the staff how their donation has made a difference.

"I donate to OMI because I believe in what we do here. The smiles on the faces of the guys when we are able to take them to bigger events the houses may not be able to afford without this donated money is priceless to me!"...*Dionne Rowles, Program Manager*

"I donate to OMI because I believe it is the right thing to do. We are a non-profit organization so we rely on "extra gifts" from outside the company to do extra things for our clients. There is power in numbers, so if many donate a little, we end up with funds large enough to benefit many of the people we serve for the extra things they like. Having my donation taken out of my paycheck before I ever see it makes it very easy to give back."....*Penny Weihrach, Registered Nurse*

"I donate because I think OMI is providing a very valuable service to the people we serve. I love my guys and truly consider them an extension of my family. So, every little bit that I can do to help OMI achieve their goals and provide better care for my guys and all the organization individuals is money well spent as far as I'm concerned."....*Shane Raden, Direct Support Staff*

"It is a nominal amount of money that I could easily waste on a cup of coffee but really adds up to do something special. We recently took the individuals for a fun day to Como Zoo. After the zoo we went to Outback Steakhouse and had a fantastic meal. We even had enough left to have a pizza party on a Sunday afternoon. It is great to see the impact the donations have on the people we serve and the opportunities and fun it brings them."....*Paula Olson, Program Coordinator*

"I donate so items can be purchased that benefit the individuals that are normally outside the regular spending limits. I also believe it is important to donate money so others see that our employees support the goals of the company and want to make an impact in the lives of the people we serve."....*Shaun Ohl, Program Coordinator*

"I donate because it helps purchase extra things that are not in the budget and the money goes to extra activities for the people we serve. The Guys and Gals Clubs really rely on donations to help fund bigger events such as Twin's games, the Science Museum and Valley Fair trips."....*Leslie Faulk, Direct Support Staff*

Donations from our community also help provide the extras to the people we serve. Please give financially or an in-kind donation to help us continue providing the little extras to the people we serve. Current needs can be found on our website at www.opportunitymatters.org/needs-list. ■

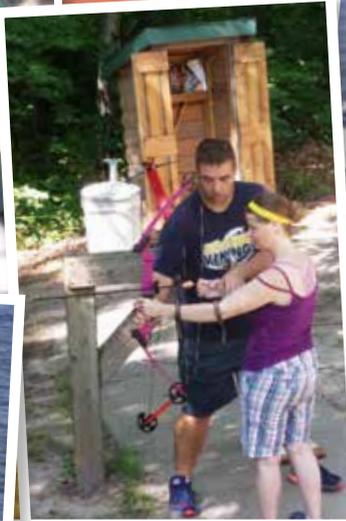
Let's Play Hockey!!

Brenda Groseclose, Program Director

Brett is a HUGE hockey fan! He has attended hockey games for many years, including the MN Wild and SCSU hockey teams. Last year, Brett was thrilled to learn that Adapted Hockey had come to St. Cloud! MN Wild Special Hockey has been around since 2006, but did not have a team in St. Cloud until the 2017-2018 Season. MNWSH's Mission is to make hockey accessible to everyone. Brett uses a wheelchair for mobility, so traditional hockey was not possible for him, despite his love of the sport. Brett is now able to play hockey in his wheelchair with the support of the coaches and volunteers who push him around on the ice while he uses his stick to handle the puck. Brett just attended the pre-season registration party on September 25th and had fun hanging out with some of his teammates. He has made a lot of new friends and has even gotten together with some of them outside of the hockey season! He also went to the Epilepsy Foundation Walk at Lake George this summer and helped out with a booth. His passion for hockey is infectious and has Lisa from Foster 9 looking to play hockey this year too. Come out to watch them play this winter. The schedule can be found at www.mnspecialhockey.org. They would love to have you come watch! ■



CAMP 2018



The Evolution of Giving Back

Brenda Eggerth, Volunteer & Communications Manager

A few years ago, OMI was fortunate to gain a volunteer, Ellen, who was a college student looking to give back to the community. Ellen was matched with our Foster 1 site to help the ladies learn how to knit. Fast forward to the present day and the wonderful experience it has evolved in to.



Ellen began volunteering to give back to her community and helped the F1 ladies find a passion for knitting.

Sue coordinates with the site to plan a trip to the local craft store and accompanies the Foster 1 ladies to the store where they pick out new yarn, fun craft projects and usually a treat or two. As an added bonus, Ellen will join her mom and the Foster 1 ladies when her schedule allows, which is always a hit with everyone who are happy to see her!

Ellen and Sue are great examples of how volunteering can benefit everyone involved. As the holiday season approaches, we encourage you to gather your friends or family and consider spending time volunteering in your community. For more information on upcoming holiday volunteer opportunities at Opportunity Matters, contact Brenda Eggerth at (320) 240-1900. ■

Taking Flight

Jaimie Jarnot, Program Coordinator

For the last five years, a few of the ladies at Foster 11 have taken part in a fun science project - caring for caterpillars as they complete the metamorphosis into butterflies. Each year, a staff member's family provides the ladies with baby caterpillars. The ladies name each one and usually keep them in a jar in the kitchen window so they can watch them grow and remember to feed them milkweed. Depending on how big the caterpillars are when the ladies receive them, the caterpillars can take anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks to cocoon. Once ready to cocoon, the caterpillar stops eating and then it takes about a day for it to make its way to the top of the jar. The cocooning process is a matter of a couple of minutes. Once in the cocoon, it takes approximately 10 days before it turns into a butterfly. About a day before it hatches the cocoon turns black and then right before hatching it turns clear and you can see the color of the butterfly's wings through the cocoon. Once it hatches, it takes several hours for the wings to dry and the butterfly to be ready for flight. It is during this time that you can hold the butterfly if you are very careful and don't touch the wings. Once the wings have dried, the ladies take the butterflies outside and release them.



The ladies take photos with their butterflies before releasing them into the sky.



Sue and a few of the F1 ladies outside Craft's Direct where they went to buy craft supplies.

The ladies have really enjoyed being involved and watching the metamorphosis process. They plan to continue doing this each year, as long as they can find enough caterpillars to assist in taking flight. ■

State Fair Fun

Mickey Thern, Receptionist

The 2018 Minnesota State Fair not only set an overall attendance record, but reached a new milestone in the process. Officials said that a total of 2,046,533 visited the fair over its 12-day run, marking the first time fair attendance has crossed the two-million mark. The old record of 1,997,320 was set just last year. This year's fair wrapped up with 171,588 people coming through the gates.

Many of our staff and individuals served enjoy attending the State Fair each year. We asked them what they enjoyed most about attending the fair in 2018.



Reported by Jess Franks, Program Coordinator, Foster 1

“Sharon enjoyed the hot cookies the best and Bernice enjoyed the fit shop the most! Both ladies enjoyed the butterfly enclosure. They were so happy when the butterflies would land on their finger and shoulder”

Reported by Emily Simonson, Program Coordinator, Foster 9

“David went to the state fair with his mom. He said he enjoyed being on the Gondola ride the most and being able to see everything from above!”

Reported by Kory McClelland, Program Coordinator, Foster 2

“Eric and Dan both went to the state fair. They looked at animals, ate burgers and cheese curds, and watched WCCO perform news live which was the highlight.”

Reported by Drea Metcalf, Program Manager

“I went to the fair the last Sunday it was open. It was much busier than other years I have gone. I usually spend a lot of my time there shopping in the International Bizarre but this year it was so busy I could hardly walk through it. Sweet Martha's cookies were as good as ever but I didn't try anything new.

The guys went to the butterfly pavilion first and seemed intrigued. They then ate burgers and garlic fries and really enjoyed that! After that they looked at the animals then got treats and souvenirs on the way out. It was so packed it was hard to do much but they seemed to have a lot of fun.”

Reported by Dionne Rowles, Program Manager

“I went for the first time in 20 years!! It was fun- I loved seeing and touching all the baby animals. I even got to try to milk a cow for the first time!! We tried some new foods- some were good- some were NOT! The crowds are insane!! I had fun but I have to say it is not something I plan to do again for a few years due to the huge number of people there!”

Reported by Camden Scott, Lead Program Director

“I have gone every year since I was about 10 years old and can say it continues to get bigger and better each year. This year I tried alligator and mac and cheese on a stick but the sliced pepperoni was the best new food I tried.”

Donations/Grants

We are grateful to the many individuals, families, businesses and foundations whose contributions are vital to the success of Opportunity Matters Inc. The following list reflects gifts received from July 1, 2018 to September 30, 2018.

\$200+

Vic & Pam Christensen
Mike's Trim Carpentry

Donations

Kaitlyn Fleck
Amanda Niemeyer
Raeann Green
St. Cloud Pride
Agustin & Rachel Guerra
Mickey Thern
Tom & Lori Kasner
Pete & Barbara Becker

If you are interested in making a donation to Opportunity Matters, please contact Regan Stommes, CEO at (320) 240-1900 x210.



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Guys' & Gals' Club Update

Guys' & Gals' Committee

Each edition we like to include an update on what fun activities the Guys' and Gal's Clubs have been busy doing. The clubs started their summer by participating in the annual Coborn's brat sales for two days in June and July at Coborn's Pinecone location. Over these four days, the clubs raised over \$750 to use for activities and outings! Thank you to everyone who stopped by the booths and bought a brat or hot dog.

In August, the clubs held their first "End of Summer" event at OMI's main office. They played bingo, ate great food and had a bonfire in the backyard complete with s'mores. Everyone agreed that this event should be planned again for next year.

In September, the clubs packed up and headed to Shakopee for their annual trip to Valley Fair. The clubs found that by going in September they can avoid the long lines to get on rides. The cooler September weather also makes the overall experience much more enjoyable.

The clubs will continue to be busy through the holidays. In October a trip to a local pumpkin patch is being planned and November will see the return of the very popular Guys' and Gal's Club Thanksgiving meal prepared and served at OMI's main office.

Thank you to everyone who supports our Guys' and Gal's clubs. These activities get our individuals involved in the community, create memories and bring smiles to everyone's face. ■

