

WHAT'S NEW

at Living Opps?

We're Hiring!

Living Opps was recently voted one of the Top Nonprofits to Work For in Oregon—come join us! We are currently seeking highly motivated, caring and committed individuals to join our team in both full and part-time support professional positions.

We offer competitive compensation, excellent benefits, and a positive work environment designed around the philosophy of mutual respect and the challenge of contributing to the continued success of our organization and the individuals and families we serve. To learn more about employment opportunities, visit livingopps.org/join-our-team.



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Medford, OR 97501
www.livingopps.org

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OPPORTUNITY



works

LIVING OPPORTUNITIES
SPRING 2018 *Newsletter*



from the CEO's DESK

DEAR FRIENDS—Can you feel it? Spring is in the air! Here at Living Opps, we can sense its arrival in the cheerful pastels splashed onto canvas at The Studio, the buzzing energy of potential new employment partnerships, and the sight of people stepping out for sunny strolls after a long winter.

As I reflect on the renewed sense of possibilities that this season brings, I am reminded that the growth we experience each day at Living Opps is made possible by the individuals who have dedicated their time and energy to shaping our organization over the years. In particular, I offer our immense gratitude to Steve Rinkle and Marge Bernard, both of whom recently retired from the

board after many years of valued service and leadership.

In this newsletter, you'll meet Eric, who learned that by challenging himself, he could stand up for others, as well as Sarah, who discovered art as a tool for self-expression at The Studio. It is through the generosity of donors like you that we have these stories to celebrate. I hope you'll join us on May 17th at our Livin' Lovin' Lunchin' fundraising event to make more of these moments possible!

Thanks for your support!

Emilie Wylde Turner

THANK YOU Donors

Without the generous support of friends and donors like you, the stories of hope, resilience, and accomplishment you'll read about today would not be possible. Together with every individual and family who counts on Living Opps' support each day—we thank you. Your kindness echoes through our work into the lives of many.

2018 *Board of Directors*

Brent Kell, **Chair**
Polly Williams, **Vice Chair**
Tim D'Alessandro, **Treasurer**
Brent Pearson, **Secretary**
Sarah Lynch

Laurie Mortenson
Denise Wisnovsky
Emilie Wylde Turner, **CEO**
Jim Norris, **COO**

Gift Planning/Financial Advisors:
Todd Maddox
Doug Schmor
Ryan Suvoy
Greg Yechout

EVENT BOARD *Save the Date*

the studio
AT LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

*Friday, April 27th,
4-7pm*

32 South Central Ave, Medford, OR

"GOOD VIBRATIONS"

Join us for our annual Spring Art Show reception.

The Studio at Living Opportunities presents "Good Vibrations," a collaboration of regional artists and the artists of The Studio.

Enjoy original fine art, refreshments and live music.

LUNCH & LEARN "Friend-raising" Sessions 2nd Tues. of every month

12-1pm | Living Opps
717 Murphy Road, Medford, OR

Next Lunch & Learn:
Tues. April 24th, Tues. May 8th

Join us to see first-hand how our work affects the lives of individuals experiencing disabilities! Meet CEO Emilie Wylde Turner and key members of our management team, enjoy a light lunch compliments of Living Opps, and hear stories of the transformative impact we've made in people's lives. Bring a friend! These tours are for learning and fun—not fundraising.

To secure your spot, please call 541-772-1503 or email kat@livingopps.org.



*Thursday, May 17th,
12-1pm*

Medford Fundraising Luncheon
Inn at the Commons, Medford, OR

Special Guest Speaker Brittany Peterson

You are cordially invited to join us for the 15th annual Medford *Livin' Lovin' Lunchin'* event! Highlights of this memorable afternoon luncheon include the chance to hear from CEO Emilie Wylde Turner and meet people supported by Living Opportunities who share how our support is helping them accomplish their goals.

All proceeds from this informative and entertaining fundraising event directly benefit individuals in our community served by our programs and services.

Please RSVP by Friday May 4th. Call 541-772-1503 or email kat@livingopps.org.

JOBS *that Work for Everyone*

Employees in the Spotlight:

Meet a few of our many successful job seekers who are employed with local businesses



TIM, CITY OF MEDFORD PUBLIC WORKS

If you catch Tim at the Medford Public Works Center, congratulate him on five years of successful employment! A reliable, dedicated employee who always takes pride in his work, Tim provides custodial and landscape services and takes on special,

much-needed maintenance projects. Tim is thrilled to contribute his skills to the City of Medford, and proudly displays the mug he received commemorating his five years of service. "I love everything about my job," says Tim.

Bridging Communities

STRONG START EQUIPS PARENTS AS ADVOCATES

More often than not, parents of children experiencing developmental disabilities face systems which are not responsive to their family's needs. To prepare parents to advocate for change in their local communities and beyond, The Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities launched the Strong Start Parent Leadership Training.

Bridging Communities was one of four family organizations selected to participate in this program, and provided training to eight emerging parent leaders. Through the training, parents developed a positive vision for their child's future, learned how to utilize personal networks and community resources to help their child develop a full life, and gained information to more effectively influence social and policy change so that all people with disabilities have access to a full community life.

We look forward to seeing how these amazing parent leaders put their training to work in our community—not only for their families, but for us all.

For more information, contact Heather Olivier, Director of Bridging Communities at 541-690-8542 or heathero@bcoregon.org.

RJ, WHITE CITY GRANGE CO-OP

RJ recently celebrated his two-year work anniversary with the White City Grange Co-Op, a long-time business partner of Living Opportunities. In his time as a store assistant, RJ has taken on increasing responsibilities, from caring for the baby chicks, to stocking and assisting customers. "RJ is thorough and does a great job," says store lead, Sherry, "We are lucky to have him." RJ's colleagues feel the same way—for Christmas, they pitched in to gift RJ \$100 to fix his bike, which he uses for transportation to work. "We really wanted to show RJ how much we cared," says a teammate, who cites RJ's willingness to help and pitch in where needed as just one of the many things that make him a great person to work with. RJ is thankful for his time spent working with a Living Opps Lead Job Coach, who quickly matched his skills and preferences to this position. "My favorite part of the job is the baby chicks," says RJ.



Hiring? *Let Us Help You Build Your Workforce and Strengthen Your Workplace*

We are currently seeking jobs for motivated individuals with a wide range of skill sets and abilities including stocking, warehouse, retail, and light office work. Please contact Baylee Lavoie, Business Relations Manager, at 541-772-1503 to learn more about hiring one (or more) of our candidates.

Welcome Sarah Lynch

LIVING OPPS' NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

We're thrilled to offer a warm welcome to Sarah Lynch, Living Opps' newest board member! Sarah is the Executive Director of the Rogue Valley Manor, a long-time employment partner of Living Opps. Through many years of connection with our organization and the supported individuals working within the Manor, Sarah developed a passion for our work. "I continue to be in awe of the way the staff and partners of Living Opportunities quietly serve such an important need in the Rogue Valley and beyond," says Sarah. "I jumped at the opportunity to serve on the board. Living Opportunities simply does amazing work in our community." In addition to serving on the Living Opps board, Sarah is also Treasurer for the board of directors for the Britt Music and Arts Festival in Jacksonville, Oregon.

Colorful news from The Studio at Living Opportunities

Crescendo!

Artist in the Spotlight:

SARAH MILRAD, FEARLESS SELF-EXPRESSIONIST

Sarah strolls into The Studio with a big smile on her face, ready to paint, laugh, sing, and dance. She greets her friends, selects her art supplies, and settles in to create. Sarah's unencumbered drawings and paintings are a spontaneous expression of who she is. She works quickly and with singular focus, filling the page with flowing lines and shapes, never giving a thought to how her art might be received. The only thing that pulls her attention from her work is when Studio Director Dan Mish plays her favorite song, "I'm a Believer" by the Monkees, on his guitar. At the strike of the opening chords, Sarah leaps up to dance and sing along, often inspiring other artists to join in. Her infectious laughter rings clearly over the music, lending to the joyful atmosphere that draws artists of all abilities to The Studio.



Act Up!

Beginning May 11th, The Studio will add drama workshops to our art and music program. The class, which will include scene study and improvisation, will take place on Fridays from 2-3pm. Contact The Studio to enroll or find out more!

Come experience the fun and creativity cultivated at The Studio. Visit us at 32 S. Central, Monday through Friday from 12-3:30pm. Want to take part in the magic yourself? Volunteer! Contact Roxanne at 541-261-5289 or Roxanne@livingopps.org.

Above Artwork: "Spring Fling" by Artist Sarah Milrad, Mixed Media, 12" x 18"

WELCOME HOME! *Stories of Supported Living*

Taking the Lead on Disability Rights

At first glance, Eric Thompson appears to be an average guy. He is a well-loved employee of the Rogue Credit Union and South Medford graduate who enjoys distance running, playing the piano, biking, and spending time with his sisters, nieces, and nephews. Yet in other ways, Eric stands out—for his leadership, resilience, and clear vision for a more inclusive world.

When Eric's family first discovered Living Opps in 2006, his parents Kirsten and Kelly were struggling to make sense of their son's life as an adult with an autism diagnosis. Through involvement in Living Opportunities programs, the Thompson family began to feel less alone and better equipped to meet Eric's needs. Eric, always encouraged by his four sisters, never let the word "autism" stop him from setting big goals in life.

"Triumph over difficulty breeds confidence," says Kirsten, "and confidence fosters a desire to tackle new challenges." For Eric, that has meant passing his driving test on the first try, finding a rewarding job through Living Opps' supported employment department, and living independently in his own home with support from family and our Supported Living program.

In 2016, Eric joined the Jackson County Self Advocates group, and was leading it within a year. He then began attending the statewide Oregon Self Advocate Coalition (OSAC), and is now the Secretary of the Board of that organization, speaking up for the rights and inclusion of all individuals and serving as a true embodiment of Living Opportunities' values at work in the community.

Eric shows us that standing up for yourself and others requires willingness to learn and step out of your comfort zone. He is a graduate of Partnership in Policymaking (PIP), a training that taught him how to become a change agent for individuals with developmental disabilities in his community. While speaking up is not always easy, Eric is committed to making a difference. We are so inspired by his leadership and can't wait to see what challenge he tackles next.

For questions please contact Eric at jacoselfadvocates@gmail.com.

