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Our Mission

Our Mission is to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live in the *same* neighborhoods, work for the *same* employers, and share in the *same* experiences to which we all aspire.

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THE LIVING OPPORTUNITIES NEWSLETTER | SPRING 2024



Luis's First Apartment • Nick's On The Job
Our 50th Anniversary Celebration • Spring Art Show



FROM THE DESK OF OUR

ceo

Take a moment to journey back to the 1970s with me. It was a time when the world was a different place, a time before many of us were even a thought in the minds of our parents. Those who were there might recall the distinct sound of a rotary phone's dial and the warm, crackling sound of a needle on a record. In places like the Rogue Valley, life unfolded in its unique rhythm, where the basics of education, a roof over one's head, and a decent job were within reach for most. Yet, let's not forget, this wasn't the reality for everyone. For individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, the story was markedly different. Far too often, their only options were confined to institutional settings or the isolation of living at home, with schools and workplaces far from welcoming.

In the midst of this era, a beacon of hope was lit in May of 1974 with the founding of Living Opportunities, Inc. This organization embarked on a mission to radically change the narrative. It set out to offer comprehensive training and support in both living and working environments, aiming to empower individuals with developmental disabilities to lead independent lives filled with dignity and purpose. It wasn't just about providing care, it was about offering respite for families, navigating the complexities of housing, and advocating for the expansion of services that cater to the unique needs of every individual.

Picture this: families and community advocates, gathered around a kitchen table, fueled by love and a vision for a future that held more promise than the institutionalized care of the past. This vision was about creating a community where their loved ones could *thrive*, not just survive. From opening its first home in 1975 to now supporting over 324 individuals and families, Living Opportunities has been a testament to what can be achieved when a community comes together for the greater good.

The impact of our organization on Oregon and beyond has been profound. From the closure of the Fairview institution, to pioneering a model of supported living, to transforming employment services, and advocating for fair wages, our achievements are a beacon of progress. Living Opportunities has embraced innovation and technology, continually pushing the boundaries of what's possible in the creation of inclusive communities.

As we mark our 50th year, we celebrate not just of the milestone but also the lives impacted and changed. This progress has been made possible by the unwavering support of our community partners, families, and dedicated staff—all united by a shared vision of a more inclusive world.

I invite you to join us in celebrating this journey throughout the year. It's a time to reflect on how far we've come, and to recommit ourselves to the work that lies ahead. Together, let's continue to build a future where every individual is valued, supported, and empowered to live their best life.

~ Amber Robles Myre



50th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

SAVE THE DATE
Friday, August 23, 2024
Rogue X

Join us in celebrating our mission to help people in our community to live, work, learn, create and share in the same experiences to which we all aspire. We hope to see you at this exciting event!



THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Everyone who knows Luis has seen how excited he has been at the prospect of moving into his first apartment. Well, we're pleased to announce that as of this April, Luis is officially the newest resident of Lithia Place!

A friendly guy who loves to socialize, Luis is not shy in proclaiming his excitement to friends and coworkers. "I'm so happy! I love it!" he announces with a kicking leap, arms in the air. With such authentic gratitude, it's hard not to share in his enthusiasm. Previously, Luis had lived in foster homes and with family, and this is the first time he's lived on his own.

There are so many benefits to his new living situation. The stability, security, and independence combined with person-centered support, opens life up to so many options. "I'm closer to my job and walking distance from my girlfriend's job," says Luis. "We get to have lunch together! And I love to preserve my catches from hunting trips and cook meals in my kitchen. I just made meatball sandwiches from wild deer!" Luis remains connected to his community. "I'm right by the bus stop. I like that I can visit people and have friends over and movie nights whenever I want. I like that the staff has activities for things we can all do together."

Sara Davis, Director of Supported Living, believes Luis will be a great addition to the culture and community of Lithia Place. "Luis is cheerful, kind, and doesn't take things for granted. He's excited about new friendships, and his positivity is contagious." It truly is. Luis remains optimistic even when experiencing challenges and change. Positivity helps us get to the other side. So it's no wonder that moving into Lithia Place is so important to Luis. It is an honor to share in his joy and be reminded of all the opportunities to practice gratitude!



the studio
AT LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

SAVE THE DATES

Spring Art Show, Thursday, May 3, 11:00am -7:00pm
ROGUE VALLEY MALL LOWER LEVEL ENTRANCE #3

Join us for "A Day in the Sun" and brighten your home with affordable fine art, T-shirts, calendars, and more. Refreshments served.

furnARTure, Sunday, October 6, 2:00-5:00pm
ROGUE VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB

An auction for fine artwork, furniture, and other creative items. All proceeds support The Studio, a lively hub of creativity and connection for people who experience disability to enjoy and participate in the arts.

NICK IS ON THE JOB

Do you remember your first job? The excitement, the nerves, and all the opportunities for growth along the way? These feelings are fresh for Nick, a local young man who recently started his first job as a Dining Services Aid at Pioneer Village Independent and Assisted Living. A quiet guy with a great sense of humor and a contagious smile, Nick lives with his family in South Medford where he enjoys being physically active, practicing his faith, and caring for his pets.

Starting out, Nick was shy and unsure. When approached, he would hide his face behind his Job Coach, Tawnia. Over time, Nick settled into the community, smiling and waving to everyone and creating a secret handshake with the chef. He learned his job quickly, developing a routine and taking ownership of his duties in a way that impressed Beondi, the Executive Director of Pioneer Village. "We are pleased with our partnership with Living Opportunities. It has been a huge success for everyone involved." She encourages more employers to participate in Supported Employment. "Nick is a valued piece of our puzzle. Living Opportunities has helped everything go smoothly, supporting both Nick and us as employers."

As the weeks went by, Beondi watched Nick become genuinely talented in his job. "Nick does exactly what he is asked to do. He arrives on time, hangs his coat, gives me a big smile and a nod, then heads out to complete his duties to perfection. Our leadership is thrilled. The community at Pioneer Village is proud to have Nick on the team."

You can tell Nick is proud of himself. Tawnia is proud of him, too. For her, it's yet another rewarding part of being a Job Coach. "I enjoy supporting Nick so he feels like he has a place where he belongs." And isn't that what we're all looking for in a job? A place that feels like a community? With a mission of creating and sustaining caring environments, Pioneer Village works hard to provide just such a place. In recognition of his hard work and dedication, Nick has been named "Employee of the Month". Congratulations to Nick on his achievements!

