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living
opportunities

PO Box 1105, Medford, OR 97501

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.

CONTACT US

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www.LivingOpps.org



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thrive

THE LIVING OPPORTUNITIES NEWSLETTER | FALL 2023



FROM THE DESK OF OUR

ceo

Dear friends,

What kind of exciting things filled your spring and summer? Here at Living Opportunities there are too many to list, but this newsletter touches on the highlights.

During the most recent Legislative Session in Salem, our policy team collaborated with other organizations to improve services for individuals and families by advocating for fully-funded Case Management, higher wages for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), and support for regional Family Networks. Over 25 staff and self advocates submitted testimony, traveled to Ways and Means "Road Shows," and visited the Oregon Capital. I'm happy to report we had some small wins, and that the fight to see our work valued continues (despite the chaos in the Legislature). A big THANK YOU to all of you who contributed to this important policy and advocacy work.

This was also an active summer of community outreach. Living Opps and Bridging Communities attended job fairs, community resource events, and other local celebrations such as Open Streets Medford, Careers in Gear, Pear Blossom, Medford Pride, Juneteenth, and more. We continued to provide outreach and education with community partners like Healthier Together Oregon, Rogue Community Health, Jefferson Exchange, Ashland Living Magazine, SOREDI, City of Ashland, United Way, Autism Society of Oregon, The Arc Jackson County, Providence Swindells and others. If you are interested in how you could partner with us please reach out.

Did you know this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), which paved the way for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990? These laws provide vital protections and support for people and workers with disabilities. Visit our Facebook and Instagram pages for a peak into the successful employment partnerships posted in October to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month #NDEAM.

Lastly, this year's annual report will arrive via email. Be sure to scan this QR code to sign up so you don't miss out!

Thanks for all you do,

~Amber Robles Myre



Let's CELEBRATE!

Valley Immediate Care

Congratulations to Valley Immediate Care for receiving the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) outstanding employer award! This award recognizes an Oregon employer for outstanding achievements in advancing Employment First by promoting a culture of Disability, Equity, and Inclusion within their business. Living Opportunities has partnered closely with Valley Immediate Care for almost two decades and is proud to congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition.

Employee Appreciation

Living Opportunities is made up of an incredible team of caring, hardworking people. Our mission is achieved by our staff, who consistently go above and beyond to support the people we serve. The 2023 Works of Heart Award recognizes excellence in the field of disability services across Oregon. This prestigious accolade is presented by Oregon Resource Association (ORA) at the Northwest Conference on Disability Services. We are delighted to announce that one of our very own managers, Tamra Weston, has been selected as this year's recipient. Please join us in congratulating Tamra!

And while we're celebrating, let's also applaud our Employees of the Year from each department:

Manager: Tamra Weston "She has this ability to teach, train and speak to people that makes them feel empowered."

Assistant Manager: Bryan Dollarhide "He's always ready to lend a helping hand and sets the standard for everyone else."

Residential: Alexis Sitzler "She exemplifies our mission and values. Alexis takes the time to get to know each individual."

Supported Living: Brooklyn Atkinson "She always prioritizes the needs of the people supported, never letting details slip through the cracks."

Employment: Shani Maynard "She brings respect, kindness, and compassion to her peers, our business partners, and everyone she encounters."

LOPPS Crews: Robert Farmer "Someone who respects his coworkers and always gives 100% in order to do quality work."

Administration: Ron Lyman "A superstar collaborator and a dedicated advocate. A beacon of what Living Opportunities strives to be."

the studio
AT LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

The Studio at Living Opportunities has achieved Silver in the Art Gallery Category at the 2023 Best of Southern Oregon survey! This contest highlights the finest businesses, locations, items, and services in Medford, Oregon. We are immensely grateful to our supporters and the wider community for nominating, voting, and continually backing the art and culture fostered at The Studio. We take pride in our outstanding Studio Director, Dan Mish, his assistant Hannah Washington, as well as the many artists and volunteers who contribute to this vibrant hub of creativity and connection.

Join us at The Studio in the Rogue Valley Mall at Entrance 3. Get involved by visiting www.LivingOpps.org and explore the CREATE tab under SERVICES for information on daily art workshops, volunteering, gallery tours, and more.



KATHY'S FIRST TATTOO:
"SHE'S A GOTHIC EMO
GODDESS WITH A HEART
OF GOLD!"



RANDY'S GOT HIS
CAKE AND HE'S
EATING IT, TOO!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO RANDY, who recently celebrated his 50th surrounded by friends from his years at Living Opportunities. In 1987, Randy came to a Living Opps home as a teenager with unique medical challenges that required 24/7 support. Doctors once predicted Randy wouldn't live past age 20. Three decades later, Randy's resilience—and the quality of care he's received—have defied those odds. Although Randy does not use verbal language to

communicate, it's clear he's made lots of friends and impacted many souls. The party was a blast, with chocolate cake, community, storytelling, and a photo-booth to create even more cherished memories together!

ACCESS Food Drive

ACCESS, a crucial support system in our county since 1976, has provided local households with much-needed assistance with food, warmth, and shelter. Living Opportunities values our enduring partnership with ACCESS. Cindy Delashmutt, a Manager in our Employment Program, recently spearheaded a successful food drive, generating engagement with the whole Living Opps community, from staff to those we support. Within a week there was a blue donation barrel at our Administrative office which collected 196 pounds of food for local families experiencing hardship.



National Disability Employment Awareness Month #NDEAM

This is Zach Dillon. He works at the Jackson County Sheriff's Office. Zach loves his job not only because he is a paid employee but also because he truly enjoys the people he works with.

Did you know people with disabilities face unemployment rates more than double that of neurotypical job seekers? Living Opportunities works to help people with disabilities find and maintain work within community businesses. If

you or someone you know is a business owner and is interested in the free services of our Employment Program, please contact Director of Employment Services Tara Mardoll at (541) 690-5290.

Living their BEST life!

IF YOU ASK HER DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL (DSP), KATHY, 68, has long been a "Gothic Emo Goddess with a Heart of Gold". She had always wanted tattoos but was discouraged by the assumption that it would be too painful. However, when she finally went to the Blu Steel tattoo parlor, she surprised everyone with her high pain tolerance, even falling asleep during the 2.5-hour session for a beautiful skull with flowers. When it was all over, Kathy was overflowing with gratitude for the tattoo artist, Amber Fogel. Kathy is already excited for her next tattoo. She's thinking of getting Dobby the Elf, from the Harry Potter series.



ORIGINAL ART BY CYNTHIA FLOWERS



TAKE PART IN A GLOBAL DAY OF GIVING

SAVE THE DATES

BLACK FRIDAY AT THE STUDIO, NOV. 24, 10am-4pm

What's better than a great deal? Supporting a local artist! Stop by The Studio on Black Friday to shop for the perfect new piece of art for your home or office.

NATIONAL DAY OF GIVING TUESDAY, NOV. 28 ~ ALL DAY!

Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement that unleashes the power of people to transform their communities and the world. You can make a difference in 2023 by donating to our mission at: LivingOpps.org/donate

HOLIDAY ART SHOW AT THE STUDIO, DEC. 7, 11am-7pm

'Tis the season to brighten your home or the heart of a loved one with a gift from our award-winning art gallery at The Studio!