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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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# thrive

THE LIVING OPPORTUNITIES NEWSLETTER | FALL 2024



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FROM THE DESK OF OUR

# ceo

Dear Friends,

As the leaves turn and we embrace the fall season, I'm reminded of the importance of reflection, resilience, and community. This year marks a truly special milestone for us—our 50th anniversary. Reaching this half-century mark has been a journey shaped by commitment, passion, and unwavering dedication to our mission. I am profoundly grateful for each of you who has supported us along the way.

Over these past five decades, we've witnessed remarkable transformations, faced challenges, and celebrated countless successes. What began as a small, family-led, grassroots organization has grown into a whole community that empowers individuals and breaks down barriers, one step at a time. Every person supported, every service, and every interaction has been a testament to our shared vision.

This year, Living Opportunities continued initiatives that strengthen our programs and services. We are advancing our equity work, which deepens our commitment to inclusivity. We are increasing our capacity to serve by ensuring safe, affordable, and accessible housing options for those we support. Our recent grant awards from the Fairview Trust and Healthy Homes will amplify our efforts to expand and enhance housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. These grants are one more example of our dedication to meeting evolving needs with the highest standards.

As we celebrate our past, we're equally excited about the future, especially with the opening of our new headquarters building. Starting in the new year, this space will not only be our central hub but also a vibrant gathering place that enhances our ability to serve, innovate, and grow. This move represents a new chapter, one where we can expand our reach and deepen our impact within the community.

Thank you for being an essential part of our story. Together, let's continue to make a difference, supporting each other and those we serve. Here's to another chapter filled with hope, opportunity, and the power of community.

Warmly,

~ Amber Myre



# DAVID BLOSSOMING

For many years, David's only experiences outside his home were traveling in a car for basic needs to specific locations. David has often been full of anxiety and depression, causing him to avoid recreation, socializing, and even quality time with his family. David's staff would work to minimize his discomfort, which sometimes resulted in even more isolation.

This year, David and his team tried a different approach. They decided to do something risky—to be vulnerable and authentic about David's limits, but to also gently push him to bloom beyond them.

David is a silly, funny guy who is very loving, but being around people could make him incredibly nervous. David's trusted staff began taking him on forest walks, at first avoiding trails with high-traffic. They would encourage him to get his exercise, holding his hand when other people walked by. Eventually his staff started modeling greetings, helping David warm up to the idea of fellow-hikers.

Today, with a hearty "Hello, have a good day!" David now looks forward to being out on the trails, laughing with strangers and sharing their joy of being in nature.

Community interactions are vital for everyone's mental health, and they only happen when we get out there. David recently began walking and riding his bike through his neighborhood and now he's shopping, eating out, and going to the movies. David even bumped into an estranged cousin at Market of Choice, and now they stay connected through social media and regular visits.

In July, David was able to return to his hometown and begin visiting with his mother in-person. He's expressing his trust and sense of safety to others for the first time in years. "It's great to see David open up and show how much he cares," says Jean, a Program Manager. "He's making major progress!"

It's clear David's staff truly cares about him, and they make an effort to let him know every day. This consistency has really helped David find mental and spiritual stability. They use honest humor to connect and maintain trust. It's crucial to be authentic and upfront with David. Once you build a rapport with him, he has so much love to offer. "Yesterday, David got his face dirty in the backyard," says Jean, "so I washed off the dirt with a warm rag. David, gently, offered to wash my face in return. It was so sweet."

David also found friendship with his upstairs neighbor. They play catch over the balcony fence, and stay connected with check-ins and kind sentiments. One day, Jean overheard David shout, "Good Morning! I love you!" Allison replied, "I hold you in my heart as well!" And David followed up with, "Will you still love me tomorrow?" This exchange reveals a fundamental truth about the human experience—our sincere desire for meaningful connections exists alongside our fear of rejection. As we develop trust in ourselves, and connection with community, we discover how resilient we really are.

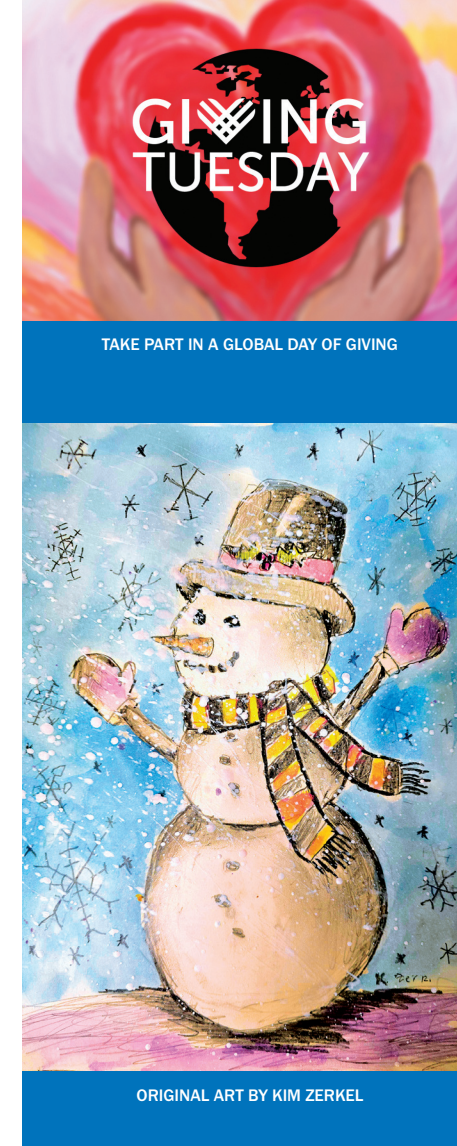


## CINDY'S WORKS OF HEART



Cindy DeLashmutt has a kind heart. She brings her infectious smile and a passion for service to every interaction. Recently, Cindy was chosen as a recipient of the Works of the Heart award, presented by the Oregon Resource Association to honor those making a difference in the disability community.

Since joining Living Opportunities eight years ago, Cindy has fallen in love with her work in Supported Employment. She sincerely enjoys meeting new people, learning about local businesses, and being of service to the community. Enthusiasm comes naturally for Cindy and it shows in the level of person-centered care she provides.



## 50 FOR 50

### 2024 GIVING CAMPAIGN

Join us in commemorating our 50th anniversary by making a difference. For just \$50, \$500, or \$5000 you can be a part of our legacy and empower individuals who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities in our community. [LivingOpps.org/donate](https://LivingOpps.org/donate)

### SAVE THE DATES

#### NATIONAL DAY OF GIVING TUESDAY, DEC. 3 ~ ALL DAY!

Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement that unleashes the power of people to transform their communities. You can make a difference by donating at: [LivingOpps.org/donate](https://LivingOpps.org/donate)

the studio  
AT LIVING OPPORTUNITIES

#### HOLIDAY ART SHOW AT THE STUDIO LOCATED IN THE ROGUE VALLEY MALL THURSDAY, DEC. 5 ~ 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!

In her leadership role at Living Opportunities, Cindy has taken charge of our Day Support Activities (DSA) and Career Exploration (PATH) programs. Often, Cindy can be found in the office early, studying for new certifications, working on files, or simply getting to know people better. "If you give me a challenge," says Cindy, "I will seriously try my best to overcome it."

The length Cindy goes to learn what's important for the people she supports, and the staff she supervises, is impressive. "I know first-hand how work is about more than money, and how important it is to be connected to the community," she says. "I entered Supported Employment through the lens of DSA and PATH. It's great watching people make friends and have fun exploring the Rogue Valley. People thrive in all aspects of life when they get their social and recreational needs met."

In PATH, Cindy helps people enter the workforce through volunteering and skill-building. "We all have trials and errors as we learn from our mistakes and grow from them. It's awesome to see a person have the empowering experience of giving back to the community, some for the first time. We all aspire to be of service to others."

Cindy really cares about making sure our programs are the best they can be. She recently added Benefit Counselor to her lengthy list of accomplishments. It was an obvious next step for someone with such a huge heart, seeing a need and stepping up with a smile. Cindy is passionate about ensuring that people receive the support they need, and minimizing gaps in their care. With her new knowledge, along with her huge smile and kind heart, Cindy is even more equipped to help her community thrive. Thank you, Cindy DeLashmutt, for everything you do to make Living Opportunities the wonderful organization that it is!