

Psst!

PossAbilities Newsletter • Summer 2013

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our new E.D.

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Snapshots of Success: *WHO IS DOING WHAT, WHERE and WHEN*

"You Got It, Dude!"



**Lisa and her
manager, Nancy**

If you knew **Lisa Brenna** personally, you would know she has a passion for people and a rare dedication to her work. With the support and assistance of her job coach, Lisa was hired in April at Rochester Scrapbooking Company – a perfect fit for Lisa's expertise in custodial work, her love of crafts, and friendly, sociable personality.

A goal of our Discovery program is to find an ideal job for clients that match their passion, skills, and interests. Together Maggie Waterman, PossAbilities employment consultant, and Lisa identified her unique talents and developed a career exploration approach. They visited several different crafty venues before their final informational meeting at Rochester Scrapbook Co. Lisa had previously met the owner through other PossAbilities programs, so the owner knew her love of crafts and dedicated work effort. Lisa always arrives at work with a positive attitude and smile. Her most common phrase when asked to complete something is "You Got it Dude!"

PossAbilities' career development and job placement services strive to match skills of its participants with employers' needs. Having a job and earning a paycheck builds self-confidence, respect, and esteem for our participants, giving them the opportunity to be contributing citizens to the community.

Sibling Sisters Swim Away the Summer!

Ashley loves to swim – especially with her sister **Katelyn**. You'll find these aqua divas practicing this summer at either the Soldiers Field or Rochester Family YMCA pools. Ashley, who has been diagnosed with autism, is also taking regular swim lessons at the Y with her able-bodied sister through our summer Youth Rec program.

This is Ashley's second summer in the Youth Rec program. The twins' Mom Tanya Benschofer has seen her aquatic skills improve with the encouragement of both Katelyn and the Youth Rec staff member. Her mom is grateful that both can take lessons at the same time and place – it saves one less trip in an already busy schedule. The biggest benefit of attending lessons together is the opportunity for the sisters to have the same experiences that any twins would have – the fun and excitement of learning to swim together!

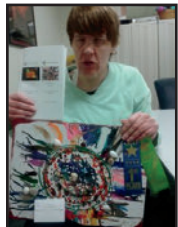
As a parent, she loves that Youth Rec offers this program for siblings in which one has a disability. They can participate in a variety of activities together while building self confidence, awareness – and have a blast with your sister!



**Swimming Sisters
Katelyn and Ashley**

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*Every financial gift helps us support hundreds of individuals with disabilities in our community. We appreciate and value your contribution. **Thank You!***

The Arts Scene is Alive and Well at Senior Services!



Patty and her winning artwork!

Creativity and artistry talent abound in our Senior Services program. This past year, participant **Patty Connelly** earned first place honors in the multimedia category at the Art and Ability Exhibit hosted by Mayo's Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. Congratulations Patty!

For her winning entry, Patty used a hairdryer to melt crayons into the design and embellished it with rocks and feathers. She is blind, so art is important because she can feel the process with her remaining senses. Working with different art mediums gives her a real sense of pride and confidence – even if she can't see her work. She has already completed her entry for the 2013 upcoming event.

Exceeding Expectations To Finish the Job!

Energy, enthusiasm and spunk – those three words describe **Kelly Vannadee**, a participant in our Employment Services program who has the drive and dedication to do her job right. Here's a story that demonstrates this. Recently, our in-center employment services team was asked to process a 4,000 piece postcard mailing. The initial effort was refused by the post office and had to be recounted. The first challenge was finding a crew member who was willing to tackle this project. Kelly stepped up and was asked to count the first tray of 1,300 postcards. Not only did she finish this – she accurately counted the entire 4,000 in 30 minutes. Kudos to Kelly for stepping up to this challenge! She demonstrated that individuals with disabilities can exceed expectations with minimal help!

Life Enrichment Hosts Western Dance Bash

It was time to dig out the cowboy boots, hats, and plaid shirts for the Western Dance Bash hosted by PossAbilities Life Enrichment participants. Guests two-stepped and lined danced to country western pop, rock and ballads, and chowed down on cowboy grub at the "chuck wagon" table.

Nate McWilliams, a three year participant with PossAbilities, caught the western spirit. With the help of supportive staff, his self-confidence and awareness has grown to give him the skills necessary to develop relationships with his peers. At next year's event, Nate will be ready to "party down" again with his friends.



Nate taking a break at the Western Dance Bash!

Employment Services participants enjoy an outdoor adventure!

Birds, snakes, fish and a T-Rex were attractions of the day for an adventurous group of PossAbilities participants. They became urban explorers and discovered the wonders of nature at Quarry Hill Nature Center.

Their afternoon included a stop at the environmental center, where they could touch and feel the skin, feathers and fur of live and displayed animals. Some were a little squeamish at first (aren't we all at times?) The fish aquarium was a highlight as they watched aquatic species gracefully dart through the water. They stretched their necks to gaze up at the life-size T-Rex, in awe of its size and stature.

The explorers then took a hike, checking out the plants, grassland and rocks. This adventure offered them an opportunity to learn more about the outdoors and experience a new and different environment while building their self-confidence and relationship skills with peers.

Introducing Eileen Wallace, our new E.D.



Hi, I'm Eileen Wallace, the new executive director of PossAbilities. It has been an exciting adventure since the middle of March when I was hired and I have delighted in meeting many consumers, community partners, volunteers, and staff. Luckily, I've been able to be part of Wine and Roses and the Ice Cream Social. Both events that have brought me great joy-from consumers volunteering to help with games at the Ice Cream Social to selling tickets for the car raffle (have you SEEN the beautiful ruby red 2014 Mustang. It's GREAT! And it's a 50th anniversary commemorative model to go along with PossAbilities celebrating its 50 years of support and service to persons with disabilities. It could be yours for the mere purchase of a raffle ticket- but I digress).

There are always challenges in human services work. But there are always situations we can influence and control- and greater community and donor participation is one of those. Over the next year we will be engaging the community at a greater level to understand the needs of our consumers, their families, and support networks. We'll then develop a shared vision for the future that we all can support and work toward.

We have a group of committed, supportive parents and guardians, volunteers who love and care about PossAbilities and the work we do. We also need to make space for newcomers, new ideas and new relationships. I'm counting on all of you to spread the word. And I need to hear from you for new ideas, to keep me honest and to assure that we never lose sight of our mission to create opportunities for children and adults to contribute to and to connect with the community. Thank you for your support and please get in touch.

Eileen Wallace

Eileen

An Elegant Evening of Wine and Roses

Over 200 guests enjoyed an elegant evening of fine wine, friendship and conversation at our annual 2013 Wine and Roses event. The weather was perfect, the ambiance charming, the food terrific, and the bidding went sky high. The April 26th event at Somerby Golf Course netted over \$55,000 to support PossAbilities' programs for individuals with disabilities.

The action-packed live auction was led by Rod Johnson, the voice of the Minnesota Timberwolves and professional auctioneer. Packages included a week at a beach-side cottage in Massachusetts, a weekend at a northern Minnesota hide-a-way, seven days at a Cabo condo, an Italian feast hosted by Gail and Allen Bishop, and a wine-paired dinner donated by Sontés.

Speakers Roxanne Hellickson and Peggy O'Toole Martin each described a personal, close relationship with a loved one who had a disability. They shared the joys, challenges, and cherished events that strengthened the bonds between them. The audience responded generously, giving over \$17,000 to the 2013 special appeal, the largest in its history.

A great team of volunteers worked many hours to make this event successful. They include Betsy Singer, Micaela Flannery, Malea Schroeder, Ginger Smith, Audrey Caseltine, Ronice Donovan, Connie Brophy and Mandy Anderson.

Thank you to our generous sponsors, including Think Bank, Olmsted Medical Center, Associated Bank, Altra Credit Union, C.O. Brown Benefits LLC, Gail and Allen Bishop, Cardinal of Minnesota, Dunlap and Seeger P.A., and Matik Management.



Guests had an opportunity to bid on over 50 decorated baskets.

PossAbilities

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Save These Dates!

Friday August 23

2013 Car Raffle Drawing
Strikers Corner, Stewartville

Wednesday October 2

Employment Awards Banquet
Rochester Event Center

Sunday October 20

PossAbilities 50th anniversary celebration
Rochester Event Center

*For more information, please call 507-281-6116
or visit our website. Raffle tickets (\$20) can be
purchased until August 23.*



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Serving children and adults with disabilities

*PossAbilities creates opportunities for
children and adults with disabilities to contribute
to and connect with the community.*

LIVE UNITED