

# PEOPLE & PLACES

## Variety of programs win first MOHR awards

The Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR) has honored several groups with its inaugural MOHR Life Enrichment Awards. The awards cover a wide range of activities for people with disabilities. Fifteen organizations were chosen through a competitive process.

“Having a good life involves connecting with the people around us and being involved in our community and activities outside of work,” said Mike Burke, MOHR president. “Nonprofit service providers are innovators when it comes to enriching the lives of the individuals with disabilities and they deserve more credit for their work.”

Awards are being given across the state at program sites.



AccessAbility

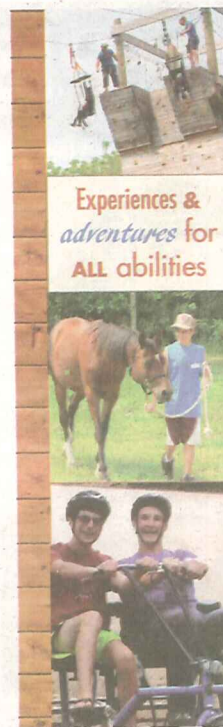
**AWARDS** To page 10



Rise, Inc.



WCI and Chippewa Enterprises



Experiences & adventures for ALL abilities



**TRUE FRIENDS**

Camps. Respite. Programs. Travel.

- SUMMER, DAY & WINTER CAMP
- TRUE STRIDES THERAPY HORSES
  - TEAM QUEST

CAMP COURAGE  
Maple Lake

CAMP FRIENDSHIP  
Annandale

CAMP EDEN WOOD  
Eden Prairie

CAMP COURAGE NORTH  
Lake George

952.852.0101 | truefriends.org

### Providing Services for People with Disabilities:

- ADA Information
- Advocacy
- Case Management
- Disability Linkage Line
- Housing Needs
- Indep. Living/Vocational Rehab
- Nursing Home Relocation
- Peer Mentoring
- Personal Care Assistance
- Ramp Project
- Technology
- Transition Services



Visit [www.mcil-mn.org](http://www.mcil-mn.org) or call 651-646-8342 TODAY to find out all we have to offer!

Metropolitan Center for Independent Living





## AWARDS From Page 9

Burke said it's important for service providers to honor the choices of people with disabilities, who often want to participate in meaningful activities and community routines along with their friends. Day programs help navigate community interactions for individuals and give them more options that they otherwise wouldn't have. "It's part of creating a holistic life pattern and having people become a part of many things outside of work."

Minneapolis-based AccessAbility Evening Stars provides after-hours social opportunities for individuals with disabilities to enrich their lives. Highly accommodating, safe and inclusive, its dinner and movie nights, dances and games are growing more popular. Participation reached 975 people in 2017, a 20 percent increase over the previous year. Evening Stars registered 12 bocce ball athletes to compete as individuals and three unified doubles teams for Special Olympics competitions.

Chippewa Enterprises' Worksite Wellness and Community Garden partnership in Montevideo began in 2016. Tapping the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, it is increasing healthy eating and healthy lifestyles for its staff and the individuals served. Raised planting beds were built and Montevideo High School got involved. The group faced many challenges, and learned about the best plants to grow together, germination, weather, construction and basic garden needs.

For three years suburban Minneapolis CHOICE has utilized its innovative health and wellness program, SHAPE, to benefit the people it serves. Fitness and exercise, strength and balance, yoga, meditation, sensory integration and nutrition are offered to program participants. CHOICE staff recognized the many barriers to healthy lifestyles that people with disabilities encounter, including costs, supervision and support, lack of control over eating choices, and need for adaptive equipment.

In the rural community of Hoffman, Grant County DAC in 2015 created a tremendous community outreach and work vehicle centered on produce. DAC's own greenhouse gives individuals with disabilities a source of pride, purpose and excitement to see plants grow from tiny seeds into healthy food and floral products. Participants are paid for their work and are also able to meet and interact with greenhouse customers.

Merrick's Ambassadors for Respect and Anti-Bullying Handbook began as an anti-bullying training for fourth-graders in 2013. It has grown to 89 presentations to 2,403 students and 138 teachers in 12 elementary schools and a statewide training handbook. The partnership with the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities teaches students about accepting differences and people first language. Participants share their own stories about being bullied, and lead interactive activities to promote acceptance.

Mankato-based MRCI provides performing arts opportunities for people with disabilities as part of a partnership with The Arc Southwest. The Innovators theater group involves individuals with disabilities, who choose a play

and their roles. The cast rehearses with assistance from an MRCI volunteer. Participants discover previously untapped talents, learn teamwork and how to take direction while gaining confidence to perform in front of others.

Midwest Special Services is a founding partner in the Show Gallery Lowertown, a nonprofit art space in St. Paul. MSS coordinates an annual exhibition, CoLab. The event highlights the work of artists with disabilities who are paired with professional artists. Art takes on many forms, from visual arts to poetry, photography, videography and flamenco dance. CoLab grew from 12 artist-pairs in 2015, to 15 in 2016 and 22 in 2017.

Creating a forum for people with disabilities to stand up for themselves and to be heard, Twin Cities-based Opportunity Partners started the Committee of Advocacy & Leadership (COAL) in 2011. The purpose is to "ignite" in everyone the power of advocacy. COAL involves more than 50 members with disabilities across several Opportunity Partners campuses and programs. The program is led by participants.

Twin Cities-based Partnership Resources Inc. offers the PARTnerships visual arts program. Individuals with disabilities trained with professional artists to produce prints, calendars and cards. Card sales peaked at more than 100,000, with more than \$250,000 in sales. Studio arts classes feature professional teaching artists. The program provides experiences for people with disabilities in the visual arts, music therapy, glass-making, clay and ceramics, the performing arts and more.

Polk County DAC in Crookston created a multi-sensory environment within its facility to relax or stimulate its participants based on a "sensory diet." The space helps people to increase their attention span, keep their heads up and smile, sleep longer, eat faster and improve their muscle tone. People who have used the sensory room have enjoyed many benefits ranging from improved functionality to less agitation.

Rochester-based PossAbilities created Striving Toward Achievement, Recognizing Strengths (STARS). This led to more than 250 hours of volunteer service. Increased time in the community has opened people up to new experiences and adventures, and improved their communication and social skills. Participants made meals, shoveled out hydrants, rang bells for the Salvation Army, caroled around town and handed out goodie bags to kids at a medical center.

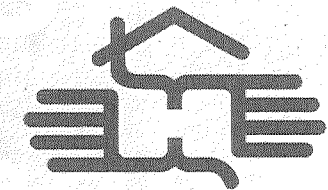
Participants at Rise tell stories and express their vision through works of art, in Art Speaks. More than 200 individuals take classes at the Hennepin and Anoka County Rise locations. Art can be abstract, as participants use microfiber dusters, rolling pins, yarn and foam pieces. The creations are on display at more than a handful of public venues, including government buildings, coffee houses and corporate offices.

Udac grows produce for donation for a Duluth food shelf in Duluth. People with disabilities helped build garden beds and created wheelchair access. They planted and tended vegetables and reaped the harvest. Gardening experts taught best practices. Healthy eating and the importance

of supporting area farmers were discussed. Partner Essential Health is exploring options for oncology patients to utilize the space for fresh air and meditation.

WACOSA, near St. Cloud, has a goal of providing experiences that help people with disabilities to discover the full measure of what makes life fulfilling and beautiful. Learning from an art therapist, multiple artists and other professionals, WACOSA participants gain knowledge and experience in a number of art mediums, including painting, drawing, ceramics, photography and music. Art shows to display and sell works are held.

West Central Industries in Willmar built a studio for artistic expression. Participants can learn the fundamentals of percussion, acoustic and bass guitar, ukulele, piano and vocal performance. Or they can choose to create artwork. A 16-member choir trained for months and has performed several times. Long-term care facilities and a hospital have become favorite venues. The program has had the added effect of opening up new volunteer opportunities. ■



**HANDI**  
HOME LIVING

- Remodeling for accessibility
- Ramps
- Roll-in showers

**Happy at home, safe at home**

**651-644-9770**

Evaluator is licensed Assistive  
Technology Professional  
& Certified Aging in Place Specialist  
Waiver accepted  
MN Contractor License #BC708388  
[handihomeliving.com](http://handihomeliving.com)