



Mar 20

2014

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Opportunities, Inc. shows appreciation

JEFFERSON — Expanding employment opportunities for people with barriers has been Opportunities, Inc.'s mission for more than four decades and it is accomplished successfully through strong partnerships with the local business community and the state's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Each year, more people are waking up with a purpose — expanding their work skills and experiencing life to its fullest potential because of the collaborative efforts of local employers.

Opportunities, Inc. considers it a great honor when it can recognize the special leaders and organizations that join in its mission with the prestigious Employer Appreciation Award, and Opportunities did that recently.

Area businesses that have received the Opportunities, Inc. Employer Appreciation Award include St. Vincent de Paul, Fort Atkinson; Humphrey Floral, Fort Atkinson; Sentry, Whitewater; Glenn's Market and Catering, Watertown; London Lodge, Cambridge; Bruno Independent Living Aids, Oconomowoc; St. Vincent de Paul, Oconomowoc, and Goodwill Southeastern Wisconsin Retail Store, Oconomowoc.

For more than five years, St. Vincent de Paul in Fort Atkinson has always welcomed participants to come and learn hands-on work skills by offering six-week work experiences at the resale shop. Of the numerous individuals who have trained at St. Vincent de Paul most have gone on and found employment at an area business with their newly acquired skills.

Tim Humphrey, owner of Humphrey Floral and Gift, has been providing valuable work experiences and job shadows for those with little to no previous employment, along with those wanting to learn new work skills. Humphrey is always receptive to giving individuals a chance to expand their skills for future employment.

"The partnership is very amiable and is a win-win situation for us both. It also forces me to take time to reinforce our policies and sharpen up my act," Humphrey said.

Dennis Riley, Sentry manager in Whitewater, has been supporting Opportunities, Inc. for more than five years by providing six-week work experiences. Participants gained valuable work skills from learning the deli to stocking the shelves to customer service. Riley's commitment over the years has been truly remarkable.

For the past 10 years, Jeff and Glenn Roberts of Glenn's Market have offered numerous individuals valuable work read- ing skills. Recently, a youth was hired after successfully completing his work experience



Pictured from left are Glenn Roberts, Jeff Roberts and Zach Lischka of Glenn's Market, and Mary Schlosser, transition specialist with Opportunities, Inc.

training. The staff took note of his hard work and great customer service, and they wanted him to stay with the market. Glenn's Market hired on other participants and continues to share a strong partnership with Opportunities, Inc.

London Lodge owner, Meg Pennywell, stated, "Opportunities, Inc. supports not only employees, but also employers to make sure the fit is successful. It ultimately benefits the community."

For the past two years, Pennywell provided two work experiences, with both ending in permanent employment. Her support and dedication is appreciated to Opportunities, Inc. in developing community employment options.

Bruno Independent Living Aids, located in Oconomowoc, has partnered with Opportunities, Inc. in supplying frequent welding job shadows over the past five years. This year alone, the partnership has led to eight successful plant tours and job shadows for transitioning high school students and other individuals interested in learning more about the field of welding. Together, they have sparked the interest in expanding employment options to local youths.

St. Vincent de Paul in Oconomowoc has been more than willing to open its doors for people with disabilities and other life barriers participating in Opportunities, Inc.'s Community Employment Program. For more than five years, St. Vincent de Paul has given numerous individuals of all ages with disabilities an opportunity to gain hands-on work skills. Location general manager Ron Furno and manager Nancy Karl instill a sense of pride and accomplishment in their employees, along with being very supportive.



Pictured from left are Meg Pennywell, owner of London Lodge, and Linda Harrison, employment training specialist with Opportunities, Inc.



Pictured from left are Kelli Hegstrom, employment training specialist with Opportunities, Inc., and Dennis Riley, manager of Sentry in Whitewater.

experiences through its Community Employment Program. Since opening its retail outlet in 2011, over a dozen work ex-

periences and four permanent placements have been provided. Location manager Nate Welke and his staff train par-



Pictured from left are Ron Furno, manager of St. Vincent de Paul in Oconomowoc, and Justin Hockwalt, vocational trainer with Opportunities, Inc.



Pictured from left are David Nawrocki, of Goodwill Southeastern Wisconsin, and Nicole Buss, program participant.



Pictured from left are Linda Harrison, employment training specialist with Opportunities, Inc., and Tim Humphrey, owner of Humphrey Floral and Gift.

grams. This can only be realized through the exemplary business partnerships established every day. It is a community changing mission, one job at a time.

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