



SUMMER 2024

The Achiever

ACHIEVE SERVICES' NEWSLETTER

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The Achiever is published by Achieve Services, a non-profit day service and employment provider. Achieve Services creates innovative opportunities to inspire people with disabilities, enabling every participant to lead a meaningful and self-determined life.

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Achieve Services has Successful Spring Gala, and Recognizes Natalie Steffen



Emcees, John and Miles, with Golden Ticket Winner, Sandy

On Thursday, April 18th, 2024, Achieve Services held its annual spring gala at Bunker Hills Event Center in Coon Rapids, MN and it was a huge success. The event sold out, with about 300 guests in attendance who participated in a silent auction, live auction, raffles, and a fund-a-need drive.

The crowd was entertained by the father-son duo of John and Miles LeTourneau, who emceed the event. Miles attends Achieve, and John serves on its Board of Directors. Funds raised at the event will be used to fund an Activities Coordinator and Activities Fund. This new role will help expand opportunities for adults with disabilities to engage in life-enriching activities in the community as well as on-site at Achieve's facility in Blaine.



To watch the impactful (and humorous) fund-a-need video, scan this QR code.



Natalie honored by current Board Members

During the event's program, Emeritus Board Member, Natalie Steffen, was recognized for her many years of service to Achieve. Natalie served on the Anoka County Board back when Achieve Services was part of Anoka County. In 2004, Achieve spun off from the county and became an independent nonprofit organization. Natalie was instrumental in helping Achieve navigate this complex transition.

Natalie served as an Achieve board member for the next 20 years, and just stepped down at the end of last year. "Natalie has been a tremendous advocate for Achieve, and for the people with disabilities who we are privileged to serve. We are extremely grateful for her many years of dedicated service. Natalie's will always occupy a special place in our hearts" said Tom Weaver, CEO of Achieve Services.



Northtown Mall – Art, Jobs, & Compliments

Northtown Mall's partnership with Achieve has continued to strengthen, providing even more enjoyable opportunities for our participants.

Last summer we were honored to be asked to paint the blank walls in their hallway, which morphed into our five beautiful Achieve Wings butterfly murals (that are still up today!). We hosted a fun ribbon-cutting ceremony and had a wonderful array of friends and family of Achieve attend the event to celebrate these inspiring works of art.

This year, we were invited to participate in the Umbrella Project at Northtown Mall, where 28 of our artists with disabilities painted their own umbrellas. The umbrellas were on display and mall goers voted on their favorite designs. The top three winners each won a medal and the top two winners won Target gift cards. This was another very enjoyable opportunity for our participants to showcase their artwork.

In addition to featuring our participants' artwork, Northtown Mall has also hired

Achieve participants to work at the mall. What started out as washing windows and cleaning some of the bathrooms, has blossomed into cleaning the outside grounds of the mall and cleaning the arcade inside the mall.

A community member who is part of a walking club at Northtown Mall called Achieve sharing how blessed she has been to see the members of the Achieve cleaning crew at Northtown Mall. She expressed her positive experiences with the staff and expressed how she loves that Achieve staff member, Teresa, always responds to her by saying, "you should thank the clients, it's them not me."

The community member also expressed that her interactions with the Achieve group have always been positive, and that she and the folks she walks with have enjoyed every engagement. She also expressed positive accolades for the Achieve Wings project. She had so many positive things to say, but ended the call saying "keep doing the amazing work you do, you're making a difference!"



Make a Gift to Achieve Today!

Achieve Services is a nonprofit organization that relies on generous community support to operate our programs and services.

Please consider making a donation today – www.achieveservices.org/donate

Thank You!

Gala Sponsors

We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors who generously donated to this year's Gala.

DIAMOND SPONSORS:



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And thank you to our many Silver and Bronze Sponsors too!

Understanding 14C

Frequently Asked Questions

| Summer 2024

In a nutshell, why does 14(c) matter so much?

14(c) work is one of the employment options people with disabilities can choose to pursue. 14(c) is an accommodation for people with disabilities, allowing employers to pay workers with disabilities at a rate commensurate to their productivity. Without 14(c), employers would hire the most productive workers, and many people with disabilities would lose their jobs. Importantly, working a commensurate wage job is always the worker's choice.



Why are people advocating to eliminate 14(c)?

Some believe that everyone with a disability should be paid at least minimum wage, even though that would mean many people with disabilities would lose their jobs.



Who is trying to eliminate 14(c)?

This movement is led by advocates who believe everyone should be paid a minimum wage, and the vast majority of these "advocates" are higher-functioning and do not need 14(c) to find employment. The overwhelming majority of families we work with want 14(c) preserved.

What will replace 14(c) if it is eliminated?

Sadly, if 14(c) is eliminated, many people with significant developmental disabilities will have no other options for employment. They will lose much more than a paycheck – they will lose the self-respect, pride, and sense of identity that comes with having a job.



How can I get involved with advocating for 14(c)?

All seats in the MN House of Representatives are up for election this year. You can get involved by asking candidates what their position is on paying people with disabilities commensurate wages under 14(c). You can also educate people about the benefits of offering 14(c).

What has a parent said about 14(c) work?

"14(c) work is the perfect fit for our son. He loves having some work to do every day, as much or as little as he wants, at his own pace. Feeling productive and valued means the world to him. Without 14(c), it would be hard to find an employer who would be willing to work around our son's complex medical needs." – **Marie Couillard**, mother of a participant

If you would like to learn more about this issue, please visit us at www.achieveservices.org/advocate.



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What 14C Is And Why It Is Important To Keep Commensurate Wage Work

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At Achieve, we strongly believe in providing a broad range of employment options for our participants. Accordingly, we provide opportunities to work in competitive jobs out in the community, usually with a job coach who provides assistance as needed. And for some, we provide work on-site at Achieve, where participants can work alongside their friends in a safe and supported environment.

Those working on-site are typically paid a “commensurate wage” which is directly tied to their productivity. Unfortunately, some advocates would like to eliminate on-site employment options.

How it Works: Since 1938, section 14(c) of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act has allowed employers to pay people with disabilities a commensurate wage – which is sometimes less than the minimum wage. The commensurate wage is based on the individual employee’s productivity. For example, if a person with a disability produces 75 units in an hour, while a non-disabled person earning minimum wage produces 100 units, then the person with the disability would be paid 75% of the prevailing rate for that specific job. Often times, 14(c) work is performed at day programs for people with disabilities, where they are safe and supported by trained staff. **14(c) was created as a reasonable accommodation to help people with disabilities find work, and it continues to serve that purpose today.**

To offer commensurate wage work, an employer must hold a “14(c) certificate” from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). DOL requires that time studies be performed for any 14(c) work, to ensure that the wage being paid is fair and truly commensurate. DOL also requires annual surveys to ensure that the commensurate wage is current and consistent with what other businesses are paying. And, DOL audits certificate holders to ensure that time studies are done correctly and that appropriate documentation and data is being collected. This oversight ensures that people with disabilities are being fairly compensated based on their productivity.

What’s the Problem? Advocates for eliminating 14(c) believe that the law promotes discrimination against people with disabilities. Many believe that every person with a disability should have competitive employment in an integrated community setting, and they object to workshop settings where disabled workers work alongside others with disabilities. What they fail to recognize, however, is that eliminating commensurate wage work will eliminate jobs for people with disabilities. If everyone must be paid a minimum wage regardless of productivity, then employers will hire the most productive workers, and that will result in many disabled workers being left on the sidelines.

It’s about CHOICE: Without question, every person with a disability should be given the option of working for competitive wages in a community setting. At Achieve Services, we work hard to place as many people as possible in competitive employment. But the reality is, some people with disabilities want to take a different path. Some CHOOSE to work for reduced wages, at their own pace, in settings where they feel safe and can work alongside their friends, and where they have staff support. Moreover, parents and guardians of some of our most vulnerable participants don’t want them out in the community. Instead, they want them in an environment where they can be productive and earn some money, but are safe and cared for.

Again, at Achieve we believe in offering a wide range of employment options, and honoring the choices our participants make. Accordingly, we will continue our fight to preserve 14(c) work as an option.



Participants doing 14c work

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Two Performances by Our Band, “Dance at Your Own Risk”

This past spring we've had two performances by our house band, Dance at Your Own Risk (DAYOR). One performance was at Harbors Senior Living Center in Fridley where residents enjoyed listening to our band members. They especially enjoyed hearing band member, Josh's, premiere of his new song "Make A Difference." The second performance was at Northtown Mall. The band played both cover and original songs during their performance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

ACHIEVE'S 60TH Party

FRI. AUG. 23RD
10:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

ACHIEVE SERVICES
1201 89th AVE NE #1100
Blaine, MN 55434

DJ NATE | TREATS | FUN



Achieve is Hiring –

Would you like to make a positive impact in the lives of adults with disabilities or know someone who would? Then we invite you to apply to work at Achieve!

Learn about our job openings and apply here: www.achieveservices.org/jobs.

ACHIEVE'S FALL FUNDRAISER

DINNER - DANCING - DJ NATE - RAFFLES - PROGRAM - FUN

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16TH, 2024

***NEW LOCATION* INFINITE CAMPUS**
4321 109TH AVE NE, BLAINE, MN 55449

You Can Make a Lasting Impact

Did you know that you can make a lasting impact by including Achieve in your legacy plans? It's easy to designate Achieve as a beneficiary in your will, and it's something you can do at any age. Your choice to include Achieve Services, Inc. in your will or other deferred giving tool helps ensure that we meet the future needs of adults with disabilities. You can also choose to make a gift now or in the future to the Achieve Endowment Fund. All gifts to this fund help Achieve work toward our goal of increased financial self-sufficiency and stability for our future.



Here's an example of bequest language: I give, devise and bequeath to Achieve Services, a Minnesota nonprofit corporation and a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, located in Blaine, Minnesota, Federal Tax ID Number 30-0202036, the sum of _____ (or % of my estate), (or other personal property herein described) to be used for the accomplishment of its mission.

Do you have questions on the many ways you can support Achieve? Contact us at 763-783-4909 or info@achieveservices.org.

Achieve's Address – A Slight Number Change

We are still located in the same spot within the Blaine Human Services Building at 1201 89th Ave NE, but our suite number has changed numbers from being numbered 105 to now 1100. This address update will be a slow process as many of our materials still list suite #105 on them, but eventually everything will be switched over to #1100.



Opportunity & Dignity for Adults with Disabilities

1201 89th Ave NE #1100
Blaine, MN 55434

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Achieve Services' 2024 Spring Gala was a Huge Success!

Read a recap about our gala and what exciting new position we're funding.

14c is Incredibly Important to Achieve and the Participants We Serve.

Learn about 14(c) work and why it's critical we preserve it as a work option.



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