



FALL 2020

The Achiever

ACHIEVE SERVICES' QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

A LOOK INSIDE

Page 2

Participants Back to Work
Support Achieve this fall
Thank you to Our Gala Sponsors

Page 3

Support Achieve this fall
Virtual Gala

Page 4

Dance At Your Own Risk
Receives Award
Recent events inspire
new songs

Page 5

Last in line, still
A message from our CEO
Tom Weaver

Back

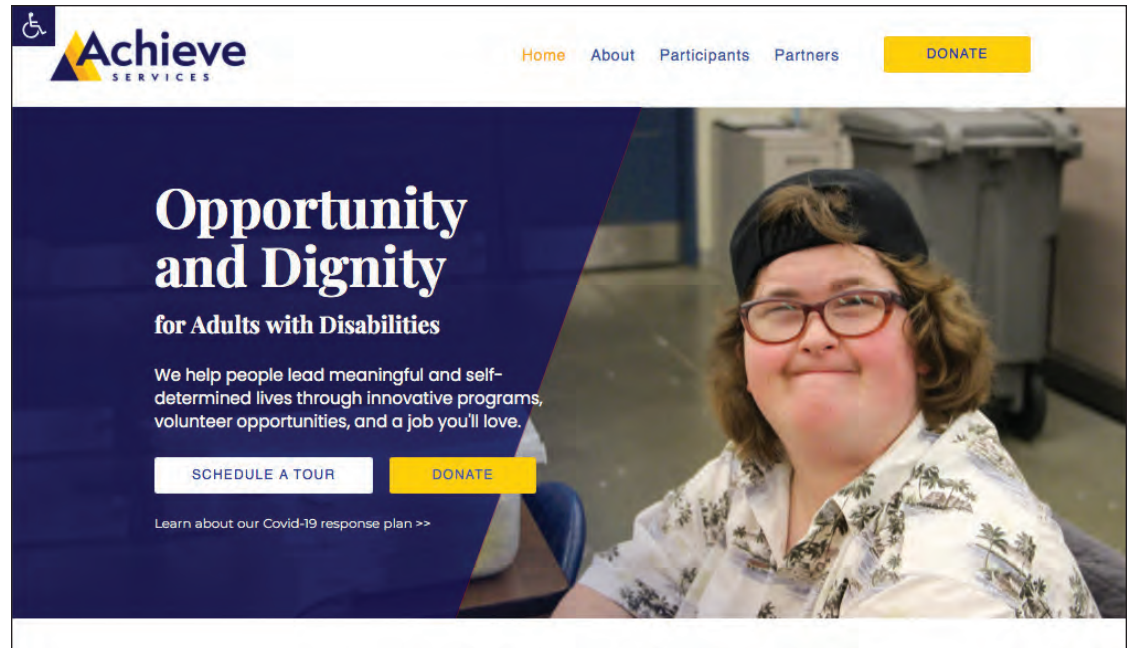
Your Support is Needed



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



Find us and follow us on social media



Achieve has a new look

If you've visited Achieve's website lately, you may have noticed we look a little different! Last fall, our team and the team at Banker Creative met with the goal of evolving our existing brand to better reflect our mission and capture interest.

Our logo still has an upward momentum but now has several levels to represent the diversity in our participants and how success looks different for every person. We also added pops of tangerine and orange to our blue to represent the energy that exists at Achieve.



We also have a new tagline "opportunity and dignity for adults with disabilities." A lot of adults with disabilities feel ignored because they aren't given real choice in their lives. At Achieve Services, we help them find opportunities to pursue what they want and give them dignity to choose a meaningful and self-determined life.

Opportunity and Dignity

for Adults with Disabilities

We hope you will take some time to explore our updated website – achieveservices.org and let us know what you think of Achieve's new look!

Participants Back to Work



Amy



Ronnie and Brad



Dan and Chris



Jared



Mindy



Jeff at Sullivan Lake Medtronic

Thank you to Our Gala Sponsors

We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors who have generously donated to this year's Gala. We appreciate their flexibility and unwavering support as we make difficult and significant changes to the structure of this year's event.

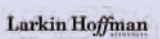
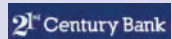
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Support Achieve this fall

VIRTUAL GALA

Wednesday,
September 16
at 7:00 pm



Achieve has made some difficult decisions to ensure we keep our community safe and healthy this fall. Our Spring Gala, typically held in April, was postponed with the hope we would be able to gather in person this fall. Unfortunately, we still do not feel like meeting in person is the best option at this time. We have also decided to cancel our Fall Fundraiser, which was scheduled in October.

However, we will be bringing all the elements you love about our Spring Gala and Fall Fundraiser to your home! This year's event will be held on Wednesday, September 16 at 7:00 pm and will be fully virtual. There is no cost to participate, and you can participate anywhere that has an internet connection.

The 30-minute program led by Emcees John and Miles LeTourneau and CEO Tom Weaver will take place on YouTube Live. Following the program, we will be hosting a dance party on Zoom featuring a playlist created by DJ Nate. You'll also have an awesome selection of premiere and silent auction items to bid on.

We will also be recognizing long-time partners Village Bank with the 2020 Legacy Award.

It's free to participate. All you need to do is register here:

<https://one.bidpal.net/superhero/ticketing>

We'll text and email reminders, so you know when it's time to start bidding and when to log on to view the program live.

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted people with disabilities – both physically and mentally. Funds raised ensure that Achieve will continue to be there for our 195 participants who rely on us for opportunities to lead meaningful, self-determined lives.

Your contributions will allow us to safely resume in person services, expand virtual service offerings, and retain our superhero staff.



Do you have an item or service you'd be willing to contribute to this year's Gala?

We are looking for unique and exciting items that will inspire people to bid high and often! Here are some ideas of items that have been popular at other virtual events:

- * Dinners for 6-8 people prepared by a local chef
- * Local trips/getaways or private cabins
- * Virtual experiences such as online classes or subscription to a streaming service
- * Home delivery: floral, wine/spirits, meals, coffee, dessert, etc.
- * Restaurant gift cards or gift cards to other local businesses
- * Home improvement or landscaping packages

If you have something you're willing to donate, please email us at info@achieveservices.org or call 763-717-7801.



Dance At Your Own Risk Receives Award

Achieve Services' resident band – Dance At Your Own Risk (DAYOR) – is a recipient of a 2020 Life Enrichment Award from The Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR). The award was presented by MOHR President Julie Johnson outside of Achieve on July 20.

DAYOR was formed in 2013. After doing some research, Training Specialist Joe Loskota found that music made by people with disabilities often included childish themes. He wanted to do something different. Using iPads and the Garage Band app, he made music accessible to anyone who is interested. The band does it all! They write the lyrics and music, record and sell original music, and perform for the public.



Achieve staff and board members as well as DAYOR band members and their families gathered outside to receive the award.

"It's funny, it's heart-wrenching, and personal. It's just been a great experience," said Loskota, "I feel like music creates such an incredible connection between people."

Photos and a video from the presentation are available on our website: <https://achieveservices.org/achieve-band-receives-award/>



Josh and his sister

Recent events inspire new songs

Dance At Your Own Risk band member Josh Larson finds inspiration in many things. He's written songs about his family, his favorite Anoka County spots, the Northstar train, and now, the pandemic.

Joe Loskota. He created videos of him singing lyrics, and Joe added instrumental accompaniment. Josh's "Wash Your Hands" is a catchy 20-second tune that can replace "Happy Birthday" as your go-to song for hand washing. "Stay At Home" reminds everyone that staying home is an important step to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Josh is currently participating in virtual services, and we look forward to hearing what inspires his next song!

When Achieve Services temporarily closed in mid-March, Josh continued to stay in contact with Training Specialist

You can find Josh's most recent songs on Dance At Your Own Risk's Facebook page.

Last in line, still –

A message from our CEO Tom Weaver

I was so encouraged to see Kirsten Swanson and KSTP's investigative series entitled "Last in Line," which clearly exposed the way the state has neglected the needs of people with disabilities. During their third special session, the State Legislature finally passed a \$30 million financial relief package for disability service providers. This, however, is too late for some and may not be enough for others.

Minnesota adults with developmental disabilities have long enjoyed an infrastructure of service providers who have ensured access to employment, skill building, recreation, volunteer, and other life enhancing opportunities and services. We have over 100 providers of day and employment services scattered around the state, providing services to about 26,000 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

When COVID hit, however, most service providers were forced to shut down in compliance with Executive Orders and to ensure the safety of staff and the people we serve. That not only meant services were suspended, it also meant that reimbursement revenue for



Jameson Crawford and Tom Weaver at the 2019 Fall Fundraiser

those services – the lifeblood that keeps those non-profit providers afloat, was cut off. For most providers, 85 – 95% of their total revenue comes from reimbursement for services. When services stop, so does funding. In the meantime, fixed costs for things like rent, insurance, vehicle leases, utilities, etc., continue to mount.

To prevent the disability service infrastructure from crumbling, we continued to ask for financial relief from the State. But, unfortunately, people with disabilities were relegated to the end of the line. It took three special sessions and herculean efforts from Sen. Abeler, Sen. Hoffman, Sen. Kiffmeyer, Sen. Isaacson, and the rest of the state senate, along with Rep. Cantrell, and Speaker Hortman, to finally secure some state support, but still only a fraction of what is needed.

What's even more shocking is that 35 states asked for, and received, federal support to help disability service providers stay afloat, but Minnesota's Department of Human Services *couldn't even figure out how to ask!* This blatant disregard for some of our most vulnerable citizens is nothing short of unconscionable. As a result of indifference, some disability service providers have permanently closed their doors, and people with disabilities will be denied the opportunities and services they deserve.

It's been said that a society should be judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable citizens. Let's hope that Minnesota finds a way to provide the necessary resources to weather the pandemic while meeting the needs of people with disabilities.



Opportunity & Dignity for Adults with Disabilities

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YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Sheri Holschbach’s son Brian has been participating in Achieve’s virtual social skills group. “It is easy to see how much Achieve means to so many and how much the staff is loved by all,” said Sheri, “and to see the humor, respect, and friendship unfold in conversations with the whole group. I have always believed this about Achieve.”



Brian

We are grateful to everyone who has provided financial contributions as we navigate the most challenging time in Achieve’s 56-year history. **Your donation of any amount will ensure we can safely resume in person services, expand virtual services, and retain our superhero staff.** To give, use the enclosed envelope or make a gift securely on our website: achieveservices.org/support-our-mission.

Thank you for your continued investment in Achieve Services and the people we are privileged to serve!



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