

# The Insider

## Getting to know the PossAbilities Community

### A Pathway to Success

For the past 17 years, Joe has spent his days at PossAbilities working or volunteering in the Rochester community.

“I don’t remember how I heard about PossAbilities,” laughed Jean, Joe’s mom. “But I went over there and talked to someone and got Joe signed up.”

During that time, PossAbilities had just started a new program called School to Work. The program was for students transitioning out of high school into the workforce.

“He had several jobs in the School to Work Program,” said Jean.

Some of those jobs included administrative work at Rochester Public Utilities and Superior Recycling. After two years of being in the School to Work program, Joe moved into an Adult Employment program and began to look for employment in the community.

“He started at Panera first. He worked there for 13 years.” said Jean. “Toys R Us, he wasn’t there too many years but he really liked it out there also.”

Joe enjoyed working part time, but wanted more community engagement so he transitioned into the Program without Walls. The program allows participants to be fully engaged in the community everyday.

“He really enjoyed that,” said Jean. “He was going out into the community and he was in good health at the time.”

However in 2015, Joe started showing signs of Dementia.

“When I heard he was getting lost and wandering, I thought we have to do something before something happens,” said Luke Urevig, Senior Program Coordinator.

With Joe’s safety a major concern, PossAbilities approached Joe’s parents with a suggestion.

“They suggested moving him to the Seniors program,” said Jean. “I was concerned about it.”

Joe was only 38 years old.

“Dementia and Alzheimer’s are extremely hard disabilities to wrap your head around,” said Luke. “So you have to transfer the person into a program right away when they still have cognitive abilities.”

With his family’s support, Joe started attending the Seniors’ program part-time and within the last few months he has become a full time Seniors participant.

“He’s doing awesome here,” said Luke. “And he is still volunteering at Channel One every week and getting out in the community.”

“Joe seems happy there and that’s the best part,” added Jean. “They’ve done a great job.”

Joe will remain in the Seniors program as his Dementia progresses. The building is designed so people with Dementia and Alzheimer’s can’t get lost and staff have a full view of the room at all times. In addition, Joe still gets to enjoy his community engagement activities.

“He’s done well,” said Jean. “And he’s grown thanks to all the people working with him and helping him on the way.”

PossAbilities will continue to work with Joe’s abilities, desires and needs as he persists on life’s journey.



## The Sweet Skills of Baking

Imagine walking into work every day to the smell of pastries and cookies. It's a mouth watering image that most of us only dream about but one PossAbilities participant is living that dream.

"I like the bakery," said Natalie.

Natalie has spent the majority of her work career among the baked goods landing her first job in 2012 at Mundt's Bake Shoppe in St. Charles.

"I loved working there. It was fun," said Natalie. "I learned a lot from Kevin (Shoppe owner)."

For three years, she scooped the monster cookies onto cookie sheets and frosted the pastries for people craving a goodie in the small town. However, in 2015 the bakery suddenly closed its doors leaving Natalie jobless so she started working with PossAbilities to find another job.

"Natalie lives independently in St. Charles and she does not drive," said Kris Henning, Employment Consultant and Job Developer. "She wanted to work in St. Charles and St. Charles only."

With the job location set, Kris and Natalie spent months reaching out to businesses and inquiring about potential job openings but they had no luck. Finally in March the perfect opportunity landed in their laps.

"Kwik Trip was having open interviews," said Kris. "Natalie and I went in and they loved her."

Not only did Kwik Trip have a position open, it was THE job Natalie had been hoping for. She now packages and labels all of the baked sweets that the convenience store offers.

"I still get to do bakery," said Natalie. "Like cookies, muffins and that's fun."

Today Natalie works five days a week, three hours a day in the aroma of Kwik Trip's finest delights. A sweet dream that she has made into a life long calling.



PossAbilities is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation committed to serving children and adults with disabilities through individualized, community based programs. We help people find and keep jobs, become engaged members of the community, contribute through volunteerism, and experience integrated social and recreational opportunities.



# Puppy Day at PossAbilities!



## SAVE THE DATE!

Join us at Rochesterfest for PossAbilities Annual Ice Cream Social and FREE Concert by Six Mile Grove!

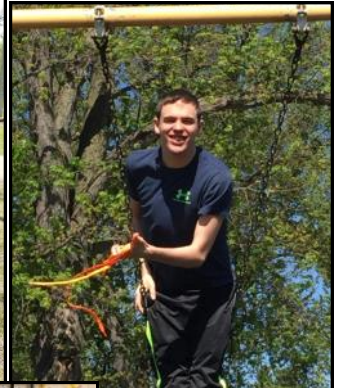
**Date:** June 19th  
**Time:** 4pm until 7pm (Carnival Games & Ice Cream)  
6pm is the Ice Cream Eating Contest!  
**Place:** Rochesterfest Grounds (Soldiers Field)



Wristbands can be purchased starting June 1<sup>st</sup> at PossAbilities, 1808 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave SE, Rochester, for \$3 or the night of the event for \$5. Children two and under are FREE!



# What else have we been up to?



Congrats to Tara Nail who was named the Employee of the Quarter!

