

The Insider

Getting to know the PossAbilities Community

The Bee Shed

PossAbilities has been buzzing over the last few months.

“There are up to 60,000 bees in each hive, which means we work with approximately 4,200,000 bees,” said John Shonyo, Co-owner of The Bee Shed.

“I love this job,” said Isaac, a PossAbilities participant. “I could do this every day.”

Earlier this year, PossAbilities gained a new and unique partnership with The Bee Shed. The local company makes honey products, sells bee keeping supplies, and educates the public on the bee business. Its a popular profession.

“We outgrew our capacity to assemble and paint the bee boxes. We outgrew our respective basements and garages and needed to move to a storage pod,” said Chris, Co-owner of The Bee Shed. “This growth demonstrates something that John and I both believe—that there is room for both profit and public benefit when running a business.”

Which is part of the reason why PossAbilities has become part of the honey making process.

“The Bee Shed is incorporated as a Specific Benefit Corp., which means we have committed to the state that serving the community is a primary purpose of our business,” said John. “Our association with PossAbilities helps us fulfill that commitment.”

For six to eight months out of the year, PossAbilities participants will assemble and paint bee boxes for the company.

“I like the work,” said Isaac.

The boxes are then sold to and used by bee keepers throughout the United States.

Also, PossAbilities has become the harvesting spot for The Bee Shed. In September, the honey is extracted from the bee hives at a warehouse on PossAbilities main campus.

“We ended up renting the space and so far it’s been working out great,” said John.

John and Chris will both admit that sometimes the business can be a little sticky, but the experience for the participants has been heart warming.

“We all need purpose in our lives regardless of the disabilities we may have,” said John. “If your clients are doing work, it shows society at large that people with disabilities can be contributing members to their community and not a burden.”

PossAbilities is thrilled to be a part of this unique opportunity. In addition, the hands on work is allowing Isaac and other participants to contribute to the community while building new skills. It’s a honey of a deal.



MOHR Legislative Conference

At the end of August, Gail Bishop, Board member, Eileen Wallace, Executive Director, Joel Pralle, Employment Division Director, and Kenn Roehl, Development Director, all attended the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation services (MOHR) legislative conference. Although we were not successful in convincing the State Legislature to pass the rate increase for disability services, we were successful in seeing increases in the formula for the rates we are given. Over the long run, that will effectively increase the rates PossAbilities receives. Advocacy and political involvement is important in assisting people with disabilities so they can receive just and quality services needed throughout Minnesota. Federally, any cuts to Medicaid will affect needed services of the elderly in nursing homes, for health care, for low-income children, AND for services for people with disabilities. You will be hearing more about this as the months progress. With that being said, we all need to be involved in communicating with our state and federal legislators to advocate for our friends and neighbors who may not be able to speak for themselves. It's what neighbors do.

PossAbilities Recognizes National Direct Support Professionals Week

PossAbilities celebrated Direct Support Professionals week, September 10 through September 17, 2017. The contributions and accomplishments made by these dedicated people are tremendous.

"Direct Service Professionals are the heart of the great work we do at PossAbilities," said Eileen Wallace, PossAbilities Executive Director. "Working with people with disabilities requires compassion and patience and intelligence and heart. We're grateful for the commitment of our employees every day."

PossAbilities employs more than 85 direct support professionals to serve 240 individuals in and around the Rochester community.



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.

Eat for a Cause!



**Your Single Meal Can
Make a Difference!**
(Flyer Attached)

United Way Days of Caring



The landscaping around PossAbilities got a makeover thanks to a group of volunteers from IBM. It was all part of the United Way Days of Caring event. We are grateful for their help and the help of all our volunteers.



Checking off the Bucket List

PossAbilities participant, John, made a mark on his bucket list this past week! After learning the history behind the hearse, a large funeral vehicle, John couldn't help but wonder what it would be like to drive or ride in one. With the help of Macken Funeral Home, John was able to ride in the vehicle around the block and check it off his bucket list. Next on the list, chasing a tornado.



What else have we been up to?



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