



Avenues to Community, Inc.

Supporting Individuals with Developmental Disabilities and Traumatic Brain Injuries



THANK YOU!

I would like to extend my gratitude to County Executive Joe Parisi, County Board Supervisors, and Dane County Human Services Director Lynn Green for supporting a .7% COLA for Purchase of Service organizations in the 2016 adopted county budget. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Supervisor Jennifer Dye, Chair Sharon Corrigan, and Supervisor Jeff Pertl for their work on supporting the amendment for this increase throughout the budget process. This has been the first increase in many years and it is greatly appreciated. Thank you and Happy Holidays!

Kevin Keisling , Executive Director

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Pride of Wisconsin

Written by Olivia

My name is Olivia. I was born in Hangzhou China and adopted from the orphanage at age 3. I came into a new family, new culture and new language and had to learn to adapt. I faced many challenges with school and social situations. My family set an expectation that I focus on my skills, areas of interest, and strengths and that I be the best that I can be in what I enjoy doing. There were no excuses but there was always solutions and this involved looking at situations through my eyes and thinking differently.

One of my interests is running. I've been involved in Special Olympics for 4 years participating in snowshoeing and track and field. Two summers ago I was chosen to go to the USA National games in Princeton New Jersey. I was an athlete with Team Wisconsin and I medaled in all four of my events. This past summer I competed in the Special Olympic World Games in Los Angeles as an athlete representing the United States. This is quite an honor because only three athletes were chosen from Wisconsin and I was the only female. I competed against athletes from over 160 countries. I ran the 100 meter, 200 meter and 4x100 relay. I trained hard for these games and won two gold medals and a silver medal.

The challenge I currently face is that I am battling stage 4 breast cancer. I was diagnosed with cancer in February after I was selected for the World Games. My treatment has been and will continue to be very intense and exhausting but I told my doctors nothing was going to stop me from going to the games. They supported me and rescheduled my chemotherapy so that I could participate. When I won my gold medals it was important for me to dedicate them for all the women in the world with breast cancer. I want them to know they should never give up.

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Photo credit Aaron Mills/Special Olympics USA



Day Trippers



Mississippi River Boat



Dancing Horses Theater





Home Sweet Home

Written by Stephanie Thousand

Tricia has dreamed of a place to call her own ever since she graduated from high school. As of October, 2015 this dream became a reality! Tricia and I first visited the Eagle Harbor Apartments back in September, 2013. Tall ceilings, private laundry, wheelchair accessible accommodations—Tricia was hooked! Prior to the move, Tricia lived at home with her family in Sun Prairie. Since this move, Tricia has gained access to Metro Para-Transit, has participated in two of the UCP Fall Enrichment classes, and she hired her own staff person through Community Living Alliance. Truly, this is just the beginning for Tricia, and I am very excited to see where her ambition and self-determination will take her next.



It Takes a Team... Written by Karen Windels



About two years ago, Mike and his parents knew something had to change. Although Mike had successfully graduated from Middleton High School as a special needs student with Asperger's Syndrome, he had struggled for 5 years to meet his goals of employment, acquiring new friendships, and living independently. Enter "Team Mike".

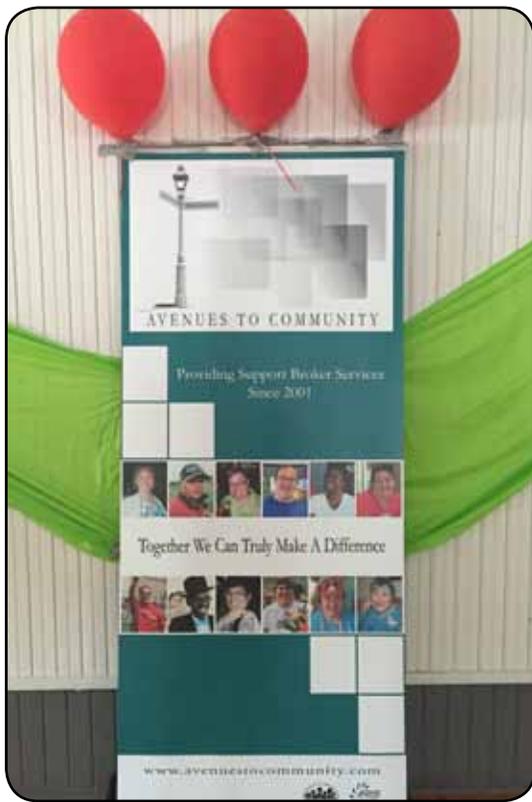
Mike's parents learned about Avenues Support Broker Services and he was immediately placed on a waiting list for a pilot program designed for adults with less severe needs. After a year or so, Mike began receiving services from his broker, Lesley Bollig. Because of Lesley, Mike and his family have been expertly assisted with the never-ending paperwork associated with applications

for Social Security, Food Share, medical services, housing, DVR, etc.

Within about six months, Mike became eligible for DVR assistance and was enrolled by his DVR counselor Stephanie, in the REDI program -- a six-week paid, training program jointly sponsored by Walgreen's and DVR. Upon completion of the REDI program, Mike was employed by the Walgreen's store only two blocks from his apartment. He loves his diverse, half-time job and enjoys compassionate coaching from his job-coach Jill and supervisor Ben. DVR also supported driving lessons for Mike, and he has recently acquired his driver's license -- meeting another long-overdue goal.

Mike's family also enrolled him in LOV Dane's Bridge Builder Program. Through LOV Dane, Mike's Bridge Builder Rachael has connected him with social opportunities. He recently planned and hosted a "game night" for other LOV Dane friends and has enjoyed belonging to LOV Dane's bowling circle. Mike and Rachael are now researching accessible fitness programs! Last but not least, in August Mike moved into his own apartment, which is close to his Walgreen's work site, and a mile from his parents' home. He can easily touch base with family and pets when needed, while still enjoying the independence of having his own home!

Through hard work and persistence, Mike, his parents, Lesley, Stephanie, Rachael, Jill and Ben have together helped change the status quo for Mike, enabling him to meet some of his life goals. Hats off to "Team Mike"!

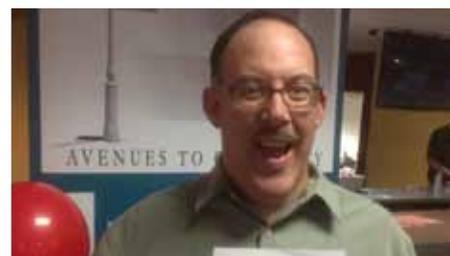


Annual Picnic 2015





AVENUES TO COMMUNITY
10TH ANNIVERSARY
2015 SUPER BOWLING EVENT



SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS



Once again, the Avenues staff and our office neighbors, Spacelabs Healthcare, participated in the NBC 15 Share Your Holidays food drive this past month. This drive focuses on raising meals to feed community members who are struggling with hunger in Dane County. Avenues took on the challenge of filling up two barrels this year! Mission accomplished!

by Stephanie Iliff

2016 CALENDAR

IN OBSERVANCE OF THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS, OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1	NEW YEAR'S DAY
MONDAY, JANUARY 18	MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
MONDAY, MAY 30	MEMORIAL DAY
MONDAY, JULY 4	INDEPENDENCE DAY
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5	LABOR DAY
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24	THANKSGIVING DAY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25	DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23	CHRISTMAS EVE
MONDAY, DECEMBER 26	CHRISTMAS DAY
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30	NEW YEAR'S EVE



Pride of Wisconsin

Continued from front page

There are wonderful people supporting me. My Special Olympics coaches challenge the team but are our biggest supporters. I've been fortunate to find people who believe in me and help me achieve my goals. Just like most athletes, I train with a personal trainer. Ryan, my personal trainer for 2 years, challenges me and won't let me quit. Sometimes I can get a bit lazy and Ryan knows me well enough to keep pushing me to be the best I can be. Also, twice a week I practice Tae Kwon Do with Master Lee. I started Tae kwon Do fourteen months ago and am currently a red belt. My goal is a black belt. Master Lee is very kind and compassionate but he is disciplined and focused. These skills will be beneficial for the rest of my life. Andrea, who I met through Best Buddies, has been my friend and confidant for over 4 years. I even was a bridesmaid at her wedding in September. Andrea has taught me social skills by getting me involved which has helped me to be an active participant in the community.



Photo credit Courtesy of Special Olympics USA

Actively participating in the community and developing my social skills has helped me with successful completion of the Project SEARCH program. Now, I work full time at Children's Hospital, live in my own apartment, pay my own bills, do my own grocery shopping and manage my daily schedule. This is all done with help and support of friends and family. Right now I'm living at my parents' home while I'm continuing my cancer treatments and facing more surgeries. But my goal is to move back to my own place with my dog Oliver.

I have more goals to achieve; beat cancer, own my own condo, and continue my education and training so I grow both personally and professionally. I also have a goal to compete this winter in the Winter State Games in snowshoeing. My hope is to win a gold medal so I can compete in at the world winter games in Austria in 2017. I also have my sights set to run in the world games in Australia in 2019.

Determination, dreams, goals and high expectations have always kept me going. Several years ago I was told that I would never have the ability to work and would never be able to function independently. If you know my mother, Judy, she knew that was totally unacceptable. She never settles and never gives up. I appreciate that she set this expectation for me because I knew this was not the way I wanted to live my life. This is just my story, but every person has a story to tell. We've all faced challenges, obstacles and adversity. It's how you chose to deal with them. You can let these pull you down or work at finding solutions. Stay true to your dreams and goals. Focus on your skills, abilities and interests. And find people that believe in you and will help you achieve what you want for your life.

Happy Holidays



WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU
IN THE YEAR AHEAD

SERVING INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES



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