

SPRING 2025

# inspiration



**EMPOWERING  
ABILITIES**

Creating Opportunities.  
Changing Lives.

# THE PEOPLE POWERING OUR PROGRESS

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- In this edition:**
- 3 Knee Deep - A New Perspective
  - 4 Brightening Lives at Home and in the Community
  - 6 Take a Swing for Empowering Abilities! Join Us for Birdies for Charity
  - 7 2025 HANDS Golf Outing Raises Nearly \$35,000 for Empowering Abilities
  - 8 Vendor Spotlight: Edwards Creative - Designing Joy, One Room at a Time
  - 10 Our Thanks Goes To
  - 12 Donor Recognition

**OUR MISSION**

As a premier service provider, we passionately advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities by creating opportunities for them to succeed, to achieve, to grow, and to be happy.



## Knee Deep - A New Perspective

In February of this year, I underwent total knee replacement surgery on my right knee, and then did it all over again on the left knee in April. "Kneedless" to say, it has been an enlightening journey, reshaping not only my physical capabilities but also my appreciation for the Empowering Abilities mission and the participants we serve daily. As I grappled with the pain and limitations of recovery, I found myself immersed in a world where many of our folks live each and every day—

a world where simple tasks become monumental challenges.

Before my surgeries, I took my mobility for granted. Walking, standing, even working out were effortless actions. But suddenly, I was thrust into a reality where every movement was a struggle, every step a victory. The helplessness I felt, at times, was overwhelming. Relying on others for basic needs, feeling the sting of vulnerability, and confronting the emotional weight of my limitations were humbling experiences. These moments of frustration, though temporary for me, are a constant battle for many of our participants and their families.

This journey has ignited a deeper empathy within me. I see more clearly the courage and resilience in those who face intellectual and physical difficulties daily. Their strength in the face of adversity is nothing short of inspiring. It's not just about providing assistance; it's about offering genuine compassion and understanding. A kind word, a gentle touch, a moment of patience, these small acts of love can transform someone's day, offering them a glimmer of hope and dignity. It can be the difference between achieving a simple goal and giving up.

Moreover, my experience has underscored the critical need for accessibility and inclusivity. Physical spaces, communication methods, and social interactions should be designed with inclusivity at their core. Everyone deserves the chance to participate fully in life, and it's our collective mission to dismantle the barriers that stand in the way of our participants.

These knee surgeries have been a catalyst for profound change in my approach to serving our mission. They have taught me the true meaning of empathy and patience. As I continue to heal, I am committed to using this experience to advocate for and support those who face these challenges daily. We can build a world that is not only accessible but also filled with compassion and understanding. My mission is clear, transforming empathy into action, and ensuring that every participant, regardless of their abilities, can live a life of dignity and fulfillment so that they may succeed, achieve, grow and to be happy.

*Jeff Ashcraft*

Empowering Abilities President/CEO







From work and community life to now thriving in our Residential Center, Paul Bevan reminds us daily that new beginnings can happen at any age. Whether he's hitting strikes at bowling night or lending a helping hand, Paul shows us what resilience and heart look like.

# Brightening Lives at Home and in the Community

## Empowering Abilities Residential Center & Group Homes Year in Review

Over the past year, Empowering Abilities Residential Services has continued to be a place where comfort meets community, and where every individual has the opportunity to live fully, joyfully, and independently—on their terms.

Let's start with one of the brightest lights in our community: **Paul Bevan**.

Paul has been part of Empowering Abilities for 50 years—a true legacy of friendship, growth, and resilience. Over the years, he's participated in nearly every program we offer: from the workshop and community employment to day habilitation and independent living with his sister. Recently, due to health concerns, Paul made the move to our Residential Center—and it's been a move full of new beginnings.

Since settling in, Paul has fully embraced life at the Residential Center. His calendar is packed with bowling nights, dinner outings, dances, and baseball games. The sparkle in his eye says it all—*he's doing what he loves, surrounded by people who care*. Paul is also the kind of neighbor we all hope for—

always ready to lend a hand to friends or help staff with daily tasks. And through it all, he continues to grow in his independence and confidence, working on life skills that support his goals.

The past year has also brought exciting improvements to both our Residential Center and group homes, making our spaces even more welcoming and supportive:

- We completed the **courtyard renovation**, creating a beautiful outdoor space for relaxation, connection, and sunshine.
- Our residents had their very own **Night to Shine**—a magical evening of celebration and inclusion.
- Every **residential room received brand-new flooring**, providing a fresh, cozy foundation for daily life.
- Our **group homes were treated to a fresh coat of paint**, and both **resident and staff bathrooms** are in the midst of remodels and upgrades.

And oh, the adventures we've had! This year was full of movie nights, concerts, fair trips, restaurant outings, and fun at local events. These aren't just activities—they're joyful memories in the making, helping our participants stay connected to their community and experience the world around them.

As we reflect on the year behind us and look forward to what's ahead, we remain committed to making every house feel like home, and every day full of purpose, friendship, and fun.

Thank you for helping us create a life of dignity, opportunity, and belonging for each person we serve.

### Performance objectives for Residential Center and Group Homes for the period January 1, 2025-March 31, 2025

#### GROUP HOMES

Number of individuals in services: **22**

On a scale of 1-4:

- Individuals offered access to community activities: **4.0**
- Increase independence of participants: **3.4**
- Ensure participants are aware of other service options: **4.0**
- Ensure choices are provided: **3.8**
- Individuals are satisfied with their amount of access to community activities: **3.8**
- Ensure overall satisfaction: **3.9**

#### RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Number of individuals in services: **57**

On a scale of 1-4:

- Individuals offered access to community activities: **3.9**
- Increase independence of participants: **3.9**
- Ensure participants are aware of other service options: **4.0**
- Ensure choices are provided: **3.9**
- Individuals are satisfied with their amount of access to community activities: **3.9**
- Ensure overall satisfaction: **3.9**



# Take a Swing for Empowering Abilities! Join Us for Birdies for Charity

John Deere Classic | July 2-6, 2025

The Empowering Abilities Boosters are once again participating in the Birdies for Charity program—an incredible opportunity to turn golf into giving, all while celebrating the John Deere Classic!

### Here’s how it works:

When you make a donation using Bird Number 127, Empowering Abilities receives 100% of your contribution—plus at least a 5% bonus match thanks to the Birdies for Charity Bonus Fund! That means your generosity goes even further in supporting the participants and programs we love.

### Where Your Gift Goes

- Funds raised for Empowering Abilities (Bird 127) through Birdies for Charity help support the Empowering Abilities Boosters in providing:
- Social and recreational activities for participants (like bowling leagues, dances, and picnics)
  - Special projects that enhance our programs and spaces
  - Staff appreciation events to celebrate the dedicated team behind our mission



### How to Give

**Online or QR Code:** Make your pledge at [birdiesforcharity.com/donate?charity=127](https://birdiesforcharity.com/donate?charity=127) or simply scan the QR code above to donate directly from your phone!

**Mail:** Clip the pledge form and send it to:  
Birdies For Charity  
15623 Coal Town Road  
East Moline, IL 61244

Important Reminder: Forms will not be mailed separately—please use the form provided in this newsletter or donate online.

# 2025 HANDS Golf Outing Raises Nearly \$35,000 for Empowering Abilities

The sun was shining, the clubs were swinging, and the community came together in a big way for the 2025 HANDS Auxiliary Golf Outing benefiting Empowering Abilities. Thanks to the incredible support of generous sponsors, the event was not only a great time—it was a tremendous success, raising nearly **\$35,000** to support individuals with disabilities in leading full and empowered lives.

This would not have been possible without sponsor support. Their generosity helped provide a first-class experience for golfers and volunteers, and most importantly, advanced Empowering Abilities’ mission in a meaningful way.

From swag bags to signage, hole sponsors to event champions—sponsors made an impact at every level. The organization is deeply grateful for the investment made in this work and the belief shown in the individuals it serves.

Held at the beautiful Davenport Country Club, the outing was filled with laughter, camaraderie, and just the right amount of competition. The day wrapped up with prizes, dinner, and heartfelt appreciation for all involved.

**Special recognition goes to this year’s tournament winners:**

**Scramble Champions:** Paul Rouse, Jamie Crawford, Dylan Steil, and Joe Hanlin

**Play Your Own Ball Winners:** Tim Flanagan, John Cook, John DeDoncker, and Steve Thornburg

Whether participating on the green or supporting from afar, each sponsor played a vital role in the event’s success. Empowering Abilities and the HANDS Auxiliary extend their sincere thanks for the continued partnership and commitment to building a more inclusive community.

Plans are already underway for next year’s outing—and organizers are looking forward to another impactful and inspiring day on the course.

## THANK YOU TO THE EVENT SPONSORS



## THANK YOU TO OUR HOLE SPONSORS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Daniel Clark and Jessica Daniel Clark                                    | Halligan-McCabe-DeVries Funeral Home        |
| In Memory of Bob, Mary, Jane, and Dave Ott - Jerry and Carrie Ott DeVine | Main Healthcare Pharmacy                    |
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Empowering Abilities  
(formerly Handicapped Development Center)

CHARITY SOLICITED FOR  
127

BIRD NUMBER

For BFC office use only  
CARD #

I PLEDGE TO DONATE:  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the charity noted above.  
*(one time, flat donation amount)*

GUESS THE BIRDIES TO WIN A TWO YEAR LEASE ON A 2025 LEXUS!

I guess that \_\_\_\_\_ birdies will be made.  
*Only one grand prize will be awarded.  
Void where prohibited by law. Guesses due by June 27.*

BIRDIES SCORED BY YEAR

1,982 (2016)	2,091 (2019)	2,041 (2022)
1,918 (2017)	N/A (2020)	1,929 (2023)
2,355 (2018)	1,905 (2021)	2,315 (2024)

MAKE MORE MAGIC with the BONUS FUND  
YES, I would like to make an additional donation to the Birdies for Charity Bonus Fund in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, to help provide the minimum 5% match to all participating charities.

PLEDGE & DONOR INFORMATION (please print)

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

PHONE AND/OR EMAIL

Please include payment & make checks payable to:  
BIRDIES FOR CHARITY



# Vendor Spotlight: Edwards Creative – Designing Joy, One Room at a Time

At Empowering Abilities, we believe every space should tell a story—and thanks to the creative vision of our partners at Edwards Creative, our Hickory Grove Road location now tells a vibrant, joyful one.

What began with a sketch and a conversation became a multi-phase transformation, driven by a shared commitment to inclusion, creativity, and purpose.

## A Partnership Built on Purpose

Over a series of months, Empowering Abilities and Edwards Creative met to develop a conceptual plan—mapping out objectives, envisioning the participant experience, and outlining a design approach that would bring warmth and inspiration into the space. Their goal? To ensure everyone who entered felt better walking in—and even better walking out.

From those early sketches, the project evolved into a room-by-room redesign that unfolded over 12-14 months. Edwards Creative took a stair-step approach to design and production, carefully customizing each space to reflect Empowering Abilities’ mission and the individuality of the people we serve.

## More Than a Makeover

The project culminated in a joyful lunch celebration—with Hungry Hobo sandwiches, high-fives, and heartfelt reflections—bringing together the full Edwards Creative team and Empowering Abilities staff. But what came after the ribbon cutting was even more impactful.

For the team at Edwards, the work sparked something bigger. “It reminded everyone involved that the work we do has real impact,” shared Tim Wren, Director of Sales & Museum Services for Edwards Creative. “Our installers, Aryn and



Austin, formed real connections with participants—greeted with smiles, high-fives, and even hugs as they moved through the building. It was more than a project; it was a relationship.”

## An Uplifting Ripple Effect

The project has inspired others as well. When Camp Courageous visited Empowering Abilities, they were so moved by the transformation that they asked Edwards Creative to reimagine several of their own cabins. The result? A warm, welcoming space that feels far from institutional—just like our vision here.

“It’s similar to the hospital projects we’ve done,” Tim added. “We prioritize how people feel when they walk in. Our job is to help them feel better, more supported, more seen.”

## Energizing for All

While the physical transformation was designed for our participants, the process also brought renewed energy to staff on both sides. “It was invigorating, fun, and creative,” Tim said. “Our team left inspired—and grateful for the chance to work alongside such passionate people.”

## Looking Ahead

Edwards Creative and Empowering Abilities aren’t done yet. Plans are already underway for the Brady Street location, which will celebrate iconic Quad City landmarks and



continue the mission of creating accessible, engaging, and purpose-driven spaces.

## Why Edwards Recommends Empowering Abilities

When asked why they’d encourage others to collaborate with us, Tim didn’t hesitate: “Empowering Abilities is an extraordinary organization. The leadership, the mission, the impact—you can feel it in everything they do. We loved every minute of this partnership.”

And we can say the same about Edwards Creative. Thank you for helping us bring our vision to life—and for designing with heart, purpose, and so much joy.





# Our Thanks Goes To



## The Boosters - St. Patty's Dance

A big thank you to our amazing Boosters Organization for putting on a fantastic St. Patty's Day Dance! Your time, energy, and creativity made the event a fun and festive celebration for everyone. We're so lucky to have you!

## Outlets - Nuts & Candy Sale

A heartfelt thank you to all the outlets who helped sell nuts and candy during our Booster Annual Nut & Candy sale! Your continued support helps us spread joy and make a difference in our community – we truly appreciate all you do!

## Pilot's Club

Thanks to the Pilot's Club for bringing joy and creativity to our residents at the Residential Center by helping with an Easter Egg craft! Your time, kindness, and festive spirit made the celebration extra special for everyone involved. We truly appreciate your support and generosity.

## HANDS Auxiliary - Trivia Night

A huge thank you to HANDS for putting on a fantastic trivia night! Your creativity and effort made it a fun and engaging evening for all. Thanks to their hard work, the funds raised directly support the individuals at Empowering Abilities helping us to continue to provide opportunities and change lives.

## Bettendorf Rotary

Thanks to the Bettendorf Rotary for generously providing funds for the Hickory Grove Road courtyard project. Their support makes it possible to add much-needed shade, creating a more comfortable and welcoming space for all our participants. Your commitment to community well-being is truly appreciated!



## Caballeros De Colon #14131 St. Anthony's Church, Davenport

Warm thanks to Caballeros De Colon # 14131 St Anthony's Church Davenport, IA for their generous donation and support of Empowering Abilities. This gift empowers us to continue creating opportunities and changing lives for individuals with disabilities.



## WQAD & Eriksen Chevrolet

A huge thank you to WQAD and Eriksen Chevrolet for selecting us as the February 2025 Three Degree Guarantee recipient! Their generous donation will support the reimagining of our Daily Discovery facility on Brady Street – helping us create a more dynamic and inspiring space for those we serve and our dedicated staff.



## Empowering Abilities-Residential Center Staff

It can be challenging for some residents from our Residential Center to attend community events – but thanks to the dedication, compassion, and teamwork of our amazing Residential Center staff, these residents don't miss a moment! The staff created a special night inspired by Night to Shine - filled with joy, laughter, and unforgettable memories, keeping the mission at the forefront of everything they did.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION TO THE GREATEST NEED

Mr. and Mrs. Chris and Kari Boling  
Mr. and Mrs. Nick and Alise Haut  
Mr. Jerry Miller  
Mr. and Mrs. John and Margaret Rich  
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Quad Cities Brain Injury Alliance

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*Donations listed were received from January 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025. Every attempt is made to accurately recognize all gifts; however, if you spot an error or omission, please contact the development office at 563-391-4834. Thank you for your generosity.*





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Davenport, Iowa 52806



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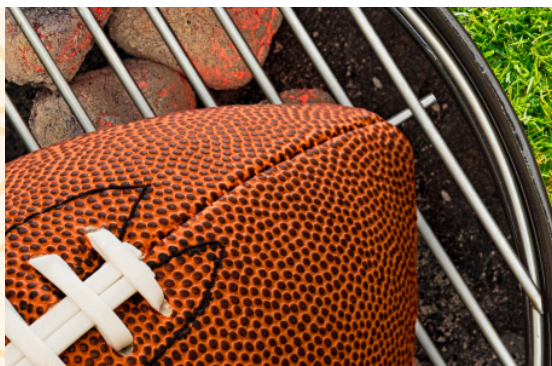
SAVE THE DATE  
**SEPTEMBER 11, 2025**

## EMPOWER HOUR

The inaugural Empower Hour will be a powerful and uplifting luncheon experience hosted by Empowering Abilities. Attendees will have a front-row seat to the transformative impact of our work.

Through personal stories and bold vision, you'll witness how individuals with disabilities are thriving with the support of Empowering Abilities – living more independently, confidently, and meaningfully connected to their communities.

**Inspire. Connect. Empower.**  
Formal invitation to follow.



COMING SOON

## TAILGATE & TOUCHDOWN RAFFLE

**Tickets: \$100**

*Sale begins July 1  
Drawing to be held August 1*

**4 Tickets for  
Notre Dame vs NC State  
on Saturday, October 11**

**Mum's the  
word... but not  
for long!**

**First-Ever  
Empowering Abilities'  
Boosters Mum Sale!**

Brighten your porch and support a great cause! Gorgeous fall mums are on the way—and every bloom helps Empowering Abilities grow opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Stay tuned for order info!

