

SUMMER 2025

# opportunities in sports



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ABILITIES

Creating Opportunities.  
Changing Lives.



# THE PEOPLE POWERING OUR PROGRESS

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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.



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Cover: Our Daily Discovery West participants and staff - Jamie Gerten, Brastain Hilbert, Doug Case, and Jeremy Drayfahl - spent a meaningful spring day planting in the Abilities Garden at the Quad City Botanical Center—nurturing both nature and new opportunities.

Dressed in red, white, and blue, Roger Prior shares a joyful moment in honor of the Fourth of July—embracing freedom, inclusion, and community spirit.

## Rising to the Challenge

On July 11, 2025, Empowering Abilities faced one of its most challenging days in recent memory. Severe storms, including a tornado that touched down dangerously close to several of our properties, brought torrential rains—more than seven inches in some areas. While we were fortunate to avoid tornado damage, the flooding that followed forced the evacuation of one of our group homes and inundated substantial portions of our residential center.

In the face of this crisis, our team did what they do best: they showed up, stepped up, and stood strong. Staff members acted swiftly and selflessly to ensure the safety of residents and fellow employees. Their quick thinking and calm under pressure helped prevent injuries and minimize damage. In the days that followed, eighteen employees went above and beyond the call of duty—coming in on their personal time, working remotely while on vacation, and giving their all during regular shifts to help clean up, restore order, and support those affected. We are proud to recognize:

**Brian Ramp, Dwaine Prine, Norman Blake, Jesus Verala, Mark Wakeland, Todd Goldsberry, Amber Donker, Laonna Dixon, Lindsey Schafer, Emily Skelton, Bill Skelton, Katy Decker, Rodesha Rush, Heather Peel, Ricki Bauman, April Houssou, Shelley Nordeen, and Michelle Garcia.**

Their efforts were matched by an outpouring of support from across our community. Many others, including members of our Board, family members of staff, and employees from unaffected areas, reached out and offered to help in any way they could. While not all were needed, their willingness to step in at a moment's notice was a powerful reminder of the unity and compassion that define Empowering Abilities.

Thanks to this incredible collective spirit, recovery was swift. By late morning the following Monday—just three days after the storm—group home residents were able to return home, offices were dry, fences repaired, and debris cleared. It was almost as if the storm had never happened.

To everyone who played a part—thank you. Your dedication turned a moment of crisis into a powerful display of care, resilience, and teamwork. Together, we weathered the storm—and together, we continue to empower abilities every day.

*Jeff Ashcraft*  
Empowering Abilities President/CEO







Dwayne Coppage enjoys a trike ride on the "Empowering Highway", the outdoor path at Hickory Grove Road, demonstrating the power of movement, confidence, and community inclusion.

# Daily Discovery: Empowering Everyday Moments

At Empowering Abilities, we believe that every day holds the potential for joy, growth, and connection. Our **Daily Discovery** program brings that belief to life—offering adults with disabilities meaningful opportunities to engage in their communities, build new skills, and experience the world around them in fun and fulfilling ways.

Designed to support independence and personal growth, Daily Discovery meets individuals where they are—whether that’s learning new social skills, exploring the Quad Cities, or simply enjoying a day filled with laughter and friendship. And this summer, the program has been full of exciting developments across our locations:

## Daily Discovery Community-Based Group Launches

On July 1, we launched a new small-group experience for participants who prefer a quieter, more flexible setting. This **community-based group** of six participants and one staff member begins and ends their day at our Endeavor Living office, skipping our larger East and West campuses. Meeting twice a week, the group enjoys longer outings in the community and a calm, connected start and end to their day. Early feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we hope to expand this option to a daily offering in the near future.

## Social Skills Boot Camp Builds Confidence

At Daily Discovery West, a focused **Social Skills Boot Camp** was developed for participants who needed additional support navigating social situations. A group of six participants met weekly with staff to explore important topics like personal space, conversation skills, managing frustration, handling disagreements, and working as a team. The first group recently graduated—celebrating not only their completion, but the confidence and connection they’ve gained. A new group has already started, building on this momentum.

## Daily Discovery East Brings the Fair to Everyone

The Mississippi Valley Fair is a beloved summer tradition—but for many of the individuals at Daily Discovery East, accessibility challenges and extreme heat make it difficult to attend. So our staff got creative. With generous support from **Electric Doctor**, we brought the fair to them! The Daily Discovery East Fair included music, games, prizes, and even a dunk tank, making the day unforgettable and accessible to all.

“Daily Discovery is about more than just activities—it’s about creating spaces where our participants feel seen, valued, and empowered to try new things,” said Katy Decker, Chief Program Officer. “Whether it’s building social skills or enjoying a community outing, these moments are making a real difference in their lives.”

From community adventures to life skills and summertime fun, Empowering Abilities’ Daily Discovery program continues to open doors, build confidence, and help participants discover the joy in every day.

**Performance objectives for  
Daily Discovery East for the period  
April 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025**

On a scale of 1-4:

Individuals offered access to community activities: **3.9**  
Increase independence of participants: **3.7**  
Individual achieved at least one goal: **3.2**  
Ensure participants are aware of other service options: **4**  
Ensure choices are provided: **3.8**  
Individuals are satisfied with their amount of access to community activities: **3.8**  
Ensure overall satisfaction: **3.9**

Number served: **113**  
Intakes: **2**

**Performance objectives for  
Daily Discovery West for the period  
April 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025**

On a scale of 1-4:

Individuals offered access to community activities: **4**  
Increase independence of participants: **3.9**  
Individual achieved at least one goal: **3.7**  
Ensure participants are aware of other service options: **4**  
Ensure choices are provided: **3.9**  
Individuals are satisfied with their amount of access to community activities: **3.9**  
Ensure overall satisfaction: **3.9**

Number served: **116**  
Intakes: **2**



# Vendor Spotlight: Tower Trust & Investment - A Local Legacy of Partnership and Purpose

At Empowering Abilities, we're proud to work with community-minded partners who don't just support our mission—they live it. One of those long-standing partners is **Tower Trust & Investment Company**, whose roots in the Quad Cities run deep and whose commitment to doing good is just as strong as their financial stewardship.

For Tower Trust's President, Cody Allen, the journey began nearly two decades ago. New to the Quad Cities area after a move from Phoenix, Cody found early guidance from then Northwest Bank President Jim Slavens and Per Mar's Mike Duffy. That guidance led him to Empowering Abilities—Handicapped Development Center at that time—and from there, the relationship blossomed. Whether participating in golf outings, trike builds for individuals with disabilities on behalf of the North Scott Rotary Club, or serving on our board, Cody and the Tower Trust team have become invaluable champions for our mission. This partnership goes far beyond events and investments; Tower Trust has been a trusted steward of Empowering Abilities' assets, helping us grow for the future while sustaining vital services today.

Tower Trust's commitment is both personal and practical. Cody recalls moments that became core memories – like on Pixar's "Inside Out" movie—including watching participants proudly ride the trikes built just for them. Over the years, Tower Trust included candy and nuts from Empowering Abilities Boosters annual fundraiser in holiday gift baskets for their clients and even included hand-drawn cards created by Empowering Abilities' participants; clients expressed their appreciation of this gesture – it's the heart of a community that values everyone.



"Northwest Bank & Trust motto was formerly 'Your Hometown Bank' and now, Tower Trust & Investment's motto is 'Your Local Fiduciary Experts,'" Cody shared. "We believe in making a local impact, just like Empowering Abilities. What's special here is that both of our organizations are deeply rooted in this community. Both invest time, energy, and resources right here in the Quad Cities."



Cody also praised President/CEO Jeff Ashcraft's disciplined and forward-focused leadership. "Jeff makes it easy to serve as a board member—not allowing the past to hold us back, just a clear, methodical path forward."

Looking ahead, Tower Trust is excited about what's next—and being a part of this future together. Asked why other organizations should consider partnering with Empowering Abilities, Cody didn't hesitate: "If you're serious about making a meaningful difference locally, this is where you want to be. The work Empowering Abilities does—serving individuals of all abilities—is the backbone of a community that cares. Come in, take a tour – look around, and you will see the evolution. You'll be amazed at how many moving parts are working together to build a more inclusive future."

From trust and investment to shared values and vision, Tower Trust & Investment continues to demonstrate what it means to be more than just a vendor—they're a true partner in possibility.

# Celebrating the Inaugural Winner of the Debra Lindbom Memorial Scholarship: Dawn Wilcox

This year, Empowering Abilities proudly introduced the **Debra Lindbom Memorial Scholarship**, created in memory of long-time participant Debra "Deb" Lindbom. Deb was a beloved member of our community. In her honor, the scholarship was established to support Empowering Abilities staff in advancing their skills, enhancing their professional growth, and ultimately enriching the lives of the participants we serve.

The scholarship provides not only financial assistance for professional development but also carries a service commitment—ensuring that the investment directly benefits the individuals and families who are part of the Empowering Abilities community.

We are thrilled to announce that the **first-ever recipient** of the Debra Lindbom Memorial Scholarship is **Dawn Wilcox**, a dedicated and compassionate team member who will celebrate her 25th anniversary with Empowering Abilities this year.

Dawn's journey began in September 2001, when she accepted a position as an aide—thinking it would be a short-term role while adjusting to life as a single parent of three young children. What started as a temporary job quickly became a lifelong calling.

"It didn't take me long to learn more than I had in my first 31 years of life," Dawn shares. "The love, compassion, and smiles here were amazing. The participants became my second family. There was never really an opportunity to leave—who walks away from family? Even on the hardest days, just five minutes here could lift your spirits with laughter and joy."

Over the years, Dawn has built deep bonds with participants, celebrating milestones and cherishing



memories, even through the heartbreak of loss. Her unwavering commitment has shaped not only the lives of those she supports but also the culture of care and connection at Empowering Abilities.

Through the Debra Lindbom Memorial Scholarship, Dawn will have the opportunity to further develop her skills—ensuring she can continue delivering exceptional care and creative, person-centered support. This investment will strengthen her ability to enrich the daily lives of participants, fostering independence, joy, and community.

"I'll be here until I retire," Dawn says with a smile. "And retirement doesn't mean stepping away—I'll still be donating, volunteering, and staying connected. Empowering Abilities is family, and I'm grateful to be part of it."

We congratulate Dawn on this well-deserved recognition and thank her for her 25 years of dedication, compassion, and heart. The impact she makes every day is exactly what the Debra Lindbom Memorial Scholarship was designed to honor and inspire.



# Empowering Possibility - Now and Always

When you think about the mark you want to leave on the world, what comes to mind? For many, it's the hope of creating something that endures—something that continues to make a difference long after we're gone.

At Empowering Abilities, your support does exactly that. It builds futures filled with confidence, purpose, and independence for individuals with disabilities. And through thoughtful planning, your impact can continue for generations to come.

As you consider your financial and estate plans, there are several simple yet powerful ways to support Empowering Abilities in the long term. Options include:

- **A gift in your will**
- **Naming Empowering Abilities as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, IRA, or retirement plan**
- **Making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from your IRA**
- **Gifting appreciated stock or other assets**



Each of these planned giving opportunities helps ensure that the individuals we serve can continue to thrive—at work, at home, and in their communities.

Leaving a legacy isn't about wealth or grand gestures. It's about aligning your values with your vision for the future. Maybe that's supporting someone's very first job. Maybe it's helping a person with a disability live independently. Maybe it's simply ensuring that joy, dignity, and opportunity remain at the heart of our community.

Whatever form it takes, your legacy can be deeply personal—and incredibly powerful.

We encourage you to talk with your financial advisor or attorney to explore the giving strategy that's right for you. Together, we can help turn your intentions into lasting impact.



# Grateful for Grants

We are grateful to the **Quad Cities Community Foundation, Regional Development Authority, and Scott County Regional Authority** for their generous support of our *Advancing Independence Through Innovation* project.

With your partnership, we are expanding the reach of smart home technology to promote independent living, reducing caregiver stress and preventing burnout, and broadening access to essential support services in rural Scott County. Your commitment is helping us build a more inclusive, empowered future for individuals of all abilities.

We are incredibly thankful to the **Quad City Housing Council** for their ongoing commitment to supporting safe and accessible housing in our community.

A special thank-you as well to the **Scott County Regional Authority** for partnering with the **Quad City Housing Council** on a collaborative grant that provided funding to update the Group Home Residential Showers. These improvements will make a meaningful difference in the daily lives of the individuals we serve.



# Inaugural Booster Mum Sale

As many of you know, our annual Bob Ott Memorial Nut and Candy Sale has been a long-standing tradition and a favorite way to support the Boosters. However, we've recently learned that Terri Lynn, our trusted supplier for many years, is closing its doors. While we're sad to see this chapter come to a close, we're also excited to introduce a fresh and vibrant new opportunity! While we won't be continuing the sale in its traditional form, we do have a small inventory of nut products available this year. As a result, we'll be working with a limited group of outlets for this final offering.

This year, we're launching our very first Mum Sale Fundraiser and we're thrilled to be partnering with the Bohnsack Family Farm to make it happen! These beautiful fall flowers are a perfect way to brighten up porches, patios, and gardens, and every purchase will help us continue funding inclusive social events for individuals with disabilities at Empowering Abilities.

**Even if you're not purchasing mums yourself, there are still plenty of ways to get involved.**

**You can help by taking orders at your workplace, spreading the word to friends and family, or simply sharing our fundraiser on social media.**

We're confident this new initiative will blossom into a successful tradition, and we're so grateful for your continued support as we grow together. Let's make this Mum Sale a blooming success!



# Our Thanks Goes To



## Christ Church

A big thank you to Christ Church Davenport for choosing to spend their Revive Sunday at Empowering Abilities doing activities with the residents. By stepping out of the sanctuary and into our community, they brought joy, connection, and compassion to our Residential Center.



## Power of 100 Women

A heartfelt thank you to Power of 100 Women for choosing Empowering Abilities as a recipient of their generous donation. Their support will directly fuel our Daily Discovery East Reimagined project, helping us create more inclusive, engaging, and empowering experiences for individuals of all abilities. Thank you for believing in our mission and being a part of this transformative journey!



## Cities Spring Classic

Thanks to the Cities Spring Classic 5K, the proceeds we received will help advance our Daily Discovery East Reimagined project, bringing us closer to a more inclusive and engaging space for all. Thank you to the organizers, participants, and community for running with purpose and supporting Empowering Abilities!



## HANDS Auxiliary - Golf Outing

We extend our thanks to the HANDS Auxiliary for organizing a successful golf outing in support of Empowering Abilities. Your dedication, energy, and generosity help make a lasting impact on our community. We're grateful for your continued support and commitment to making a difference!

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR IN-KIND DONATION

Mr. and Mrs. Jeff and Crista Ashcraft

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Prove it at the  
**HANDS  
Auxiliary  
Trivia Night!**

**Friday, January 16**  
**Hickory Creek Event Center - Davenport, IA**

*Bring your brainiest friends, your silliest team name, and your A-game for a night of laughter, friendly competition, and community spirit. Proceeds benefit Empowering Abilities, helping adults with disabilities build skills and live their best lives.*

**Be on the lookout for registration details—  
and some exciting new twists to this year's  
event!**

## Get Involved. Make a Difference.

At Empowering Abilities, there's a place for you to help create opportunities and change lives!

### **HANDS Auxiliary**

Help raise funds and awareness through events like our Golf Outing and Trivia Night.

### **Booster Organization**

Join families, friends, and community supporters in making our programs even stronger and providing recreational activities to help participants thrive in an inclusive community.

### **Volunteer**

Share your time and talents to support participants and special projects.

Call us (563) 391-4834 or visit [empoweringabilities.org](http://empoweringabilities.org) to learn how you can get involved today!

*Together, we create opportunities and change lives!*