

FALL 2015

Ability Connections



EMPOWERING
ABILITIES

Creating Opportunities.
Changing Lives.

THE PEOPLE POWERING OUR PROGRESS

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Cover: A perfect autumn day at the pumpkin patch brought Barb Schulz smiles, laughter, and even a visit from a baby chick. Moments like these reflect the heart of Empowering Abilities – creating joyful experiences that foster belonging and connection.

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.



In this edition:

- 3 The Gift That Lasts All Year
- 4 Quarterly Snapshot: Endeavor Living
- 6 Partner Spotlight: Springfield Armory
- 7 Bringing the Quad Cities to Life - Inside Empowering Abilities
- 8 Our Thanks Goes To
- 9 Empower Hour Brings Community Together to Celebrate Ability and Inclusion
- 10 Donor Recognition



Sakeena Cunningham and Jason Gesling took the stage at Empower Hour and truly captured hearts. Through their powerful personal stories, they made us laugh, brought a few tears, and reminded everyone why inclusion, independence, and joy matter so deeply. What an inspiring duo!

The Gift That Lasts All Year

As the holiday season draws near, we're surrounded by reminders of generosity, gratitude, and togetherness. It's a time when we exchange gifts, share meals, and reflect on the blessings in our lives. But at Empowering Abilities, we're reminded daily that some of the most meaningful gifts aren't found under a tree – they're found in relationships, in purpose, and in the joy of inclusion.

Working with individuals with disabilities is one of those gifts. It's not seasonal. It doesn't expire. It's a gift that gives back every single day.

We see it in the small victories – a new word spoken, a goal reached, a smile that lights up a room.

We see it in the resilience of families, the dedication of staff and volunteers, and the way our community shows up with open hearts. These moments are powerful reminders that when we empower others, we're also enriching our own lives.

The holidays may highlight the spirit of giving, but at Empowering Abilities, that spirit is alive all year long. Every interaction is an opportunity to build connection, foster independence, and celebrate the unique strengths of every individual. Inclusion isn't just a value we talk about – it's something we live.

This season, as we gather with loved ones and reflect on the year behind us, let's carry forward the lessons we've learned. Let's remember that kindness, patience, and understanding are gifts we can offer every day. And let's recommit to building a world where everyone – regardless of ability – is seen, supported, and celebrated.

From all of us at Empowering Abilities, thank you for being part of this journey. Your support, your time, and your belief in our mission are gifts that make a lasting impact. We wish you a joyful holiday season and a new year filled with hope, connection, and possibility.


Jeff Ashenfält

Empowering Abilities President/CEO





Brennan Harper shows Endeavor Living Program Director Natalie Wenzel how he uses his new ELI device—a remote support tool that keeps him connected, independent, and on track with daily reminders, games, and more.

Quarterly Snapshot: Endeavor Living

At Empowering Abilities, we believe that home is more than a place—it's the heartbeat of **independence, dignity, and belonging**. That's why our Endeavor Living program continues to grow—both in reach and innovation.

This fall, we're proud to share that Endeavor Living has expanded with the addition of a new site—the first new site since 2019—creating more opportunities for individuals to live independently within our community while receiving personalized support from our caring, professional team. Each home provides a warm, inclusive environment where participants gain confidence, develop essential life skills, and celebrate daily achievements—big and small.

But Endeavor Living is about far more than where you live—it's about **how you live**. The program is designed to help participants connect, contribute, and thrive in the world around us. Through community outings, volunteering with local not-for-profits, and engaging in events and festivals across the Quad Cities, participants are fully immersed in the life of our community. Whether it's taking part in beloved QC traditions like the Festival of Trees, cheering at a River Bandits game, or exploring local farmers' markets and concerts in the park, Endeavor Living participants are **living life out loud—right alongside their neighbors**.

Our dedicated team works closely with each individual to help them set and achieve personal goals – whether that means learning to cook a favorite recipe, saving for a vacation, joining a local club, or traveling to see new places. These experiences help participants build lasting friendships, strengthen independence, and embrace the world with confidence and joy.

And as Endeavor Living grows, we're pairing these personal experiences with **cutting-edge innovation**. Thanks to the generous support of the **Quad Cities Community Foundation, the Scott County Regional Authority, and the Regional Development Authority**, Empowering Abilities is

introducing remote supports into several Endeavor Living sites—bringing safety, connection, and empowerment together through technology.

Using smart-home systems such as **two-way communication tools, personalized reminders, and step-by-step video instructions**, participants gain an extra layer of support—like having another staff member available when needed. Importantly, these remote supports **do not replace direct staff support**; they **add** to it—enhancing safety, convenience, and confidence for participants, families, and fellow staff.

The pilot phase, launching with select participants at select sites, allows each system to be customized to meet individual needs and preferences. Participants and staff are embracing the technology, describing it as intuitive, user-friendly, and empowering. As the program continues to evolve, our goal is to meet participants where they are today—while fostering greater independence for tomorrow. These advancements mark another exciting step toward ensuring that individuals of all abilities can live independently and safely while enjoying full, active lives in the community they love.

Because through **Endeavor Living at Empowering Abilities**, we're not just providing homes—we're helping people **create opportunities, chase dreams, and live their very best lives**.

Performance objectives for Endeavor Living for the period July 1, 2025 - September 30, 2025

On a scale of 1-4:

- Individuals offered access to community activities: **4**
- Increase independence of participants: **3.8**
- Individual achieved at least one goal: **3.8**
- 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: **3.9**
- Ensure overall satisfaction: **3.9**

Number served: **71**
Intakes: **3**

Partner Spotlight: Springfield Armory

For decades, Springfield Armory has proudly partnered with Empowering Abilities, building a relationship rooted in trust, quality, and community impact. What began as a good business decision has blossomed into a meaningful collaboration that continues to strengthen year after year.

A Partnership Built on Dependability

Springfield Armory relies on Empowering Abilities for critical support—from warehouse space to timely, high-quality production work. “Empowering Abilities can always be counted on to meet deadlines, and the work performed is top-notch,” their team shared. “Because of their assistance over the years, we’ve not only met deadlines but also increased profits.”

Resilience Through Challenge

One of the partnership’s defining moments came during the COVID-19 pandemic. While many businesses closed and workers were scarce, Empowering Abilities kept moving forward. “We counted on them to deliver—and they did,” Springfield Armory recalled. That dependability cemented the relationship as more than just a business arrangement; it became a source of stability in uncertain times.

People Who Make the Difference

What makes Empowering Abilities such a valuable partner? Springfield Armory points directly to the people. “The staff is professional, proud of their work, and we are thankful for each employee’s help. It’s the workers that really make the difference.” This shared work ethic—showing up, stepping up, and giving your best—has created a strong foundation of mutual respect.



Community at the Core

Both organizations share a commitment to building a thriving community. Springfield Armory values sourcing locally, creating opportunities, and supporting businesses, schools, and families across the Quad Cities. Their partnership with Empowering Abilities is one way they ensure diverse stakeholders come together to foster opportunity and success.

Looking Ahead

The future of this partnership is bright. Springfield Armory is committed to continuing the relationship, confident in Empowering Abilities’ ability to deliver “through thick and thin.” As they note, this isn’t just about business—it’s about family. “We consider Empowering Abilities part of our family and thank them for their contribution to our success.”

A Recommendation to Others

Springfield Armory doesn’t hesitate to encourage other businesses to explore a partnership with Empowering Abilities. “Take the time to visit the facility and see the value for yourself. Our work relationship is just another great example of creative partnerships garnering success.”

Bringing the Quad Cities to Life – Inside Empowering Abilities

As the year ends, something extraordinary is happening at Empowering Abilities – and it's powered by you.

Every day, participants come through our doors and discover joy, confidence, and belonging. Thanks to your generosity, we're nearing the finish line of reimagining **Daily Discovery East** – a bold transformation of our Brady Street location into a vibrant, QC-themed space where imagination meets community.

Reimagining Possibility—Together

This project brings the Quad Cities to life inside our walls through colorful design and interactive, game-based activities. Participants will connect with local landmarks and icons, explore familiar places, and celebrate the community they call home – all while building confidence, friendships, and pride.

More Than a Makeover

Every wall and corner is designed to inspire curiosity and belonging. It's more than décor – it's discovery, inclusion, and joy in motion. Picture participants stepping up to an interactive ballpark

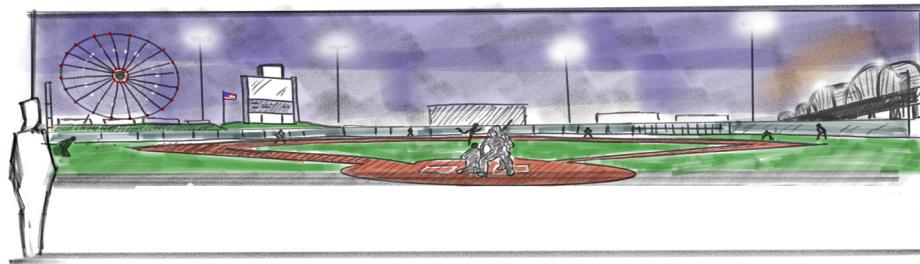


challenge, hearing cheers, and thinking, "I can do this!"

You Are the Heart of This Transformation

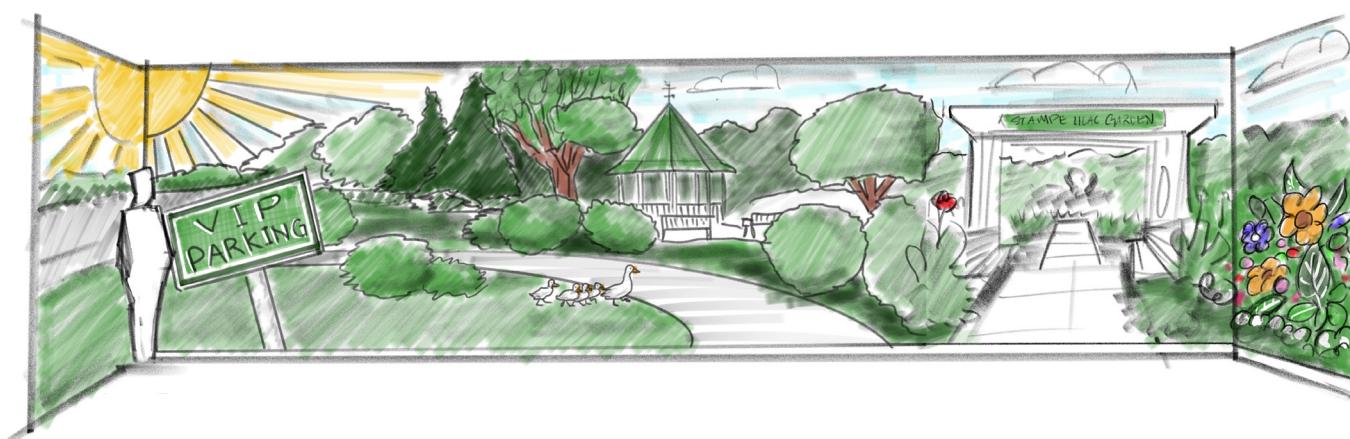
Your year-end gift helps:

- Create hands-on experiences that encourage discovery
- Celebrate the people and places of the Quad Cities
- Build a welcoming, inclusive space where everyone belongs



Join Us In Bringing "QC Land" To Life

Scan the QR code to make your gift today and help us finish strong—creating a space where joy, independence, and belonging thrive.



Our Thanks Goes To



River Bandits

A big thank you to the Quad Cities River Bandits for spending time with us! Their visit, Q&A session, and autograph signing brought so much joy and excitement to the individuals we serve. Your generosity and connection with our community made a lasting impact, and we're grateful for your support and spirit.

Electric Doctor

Thank you to Electric Doctor for their generous donation that helped Daily Discovery East host their very own Fair! With extreme heat making it unsafe to attend outdoor events, their support made it possible for individuals to enjoy a fun, inclusive celebration in a safe and comfortable environment. Thank you for helping us create joyful experiences for everyone we serve!



Katun

A warm thank-you to Katun for treating Daily Discovery West to a fun and delicious ice cream social! Their kindness and generosity brought smiles, laughter, and a sweet break to the individuals we serve. We're grateful for your support in helping us create joyful, inclusive experiences.

Augustana Football Team

Thank you to the Augustana Football Team for welcoming our folks to watch practice and take part in a meet and greet! Their kindness and hospitality made for an unforgettable experience for the individuals we serve.



WQAD Beast

A huge thank-you to WQAD for bringing the BEAST to Daily Discovery! The participants and staff had a blast checking it out and learning more about weather through their engaging and educational visit. Their time and effort made a meaningful impact, and we're grateful for the opportunity to connect and learn in such a fun way.



VanDerGinst Law

We're so grateful to VanDerGinst Law for donating a suite at the River Bandits game! Thanks to their generosity, the individuals we serve were able to enjoy the game in a safe and comfortable environment, with the option to cool off indoors when needed. Their support helped make this memorable experience both fun and accessible for everyone.

WHBF-TV/KGCW-TV/KLJB-TV

A heartfelt thanks to Jason Happel and our friends at WHBF-TV/KGCW-TV/KLJB-TV for generously sharing their booth space with Empowering Abilities during Special Needs Day at the Mississippi Valley Fair! Your partnership helped us spread our mission of inclusion and opportunity to even more members of our community.



John Deere Classic Birdies for Charity

A huge thank-you to the John Deere Classic Birdies for Charity for their incredible 9% match! Their support helps us stretch every dollar further, making a meaningful impact in the lives of the individuals we serve. We're grateful for your commitment to our mission and your investment in creating inclusive opportunities.

Boosters

A heartfelt thank-you to the Boosters for organizing a fantastic picnic for Daily Discovery and for their support with the successful Booster Mum Sale! Proceeds from the sale help fund social activities for the individuals at Empowering Abilities, creating more opportunities for connection, joy, and inclusion. We're so grateful for your continued dedication to our mission and community.

Modern Woodmen of America

Thank you to Modern Woodmen of America for their amazing volunteer support during the Booster Mum Sale! Their help loading mums as people picked them up made the process smooth and enjoyable for everyone. We're grateful for the time, energy, and commitment to supporting social activities for the individuals at Empowering Abilities.



The Ridge

A huge thank-you to The Ridge for donating proceeds from their golf outing to Empowering Abilities! Your generosity helps us continue creating inclusive opportunities and meaningful experiences for the individuals we serve. We're grateful for your support and commitment to our mission.

EMPOWER HOUR

Empower Hour Brings Community Together to Celebrate Ability and Inclusion

More than 200 community leaders came together for Empower Hour—an inspiring celebration of ability, inclusion, and community spirit! Guests had the opportunity to experience the mission of Empowering Abilities firsthand, hearing powerful personal stories from families and participants that highlighted the impact of our work every single day.

From laughter and shared joy to heartfelt moments that moved the room, the event truly embodied what it means to live empowered. Attendees left inspired—not only by the stories shared but by the resilience, creativity, and humor that shine through our participants' journeys. It was a meaningful reminder that empowerment happens when a community comes together to see and celebrate everyone's abilities.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our generous event sponsors who made Empower Hour possible:

Quad City Bank & Trust, Tower Trust & Investment Company, Modern Woodmen of America, AssuredPartners, MindFire Communications, The Gentry Shop, and SSAB..

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Meet C.J. Bear!

Empowering Abilities is grateful to be the 2025 recipient of net proceeds from Von Maur's beloved C.J. Bear—a holiday tradition 14 years in the making!

Each year, Von Maur shoppers look forward to welcoming a cuddly companion for the season, and this year's bear is dressed in his coziest holiday sweater and ready to spread cheer! Available in Von Maur stores through this holiday season!

Purchases will help empower individuals with disabilities to live, work, and thrive more independently.





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SAVE THE DATE
Friday, January 16, 2026

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Hickory Creek Event Center
3504 Hickory Grove Road,
Davenport, IA 52806

Doors open at 6 pm.
Trivia starts at 7 pm.

Full bar available for drinks.
Bring your own snacks.
50/50 and raffle basket tickets
available for purchase.



To register for a table, please call
Lexi Keppy at 563-391-4834 or email
lexikeppy@empoweringabilities.org.



The Final Booster Organization
Bob Ott Memorial Nut Sale
is underway!

**Sale ends
December 31, 2025**

There is LIMITED inventory available so be sure
to email or call Lexi Keppy to get yours today!

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