

WINTER 2026

# inspiration



EMPOWERING  
ABILITIES

Creating Opportunities.  
Changing Lives.

# THE PEOPLE POWERING OUR PROGRESS

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Cover: With a smile that says it all, Theresa Lemen is thriving in her Community Employment job at The Fountains—learning valuable job skills and contributing to her workplace every day.

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.



# Big Hopes, Big Energy: Welcome to 2026

As we kick off 2026, I'm feeling genuinely hopeful about what's ahead for Empowering Abilities—and that optimism comes straight from the community around us. Every day, we see people showing kindness, encouragement, and support for the individuals we serve. When that kind of energy surrounds you, it's impossible not to feel excited about the future.

Just recently, a local business owner pulled me aside and said something that really stuck. He told me, *"I love when your participants come in. They're always well-mannered, always positive, and they're some of my most consistent customers."*

Comments like that remind us that our participants don't just belong in the community, they enhance it. Their presence creates connection, and their consistency builds trust. People notice, and it matters.

One of the things I'm especially excited about this year is the continued growth of our **ELI (Endeavor Living Independence)** initiative. ELI is more than just "smart technology" in someone's home—it's a game-changer. It gives individuals tools that help them manage routines, build confidence, and stay safe while taking bigger steps toward independence. For some, it means being able to cook on their own for the first time. For others, it means keeping up with daily goals or finding the confidence to spend more time in the community.

The most powerful part? ELI doesn't replace personal support, it strengthens it. It allows our staff to focus on meaningful interactions while giving participants the freedom to grow, learn, and take ownership of their day. It's a modern approach that truly puts independence within reach.

Alongside ELI, we're continuing to expand opportunities for skill-building, community involvement, and personal growth. And we're deepening our partnerships with local businesses and organizations who share our belief in what's possible.

What gives me the most hope is all of our families, caregivers, staff, volunteers, and partners. Your support fuels every success.

Here's to a 2026 filled with connection, confidence, and new milestones—together.

  
Empowering Abilities President/CEO



CAPTION





*Cross-trained and always ready to help, David Olson completes labeling work in Enterprise—one of the many roles where his skills shine.*

# Quarterly Snapshot: Employment Services in Action

At Empowering Abilities, Employment Services are about more than jobs—they're about purpose, pride, and possibility. Through our **Prevocational**, **Community Employment**, and **Enterprise** programs, individuals build skills, confidence, and independence while contributing meaningfully to their workplace and community.

Our **Prevocational Services** focus on skill-building and readiness—helping participants develop work habits, social skills, and task proficiency in a supportive environment. **Community Employment** connects individuals to jobs with local employers, offering on-the-job coaching and ongoing support to ensure long-term success. **Enterprise Services**, our in-house employment program, provides paid work opportunities where associates take on real production tasks while continuing to grow and cross-train.

A shining example of Enterprise in action is **David Olson**, a long-time participant with Empowering Abilities. David is proud of what he does—and especially proud of earning a paycheck. As he puts it best: "Payday = Money, Money, Money!"

David is cross-trained across many Enterprise jobs, including cutting paper, boxing parts, running the auto-bagger, stapling boxes with the foot stapler, packing pallets, labeling parts, and more. Staff regularly share that David is willing to use his skills wherever he's needed most—making him a valued and dependable member of the team.

Over more than two decades, David's journey with Empowering Abilities has continued to evolve. He previously worked in the sheltered workshop and is now a resident of Endeavor Living, sharing a home with three roommates. Since joining the residential

program, David has experienced significant improvements in his health and overall quality of life.

Because of his participation in both Enterprise and community-supported living, David's life experiences have expanded in exciting ways—including travel around the globe. One highlight? A recent vacation to Hawaii, where he especially loved the leis. He's already saving up for his next trip.

Outside of work, David enjoys bowling and proudly competes in the **Special Olympics**. In his downtime, he also loves watching TV and movies—particularly anything starring his favorite superhero, Spider-Man.

David's story reflects what Employment Services at Empowering Abilities are all about: meaningful work, growing independence, and living a full, connected life. We're proud of David—and of the many individuals whose talents, determination, and contributions strengthen our organization and our community every day.

## Performance objectives for Employment Services during the period October 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

On a scale of 1-4:

Were offered access to community activities: **3.9**

Were made aware of options to access the community **3.6**

Increased their independence: **3.8**

Achieved at least one goal: **3.8**

Were offered choice of activities: **3.7**

Were satisfied with their community access: **3.5**

Were overall satisfied with services: **3.7**

Number served: **51**

Intakes: **4**

# Honoring the Heart of Empowering Abilities

Each year, Empowering Abilities proudly honors individuals whose dedication, perseverance, and compassion bring our mission to life. At our Annual Recognition Dinner, we celebrate excellence across our programs—recognizing staff members who go above and beyond in their roles, participants who demonstrate personal growth and achievement, and one exceptional individual whose legacy reflects the very heart of our organization.

The **Staff Excellence Awards** recognize outstanding employees from each program area whose leadership, professionalism, and commitment elevate the care and support we provide every day. **The Participant Achievement Awards** honor individuals who have shown meaningful progress, independence, and personal growth—celebrating milestones that reflect determination, resilience, and success.

The evening also includes the presentation of the **Gary Ashcraft Memorial Award**, our highest honor. This award recognizes an employee who embodies Gary Ashcraft's enduring legacy of integrity, kindness, teamwork, and unwavering dedication to Empowering Abilities.

Together, these awards highlight the people who make Empowering Abilities a place where individuals are supported, celebrated, and empowered to thrive.



## **Jesse Ashford - Residential Center Participant Achievement Award**

Jesse Ashford was recognized for his incredible positivity and strength. Active in both Daily Discovery and

Residential services, Jesse brings joy to everyday moments through his laughter, love of tractors, and warm connections with peers and staff. His cheerful spirit is a bright light in our community.



## **Crystal Castile - Residential Center Staff Excellence Award**

Crystal Castile was honored for her outstanding leadership and dedication within the Residential Center. Since

joining Empowering Abilities in 2020, she has trained more than 100 staff members, supported exceptional retention rates, and consistently provided compassionate, high-quality care. Crystal's impact is felt across the organization every day.



## **Jill Sobie - Daily Discovery Participant Achievement Award**

With nearly four decades at Empowering Abilities, Jill Sobie was celebrated for her calm presence, adaptability, and steady commitment through years of growth and change. Respected by peers and loved by those she serves, Jill's kindness and quiet strength continue to make a lasting difference.



## **Brittane Ashby - Daily Discovery Staff Excellence Award**

Brittane Ashby was recognized for her versatility, enthusiasm, and unwavering support of participants. From leading morning dance parties to mentoring in Autism classrooms and helping in Group Homes, Brittane brings energy, compassion, and reliability to every role she fills.



## **Mark Belgarde - Endeavor Living Participant Achievement Award**

Mark Belgarde was honored for his positive spirit, independence, and active engagement in the community. A proud Special Olympics athlete, Mark embraces new opportunities with grace and determination, inspiring those around him through his kindness, perseverance, and commitment to personal growth.



## **Trena McCartney - Endeavor Living Staff Excellence Award**

Trena McCartney was recognized for her compassionate leadership, advocacy, and attention to detail. Whether supporting participants at events or ensuring individual needs are met, Trena's reliability and dedication embody the heart of Endeavor Living.



### Quinn Adams - Employment Services Participant Achievement Award

Quinn Adams was celebrated for his strong work ethic and independence in his role as a Front of Store Attendant at Target. Known for his positive attitude and reliability, Quinn continues to thrive in the workplace and make a positive impression throughout the community.



### Todd Goldsberry - Gary Ashcraft Memorial Award Recipient

Todd Goldsberry, Environmental Services Director at Empowering Abilities, was named the 2025 Gary Ashcraft Memorial Award—an honor reserved for team members who exemplify integrity, compassion, teamwork, and unwavering dedication. With more than 30 years of experience, Todd is the steady force behind the scenes who keeps our facilities safe, welcoming, and running smoothly. In 2025, Todd faced a serious health challenge that reminded all of us just how deeply he is woven into the fabric of Empowering Abilities. His absence was felt not only in daily operations, but in the spirit of our organization. His return was met with gratitude and joy—a powerful reflection of his resilience, the strength of our community, and the positive impact he has on everyone around him. Todd’s work goes far beyond fixing what’s broken. He brings dignity to every space, pride to every project, and kindness to every interaction. His commitment reflects the very values this award represents, and we are proud to honor Todd Goldsberry as this year’s Gary Ashcraft Memorial Award recipient.

### Don't miss the full stories behind the honors!

Scan the QR code or visit the Empowering Abilities YouTube Channel to watch the videos featuring each of our deserving honorees. Their journeys, impact, and moments of pride deserve the spotlight—and trust us, they're worth the watch!

Watch the playlist here:  
YouTube Playlist - Honoree Features

[www.tinyurl.com/2025RecognitionDinnerVideos](http://www.tinyurl.com/2025RecognitionDinnerVideos)



# Leadership and Gratitude

We are thankful for the people who help guide and support our mission.

We are pleased to welcome three new members to our Board of Directors: **Tracy Lindaman, Kendra Mulcahy Glazier, and Eric Langan**. Each brings valuable experience, strong community connections, and a shared commitment to inclusion and service. Their leadership will help guide Empowering Abilities as we continue to support individuals with disabilities in living, working, and thriving in our community.

We thank all of our board members—past and present—for their service, leadership, and continued belief in the mission of Empowering Abilities.



**Tracy Lindaman**



**Kendra Mulcahy Glazier**



**Eric Langan**



The Hall of Fame wall at Empowering Abilities—celebrating decades of partnership, service, and community impact.

## Hall of Fame: A Legacy of Support

Each year, Empowering Abilities proudly honors individuals and organizations whose generosity, advocacy, and leadership have made a lasting impact on our mission. Our Hall of Fame inductees embody the very heart of Empowering Abilities—championing inclusion, strengthening community, and helping create opportunities for individuals with disabilities to thrive.

This year’s inductees represent the power of partnership, service, and courageous storytelling. Together, they reflect the many ways support shows up—and the profound difference it makes.

### Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131

For many years, the Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131 has stood shoulder to shoulder with Empowering Abilities, offering unwavering support, kindness, and a heartfelt commitment to creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Their dedication shines most visibly through their annual Tootsie Roll sales—a cherished tradition that continues to make a meaningful impact year after year. Through countless volunteer hours and tireless



Members of the Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131 accept their induction into the Empowering Abilities Hall of Fame, honoring years of generosity, volunteerism, and steadfast commitment to creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

effort, the Knights turn a simple gesture into vital funding that strengthens programs, fuels experiences, and brings joy to the individuals and families we serve.

What makes this partnership especially meaningful is the spirit behind it. The Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131 gives generously with humility, sincerity, and a deep belief in the power of community. Their actions embody the core values of the Knights—charity, unity, fraternity, and service—uplifting not only Empowering Abilities, but the entire Quad Cities region.

This year, we are proud to honor the Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131 as members of the Empowering Abilities Hall of Fame. Their loyalty, generosity, and enduring partnership have left a lasting mark, and we are deeply grateful for every year they have walked alongside us.

## Modern Woodmen of America

For decades, Modern Woodmen has been a steady and trusted supporter of Empowering Abilities—showing up year after year with generosity, leadership, and a genuine commitment to building a more connected and inclusive community.

Their impact can be felt across nearly every part of our organization. Modern Woodmen team members have volunteered at countless events, served on the HANDS Auxiliary, and taken on meaningful leadership roles on our Board of Directors. Through their time, expertise, and dedication, they have helped strengthen programs, support operations, and expand opportunities for the individuals and families we serve.

Their support also extends through ongoing financial investments in our mission. From event sponsorships and donations to participation in fundraising efforts like golf outings, trivia nights, seasonal campaigns, and community celebrations, Modern Woodmen consistently helps ensure our events are not only successful—but joyful and welcoming for all.

Behind the scenes, their print shop has provided discounted services as an act of community service, elevating our communications and outreach. This support allows us to better share our stories, connect with families, and raise awareness throughout the Quad Cities—amplifying our mission in powerful ways.



**Members of the Modern Woodmen of America team accept their induction into the Empowering Abilities Hall of Fame, honoring decades of leadership, service, and a steadfast commitment to building an inclusive and connected community.**

We are proud to welcome Modern Woodmen of America into the Empowering Abilities Hall of Fame, honoring their legacy of service, leadership, and community spirit—and their enduring belief in “people helping people.”

## Wendy McDonagh

While our organizational partners demonstrate the power of collective action, Wendy McDonagh reminds



**Hall of Fame Honoree Wendy McDonagh, pictured here with her husband Kevin, celebrates this well-deserved recognition for her dedication and service to Empowering Abilities.**

us of the extraordinary impact one courageous voice can have.

Wendy is a passionate and heartfelt advocate for Empowering Abilities, generously sharing her family’s story with honesty, warmth, and deep love. Through lunch-and-learn conversations and from the Empower Hour stage, Wendy has bravely stepped outside her comfort zone to speak from the heart—reaching and inspiring countless people across our community.

Wendy is always eager to talk about Empowering Abilities because it allows her to share the extraordinary light of her son, Danny. For the past 12 years, Danny has been a participant at Empowering Abilities. Wendy speaks openly about her family’s journey—one without traditional milestones, yet rich with celebrations of who Danny is: sweet, joyful, profoundly autistic, virtually non-verbal, and living with a seizure disorder and significant intellectual disabilities. As Wendy lovingly shares, he is “our perfect boy... a bundle of love and the light of our lives.”

Each weekday, Danny arrives at our Brady Street location and is welcomed with open arms. Even on challenging days—when Danny may feel overstimulated or overwhelmed—he is accepted without question. As Wendy beautifully describes it: “Always supported. Always understood. Always loved.” His days are filled with creativity, connection, activity, and compassionate care.

Through her advocacy, Wendy reminds us that Empowering Abilities is more than a program—it is a community. A place where adults with disabilities are celebrated for who they are, families feel seen and supported, and everyone has a place “to be happy.”

We are honored to welcome Wendy McDonagh into the Empowering Abilities Hall of Fame for her compassion, courage, and the powerful voice she lends to our mission.

# Partner Spotlight: Carpetland USA

Meaningful partnerships are built on shared values, authentic relationships, and a belief that stronger communities emerge when everyone is included. That spirit is at the heart of the partnership between Empowering Abilities and Carpetland USA—and it's one we're proud to highlight.

For **Eric Langan, owner of Carpetland USA**, partnering with Empowering Abilities was a natural fit. "First and foremost, Empowering Abilities serves a tremendous need in the Quad Cities and surrounding communities," Eric shared. "I've always admired the people involved—their attitudes toward life, relationships, and challenges are truly inspiring. We could all learn a lot from their example."

The partnership has grown in both meaningful and practical ways. Carpetland USA has supported flooring projects across Empowering Abilities' residential and commercial properties, helping create safe, welcoming spaces. The company has also partnered with Empowering Abilities' Enterprise program to produce branded apparel for Carpetland USA's warehouse staff. "They do a great job," Eric noted. "And beyond the work itself, there's a real sense of goodwill that comes from partnering with such an impactful organization."

When asked what sets Empowering Abilities apart, Eric's answer was simple: people. "From leadership and staff to residents and participants, people are their greatest strength," he said. "They create a sense of community where everyone feels welcomed—and empowered."

Eric believes partnerships like this have a ripple effect. "I hope our collaboration positively impacts those served by Empowering Abilities, their loved ones, and the broader community. I'm a big believer in the 'it takes a village' mentality."



We are also pleased to share that Eric has recently joined the **Empowering Abilities Board of Directors**. "I'm looking forward to actively engaging as a board member and advocating for this wonderful organization," he said.

Would he recommend partnering with Empowering Abilities? "Absolutely," Eric added. "Visit a location, attend the annual golf outing, volunteer for a day—and you'll see why."

We are grateful for Carpetland USA's partnership and thrilled to welcome Eric Langan to our Board. Together, we're building inclusive spaces, stronger connections, and a more empowered community.



**Eric and Jenny  
Langan**

# Our Thanks Goes To



## The Boosters - Holiday Fun

We're so thankful to the Boosters Organization for making unforgettable moments possible for our participants! Our community enjoys amazing events throughout the year, including the annual Halloween and Christmas dances, the Valentine's Day dance, and other fun social gatherings. Their dedication brings joy and connection to so many, and we truly appreciate their continued support in creating these special experiences!



## SAU Bee Adaptive & Inclusive Club - Students at Halloween Dance

A big thank you to the SAU Bee Adaptive & Inclusive students for bringing their incredible energy and creativity to our Halloween and Christmas dances! Their enthusiasm and commitment to inclusion made these events truly special, filling the room with laughter, smiles, and unforgettable memories. We appreciate their support in helping us create fun, welcoming celebrations for everyone!



## Davenport Police Association - Thanksgiving Tradition

We deeply appreciate the Davenport Police Association for continuing their wonderful tradition of hosting a Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner for our staff and participants. Their kindness and commitment create a warm, festive atmosphere that makes the holiday season truly special for everyone. Thank you for bringing joy and togetherness to our community year after year!

## Holiday Giving - Brittany's Gifts, Jeff & Linda Manders, and the Elves

A huge shoutout to Brittany's Gifts, Jeff and Linda Manders, and the amazing "Elves" from Davenport West, North, and Central High Schools for making the holidays brighter! Their generosity through thoughtful gifts, hygiene essentials, and activity supplies bring comfort and joy to individuals in our Residential Center and Group Homes. Thank you for spreading cheer and making a difference!



## HANDS Annual Donation - \$39,500 at Recognition Event

We are thrilled to recognize the incredible impact of HANDS Auxiliary! Through their dedication and annual fundraising efforts, they contributed an outstanding \$39,500 to Empowering Abilities, presented during our annual Recognition Dinner. This generous support helps us create meaningful opportunities and enrich the lives of those we serve every day. Thank you, HANDS Auxiliary, for your unwavering commitment to making a difference!

## Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131 - Tootsie Roll Drive Donation

We're grateful to the Knights of Columbus Hispanic Council 14131 for their incredible generosity! Thanks to the proceeds from their annual Tootsie Roll Drive, we're able to provide programs and services that make a real difference for individuals with disabilities. Your continued support helps create opportunities and enrich lives in our community—thank you for standing with us!

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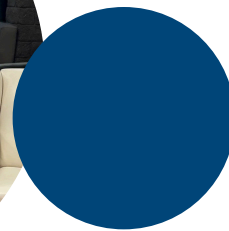
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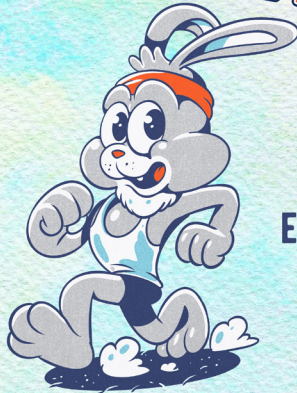
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