



Annual Meeting Program Report **2018**

Programs of The Arc of Omaha

Adult Social/Recreational and Training Program

- The Adult Services program has continued its partnership with the City of Omaha's Therapeutic Recreation Department for monthly large-group events.
- The partnership with Jewish Family Services has also continued with annual events in the community, including a riverboat party in the summer.
- Several social events have been held throughout the year, including Shop and Learn at Whole Foods, Lunch and Film Club at Westwood Cinemas 8, The Sweetheart Dance, Ability Experience Luau, Halloween Dance, Fit Club, and Wine(d) Down Painting Party.
- Fitness Club which met once per month expanded the number of participants in the program and added elements of HealthMatters™, a wellness program aimed at improving health and health promotion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the state of Nebraska.
- Class topics for this year focused on social skills and relationship boundaries with the Circles series, BE SAFE training which emphasized safe interactions with law enforcement, and expanded to wellness with Amanda Clark serving as Program Coordinator for HealthMatters™ classes.

Self-Advocacy Program

- Project II was recognized in 2017 with the "Chapter of the Year" award at the People First Convention.
- OWCI Program Coordinator, Aimee Addison generously volunteered her time to help facilitate the Project II program and its 10 members. Mary Angus and Becky Kalinski assisted with implementation of the program.
- In 2017, Project II worked on self-advocacy presentations and trainings, wrote letters to State Senators and Congress regarding Medicaid cuts, attended a Region VI DD Council meeting, and also participated in the Disability Pride Day in Lincoln.
- The group worked diligently on fundraising efforts throughout the year to raise money for the transportation portion of their convention trip.
- Many new members attended the 40th Annual People First Convention in Kearney in October.

Ultimate Life Program

- Ultimate Life is a unique and popular small-group program designed to combat the lack of social opportunities faced by adults with disabilities by offering 90+ community-based activities annually. This program provides access to the community, transportation, and peer friendships as well as the potential to increase social and independent living skills
- The Ultimate Life program offers adults with disabilities on average, eight community activities monthly. Activities are selected with input from trained staff and feedback from program participants with shared costs in order to maintain the program.

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- Additionally, one-on-one opportunities that are customized to the individual such as attending horseback riding lessons, concerts, sporting events and attending work-related or other social activities are also included in this program.
 - Census: 108
 - Partners: Enrichment Foundation
 - Impact: The Ultimate Life program provided opportunities for adults with disabilities to access the community, enhance independence, make new friends, and increase social skills and self-esteem. Ultimate Life was developed to address unmet needs and the lack of age appropriate social opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. Throughout 2017, small groups, aged 18 years and older participated in 93 activities.

Best Buddies Program

- Ollie Webb Center, Inc. continued as the Host Site program for Omaha in partnership with Creighton University.
- Best Buddies has 62 one-to-one mentoring matches where college students are paired with adults who have disabilities, aged from 19-50.
- There are an additional 95 Associate Members who are college students participating in group-mentoring activities.
- Social opportunities for buddies are arranged in the community every month during the school year, including sporting events, holiday parties, and tours to the zoo.

Just Friends Program

- There are 38 individuals in one-on-one matches in the teen mentoring program with most of the matches extending for more than one year.
- There are 123 people in the program total. If an individual is on the waitlist for a mentor, they are welcome to attend program events, activities, and classes.
- Outreach for increasing mentor numbers has been conducted with Midlands Mentoring Partnership, Creighton Prep; Omaha South, Marian, Westside, Duchesne, Burke, Mercy, and Skutt High Schools; Brownell-Talbott School; and the MAHA music festival.
- Just Friends partnered with Creighton University, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and many youth groups across the Omaha metro area to help fulfill volunteer needs.
- UNO's Volunteer Program Assessment interviewed half of the mentors and received one of the most positive responses of any program assessed in 2017. OWCI staff followed up with all mentors in 2018 for additional feedback.
- Just Friends held monthly social events throughout the community, including the Halloween Dance, Lunch and Film Club at Westwood Cinemas 8, Shop and Learn at Whole Foods, and Fit Club.
- Just Friends offered classes focused on social skills and relationship boundaries with the Circles series and expanded to wellness with additional HealthMatters™ classes and the BE SAFE training, emphasizing safe interactions with law enforcement.

Next Chapter Book Club

- The Next Chapter Book Club (NCBC) provides adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities of all reading levels the opportunity to read, discuss books, and socialize while participating in an age appropriate activity.
- The NCBC focuses on three major components: community inclusion, social connectedness and literacy.

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- Since launching the program in June of 2011, this popular program rapidly expanded to meet community demand and fill social opportunity gaps. OWCI currently offers 14 NCBC's in the Omaha metro Area.
 - Census: 120 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities encompassing 4,320 hours of participation.
 - Partners: 38 community volunteer facilitators and NCBC at The Ohio State University Nisonger Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.
 - Impact: For the sessions offered in 2017-2018, 99% maintained or improved social skills and 98% maintained or improved literacy skills while promoting enhanced opportunities for community inclusion, social connectedness and retention or expansion of literacy skills, leading to a better quality of life and self-sufficiency for program members.

First Chapter Book Club

- The First Chapter Book Club (FCBC) provided high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities of all reading levels and abilities the opportunity to read, discuss books, and socialize while participating in an age appropriate activity.
- The FCBC focused on three major components: literacy, community inclusion and social connectedness; all areas that are a challenge for most high school students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- FCBC met once a week after school for an hour for 10 weeks each semester and the curriculum centered on high-interest, low-level, age appropriate books.
 - Census: 68 high school students ages 14-18, totaling 2,720 hours of participation within six active clubs in the Omaha metro area.
 - Partners: Omaha South, Omaha Burke, Omaha Central, Westside, Papillion South and Papillion High Schools (7th Club - Omaha North is on hiatus).
 - Impact: All participants, both students with disabilities and typical peers were impacted by the experience of an inclusive book club program.
 - 100% of members increased or maintained social skills by paying attention to both books and other participants.
 - 97.5% of members increased or maintained social skills by answering questions associated with the reading material presented.
 - 100% of members increased or maintained their ability to comment on connections between book and life.
 - 97.5% of members increased or maintained their ability to predict story events.

Stars Basketball Program

- The OWCI Stars Basketball league provides a league where players with disabilities are supported and understood, serving ages 5 through adulthood. The adapted game allows the players to have team experiences that are not often available to them with their typical peer group due to physical and cognitive differences.
- Offered in the spring and fall, players worked on all of the typical team lessons at an individualized pace and experienced the joy and excitement of playing basketball.
 - Census: 70 athletes in both the spring and fall.
 - Partners: 25 community volunteers, UNO Women's Basketball Program, Omaha Public Schools, and the Autism Center of Nebraska,

Impact: Promoted and fostered a basketball team experience with adaptations and/or modifications that allowed participation of all players with disabilities.

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Parent to Parent Program

- Parent to Parent (P2P) activities provided families and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities an opportunity to learn and practice social skills in a permissible, comfortable, and understanding environment as well as to connect and provide support to each other. Additionally, Support Parent Trainings were offered to individuals and area organizations, including a new partnership with Omaha Public Schools.

- OWCI P2P events this year:
 - Easter Egg Hunt: 213 participants. OWCI partnered with Autism Society Nebraska, College of St. Mary, College of St. Mary Do Unto Others and Student Occupational Therapy Association as well as Creighton University Student Occupational Therapy Association.
 - Hooked on Fishing: 172 participants. OWCI partnered with Small Boat Bass Club and Private Property Owners.
 - Fire and Safety Day: 300 Participants. OWCI partnered with the Bellevue Fire Department, Autism Society Nebraska, Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, and the Autism Center of Nebraska.
 - BE SAFE the Movie Interactive Screening: 24 parents and 25 individuals with disabilities. OWCI partnered with Autism Society Nebraska, Autism Center of Nebraska, and the Down Syndrome Alliance.
 - Offutt Special Needs Air Show: 38 participants. OWCI partnered with Offutt Air Force Base.
 - Day on the Water: 110 participants. OWCI partnered with Missouri River Paddlers, Tomes Family, and Nebraska State Parks and Recreation.
 - Mighty Mavericks: 250 participants. OWCI partnered with Children’s Respite care Center, United Cerebral Palsy of Nebraska, and UNO.
 - Caregivers Retreat: 120 participants. OWCI partnered with The Enrichment Foundation, Tools for Caregivers, Respite Across the Lifespan, United Cerebral Palsy of Nebraska, Brain Injury Alliance-Nebraska, and Martinwood.
 - Harvey Help in a Zip: 167 individuals in need in Texas served due to the generosity of OWCI families and partnering organization, Garro Behavioral Consulting in Waller, TX.

PRISM Project

- Parent Resource Information and Support Meetings (PRISM) is a monthly resource for families of individuals with developmental disabilities to access emotional support, education, and services. This outreach project enables families to lessen the stress and mental strain of not knowing where to get answers, combined with the opportunity to gain knowledge on how to prepare an individual with a disability to be classroom and workforce ready.
- PRISM offers a minimum of eight events per year of training and support, and provides information from guest speakers that are subject matter experts in the field of disability-related topics. These events provide parents a forum to receive the most current information and be able to discuss and ask questions. The opportunity for networking between families is one of the most rewarding aspects of the PRISM Project.
- PRISM Topics: iPad 101, Effectively Communicating Needs for Adult Services, Home is Where you Hang Your Hat, Guardianship and Conservatorship, Smooth and Steady Transitions, Effective Advocacy, Social Media 101, Making the Move- Seamless Transition to Junior High or High School, Medicaid Update-Director of DD Services DHHS, Living the Dream-The Process of Preparing an Individual with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability to Live Independently.
 - Census: Average of 450 each year.

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- Partners: UNO Community Engagement Center, Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, Munroe Meyer Institute, Seamus Kelly-Disability Attorney, The Arc of Nebraska, and Disability Rights Nebraska.
- Impact: Evaluation forms returned showed that 94.5% of parents and extended family of those with developmental disabilities increased knowledge of disability-related topics, programs, and services and believed that they could use the information to parent better and improve the quality of life of a family member. An increased number of school district personnel participated in PRISM events to help be more informed and better support families and students.

Legislation and Governmental Affairs

- OWCI works closely with The Arc of Nebraska to advocate for legislative change that impact individuals and families with disabilities. OWCI is an active member of the Nebraska Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities and staff have testified at legislative hearings regarding disability policy and issues.
- Training and resources geared at engaging stakeholders in mission-based grassroots efforts and information dissemination about policy and matters that impact citizens with disabilities continue to be priority.
- Ollie Webb Center, Inc. was represented at the Arc of the U.S. Policy Seminar in Washington D.C. in April 2018 and met with Congressional Representatives to discuss disability-related issues.

Sibshops

- Ongoing efforts continue in recruitment and outreach for this OWCI initiative.
- The Sibshops program partnered with the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands to host parent-resource meetings at the same time as Sibshops, serving families of children with all types of intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- UNO's Community Engagement Center provided space for the program once monthly throughout the school year.

Programs of Career Solutions, Inc.

***The programs of Career Solutions, Inc. support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities on average nearly 500,000 hours a year. A breakdown of programs offered by Career Solutions, Inc. is below.**

The Art of Imagination Program

- The White Gander, an OWCI original and inclusive theatre production featuring actors and artists with and without disabilities premiered in October of 2018 and was a huge success.
 - The project was funded in part by grants from the Todd and Betiana Simon Foundation, The Sherwood Foundation, and the Blue Stem Prairie Foundation.
 - OWCI courses in Documentary Filmmaking, Prop Design, Costume Design, Dramaturgy, Playwriting, Musical Theatre and many others provided props, sets, scripts, and content for the production.
 - The production was performed Oct. 25-28, 2018 at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in downtown Omaha.
 - Publicity for The White Gander included a prominent article in the October edition of The Reader and a television interview on KPAO.

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- Local theatre artist Jill Anderson was hired to direct and write The White Gander and several new teaching artists were brought on to assist with specialized class instruction.
- A film documenting the making of The White Gander and OWCI's Continuing Education/The Art of Imagination program is currently in process.
- OWCI's The Art of Imagination and Supported Employment departments collaborated to deliver workshops to those interested in auditioning for The White Gander play. The workshops were designed to help prepare OWCI's program participants for The White Gander audition process. Monologue delivery, stage presence, and voice projection were practiced with instructors, professional headshots were taken, and performance resumes were created by the Supported Employment Manager.
- Three full semesters of visual and performing arts courses were provided throughout the year and End-of-Semester Showcases for Board Game Design, Filmmaking, Musical Theatre, Puppetry, Costume and Scenic Design were held in partnership with the Rose Theater, Do Space and the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center.
- New classes, including Voice Acting, Filmmaking, Music Studio, and Sound Effects were added to the repertoire of performing arts courses with continued development of beginning, intermediate, and advanced arts training
- The partnership with Opera Omaha continued with Musical Theatre participants working alongside Opera Omaha Fellows in several workshops throughout the year, culminating in performances at Hot Shops in the spring of 2018 and Turner Park in the summer of 2018.
- A new partnership was formed with the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in regard to a rehearsal and performance venue for OWCI's The Art of Imagination's theatre production of The White Gander and Costume Design class with continued partnerships with Opera Omaha, The Rose Theater, Outspaces and other area arts programs.

Continuing Education Program

- Vocational education services as part of the Continuing Education department have continued to focus on career and job-readiness skills to help prepare the over 68 program participants served in 2018, for success in a wide range of employment fields.
- Many of the visual and performing arts classes and curriculum were designed to complement The White Gander project, an inclusive theatre initiative that gave participants the opportunity to perform onstage as well as work backstage.
- Three semesters of beginning to advanced training courses were offered that focused on promoting independence, productivity, and inclusion while comprising learning tracks in the following areas:
 - Career Planning and Development
 - Communication/Language Arts
 - Computer Science
 - Culinary, Hospitality, and Horticulture
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Math
 - Natural Science
 - Personal Study Goals
 - Personal Growth and Development
 - Reading
 - Social Science
 - The Art of Imagination (visual and performing arts)
- Two brand new class offerings fostering pre-employment and independent living skills included award-winning curricula: BE SAFE, a class focused on healthy emotional and community safety;

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and HealthMatters™, which taught the importance of nutrition, health, and wellness on personal and professional productivity.

- Partnerships have continued with DHHS and Nebraska VR with Continuing Education and Supported Employment staff participating in a two month grant for transition-aged youth and young adults interested in pursuing competitive employment.
- Technology-oriented classes were also expanded, including Documentary Filmmaking, Filmmaking, Web Page Design, and Video Game Development.
- All classes were offered off-site in relevant and meaningful integrated community locations.
- New and ongoing partnerships continue to grow and enhance community engagement, including the University of Nebraska's Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Do Space, Metropolitan Community College, and the Omaha Public Library among others.

Supported Employment Program

- 2018 has been an exciting year in the Supported Employment department with significant growth to both services and staffing.
- Year to date, 70+ individuals in the program have been served through either job development, pursuing competitive employment or job coaching, helping to maintain employment.
- In 2018, the program supported 13 individuals in obtaining new employment and pre-vocational opportunities in diverse fields, including hospitality, food service, custodial, child care, and customer service.
- The leadership team has continued to increase community awareness of OWCI services and programs as well as expand current networks with 50% of program participants receiving job offers from newly formed partnerships and businesses.
- Of the over 50 program participants currently receiving job coaching services by employment staff.
 - 30 have been at their current job for over one year.
 - 15 have been employed for 5+ years.
 - 4 have reached 10+ years of employment.
 - 3 have maintained employment for 15+ years.
 - 1 received recognition for 25 years of service.
 - 1 received a promotion within the first year of employment.
- Partnerships continued with DHHS and Nebraska VR to provide person-centered employment services to adults and transition-aged youth participating in or pursuing competitive employment.
- For the second consecutive year, the employment team was awarded a grant from Nebraska VR to implement a summer program for transition-aged youth, 14-21 years old.
 - The program centered on career exploration and job-readiness skills and was implemented by both supported employment and continuing education teams.
 - Participant census increased by 50% in 2018 and the program was extended from four to eight weeks, running through June and July.
 - Volunteer opportunities, employer tours, and job shadowing experiences were increased to cover all career fields outlined by the Nebraska Department of Education.
 - Participants had the opportunity to earn a Certificate of Competency from The Center for Work Ethic Development using the Bring Your "A" Game to Work curriculum.
- The Supported Employment team continues to participate in a state-wide grant-based initiative sponsored by Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) to increase capacity and enhance staff skills in serving individuals with traumatic or acquired brain injury using industry best practices.

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- Blaine Villafuerte, Supported Employment Services Manager has worked diligently with her team to increase community and business partnerships as well as participated on several committees, including:
 - The Secondary Transition Advisory Committee, working with school personnel and parents of transition-aged youth.
 - Heartland Workforce Solutions Community Partner Meetings, facilitating collaboration with employment agencies and programs throughout the metro area.
 - OWCI's Health and Wellness Committee, part of the HealthMatters™ grant, focusing on increasing healthy lifestyles for the individuals with disabilities.

Independent Living (Residential) Program

- The Independent Living Services department at OWCI (also known as In-Home Residential Services) provides instruction for over 40 individuals who live in their own home or in their family's home. Education, training and support are provided to maintain or increase independent living skills.
- In-home residential services assist with the acquisition, retention, or improvement in skills related to living in the community and may include adaptive skill development, assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL), habilitative community inclusion, as well as social and leisure skill development in the most integrated settings.
- Each participant has an individualized goal and program to help increase their independence and overall quality of life. Select skills taught include:
 - Budgeting and money management.
 - Balanced meal preparation and nutrition.
 - Beginning and advanced apartment living skills.
 - Personal wellness and maintaining healthy lifestyle choices.
 - Reading and writing to increase independence.
 - Learning how to access and navigate transportation services.
 - Positive social interactions and effective communication.
 - Community safety and first aid.
- Community access is a critical aspect of the residential services program with activities and outings adding to and enhancing the participant's independence and personal growth, such as going to restaurants and exercising at the gym in addition to attending sporting events and activities like indoor golf, fishing, dances, movies, bowling, book clubs, swimming, and more.
- Training opportunities in 2018 included BE SAFE, RentWise, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA).
 - Independent Living Services Manager, Lisa McMichael and five other OWCI staff were certified as BE SAFE trainers. This curriculum teaches individuals how to be safe in the community when interacting with Emergency Responders and Peace Officers.
 - The Independent Living Manager offered evening RentWise training which was open to the community in April with several participants earning a Certificate of Completion. Nebraska RentWise is a program to help renters obtain and keep rental housing and to be successful renters through education and training.
 - In November, Lisa McMichael participated as a panelist at the AARP and MAPA Heartland 2050 Summit where the topic of discussion was the challenges individuals with disabilities face utilizing public transportation in the Omaha Area.
- Current residential staff is comprised of direct support professionals who have been employed with OWCI from a few months to almost a decade, making a significant difference in the rapport and relationships that are built between program participants and staff.
- All services are participant-driven and goals chosen based on the collaboration between the individual, their family, service coordination, and the OWCI team. Individuals are currently

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receiving residential support Monday through Friday as well as some shifts on Saturdays; shifts are based on the needs of each individual.

- Department goals for the future include: continuing to increase the number of individuals served through outreach to those transitioning from school-age to adult services, hiring additional staff to meet higher service needs, and expanding the amount of locations that individuals access within the community.