

one step

AHEAD

Kaposia invests in the prosperity of people with disabilities and the profitability of our partners.



Finding a Better Match

by Carol Rydell



When Nick Andrus left his school transition program and began Kaposia services, he already had a job as a greeter at Sam’s Club. Kaposia planned to work with Nick to find an additional job to increase his overall hours of work each week. Nick felt Sam’s Club was a good first job. He got to meet new people and liked it when people in the community would recognize him from his job. But over time, it became clear that the job wasn’t a good fit. Nick is a quiet individual and—despite his magnetic smile and friendly demeanor—Sam’s Club wanted more verbal interaction with customers. Scheduling issues also came up, and Nick and his family decided it was time to let go of the job at Sam’s Club. Fortunately, Nick found a better job match using Discovery.

Nick has a lot of interests and abilities. He likes to do research and learn new skills. People love being around him. He exudes friendliness and good will. When reviewing information gathered for Discovery, Nick’s mom identified an additional vocational theme—mechanical skills—that had been missed. Nick is good at taking things apart and putting them back together again. That information proved to be a missing link for finding a job that would capitalize on Nick’s strengths.

At an information interview at Valley Bike and Ski, Nick made an immediate connection with the employer. The employer wasn’t exactly sure how to fit Nick into his business, but he knew he wanted to include Nick on his team. He hired Nick to help assemble the many bikes sold at the store. Nick didn’t know anything about assembling bikes but was eager to learn and watched YouTube videos over and over to help him improve his skills.

Despite his efforts, Nick still struggled with the many differences between the variety of bikes the store sold. In this situation, individuals sometimes lose jobs. Not Nick. His employer was committed to making sure Nick was successful; he was willing to take the time to find the right niche. That niche turned out to be having Nick wash bikes, taking some parts off in the process, and then reassemble them.

Nick now has a job that better fits who he is. He’s part of a team. He has one primary “go-to” person who is available for help, but all of his team members are supportive. Nick has a job in which he can see his accomplishments. He can work with his hands and problem solve how to tackle working with a variety of bikes. Nick works in a place that values what he brings to the workplace. When Nick and his family let go of the job at Sam’s Club, that left Nick with limited hours working at Valley Bike and Ski. They chose quality over quantity, and their decision paid off. Nick’s hours on his new job have steadily increased, and he now has added more days of work.



Nick is energetic when he talks about his job at Valley Bike and Ski, and he goes into more detail when he talks about it. According to his mom, “We did not see this side of him when he worked at Sam’s Club.” The pieces all came together for Nick. He has a supportive work environment, a supportive family, and a job in which he takes pride.

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~and much more!

What it Takes to Finish

Setting a long-term goal can be tricky. Meeting a long-term goal is hard.

In 2009, I wrote a newsletter article about my goal of running a marathon in all 50 states. At the time, I was less than half way to my goal and had just struggled to finish a race following an injury. Ten years later, I am proud to say I recently finished my goal.

When you complete something like this, it causes you to reflect on what it took to finish. While it might seem like I did all the work by doing the running, there were many others who were involved. My wife came along on most of the trips to support me through cheering, giving me ibuprofen, and driving me home. Friends and family encouraged me to stick to it and would ask me about how I was doing. My co-worker, Patti, made up banners to hang on my office door counting down the final states, while another co-worker, Chris, kept a list in his office and would cross off each state as it was finished.

So, while this was my goal, many others came along with me.

Next month, Kaposia will be releasing a short film about one of the people we serve. As we worked with the production company, I wanted to be sure this film focused on what was important to Kaposia, but not necessarily on Kaposia.

One of our core beliefs is that “it isn’t about us.”

In other words, it’s about the people we serve. We want you to see and hear their stories. Their successes are what motivate us; not the praise for our part in making it happen. This core value runs through the veins of Kaposia. So much so that, on the day of filming, the person who supports the individual did everything she could not to be filmed, including call me to say, “I do not want to be on film.”

In the film, you will see and hear his story. It is a powerful one of struggle and triumph. In the end, he meets his goal.

And we got to go with him.

from the desk of the CEO

JON ALEXANDER



New Kaposia Video Release

by Jon Alexander

After watching a video on You Tube about situation involving a person with a disability, Board member Colin Sharp said, “we need something like this for Kaposia.” He reached out to a former co-worker at Clarity Coverdale Fury to see if they would work with Kaposia to develop a video with the hopes it might go viral.

Kaposia values standing in the background behind our customers, letting their successes speak for themselves. This is part of the reason why people are often unfamiliar with what we do.

Kaposia’s uniqueness lies not in just the services we carry out and what we do, but in why we do it. So as we partnered with CCF, we asked them to try to capture this core value which fuels everything we do.

We will be releasing the video on our website and Facebook in late June. We will also be hosting an exclusive release party with key individuals and organizations who have made our work possible.

You can help Kaposia tell its story and help more individuals realize their full potential by sharing this video to spread the word. The final word is that everyone is capable of putting their strengths to work and finding employment that brings a greater sense of purpose and meaningful connections.



customer profiles...

SUCCESS



Usually when you think of a library, you think of a quiet, solemn place where people mostly go to keep to themselves. However, when our Rice Street

retirees go to the Roseville Library for a monthly scrapbooking session, they anticipate quite the celebration.

This is because of Cleo Rudolph. Cleo is one of Kaposia's most seasoned volunteers, and she's been a blessing for us since she started on April 3, 2003. She responded to a newspaper ad asking for scrapbooking volunteers and assumed she'd be placed with all older women. However, she started out with two men—Bob and another customer no longer in Kaposia services—and enjoyed it so much that she keeps coming back. Now, she is good friends with Bob and many of the other retirees as well as Kaposia employees.

Cleo is passionate about arts and crafts and relays this enthusiasm to all of the customers that come. Each month they meet up, eager to have Cleo and accompanying staff help them fill their personal scrapbooks with photos as well as ornate drawings, designs, and captions that capture the past months' exploits.

Patty loves sharing pages from her book adorned with pictures spotlighting her adventures—including visiting with trumpeter swans at Swan Park and meeting the Aquatennial princess. Meanwhile, Bob and Cleo sit next to each other going over new page ideas and bicker playfully like brother and sister. They spend the whole two hours having fun and

Volunteer Spreads Joy at Monthly Scrapbooking Sessions

by Callie Sleper

making each other laugh.

Bob is perhaps the biggest Elvis aficionado you'll ever meet. Sometimes, he even dons the signature white aviator shades. Bob belts out lyrics from "All Shook Up" while Cleo shows him a picture of his face superimposed over Elvis in a white suit playing the guitar. Bob pledges to everyone that he's going to start bringing a microphone to their sessions. Cleo holds up a couple sheets of construction paper in different shades of red for Bob to choose as a backdrop for the photo.

"Bob's such a pleasant guy to work with," Cleo says.

"That's right!" Bob chimes in.

"We have a lot of fun, don't we, Bob?"

"Yes, we do," he says.

The group sings songs with one another during many sessions, and go-to favorites include "9 to 5" and "Jolene" by Dolly Parton as well as the classic Temptations' hit, "My Girl." Luckily, the walls are well-soundproofed from the more studious guests, making both a carefree time and a good relationship with the Roseville library possible. The group all eats lunch together at the end, rounding out a relaxing and enjoyable afternoon in good company.

Cleo has gone with the Rice Street retirees on many different adventures, ranging from the Macy's Flower Show, circus, Twins games, Breakline Fishing outings, the State Fair, nature centers, Art in Bloom, and the Aquatennial boat races. Outside of Kaposia, Cleo loves raising monarch butterflies and attracting them with all the perennials in her yard. The Kaposia group has inspired her to put some pictures of the monarchs as well as at least three decades' worth of vacation photos into her own scrapbook and photo album.

"Looking at pictures is something that brings joy to everybody, I think," she says.

Walk 4 Wheels 2019 a Great Success

by Josh Reuter

On May 4th, Kaposia held its annual Walk for Wheels Fundraiser. Over 140 walkers came together to help Kaposia raise money for a new van. Kaposia



holds this annual fundraiser because we put over 300,000 miles on our vehicles each year. Our Walk for Wheels participants raise much-needed money while also enjoying a beautiful stroll around Bennet Lake. During the Walk festivities, walkers

were entertained by the talents of Nathan "The Master of Keys" Barclay and were able to dine on the delicious pancakes made by Chris Cakes.

Kaposia would like to give a huge thank you to all the sponsors who helped make the 2019 Walk a Success:

Riverbridge Partners LLC, Success Computer Consulting, Bank Cherokee, Stagetime Productions, Professional Fiduciary, Krause Anderson, the Nickles Family, Tom's Mobile, and Lancer Service.

Thanks to their generosity and to all the people who gave to Kaposia, we had one of the most financially-successful Walk for Wheels to date. Kaposia raised more than \$22,000.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for your support of Kaposia!





Kaposia Customers Speak Out at Disability Justice Seminar

by LuAnn Hudson

Susan Lang and LuAnn Hudson, Kaposia customers and employees from the University of St. Thomas School of Law, recently served as panelists for the Ninth Annual Disability Justice Seminar: Employment Barriers and Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities. The event was hosted by the Minneapolis law firm of Robins Kaplan, LLP and the Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Diversity Committee.

Other members of the panel were attorney Chelsea Walcker from Robins Kaplan, LLP; The Honorable Donovan W. Frank, U.S. District Judge for the District of Minnesota; Dr. Colleen Wieck, Executive Director of the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities; Reid Scheller, Self-Advocate and Employment Service Provider

for Dakota County Western Service Center; and Matthais Niska, labor and employment attorney.

The discussion highlighted opportunities for employment for disabled individuals and ways to overcome employment barriers and included views from both employers and employees. Sue and some of the other panelists spoke about issues and barriers that have affected them, both in their personal lives and work environment.

The University of St. Thomas appreciates the opportunity and continues to benefit from our partnership with Kaposia.



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AHEAD

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JEREMY COWART

Joining us September 28th



Save the Date!