

LifePursuits

Summer 2019

**ANNUAL
CELEBRATION**

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**UPSTREAM ARTS
PARTNERSHIP**

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Lifeworks

A nonprofit serving
people with disabilities

Lifeworks

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Contact Us

lifeworks.org
651-454-2732
contact@lifeworks.org

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\$575,000 Raised at 2019 Lifeworks Annual Celebration!

The Lifeworks Annual Celebration is our largest fundraiser – and the total raised for this year's successful event surpassed all prior celebrations. With nearly 1,000 guests in attendance at The Depot in Minneapolis, Lifeworks asked for help with supporting our innovative, high-quality, community-centered offerings.

YOUR SUPPORT FUNDS:

- Creative Arts
- Career Exploration
- Educational Summits
- Government Service Navigation
- Health and Wellness
- Music Therapy
- Multi-Sensory Environments
- Outreach to Underrepresented Communities
- Self-Advocacy Development
- Skill Building in the Community
- Technology Labs
- Volunteer Opportunities

WE HONORED FIVE INDIVIDUALS AND ONE BUSINESS THROUGH THE LIFEWORKS ANNUAL AWARDS:

Advocate of the Year – Lori Koutsky
Employer of the Year – Travelers
Personal Achievement – Kari Hill
Personal Achievement – Donna Buzay
Personal Achievement – Teal Paape
Staff Excellence – Sandy Sanders

Presented by Atomic Data, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Carlson Partners, and Horton, the event raised \$575,000 for Lifeworks and the people we serve.

Contributions from our supporters will help us bridge the funding gap due to unprecedented decreases in government funding and increased costs to provide services that do more than just fulfill a need – services that pave the way for the people we serve and enhance lives.

Lifeworks is so grateful for the support we received from our community. Thank you to everyone who made a contribution.

Relive the moments!

Page through our photo gallery and watch the award videos:
lifeworks.org/blog

Pictured on cover: Gahone Bell, Lifeworks Brooklyn Park participant.



Thank You!

WE ARE ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL TO:

Atomic Data and its CEO, **Jim Wolford**, who donated three auction items that raised \$67,000, in addition to speaking on our behalf and being a Presenting Sponsor.

John Abbott, the Vice Chair of Lifeworks Board of Directors, and his wife, **Michele**, for kicking off our fund-a-need at the \$25,000 level.

Longtime Lifeworks supporter, **Steve Daas**, who gave \$10,000 for a matching gift challenge that provided donors with an opportunity to double their impact.

Volunteers from Allianz, U.S. Bank, and Minneapolis Public Schools for donating their time. We greatly appreciate your support and help with the 2019 Lifeworks Annual Celebration.

THANK YOU TO THE KEY SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS:



2018 Lifeworks Satisfaction Survey

Each year, Lifeworks strives to provide services that enhance the lives of the individuals and families that we serve. We do this by continuously seeking ways that we can improve. In this effort, Lifeworks sends out participant satisfaction surveys.

The results of the surveys are reviewed, shared, and used to change our services for the better.



FISCAL SUPPORT SERVICES

“Everyone at Lifeworks is great. When I call and need help with something pertaining to our son’s waiver, I get answers right away. If there are any changes or new information, we know and we appreciate that.”

90% say that when they have a question, Lifeworks staff carefully listen.

89% report that they are satisfied with the service they receive from Lifeworks.

88% feel that when they have an inquiry, Lifeworks staff respond promptly.



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

“Because of Lifeworks, my son is gainfully employed. He feels worthwhile, more confident, and is optimistic about his future. I can’t thank Lifeworks enough.”

91% feel that Lifeworks staff treat them with respect.

86% say they like their job and/or career development activities.

78% feel that Lifeworks helps them learn and grow.



DAY SERVICES

“I am impressed with the activities both in center and out in the community that they participate in. Thank you!”

98% feel that Lifeworks staff treat the people we serve with respect.

83% say they are happy with the offerings Lifeworks provides.

71% feel that Lifeworks helps them be a part of their community.



2019 Funding Priorities

Since 1965, Lifeworks has been a pioneer for inclusion. We were founded by families who recognized the importance of advocacy and removing barriers for people with disabilities to be part of the community.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

In 2019, our goal is to raise \$1,135,000 to help bridge the growing gap between government funding and the cost to provide high-quality, innovative offerings such as technology labs, creative arts, and multi-sensory environments.

Your investment in Lifeworks helps set the standard for inclusive services in our state. With top-notch, skilled professionals on staff committed to self-determination, independence, and community engagement, Lifeworks can continue our work ensuring that all people are represented.

Give back to your community through Lifeworks.
Visit: lifeworks.org/get-involved

92¢
of every dollar goes directly towards programs for the people we serve

2018 Lifeworks Annual Report

Thank you to all of those who helped make 2018 a success. We appreciate your commitment to Lifeworks and the people we serve.

Read about our impact, supporters, and highlights from last year. Visit the 2018 Lifeworks Annual Report website: lifeworksannualreport.org

Special Thanks to Our 2018 Foundation Donors

\$25,000-\$50,000
Shavlik Family Foundation

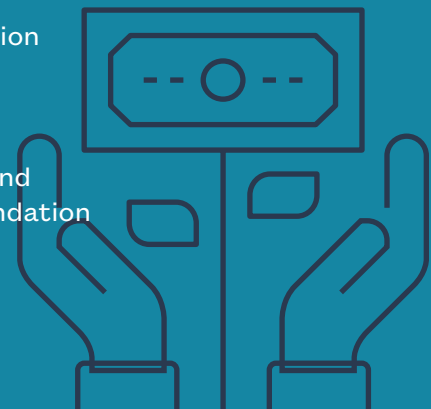
\$10,000-\$24,999
Ecolab Foundation
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\$500-\$999
The Carmax Foundation
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\$100-\$499
Dunnwind Family Fund
The Minneapolis Foundation
PNC Foundation





Less Time on Paperwork, More Time for Family



Recently, Lifeworks sat down with our long-time Personal Support and Respite participants: the Mercier family.

Cheryl is a strong advocate for her children, Josh and Sara (pictured left). Both of her children are in their late twenties and have received Fiscal Support Services from Lifeworks for the past fifteen years. Josh loves listening to music and trying different types of food. His younger sister, Sara, enjoys movies and going on dates with her boyfriend of six years.

The Merciers first learned about Lifeworks from a list of providers given to them by their county. After a few phone calls, they determined that Lifeworks was the best fit for their family because they could receive two services that they were eligible for at one place: Personal Support and Respite.

Personal Support provides one-on-one staff to help people increase their independence through activities of daily living and access to community services. As a licensed Personal Support provider, Lifeworks

assists with the hiring process and training for staff as well as monitors and coordinates services. Essentially, Lifeworks Fiscal Support Services take care of employer-related responsibilities so that people can focus on doing what matters most to them.

Because of the self-directed support her family receives from Lifeworks, Cheryl has been able to avoid the high staff turnover rate that is common at traditional agencies. One of Josh's current respite staff, Tasha, has helped the family for more than a decade. This structure fosters strong relationships between families and caregivers.

For Cheryl, Lifeworks has enabled her family to have more meaningful time together:

"I have two kids and they're opposites in so many ways, so we learned what works best for them - that means staffing is really crucial for us. Without Lifeworks, they wouldn't get to do the individual things that they each like to do. I don't want to do the financial things. I'm very content to do the love. I want to

spend time with them, not on paperwork."

Lifeworks Fiscal Support Services are available so the people we serve can focus on having fun, exploring their interests, and building relationships. When asked what people who are new to the services should know about Lifeworks, Cheryl replied: "It's inexpensive - the portion that is taken out of the budget. The cost seems fair for how much they do."

Without Lifeworks, they wouldn't get to do the individual things that they each like to do. I don't want to do the financial things. I'm very content to do the love. I want to spend time with them, not on paperwork.

Find out how Lifeworks can help you focus on what matters most.
Visit: lifeworks.org/fiscal-support

Make a family member or friend your paid caregiver.

LIFEWORKS.ORG | 651-454-2732

PCA Choice
Personal Support and Respite
Consumer Support Grant
Consumer Directed Community Supports



Lifeworks Awarded Outstanding Case Study Certificate by the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council

Founded in 2013, the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC) convenes buyers, suppliers, and public interest advocates from around the country to develop programs that simplify and standardize purchasing.

In May of 2018, Lifeworks supported the SPLC conference in Minneapolis using an inclusive hiring model to help staff the conference. With the sponsorship of Best Buy, 16 people gained paid work experience through roles such as registration support, timekeeping, and breakout session management. This undertaking brought attention to how advancing employment for people with disabilities can raise businesses' bottom line while increasing community engagement and ensuring equal opportunity - essentially promoting more equitable and sustainable communities.

To share the successful experience with other businesses, Lifeworks Disability Inclusion Consultant, Ashley Oolman, submitted a study to SPLC that highlighted Lifeworks involvement in the 2018 conference and the impact of increasing accessibility and inclusion for all,

titled, "Cast a Wider Net: Advancing Inclusive and Sustainable Hiring." The work received an Outstanding Case Study Certificate from SPLC and was published on their online resource library.

When presented with the award, Oolman remarked, "Receiving the award is such an honor. We appreciate the SPLC recognizing the value of inclusive hiring practices and their support of talent diversification in the workforce."

Are you interested in having Lifeworks educate your business about diversity, equity, and inclusion? Contact: 612-695-2289.

Pictured: Ashley Oolman, MBA, Disability Inclusion Consultant



Lifeworks Leading the Way: Sharing Best Practices

Lifeworks recently presented at two national conferences offering insight into employment best practices, networking with industry leaders, and hearing new ideas.

Our position as an industry leader makes it essential for us to not only share what we have learned with other stakeholders, but also to focus on how we continue and advance conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2019 NATIONAL CONFERENCE - ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT FIRST



With over 1,000 community leaders in attendance, the Association of People Supporting Employment

First (APSE) focuses on using state-of-the-art strategies to provide actionable ideas that advance equitable employment for people with disabilities.

Four Lifeworks staff attended this year's conference in St. Louis, including our Disability Inclusion Consultant, Ashley Oolman, who presented on how providers can diversify revenue by helping employers enhance accessibility and inclusion. Ashley shared new approaches to service delivery and discussed asset identification, relationship building, and communication with businesses. Deb Russell, a corporate disability inclusion leader and fellow conference speaker, had this to say about Ashley's presentation: "She rocked it out! Best session so far! I hope I can inspire and inform as well as she did!"

Pictured: Susan Winterfeld Thompson, right, speaking at Microsoft's 2019 Autism at Work Summit.

MICROSOFT'S 2019 AUTISM AT WORK SUMMIT



Lifeworks Director of Program Services, Susan Winterfeld

Thompson, was invited to present at Microsoft's Autism at Work, a summit bringing together employers, support systems, and the autistic community to explore inclusive hiring practices.



Susan presented during the "Finding Your Support Partners" session, sharing the innovative internship program developed by Lifeworks, Travelers, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. She discussed how companies and community partners can work together to build systems that increase access, advance corporate culture, and foster independence.

Lifeworks is honored to have participated in these conferences and looks forward to sharing what we learn with the community.



Building a Career with Lifeworks – Julie’s Success Story

THE CHALLENGE

Julie’s passion for helping people led her to seek out career experiences in caregiving roles. Her previous positions at a daycare, assisted living facility, and group home allowed Julie to further hone in on her interests and ideal workplace. Julie knew that she wanted to continue helping people, but had not quite found the right fit for her.

THE PROCESS

Julie first learned of Lifeworks through her sister who happened to be an employee at the Apple Valley location. Julie was looking for a summer job before starting college and Lifeworks was seeking additional help in Day Services.

After working with the organization for three summers, Julie knew that she wanted to join the team fulltime: “At Lifeworks, the environment is so friendly – everyone is welcome. I enjoyed my job and coming to work.”

Julie applied, was offered, and accepted a Service Specialist position, where she provided direct care to program participants. Her success led to a promotion to a Career Development Facilitator, giving her insight into the day-to-day lives of the people and families we support.

After five years with Lifeworks and earning her bachelor’s degree in psychology, Julie wanted to further build her skillset and experience. She accepted an opportunity to join the administration team at Lifeworks Eagan where she served as a Fiscal Support and Administrative Assistant. She was then promoted to Service Coordinator where she helped people navigate funding and meet state-mandated requirements, including managing training, staffing, and reimbursements.

Julie’s career path at Lifeworks has helped her provide high-quality services to the people we serve. She reflects, “It’s been really nice having the different perspectives. I can walk people through experiences that may be new to them because I understand how the processes work together.”

In addition to her role in Fiscal Support Services, Julie also serves on Lifeworks Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, a group responsible for fostering a greater understanding of cultures represented in the communities we serve. They regularly offer onsite educational seminars for staff that focus on removing barriers and promoting inclusive environments.



THE OUTCOME

Now in her 15th year at Lifeworks, Julie is a Fiscal Operations Supervisor where she oversees a team that provides support to families while managing key metrics and processes to ensure participant satisfaction.

“The position I am in now is really the best of both worlds. I get to help a large amount of people access services while at the same time build lasting connections in the communities we serve.”

Lifeworks ability to offer opportunities for employees to grow both in their skillsets and within the organization has helped people reach their goals.

Are you looking to build your experience and make a meaningful impact in your community?

Check out current job openings by visiting: lifeworks.org/careers

Lifeworks is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We value and are committed to employee health, wellness, and work-life balance.

We offer competitive pay and extensive benefits, including generous paid time off, affordable and comprehensive medical package, retirement plans, and much more.

2019 Legislative Session: Highlights

Thank you to all of the advocates who voiced their thoughts and brought much-needed attention to the legislative priorities that impact people with disabilities and caregivers. Together, we made gains that helped offset significant cuts.



HEALTH CARE PROVIDER TAX: EXTENDED

For the past 27 years, the Health Care Provider Tax has been a reliable revenue stream that ensures people in our communities have access to affordable health care services. The 2 percent tax paid by health care providers including hospitals and clinics that support the state-run health care system has benefited more than one million Minnesotans.

This year, the tax was scheduled to end – a revenue loss of nearly \$700 million dollars per year. Efforts from advocates and organizations helped persuade legislators to extend the tax with a lowered rate of 1.8 percent. Extending this tax helps people who struggle to afford market-rate coverage pay for health care.

COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE FACTOR: APPROVED

Recent data shows that the wage differential between direct support professionals and those in comparable careers in other fields is at approximately 17 percent. This session, the legislature established a Competitive Workforce Factor (CWF) ratio of 4.7 percent, which will result in an approximate 4 percent increase in service reimbursement rates.

Automatic inflationary adjustments will also occur every two years beginning July 1, 2022. The CWF and automatic inflationary adjustments are beginning steps to addressing the wage differential and workforce shortage in disability services.



“I get to help a large amount of people access services while at the same time build lasting connections in the communities we serve.”



Working Together to Build an Inclusive Community: Lifeworks and Upstream Arts

The long-term relationships that Lifeworks has built over the years with organizations and businesses has helped us better support the people we serve and our communities. Our partnership with Upstream Arts, which began in 2006 (the year their organization was founded) provides an example of the impact that mission-driven people can have when they work together.

ABOUT UPSTREAM ARTS

Upstream Arts, a nonprofit that “uses the power of the creative arts to activate and amplify the voice and choice for individuals

with disabilities” was founded by Julie and Matt Guidry after seeing the connection their son had with dance.

Julie reflects: “We have a child with pretty significant disabilities. Caleb does not use words to communicate. At a very young age, he would watch his dad dance during rehearsals; and he started to mirror what Matt was doing on stage – but it was not just fluid mirroring. My son took turns. And that give and take was something that we as a family leveraged as a place where we were going to be able to check in with our kid.”

When their son started middle school, Matt and

Julie brought this idea to his classroom and realized its incredible potential. She notes, “We found out pretty quickly that we were able to use the arts, creativity, and play to develop foundational skills.”

As the Guidrys explored further how art could be used as a vehicle for building soft skills, they reached out to organizations that serve people with disabilities. The relationship with Lifeworks began with a simple phone call: “We [Upstream Arts] are doing this work and we really think that it would be pretty impactful if we were able to work with some of the adults in your program.”

LIFEWORKS AND UPSTREAM ARTS PARTNERSHIP

Lifeworks embraced the opportunity and together, the organizations have grown and increased the amount of opportunities for the people we serve. Being one of the first adult programs to work with Upstream Arts, Lifeworks was able to play a key role in generating ideas for classes and content.

Upstream Arts uses the creative process to develop fundamental social and communication skills. Raquel Sidie-Wagner, Regional Manager at Lifeworks, notes, “The soft skills that we are helping to develop – like the ability to engage with people and express needs are so much more crucial than we give them credit for – they are essential to living independently.”

Julie explained: “Lifeworks really came along on the journey with us. This partnership has been 13 years in the making and Lifeworks has really helped us think about the places we can show up and be really relevant to the community. They have

been excited, willing, and open to innovating with us.”

Through conversations with Lifeworks staff regarding employment for people with disabilities, Upstream Arts examined and designed curriculum that addressed how they could support people in their careers. This seed grew into one of their eight core areas: The Art of Working, which “cultivates soft skills vital to obtaining and maintaining employment while exploring the fundamentals of visual art, theater, poetry, music, and dance.” It is one of their most popular programs.

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER TODAY

This spring, Lifeworks participated in their newest 12-week program, The Art of Voice and Choice, which focuses on informed decision making and person-centered planning; it was attended by people with disabilities and support staff.

Raquel reflected on the importance of the program, “So often people with disabilities

are told where to go and what to do – so this class provided the opportunity for people to learn how to discover what options are available and then how to make a choice. The program has also helped staff open up our minds to the possibilities of what goals we can help people achieve. And if we are doing our jobs well, the reliance on support from us decreases while independence increases. The more our staff understand person-centered planning the better advocates we can be for the people we serve and their families.”

Our work together helps to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live a self-determined life. Diversity of thought and style that happen through community partnerships, like the one between Lifeworks and Upstream Arts, helps us all innovate and navigate through the constantly changing landscape of services for people with disabilities.

“We found out pretty quickly that we were able to use the arts, creativity, and play to develop foundational skills.”





Giving Back and Building Connections: Lifeworks Brooklyn Park Volunteer Therapy Dog Team

For the past two years, Lifeworks Brooklyn Park has been a regular stop for volunteer, Constance Bleecker, and her therapy dog, Zeus.

When Constance retired, she wanted to explore dog therapy as a way for her to give back to the community, build connections, and remain active. At nine months old, her Miniature Australian Shepard, Zeus, became certified through the Canine Good Citizen Program developed by American Kennel Club (which includes a ten-step test) and completed therapy training.

Zeus is now nine years old – and though he has a modest demeanor, his background is quite impressive. Along with his good-manners and friendly nature, Zeus is an international and national champion through the International All Breed Canine Association. He holds several titles for obedience, therapy, and trick dog.

When you first meet Constance and Zeus it's clear that they mean a lot to each other. Constance reflects, "I couldn't ask for a nicer boy. He's so forgiving. He's so accepting. He relies on me. We're a team. It's not all cut and dry. You have to be able to handle different situations."

Constance is a member of Therapy Dog International, which requires additional on-going evaluation and specialized training for dogs volunteering in care environments such as hospitals. She is also part of the

organization's district club that has monthly trainings.

Constance found out about Lifeworks from her close friend, Lori Noland – a Service Facilitator for the organization. Lori suggested that Constance and Zeus visit Lifeworks – and after the first day, the pair knew it was a good fit for them.

She notes, "When we started, Zeus was a little nervous, but he settled right in. He's used to coming here. We have developed some really good friendships."

to continue and build—and you know, I don't know if the people realize how much they give me and how much these visits have become part of my life."

Volunteering with Lifeworks has also given Constance and Zeus insight into the organization: "I'm honestly amazed at all the different offerings and activities. The goals that people can make for themselves and what they can achieve here with the dedicated staff – it's really incredible."



Pictured above: Constance and Zeus Bleecker, Lifeworks Brooklyn Park participants, and Service Facilitator, Lori Noland.

This volunteer opportunity with Lifeworks has now become part of the team's weekly routine. Constance and Zeus visit with participants at Lifeworks Brooklyn Park for thirty minutes to an hour on Tuesdays or Thursdays in the morning, depending on daily schedules.

"It's just been a really fun experience. There are several people at Lifeworks that just love Zeus. Some of the people tell me about their dogs. We have relationships here now that I want

Looking to give back?

We believe that every person deserves the opportunity to thrive while making a positive impact in their community. You can remove barriers and ensure that all people are represented.

Learn more:

lifeworks.org/get-involved
651-454-2732

Lifeworks

Lifeworks Services
2965 Lone Oak Drive, Suite 160
Eagan, MN 55121

lifeworks.org
651-454-2732

Since 1965, Lifeworks Services Inc. has been a pioneer for inclusion. Lifeworks was founded by families who recognized the importance of advocacy and removing barriers for people with disabilities to be part of the community.

Mission: to serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together.

This information can be made available in an alternate format upon request. Lifeworks is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Lifeworks

**DO MORE than you ever
thought possible**

GET STARTED WITH LIFEWORKS:

Career Exploration & Development
Skill Building in the Community
Music Therapy
Self-Advocacy

lifeworks.org
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Serving Minnesota for more than 50 years

