HOME & COMMUNITY OPTIONS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Respecting differences. Creating opportunities. Achieving independence.

HCO MANAGEMENT TEAM

Suzanne Horstman
Executive Director

Abigail Jackson
Program Services Director

Lucinda Wiczek
Program Services Director

Keri Cada
Licensing and Policy Director

Andrew Schneider
Finance Director

Nicole Weydt
Health Services Director

Home and Community Options is excited to share our refreshed Mission, Vision, and Core Values! Updated to be more clear, memorable and meaningful, these statements reflect our ongoing commitment to empowering lives and fostering inclusivity. With thoughtful input from a number of our stakeholders, these statements honor our past while embracing the future.

MISSION

To empower and support people with developmental disabilities

VISION

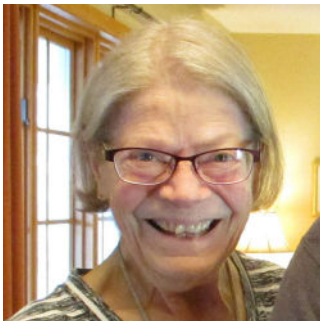
For everyone to thrive and be valued members in their community

CORE VALUES

- Respect for all people and their differences
- Quality services that balance independence with safety and security
- Opportunities for all individuals to learn, build meaningful relationships, and enjoy life

2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paula Krage
President



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*Thank you to **Brittani Burt** and **Lynn Theurer** for their years serving on the HCO Board!*

Suzanne Horstman
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE *message*

2024 has been a year of remarkable growth and achievements for Home and Community Options (HCO). As we reflect on the past year, it is clear that both the individuals we serve and the agency itself have experienced tremendous progress. The commitment, compassion, and innovation that define HCO have been instrumental in our continued success. Here are just a few examples of the things we have worked on this year.

Meeting the Challenge of High Medical and Behavioral Needs

As the demand for services to support individuals with high medical needs and behavioral challenges continues to grow, our dedicated support teams have risen to the occasion. In 2024, HCO focused on expanding our capacity to care for those with specialized needs. We have hired and onboarded numerous new teammates, ensuring that our staff has the expertise and resources required to provide the level of care that our clients deserve. Additionally, we have invested in ongoing training and educational opportunities for our current employees. This commitment to enhancing skill sets enables our team to deliver exceptional care to individuals with complex care plans.

Expanding Respite Services

This year marked an exciting milestone for HCO. After updates to relevant legislation, we were once again able to offer respite services beyond the daily scope. This was a significant development for the families we serve, as it allowed for after-school and weekend services at our Resource Home. For many of the individuals receiving care through HCO, traditional daycare and after-school programs are not suitable due to medical and behavioral needs. The expansion of respite services provides vital support to parents, helping them bridge the gap between work and school hours. It also offers our clients the opportunity to develop essential socialization and personal care skills in a supportive environment.

Central Office Building Updates

In response to our growing needs, we also made improvements to our Central Office. After 28 years in our current location, it was time to refresh the space where our employees receive orientation, training, and hold meetings. Located in downtown Winona, the Central Office serves as a hub for administrative staff and those we serve. Over the past year, we carefully assessed how the building was being used, ensuring that the space met the evolving needs of our teams and clients. Employees were transitioned to new office spaces based on team workflows, and several areas received new carpeting and a fresh coat of paint, brightening the environment. The addition of new common areas, available for group use and checkouts, has enhanced collaboration and created inviting spaces for meetings and activities.

A Heartfelt Thanks

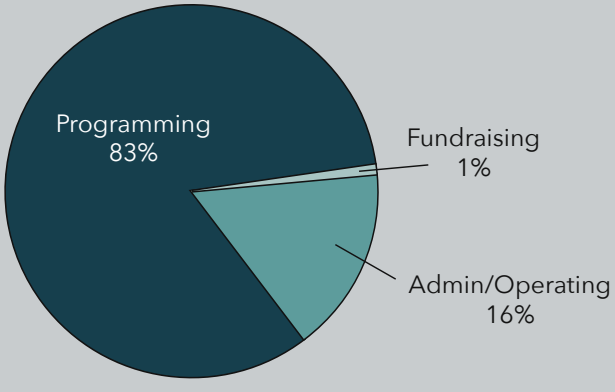
We remain deeply grateful for the individuals who entrust us with their care, the families who rely on our services, the dedicated workforce that consistently goes above and beyond, and the supportive community that values the work we do. Each of these groups plays an integral role in the continued success of Home and Community Options, and we look forward to building on this strong foundation in the year ahead.

As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to providing high-quality, compassionate care and support. Together, we will continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Home and Community Options, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position

Year Ended: December 31st	2024	2023
ASSETS		
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	$2,288,848	$2,164,489
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Escrows and reserves	$197,760	$154,429
Property and equipment, net	$2,726,604	$2,682,215
Long-term investments	$8,184,056	$6,959,324
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	$11,108,420	$9,795,968
TOTAL ASSETS	$13,397,268	$11,960,457
LIABILITIES		
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	$786,059	$673,194
LONG-TERM DEBT - net of current portion	$35,327	$48,011
TOTAL LIABILITIES	$821,386	$721,205
NET ASSETS		
UNRESTRICTED	$11,942,144	$10,659,662
RESTRICTED\TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	$633,738	$579,590
TOTAL NET ASSETS	$12,575,882	$11,239,252
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	$13,397,268	$11,960,457



2024

Allocation of Expenses

SPECIAL *thanks. . .*

Thanks to your generosity, over $23,000 was raised through our 2023-2024 mail campaign, enabling us to provide essential transportation for those we serve. This support ensures access to critical services like medical appointments, grocery shopping, and community activities. Your kindness fosters connection, inclusion, and empowerment, helping individuals live fuller, more engaged lives. Thank you for making such a meaningful difference!

THE IMPACT OF *Assistive Technology*

For individuals with developmental disabilities, assistive technology is more than just a convenience—it is a gateway to greater independence, security, and confidence. At HCO, we have embraced technology as a vital resource, helping those we support lead fuller, more autonomous lives while also alleviating some of the challenges caused by staffing shortages. Through innovation and thoughtful implementation, assistive technology is transforming daily routines, fostering self-reliance, and ensuring timely support when needed.

Beyond remote monitoring technology, which is integrated into several of our homes, a variety of assistive tools, including bed alarms, communication devices, and light sensors, are enhancing daily living experiences while also supporting staff in their caregiving roles.

The scope of assistive technology continues to expand, improving accessibility in numerous aspects of life. From communication devices that give individuals a voice to mobility aids that support movement, these innovations help bridge gaps and create new opportunities. They enable individuals to engage in daily living activities, use computers, navigate their environments, and participate in recreational activities with greater ease and confidence.

At HCO, we've seen firsthand how assistive technology can make a life-changing difference. Here are two inspiring examples of how individuals in our programs are using technology to enhance their daily lives:

Technology - A Journey to Greater Independence

Tim, an individual in one of our residential homes, has experienced life-changing benefits from assistive devices that enhance his independence and safety.

- Alexa Integration: Tim now uses Alexa to help with his daily routines, including teeth brushing and showering. With set routines and timers in place, he has learned—through the guidance of staff—how to independently start a timer to complete these tasks. What was once a challenge requiring frequent reminders is now an established and self-directed part of his day.
- Motion Sensors: A new motion-sensor lighting system has been installed on the stairs, addressing the safety concern of nighttime navigation. Since he routinely turns off lights, this feature ensures that he has adequate lighting when moving up and down the stairs in the dark.
- Sound Alerts: A Hub Siren has been installed in the home to provide auditory alerts as needed. With customizable volume and tone, these alerts allow staff to be aware that additional support may be needed.

The result? Not only has this technology improved his independence, but it has also significantly enhanced his safety. He can now complete personal hygiene routines without constant oversight and navigate his home with greater confidence.

Staying Safe and Connected

For another gentleman, assistive technology is making a meaningful difference, allowing him to stay independent while navigating mobility challenges.

- Alexa as an Intercom and Alarm Clock: By utilizing Alexa, he can communicate with staff from his bedroom if he needs assistance, reducing the need for physical strain. Alexa also serves as an alarm clock, helping him maintain his daily schedule with ease.
- PERS Equipment: Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) technology allows him to call for immediate assistance in the event of a fall. With just the press of a button, staff are alerted and can respond quickly, providing peace of mind for both him and his caregivers.
- Motion Sensors: To minimize fall risks, motion sensors have been placed in his room and hallway. These automatically turn on when he stands up, ensuring he has adequate lighting to safely navigate his space.

With these assistive devices in place, he is able to maintain the independence he cherishes while staying safe as his mobility changes.

Additional Assistive Technology in Our Programs

Across our programs, a variety of assistive technology devices are making a meaningful impact in supporting those we serve. Here are just a few examples:

- Hatch Lights: A programmable light used for scheduling, telling time, and developing healthy sleep routines. The light changes color to indicate awake time (yellow, 6 AM–10 PM) and sleeping time (blue, 10 PM–6 AM), helping an individual orient himself throughout the day.
- Communication Boards (Go Talk): A programmable board that allows voice-recorded messages to be used instead of robotic voices. This is especially helpful for an individual who identifies items using unique words.
- Door Alarms: Various alarms are used throughout the home to increase safety while allowing independence. Some notify staff of visitors, while others are specific to certain areas or activate only at night to avoid disturbing others.
- TEAM Alarms: Staff wear discreet call buttons that alert colleagues via vibrating pagers when assistance is needed, preventing unnecessary disruption while ensuring timely support.
- Timers: Used to help an individual orient himself when waking in the middle of the night, providing a sense of time without relying solely on staff guidance.
- Automatic Soap Dispensers: Installed in the shower for an individual who has difficulty holding and squeezing a bottle, promoting increased independence in personal hygiene.

Technology That Transforms Lives

These are just a few examples of how assistive technology is making a profound impact at HCO. By integrating smart solutions tailored to each individual's needs, we are improving quality of life, fostering confidence, and promoting self-sufficiency. Thoughtfully applied technology has the power to break barriers, open doors, and create new opportunities. At HCO, we remain committed to harnessing these advancements so that the individuals we support can live safely, independently, and with dignity. Assistive technology is not just about innovation—it's about empowerment. As we continue to explore new ways to enhance the lives of those we serve, the future is brighter than ever.

CHARTING A *bold future*

Every two years, Home and Community Options (HCO) embarks on a reflective journey to shape its vision and strategic direction for the future. The development of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan began last fall with a comprehensive evaluation process. We conducted Satisfaction Evaluations with the individuals and guardians we serve, gathered valuable feedback from our dedicated staff through survey questions, and facilitated a collaborative brainstorming session with our Leadership Staff and Management Team to address key agency concerns. After carefully compiling and reviewing all responses, we identified critical challenges and priorities that will guide our focus into the future. With the endorsement of our Board of Directors and the Quality Assurance Committee, we have already begun to move forward.

This plan reaffirms our unwavering commitment to strengthening our foundation, enhancing services, and ensuring exceptional care and support for individuals we support. Here are some of the key components included in this plan:

Strengthening Community Connections

Building strong community relationships is essential to our mission. We are enhancing outreach through interactive experiences and clearer communication to ensure a better understanding of our services. Additionally, we are streamlining onboarding to create a smoother transition for those entering our programs.

- **Refreshing Agency Materials:** Updating brochures, sharing testimonial videos, and refining existing documents to more clearly communicate our services.
- **Expanding Interactive Engagement:** Increasing facility tours, one-on-one learning sessions, and community outreach opportunities.
- **Enhancing the Intake and Onboarding Process:** Refining procedures for a structured, user-friendly transition.
- **Empowering Employees as Advocates:** Providing specialized training to equip staff with the knowledge and tools to advocate effectively.

These efforts strengthen connections and ensure individuals and families have the resources and support they need to thrive.

Health and Wellness Initiatives

HCO is committed to improving healthcare services to better support those we serve.

- **Assessing Healthcare Needs:** Evaluating client demographics, contracts, and staffing to align services with individual needs.
- **Securing Future Health Resources:** Expanding partnerships, researching advancements, and strengthening our healthcare workforce.
- **Enhancing Health and Wellness Training:** Updating training on infection control, safe client handling, fall prevention, and overall wellness.

These initiatives ensure the continued well-being of individuals and staff.

Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements

As HCO's population ages, we prioritize helping individuals remain in their homes as long as possible. Openings in facilities such as assisted living or nursing homes are scarce, especially for individuals with behavioral or developmental needs. While not always feasible, HCO strives to provide the necessary support for aging in place whenever possible.

To ensure safe and accessible environments, HCO is investing in facility assessments, upgrades, and long-term planning.

- **Conducting Facility Assessments:** Each site will be thoroughly reviewed to identify accessibility levels, opportunities for expansion, and overall areas for improvement.
- **Enhancing Facilities:** Long-term property management plans and accessibility projects will ensure that our spaces meet the needs of those we serve as they age.
- **Securing Financial Resources for Property Improvements:** We will continue to identify funding opportunities and resources available to providers.

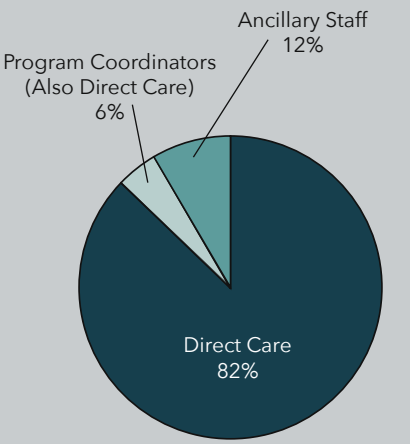
Leadership and Workforce Development

To maintain excellence in service, HCO remains committed to sustaining a strong leadership team and a stable, engaged workforce. To support this, we are conducting a comprehensive review and update of job descriptions to enhance clarity, efficiency, and alignment of responsibilities across the organization. Additionally, we continue to strengthen workforce capacity by offering clear career paths, a supportive work environment, and ongoing professional development opportunities to foster employee growth and retention.

Looking Ahead

HCO's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan is a roadmap for strengthening the support and opportunities available to the individuals we serve. By enhancing healthcare services, improving accessibility in our facilities, and fostering stronger community connections, we are ensuring that individuals receive the highest quality care in an inclusive and supportive environment. Additionally, by investing in leadership development and workforce sustainability, we are building a foundation that will allow HCO to continue providing exceptional services for years to come. Our commitment remains unwavering—to empower individuals with developmental disabilities, foster inclusivity, and create opportunities for all to thrive.

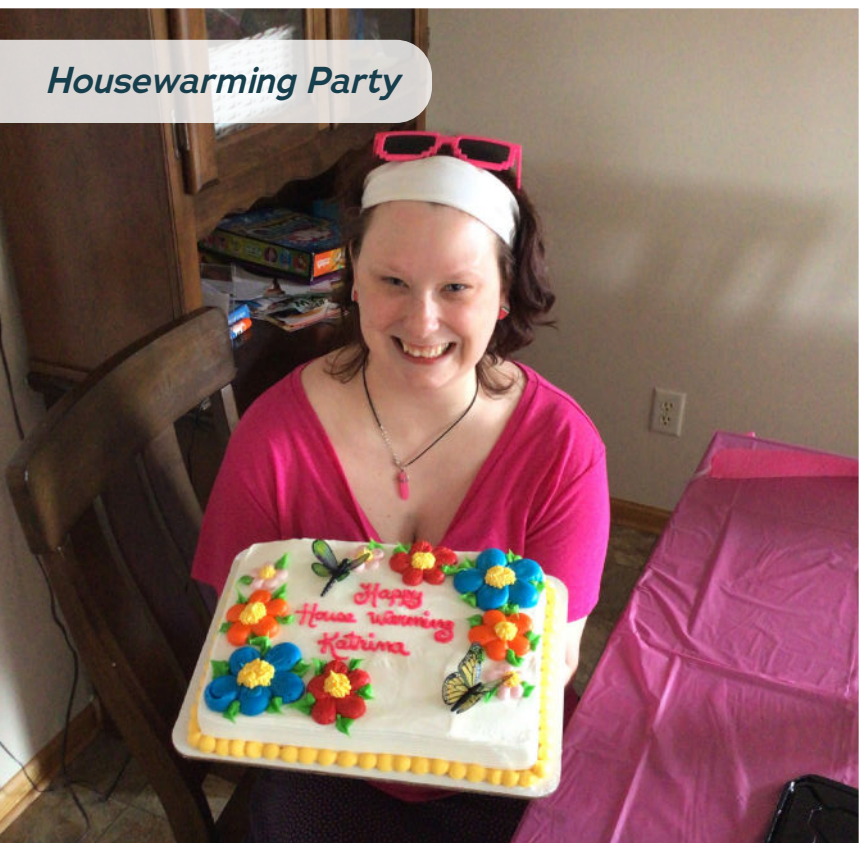
HCO STAFF



Election Day

Waffle Breakfast

Leadership Winona Graduates



Housewarming Party

Winona Boat Tour

Streets and Treats

Healthy Lifestyles

Disability Services Day at the Capitol

A PASSION FOR *helping others*

Bob's love for helping others started at a very young age and little did he know he was about to begin a new chapter that would profoundly shape his life. It all began during his senior year at Winona Senior High School, where Bob enrolled in a community service class. This class, aimed at working with teenagers with various disabilities, sparked a passion in him that he never anticipated. He never guessed this course would lead him to a career that became a central part of his life.

At just 18 years old, Bob was hired by Paula Krage and Cindi Wiczek. Their belief in his potential, coupled with the guidance of Mary Jansen, lead him to his first placement at an HCO program. This program is where Bob improved his skills and quickly became familiar with the responsibilities of his role. As he expanded his duties to a second HCO program, his dedication and enthusiasm became increasingly evident.

Working as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) for over two years, Bob found immense satisfaction in the work he was doing. The friendships and shared passion with his team for assisting people with disabilities made every challenge worthwhile. The core of HCO's mission resonated deeply with him: every client deserves the opportunity to live a fulfilling life, and Bob is proud to be a part of that vision. The relationships he developed with clients and colleagues are more than just professional—they are genuine friendships that enrich his life.

Bob then transitioned to a paraprofessional role at the old Winona Middle School which was both challenging and rewarding. Helping students with disabilities navigate their school day and complete their assignments helped his patience and adaptability grow. But it was this experience that further solidified his commitment to supporting others. Later, his role as a program assistant at an HCO Program, along with a few hours spent at the DAC, broadened his perspective and deepened his skills.

Later on, Bob pursued a degree in information technology from Minnesota State College Southeast in Winona, earning a Microsoft Certified Professional certification. Balancing work and study was demanding, but this period of his life taught him valuable lessons about perseverance and self-discovery. The skills he learned at HCO, including patience, kindness, and a sense of humor, became integral to his personal and professional life.

Upon graduating, Bob joined the IT department at Fastenal, where he has spent the last 26 years building a successful career. Yet, even as he thrives in his role at Fastenal, he never forgot the impact HCO had on him. The agency had been more than just a job; it was a place where he found his true calling and learned to appreciate the little things in life.

With Bob's return to HCO in his early 50s, it truly feels like a full-circle moment. Despite no longer needing the income, he knew this is where his heart was. The work, though challenging, fulfills him in a way that no other job can. His journey at HCO has taught him to be grateful and humble, to appreciate the importance of serving others, and to value the connections he makes.

Back in Rollingstone, where his roots run deep, Bob finds joy in balancing his professional life with his personal interests. He enjoys cooking, especially grilling, and is always on the lookout for healthy eating practices. Weightlifting has been a passion of his since he was 14, and although he has slowed down after reaching his competition goals, he continues to stay in shape. Music, playing the guitar, and riding his Harley Davidson with friends are favorite pastimes, along with hosting fun holiday get-togethers in his man cave.

Bob's family is a cornerstone of his life. He and his wife have raised two wonderful children, both of whom achieve their dreams. His parents and younger sister remain close, embodying the strong family values that have shaped him. In his small town, amidst the supportive community and the memories of overcoming challenges like the recent tornado, Bob finds a deep sense of fulfillment.

In the end, Bob's story is a testament to the power of passion, dedication, and personal growth. From his early days at HCO to his long-lasting career at Fastenal, and back to HCO, Bob's journey reflects the importance of finding work that not only pays the bills but also enriches the soul. His life is a testament of the simple joys, meaningful relationships, and the lasting impact of a career driven by purpose.

Thank you, Bob, for your unwavering commitment to Home and Community Options. Your dedication, kindness, and passion for helping others have made a lasting impact on the lives of so many. We are grateful for the care and compassion you bring to HCO, and we appreciate all that you do to support our mission. Your journey is an inspiration, and we're so glad to have you as part of the HCO family!

SUCCESS STORIES

Working in the Winona Community

At Home and Community Options, we believe in the power of inclusion, opportunity, and the profound impact that meaningful employment has on individuals and the communities they are a part of. Across Winona, the individuals we support are more than employees—they are dedicated, hardworking professionals who take pride in their contributions. Through their work, they give back to the community that supports them, proving every day that employment is more than just a paycheck—it's about connection, contribution, and personal growth.

One of the most rewarding aspects of employment is the sense of purpose it brings. At Winona State University, Troy has been a dedicated member of the cafeteria staff for an incredible 26 years. He takes great pride in ensuring students have a well-stocked and welcoming dining experience, diligently maintaining the salad bar, cereal station, and other areas. His commitment and longevity are testaments to his work ethic and the value he brings to his team. He's not alone—several of the individuals we support work at Chartwells in the WSU cafeteria, contributing to the university's vibrant community.

Beyond WSU, our individuals bring enthusiasm and dedication to many local businesses. At Kwik Trip, Walmart, and Hy-Vee, they play essential roles in customer service, stocking shelves, and maintaining cleanliness. Their efforts help keep these businesses running smoothly, and their positive attitudes foster meaningful connections with coworkers and customers alike. Their dedication does not go unnoticed—they prove every day that every role is vital to a business's success.

Local businesses provide another space where our individuals thrive. Jon enjoys his work at Bub's, while Brock is a valued team member at Sammy's Pizza. At the Riverport Inn, an individual contributes to the hospitality industry, ensuring guests have a welcoming and comfortable stay. The Elks Lodge also provides meaningful employment opportunities, where individuals play a role in its daily operations. In the catering industry, those working at Steak Shop Catering showcase resilience and determination in a fast-paced environment, helping events run smoothly with their dedication and hard work.

Sophi is a shining example of dedication paying off. She is employed at the YMCA, where she works in the children's program, bringing energy, joy, and enthusiasm to the kids she supports. She loves what she does, and her passion is evident in the way she positively impacts the young lives around her.

For one individual, meaningful employment has taken the form of entrepreneurship. William has built his own lawn care business, spending summers mowing lawns and helping community members maintain their properties. His dedication, hard work, and perseverance have turned his passion into a successful endeavor. His journey is an inspiration—showing that with determination and commitment, it's possible to create your own opportunities and make a lasting impact in the community.

We are also proud to support individuals who have found fulfillment with working in the local schools. One individual is making a difference at Winona Area Public Schools, while another contributes their talents at WK School. Their work plays a role in shaping the next generation, and their dedication to helping students succeed is truly inspiring.

Each of these individuals brings something unique to their workplace. Their commitment serves as a reminder that every job holds value and purpose. They show up each day ready to contribute, demonstrating that an inclusive workforce benefits not only those employed, but the entire community. Their work is a source of pride, accomplishment, and connection, and we are honored to support them on their journeys.

Winona is stronger because of the contributions of all its residents. At Home and Community Options, we celebrate the individuals who are making a difference through their hard work, proving that employment is more than just a job—it's a meaningful way to be part of something bigger.

A heartfelt thank you to the businesses and community members who champion inclusion in the workforce. Together, we are creating opportunities, fostering independence, and building a more connected and vibrant Winona.

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

Stories of Growth and Change

For many young adults, moving into their own home is a significant milestone—one that marks the start of greater independence, personal growth, and new experiences. For Katrina, Haylee, and Ebony, this transition became a shared journey, as they each moved into their current HCO home within a month of one another. Though each of their paths was unique, they all found excitement, challenges, and fulfillment in their new environment.

Katrina's Journey: A Long-Held Dream Realized

Growing up in Winona, Katrina always lived with her parents, finding comfort in the familiarity of home. However, as she got older, she longed for more independence. After high school, she joined HCO's Saehler Drive program to develop essential daily living skills while still living at home. The COVID pandemic made her realize how much she missed connecting with peers, strengthening her resolve to move out on her own.

In early 2024, Katrina took the leap, moving into her new home with HCO. She quickly bonded with her housemates and found comfort in her new routine. Having her own space, complete with a TV and mini fridge, reinforced her sense of independence. She also formed meaningful relationships with the supportive staff, who helped her with everything from developing life skills to small but meaningful gestures like assisting with makeup and hair.

Katrina also embraced her responsibilities as an adult, securing a job at Steak Shop Catering, where she washes dishes, prepares food, and assists with events. With ongoing goals of increasing her independence and advancing in her career, Katrina is thriving in her new environment and inspiring those around her with her determination.

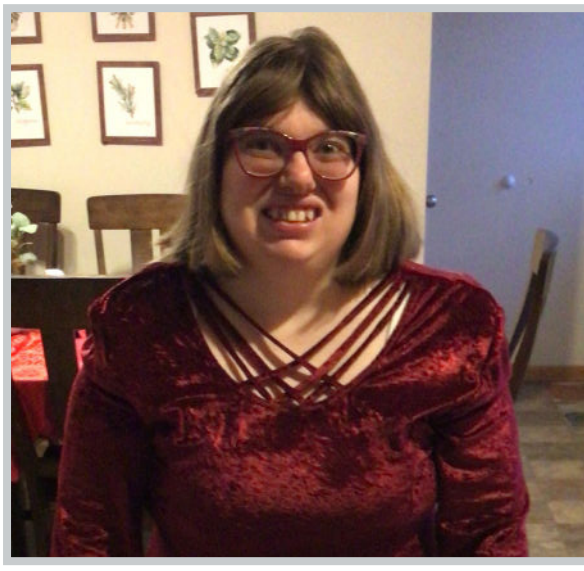
Haylee's Story: Finding Comfort in a New Home

Haylee had her first experience with an HCO home in 2020, and when she moved into her current house, she was eager for a new experience. While she worried about fitting all her belongings into her new room, everything found its place, and with the support of HCO staff, her transition was smooth.

One of the biggest adjustments for Haylee was learning the routines and preferences of her new roommates. Fortunately, she found that they all got along well and enjoyed spending time together, particularly during dinner and movie nights. She appreciated living in a quiet home and found comfort in having all-female roommates.

Since moving in, Haylee has taken pride in her newfound independence. She now does her own laundry and has started learning more about cooking. With the support of staff, she

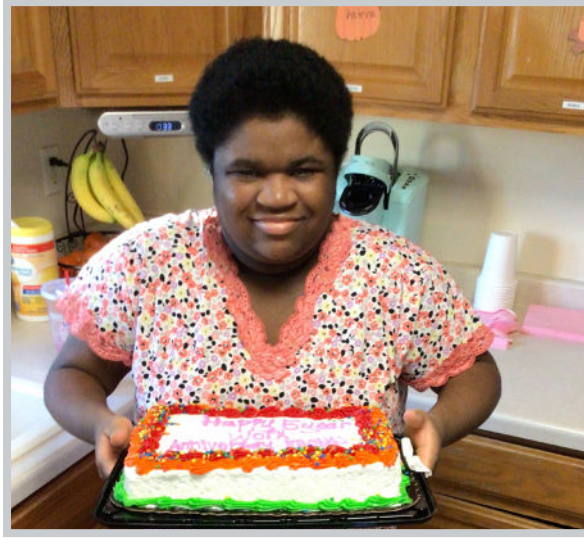
continues to develop her daily routines and explore new hobbies, including baking cheesecakes and crafting. One of her proudest accomplishments has been getting back into bowling, a passion she had set aside.



When asked what independence means to her, Haylee had a simple but meaningful answer: getting to pick out her own monthly Yu-Gi-Oh! card. She looks forward to continuing her journey, spending time with her housemates, and celebrating milestones in their journey toward independence, recognizing their achievements in daily living and personal growth.

Ebony's Experience: Building Skills and Connections

Ebony was excited about moving into her new home but was also nervous about making new friends and adjusting to a different environment. With the help of HCO staff, she settled in quickly, and her fears about meeting new people faded as she bonded with her roommates and support team.



Since her move, Ebony has learned a great deal about herself. She discovered a love for cooking and has grown more confident in preparing meals for both herself and her housemates. Another skill she has developed is finding and watching new movies independently, something she previously needed assistance with. Staff have also encouraged her passion for art, helping her enter her work at the Winona County Fair.

Ebony enjoys spending time with her roommates, watching movies, playing games, and cooking together. She appreciates the structure and cleanliness of their home, where everyone takes responsibility for maintaining shared spaces.

Looking to the future, Ebony has big dreams. She hopes to continue developing her cooking and baking skills, with a goal of learning more about baking. She also dreams of visiting Disney World one day. Her advice to anyone considering an HCO home is simple: take things one day at a time and be open to getting to know new people.

A Home, a Community, and a Future Full of Possibilities

For Katrina, Haylee, and Ebony, moving into their HCO home was more than just a change in location—it was the beginning of a new chapter filled with growth, friendships, and newfound confidence. Each of them has embraced the transition in their own way, learning valuable life skills, forming meaningful connections, and discovering what independence means to them. Their journeys serve as a testament to the supportive and empowering environment that HCO provides, helping individuals build lives filled with purpose, joy, and self-reliance.

Oxbow Park

Gardening

Servant Leadership Training

Fishing at the Winona Lake

Grassroots Meeting

Holiday Decorating

Staff Holiday Party

Ferguson's Apple Orchard

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory

2024 DONORS

A heartfelt thank you to all of our dedicated donors.

If we have neglected to mention anyone, please accept our apologies and know that we deeply appreciate your support.

All Are One Roman Catholic Church
Doris Ames
Chris and Harley Antoff
Rick and Sandra Auseth
James and Maribeth Bedtke
Chris Bell
Ken Bence
Linda Berg
Lawrence and Mary Bergin
Pete and Ashly Bissen
Bluff Country Co-op
Dennis and Barbara Boelter
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Bosteter Windows and Siding, Inc.
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Bub's Brewing Company
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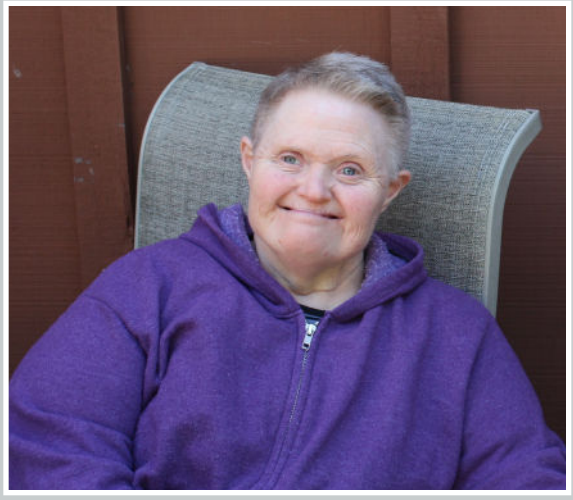

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