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BRIDGET'S STORY A LIFE BUILT ON CONNECTION

Bridget has created a life centered around meaningful relationships, favorite traditions, and activities that bring her joy. Originally from Fountain City, where she grew up with her mom, dad, and brother Patrick, she values staying connected to the people who matter most. Since beginning her journey with HCO, Bridget has continued to grow in her independence while building a strong support system and creating a daily life that reflects her interests, strengths, and routines.

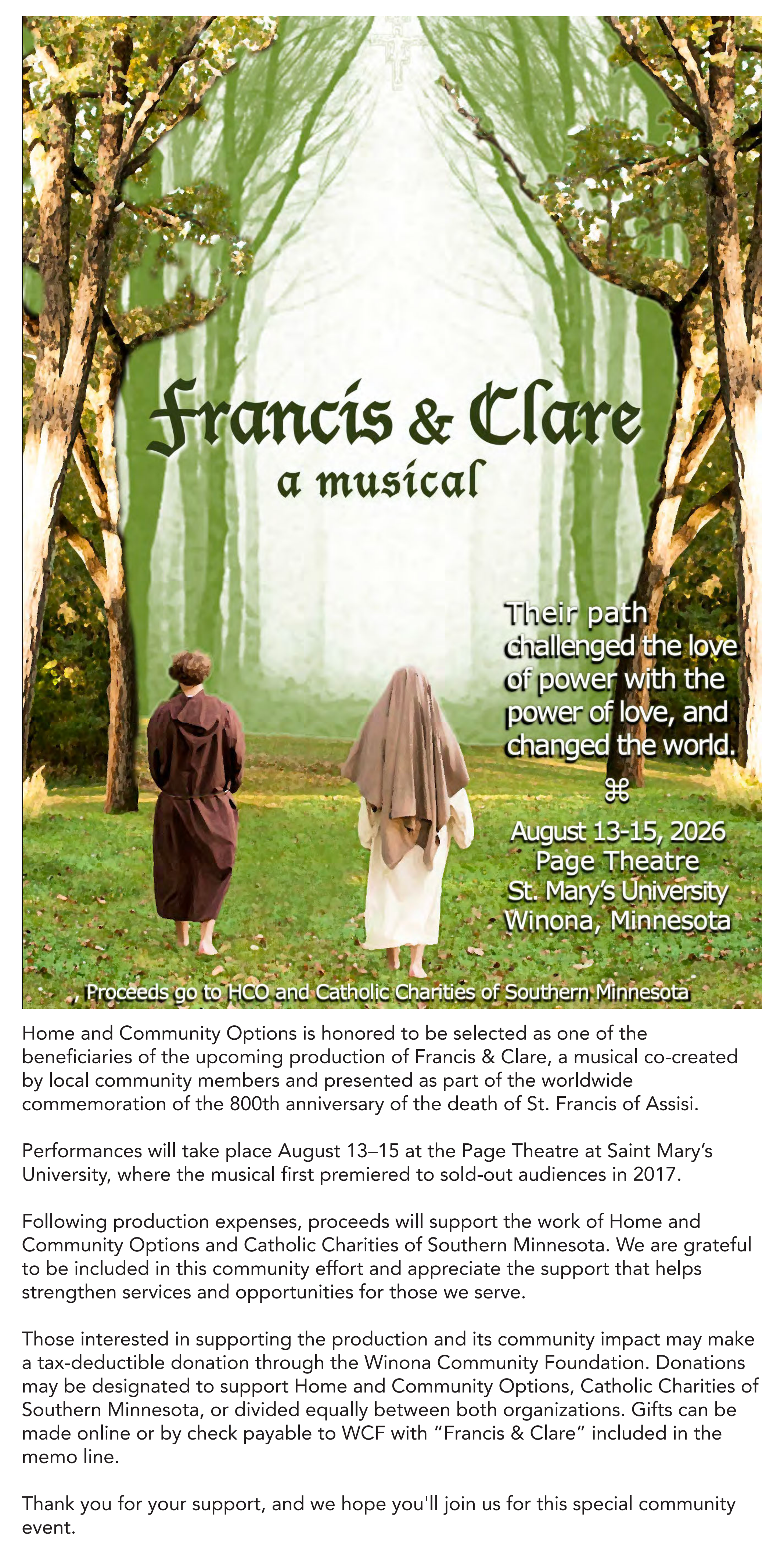
A large part of Bridget's routine includes working at DAC, where she enjoys staying busy and contributing throughout the day. She spends time folding towels, sorting stickers, and completing other various projects. Having structure and consistency is important to her, and she takes pride in staying active and being involved. That same sense of responsibility carries into life at home, where she enjoys helping with household routines by making sure supplies are stocked and the trash is taken out. She also enjoys exercising and keeping active in ways that support her overall well-being.

Outside of her daily routine, Bridget enjoys spending time doing activities that help her stay connected with others and create lasting memories. Some of her favorite hobbies include playing games, spending time with family, and researching her family tree, where she enjoys discovering how everyone is connected. She

especially enjoys pizza and picnic dates with her boyfriend and looks forward to participating in Buddies and Healthy Lifestyles events. One of Bridget's unique strengths is her ability to remember birthdays and special occasions, helping her maintain thoughtful connections with those around her. She also enjoys looking through family photographs and reminiscing about meaningful moments throughout her life. When relaxing, one of her favorite ways to unwind is watching Power Rangers.



CONTINUE READING



Francis & Clare

a musical

Their path
challenged the love
of power with the
power of love, and
changed the world.



August 13-15, 2026
Page Theatre
St. Mary's University
Winona, Minnesota

Proceeds go to HCO and Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota

Home and Community Options is honored to be selected as one of the beneficiaries of the upcoming production of Francis & Clare, a musical co-created by local community members and presented as part of the worldwide commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi.

Performances will take place August 13–15 at the Page Theatre at Saint Mary's University, where the musical first premiered to sold-out audiences in 2017.

Following production expenses, proceeds will support the work of Home and Community Options and Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota. We are grateful to be included in this community effort and appreciate the support that helps strengthen services and opportunities for those we serve.

Those interested in supporting the production and its community impact may make a tax-deductible donation through the Winona Community Foundation. Donations may be designated to support Home and Community Options, Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota, or divided equally between both organizations. Gifts can be made online or by check payable to WCF with "Francis & Clare" included in the memo line.

Thank you for your support, and we hope you'll join us for this special community event.

summertime

TRADITIONS AT HCO

Summer at Home and Community Options is all about making memories, soaking up the sunshine, and making the most of every opportunity to enjoy the season together. Across HCO's programs, individuals have been staying busy with activities that bring laughter, connection, and plenty of summer fun.

As the weather warms up, many programs naturally head outdoors. Fishing trips, bike rides, backyard games, bubble activities, gardening, and evenings spent around bonfires and grill-outs have quickly become seasonal favorites. Several homes are enjoying time in their raised garden beds, where individuals help water plants, care for vegetables, and celebrate harvesting fresh produce throughout the summer. One home recently welcomed a new patio set, creating another space to relax, enjoy meals together, and spend more time outside. At another program, a friendly fishing competition between staff and individuals has added a little extra excitement as everyone waits to see who will land the biggest catch.

Summer also means getting out into the community and enjoying local traditions. Individuals have spent time exploring the Winona Farmers Market, attending Steamboat Days, visiting the library, going bowling, taking bike rides, and spending time at Project Compass. Annual favorites like trips to Valleyfair and the Lakeview Drive-In continue to create moments everyone looks forward to year after year. Fourth of July celebrations, local races, picnics, crafts, and gathering together to watch the parade have all helped make this summer one to remember.

Back at home, the fun doesn't stop. Days are filled with baking favorite treats, playing cornhole in the backyard, celebrating birthdays, and gathering with friends and staff for special meals and activities. Whether it's sharing a barbecue on the patio, tending to a garden, enjoying a picnic, or simply spending time together outdoors, each activity creates opportunities to build friendships and enjoy meaningful moments.

While every HCO program has its own traditions and favorite summer activities, one thing stays the same across every home: summer is a season for connection, adventure, and making memories together. With plenty of warm days still ahead, we look forward to seeing what new traditions, favorite moments, and summer stories are still to come.



Chris & Amber
enjoying the Steamboat
Days Parade



Vance & Bryce
enjoying S'mores around
the bonfire



Brenda & Julia
exploring the Winona
Farmers Market



Gus enjoying fishing at
the Winona Lake

STORIES FOR GOOD

“Creating Change Through Self-Advocacy”

“Home and Community Options believes that every person deserves the opportunity to be heard, valued, and included in their community. For many of the individuals supported by HCO, self-advocacy has become one of the most meaningful ways they share their experiences, build confidence, and help others better understand disabilities...”

CONTINUE READING



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Finding Her Place – Arielle's Story

Sometimes the right career is one you never expected. For Arielle, Home and Community Options became the place where she discovered her strengths, built lasting relationships, and found both a profession and a community she loves.

Growing up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Arielle attended several different schools and describes herself as a quiet and reserved child who loved art, science, and reading. She got her first job at a local pizza restaurant when she was just 14 years old, where she learned responsibility, teamwork, and the value of hard work.

After high school, she attended college, first studying sculpture before switching to art education. During student teaching, however, she realized teaching wasn't the right fit. Unsure of what came next, she left college and worked several jobs before accepting a position supporting people with disabilities. Although the work was challenging, it introduced her to human services and revealed a career she found meaningful. After several years in the field and a brief detour as a bank teller, an unexpected opportunity brought her to Minnesota in February 2014.

Knowing almost nothing about Winona, Arielle packed up and made the move. "It was a huge adjustment," she says. "I went from a densely populated area with endless options to a small, snowy town where I didn't know a single person."

While searching for a job, she came across Home and Community Options. She joined HCO in March 2014, and what started as a job quickly became much more. Over the years, HCO became the place where Arielle found her community, developed lasting friendships, and discovered strengths she didn't know she had.

Today, Arielle serves as a Program Coordinator while also supporting HCO as a Trainer, mentor, and coach for the Ambassadors for Respect Team, and by assisting with respite services. During her time at HCO, she also returned to school and earned her sociology degree from Winona State University in 2022.

"HCO helped me find my place, both professionally and here in Winona," she says. "It became a place where I was encouraged to grow, explore my strengths, and discover opportunities I never imagined for myself."

That encouragement has shaped Arielle's career in ways she never expected. What began as a new job in an unfamiliar town has grown into a career filled with opportunities to lead, mentor others, and continue learning. Looking back, she sees that HCO believed in her long before she fully recognized her own potential.

"What stands out most is HCO's ability to see potential in people before they fully see it in themselves," she says. "Time and time again, I've watched this organization identify strengths, nurture growth, and create opportunities for people to succeed. That belief has helped me discover what I enjoy, what I'm good at, and where I want to go next."

Sometimes the right career is one you never expected. For Arielle, that unexpected opportunity became the place where she found purpose, confidence, and a community to call home.



BEATING THE HEAT THIS SUMMER

Summer has brought plenty of warm, sunny days, creating opportunities to enjoy the season in a variety of ways. However, with this week's extreme heat, spending time outdoors isn't always the safest or most comfortable option. Across HCO, our programs are finding creative ways to stay cool while continuing to make the most of summer. From enjoying ice cream and fun indoor activities to games, crafts, and time spent together, individuals and staff are embracing the season in ways that keep everyone safe and comfortable. See below for just a few of the ways they're beating the heat this summer!



Pictured is Brittany gathering ingredients while baking cookies with roommates and staff.



Pictured are Lori, Destiny, and Danna enjoying an indoor game of Connect 4.



Pictured is Kathy enjoying some relaxing time in the air conditioning while watching a game show.



Pictured are Bryce & Ella making frozen yogurt bites to help stay cool.

MORE THAN A DONATION

Thank You Bluff Country Co-op!

Home and Community Options is truly honored and grateful to be selected as a recipient of a generous donation from the Bluff Country Co-op Community Fund.

Gifts like this make a meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals we support every single day. This generosity helps provide more than just basic needs, it helps create comfort, stability, dignity, and a true sense of home. Donations help furnish living spaces with

furniture and household essentials, provide kitchen supplies and everyday comforts, and ensure individuals have transportation to medical appointments, community activities, and other important opportunities that support health, independence, and quality of life.

For the individuals we support, these things matter deeply. A comfortable chair, a fully stocked kitchen, reliable transportation, or the opportunity to participate in the community may seem simple to some, but they can have a profound impact on a person's daily life, confidence, and sense of belonging.

Beyond the practical support, this gift sends an even more powerful message: our community cares. It reminds the individuals we support, their families, and our staff that they are valued, included, and supported by the people around them. That compassion and kindness mean more than words can fully express.

As a local nonprofit serving individuals with developmental disabilities for over 50 years, we are continually grateful for the partnerships and community support that help make our mission possible. Together, we are building a more compassionate, inclusive community where every person is respected, supported, and given the opportunity to live a meaningful life.

Thank you to Bluff Country Co-op and to every community member whose support helps make this important work possible.



THE TEAM BEHIND THE SCENES

that keeps everything moving

We've all been there. A sink starts to leak. A toilet gets clogged. A winter storm covers everything in ice and snow. Or a piece of siding suddenly comes loose.

As any homeowner knows, things go wrong, and usually at the most inconvenient time. Now imagine not just one home, but 17 residential homes, a Central Office, a Resource Home, the Iverson Court apartment complex, and a maintenance shop. That's where our Maintenance Team comes in.

Leading this work is our Facility and Property Management Director, Darin, who oversees all aspects of our properties and facilities. Working closely with our Maintenance Coordinator, Jamie, and in collaboration with our Management Team, he helps identify needs, prioritize projects, coordinate repairs, and plan for both immediate and long-term improvements. He also works with vendors and contractors on larger projects, helping ensure our homes and program sites remain safe, functional, and welcoming.

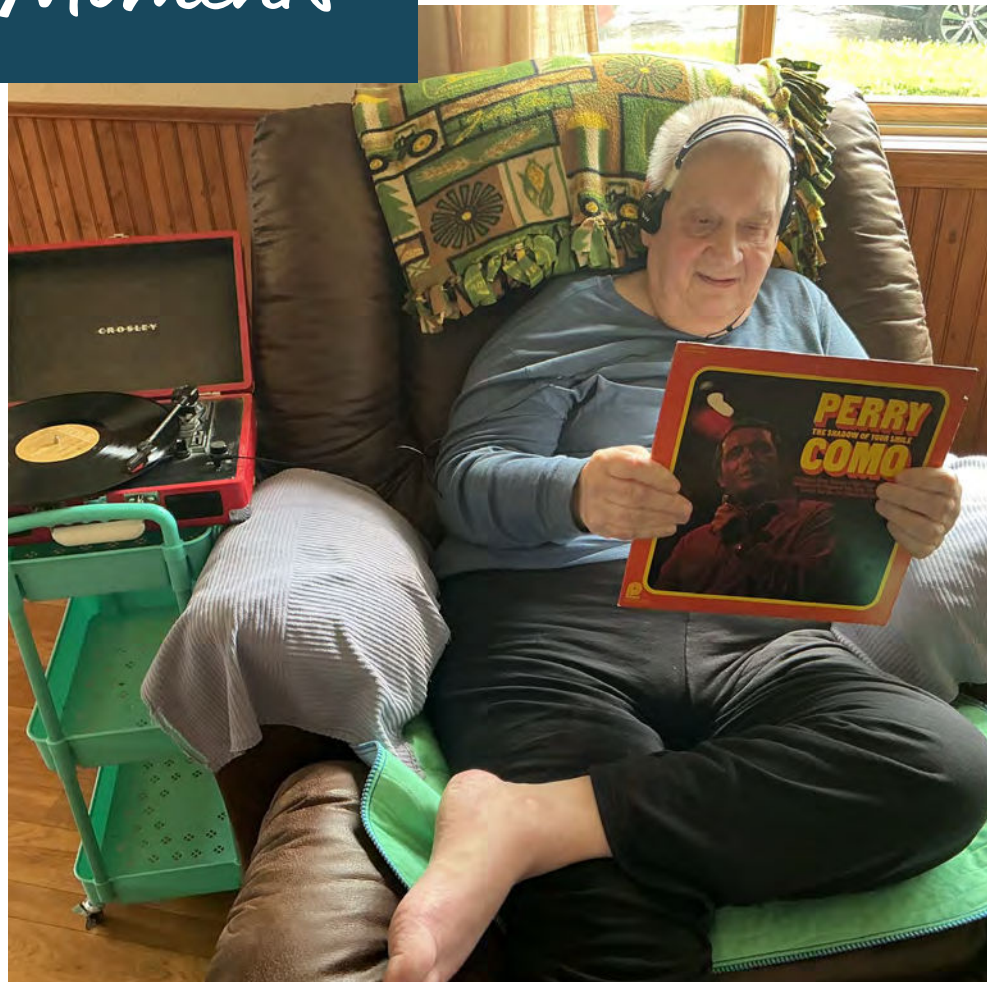
Bringing those plans to life is our dedicated Maintenance Team. As Maintenance Coordinator, Jamie helps organize and coordinate day-to-day maintenance activities while also working side-by-side with Josh, Mark, and Eric to keep our homes and programs running smoothly. Together, they repair what breaks, build what is needed, and respond when something cannot wait. From repairs and painting to lawn care and snow removal, their work is physical, constant, and essential. No two days look the same, and neither do the challenges they face. Whether it is early morning, late at night, or over the weekend, they show up ready to solve problems and keep our homes and programs safe, functional, and comfortable.

This team may often work behind the scenes, but their impact is seen and felt every day in safe homes, reliable transportation, and uninterrupted support. Because of their dedication and responsiveness, our programs can focus on what matters most, supporting individuals in living full and meaningful lives. We are grateful for the care, skill, and commitment this team brings to our organization each and every day.





Everyday Moments



MONTHLY

quote

Character is shown not in words, but in actions, doing what is right,
even when no one is watching.

Are you Living with Purpose?

HCO

HOME & COMMUNITY OPTIONS

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