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HOME & COMMUNITY OPTIONS

HCO October 2026

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS

MICHAEL'S STORY

FINDING A PLACE TO CALL HOME

When Michael talks about his home at Home and Community Options, one thing becomes clear: he is grateful to be here.

Before moving to HCO, Michael says he did not always receive the kind of care and support he needed. His experience left him unsure of what to expect when he moved into his new home. It did not take long, however, for him to realize that this was a new beginning.



Today, Michael is quick to share how happy he is to be at HCO. He often thanks staff for welcoming him into his home and for giving him the opportunity to live somewhere he feels supported, respected and cared for. According to Ashley, one of Michael's staff members, he thanks her nearly every day for helping him move into his new home.

For Michael, those words of gratitude are more than a simple thank-you. They reflect how much his life has changed since coming to HCO.

Originally from Winona, Michael graduated from Winona Senior High School and has created a routine that keeps him busy and gives him opportunities to continue growing. Monday through Thursday, he works at ORC before returning home to spend time with his housemates and staff.

CONTINUE READING



VOTE FOR HCO!

Home & Community Options has been selected as a finalist for Altra Federal Credit Union's Best Life Community Award! After reviewing more than 30 semifinalist nominations and applications, a panel of judges selected HCO as a finalist for the **Community Choice Award, with a chance to win $10,000!**

The winner will be determined by public voting, so **every vote counts!** Help HCO win $10,000 to support our mission and the people we support.

HOW TO VOTE:
Click the button below and vote for Home and Community Options!

Voting is open through Friday, October 23rd, at 11:59 p.m. Every vote makes a difference. Thank you for supporting HCO!

VOTE FOR HCO HERE!



A SPECIAL *thank you!*





Tidal Wave Helps Make a Difference for HCO

On Friday, September 18, Home and Community Options had the opportunity to participate in Tidal Wave Auto Spa's Charity Day in Winona. Throughout the day, customers could support HCO by purchasing a car wash, with a portion of the proceeds benefiting local organizations.

Thanks to the generosity of Tidal Wave Auto Spa and everyone who stopped by to support HCO, the event raised **$750** for our organization! Even with the rainy weather, people came out to wash their vehicles and support a great cause.

We are incredibly grateful to Tidal Wave Auto Spa for their generosity and for including HCO in this year's Charity Day. We also want to thank everyone who stopped by, donated, and helped make the day a success!

CELEBRATING **OUR DSPS!**

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week





We celebrated DSP Week September 12–19 with a fun week of appreciation for our incredible Direct Support Professionals! All HCO staff received a coupon for a free baked good from Blooming Grounds, and we enjoyed a pancake breakfast at the Central Office. We also gathered at Two Fathoms Brewery for Plant Bingo, giving everyone a chance to have some fun and spend time together.

As a kickoff before the official start of DSP week, we also hosted our annual agency picnic, bringing together individuals, staff, families and friends to enjoy time together and celebrate our HCO community.

It was a great time filled with good food, laughs, and opportunities to recognize the hard work our DSPs do each day. We are grateful for the dedication, compassion, and support they bring to the individuals we support and the HCO community!

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: *Destiny*

Finding a Voice

When Destiny joined Home and Community Options in 2017, she was looking for

something different. Friends who worked at HCO spoke highly of their experiences, and their words encouraged Destiny to apply. What began as a new job soon became something much more meaningful: a career built around relationships, advocacy, and helping others be heard.



Originally from Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, Destiny moved to Winona in 2015 to attend college, where she met her husband. Today, her life outside of HCO is centered around her family, including their one-and-a-half-year-old son, two dogs, and four cats. She enjoys reading, listening to music, and, most of all, watching her son discover the world around him.

Destiny started at HCO as a Direct Support Professional, became a Program Assistant in 2019, and stepped into her current role as a Primary Counselor in 2023. While her responsibilities have changed over the years, the heart of her work has remained the same: getting to know the people she supports, understanding what matters to them, and helping them have the opportunity to live life on their own terms.

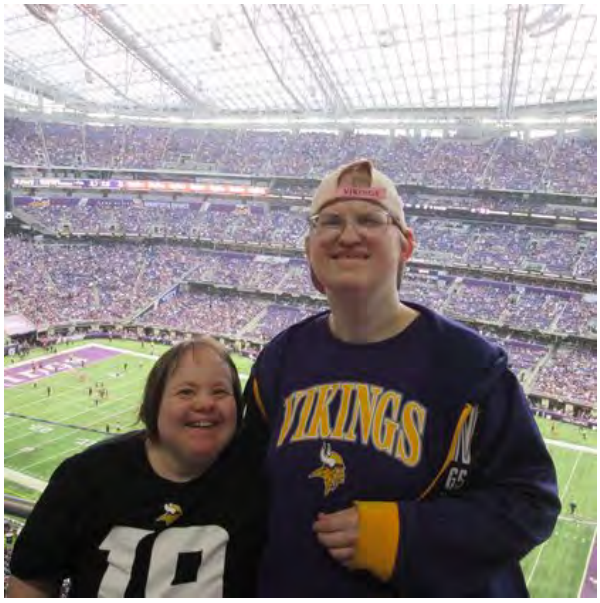
For Destiny, some of the most meaningful moments have come from seeing people grow in ways that may not always be obvious to others. She treasures the moments when someone reaches a goal, tries something new, experiences joy, or finds a way to communicate something they want others to understand.

One relationship, in particular, had a lasting impact on Destiny and changed the way she understood communication.

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THE IMPACT OF GIVING

There is something special about being given the opportunity to experience something you have never done before. Throughout the year, HCO is grateful to receive donated tickets to sporting events, plays, musicals and other events in our community. These generous donations give those we support the chance to get out, be part of the community and enjoy experiences they may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend.



In late August, two ladies had the opportunity to attend a preseason Minnesota Vikings game thanks to a generous ticket donation to HCO. When staff first told them about the tickets, both of their faces lit up. Neither had ever been to a Vikings game before, making the opportunity to attend their first game especially exciting.

They were also incredibly appreciative to learn that the tickets had been donated to HCO so they could enjoy the game. They spent the day cheering on the Vikings, taking in the atmosphere and enjoying every moment at the stadium alongside HCO staff. The ladies agreed that watching the game in person was even more fun than watching from home!

“Seeing the excitement on their faces and watching them experience something new is what makes opportunities like this so meaningful” said one of the staff members. The game gave them more than a day out. It gave them a first-time experience, something to look forward to and a memory they could share together.

HCO is incredibly thankful to the generous people who continue to donate tickets and experiences to our agency. Your generosity helps make meaningful experiences possible and gives those we support opportunities to enjoy the things they love, discover something new and create memories with the people around them.

GRASSROOTS Advocacy Task Force

Grassroots: Who's on the Ballot?

Our voices matter, and knowing who is on the ballot is an important part of being an active citizen!

At our September Grassroots meeting, we learned more about the candidates running for **Minnesota State Representative, State Senator, and Governor**. We looked at who is running, learned about their top priorities, and talked about the issues that matter to us.

As we reviewed what candidates are saying they want to do, we came up with an important question:

"How are you going to do this? What is your plan?"

We also talked about some of the priorities that are important to people with disabilities and our HCO community. These include **increased funding, keeping affordable and accessible housing, meaningful work, and protecting important services while also addressing fraud**.

The group also talked about how it would be helpful to know how current legislators have voted on issues that affect us. We can look at the voting records of current legislators, but this information is not available for candidates who have not served in office before.

Looking Ahead

Grassroots members also shared ideas for activities they have enjoyed in the past. These include **Self-Advocacy Bingo, learning how a bill becomes a law, writing letters, practicing how to talk with legislators, and visiting the State Capitol**.

We also came up with some new ideas. These include attending a town hall or city council meeting, making a video about issues that are important to us, having a watch party for the Day at the Capitol livestream for people who cannot attend in person, and sending postcards to invite a friend to Grassroots.

There are many ways to get involved, learn about our government, and make our voices heard. **Every voice matters!**

In October, we are focusing on **voting rights** and why it is important for

everyone to have the opportunity to vote.

A SUMMER TO REMEMBER WITH WWE

As we wrap up an unforgettable summer partnership with WWE, Home and Community Options (HCO) is excited to share that we received a generous **$20,000 donation from WWE** as part of the SummerSlam Community Champion program. This incredible gift will help support HCO's mission and the people we support. We are so grateful for WWE's generosity and for choosing HCO to be part of this special opportunity!

The donation was just one part of an amazing summer filled with new experiences and lasting memories. HCO welcomed WWE Superstars Chad Gable, Otis, Tiffany Stratton, and Maxxine Dupri for a special visit. Individuals enjoyed playing basketball and cornhole, planting a garden, sharing lunch, and celebrating Tiffany's birthday with a birthday cake!

The summer wrapped up with an exciting visit to Minnesota Vikings practice just before SummerSlam weekend in Minneapolis. Individuals had the opportunity to meet even more WWE Superstars, meet Vikings players, and receive a one-of-a-kind wrestling belt featuring HCO's logo!

From meeting WWE Superstars to celebrating special moments together, this partnership created memories that will last long after the summer ends. **Thank you to WWE for your incredible generosity and for making this summer so special for HCO and the individuals we support!**

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER *on and off the field*

For local student-athletes Dylan, Arthur and Graham, teamwork, encouragement and dedication

extend far beyond the playing field. As Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) at Home and Community Options (HCO), they support individuals in pursuing their goals, enjoying their interests and living meaningful lives. Along the way, they have discovered something special: **the support they give comes back to them in the most meaningful ways.**



Each athlete found their way to HCO through different experiences, but all three have discovered how shared interests, especially sports, can bring people together. Having conversations about football, favorite teams and upcoming games have grown into genuine friendships and connections with those they support at HCO.

Those relationships have led to some unforgettable moments, including individuals traveling to watch the athletes compete.

CONTINUE READING





Everyday Moments





MONTHLY *quote*

Leaders who put people first inspire loyalty and trust by genuinely caring about the success and happiness of those around them.

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

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