

## IOI 'certifies' 56 students at celebration

Re-print from *The Andrews Journal*  
By Taylor Bello

Graduation season continues to roll full steam ahead, but this particular ceremony was special.

Industrial Opportunities, Inc. awarded 56 students their certificates Friday, May 29, 2015, for completing the College and Career Readiness program through Tri-County Community College in Peachtree.

Students in the program took classes in math, reading, computer skills, cooking, gardening, and basic adult living skills. As registered Tri-County students, they can sign up for as many or as few classes as they want, instructor Carol Pittenger said.

"This program is dedicated to



Christopher O'Brien," Pittenger said.

O'Brien, 23, passed away from pneumonia on Dec. 17. He worked at IOI with his father, Tom, President of IOI. His name was read out along with 45 other students. Another 11 students were in Raleigh participating in Special Olympics and weren't able to be at the ceremony.

The audience of about 150 people filled with smile, and ample applause could be heard for each name that was called from the podium. Some people had to stand in the back of the room because the tables that had been set up were filled.

Dr. Donna Tipton-Rogers, President of Tri-County, handed each student his or her certificate and posed for photos with families. "Show everybody your certificate!" she encouraged one student who got a little distracted.

Fifteen of the students had a special surprise for the audience.

Accompanied by instructor Heidi Holton on guitar, they sang three songs: "I'll Fly Away," "Love Can Build a Bridge" and "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." A giggle slipped from one student just before the music began. Fellow student Chad Phillips signed the lyrics.

As they filed from the front of the room, several students smiled and said, "I got it!" as they passed their family and friends. But the fun didn't stop there.

Suddenly, "Cotton-Eyed Joe" blasted from the speakers, and nine pairs of students and HAB techs - who assist students on a day-to-day basis- emerged and filed back into the middle of the room. The "hoe-down" had begun, and finally the straw hats on certain members of the audience made sense.

Instructor Polly Kilpatrick led the show and called out moves from the podium. As she hollered, "Spin you partner round and round!" several dancers took to waving their hats to the beat. As the music picked up speed, Chad Phillips yelled, "Yee-haw!"

IOI provides career opportunities for disabled adults in



manufacturing medical and military products. This includes suspenders, belts, reflective leg bands for miners, surgical drapes and more. If students wish to continue working at IOI, they each receive a paycheck every two weeks just like at any other job, Pittenger said.

In addition to Tipton-Rogers, and Tom O'Brien, Pittenger, said she wanted to be sure the thank fellow instructor Tammy Luther, Angela Jaco, College and Career Readiness Program Coordinator; Susie West, Director of College and Career Readiness Program.

"This is a big community service," Pittenger said of what IOI produces. "And a lot of people don't even know about it."



# CHRIS O'BRIEN TRACK & FIELD DAY 2015



*From the mailbag...*

## “My Goals, My Dreams, and How I Plan to Achieve Them”

Mr. O'Brien,  
My name is Jayci Perkins. In July 2013, I had the awesome opportunity to work along side your son Chris at IOI. First and foremost, I wanted to tell you how sorry I am to learn of his passing. I also wanted to make sure I told you how much meeting Chris changed my life. He was the happiest guy I have ever met in my life. It touched my heart that even having the day to day struggles he had, it never stopped him from having a positive outlook on his life. I am sure you are well aware of how great your son was, but I wanted to let you know that because of Chris, I am going to be attending Northern Michigan University for Elementary Special Education. I never had the intention of going in to Special Education but when I got to know Chris, I wanted to learn more and touch other people's lives like he touched mine. I sadly didn't get to go to I.O.I this summer with my youth group but was informed of

the passing of Chris when they found out.  
This past year, I applied for many scholarships in attempts to help pay for my college. One of those scholarships required me to write an essay about my dreams and aspirations. In that essay, I wrote about Chris and how he inspired me to be a better person and become a special education teacher. I was informed last month that I won that scholarship. Not only was I thrilled for the financial award, but it touched my heart that they valued Chris's impact on me and what I have now decided to do with my life. I wanted to share my story with you, and I hope it touches your heart like Chris touched mine. I'm going to add the attachment of my scholarship story so you can see what I wrote. I am also attaching some special pictures of my time with Chris.  
I think what you have done with IOI is amazing and I thank you from the

bottom of my heart for your son, for my time at IOI, and for what you do every day.  
Thank you so much for your time, Jayci Perkins

### “My Goals, My Dreams, and How I Plan to Achieve Them”

If I would have had to write this essay two years ago, I'm not sure that I would have been able to, but a trip to Tennessee changed that. During the summer of 2013 I traveled with my youth group to a service camp called Eagle Ranch. The main point of the trip was to go and fix houses for the less fortunate in Copperhill, Tennessee. That was my intension. However, as an added bonus, we ended up going to a place called IOI. IOI was created to give people with special needs or disabilities a chance to work and be involved with regular jobs on machines created just to fit their needs. Within an hour of being at IOI, I met an

amazing guy named Chris. Chris has Down syndrome and his father is the founder of IOI. He had the most heart I have ever seen in any one person. He changed my life and my dreams. As of today I am doing an Independent Study with the preschool Special Education program at Rudyard. In the fall, I also plan on going to Northern Michigan University and majoring in Elementary Special Education. I hope to become a Special Education teacher after college, meet many more people like Chris and change their lives, like he changed mine.



# Christopher Thomas O'Brien

03/27/1991 - 12/17/2014



## In Memory of Chris O'Brien

- Thomas Sheridan
- Dwight & Linda Dickinson
- Glen & Jane Smith
- Chris' parents, Tom & Susan O'Brien
- Margaret Walton
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- Sharon Barnes
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- SIR Webbing, Inc
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## Quest Fellowship

- In memory of Joe El-Khoury by Rose El-Khoury
- In honor of Doug Earley by Jack & Sue Baldwin
- In memory of Cecile Mattox Campbell by Jane Campbell
- In honor of Tom O'Brien's commitment to services for the people of our communities by George Heilner
- In memory of Maxine Earley and honor of Doug Earley by Nan Wise
- In memory of Bill O'Brien, Shirley O'Brien, Judy O'Brien Sheridan, & Kathy O'Brien Pruzinsky by Thomas Sheridan
- In memory of Cherry A. Jarrett by Margaret Walton
- In memory of Cecil Mattox Campbell by John & Carol Campbell
- In memory of Cherry Jarrett by Fannie Watson
- In memory of Cherry Jarrett by Oak Forest UMW
- In memory of Mr. D. Joseph O'Conner by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

# Thank You!

**Andrews Twin Cinema**  
**John Irvin**

&

**Andrews Town Pool**  
**Cindy Bradley**

**for including IOI in your summer activities**



# Medical kits have interesting ties to community

By Stacey Posey  
Clay County Progress

BC Machining and Tactical Medical Solutions donated 20 downed operator kits to the Clay County Sheriff's Office. This kit is a medical kit that contains a tourniquet, tape, scissors, a CPR face shield, latex gloves and a hemorrhage control bandage. Bob Merrill, owner of BC Machining, said he felt these kits would benefit the deputies and citizens of Clay County. Merrill and his company are part of a great story.

Tactical Medical Solutions is a company out of Anderson, S.C. owned by Ross Johnson, who is a retired Special Forces soldier who got tired of making tourniquets out of whatever materials were available during his tours. When he retired, Johnson designed and patented a combat tourniquet made out of nylon materials. He needed someone to sew the pieces together and make a pin for the tourniquet. He found Industrial Opportunities Inc. where he met with Harry Baughn. IOI has been manufacturing the tourniquets ever since. Johnson was having the pins made somewhere else when Baughn suggested he speak with BC Machining. Merrill and his company began making the pins. They make 3,000 pins a day, deliver their finished product to IOI to attach the parts and sew the tourniquet. Both companies are striving to reach their

goal of 5,000 tourniquets per day. Once completed, the tourniquets are shipped worldwide to be used by U.S. military and law enforcement agencies. Tactical Medical Solutions is IOI's biggest customer. Twenty employees are dedicated to this project. BC Machining has three shifts of 12 employees dedicated to their part. Merrill and Baughn are grateful to be able to make a product locally and ship all over the world. Many people and families benefit from making a simple life-saving device. During recent training, each deputy received combat medical



From left, Stacey Posey, Sheriff Vic Davis, Bob Merrill and Mayor Harry Baughn display the combat kits donated to the sheriff's office.



A combat tourniquet is part of the combat kit in the patrol vehicles.

training, which included the use of a combat tourniquet. Little did they know that they would be receiving their own combat kit. Every deputy will have a kit in his patrol vehicle. On behalf of the sheriff's office, Sheriff Vic Davis said, "We appreciate the donation of these items that could potentially save the life of a deputy or a Clay County resident."

**Yes, I would like to contribute to the capital needs of I.O.I.**

All Gifts are Tax Deductible

Enclosed is a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward capital improvements at I.O.I.

**I make this gift:**

- In memory or honor of \_\_\_\_\_
- To benefit the client activity fund.
- To benefit the IOI Endowment Fund.
- Enclosed is my Quest Fellowship donation.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mail to: Industrial Opportunities, Inc. • P.O. Box 1649 • Andrews, NC 28901  
828-321-4754 • Fax 828-321-4784 • 800-872-4264**

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