

Winter • 2023

Qwest

Newsletter of Industrial Opportunities, Inc.

IOI Recognized for over 10 Years in SHARPS Program

On October 26, 2023, Industrial Opportunities, Inc. was awarded the SHARP Award by the NCDOL-Occupational Safety and Health Division (OSHA) in recognition of over **TEN** consecutive years in the SHARPS Program, (Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program). The SHARP Recognition Program is designed for small and mid-size employers that have established, implemented, and maintained exceptional workplace safety standards.

For over a decade, Industrial Opportunities, Inc. has requested and completed safety and health inspections performed by consultants from OSHA through its voluntary consultative services



program. IOI received some of its highest marks on this year's assessment which is a testament to the commitment of IOI's employees, clients, and Safety Committee to the safety and health of its employees. IOI is one of only three employers in Western North Carolina to be recognized as a SHARP Site, and one of approximately 150 employers throughout the state of North Carolina.

IOI's TCCC Students Perform "Rudolph"



TCCC Adult Basic Education students at IOI performed a production of Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer on Thursday, December 7, 2023. As part of the performance, the students enacted the nativity scene. IOI employees enjoyed watching the performance along with several parents and guardians.

IOI Clients and Employees Support Local Causes



Throughout 2023, the clients and employees of Industrial Opportunities, Inc. in Andrews held several fundraising events to benefit local charities. This year IOI was able to donate:

- * \$1,100 to the Cherokee County Food Bank
- * \$1,000 to the Shop with a Cop Program

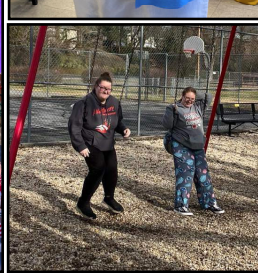
- * \$1,000 to Toys for Tots
- * \$980 to Cherokee County United Way
- * Several Coats for the Coats for Foster Children Drive

IOI wants to thank all its clients and employees for helping to make these donations possible and for making a difference in

Cherokee County.

Additionally, IOI wants to recognize one of its employees (Secret Santa) who wishes to remain anonymous who made an additional sizeable donation to Toys for Tots. This employee has made an individual donation for the past several years. The employee said that they knew what it

was like to need assistance and their children benefited from the Toys for Tots program years ago. The employee said that they were now in a place in their life to be able to help others as they were helped. Thank you, Secret Santa, for your support and generosity. May we all have the spirit of giving like this individual.



Cherokee County Annual Chamber Awards Dinner



David Robinson (second from right) pictured with Dennis Myers, VR Services Coordinator, Emily Burch, Employment Specialist, and Lynne Manning, Director of Programs, all from IOI.

These awards recognize people who refuse to be defined by a disability and also business who recognize that having a disability does not diminish the value or contribution these people can provide for their organizations. In a business environment, where there is a premium on getting and keeping good employees, now more than ever, this attitude becomes an even more important consideration for employers. The Personal Achievement Award goes to David Robinson who, with the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation, came to Industrial Opportunities Inc. soon after high school. After a time in the VR program, he was hired by IOI on the janitorial staff, where he is still employed today. That was in about 1982. He has been a mainstay of the janitorial staff for these many years. At one point, he mowed yards in the Andrews area in addition to a 40-hour week at IOI. He was always a great fan of Andrews athletics. He served as a student manager for the football team while in school. After getting out of school, he became a member of the football "chain gang." He has continued this activity over 40 years. David has been inducted into the Andrews High School Athletic Hall of Fame for his many years of service. He is better known in Andrews as "Happy Jack." During the time of his employment, he married a co-worker, with some transportation assistance from other co-workers. David has always had a strong support system, both with

family and friends. The Employer Award goes to United Grocery Outlet of Murphy, which has been supportive of the disabled population down through the years. They have been open to providing work experience activities to evaluate both soft and hard skills, and they also help determine if they were or should be good candidates for employ-



April Fleming and Brenda Cook (from left) accept the plaque recognizing United Grocery Outlet of Murphy as 2023 Employer of the Year.

ment at their business. The manager, Brenda Cook, attitude has always been that everyone deserves a chance to at least show what they are capable of doing and to show that they are able to perform a job. Several different people have performed work experience activities at their store, which offers a number of different work options. This willingness on the business's part is even more of a help now that the Pre-Employment Transition Services program is in operation and steadily growing, with an increasing need for sites for employment experience.



IOI Receives Grant, Covered Walkway Much Appreciated



A grant from the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina and IOI friends made it possible to build a covered walkway and patio cover. This will help us stay dry in downpours and provide shade from a broiling sun. Thank you for your generosity, we appreciate it!!!

From the mail...



Joyce and I recently bought a home in Andrews. As we researched the area, we became aware of the IOI story. We are inspired by your mission.

Scott & Joyce Haven

Quest Fellowship

- In memory of T. Robert Hay by Hampton DeJarnette
- In memory of Lee Ferguson by Matt Rogers
- In memory of Annabelle Golem by Betty Carpenter
- In memory of Ann & Paul Golem by Barbara El-Khoury
- In memory of Jack & Maxine Earley by Nan Earley
- In honor of Doug Early by Nan Earley
- In memory of William, Shirley & Dan O'Brien by Tom O'Brien
- In memory of Kathy Pruzinsky, Judy Sheridan & Kenny Isidor by Tom O'Brien
- In memory of Chris & Susan O'Brien by Tom O'Brien

Supporters

- Karen Kephart
- Frederick & Karen Willes
- Patricia Slagle
- Jenny Hart
- Sharon Robertson
- Andrew Reichman
- Roger & Regina Holloway
- Ronald & Becky Parker
- Dan & Margaret Sifferlin
- Phil Mattox
- Joel Storrow
- Jacky Jones CDJR
- United Community Bank
- Mountain Credit Union
- Nantahala Bank & Trust
- Scott & Joyce Haven
- Nola Cooper
- Kyndra Payne
- A+ Products, Inc.
- Jack Smoot
- Tom & Molly Carew
- Terry & Melinda Swaim





Warm Wishes for a
Joy filled
Holiday Season
and a peaceful and
happy
New Year!

The IOI Team

This card was designed by the winner of the 2023 Christmas Card Contest: Thomas.
He has attended IOI since 2005. *The artwork for the remaining entries are throughout the newsletter.

All Gifts are Tax Deductible

I make this gift:

- ☐ In memory or honor of _____.
- ☐ To benefit the client activity fund / IOI Endowment fund.

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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