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### **Pigs! Butterflies! Goats! 10th Annual Tables for Tasks Celebrates Creativity and Mental Health Recovery**

Creativity abounded at the 10th Annual Tables for Tasks held at the Bayview Event center on Lake Minnetonka. This year’s event hosted 18 exquisite tables with themes ranging from spooky to sparkling.

The program included highlights from the past year and the challenges ahead as discussed by Executive Director Karen Johnston, as well as stories of triumph over illness from Willie Brown, a recent Interlachen Training Lodge graduate, and Linda Williams, a mother living at Oakwood Residence with her daughter. The program concluded with the emotional story from Karen McGown, a mother who struggled to navigate the mental health system and eventually found support for her son in Tasks Unlimited.

Many people helped make the event a huge success. Thank you to all who participated: financial contributors, table decorators, table hosts, silent auction donors, volunteers, speakers and attendees!

To see more pictures from the event, check out the Tasks Unlimited Blog at [www.tasksunlimited.org/blog](http://www.tasksunlimited.org/blog).

### **Program Participants Climb the First Rung of the “Career Ladder”**

As the school year began across the nation, class was also in session for ten Tasks Unlimited program participants looking to climb the “Career Ladder.”

“It’s exciting to have this many people interested in the Career Ladder program,” said Career Ladder Program Coordinator Robin Schuette.

The Career Ladder program is a highly individualized opportunity for Tasks Unlimited program participants to learn new skills through classroom and on-the-job training. Upon completion, trainees have the opportunity to become crew leaders, supervisors or contract managers for one of the seventeen Tasks Unlimited Building Services (TUBS) work crews.



The current classroom session – the Apprentice Crew Leader Training – is the first step for people interested in gaining more responsibility at the worksite. The course focuses on safety, inventory and quality control. Upon completion of the nine-week session, trainees will work closely with the supervisory team at their worksite to ensure they gain the necessary skills to become successful crew leaders. Trainees are able to complete the on-the-job training at their own pace. Once they complete the apprentice phase they are eligible to apply for the full position.

Crew Leaders play an important role in keeping operations smooth at the worksites. They assist the worksite team by running safety meetings, ordering supplies and giving feedback to employees about their work quality after doing an inspection. This reduces the burden on the contract manager, who can be free to focus on other areas of keeping the contract running smoothly.

“TUBS has large contracts with a lot of ground to cover every day – Whipple itself is over 500,000 sq. ft. with 70+ restrooms and 30+ employees. That’s a lot for one person to monitor each day. By having a Crew Leader or an additional supervisor, we are able to provide more and better supervision to our crews, and we have more ‘eyes on the building’, resulting in better quality janitorial services for our customers,” says Steve Lockwood, Program Director of Janitorial Operations.

The current nine-week course wraps up in November. The next training opportunity will take place in the spring.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

November 16

Give to the Max Day

**Providing supported employment and housing for people in recovery from mental illness since 1970.**

## Karen's Corner: A Budget Crisis Solution

From Executive Director,  
Karen Johnston

Fall is here. A glance back at this year's election campaigns reminds us that finding balance between fiscal responsibility and the increased demand for state and county-funded services is a challenging and difficult task.

Tasks Unlimited is a budget problem-solver. When people are out of work, our tax pool shrinks and we have less money to disperse between necessary services needed to keep our communities running. Prior to joining our organization, 83 percent of Tasks Unlimited's program participants were unemployed. Now they work and pay taxes. They add to the funds needed to run critical services and become less reliant on those services. Even more, the consistent work allows for a higher level of mental health stability that keeps them out of hospitals.

Despite our success at maintaining mental health at a lower cost and a notable increase in demand for services, we face significant budget cuts each year that force us to innovate and work harder with less money.

When we look ahead, our future is not bleak, but it will be challenging. Our staff is working diligently to find new revenue streams and develop opportunities to employ more people with serious mental illness while reducing operating costs for the organization. The new laundry business is a testament to this forward-thinking spirit.

But we still need your help. Your donations and advocacy for continued mental health funding help us continue to provide quality services to our clients and contributes to the on-going health and success of our community. Thank you for continuing to empower people with serious mental illness to live full lives.



## Celebrating 40 Years with Singing & Stories

Tasks Unlimited celebrated 40 years of success at the annual fall family picnic. Over 200 people honored the occasion with food, conversation, karaoke and an opportunity to share memories from the past 40 years.

Executive Director Karen Johnston opened the celebration by sharing favorite memories submitted by lodge members. Memories included peers supporting each other during the bus strike to make sure everyone got to work on time and got home safely, vacations around the world, making friends on the work crews, having pets in the lodge and enjoying recovery.

Co-founder and long-time board member Dorothy Berger spoke on Tasks Unlimited's earliest days at Anoka State Hospital and how being told "no" was her ammunition to start a Fairweather training program.

Board member Lydia Lee presented Dawn Somlai, a lodge member at Tasks Unlimited's Oakwood Residence, with the John K. Trepp Innovation Award. Dawn was nominated for the award by Program Director Andrea West based on her dedication to the Fairweather Lodge Model and her efforts to bring the mothers and children together as a cohesive group.

"Dawn has a big heart. She frequently goes above and beyond her responsibilities and volunteers to help others, even if it means she will have to forego things for herself," said Oakwood Residence Program Director, Andrea West.

The program ended with everyone singing "T-A-S-K-S," the Tasks Unlimited version of 1970s classic, "Y.M.C.A."

Thank you to all who have participated in Tasks Unlimited's success over the past 40 years!



## Tasks Unlimited Launches New Website

Tasks Unlimited recently launched an all-new website! Details on our programs and services offered to individuals and to businesses are now available online. You can also make online donations and learn more about serious mental illness. Be sure to check out the latest news on the organization's blog! Check it out at [www.tasksunlimited.org](http://www.tasksunlimited.org).



### End Stigma: Take Your Advocacy Online

Stay current on Tasks Unlimited events, mental health news and more by following Tasks Unlimited on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tasksunlimited](http://www.twitter.com/tasksunlimited) and joining our NEW online community page at [www.facebook.com/tasksunlimitedinc](http://www.facebook.com/tasksunlimitedinc).



## "Give to the Max!" on November 16

On November 16 Tasks Unlimited will participate in the second annual "Give to the Max Day"—an opportunity for Minnesotans to take part in the largest online giving event ever. Last year Minnesotans gave \$14 million to over 3,400 nonprofit organizations.

Donating to Tasks Unlimited is simple. Just go to [GiveMN.org](http://GiveMN.org) or use the link provided on Tasks Unlimited's "Donate" page. Follow the instructions provided to make your donation securely online.

Are you a night owl? An early riser? Consider making your donation at various times throughout the day. Each hour, one GiveMN donor will be randomly chosen and \$1,000 will be added to their donation by one of GiveMN's partners (your donation will not be affected). The top two Twin Cities nonprofits and the top two Greater Minnesota nonprofits with the most donors will receive a grand prize of \$20,000 for first place and \$10,000 for second place.

Rally your friends and help us fund more opportunities for people with serious and persistent mental illness. Give to the Max!

## Seasoned Cleaners Add Shirts and Rags to Their Cleaning Repertoire

As an organization, Tasks Unlimited has made a pledge to all participants: As long as they stay with the program, they will have a job if they want to work. Many are working well into their senior years, but janitorial work is often difficult for those with mobility issues or for workers who want to cut back on their hours as they ease into retirement.

In response to this issue, the Aging and Agility Committee at Tasks Unlimited developed a plan for a laundry business to ensure the organization continued to meet its pledge. With help from a grant from the Anoka Regional Treatment Center Auxiliary, the laundry facility opened in August with three employees who clean and repair shirts for two Tasks Unlimited Building Services contracts. They also wash cleaning rags for four additional worksites.



"It's a good worksite for someone who feels like they can't clean a whole floor anymore. The guys are doing a really good job," said Sarah Brenholt, the team's supervisor.

## Tasks Unlimited "Celebrate Recovery" at the 26th Annual National Fairweather Lodge Conference

Tasks Unlimited staff and program participants joined forces with the Coalition for Community Living to welcome people from Fairweather Lodge programs from across the nation for the 26th Annual National Fairweather Lodge Conference early in September. The event was held at The Depot Minneapolis Renaissance Hotel in Minneapolis.

The conference theme, Celebrate Recovery, was widely embraced as conference attendees exchanged ideas and enjoyed each other's company. The event featured workshops on issues important to mental health recovery and Fairweather living. Tasks Unlimited program participants hosted workshops on the benefits of peer specialists, pets in the lodge and looking good and feeling great.



Tasks Unlimited program participants also hosted a "Celebration of Recovery" during which they presented posters, performed magic, discussed trips and featured other ways they celebrate recovery from mental illness.

During the closing awards ceremony, The Coalition for Community Living honored David Beebe with The Billie

Larch Lifetime Achievement Award. David worked as a mental health worker at Tasks Unlimited's lodge training program (LTP) for 25 years. He was a tireless proponent of the Fairweather Model, and his first priority was always the trainees and their recovery. David helped over 150 people succeed in training and move on to living in a lodge. David resigned his position in July and is deeply missed.