



CHOICE unlimited

Work · Create · Connect

Happy Snowy Spring, Friends!

What is the old adage, *March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb*? Well, the opposite was true this spring! In order to keep people safe, we partially closed our agency on March 25th and 26th and watched the many inches of snow fall in our community. It truly was beautiful, but then it was time to shovel, and shovel, and shovel some more! We were able to support a few people at their jobs during our spring blizzard and their employers were very happy to see them! The rest of the people we served were invited to participate in remote classes while safely at home. The classes offered during the two-day period included: All About Weather, Basic American Sign Language, Short Story Club, History of Duluth, Latin Dance Exercise, Something to Smile About, and Social Club. Having the flexibility to offer remote classes to the people we serve when we cannot be in-person is one of the priorities we have with our current Strategic Plan. One of the goals emphasizes **enriching services to persons served**. We are continuing to look for ways to enrich our services based on feedback from annual satisfaction surveys and focus groups.

In the past three years we have increased the amount of time we are serving people by expanding their schedules and providing more opportunities for work, creative expression, health and wellness activities, volunteer experiences, advocacy opportunities, and classes and discussions that focus on developing healthy relationships and body positivity. Our current Strategic Plan has three additional goal areas including: recruiting and retaining quality employees, increasing overall agency revenue, and expanding our business. Our current Strategic Plan will end this summer, and I am looking forward to helping create our next three-year plan.

~Kristie Buchman, Executive Director

Welcome CARF!



CHOICE, unlimited is excited to announce that the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, known as CARF International will be coming to our agency for an accreditation review this summer. The mission of CARF is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process and continuous improvement services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

Spring Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 29

Issue 1

Happy Spring! Welcome CARF	1
Save the Date! Hike for Health	2
Meet Our Interns	3
Quarterly Highlights	4
What's Cooking! A Wild State Surprise	5
ARTS Program Update	6
Book Now! Sundown on the Jasper County Jewel	7
Thank you MN State Arts Board!	
Hobby Hub	8
Health & Wellness Program Update	
Support Ukraine! Partnership with Superior Rotary	9
Chair Massage available	
We Are Hiring! The Frugal Fashionista	10
Spring Remote Classes	11
Thank You Community Employers!	12

Save the Date - Hike for Health!

Please join us for our 12th annual fundraising event to support our Health and Wellness Program!

When: Wednesday June 26th 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Where: Hartley Nature Center



Get Involved-Become a Sponsor!

Holistic Health Level Sponsor: Donate \$600.00 to our event. Sponsors receive two event t-shirts and are invited to display wellness materials on an 8-foot table prior to and during our event. You will be listed on our *Hike for Health* t-shirts and will be prominently noted in promotional announcements, event sponsorship material, our Facebook page and website; reaching over 2,000 community members!

Wellness Level Sponsor: Donate \$400.00 to our event. Sponsors receive two event t-shirts and are invited to display wellness materials on an 8-foot table prior to and during our event. Wellness Sponsors will be listed on our Facebook page and website.

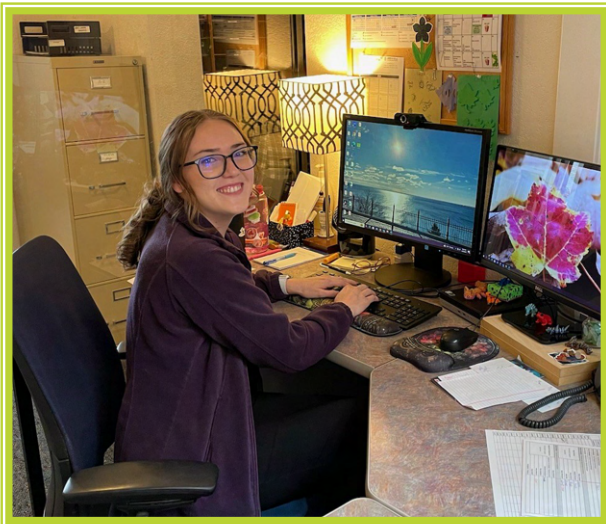
Healthy Partner Sponsor: Donate healthy snacks, door prizes or offer a health-related activity during our event. Healthy Partner Sponsors will have an 8-foot table to display wellness informational material.

Additional business partnership opportunities: Organize a group of co-workers and hike with us!

To become a Sponsor: contact Jessa Swift at 218-724-5869 or by email jswift@choiceunlimited.org

Meet Our Interns

Anna Tennis joined CHOICE, unlimited in October 2024 as an intern while attending the College of Saint Scholastica's Master's program in Licensed Clinical Social Work. Anna has a background in creative writing, project management, and health and wellness. Anna works directly with several people we serve, and is also supporting several CHOICE, unlimited classes including: Book Club, where the group is working their way through the entirety of the Chronicles of Narnia; Feel Good Food, in which people gather to discuss the best ways to be and feel healthy through diet and other lifestyle choices; and Creative Writing, where Anna supports Tina Wussow as she guides the class in exploring the world through the written word in all forms. Anna will complete 450 hours by the end of her internship commitment with our agency.



Hello, my name is Emily, and I am the human resources intern for spring 2024. I am a senior, majoring in psychology with a minor in early childhood studies at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Originally, I thought I would use my degree to go into counseling for young adults, but then I connected with a few individuals who have been working in human resources for more than a decade, and ultimately decided that this is something I would like to do long term. I am ecstatic to learn about talent development/ acquisition, recruitment and retention, and more. Outside of school, I enjoy playing pickleball. I recently got more involved with this sport and

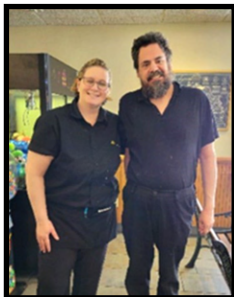
actually won second place in my first tournament! Additionally, I enjoy reading books before bedtime to break the habit of being on a screen during all of my waking hours. Outside of these two activities I always try to make time to hang out with my friends, family, and animals. I have two cats and two dogs. I am very excited to learn from Terrie and others during my time here at CHOICE, unlimited! By the end of my commitment I will have over 200 hours of internship experience!

Thank you Anna and Emily for your great work with our agency!



Quarterly Highlights

Employee of the Quarter



*Kevin and his co-worker
Kim taking a rare break
for a photo!*

Kevin is our featured Employee of the Quarter! He worked in the food service industry for 22 years prior to working for Perkins. He was employed at the Perkins Miller Hill Mall location for 8 months before they decided to close their doors. He was given a great recommendation by a co-worker and the owner of Perkins to work at any location in the area. Kevin chose to work at Perkins West and began his tenure there in March of 2022. He is responsible for washing dishes and putting them away once they are clean. He is also responsible for maintaining a clean and tidy work station. Kevin is a reliable and dedicated employee. He has a dry sense of humor and enjoys joking with his co-workers and quizzing them about music. Thank you Kevin for your dedication and hard work!

Employer of the Quarter



Perkins Family Restaurant in West Duluth is a great place for a delicious breakfast or yummy baked goods. Founded in 1958 as a single pancake house in Ohio, the company currently has nearly 300 restaurants in 32 states and Canada! Committed to delivering 100% satisfaction through service excellence and positive dining experiences, the brand embraces a kindness served daily philosophy. CHOICE, unlimited and Perkins have enjoyed being employer partners for over 8 years. Kirsten, one of the managers, commented "everything is great" when asked about the partnership between our agency and the restaurant. Thank you Perkins, for your inclusive hiring practices!

Volunteer of the Quarter



The Chum Food Shelf serves as a beacon of hope and unity, tackling the pressing challenge of food insecurity with remarkable compassion. This initiative goes beyond simple food distribution, exemplifying a spirit of inclusivity and empathy. It even acknowledges the critical roles pets play in many households by providing pet food, ensuring comprehensive care for all family members, including the four-legged ones. At the heart of Chum Food Shelf's operations is a dedicated group of volunteers, among whom Zach stands out for his exceptional commitment and warmth. With two years of volunteer service under his belt, Zach embodies the essence of teamwork and

community engagement. His role at the Chum Food Shelf has allowed him to leverage his friendly and caring nature, making him a pivotal figure in the organization's outreach efforts. Zach thrives on meeting new people and enjoys the collaborative atmosphere of volunteering, where he can work alongside others towards a common goal. His ability to connect with people from various backgrounds, whether they are volunteers, clients, or fellow community members, has significantly enhanced the impact of the Chum Food Shelf. As demand for the Chum's services continues to escalate, the role of volunteers like Zach becomes increasingly crucial. Through initiatives like Chum2GO, aimed at overcoming barriers to food access, and the unwavering commitment of the volunteer corps, the Chum Food Shelf is making substantial strides in combating food insecurity. Zach's dedication and personable nature contribute immeasurably to this cause, underscoring the power of community action and the importance of every individual's contribution.

What's Cooking!

Easy Rhubarb Custard Cake

Ingredients:

1 box yellow cake mix
Water, eggs and vegetable oil required for cake mix
4 cups chopped rhubarb * See below
1 ¼ cup granulated sugar
1 ½ cup heavy cream
Optional- whipped cream or Cool Whip for serving

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
 2. Prepare yellow cake mix as directed. Pour in greased 9x13 pan
 3. Sprinkle chopped rhubarb and sugar evenly over the cake mix
 4. Pour heavy cream over everything
 5. Bake at 350 degrees for 60-70 minutes
 6. Serve cake warm topped with whipped cream and store leftovers in the refrigerator
- *Frozen rhubarb will work in this recipe as a substitute. Just be sure to thaw and pat it dry before adding it to the cake.



Shannon's Rhubarb
Custard Cake

A Wild State Birthday Surprise

Bryan Hagberg was surprised on his recent birthday by not only receiving a T-shirt displaying his favorite entertainer, Britney Spears, from his co-workers, but all of his co-workers were wearing the same shirt!

One of his co-workers, Dominic, added "Bryan makes us smile, and makes every day brighter for us!" Bryan will celebrate his 5th year work anniversary this May. As you can see, he thoroughly enjoys his job and co-workers at Wild State Cider!



ARTS Program Update



BOLD-choice on the Norshor Stage

BOLD-choice Theatre Company is still in afterglow mode after it's SOLD-OUT premiere performance of "Sundown on the Jasper County Jewel", their original country western musical! A crowd of nearly 600 attended the show on January 6th at the historic Norshor Theatre. The Duluth Playhouse and their generosity helped to make this spectacular kick-off a reality. The setting couldn't have been more perfect to tell the tale of a once famed honky-tonk theater that was aching for its glory days. The cast and crew had an exceptional night, and the crowd was swept away with the talent, songs, costumes, characters, and storytelling! BOLD-choice has the show available to tour through the next year. For booking information turn to page 7 of this newsletter.

Our Visual Arts Classes are always learning about new approaches, mediums, and artists to inspire their work. Their most recent unit is in *shape*. Students have been exploring the definition and use of shape in visual art, making Matisse inspired cut-paper collages, drawing nature inspired shapes, and currently working on creating a portrait painting in the style of Gustav Klimt.

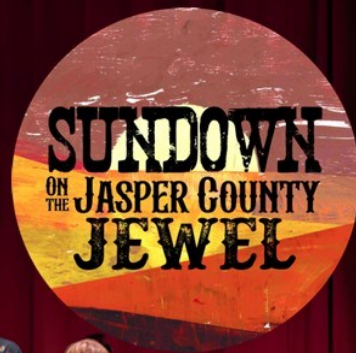
The Dance and Music Classes continue to rouse the inner performer in each of their students. The Norshor Studios remain Dance Class headquarters on Monday afternoons and both Monday and Thursday Music Classes are held at Peace Church, one of our long-standing community partners. On March 11th, Monday morning Music Class students had a showcase of their most recent original songs, highlighting flowers and sweet treats, a continuation of the strangeness of skeletons and ditties about self-confidence and identity.



Alicia's Matisse inspired work

After another well-attended and well-received Poetry Reading at Wussow's Concert Café in December, Creative Writing is currently mid-session and meeting in the Great Hall at the St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center (aka The Depot). Each week starts with a 10-minute warm-up writing session inspired by a simple word or phrase. Next the class is offered a more detailed prompt to use for inspiration if they like or they can always take off in their own direction. One of the many strengths of the class is the camaraderie and appreciation it fosters among the students, sharing their work with one another and building a creative cohort.

Acting Class is currently creating a new one-act play; this time the setting is a bowling alley! Most of the actors love bowling in real life so they wanted to expand on their familiarity and add some crazy twists (of course!). We have all the likely scenarios; time on the lanes, ordering drinks, getting shoes, a birthday party, pros, and novices. What the audience may not expect is the dynamics of a take-over, hired entertainment, and a questionable death! Drama indeed! The class will be showcasing their play in late spring-look for more info on our social media. We would love for you to attend!



BOOK NOW

**BOLD-choice is touring their original Musical
“SUNDOWN ON THE JASPER COUNTY JEWEL”**

**Book this rootin’ tootin’ good time for your community,
organization, celebration, conference or training!**

**Contact Annie Roseen (218)724-5869
aroseen@choiceunlimited.org**

THANK YOU TO THE MINNESOTA STATE ARTS BOARD

For awarding CHOICE, unlimited’s ARTS Program
The 2024 Arts Experiences Grant!

*We are dedicated to creating artistic outlets and
experiences for people with disabilities, providing
platforms for self-expression and an opportunity to
educate the public to the incredible possibilities all
individuals possess.*



Hobby Hub

Sewing with Roxanne



Roxanne Nelson lives for fashion and creativity. So, it comes as no surprise that she loves to sew! Since taking a class many years ago where she learned to make a blanket, she has been wanting to freshen up her sewing skills. Earlier this year she began working on sewing projects once a week. When asked why she enjoys sewing, Roxanne said “I’ve always wanted to learn new things. I can call it my own.”



Roxanne is learning about pattern making and is working on hand stitching projects. While making this messenger bag she put her skills and design flair to the test, but what she is most excited about is clothing. She is eager to learn more about fabrics and other materials used in sewing. This summer she is looking forward to learning how to use a sewing machine to tackle some wearable art. “It’s always been a dream of mine to do fashion!”

We are excited to see the unique and fun clothing pieces that Roxanne creates, so watch for some bold and fanciful new fashions very soon!



Health and Wellness Program Update

This winter brought a new opportunity for people to dive deep into healthy eating knowledge in a new class **Feel Good Food**, taught by our intern Anna Tennis. The class gathers every Wednesday from 11:15-12:15 to discuss food and lifestyle choices that bring vitality to any and all bodies. The class discusses a variety of healthy eating options and stresses that there is no single, correct path everyone should follow to health, because each person has unique needs. Many people navigate disease, allergies, and other vital considerations to choose a diet and lifestyle that work for them. As a group, they gather to discuss health from all perspectives: how the way we feel impacts our bodies, how the way we eat impacts the way we digest foods, how what (and when) we eat can change our bodies, and what actions we can take to feel not just healthier, but better.



Another class, **Healthy Lunch Bunch**, gathers weekly to discuss and learn about healthy food alternatives. This past quarter they learned about alternatives to drinking soda. They sampled different flavors of sparkling waters and made their own infused waters with fruit, mint leaves and cucumbers. They also sampled different citrus fruits, to take advantage of the best season for citrus. In other wellness news, Seated Stretch and Strengthen, Tai Chi, and Healthy Lunch Bunch moved to a new class location at Peace Church. We are so grateful to have such a wonderful space for our classes! In addition, all of the fitness and healthy eating classes grew in attendance this quarter. It is exciting to see people we serve and our employees embrace a healthier lifestyle!

Support Ukraine Shirts

CHOICE, unlimited is partnering with the Rotary Club of Superior Wisconsin in support of the people of Ukraine. Artist Stephanie Wilcox designed a *World Friendship* shirt capturing the essence of this mission. Superior Rotary has already purchased one ambulance that is actively being used in war-torn areas of the country. Another ambulance, stocked with medical supplies, is the new goal! All profits from your purchase of a shirt will go towards this goal.

Stephanie's image, *World Friendship*, reminds us of the many hands reaching across the world to provide humanitarian aid in Ukraine. Thank you Stephanie for your image!

CHOICE, unlimited will be an outlet for the purchase of shirts.

Order forms are available though April 30th at CHOICE, unlimited. Accepting checks or cash only. Checks payable to Superior Rotary.

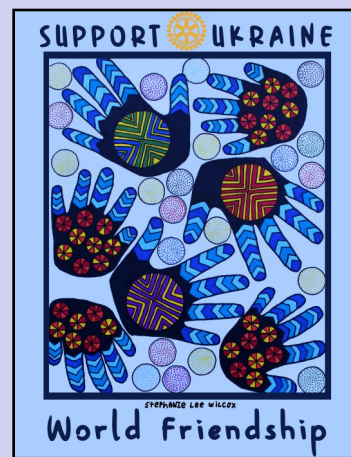


T-shirts \$25, Long Sleeve T-shirts \$30, Crewneck Sweatshirts \$40.

Shirt colors: White, Black and Royal Blue

Unisex sizes: Small to 4X (\$2 extra for 2X to 4X).

For more donation opportunities go to:
[Superior Rotary's Website.](#)



Artist Stephanie Wilcox displays her art at local art galleries

Chair Massage Available at CHOICE, unlimited!



Nicole getting ready for a chair massage session.

We are thrilled to welcome Nicole Lindstrom of Nicole Lindstrom Massage back on a regular basis offering 15-minute chair massages for the people we serve and our employees once a month. Massage is an important tool in promoting mental, and physical health, reducing stress and anxiety and promoting relaxation. CHOICE, unlimited offers a punch card discount for the people we serve and employees. Purchase a punch card for \$60 and receive five 15-minute chair massages.

Book a session with Nicole in April for anytime in 2024 and mention this newsletter article and receive 10% off of any one in-studio massage session or book chair massages for your organization.

Call Nicole for details at 218-260-7982 or reach out to her at nicole.lindstrom.nl@gmail.com



Kevin, enjoying his chair massage

Positions Available



- **Community Support Specialist**—Full time Management position starting at \$21.25
- **Employment Specialist/Job Coach**— Full and Part time entry-level openings starting at \$17.25 per hour

Benefits Available Include

- Health, Dental, and additional voluntary benefits
- PTO, HSA, 403(b) Retirement Plan
- Mileage is reimbursed
- Wage differentials for evening and weekend shifts

Interested in learning more about our open positions?

Call Terrie Whitesel, Human Resource Manager, for more information at 218-724-5869 or apply at www.choiceunlimited.org



Ms. Frugal was looking forward to wearing a flowery spring dress for the upcoming holiday weekend and the snow wasn't going to subdue her sartorial spark- "just add leggings and boots!".

So, what does a frugal fashionista want in her Fashion-Easter basket? Our gal is trying to avoid the sugary stuff so she had advice on what contents could make up a healthy but not boring Easter basket. Start with snacks that will fill you up without overdoing the sweetness-pretzels and apples. Next add some fun things to pass the time-a puzzle with a spring theme, coloring books and colored pencils.



Last up, all the goods that can adorn you including fruity scented body spray, fun scrunchies and barrettes, a set of bunny earrings and necklace, candy-colored nail polish and new eye-makeup! Pastel pinks, blues and yellow? Yes- except for our fashionista's trademark smoky dark-lined eyes; they are a staple year-round!



hello SPRING

Spring Remote Class Schedule

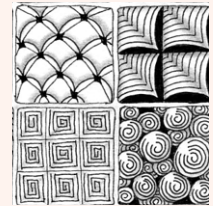
Book Club - Wednesdays 8:30am - Listen to audio recordings of famous literary works. Discussion about the books' happenings included before and after the listening session.



Coffee Club - Thursdays 10am - In coffee club, we get together with our morning beverage of choice and talk about what we did for the week to feel better about ourselves and reduce stress.

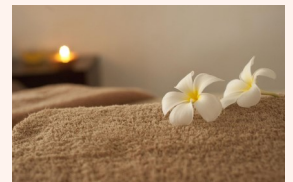
Dance - Wednesdays 11am - Weekly dance instruction, exercise and social connection that allows students an opportunity to move their body, get exercise, and see fellow students.

Mindfulness Through Zentangle- Thursdays 9am - A class designed to teach participants to tune into their thoughts and use the Zentangle method tools to increase focus, happiness, and peace.



Music- Wednesdays 10am - Weekly music exploration and instruction. Drawing out and honing natural strengths-instrumentation, voice, rhythm and lyric work.

Relaxation-Mondays 9am- Guided meditation focused on relaxing mind and body.



Something to Smile About- Tuesdays 10:30 am - This class shares positive uplifting stories from around the world, giving everyone a reason to smile!



Studio Art- Tuesdays, Wednesdays at 2:00 pm, A creative social hour to spend time working on personal creative projects such as drawing, painting, knitting, or other projects.

Art Club— Fridays at 1:00 pm—An opportunity for artists to gather and work on art, share their latest project, and talk about art and art happenings scheduled throughout the community.

Wild Minnesota: Nature Drawing- Fridays 10am - In this class students will watch videos and study pictures of local Minnesota plants and wildlife, including trees, flowers, birds, mammals, fish, and more.



Sweatin' to the Oldies- Tuesdays 9am - Exercise class set to fun music.

****If you are interested in participating in remote classes, call Karen Wright at 218-724-5869 for more information.**

**We would like to recognize and extend our appreciation to the
Community Employers with whom we partner!**

**310 Pub
AmericInn Proctor
Animal Allies
Barkers Island Inn
Bayshore Health Center
Bent Paddle Brewing Company
City Laundering
Defy Duluth
Dicks Sporting Goods
Duluth Art Institute
Duluth Parks and Recreation
Duluth Running Co.
Ecuman Lakeshore
Enger Park Golf Course
FeraDyne Outdoors
First Lutheran Church
First United Methodist Church
Gordy's Gift and Garden
Grandma's Marathon
Hampton Inn Duluth
Hampton Inn Superior
Holiday Inn Express-Duluth
Home Depot
ISD 709
JCPenney
Johnson's Bakery
Keyport Liquor**

**McDonald's Hermantown
Men as Peacemakers
Mexico Lindo
Mount Royal Fine Foods
New Horizon Foods
Northwest Wisconsin Community
Services Agency
Northwood Children's Services Main
Northwood Children's Services West
Old Chicago
Old World Meats
Perkins West
Ravin Crossbow
REM Arrowhead
Salem Lutheran Church
Slumberland
**Spirit of the Lake Community Arts
St. Ann's Residence
St. Mary's Catholic Church—Silver Bay
Super One Foods Kenwood
Super One Foods Miller Hill
Twin Ports Dog Training Club
Voyageur Bus Co.
Walmart Hermantown
Wild State Cider**

**** Denotes a new Employer Partner this quarter.**



Vision

CHOICE, unlimited envisions a vibrant community that empowers individuals with disabilities and fosters a culture of inclusiveness.

Mission

CHOICE, unlimited creates and enhances opportunities for individuals with disabilities within local communities.