



# CHOICE unlimited

Work · Create · Connect

## Warm Summer Greetings All!

The move to our new office is right around the corner and we are thrilled at the prospect of being in our new location soon. We had a number of delays in the build-out process, and had to change our move in date a couple of times, but now we are set to move August 21st and 22nd! We will be open for business at our new location on Monday August 25<sup>th</sup>.



I included our new address at the bottom of this page for easy reference.

As mentioned in our Spring Newsletter, as soon as we are settled and all the remodeling projects are complete, we will host an Open House Celebration. In the meantime, it is *full steam ahead* with all of our planned events and projects.

I invite you to read on to learn about all the interesting and fun happenings we have been involved in during this past quarter, and to mark your calendar for our upcoming events such as our Hike for Health fundraising event to support our Health and Wellness Program. Registration is open so please join us for a fun night!

I hope you all have and enjoyable remainder of our beautiful summer here in the Northland.

### **New Address:**

CHOICE, unlimited  
500 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Suite 300  
Duluth, MN 55805

~Kristie Buchman, Executive Director

## Summer Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 30  
Issue 2

|                                       |    |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| A Message from our Executive Director | 1  |
| Upcoming Event– Hike for Health!      | 2  |
| Thank You Generous Donors!            | 3  |
| Summer Events                         | 4  |
| Annual Ice Cream Social               | 5  |
| Remembering Rebecca                   | 6  |
| What's Cooking?                       |    |
| Quarterly Highlights                  | 7  |
| ARTS Program Update                   | 8  |
| Hobby Hub                             | 9  |
| Thank you Sponsor!                    |    |
| Giving Back to the Community          | 10 |
| Health and Wellness Program Update    | 11 |
| We Are Hiring!                        | 12 |
| Frugal Fashionista                    |    |
| Arts Program Road Trips               | 13 |
| Summer Remote Class Offerings         | 14 |
| Thank you Employer Partners!          | 15 |



T-shirt with a  
donation of  
\$30 or more

**Sept 17** at Hartley  
Nature Center  
**5:00** Registration, Silent  
Auction, Performances  
**5:45** Warmup & Hike

JOIN US FOR OUR 13TH ANNUAL

# HIKE FOR HEALTH

Registration is now open!  
Register by **Sept 1** to  
guarantee t-shirt size.  
Proceeds benefit the  
Health and Wellness  
Program at



**CHOICE**  
unlimited

[www.choiceunlimited.org](http://www.choiceunlimited.org)

To register,  
scan the QR code below:



**THANK YOU,  
SPONSORS!**

Sponsorship opportunities are  
still available! Contact  
[jswift@choiceunlimited.org](mailto:jswift@choiceunlimited.org)  
for more information on  
sponsoring this event.

# Thank You Donors!

A special thank you to the generous people and businesses who donated to our organization during the last fiscal year (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025).  
Your contributions and gifts to our organization are sincerely appreciated!

## Individual Donors

Barb Ahlberg  
Laurie L Anderson  
Steve Anthony  
Brian Bluhm  
Robin Brown  
Dan & Kristie Buchman  
Isa Fahrat  
Kelly & Jody Faughnan  
Kathryn Forsman  
Debbie Freedman  
Deana Grant  
Wanda Grew-Jasken  
Adele Hartwick  
Alex & Susan Hautajarvi  
Karen Hennis  
Holly Holmquist  
Tom Houghtaling  
Amy Johnson  
Richard & Theresa Johnston  
Danny Klotz  
Barb Knighton  
Robert Knighton

Rebecca Matson  
Jackie Nelson  
Amber & Jim Novak  
David & Julianne Raimo  
Susan Rasmussen  
Kim Reed  
Pam & Brad Reitan  
Susan Rickert  
Lizette Roebke  
Dorothy Rottier  
Karen Schmidt  
Peggy Shelton  
Ryann Signorelli  
Susan & Glenn Solin  
Mary Tennis  
Jennifer Trevathan  
DeeAnn Trotta  
Dave & Ginger Wheat  
Lynn Wilcox  
Tom & Georgette  
Wondolkowski  
Krista & Shane Yokum  
Peggy Zahorik  
Anonymous Donors

## Business Donors

American Family  
Insurance-Dylan Merriman  
Brown & Brown, Inc  
Canal Park Brewing Co.  
Citon  
Dalberg Law Office PA  
Enbridge  
Global Village Duluth  
Hanft Fride  
Intectural Inc.  
Lum Studio  
MN Power Employee  
Credit Union (MPECU)  
North Shore Bank  
Northern Industrial  
Insulation  
State Farm Insurance-  
David Raimo  
Thrivent  
Twin Ports Spay / Neuter



# Summer Events



**CHOICE. UNLIMITED  
VISUAL ARTS CLASSES  
PRESENT:**

**GOING TO THE DOGS!**  
A DOG THEMED ART SHOW PUP-UP  
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT  
CARLTON COUNTY ANIMAL RESCUE

## Twin Ports Disability Pride Day



July is Disability Pride Month, a time to celebrate the history, achievements, and experiences of people with disabilities. It also commemorates the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Disability Pride Month aims to challenge negative stereotypes, promote inclusion, and foster a sense of pride within the disability community.



*Enjoying Disability Pride festivities on July 9th!*

Mayors Roger Reinert of Duluth and Jim Payne of Superior kicked off the celebration with their Mayoral Proclamations highlighting July 2025 as Disability Pride Month in the Twin Ports. They were followed by local Disability Advocates sharing the history of the ADA, Independent Living Movement, and the Disability Justice Movement. CHOICE, unlimited's dance class participants rounded out the event by performing one of their original dances!



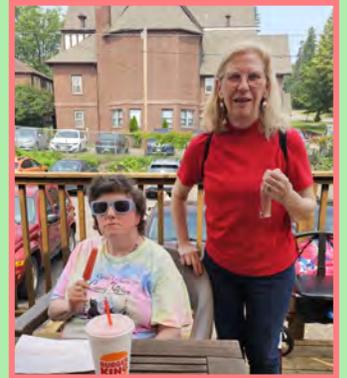
*Friends celebrating Disability Pride!*



*We all enjoyed a refreshing and cool treat at our annual Ice Cream Social on July 24th.*



*The day was perfect for enjoying an ice cream treat and visiting with friends!*



# In Memory of Rebecca Knighton



October 22, 1976 to May 27, 2025

We have been honored to know Rebecca since 2006. In addition to her strong work ethic having worked at JCPenney for 6 years and later at Northwood Children's Service for 11 years, Rebecca was a talented actress and a powerhouse on and off the stage!

She was a vital member of our BOLD-choice theatre company for many years. She had a flare for the dramatic and was often cast in lead roles. Her contributions to our Theatre company are endless.



Rebecca as reporter, Margot Malone, in WHODUNIT?

**We will miss her beautiful smile and her passion for life!**

## What's Cooking?

It is Rhubarb season and we have a simple recipe that will make your mouth water and have your company asking for seconds!

### Rhubarb Custard Cake

#### Ingredients:

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

**\*\*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.**

#### 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
7. ENJOY!





# Quarterly Highlights

## Employee of the Quarter

Dave Lane is passionate about running. So it makes sense that he works as the Operations Assistant for Grandma’s Marathon. Dave started with Grandma’s in 2018 and he hit the ground running! Dave plays a vital role in the organization. His supervisor, Greg Haapala, Race Director, has nothing but praise to share about Dave! “Sir Dave, as he is known here, plays an invaluable role on our team year-round, whether it be projects in the office, organizing the warehouse or set up/tear down at all events. He also runs many of the events himself and can offer a unique perspective as both a participant and staff member during planning. We’re so grateful that Dave is a member of the GM team!” This June, during Grandma’s Marathon weekend, Dave completed the William A. Irvin 5K, The Gary Bjorklund Half Marathon, and went right back to work after running! He is the only one of the Grandma’s crew to “work, run, work!” Dave is very proud of the work he does and has a great work ethic. He was very fortunate to be able to turn one of his hobbies into meaningful employment. Keep up the great work, Sir Dave!



*Dave following the race, proudly displaying his medals!*

## Employer of the Quarter



Grandma’s Marathon began with a group of runners in 1977 with 150 participants. It is now one of the largest and best know marathons in the United States. The race is regarded as a “world class event with small town charm”, and welcomes more than 20,000 participants each June with an economic impact to the region exceeding \$25 million. Named after its first ever marathon champion, the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon began in 1991. It is one of the most popular 13.1-mile races in the nation. In 1994 the William A. Irvin 5K began and has become the kickoff event to the weekend’s three-race schedule. With the philosophy that the weekend should not just be for adults, there are Whipper Snapper races to introduce kids to running. Grandma’s Marathon is not just a weekend race event. The non-profit organization operates a year-round office in Canal Park and holds events throughout the year. The Young Athletes Foundation (YAF) is their charity arm which was created to promote healthy and active lifestyles for youth in our area. Since its inception in 1990 the YAF has donated more then \$1.3 million to youth athletic, recreational and nonprofit organizations. Thank you, Grandma's Marathon, for your contributions to our community and your inclusive practices both on and off the race course!

## Volunteer of the Quarter



Chris started volunteering at Animal Allies in January 2025, and he loves it! He is a “Cat Buddy Level 1” and went through training with his job coach Dylan so they could volunteer together. Chris volunteers once a week with the cats. He is taking on additional training because he wants to be as good of a volunteer as he can be! Animal Allies is an animal shelter based on Duluth, Minnesota that has been in our area since 1957! Thanks for all your volunteer work, Chris. The animals love you back!



*Chris, giving some love and attention to a kitten*

# ARTS Program Update

It is always exciting when it comes time to write the newsletter article for the ARTS Program, it is a chance to reflect on the amount of cool and special work that is done continuously by the artists in our program.

BOLD-choice wrapped their “Sundown on the Jasper Country Jewel” production with a fabulous final performance at the historic Denfeld Auditorium. The company’s wrap parties are always epic-in the style of an awards show- The BOLDYs. The Jade Fountain was the perfect setting for an afternoon of fancy drinks and tasty foods, snazzy garb, individual honors and trophies, acceptance speeches and a dance party. A truly special way to celebrate all the hard work and entertainment the cast brought to the production. It was difficult to say goodbye to such a successful play, but new art must be made! BOLD-choice’s new production is in creation-a new theme and a new cast (both beloved veterans and some hot new stars). The cast wanted drama, intrigue, scandal, romance, betrayal- so they are writing their own...Soap Opera. It will certainly be entertaining and will allow the actors to stretch their on-stage presence in a new thrilling way!

Visual Arts Class had two community shows up this summer already - one at the Hillside Whole Foods Co-op and one at Wussow’s Concert Cafe. The spring into summer session of class was an all-printmaking session! This included a variety of ways to print: relief print, monoprint, and cyanotype prints using the power of the sun! The biggest printing project involved using gel printing plates to create intricate layers of color and design for dog themed art modeled after shelter dogs at Carlton County Animal Rescue. This was by far a class favorite! Pieces from that show were for sale at a



**pup-up sale on July 31<sup>st</sup> at Wussow’s** benefiting the Carlton County Animal Rescue. The session wrapped by making buttons featuring their canine creations, and a special workshop making buttons and signs for the Disability Pride celebration on July 9th.

## *Dancers at the Disability Pride Event on July 9th*

The Dance Class was the star entertainment at the Disability Pride Event! The dancers performed original choreography in the bright sunshine- right out front of City Hall! The energy and solidarity of the event was the perfect place to show off moves that made the dancer feel powerful!



*Josh & Keira Reading Poetry*

Creative Writing is just beginning a new session and continues to meet at the downtown Public Library on Friday afternoons. The poets of the last session held a poetry reading at Wussow’s Concert Café on Friday June 13<sup>th</sup>. It was a small but mighty group of poets sharing their work on existentialism, self-love, and everyday experiences.

Music Classes have remained busy and popular among the people we serve. Students in class each create their own original song to perform. Friends, family and fans had the opportunity to come listen to what they had been creating in “Music Demos”. Peace Church was our generous host for the classes and the demonstrations that were held on Monday, May 19<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. Songs subjects included family, friends, blue jeans, yellow moons and the thrill of rummage sales.

Acting Class is always a wild, wonderful adventure. The class has creative control over the characters and storylines, and they explore *everything*. The last session wrote a play about a farm wedding that goes very wrong, in the most hilarious and unexpected of ways. They performed the one-act at the Norshor Studios on June 5<sup>th</sup> to a packed house. A new session has started, and the class has already begun a new piece they will present in the fall. This time around-pirate ship shenanigans! *Aye aye matey!*

## Hobby Hub

### *For The Love Of Running!*



*Jenny showing off her medals*

For several years now, Kelsey and Jenny have been active members of Special Olympics and are interested in all types of sports, such as basketball, bowling, hiking and even the polar plunge! But what they are most passionate about is running. Whether for fun, or to keep in shape, the love of running is in their hearts.



*Kelsey, relaxing after a race*



*Encouraging young runners at the finish line*

They share their interest in running to inspire others, particularly kids. They both volunteer for Grandma's Marathon Young Athletes Program *Wednesday Night at the Races* held throughout the summer. In addition, they have participated in the Torch Run, an event partnering with law enforcement, which kicks off Special Olympics each June. They carried the 'Flame of Hope' through the city to raise awareness and fundraise for Special Olympics. [Click here to see them in local coverage.](#)



*Jenny and Kelsey enjoying the St. Fennessy 4K run*

In addition, Kelsey has run the William A. Irvin 5K every year since she moved to Duluth.

Great job Kelsey and Jenny! You are both an inspiration to so many around you. Keep it going and we look forward to seeing you at the finish line!

**PROUD TO SPONSOR  
CHOICE UNLIMITED**



**Dylan Merriman Agency LLC**  
Dylan Merriman, Agent  
(218) 722-1178  
merrimanagency@amfam.com  
Duluth, MN

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. and Its Operating Companies  
6000 American Parkway, Madison WI 53783 ©2017 007251 Rev. 11/23 -  
24578670



# CHOICE, unlimited Giving Back to the Community



**Dragons Unlimited would like your support for the 23rd Veterans Organization! Our Dragon Boat team is paddling with a purpose for veterans experiencing trauma. Click here or use the QR code below to donate to CHOICE, unlimited's fundraising efforts.**



Come down to Barker's Island in Superior, WI on August 23rd to watch us race! The festival is filled with fun, family-friendly activities.



CHOICE, unlimited employees and friends volunteered Friday June 20th throughout the afternoon and evening selling beverage tickets before and after the William A. Irvin 5K Race. A fun time was had by all as we sold tickets, congratulated the racers, and enjoyed the Whipper Snappers races for kids. Grandma's Full and Half Marathons took place the following day and the excitement and anticipation for the races could be felt throughout the evening! We are already looking forward to volunteering next year!



# Health and Wellness Program Update

After a long chilly spring, our Health and Wellness class participants was grateful for the start of warm weather for outdoor workouts. To make the most of summer sunshine, we have moved our Tai Chi classes to Grant Rec Park and started up Hiking Club adventures. These are both popular



*Sean, Shawn and Josh get instruction from Jessa*

activities taking advantage of our short summer.

Hiking club members enjoy guided hikes on the beautiful trails around the Twin Ports. Jenny Faughnan is the hike leader this year and has enjoyed sharing her love of walking outdoors.

These outdoor adventures are the perfect warmup for our annual fundraiser, Hike for Health. The event will take place on September 17th at Hartley Nature Center, with registration at 5:00 pm and hikes starting at 5:45

pm. For the 2025 event, we are planning exciting performances, a silent auction, great door prizes and a wonderful fall hike! Registration for hikers and sponsors is open, and we are also looking for volunteers!



*Tai Chi in the open air on a great Summer day*

Contact Jessa Swift with CHOICE, unlimited for more information. [Register at this link](#)

We offered three pop-up classes this season. Our dance aerobics class got everyone moving and grooving to upbeat music. Cardio kickboxing was a big hit! This class helped people learn about kicking and punching while maintaining good

balance and posture. In July, we partnered with North Pointe Center to offer a class on Gentle Movement and Breathing. The focus of this class was learning controlled breathing and body movement to relieve stress and anxiety in a healthy way. Additional fun included “Try Chi” in late July, a chance for people to try a Tai Chi class led by the regular class members. On July 29th, Whole Foods Co-op taught a cooking class on making spring rolls. The group will also have an upcoming lesson at the store on how to choose the best ripe produce. Thank you to the Whole Foods Co-op for your ongoing support of our Health and Wellness Program!



*Hiking Club takes to the trail*



### Employment Specialist/Job Coach

Full-time entry-level openings starting at \$18.25 per hour.

### Benefits Available Include

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

## Interested in learning more about our open positions?

Call or email Terrie Whitesel,  
Human Resource Manager at 218-724-5869  
twhitesel@choiceunlimited.org  
or apply at [www.choiceunlimited.org](http://www.choiceunlimited.org)



## The Frugal Fashionista with April



*At the Chateau*

Bonjour! Fashionista is back from France and her adventure proved that she is a true-blue American Girl!

She loves that she had the experience and the gardens, the Eiffel Tower and the village homes were beautiful, but it was hot and the food was not for her.

Coffee? Way too strong. Cheese? Soft and gross. Beer? Too French. Lemonade? Not sweet. :)

She loved her boat tour on the River Seine and the wedding she was there for was elegant and very special. The trip called for a wide variety of clothing options from shorts and comfortable shoes for all the sight-seeing to elegant dresses for the festivities- both cocktail nights and a black-tie ceremony and reception on the grounds of a gorgeous chateau. Although she is happy to be back on Minnesota ground, she loved having an excuse to be a jet-setter and wear a floor length, sparkly, pink gown. Not frugal, but life calls for extravagance sometimes as well!



*April Pretty in Pink*

# ROADtrip

A few curious individuals have taken the opportunity to hit the road and see what other parts of Minnesota have to offer in the way of cultural and artistic experiences. Visual Arts instructor Maria planned two separate trips to the Twin Cities to explore museums and cultural centers. The first trip was on April 17<sup>th</sup>-Chris, Matt, Kevin, Maria, Jordan and Grace visited the American Swedish Institute and the Minneapolis Museum of Art (Mia). The theme of the day was “how to view art”. With all the variety of artwork, each person found themselves connecting with something different- from ancient symbolism to modern conceptual work.



The second adventure to the big city was on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. This time Kevin, Jordan and Maria were joined by Pete, Lloyd and Jenny. First stop: St. Paul’s Hmong Museum where everyone learned about the beautiful and resilient history and culture of the Hmong people- an important part of our Minnesota history and community! After visiting the Hmong Museum, the group headed to an Ethiopian restaurant for coffee and lunch and then explored the Museum of Russian Art in Minneapolis together- learning about culture, art and resistance. So cool!

Another out-of-town arts opportunity was experienced at a weekend artist’s retreat near Ely at the Tofte Lake Center (TLC), a non-profit organization that provides residencies for artists looking for dedicated time to work on their projects, for creatives who seek individual growth through guided workshops or retreats, for arts organizations that want to make time to re/focus on their goals or mission, for arts leaders to gather to exchange ideas with colleagues in their field. Tofte Lake Center received a grant through the Minnesota State Arts Board to help improve accessibility at their location. Nathan Ahlberg brought Toby Churchill as support for a weekend long retreat with other artists with disabilities to give guidance on how to make the center a place that meets the needs of artists with disabilities. The weekend was filled with creating art and music, discussions around the campfire, walks in the woods, and shared meals. It was a truly unique and quality experience.



Finally, a small group of BOLD-choice actors are going to St. Paul in early August to be part of Déjà Moo- an event put on by our friends at Cow Tipping Press. Like our Creative Writing Class, they teach and publish writing by people with intellectual/developmental disabilities, giving audiences a new way to think about this rich form of human diversity in practice and in print. The event will feature readings by poets, tabling from arts and disability organizations, and musical performances-including selected pieces from “Sundown on the Jasper County Jewel”. It promises to be a fun chance to meet new connections and share talents.



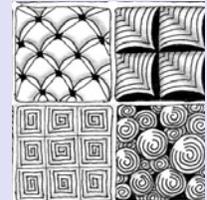
# Summer Remote Class Schedule



**Coffee Club** - Thursdays 10am - In coffee club, we get together with our morning beverage of choice to visit and enjoy each others company.

**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.

**Something to Smile About** - Tuesdays 10:30 am - This class showcases heartwarming and inspiring stories from around the world, guaranteed to lift your spirits and bring a smile to your face. Each session highlights acts of kindness, courage, and triumph, and a little laughter reminding us of the incredible good in the world.



**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.

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



**\*\*If you are interested in participating in remote classes, call Karen 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**  
**Animal Allies**  
**\*\*Anderson's Greenhouse and Florist**  
**Barkers Island Inn**  
**Bayshore Health Center**  
**Bent Paddle Brewing Company**  
**Builders Saloon**  
**Dicks Sporting Goods**  
**Duluth Art Institute**  
**Duluth Parks and Recreation**  
**Duluth Running Co.**  
**Ecuman Lakeshore**  
**Enger Park Golf Course**  
**Essentia Health**  
**First Lutheran Church**  
**First United Methodist Church**  
**Five Below**  
**Gordy's Gift and Garden**  
**Grandma's Marathon**  
**Hampton Inn Duluth**  
**Hampton Inn Superior**  
**Holiday Inn Express-Superior**  
**Home Depot**  
**Hydrosolutions**  
**ISD 709**  
**JCPenney**  
**Johnson's Bakery**  
**Keyport Liquor**  
**Kidz Kollege Learning Center**

**Kohl's**  
**McDonald's Hermantown**  
**Men as Peacemakers**  
**Mexico Lindo**  
**Michaels**  
**Mount Royal Fine Foods**  
**NW Wisconsin Community  
Services Agency**  
**Northwood Children's Services Main**  
**Northwood Children's Services West**  
**Old Chicago**  
**Old World Meats**  
**Perkins West**  
**Progressive Care - Mt. Royal Pines 3**  
**Queen of Peace Catholic School**  
**Ravin Crossbows**  
**REM Arrowhead-Sevita**  
**Salem Lutheran Church**  
**Slumberland**  
**St. Mary's Catholic Church—Silver Bay**  
**Super One Foods Kenwood**  
**Super One Foods Miller Hill**  
**TJ Maxx**  
**Twin Ports Dog Training Club**  
**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.