

Ventures Adventure

Ventures Athletics—Special Olympics Team

Washburn County

110 N. Industrial Drive
Shell Lake, WI 54871
(715) 468-2939

Sawyer County

10140 Highway 27
Hayward, WI 54843
(715) 934-3035

Barron County

413 S. Main Street
Rice Lake, WI 54868
(715) 736-6959

Check us out at our new
email address:
www.venturesunlimited.org

The Ventures Athletics Special Olympics team competed in its first official tournaments this past October and November. Formed this past May, the team is a partnership between Special Olympics and Ventures, bringing SO sports back to Sawyer County. Ventures Athletics will field teams in bowling, snow shoeing, and track and field. The bowling team consisted of 17 athletes and 8 volunteers, and traveled to competitions

in Duluth and Eau Claire. The snowshoe squad is practicing as we speak, prepping for competitions in 2011. The track and field team will start practicing in the spring, with competitions scheduled for early May.

The team has received great support from the community in the form of donations and overwhelming support. They just completed a very successful fundraiser, selling wreaths

in the community. For more information on how to get involved as an athlete, coach, volunteer, or fundraiser please contact Tom Sweeney or Chris Mayou.



Ventures Athletics Bowling Team

Director's Corner

Nothing in life happens by chance. There's always a reason for the events that take place and people that enter our lives. Over the past 15 plus years, we've been very fortunate to build a circle of friends who have worked tremendously hard to make this organization a very special place for the people we serve. The ties that bind us together as a team are strong and our be-

lief in our mission allows us to achieve amazing results.

Yes, work is the focus of our program, but we also like to have fun. From trips to Branson, Mall of America or summer picnics at the beach, we have perfected the art of having fun.

None of these activities (fun or work) would be possible without the support of our circle of friends, committed

Board of Directors, or our qualified and dedicated staff. Thank you all for a great 2010.



Kristin Frane, CEO

Inside this Issue:

Money Saving Coupon	2
2011 Trip are Announced	4
Branson 2010	8
Summer Picnic	10
Recipe	11

Ventures Unlimited Thrift & Gift Shoppes

The Ventures Unlimited Thrift & Gift Shoppes have been thriving. Donations continue to pour in. The Holiday merchandise has sold well in both stores. Thank you to everyone who continues to show their support by donating and shopping at our stores.

Our Donation Guidelines are as follows:

All donations should be free from stains, tears and excessive wear, and in resalable condition.

We **do not accept** the following items:

- TV's, computers, printers, accessories
- Car Seats
- Clothing with tears, stains, missing buttons, broken zippers, etc.
- Electrical items that do not work
- Large appliances
- Chipped or broken dishes and glass
- Stereo speakers
- Furniture items that are stained, torn or broken
- Construction materials
- Exercise equipment

Drop-offs are accepted Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and Saturday 9am-3pm. Thank You!

The cold weather has brought lots of traffic into our thrift stores. We have been running weekly bag sales on clothes, shoes and books, as well as the monthly bag sale on the last Saturday. We put the "\$2.00 BAG SALE TODAY" signs out in front of the stores on these days.

Clothing is being sorted, tagged and hung by the Ventures assembly floor in Hayward and Shell Lake. We have even transported some of the clothing to Rice Lake so they can help out. This has been a wonderful

opportunity for many people to gain valuable work experience.

The Hayward store is doing exceptionally well this year. The staff has done a great job on working with our participants to help them gain a meaningful work experience and getting stuff to flow through the store quickly, while pricing things affordable yet allowing us to turn a profit.

The Spooner store has a new roof which came in time for the winter. We received a grant from the Bremer Foundation for the roof and the project is being completed by Cahill Construction out of Spooner. The project is not yet complete, but the roof is no longer leaking. We will be making some changes to improve the ambiance of the Spooner store over the next several months.

Just For the Birds

Just For the Birds celebrated 10 years in October. We appreciate all of the hard work and dedication of our employees and staff in the suet lines and woodshops. The suet sales have been booming this winter and everyone has done a great job in keeping up with the others. We are thankful for regular business from our local supporters, and the traffic the winter tourist season brings.

We continue to purchase our black oil seed and deer corn locally. Special thanks to Tom Perlick of Sarona for growing black oil seed and Bill Taubman of Shell Lake for growing whole kernel corn. By partnering with these local farmers, we are able to offer important and meaningful work experiences to many people. Everyone enjoys being part of the crew that goes to the farm to fill bags of seed and transport them to



Thrift & Gift Shoppe and Just For the Birds

Buy ONE Get ONE FREE

On all Thrift Shoppe Merchandise Equal or lesser value item is free-limit 10 items

Offer expires 4/30/11

our stores. We also continue to sell lots of the bird seed jugs. We use recycled milk jugs to package our own seed mixes. The milk jugs should be rinsed thoroughly and aid dried before bringing them into Ventures. Thank you for helping us re-use and recycle milk and water jugs.

We appreciate your business at Ventures Unlimited Thrift & Gift Shoppe and Just For the Birds stores. Please stop in and see us at any of our locations or visit us at www.justforthebirds.org. We have something for everyone.



Ventures & APSE Sponsors Employer Event

On Tuesday, November 9, 2010, Ventures Unlimited, Inc. hosted an Employer breakfast educating employers and the public at large of the value of Integrated Employment. The event was held at the Blue Hills Masonic Lodge in Rice Lake and the theme was “Building Assets through Partnerships with Employers.” Over 35 people attended which included DVR Barron County staff and Managers from District 8, employers, local high school special education staff, UWBC and WITC staff, Barron County ADRC, CRI, REACH, CILWW, UW, Pathways, consumers and Ventures staff. The forum and power point presentation centered on learning about the challenges of “Unmet

Needs” within businesses in the local area communities. Jim Meehan, Executive Director of KFI and mentor for the rebalancing grant provided case examples of customized employment and the benefits it will provide to employers and individual job seekers. There was a 15 minute time period at the end slotted for open questions and many took advantage of this time to share both experiences and clarify details regarding customized employment and developing good job matches. Ventures Unlimited would like to thank all who attended and would like to thank our sponsors, which included WI APSE, Viking Coke and Louie’s Finer Meats.



Bremer Grant brings Mark Sweet to Ventures Unlimited

The second round of on-going education with Mark Sweet of Disability Rights WI took place in mid-December. Ventures staff are fortunate to have the opportunity to have Mark available to discuss the finer points of Person Centered Planning, Client Driven Programming, or Self Directed Supports. Mark is a big proponent of

Point of View thinking, encouraging support providers to weigh the employee (or consumer) point of view in every decision that is made. Understanding behaviors from the consumer point of view is the logical progression of Person Centered Planning, especially for folks with limited communication skills. Mark is working with the

Ventures staff for the next two years under a generous grant from the Bremer Foundation. Staff members are very excited by the opportunity to learn from an experienced and very well-respected advocate in Mark Sweet.



Trips for 2011 Planned



2010 was a year to remember with the trip to Branson, the Twins game, the trip to ValleyFair, Mall of America and so on.

Where are we going to visit in 2011? We are planning five adventures throughout the year.

We are planning a Milwaukee weekend that will include a Brewers game along with the Milwaukee zoo, museum, planetarium and I-Max Theater.



The second trip scheduled will be camping in the Northwoods. Fishing, hiking, and camp fires await all that sign up for this trip.

Next will be a day trip to the North Shore aboard the North Shore Scenic Railroad with lunch along the way.

Our big trip for the year will be to Chicago. We are still working on the details but it looks like there is plenty to offer in the Windy City.

Last, but not least, we will be once again going to the Chanhassen Dinner Theater to "Hairspray." "Footloose" was a hit last year.

More information will be distributed on all of the above trips at least two months before the trip is scheduled.

If you are interested in any of these trips, please call Melissa at 715-468-2939.

Rice Lake News



What a great fall we had in Rice Lake! The group took part in many fun and educational day trips including: the Spooner train ride tour, Stillwater River Boat lunch & tour, trips to Irvine Park in Chippewa Falls, apple orchard trips, the pumpkin patch and many other visits to local Barron County parks, the Humane Society and city recreational areas. Even though we partake in many fun community activities, arts, crafts and leisure activities, we still manage to have some time for work opportunities for those that want to work and make some money. Our paper shredding rooms are still pretty full and we are now helping Ventures Thrift stores by sorting and pricing clothing that comes in the doors. Clothing that comes in torn or stained have been cut up for rags so you

need some, just give Mike a call at the Rice Lake Day Center 736-6959 and we can get a bag-o-rags ready for you to pick up.

Now that there is a definite chill in the air that means one thing Winter is here! and that's the perfect time for baking cookies. We recently received a brand new stove that the staff and clients got to pick out at Sears. This stove was donated by Barb Muench. We love it! Thank you very much Barb it's a cookie making machine! We would also like to thank Carolyn for donating a foosball table which is also getting put to good use by many people.

Finally, everyone at Rice Lake Ventures would like to give a warm welcome to several new staff members that came on board within

the last several months: Gail Green, Carolyn VanBuren-Simon, Vicki Anderson and Jerry Totten. For all of the Ventures staff new and old I would like to say thanks for all you do in providing quality hands on activities and making everyone feel welcome and appreciated while they attend Ventures Unlimited.

Thanks again, and have a great holiday season.



Grow Room in Hayward

The grow room at Ventures in Hayward is bountiful with basil. We have been starting plants from seed, transplanting and nurturing them through to harvest and picking loads of fresh basil. All of our fresh basil is purchased by the Angry Minnow restaurant in Hayward. We deliver about 3 pounds per week. Thank you to Kerry and a vari-

ety of employees for their hard work in the grow room. In Shell Lake we are close to having the grow room up and running. The woodshop is building tables, and we are in the final stages of the installation of the grow lights. We will start growing basil and other herbs, and will look for a local restaurant or sales outlet near the Shell Lake community.



Cookie Bakery

We are pleased to announce that our cookie bakery in Hayward is up and running! We started baking cookies in the kitchen at St. Joes Catholic Church and we are selling them at Backroads Coffee and Tea and at the Hayward Thrift Shoppe. We sell the 2 day old cookies at snack central at Ventures. The varieties we are offering are Chocolate Chip, Oatmeal Raisin, Peanut Butter and Snickerdoodle. Through the cookie baking program, we are able to offer many con-

sumers valuable work experience. They go to the church kitchen, measure ingredients, mix dough, scoop cookies onto baking sheets, bake cookies, cool and package them, and deliver them to their destination. We are planning to expand this business in the coming months by selling cookies at other Hayward area businesses. We also take special orders, so remember us for all of your cookie needs! Special thanks to St. Joes Catholic Church, Backroads Coffee

and Tea, and Kerry, Dick and their crews for helping us to get this program up and running.



Shell Lake Work Floor



What an exciting and adventures year we've had at Ventures Unlimited!! Many new and exciting projects are in progress with lots on the horizon and in the planning stages. Work continues to be a challenge with many companies and individuals offering employment with the paper shredding business, preparing literature, factory work, rug weaving, wire stripping, private orders of art, and clothing donations. We are so grateful for these opportunities. Ventures own suet line affords many employees steady work preparing products for Just For the Birds and the Spooner Thrift Shoppe operates and provides a much needed business in the community.

Some of the new areas of interests in the employment field at Ventures in Shell Lake include items made in the wood shop, Tabby's plaques depicting a variety of fish, a "shoe shine" department, and the recycling and carding of buttons. More work is being done on the "de-linting" of

clothing in preparation for sale at the store. The Ventures Unlimited Thrift and Gift Shoppe has been running terrific "bag sales" and working hard to pick up business. It is one way we can contribute back to our community! And speaking of our community, we have really been enjoying the library, Humane Society, and all of our local churches and businesses.

We have new employees and staff that have started with us over the past few months. They include Kitty and Kathy, floor supervisors, Billy T., Shane L., as well as the school kids.

We have been able to go on some day trips, both near and far! Mommsen's Pumpkin Patch was a lot of fun and the trip to Mall of America was very successful.

Therapies of massage, art, music, cooking and wellness continue to be an important part of our work day as does educational pursuits. Skills in

daily activities reinforcing work readiness will be emphasized in upcoming classes. New structure and variety is in the process of being developed for 2011-and we are excited about that!! A program of earning "Venture Bucks" to cash in for extra fun has also been put in place to help keep us all on task and reward all of our hard workers with extra bonus activities. This is a fun and weekly event that continues to inspire our best!

We enjoy having friends, old and new, stop in to see what we are up to and of course consider us for any employment needs. We have many reliable and steady workers who take pride in what we do.

For the holidays, we have a food drive to collect food products for the less fortunate, a Christmas party, gift exchange, and lots of fun activities planned.



Independent Living Skills-Hayward

Ellen and Janet have been doing a great job in working with the consumers and their Independent Living Skills. Floyd, Terry and Pam who all live in their own apartment have learned to use the phone and call the different people on their

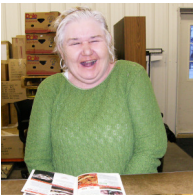
own, cook meals in their crock pots, and currently they are learning to use the transit system on their own.

They do their weekly necessary errands, med pick-ups, grocery shopping, budgeting, banking, etc.

They also go on outings to increase their social network and opportunities for natural supports. Keep up the great work.



Cookie Baking and Exchange



Looking for Recipes



Rolling out balls and decorating



Mixing and Stirring



On Friday, December 17th, 13 staff and clients got together in Shell Lake to bake and exchange cookies,

They each brought in a recipe or two and then helped each other while mixing, stirring and baking.

Everyone enjoyed the day and took home a nice plate of cookies.



Twins Game

A group of Ventures staff and consumers left early in the morning on September 22nd to attend a game at the Minnesota Twins new stadium.

It was a long day but that didn't stop the enthusiasm of our clients. One of the consumers said "I had so much fun, I want to do that again but let's go to see the Brewers next time,

which is now in the works for 2011.



Branson 2010



Tom, Judy and Kitty took a group of four on vacation to Branson, MO.

We started our trip early Friday, November 26th. We traveled to De Moines, IA and stopped for the night. We enjoyed a great dinner at Outback Steakhouse and then retired back to the hotel.



We arrived in Branson by 3:30pm.



Our First show was The Dixie Stampede, where we had a huge dinner and enjoyed a Christmas show. Judy asked our server for silverware because there was none on our table. The waiter chuckled and said "Here we eat with our hands." So we all dug in and enjoyed the feast.



On day two, we had lunch and then were off to Silver Dollar City for a day of fun. Pat, Molly, Stanley and Floyd all seemed to enjoy walking around looking at the way things worked back in the older days. We saw a candle maker, glass blower, wood crafter, ceramic maker,



cutlery maker and so much more. We did some shopping and listened to Christmas music.

Our show that night was "The Spirit of Christmas." Pat and Molly were a tad tired and fell asleep during the show.

On the third day, we spent most of our day downtown Branson shopping on the boardwalk. We enjoyed lunch at Garfields and visited the Bass Pro Shop and checked out all of their stuffed animals. We had dinner reservations on the Branson Belle. The Branson Belle is a large paddle boat where we enjoyed a 3 course meal and caught a comedy act too.

The next day, we did some more shopping before having dinner at Big Mike's Steakhouse. The food was delectable. After dinner, we went to see our final show "The Miracle of Christmas." Wow, What a show! This was by far one of the best Christmas shows ever. It was very touching. Stanley and

Floyd particularly enjoyed this.

Wednesday, it was time to pack up and head home. We were on the road by 8am. We traveled as far as Owatonna, MN where we stopped, had dinner and even got a chance to check out Cabella's. Our last night together was a nice and relaxing.

Thursday, we were packed up early and arrived home at around noon. We all had a wonderful time.



Health & Wellness with Judy

Exercise and healthy eating are still the focus this fall for all Venture's staff and employees. Snack central and the weekly cooking class provides excellent learning possibilities for healthy food choices. There is a different kitchen leader each week.

Staff are focusing on "Holding on for the Holidays", just maintaining while still enjoying!

Winners of the "Walktober" walking program for Staff are Sue Pfeil,

Shirley Berlin and Stacy Martin. Each accomplished their walking goal for 20 days during October and won a new pedometer. Congratulations!

The employees are very active in Special Olympics starting with bowling and now are quite involved in the snowshoe program too. Keep up the good work.

Regular exercise continues at each site that includes individual and group activities and weight training,

We are looking forward to a Happy and Healthy New Year-Merry Fitness and a Healthy New Year!



Hayward AIM Update

Ventures in Hayward has been decorating for the holidays. We have enjoyed some special activities including spending some time at Flat Creek Eatery for coffee or hot chocolate and music appreciation with Naomi.

We enjoyed a Thanksgiving feast made up of hot turkey sandwiches and cranberries.

We have been busy with pine boughs and bird houses to market at the Candle Shop in Hayward. We have been making button cards which are buttons that we remove from clothes in the donations that we receive.

We are always active with filling bird seed jugs, shredding, wellness and

exercise, cooking class, sensory activities and cleaning.

We have been also journaling a newsletter about a movie of the week.

AIM also recently had a Freeze Dance and popcorn party.

Supported Employment—Hayward Edition

Hayward still has several people employed at the Flat Creek Eatery and the Flat Creek Inn and Suites. Charlie Baker continues to do an excellent job and is very busy each and every weekend. Please stop in and patronize this business, as they have been great to Ventures. Say "Hi" to Charlie while you're there.

Floyd Fleming is working not only at LCO IGA, but he also works at Back-

roads Coffee and Tea. He does a marvelous job of keeping the place clean and shiny! So many of our other Ventures employees continue to work in the community at various locations, namely United Methodist Church, Roscoe Butterfield Well Drilling, Northwoods Chiropractic, Sawyer County Highway Shop and the Hayward Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home.

As we look to the New Year, we hope

for a wide open job market and success in placing everyone in a job that they want.



Summer Picnic 2010

Our annual picnic was once again held in Minong at Tatoga-tic Park. It was a great day and fun was had by all. Everyone enjoyed the lunch and the festivities.

This year, we had a pontoon and a fishing boat available. The pontoon was very popular and made many trips around the lake. Tom and Cindy agreed to be the lifeguards and even got everyone involved in a game of

pass the watermelon in the water. The only thing about the watermelon was that it was covered in grease. It was very slippery. Harold Stone agreed to be the DJ for the day and as always did a wonderful job.

This year, Shell Lake gave awards to Tammy Dahle, Staff of the Year, Paul Sundeen, AIM Employee of the Year, Mike Hayden, Placement of the Year and Gage Curtis, Employee of

the Year.

Rice Lake awards were given to Mike Grilley, Staff of the Year, Dustin Trowbridge, AIM Employee of the Year and John Gunderman, Placement of the Year.

Hayward awards went to Lori Johnson, Staff of the Year, Dan Jeffries, AIM Employee of the Year and Kathy Eichenger, Employee of the Year.



Shell Lake AIM Program Full of Activities

We would like to introduce to you our newest AIM Staff, Tresa Smith. Tresa was one of our Namekagon drivers and now does both with most of her time being spent with us. We are so excited to have her and her enthusiasm among us.

On a much sadder note, we lost Joanie, who was one of our consumers for many years. She was coming back to our program after

spending some time in Hayward. We miss Joanie every day.

So, what have we been doing, you ask? Well, we have been going on a lot of picnics this summer. We love getting out when the weather is nice. On a beautiful Thursday, we took a ride to the Smith Apple Orchard. We had some apple donuts and cider while we were there. We then made homemade applesauce out of the apples that we purchased.

The months have been flying by. We have made many crafts, bird treats, enjoyed a trip to the Pumpkin Patch, enjoyed a Halloween Party, and now we are busy making Christmas ornaments, baking and doing winter crafts.

We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Ventures Staff

Shell Lake Staff

Michelle Anderson-AIM Aide, Shirley Berlin-Job Developer, Julie Blatterman-Job Coach, Kara Breitenfeld-Vocational Case Manager, Tammy Dahle-Book Keeper, Paul Davis-Driver, Melissa Denotter-Vocational Case Manager, Gail Espeseth-Woodshop Supervisor, Kathy Greschner-Floor Supervisor, Stacy Martin-AIM Aide, Mike Olsen-RAM, Kristy Osius-Thrift Store, Linda Paulson-Massage, Kathryn Quenette-Floor Supervisor, Sandy Rommel-Thrift Store, Wanda Severson-Thrift Store, Teresa Smith-AIM Aide, Tina Stilwell-Job Coach

Hayward Staff

Susan Blake-Thrift Store, Debi DeFoe-Greene-Marketing director, Deb Gerich-Job Coach, Janet Gost-Job Coach, Paul Gotmer-Woodshop Supervisor, Richard Hanson-Job Coach, Judy Holmes-Fitness Instructor, Barb Jaaska-Job Coach, Lori Johnson-Job Developer, Denise Marquardt-Program Coordinator, Dolores Marquardt-Job Coach, Kimberly McFarland-AIM Aide, Ellen Palmisano-Job Coach, Susan Pfeil-Nurse, Joan Rainville-AIM Aide, Cindy Raul-Floor Supervisor, Kerry Rothgeb-Floor Supervisor, Vicki Smith-AIM Aide, Tom Sweeney-Program Coordinator, Phyllis Wolf-Massage Therapist, Xan Ziengenhorn-Thrift Store

Rice Lake Staff

Vicki Anderson-Job Coach, Christine Berlin-Mentor, Shirley Berlin-Job Developer, Bill Duerkop-Job Developer, Gail Green-Job Coach, Mike Grilley-Human Resources, Jessica Holmes-AIM Aide, Tiffany Janisch-AIM Aide, David Johnson-Office Staff, Joe Mier-Job Coach, Linda Paulson-Massage Therapist, Malisa Paulson-AIM Aide, Jerry Totten-Mentor, Carolyn VanBuren Simons-Job Coach



Cookie Baking Recpie

Chocolate Peanut Butter Krispie Bon Bons

Cream 1 stick of margarine or butter with 2 1/2 cups of powdered sugar and 2 cups of chunky peanut butter. Add 3 cups of rice krispies, mix well with your fingers. Roll into balls. Press tightly to make them stick together. Chill for 2 hours.

Melt 1 bag of chocolate chips, 1 square of semi-sweet chocolate, and 1/4 bar of paraffin wax.

Dip balls and chill again.

Event Calendar and Vacation Days

President's Day.....February 21st
Easter.....April 25th
Memorial Day.....May 30th
Independence Day (RL & SL).....July 4th-7th
Independence Day (Hayward).....June 27th-June 30th

Ventures Unlimited Board of Directors:

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Mary Emerson, Vice Chair
Vera Hoogen, Secretary
Wayne Kupsch
Vern Lokken
Robert Washkuhn, Substitutue
Kate Melton, Board Chair
Dan Ringwelski

MISSION

To assist people in obtaining development, personal, independence, and employment goals in both facility-based and community-based work settings.

Ventures Adventure is a bi-annual publication of Ventures Unlimited, intended to inform you of our agency's activities. Ventures Unlimited is a 501 (c3) not for profit organization. If you would like additional information about Ventures' services or to schedule a tour please feel free to contact any one of our three facilities. You may also visit us on the web at www.venturesunlimited.org.

If you have recently moved or are receiving duplicate copies of this newsletter, **PLEASE** let us know.

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