

THE CIRCLE

 FriendshipCircle



ETP SPOTLIGHT

TALIA TREVINO

WORKFORCE-READY

WITH DOWN SYNDROME
ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN AND
ENGUAGE



MEET *the* OBERNEDERS

BY JOAN ELOVITZ KAZAN

GOOD FORTUNE

SOPHIA HEY

FRIENDSHIP AND SERVICE

IN ACTION

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A LETTER *from the* EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends,

We are so pleased to publish the fourth issue of The Circle magazine! We hope you will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy sharing stories and information with you.

In this issue, you will meet the wonderful Oberneder family. You will also get to know more about DSAW (Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin) and their partnership with Engauge. Did you know that 82% of adults with disabilities are unemployed? The Friendship Circle offers Employment Training to bridge the vocational gap and prepare this population to join the workforce. For more information, visit www.fcwi.org/

job. If you know of a business that may be interested in hiring an Employment Training graduate for equal-opportunity employment, please go to www.fcwi.org/PIE to learn and care for this amazing community! We are so grateful!

As always, we welcome your feedback and suggestions as this magazine is for anyone who has a disability or anyone who knows someone with a disability. In other words, EVERYONE!

Levi & Leah Stein

& The Friendship Circle Family



The CIRCLE TEAM

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TALIA'S GRADUATION FROM ETP

ETP Spotlight

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

Talia Trevino BY SOPHIA HEY

In the past year, twenty-two year old Talia Trevino transformed from being a more shy member of the Friendship Circle Employment Training Program into a person full of certainty and poise because of the guidance that was given to her through this program.

Being diagnosed with a type of schizophrenic disorder and a major anxiety disorder, Talia has found herself in some dark spaces throughout her life. Through activities like drawing, writing, and sewing, she has found good ways to cope. The people around her have also been of great support. Friendship Circle embraced her, and through the Employment

Training Program, she was able to find a position at Betty Brinn Children's Museum this past winter where she demonstrates her strengths and skills daily.

The museum environment is colorful, whimsical, and full of fun activities for children to learn and grow. Kids laugh and play, running around to explore the different sections. Each area is filled with wonderful smiles including Talia's.

"I'm a kid at heart, so I have a good effect on children and understand them," Talia says, "Hearing the goofy and sweet voices of kids having fun is one of the favorite parts of my job."

Before working at Betty Brinn, Talia's time in the Employment Training Program helped her blossom.

"When she first came in, she was unsure, apologetic, and wasn't as confident," her Employment Training Manager, Chrissie, says.

However, as time went on, she began to make fast friends, share a great deal of positive energy, and find a sense of belonging. She carries a deep sense of empathy which impacted the group she was in. Talia still continues to demonstrate these skills within her daily work at Betty Brinn.

Talia not only spends time helping coworkers and children have a good experience, but she also has a sharp eye for details. She ensures that each space is safe, clean, and organized. She takes time and care to make Betty Brinn a memorable, enjoyable place for guests of all ages, and it does not go unnoticed. Her presence is a gift at the Museum.

Talia describes that she was anxious at first before working at Betty Brinn, "I was worried it would be like high school. Would I fit in? Would people treat me differently?" These questions caused some anxiety about the job for Talia, but she was met with friendly faces who love working alongside her.

As time went on, Talia grew comfortable with the working environment. She felt that this job was perfect for her, and everyone around her can concur.

“I was worried it would be like high school. Would I fit in? Would people treat me differently?”

“She loves going to Betty Brinn every day,” her mother, Mariana, says. It’s easy to see why. Not only is her joy apparent when working, but she also loves the people she works with. Her coworkers appreciate her enthusiasm and can-do attitude.

There was a duration of time in the Employment Training Program where Talia didn’t believe she could take on a job at a place like Betty Brinn. These thoughts were far from the truth. Her bravery and determination have helped her throughout her journey. The Employment Training Program members supported Talia in each step she took. She described them as her “cheer leaders” who were there for her even when times were tough.



She beams when mentioning the encounters she has with children, she takes her responsibilities seriously, and she has found an environment that gives her a sense of belonging. She has also learned to step out of her shell. By doing this, Talia has conquered her fears and has become a role model for her community.



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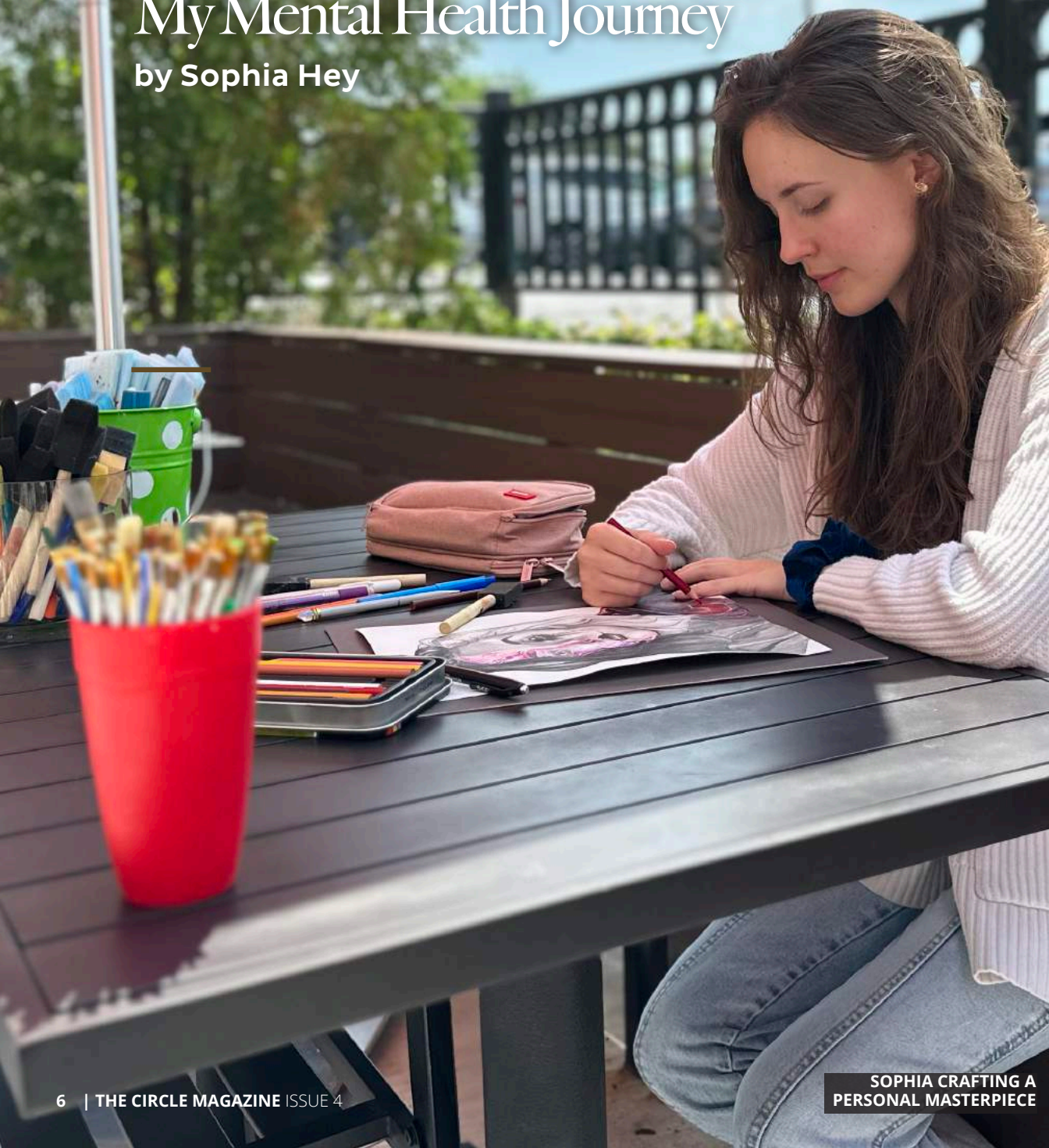
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GOOD FORTUNE

My Mental Health Journey

by Sophia Hey





It's ironic when you open a fortune cookie that says, "You will soon be surrounded by good luck," a few hours before you're put in a police car heading for a hospital. The Resident Assistant in my first college found me running around at night barefoot and screaming at whoever passed by me. She brought me inside. I was sat on a couch in the commons area speaking gibberish. My mind was speeding with thoughts that ran faster than my mouth could keep up.

"Do you feel safe?" she asked.

"No," I said.

The police were called and I was taken to a medical hospital where I was tested to see if I had drugs in my system. During the time I was there, I couldn't stop singing at the top of my lungs. I said nonsensical things like, "When is my boyfriend getting here? We're late for our wedding," and, "I'm dying. That's what this is. I'm going to heaven, aren't I?"

I felt high as a kite, but it had nothing to do with drugs. I hadn't taken any. No one knew what was wrong with me—especially myself. The nurses gave me anti-anxiety medication which made me drowsy. Everyone waited for my parents to arrive. They had to drive many miles to get there. When they finally got to my bed in the hospital, my half-opened eyes believed they were imposters.

"We couldn't find anything in her system," the doctor said. "We suspect she likely took something that we couldn't find in the results. Take her home. She should be well enough to go to school in a day or two."

That was the last thing I remember hearing in that clinic before I went home in a hazy car ride home. I didn't end up back at school. I ended up in a mental hospital two days after I opened that stupid fortune cookie.

Being diagnosed with bipolar disorder with psychotic features wasn't how I wanted to begin my first year of college. Being in the hospital for around two months was also not

in my plans. Don't ask me how I signed the papers that allowed me to stay in the mental facility. I remember nothing. Since I was newly eighteen, I was put into an adult ward where no one my age resided. Not only did I feel alone, but my constant delusional thinking caused severe paranoia.

There were several strange thoughts that haunted me. Ravioli was the scariest food I'd ever encountered. Watching other patients eat it sent me into anxiety attacks. It looked like disgusting, bloody mystery meat. I came to the conclusion that this mixture of beef encased in pasta with crimson mariana drizzled on top was made of people.

I also believed I was in hell. The faces of nurses who helped me became distorted. The fluorescent lights above me would cause an unusual glint in their eyes from time to time which forced me to believe they were devious and evil. That was far from the truth. They were there to help me—I was there to yell and scream at them out of fear.

I was so far gone that the nurses worried I would get out of control if visitors came along to visit me. This further isolated me. By chance, however, I began to regain some footing during my last week there. I became gentler with words. I started to see bits and pieces of the world as it actually was, I was soon sent home based on these improvements, however, I was far from recovered.

The pain that I felt in the mental hospital did not cease when I was released; it followed me everywhere I went. I fell into a deep state of depression. I was numb for the entire year I came back. Going to outpatient programs was of no help. I couldn't concentrate or stay awake during any meeting. I had a deep longing to go back to my school, but I kept being told by therapists and family that it'd be best if I took a few years off. It was even suggested I shouldn't return to college at all.

Seeing old friends around me progress into adulthood made me utterly disappointed. I witnessed the fun and excitement they were all having behind the screen of my phone. While everyone went out living fuller lives, I was home sleeping, wishing the world away.

As time went on, I gained a reasonable amount of energy and found myself working a year later in retail through helpful connections. I was horrible at my job no matter how hard I tried. My job required energy, focus, and confidence. I lacked each of these qualities at the time. Luckily I was given a lot of chances. I found a way to get used to the flow of working there, but despite this, I still felt lost.

The million combinations of medications I had to try before finding the right balance gave me worrisome health issues and side-effects. I became a test guinea pig. The worst part was losing the abilities to pursue my passions and improve my artistic skills.

Tremors prevented me from being able to draw. My voice refused to cooperate when I wanted to sing because of the emotional trauma I faced. I also felt like I would never be able to step foot on the stage

again. These were all things that once made me feel free, but now I felt like a bird that was caged.

A year passed and my family agreed that I could go to a college near me. My freshman year at my new school wasn't a good experience. I made a few friends, but I was awkward and lacked communication skills because I still had a long way to recover.

When I felt low, I looked at old photos of my time in high school which filled me with more sadness. There was a girl in all those photos who smiled. A girl who had hopeful eyes. A girl who went through life naively and believed in a promised tomorrow. I was no longer that girl.

I wished everything would go back to normal. The problem is that there is no such thing as "normal." Everything is in a constant state of change. Whether I accepted it or not, nothing would go back before.

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, I began to think college wasn't written in the stars for me. Lockdown did have a silver lining—I now had time to work on myself. Through a turn of events, my psychiatrist found a healthy balance of medication for me. I pushed forward with my passions of art and writing no matter how shaky my drawing and words were on paper. I did not want to give up.

More changes continued to happen over the course of the year. I became better at my job and I began to enjoy school once it was back to being in-person. Time passed, and I found



SOPHIA HEY

through discipline and persistence that my skills evolved. I felt like everything was a miracle.

In these past five years, a lesson I've been taught over and over is that no matter how much I want to go back in time to stop my manic episode from ever happening, I can't. Nothing is concrete. I will never be the same person, and for that I am happy. I have grown in ways I would never have imagined because of the trials I went through. I continue to do so with each passing day.

I wished everything would go back to normal. The problem is that there is no such thing as "normal"

I have found numerous ways to cope with the trauma. I look back on my hospital visit laughing, cringing—even smiling—at all that happened there. I recount those that were patient with me, in and out of the hospital, close and far from me.

I think about how lucky I am to have a good support system that got me through that incident. I think of the hard work I went through to regain myself. I think of numerous near-death experiences during the duration of not being stable, but somehow, I survived. Maybe the fortune cookie wasn't ironic. Perhaps it did foresee the future. Everything from that time has led me to this present day—a place I am fortunate to be in.



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ENGAUGE TEAM AT WORK

Workforce-ready with Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin and Engauge

By Jessica Gatzow
and Joan Elovitz Kazan

Thanks to a Workforce Innovation Grant awarded to DSAW, young adults can take the class free of charge.

The Engauge/DSAW partnership is a win-win for both organizations. “This is a perfect opportunity to give people hands-on experience versus just in a classroom talking about it. This is meant to be a training ground,” Chris Peters, Engauge’s Inventory Control Specialist, explains.

“I think it’s really beneficial if a person is interested in manufacturing,” said DSAW Site Coordinator Laura Benne. “If I have eight weeks to figure out what the person is interested in, by the end I can get them a job in the field or place they’re wanting to work for.”

The Basics to Manufacturing class tends to change every session. Benne builds a curriculum by modifying training resources from Engauge and often adjusts lessons to meet the individual learning needs of her students. For example, she might incorporate more visual and image-based teaching strategies for non-verbal individuals. Benne says that many of the program’s skills aren’t solely relevant to manufacturing and can easily transfer to almost any job.

Manufacturing might be a backbone of a thriving economy but it’s not always a shining example of inclusion. But one workplace and training facility in Menomonee Falls is changing that. At Engauge Workforce Solutions, neurodiversity thrives. It begins in a classroom that overlooks the shop floor, where students of all learning styles bring not only textbooks and pencils to class, but also hardhats and safety glasses. Only a handful of students are enrolled in each session, allowing for an immersive and detailed introduction to industrial and engineering skills.

Engauge is in an ongoing partnership with the Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin (DSAW) which offers an eight-week program called Basics to Manufacturing. Under their umbrella organization, Rely Contract Manufacturing, Engauge works with DSAW to prepare young adults for jobs in the manufacturing sector and related industries. Inside the classroom, students practice “soft skills” like time management, communication and critical thinking. Students spend at least an hour during every class learning manufacturing elements and gaining valuable skills through immersive, hands-on workshop experience.

After jotting down a list of safety reminders on the whiteboard and donning work-safe gloves, students get busy with measuring devices and power tools. Workshop activities range from learning the best way to lift and open a heavy box, to operating a forklift.

“I’m not shocked by anything, you teach them just like you would any other associate;”

One recent student, Devin, shared his excitement, “I like to learn how things work,” he said. Devin’s dream job is stocking shelves at a gas station. The skills he learns through this program will go a long way towards making that dream come true.

DSAW’s employment services mission is twofold: they help individuals develop work readiness skills and work with employers to place people with special needs into jobs. A few months ago,

DSAW presented at the Disability IN Wisconsin Conference. The event welcomed business leaders to the shop floor of Engauge for a networking session on how employers can expand their talent base and accommodate neurodiverse abilities.

“This (partnership) provides opportunities for employees that a lot of people overlook. We identify clients where graduates could work,” Peters says. “We have four individuals from that program we hired full-time here. Our clients are really keen on this program because they get to meet new people and they love working with different populations,” Peters adds.

Kimmi Roehrborn, Production Manager at Rely Contract Manufacturing has a wealth of experience and a great deal of empathy towards new employees. “A lot of people are scared, just like I was when I first started in manufacturing. So this gets them a little familiar with different opportunities and shows them that they could build a career out of manufacturing,” Roehrborn says.

Growing up with a sister with Down’s Syndrome gives Roehrborn insight into working with neurodiverse populations. “I’m not shocked by anything,” Roehrborn explains. “You teach them just like you would any other associate; you just have to watch a little bit of their body language and keep making sure you’re not stressing them out. I like just giving them a couple hours in each area and then rotating and moving them,” she adds.

Change can be difficult for people with special needs but managing change and

“I was looking for a change of pace and I thought it was great”

instilling confidence helps encourage flexibility. “We get them experience in every job that we’re doing so that the workforce is flexible and they can be moved around. They learn everything, just like a regular associate,” Roehrborn adds.

Richard Watson is a graduate of the program, currently working at Engauge. He was excited to begin a career in manufacturing after a stint at Metro Market. “I was looking for a change of pace and I thought it was great,” Watson recalls. Watson’s favorite things about his job? His coworkers. “The people are good,” Watson says.



**DSAW PARTICIPANT LEARNING
NEW TECHNIQUES FROM MENTOR**

According to DSAW, Down Syndrome is the most common genetic condition with approximately 400,000 Americans affected. People with disabilities account for almost 12% of the population, but less than 20% of people with disabilities are employed. Many individuals with diverse abilities want to work, can follow workforce safety guidelines and even have higher expectations for quality control than other associates. Workforce studies show that diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives can help employers fill vacant jobs, especially in manufacturing.

“I think it’s beneficial for companies to have learning hubs and work experiences like this,” said Benne. “Neurodiversity in the workplace has a positive impact in the sense of tenure and workplace happiness.”

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DSAW is planning more expansions to their employment services. This fall, they will launch a second level of the Basics to Manufacturing class that students can test into or take after completing the first course. Robotics will be one major part of the curriculum.

Other employment training programs at DSAW include a Basics to Hospitality class, which recently expanded to the Madison and Green Bay areas, as well as partnerships with high schools. Benne teaches at Kettle Moraine High School and Nicolet High School, and her students find jobs everywhere from movie theaters to restaurants. For example, one student recently completed a five-month rotation learning food prep and serving at all three restaurant locations for Flour Child Pizza.

Richard Watson can sum up the Enguage/ DSAW program in seven words. "Come work here. It's a great place," he says.



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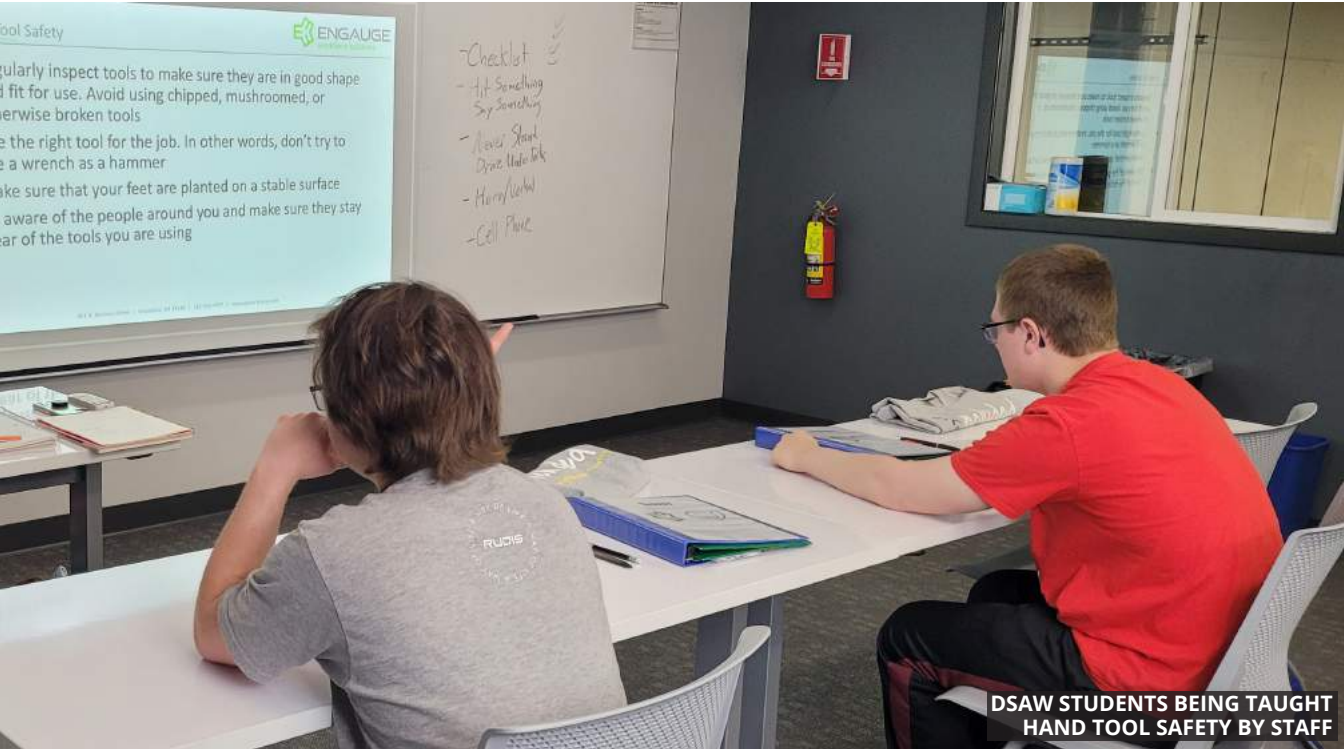
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MEET *the* OBERNEDERS

By Joan Elovitz Kazan





“I’ve heard it said, that people come into our lives for a reason
Bringing something we must learn. And we are led to those who help us
most to grow, if we let them. And we help them in return.”

“For Good” by Stephen Schwartz

These lyrics from the musical *Wicked* describe both the Oberneder family’s experience with their daughter, Emily, and their involvement in Friendship Circle.

When Emily was born twelve years ago, Kathleen and Dan Oberneder felt overwhelmed and isolated. “While I was pregnant, I did not know that Emily had Down Syndrome. We were hoping for a gender surprise, so this (Down Syndrome) was a surprise within a surprise,” Kathleen explains.

Hospital policy dictated that Kathleen’s own doctor inform the couple about baby Emily’s diagnosis, but Emily was born on her doctor’s day off. “The minute I delivered, the oxygen left the room, although they couldn’t tell me the baby had Down’s Syndrome for 24 hours,” she adds.

It took me a bit of time to understand the impact Emily’s diagnosis would have on me personally

The next day when Kathleen’s doctor advised the Oberneders to test Emily for Down Syndrome, emotions ran high. “My husband was crying uncontrollably and I heard nothing else the doctor said,” Kathleen says. The Oberneders did not get what they needed most: access to resources, up-to-date information, and a supportive community. “The hospital gave me a pamphlet with a stereotypical female with a bad haircut with Down Syndrome,” Kathleen recalls.

Bringing a baby sister home to their young daughters, Lily, and Caroline, would be stressful under any circumstances but Kathleen and Dan had additional layers of stress. “When Emily was born, I was also dealing with a father who had dementia and a mother who was caring for him in Omaha, Nebraska. I was my dad’s financial power of attorney, so I was taking care of my parents at that same time,” Kathleen recalls.

The post-partum adjustment period was a rollercoaster of emotions, “The positive was that Emily was healthy and didn’t need to go to the NICU (neonatal intensive care) but the negative about not going to the NICU is that I had no social service workers. I was just all by myself,” Kathleen says. “It took me a bit of time to understand the impact Emily’s diagnosis would have on me personally.”

Two years after Emily was born, Kathleen and Dan were instrumental in bringing Gigi’s Playhouse to Wisconsin. This Chicago-based non-profit supports people with Down Syndrome and their families. “I channeled my postpartum depression towards being inspired and wanting to help other people,” Kathleen recalls.

Despite Kathleen’s difficult postpartum adjustment, her oldest daughter, now seventeen-year-old Lily, has fond memories of that time. “When I was told I was going to have another baby sister, as a five-year-old, all I could feel was excitement,”



KATHLEEN EMBRACING LILY FULL OF EMOTION AND SURPRISE AFTER FINDING OUT ABOUT EMILY'S DIAGNOSIS

Lily recalls. "I thought Emily was the cutest baby, I would show her my toys and read books to her since she had no other choice!" she adds.

Emily's diagnosis also impacted Kathleen's career. Prior to Emily's birth, Kathleen had been working in financial services; Emily inspired Kathleen to carve out a new niche. "As painful and hard as Emily's diagnosis was, I still thought I was good at understanding the financial world. A couple years after Emily was born, I decided to change my professional path," Kathleen says.

Fueled by a passion to help families like her own, in 2014, Kathleen connected with Betty Wellhoefer Hill, owner of Crescendo Wealth Management. The pair clicked immediately. "When I sat down with Betty I said, 'Number one, I can't work full-time. Number two, I want a mentor because I know how NOT to be a financial advisor, but I want to learn how to be a financial advisor. And then I finally said, 'I want to build a practice that helps families like mine,'" Kathleen recalls.

"Every parent of a child with a disability has the same fear, 'what's going to happen to them when I'm gone?' There's more to that than a portfolio can solve," Kathleen says. "Parents of children with disabilities want their children to be financially secure, but they also want them to have friends, to have purpose, to make a difference in the world and to know that they are a part of something beyond themselves," Kathleen explains. "Having adequate financial means makes these things

easier to achieve but you can't buy them all," she adds.

A financial services professional with personal knowledge and experience can be game changing for special needs families. "I assist parents and families with creating a document called a Letter of Intent. In addition to critical information which is typically only known by the parents, like who their doctors are, what medications they take, details on case managers and what public benefits they receive, this non-legal document lays out their hopes, dreams, and vision for their child's future," Kathleen explains.

"It can be very isolating to have a child with a disability, especially as that child grows older, beyond the school setting. Part of my planning is educating parents and families of the many resources that are available to them and their children beyond financial instruments, like all the programming that Friendship Circle does. Sometimes it's the activities for the child and then sometimes it's connecting the parent with other parents who are experiencing some of the same challenges in raising their child," Kathleen says.

Informing her other daughters about the Oberneder's long-term plan for Emily was an important conversation. "I have shared with Lily and Caroline that we expect

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Emily to work, participate in physical activity of some kind, whether it's her Personal Training at All Star Health Center, or Special Olympics, and we would like for her to live on her own," Kathleen says. "We are making the financial investments today so that Emily has means beyond her public benefits to live on. This is for Emily's future and, if not more importantly, this is also so that Lily and Caroline do not have the financial or personal burden for caring for their sister," Kathleen adds. "I want her sisters to continue to be her sister, not her financial managers, in my opinion that adds too much responsibility to them beyond what a sibling should have to do."

The three Oberneder girls, Lily, fourteen-year-old Caroline, and Emily, have a pretty typical sibling relationship filled with laughter and fun, ups and downs. "There is never a dull moment with Emily. She can be very funny and will want to have a fun time with you, or some days she will be challenging and won't want to talk," Caroline explains. Lily agrees. "There is no need to sugar coat it, having a stubborn, sassy, and frustrating sister is real life. Emily runs on her own schedule so I have to adjust my wants for her," Lily says.

Emily is a spunky pre-teen who doesn't mince words about her sisters. "I want people to know that my sister Lily is amazing, and I like my sister Caroline too, but she can be annoying!" Emily explained. She summed up her sisters' strengths in a few specific areas. "Caroline does a good job with hair and makeup and Lily makes all the cakes, and cookies in the house," Emily explains. Lily recently brought her talents to Friendship Bakery as a part-time member of the baking team.

Children with Down Syndrome can have problems with crowds and overstimulation, which makes certain activities off limits. "Since Emily is so stubborn, it prevents our family from going to busy, fun attractions, including hikes, Disney World or even museums," Lily adds. "I handle these challenges by being patient, and thinking about the positive attributions about her."

Thanks to Emily, the Oberneder family, who live in Mequon, found a supportive community at Friendship Circle. "I had my birthday party there, I attended the Silent Disco, I learned about robotics, I participated in an Art Camp. There are so many things that I have been able to do there," Emily says. But what's the main attraction for Emily? "The awesome drinks and food they have, it's like a Starbucks, but better!" Emily adds.

Looking back, Kathleen recognizes how different her situation could have been. "When Emily was born, if I would have known that I would meet Levi and Leah Stein and the commitment that they've made to the Down Syndrome community, I know I would've cried less tears," Kathleen says. "And I would have had more hope in those early days."



EMILY SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS.

“There is no need to sugar coat it, having a stubborn, sassy, and frustrating sister is real life.”



EMILY ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS



TEEN LEADERSHIP BOARD IN THE OFFICE OF
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SARA RODRIGUEZ

Friendship and Service in Action

BY SOPHIA HEY

It was the beginning of a Friendship Circle event and Annalisa* was anxious about joining in. She was with her mother in the parking lot and refused to get out of the car. The anxiety is understandable; this was a new setting, and with people with whom she was unfamiliar.

“I don’t want to go,” Annalisa said firmly.

“Come on, why don’t you give it a try?” her mother tried coaxing her. “It’ll be okay.”

Her daughter shook her head, unwilling to budge. Luckily, some members of the Teen Leadership Board passed by and noticed her struggle. “Hey, why don’t you join us? It’ll be a lot of fun,” one of the members said. “Everyone is welcome here.”

Annalisa looked from her mother to the teens. Though hesitant, she decided to step out of her comfort zone. “I’ll give it a try,” she said as she walked with them to the event.

The Teen Leadership Board is full of incredible volunteers from several different local schools. In 2018, the Board was created. The devoted teens advocate for those with disabilities and are strong leaders in their communities. With fun events like a silent disco, movie nights, and bike races, these volunteers are sure to include anyone and everyone to join in.

In April, the teens stepped into the hushed atmosphere of the state rotunda. When they entered the capitol, they gazed at the beautiful, intricately designed building and were greeted warmly by state legislators.



HANNAH LIBERMAN ACCEPTING AWARD FROM LT. GOVERNOR SARAH RODRIGUEZ



TLB ENJOYING LUNCH WITH WISCONSIN SUPREME COURT JUSTICE REBECCA DALLET

The trip focused on preparing the teens to take charge and become outspoken about inclusivity. These future leaders were able to see state legislators in action and learn from them. They also got the chance to meet Supreme Court Justice Rebecca Dallet who encouraged the Teen Board and spoke on how she became a leader in the community. Skills were gained and bonds were strengthened. “The Madison trip was something that brought everyone closer together,” Board member Hannah Liberman says.

The teens were presented with the Presidential Service Award during their trip to Madison by Lieutenant Governor Sarah Rodriguez. This is no surprise since the Board gives so much to their community. Whether it’s through a smile, a helping hand, or being a friend, they are always willing to step in.



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IN DISCUSSION.**



**THE BOARD LISTENING INTENTLY TO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SARAH RODRIGUEZ**

Executive Director, Levi Stein, says, “When teens are in it for the mission, they are there for the right reasons. These members are an example of our future leaders.”

Annalisa went into the Friendship Circle event nervous and uncertain, but came out of it with wonderful new experiences. If it weren’t for the teens who reached out to her, she might’ve not stepped out of her shell.

Her mother anxiously waited for her daughter in the parking lot after the event was over. Was Annalisa able to connect with new people? Did she have a good time? When her daughter finally came out of the event and walked toward the car, the smile on her face said it all. With tears of joy in her eyes, the mother was told, “Mom, I’m so happy I made some friends today.”



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**Thank you Levi and Leah Stein
for all your efforts with The Friendship Circle.**



TEEN LEADERSHIP BOARD INTERACTING WITH PANEL OF STATE LEGISLATORS



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