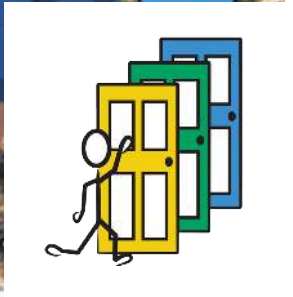




**A YEAR IN THE
LIFE SHOP**

YEARBOOK

2014



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Like many things at Opportunity Knocks, the Life Shop began as an idea and quickly blossomed into an organized effort that included many OK community members. It was a collective acknowledgement that for our young people with developmental disabilities in the state of Illinois there is simply not enough---not enough resources and not enough opportunities available to them after they graduate from high school---a truly harsh and unjust reality that presents itself at a time when there should be endless opportunities available to them. This startling realization is what required immediate action towards launching the Life Shop pilot day program.

With three years of researching, discussing, and planning, the Life Shop pilot opened its doors to ten Warriors on Tuesday, August 13, 2013. The day program is called the Life Shop because it is a place where our young people can come to explore life, with their friends and their Coaches. Many of the activities we explore are rooted in the overall goals of Opportunity Knocks and adopted by the Life Shop, such as, broadening life experience, community integration, and health & wellness. Additionally the Warriors bring their personal goals to the Life Shop through annual My Warrior Planning (myWP) meetings. Warriors are included in the decision-making of the Life Shop and brought to the forefront of planning and leading their own activities through our peer-led and club planning formats.

Take for instance, this yearbook. It is just one example of how deeply involved the Warriors are in the decision making and planning of activities that take place at the Life Shop. As you will read on page five, Life Shop participants were involved in the yearbook every step of the way: from brainstorming to selecting content to laying out the pages. Creating the yearbook was a new experience for many of us here at the Life Shop, but we learned it together as a team. The concept of the Life Shop as one cohesive unit is the cornerstone of how we approach much of our learning.

The Life Shop is our space to come to and explore topics and interests that we want to explore, with our friends and Coaches. As a team we journey into these new experiences and help each other along the way, especially when we are intimidated or nervous with trying new things. Through approaching new topics together we become stronger leaders. We help and support each other with our new learning. We are all in this together!

I hope you enjoy the Life Shop Yearbook. It was an amazing project and we are very excited to share it with all of you. The yearbook is an honest glimpse of what we have all accomplished together in the year and a half since the day we opened our doors! We are looking forward to an even brighter future.

Kim Meares
Life Shop Director





WARRIOR QUOTES



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A Warrior is STRONG

-John Carmody

**A Warrior is a
GOOD LISTENER.**

-John Carmody & Sonya Taylor

**A Warrior is ADVENTUROUS
& TRIES NEW FOOD.**

-Max Wright

A Warrior is INDEPENDENT

-Kris Bowyer

A Warrior is HELPFUL.

-Jackie Finn

**Life Shop is where
WE WORK OUT.**

-Charlie O'Connor

**Life Shop is where I HAVE
FUN WITH MY FRIENDS.**

-Sonya Taylor

Life Shop is



-Danny Wallace

A Warrior is BRAVE.

-Claire Puiszis

A Warrior uses TEAMWORK

-Sonya Taylor

A Warrior is HAPPY

-Darius Nichols

**Life Shop is where YOU
FIND YOUR OWN WAY**

-Patrick O'Rourke

Life Shop is A GOOD PLACE

-Max Wright

**Life Shop is where
WE EAT GOOD FOOD**

-Darius Nichols

**Life Shop is MY FRIENDS
AND COACHES.**

-John Carmody

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MEET OUR STAFF

In addition to our ten Warriors, Life Shop has 5 dedicated Life Coaches and also receives support from other OK staff members. Get to know some of the folks that keep the Life Shop rolling!



KIM MEARES

Life Shop Director

Favorite food? Pizza or Nonnie's Spaghetti. Basically anything Italian thanks to my Grandma and Nonnie.

Hobbies and interests? I love to read, I love to sing, I love to be goofy and silly with my family and close friends.

Favorite movie? In my 20's- *Lost in Translation*; In my 30's- *Little Miss Sunshine*; During Christmas- *White Christmas*

Favorite song? "RESPECT" by Aretha Franklin

Favorite Animal? Cats

Favorite TV show? *The Goldbergs*



JENI PIERCE

Life Coach, Health & Wellness Director

Favorite food? Broccoli (seriously, I love it!)

Hobbies and interests? RUNNING, reading, dining out with friends, all things Michigan, traveling, my family!

Favorite movie? *The Holiday*

Favorite song? Anything I can dance to - currently loving "Shake it Off"

Favorite Animal? Elephant - I once was an Elephant for Halloween!

Favorite TV show? *Scandal* or *Friends*



KEELY BALDWIN

Life Coach, Special Projects Coordinator

Favorite food? Chocolate chip cookies (and I like to eat the dough!)

Hobbies and interest? My dog, yoga, hanging out with my friends, getting brunch, and my family.

Favorite movie? *Little Miss Sunshine*

Favorite song? "Stir it Up" by Bob Marley

Favorite Animal? My dog, Nala!

Favorite TV show? *True Detective*



HONEY BADGER

Life Coach

Favorite Food? "Garbage salad" - everything in it!

Hobbies and interests? shopping / collecting, reading, cooking and walking.

Favorite movie? *The Birdcage*

Favorite song? "Fly Me To The Moon"

Favorite animal? Dogs

Favorite TV show? *David Letterman Show*



DAN SCHERER-EMUNDS

Life Coach, Marketing Specialist, Yearbook Editor

Favorite food? Bacon

Hobbies and interests? Sports, music, hip-hop, food, nature, traveling, comedy.

Favorite movie? *City of God*; *Whiplash*

Favorite song? "Take a Minute" by K'naan

Favorite Animal? Cheetah or Moose

Favorite TV show? *The Wire*



MIKE CARMODY

Executive Director

Favorite food? Pizza

Hobbies and interests? Running/ Gardening/woodworking

Favorite movie? *Uncle Buck*

Favorite song? "Escape" by Enrique Igelesias

Favorite Animal? Polar Bear

Favorite TV show? *The Wire*



DESIREE RIVO

Technology Director, Marketing Specialist, Yearbook Editor

Favorite food? Pizza

Hobbies and interest? Art, design, live music; I collect postcards!

Favorite movie? *Frozen* or *Casino*

Favorite song? "Elastic Heart" (This is a tough one! My latest favorite song.)

Favorite Animal? Whale

Favorite TV show? *Bob's Burgers*

WARRIOR-MADE YEARBOOK



Warriors brainstormed the different sections we would want to include in the Yearbook: an introduction, Warrior bios, staff bios, and sections dedicated some of our Life Shop trademark programs including Health & Wellness, Community Outings, Life Skills, Job Skills, Peer-Led Programs, Warrior Outings, and Nature Club. Our resident OK 'Tech Wiz' Desiree Rivo helped us develop the Adobe InDesign template and we got to work.

had played a hand in production, the Yearbook program became a small club activity for the final phase. The Yearbook Club of Danny, Max, John, and Sonya worked alongside me to layout the chosen content into the remaining sections on InDesign.

We think you will agree that everybody did a fantastic job and we hope you enjoy our creation!

Dan Scherer-Emunds
Life Coach & Yearbook Editor

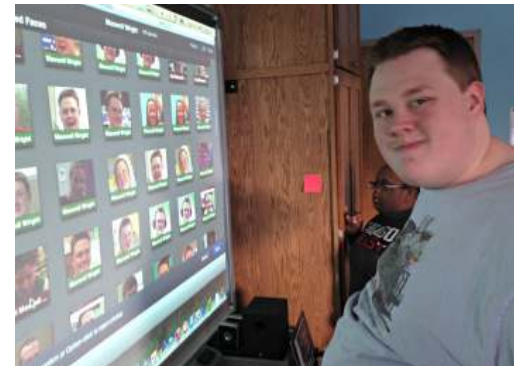
In our first high-octane Life Shop planning meeting of 2015, the Life Coaches reflected on 2014 and all of the beautiful moments, achievements, and progress that came out of Opportunity Knocks' day program's first full year. In the course of our discussion, as we looked to transition to the new year and new horizons, we had the idea to commemorate our old adventures with the first ever Life Shop Yearbook!

Warriors developed the Yearbook content by utilizing our full technology arsenal including the SmartBoard, Chromebooks, and PCs, as well as applications and such as PicMonkey, Adobe InDesign, iPhoto, Dropbox, Google Drive and Microsoft Word. First, we designed the cover page. Then Warriors filled out bios, wrote about their favorite Life Shop memories, found some favorite photos of themselves, and placed their bios and photos into the InDesign template. Next, they wrote quotes and hunted down photos for the different program sections of the Yearbook.



We pitched the idea to the Life Shop Warriors and they were enthusiastically on-board with our vision. Together, coaches and

After the content for each section was determined and all Warriors



KRIS BOWYER

COOL KRIS | KING KRIS

Age: 26

Favorite Food: Fruit - watermelon, pineapple

Favorite Color: Neon green

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: Jamaica

Hobbies/Interests: Dancing, listening to music, people watching, hanging with friends

New Year's Resolution: Stay more focused in group activities

Dream Job: Dancer

My friends and family say that I am: Funny, a cool guy, sneaky, happy, smiley, good friend, smart, strong, sweet-toothed, a music lover

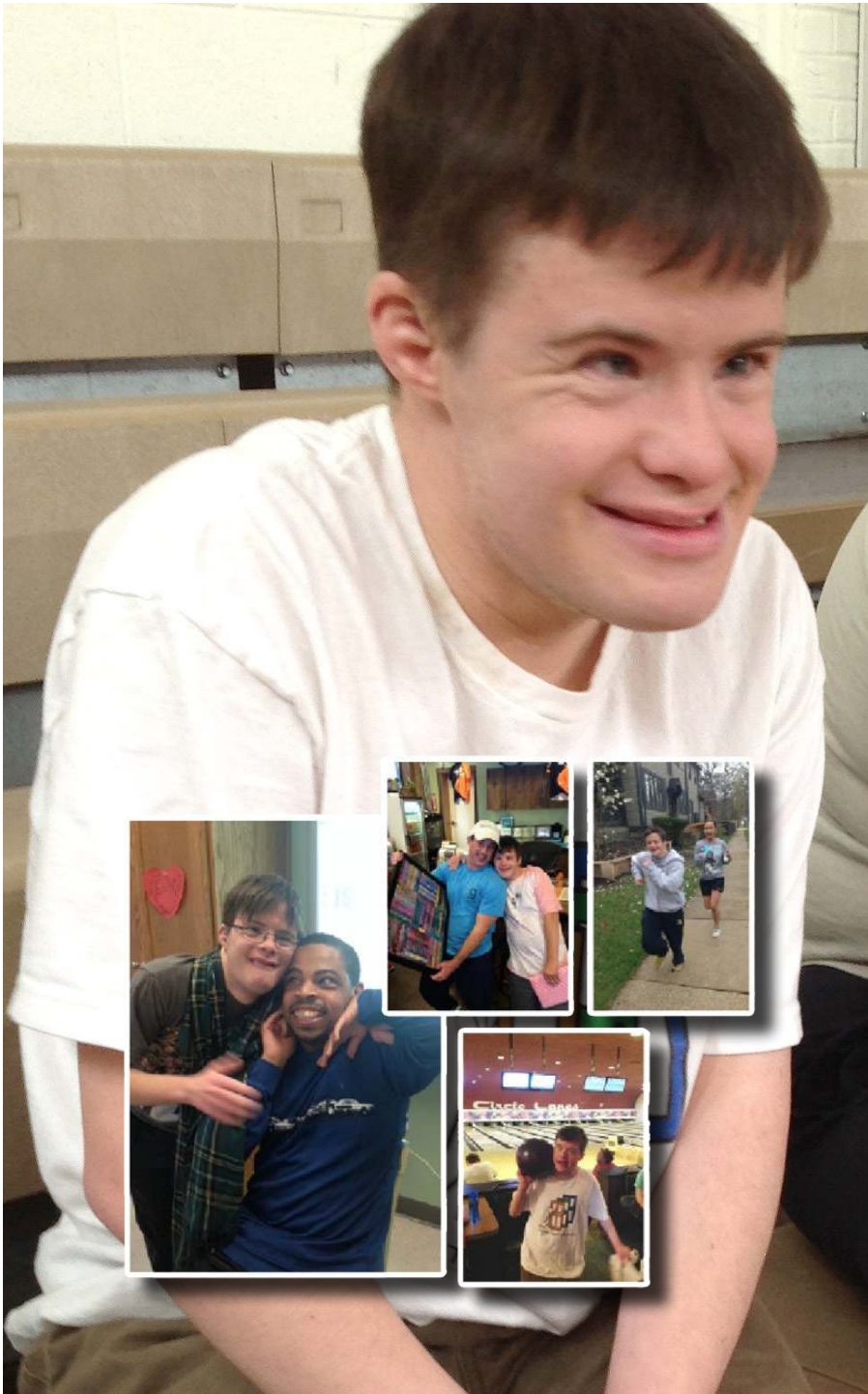


“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY
IS WHEN MY MOM AND GRANDMA CAME TO LIFE SHOP FOR LUNCH. I WAS EXCITED FOR THEM TO SEE MY FRIENDS.

JOHN CARMODY

JOHNO



Age: 27

Favorite Food: Pizza

Favorite Color: Green

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: Florida

Hobbies/Interests: Bowling, sports, WWE, hang out with family and brothers, running

New Year's Resolution: More fitness

Dream Job: Cook at Mickey's

My friends and family say that I: Give good hugs, am responsible, caring, happy, outgoing, athletic, silly, a hard-worker, good friend, good cook, am helpful, loving, never leaves anyone behind, am thoughtful, independent



“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS HANGING OUT WITH KRIS BECAUSE HE IS MY FRIEND. HE IS MY PAL. I LIKE DANCING AND RELAXING WITH HIM.

JACKIE FINN

PEAN

Age: 24

Favorite Color: Pink

Favorite Food: Pasta

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: California or Palm Springs

Hobbies/Interests: Facebook, watching TV, movies

New Year's Resolution: Meet up with friends

Dream Job: Work at Jimmy's Place

My friends and family say that I am: Fun to be around, joyful, very caring, friendly, fashionable, a good dancer and singer, helpful to others, thoughtful, sensitive to other people's feelings, a good listener.

“

**MY FAVORITE
LIFE SHOP
MEMORY IS
PAINTING NAILS.**



DARIUS NICHOLS

PAPA D.



Age: 23

Favorite Food: Chicken, French fries, Italian beef

Favorite color: Red

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: Italy

Hobbies/Interests: Hanging out with my brothers, playing football, wrestling, music, rapping, dancing

New Year's Resolution: Ride a bike more

Dream Job: Singer

My friends and family say that I am: A performer, a foodie, great at free-styling, a great dancer, a swag artist, hilarious, a great friend, fun, a star, a great brother and uncle.



MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS KARAOKE WITH KRIS. I ALSO LIKED COOKING BBQ WITH STAN AT THE OK CLASSIC AND MAKING THE MY GIRL MUSIC VIDEO.

CHARLIE O'CONNOR

CHUCK

Age: 26

Favorite color: Red

Favorite Food: Steak

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: Canada

Hobbies/Interests: Blackhawks, sports, golf, running, listening to music, cooking

New Year's Resolution: Work out more, be a leader

Dream Job: Manager for the Blackhawks

Friends and Family say that I am: Nice, confident, jokes around, loves his family, helpful, fun, loves Blackhawks and Cubs, watches out for his friends, loves sports, happy, respectful, involved

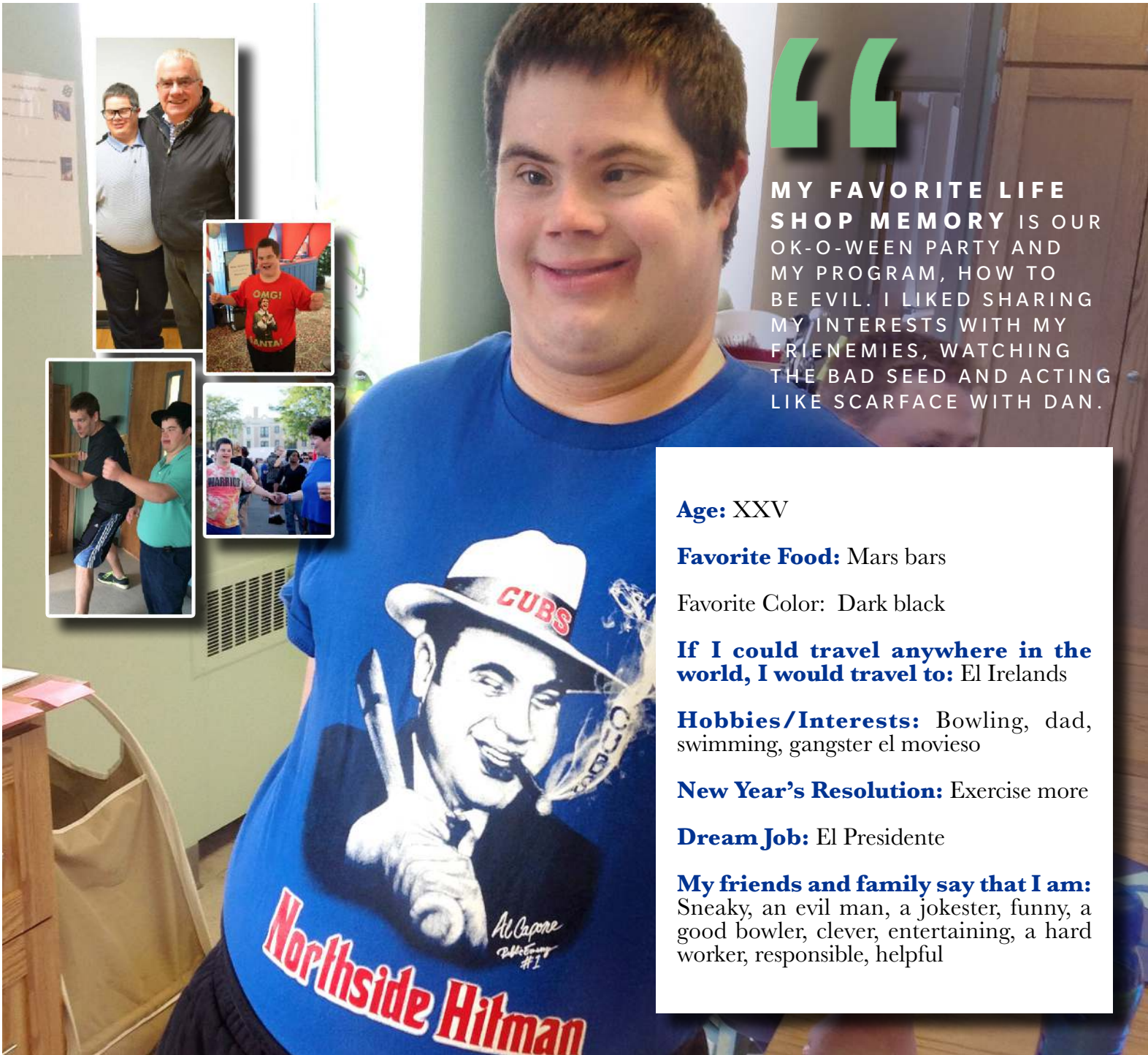


“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS MY OUTING WITH BLACKHAWKS VIDEOS, SOFTBALL AND BOWLING.

PATRICK O'ROURKE

THE DESSERTER | EL PRESIDENTE



“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS OUR OK-O-WEEN PARTY AND MY PROGRAM, HOW TO BE EVIL. I LIKED SHARING MY INTERESTS WITH MY FRIENEMIES, WATCHING THE BAD SEED AND ACTING LIKE SCARFACE WITH DAN.

Age: XXV

Favorite Food: Mars bars

Favorite Color: Dark black

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: El Irelands

Hobbies/Interests: Bowling, dad, swimming, gangster el movieso

New Year's Resolution: Exercise more

Dream Job: El Presidente

My friends and family say that I am: Sneaky, an evil man, a jokester, funny, a good bowler, clever, entertaining, a hard worker, responsible, helpful

CLAIRE PUISZIS

LIZ P.

“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS HANGING OUT WITH JACKIE AND GOING TO ENCHANTED CASTLE.

Age: 22

Favorite Food: Pepperoni pizza

Favorite Color: Blue and pink

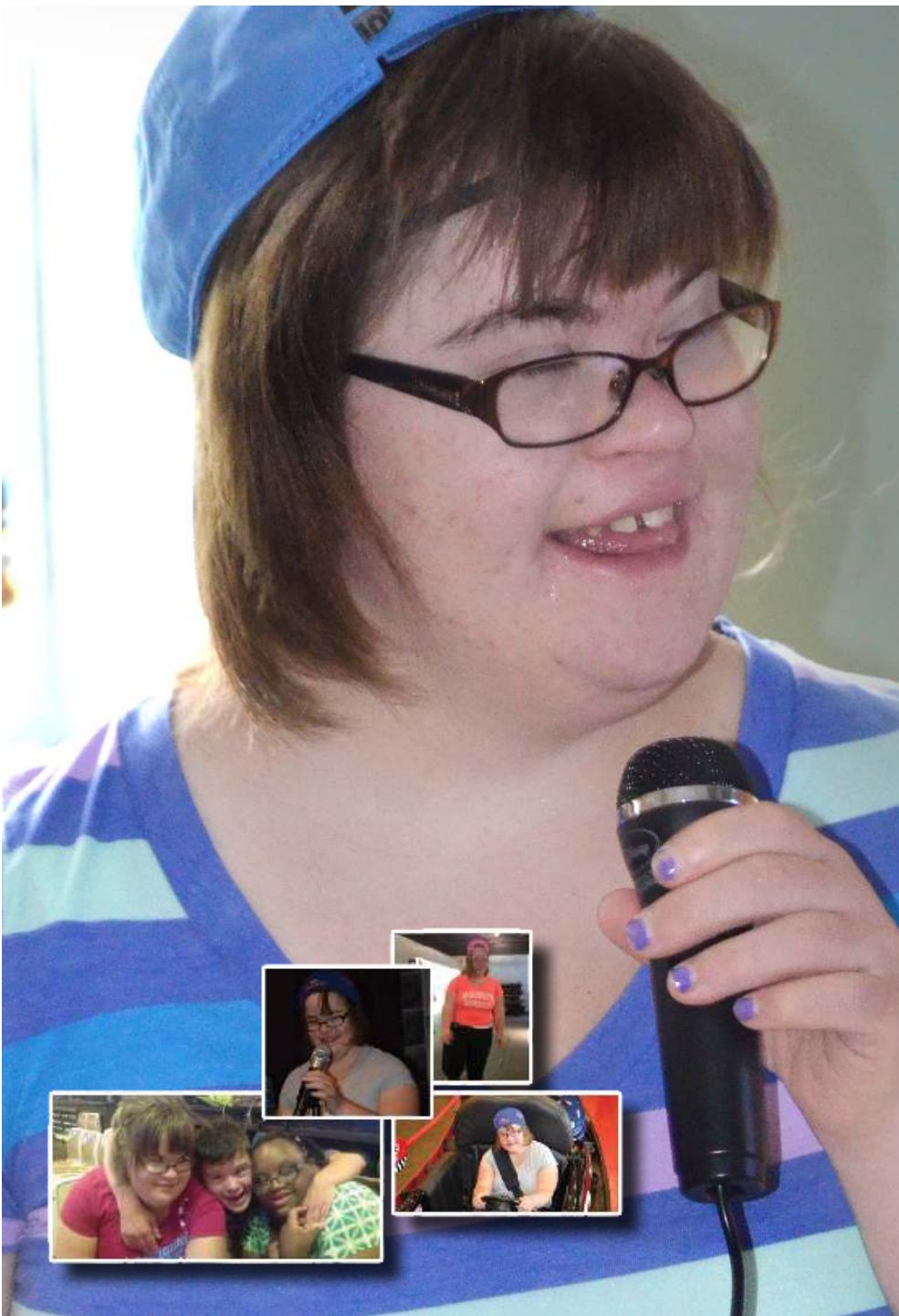
If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: Mexico

Hobbies/Interests: High School Musical, painting, Lizzie McGuire, Toy Story, horseback riding, movies

New Year's Resolution: Drink more water

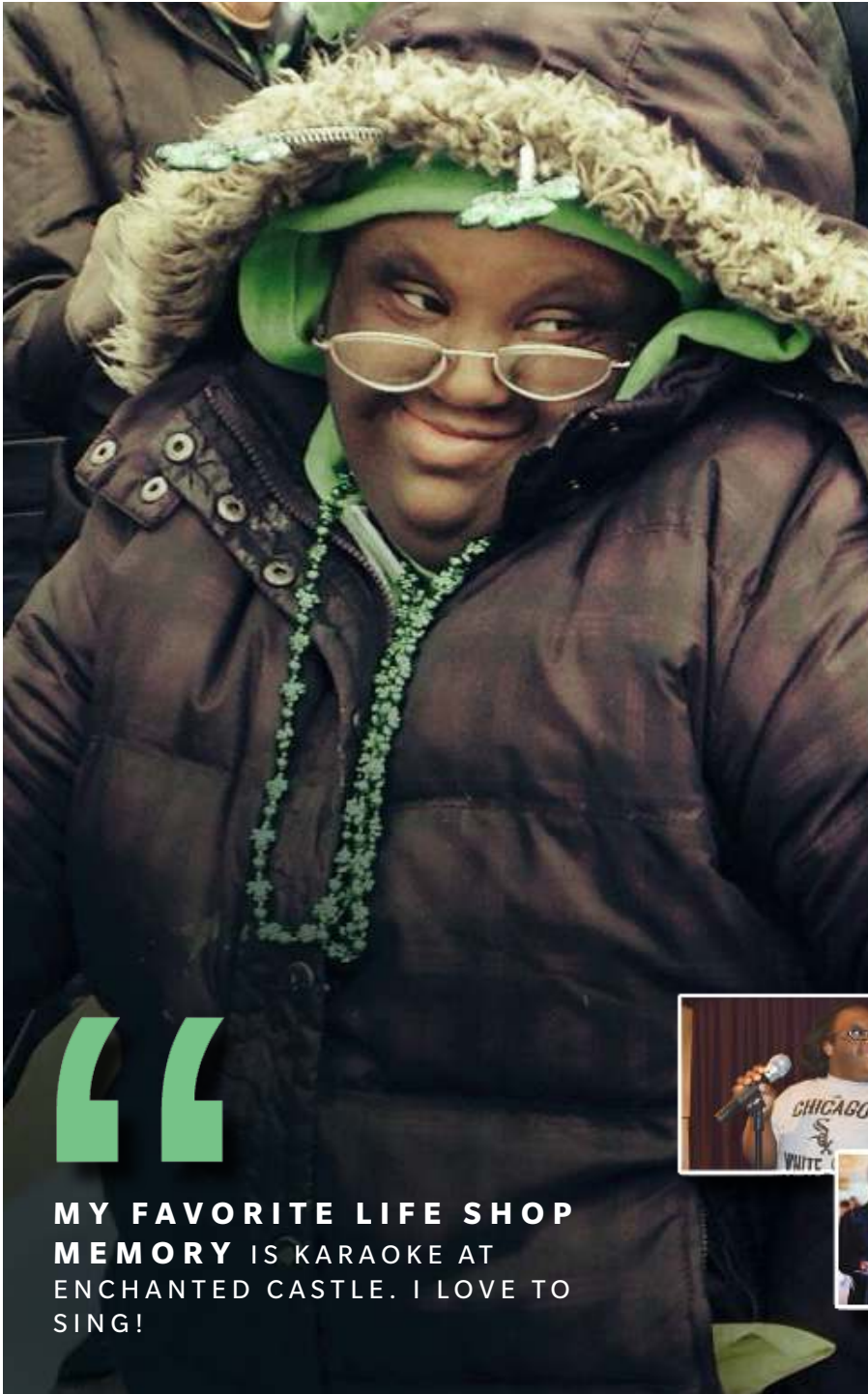
Dream Job: Work at Mcdonalds

My friends & family say I: Am helpful, have good taste, good sense of humor, am smart, a good singer, a good sister, a tallented performer, have a great smile



SONYA TAYLOR

S. T.



Age: 23

Favorite Food: Pizza

Favorite Color: Pink

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: My friends' houses

Hobbies/Interests: Bowling, dancing to High School Musical with my friends (Jackie is Sharpay, I'm Gabriella, Charlie is Troy, etc.)

New Year's Resolution: Drink milk

Dream Job: Deliver food at McDonalds

My friends and family say that I am: Sweet, a great dancer, funny

“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS KARAOKE AT ENCHANTED CASTLE. I LOVE TO SING!



DANIEL WALLACE

DANNY

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS GOEBBERTS FARM. I LIKED PETTING THE ANIMALS. I HAD FUN.

“

Age: 24

Favorite Food: Pizza

Favorite Color: Red

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: London

Hobbies/Interests: The world, Sesame Street

New Year's Resolution: Be good

Dream Job: Cashier at McDonalds

My friends & family say I am: A good guy, creative, smart, funny, kind



MAX WRIGHT

MR. CONDUCTOR

Age: 23

Favorite Food: Cheese pizza

Favorite Color: Blue

If I could travel anywhere in the world, I would travel to: Disneyland or Door County

Hobbies/Interests: Trains, Disney, Thomas the Tank Engine, reading books, movie & TV quotes

New Year's Resolution: Be a good guy and try new foods

Dream Job: Voice acting

My friends & family say I am: Great, a good adult, an awesome guy, kind, gentle, caring, funny, trustworthy, wise



“

MY FAVORITE LIFE SHOP MEMORY IS GOING ON OUTINGS LIKE GOING ON THE METRA TRAIN RIDE TO ELMHURST AND THE NATURE CLUB TRIP TO THE GRAVE MILL WATERFALL.

LIFE SKILLS

Life skills is a major component in our weekly Life Shop curriculum. We collaborate often with Ms. Kennedy and our friends in the OPRF CITE program, who are also based out of the River Forest Community Center. In addition, we have traveled to Whole Foods Market River Forest for in-store programming. We are very grateful for these two awesome community partners. We also do lots of independent Life Skills activities at OK, including cooking, gardening, and much more!



WORK WITH CITE

“We work on life skills a lot with CITE. Some of our lessons have included public v. private, good and bad touch, circles (personal relationships), Internet safety, trusted adults, healthy hygiene, and team-building (communication, teamwork).

I like being with CITE and seeing friends. We learn stuff. We celebrate holidays with them. We do projects with them. I like the videos we watch. I like seeing old friends and Ms. Kennedy.”





WHOLE FOODS

“We went to Whole Foods Market. We went shopping for healthy food.

We made lunch and cooked there. Abby was helping us. She was cool. We learned about some of the different healthy foods they had there and how to make food safely. It was good and fun. We would like to go back there some time.”



COOKING

“We cook food a lot in Life Shop. We plan the meals when we are on lunch crew. We plan balanced meals with fruit, grains, vegetables, protein, and dairy. Then we go to the grocery store and shop. When we get back we cook! Some of our favorite meals were hot wings, el Mexicano food, tacos, quesodillas, and grilled cheese.”



COOKING 101

“We did cooking 101 with Joe Hart. We learned knife skills, how to use the stove and the oven and be safe. We made salsa, pear bacon salad, sandwiches, brownies, pork, and more! It was fun! We like working with Joe. He’s a great chef. Ohhh yeah!”



GARDENING

“We garden when it’s warm outside. We have our own garden in front of the Community Center. We have grown tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, and more. We water the plants. We eat the food with our lunch when it is done.”

COMMUNITY OUTINGS

At the core of OK's mission is community integration. We are always striving to implement activities that connect the Warriors to the community in which they live, work, recreate, and to also connect the community to the Warriors. Have a look at a few of our many days spent out exploring our surrounding area and helping others in need.

GOEBBERT'S FARM/ BENGSTON'S FARM

"At Goebbert's Farm in the Fall of 2014, we went on a hayride and pet and fed animals like girraffes, bulls, donkeys, goats, zebras and camels. We did a pig race, corn maze, hay maze. The pumpkin eating dinosaur was my favorite. The hayride was also my favorite. I liked going fast and seeing the swinging skeleton. At Bengston's in the Fall of 2013, there was a pumpkin-shooting cannon and Max won the first pig race."



GOOD EARTH/ JUICE JOINT

"The Juice Joint is a place where they have smoothies and water and juice. We have lots of friends there. Next to it is Good Earth Greenhouse, where you can buy plants. They have flowers, dirt/soil, pots, shovels. We bought flowers for Mother's Day and learned how to start seeds at Good Earth."



URBAN FARM

"We visited our friend Stephanie at the Chicago Lights Urban Farm in the city. We ate fresh strawberries and kale. We helped out planting fruits and vegetables for people in Chicago. We worked hard on a hot, sunny day. We had fun helping out!"



PENCIL PROJECT

“Over the summer with CITE we collected pencils from different places and we brought them to a school in the southside of Chicago. We wanted to donate to Burke Elementary. We collected notebooks, pens and other school supplies. We got boxes and bins to put at the Brown Cow, Garlans, Wonderworks for people to donate the school supplies. After we collected the supplies, on a Saturday we visited Burke on their Community Day to drop off some supplies. We danced with the students. We came back during the session to bring more supplies. It felt great to help other people.”



NAVY PIER

“Navy Pier was a lot of fun! We went on rides, saw the blackhawks hockey rink, we rode the carousel, the Ferris Wheel, slides. The theme was Winter Wonderland! I loved the big Christmas tree! We took a big group holiday photo there. I loved seeing all the kids!”



LAMBS FARM

Life Shop took a trip out to Libertyville and visited Lambs Farm. We played mini golf, had lunch, visited their Animal Rescue center, explored their Farmyard, fed some animals and saw our old friend Stephen Koss who works in their country store! “I love that adorable picture of me with the puppy!”



HEALTH & WELLNESS

We stay very active in the Life Shop. We work out weekly with our community partners like Midtown Athletic Club and Greenline Wheels and also do lots of fitness in our own newly renovated fitness room and outside when it's warm. We play lots of sports, do boot camps, group workouts, biking, and much more! We also do health-based lessons like Charlie's peer-led HealthMatters.



MIDTOWN FITNESS

“We work out at Midtown Fitness every Thursday. We work out with the trainers there. Our friends from CITE sometimes join us! We touch the wall. Kris loves the vibration seat, but sometimes it itches our nose. ABC News was there. They were recording what we do there like showing our muscles, the activities like throwing the sand weights on the ground. We like the lights on the ground and on the wall. We like playing all the different games there. It's fun.”



GREENLINE WHEELS

“We ride bikes at Greenline Wheels in Oak Park once a week. It makes you tough. We like seeing David...he can be a funny fellow. He tells us to keep going and that we can do it.

We go there with friends from CITE. We sing songs and dance while we ride the bikes. It's fun. We climb hills on the bike. We drink water, use a towel when we're hot.”



FITNESS CENTER RENOVATION



Then we got our own new equipment for the fitness room donated by the Oak Park Tennis and Fitness Centre, which was one of the places we visited.



We got new floor like Midtown Fitness. We got new sand-weights and punching bag and lots of new stuff. I like the new room, it looks just like new again.

We visited different fitness centers to check out the equipment. We liked the treadmills, bikes, and ellipticals.



Thank you for your support. Thanks for helping us get new equipment and be healthy! It's great and we love it.



HEALTHMATTERS



“We learned what it means to be healthy. To be healthy, drink water. We got two wristbands each week and gave one to other people. We told them to remember to be healthy. Charlie and Jeni led HealthMatters. We learned about FABS: Flexibility, Aerobics, Balance and Strength and learned different activities for those. We took our lessons home each week. We made healthy goals each week. Some of our goals were to work out at home, run with mom, play sports, dance with our family, exercise with mom, drink more water, eat healthy food.”



MISC

“We sometimes play softball and other sports. It's great. I like it and it's a good workout. I like hitting the ball. I sing take me out to the ball game. We also do boot camp- it's tough work. We do sit-ups, wall push-ups, jumping jacks, step-ups, squats, bands. At the end, we race. My favorite activity is the bands. My favorite is the wall push-ups. We do it in the dance studio or in Washington Park when it's nicer outside.



We work out in the fitness room. I like the bike. My favorite is the treadmill. Elliptical is my favorite. I like the bike.



My favorite activity is the bands. My favorite is the wall push-ups. We do it in the dance studio or in Washington Park when it's nicer outside. We also ride bikes outside when it's nice. We work out in the fitness room. I like the bike, treadmill, and elliptical.”

PEER LED PROGRAMS

Warriors' interests and strengths are at the core of our daily activities and the Life Shoppers play a central role in planning our programs. Participants have planned and led programs about some of their favorite hobbies for their peers, including water color painting, jewelry making, dancing, train & safety appreciation, heroes & villains and even a Life Shop music video! Check out some highlights!



HOW TO BE EVIL WITH PATRICK

"I accomplished my goal for the session: teach people about vill-roes [villain heroes] and have a halloween party. It was fun to share what I like with friends. I showed my favorite video, 'Give Me Back My Shoes', from the bad seed. The hardest part was planning everything. I want to lead more."



DANCING WITH SONYA

"My program was dancing. We did Michael Jackson, High School Musical, Irish Dancing, Zumba. I chose dancing because I love to dance. My favorite week was High School Musical because I like to act like Trina."



To be a good leader you need to help other people, communicate with people, give good directions, and be excited."



TRAINS WITH MAX

"My program was train safety and appreciation. We went to Junction Diner and took a Metra ride to Elmhurst and went to Nu Crepes. I taught people not to play on the railroad tracks and to stop, look, listen, and live when crossing the tracks. I read Thomas books. It was fun. To be a good leader, you need to be a good guy, pay attention, be a good listener, be calm and respectful."



DARIUS'S MY GIRL MUSIC VIDEO

“I made a music video. We sang ‘My Girl.’ Sonya was My girl. I pretended to drive Stan’s (Dan) car. I made it rain with money. I danced with my friends.”



COOKING WITH JOHN

“My program was cooking. We had cooked carrots, applesauce, sweet potato fries, pasta, taco bar. I want to do it again. Cooking is my favorite. To be a good leader, you need to listen, be smart, help people out.”



PAINTING WITH JACKIE

“For my peer-led program, we did water color painting. We did fishes, flowers, shamrocks, and sunsets. I liked it! I liked teaching my friends! I like to paint. I learned good leaders check in and see how everybody is doing. Good leaders have good teamwork, good communication, are respectful and safe.”



BEADING WITH CLAIRE

“We did beading! We made jewelry, cards, and other crafts out of beads. I had fun. It was fine. Good leaders talk to everybody and ask if they need help.”



WARRIOR OUTINGS

Along with implementing Life Shop programs, Warriors are also responsible for sitting down with a coach and planning a monthly LS outing to the destination of their choosing. Prior to the outing date, they plan for every consideration from appropriate attire to lunch menu to materials needed. On the day of their outing, they are responsible for leading everything they planned.



SONYA

“My outing was Enchanted Castle. We ate pizza, we did Karaoke, we had fun, we played games, we rode go-karts and other rides, we took pictures. In the morning, we did make-up and I did Dan’s make-up. It was cool. My favorite part was karaoke on the stage. I sang Michael Jackson’s ‘Beat it.’”



DARIUS

“We did karaoke. I sang my girl and We Are Young. For lunch we had BBQ, sweet potato fries, and watermelon. We went to the movies. We saw Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. I had fun.”



JOHN

“My outing was bowling at Circle Lanes and softball in the gym. We had turkey dogs for lunch. We watched WWE clips.

We celebrated my birthday, Jeni’s birthday, Kim’s birthday, and Max’s birthday. I liked being a leader. I liked following my schedule and carrying it around.”



PATRICK

“For my Warrior Outing we had a Halloween party. We ate brain punch, mummy dogs, and a monster throwing up guacamole. It was spooktacular! We went to scarface’s (Al Capone’s) grave. It was dark and rainy and spooky and I loved it! We did a gangster tour of River Forest and Forest Park.



KRIS

“Kris’s day was filled with some of his favorite things: music, friends, family, and food. We had a dance party in the morning with some of his favorite songs like “Superstition” by Stevie Wonder. Then his mom and grandmother joined us for a BBQ lunch with burgers, watermelon, and mac and cheese.”



CLAIRE

“For my day we did karaoke. I sang “What Dreams are Made of” by Lizzie McGuire. We watched an episode of Lizzie McGuire called “Best Dressed for Less.” For lunch we had pepperoni pizza, salad with strawberries and grapes. After lunch we went to the Oak Park Conservatory where I work. Then got ice cream at Petersen’s. I got chocolate!”



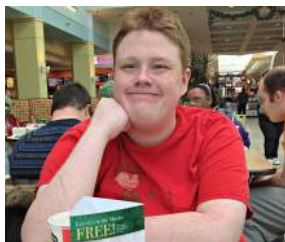
CHARLIE

“We watched Blackhawks highlights & sang the goal anthem song “Chelsea Dagger.” Then we went the park and played softball. We ate a picnic with sandwiches. Then we went bowling at Circle Lanes. We sang, danced, and made strikes! We also called Kim and sang happy one-year birthday to the Life Shop.”



MAX

“My outing was North Riverside Mall. We ate lunch there and also went shopping for Christmas presents for our family. We watched Christmas videos and made Gingerbread houses. It was fun. I liked the pizza. I liked being a leader.”



JACKIE

“We had carrots and celery in the Life Shop. We painted nails and did makeup and had manicures. We sang High School Musical. My favorite song is “Start of Something New.” Then we went to Enchanted Castle. We played games, did karaoke, rode go-karts, rode bumper cars. It was a great day! I want to do another outing soon!”



NATURE CLUB

For six weeks during summer 2014, Warriors spent some quality time in the great outdoors for the peer-led Nature Club program!



PLANNING

Max, Patrick, and Danny were the Nature Club Planning Committee alongside Coach Dan. They picked local nature spots to visit and planned and led each outing. Their goals were to to feel great, be outside, be active, go somewhere new, and have fun!

LAKE VIEW NATURE CENTER & TRAILSIDE MUSEUM

“We first went to the Trailside Museum [in River Forest] where I got mosquito bites. We went on a nature hike with a guide. We saw deer. Then we went to Lake View Nature Center [in Oakbrook]. We pet animals like rabbit, snakes, and mouse. We had grilled turkey dogs for lunch. We went fishing there. I tired to do a fish call that Ernie does from Sesame Street. “

GARFIELD PARK CONSERVATORY

“We walked around a maze outside. I noticed thunderclouds rolling in. We ran inside for cover. We had lunch inside. We walked around inside and did a scavenger hunt, staying inside from the rain.”



FULLERSBURG & GRAUE MILL

“First we went to Fullersburg Woods. We went inside a big bird’s nest inside the nature museum. Then we walked down to Graue Mill and played Pooh Sticks on the way. We went inside and saw some things from the Amish Country and dressed up. I liked seeing the waterfall and the watermill.”



PEGGY NOTEBAERT MUSEUM & LP ZOO

“First we went to Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago. I made a face like a walrus. We saw the butterfly exhibit. Then we went to LP ZOO. We saw lions tigers, gorillas, flamingos, giraffes and lots more. Making a face of a walrus was my favorite part.”

MORTON ARBORETUM

“We hugged trees. We drove around the park in the morning. We had lunch. We did a lot of walking. We had a guide and she told us about fur and trees and nature. I was so tired and I fell asleep on the ride home.”



JOB SKILLS

Vocation is a big part of the Life Shop. From designing our own chairs to volunteering at the local Food Pantry to creating our very own Warrior-made pickles, we are always working hard on job skills in the Shop and in the community.

WARRIOR ROLES

“Kitchen cleanup, healthy water, life shop cleanup, pedometer captain, wellness warrior, welcome warrior, social media warrior. We work together as a team doing different work. Look at the schedule to see which role you are. My favorite role is the Welcome Warrior because I like the song of the day. My favorite role is Warrior Chef because I like to cook.”



CHAIR PROJECT

“It was dusty work. I liked it. I liked painting our chairs. We learned new skills. We painted, sanded, scrubbed, put seat covers on, wrote our names.”

We wore gloves and goggles so sand didn't get into our eyes. We practiced teamwork and safety.”



STRENGTHS

“We chose dream jobs, talked about what we liked and what we're good at. We talked about what it means to be professional: knowing your schedule, having a great attitude, being happy and positive, respecting yourself, boss, coworkers, professional greeting, working hard and getting the job done. We did this with CITE.”



OPRF FOOD PANTRY

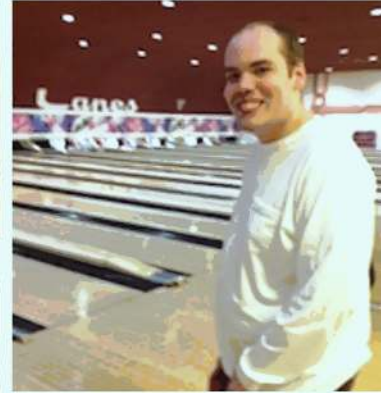
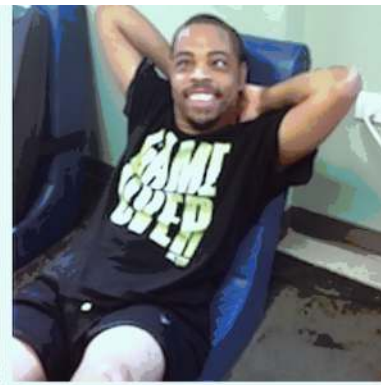
“We go on Thursdays and sort food like apples, pears, onions, potatoes, oranges or items like toilet paper, paper towels, diapers. The food goes to people who need food and don't have it. We like going there. It's fun and we work on job skills there.”



KNOCK OUT PICKLES

“We make pickles to sell for special occasions and OK events. The money goes to us for outings, groceries, wellness equipment, and program supplies. Patrarlie (Patrick & Charlie) designed the label. To make the pickles, we cut cucumbers, garlic and put them in jars with dill seed, peppercorn, and vinegar. Some are chips and some are spears. Then we put the labels that we made on the jars. They used to be called Wickles but are now called Knock Out Pickles. They are dill-icious!”





THE OK MISSION

- Offer a diverse set of programs built in partnership with the Warriors that attend them.
- Create an organization that empowers members at all levels to lead.
- Build and develop community partnerships that lead to a Warrior's positive and continued presence in the community.
- Promote healthy living in mind, body and spirit.

For more information on the Life Shop, contact Director Kim Meares at kim@opportunityknocksnow.org or call us at (708) 771-6159 x 212.