



## — GOLD STAR AWARD —

This June, one of VNU's residents had the honor of receiving Pizza Ranch's Gold Star Award. The award has three levels that must be achieved in order: first bronze, then silver, and finally gold. The award was designed to recognize those that provide service from the heart throughout the duration of their shift, and Chris' dedication and work ethic has not gone unnoticed. Kirsten Poage, Chris's supervisor at Pizza Ranch, commented, "We absolutely love having Chris here. Just having him in the dining room makes a huge difference. We have had guests comment that when he's not here, it's just not quite the same... he can turn any day around just by being here." Nic Wielenga, Chris' Service Coordinator, shared Chris' secret to success: "He always puts his work first. He tells me almost weekly that he loves the work he's doing out there." According to Chris, his job is wonderful! He feels comfortable at work, and he really enjoys the work that he does. Chris' favorite part is the work itself! He commented, "I really like bussing tables, and I love wiping them down!"

Congratulations Chris, we are proud of you – keep up the good work!

VILLAGE NORTHWEST UNLIMITED // FALL 2019

# VILLAGE VOICE



## — WATER FUN DAY —

In August, all of the Residential Center Programming staff hosted a Water Fun Day for every resident that lives on campus. There was a proper water fight, complete with water guns and water balloons, sprinklers, and even a home-made water slide. The best part – the water slide was accessible to everyone! Every resident that wanted a chance to go down the slide got to go regardless of his or her mobility level. Thanks to the beautiful weather and the incredible efforts from dedicated staff, not a single resident left the 'water park' without a smile on their face. But, it wasn't just a fun day for the residents. It was a special day for the staff too. Here at VNU, just because you're at work doesn't mean it should feel like it! You better believe a few staff members made their way down the slip and slide as well! The day was definitely a success for everyone!



### INSIDE THIS EDITION

- Water Fun Day
- Golf Benefit
- Panther Softball
- Pet Time
- Summer of Service
- Miracle League
- Gold Star Award



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## — GOLF BENEFIT —

On what was quite possibly the hottest Monday in July, a troop of dedicated golfers gathered at Landsmeer Golf Course in Orange City, IA, for a day full of competitive play. The tournament, whose reputation for prizes and giveaways precedes itself, was VNU's 19th annual Golf Tournament benefit event. Despite the heat, the course was buzzing with excitement from the first tee-shot to the final putt. Thank you to all the sponsors, volunteers, and golfers for supporting adults with disabilities, your participation helps change lives.

### All Men's 1st Flight– Score of 58

Brian Tutje, Nick Bomgaars, Gene Bomgaars and Dave Van Kley

### All Men's 2nd Flight– Score of 67

Duane Kolpin, Donald Nielsen, David Schroeder and Norman Lux

### Mixed Flight– Score of 63

Dave Van Essen, Jill Van Essen, Ty Van Essen and Zach Van Essen

### All Women's Flight– Score of 67

Brooke Wittrock, Ashley Sandersfeld, Heather Storey and Rylee Goosen



## — STATE CHAMPIONS —

On August 3rd, the VNU Panther Softball Team travelled to Ankeny, IA, to compete in the Special Olympics State Softball Tournament. The team's hard work and preparation paid off as the Panthers returned home victorious after defeating the Iowa City Hawks (14-8) and the Glenwood Resource Center (18-8), winning first place in their division. Three residents also medaled in the individual softball skills competition: Keith K. took home the bronze in his division and Travis K. and Austin B. both brought home the gold in their divisions. Great work Panthers, we are proud of you! For a complete Panther schedule check out [www.villagenorthwest.org/panthers](http://www.villagenorthwest.org/panthers).



## — PET TIME —

Throughout July and August, VNU has started a new program: Pet Time! Two days a week, various VNU staff have graciously been bringing in their pets and small farm animals for residents to spend time with. Kitten cuddles and puppy playtime can turn a day around and bring a smile to anyone's face. The residents (and staff) have loved every minute of it. The fun is not limited to normal, everyday pets, either. Residents have had the opportunity to hold more exotic animals like chicks, rabbits, and if they were brave enough, a skunk! Luckily, nobody needed a bath in tomato soup, but a lint roller did come in handy!



## — SUMMER OF SERVICE —

This summer, VNU had the opportunity to welcome a handful of student volunteers to our campus through the resurfacing of the Summer of Service program. It did not take long before friendships began to blossom between the volunteers and the residents. Mag Vander Wilt, one of the supervisors of the program, commented on its success: "We're finding that it's a great program. We have a lot of kids that are here and it's a great environment. The kids have been wonderful. They're building incredible relationships." This program has provided opportunities for residents to interact with kids in the community, and for our young volunteers to learn about who we are and what we do here at VNU.



## — MIRACLE LEAGUE —

Throughout the summer, VNU residents made a splash at the Miracle League of Sioux City complex. Built in 2016, the facility features a playground, music park, mini golf course, rubber-surfaced baseball field, and splash pad, all built to be accessible for individuals with any abilities. Throughout the course of the summer, the physical therapy department took a group from the Wansink Center, the VNU Summit building brought a day habilitation class, and one of the residential homes spent a morning at the park. Although the playground, which sported a wheelchair-accessible merry-go-round- was fun, the splash pad was the all-around favorite. One resident commented that her favorite part was "the buckets on the splash pad- they have buckets that dump [water] on top of you!" All the residents came back with smiles on their faces, despite being worn out from all of the excitement- and they can't wait to go back!

