

# VILLAGE VOICE



## INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

*New location, same great night.*

After being unable to host our annual Independence Day Celebration in 2020, it was great to be able to put it on once again! This year's event looked a bit different as we used caution in deciding not to have our normal carnival games and inflatable slides and bounce houses. Although we were missing some aspects of the event that people love, we were still able to have Ditzzy the Clown make free balloon animals all night, life sized yard games, food trucks and of course the live music by The Hepperly Band. The food trucks were a hit with the crowd and sold everything from nachos to fried Oreos.

Another big change to this year's event was the location, instead of hosting the event on our campus, it was held on the RiseFest grounds east of Sheldon. At the time of the event VNU parents and guardians still had limited access to visiting their loved one on campus so allowing thousands of people on campus for an event didn't seem fair. As we look ahead to next year's event we can't help but smile thinking that the Independence Day Celebration will be back on our campus with carnival games, inflatables, zoo animals, fire truck rides and wagon rides and so much more! We will be welcoming The Hepperly Band back in 2022 to rock the stage one more time.



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## SUCCESS ON THE JOB!

During a shift at the Sheldon Pizza Ranch, Alec was surprised to find out that he had won a bronze star award, it's only given to staff who show exemplary care to customers and a good work ethic. It wasn't many years ago that Alec was taking classes at VNU to help him with his job skills. He frequently needed breaks when he was overwhelmed and didn't have enough endurance to get through a whole shift. After years of support from VNU staff, Alec is thriving at work. To read the whole article go to [www.villagenorthwest.org/alec](http://www.villagenorthwest.org/alec).



## 4TH OF JULY FESTIVITIES

July 2nd was a busy day on the VNU campus, our staff put together carnival games, a photo booth and fire truck rides were given all day long. Our maintenance staff even created a lift system to get residents in wheelchairs on top of the firetrucks. Until this year, our residents in wheelchairs have never been able to ride the fire trucks at any of the Independence Day Celebrations. Staff grilled hot dogs for lunch and then the famous Willage People band, a group of staff, took the stage to cover everyone's favorite songs.



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS

All Special Olympic competitions and practices were canceled until further notice in March of 2020. This was a huge disappointment to our VNU Panther coaches and athletes. Our athletes asked often if there was any word on when they could participate again, but the answer was always, "I don't know." When our coaches got word that competition was going to start up again in July of 2021, we had many excited athletes and even the coaches were thrilled to be back on the field. The first competition our athletes competed in was softball skills on July 8th in Manning, IA. In an attempt to start back up with caution, Special Olympics Iowa decided there will be no state competitions this year so all of the athletes earned gold medals at the softball skills competition.

The Panther softball team got the chance to play on July 10th against Sioux City. The team played hard but lost the first game by two runs. The team was supposed to play two games but after the first one a group of dark clouds rolled in and the second game had to be canceled for bad weather. As the team packed up their things, they were met with a downpour. Like softball skills, due to Covid guidelines there will be no state competition.

Panther coach, Sara Wolthuizen said, "It feels great to be back competing at Special Olympics events! We as coaches have missed seeing our athletes compete and show off their God-given talents and the athletes have missed seeing their friends and competing against fellow athletes! It's just an overall win for everyone to be back at it!"



## GOLF TOURNAMENT

On July 19th, the 20th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament was held at Landsmeer Golf Club in Orange City, Iowa. With 148 golfers, it was the largest golf tournament we've ever put on. The weather was a beautiful 83 degrees with a slight 3 mph breeze, we couldn't have asked for better golf weather. We are continually amazed by the support of the community, nearly \$70,000 was raised by our incredible sponsors and participants. All contributions from this event go directly towards bettering the lives of the 180 adults with disabilities served at VNU.

All Men's 1st Flight- Score of 57  
Brian Tutje, Nick Bomgaars, Gene Bomgaars and Dave Van Kley

All Men's 2nd Flight- Score of 66  
Carl Purhmann, Harlan Peterson, Donald Thomas, Will Joines

Mixed Flight- Score of 62  
Amber Bosma, Dave Van Essen, Jim Jansen, Bruce Mosier

All Women's Flight- Score of 68  
Jaynee Smith, Ashley Sandersfeld, Heather Storey and Rylee Goosen



## NEW RESIDENTIAL HOMES

Despite everything with Covid, we've been able to continue with our plans to have two new ICF-ID homes built on our campus. ICF-ID stands for Intermediate Care Facility for Individuals with Intellectual Disability. Of the 180 people we serve at VNU, we are licensed by the State of Iowa to serve 60 people under our ICF-ID license. Individuals in the ICF-ID setting are the most vulnerable and have the greatest needs of the people we serve.

The building of these two homes started in April 2020 and the residents moved in on July 6th, 2021. Two new homes were built because the original 12-bed home that was built in the 1970's had reached the end of its useful life, it also was not adequately meeting the needs of the people who lived in the home any longer.

The new homes are each 5,000 square feet and designed to meet the needs of people in wheelchairs. Each of the new homes have 6 bedrooms. Each resident has their own half bath attached to their bedroom instead of sharing a large community bathroom. Each bedroom has a built-in track system in the ceiling allowing for a lift system to assist residents in and out of bed or transport them to the toilet in their bathroom. The hallways are double wide, allowing for two wheelchairs to pass through at the same time, the doorways are wider and the homes have an open concept with a large kitchen, dining area and family room.



Barry Whitsell, President and CEO commented, "On behalf of our residents, who now have a new home, I think it is important to say "thank you" to all the donors who made the Building On Our Promise capital campaign a great success. Without the support of our donor base this project would not have happened this year but our donors saw the need and how these homes fit within the Village's mission of providing Purpose, Privacy and Dignity. With the homes we completed in 2015 and 2016 we now have six new homes that provide a wonderful environment for our residents and allow our staff to give exceptional care to our residents."

## 16TH ANNUAL RUN, WALK & ROLL

We're gearing up for the 16th Annual Run Walk & Roll scheduled for Saturday, September 25th, 2021 at 9am on our campus. Join us for a 5k run, 10k run, or 1 mile walk/roll. A virtual option is available for anyone who can't make it to our campus on the 25th, see the sign up sheet below for more details on it.

Participants of all ages and abilities are welcome to join. There will be chip timing for all 10K and 5K participants and awards given to top participants in each age group. In 2019 this event hosted 600 participants and raised over \$70,000. Following this year's race, there will be free snow cones, fruit, granola bars, chocolate milk and water.

All funds raised are used to provide residential, therapeutic and vocational services for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, or autism spectrum disorder here at Village Northwest Unlimited.

Register or donate at [www.allsportcentral.com](http://www.allsportcentral.com).

