

# mainstream connection

## SAVE The date!



### "Cheers to Mainstream"

is a fun and unique community event that will help raise funds for Mainstream Living programs and services. Tickets are \$50.00 per person or \$30.00 each for those who are members of a Young Professionals organization.

#### Your ticket includes:

- Tasting of 12-15 premium, Iowa and Midwest produced craft beers
- A menu of hors d'oeuvres created to pair perfectly with beer offerings
- Souvenir tasting glass
- A fun and casual atmosphere with a few additional surprises!

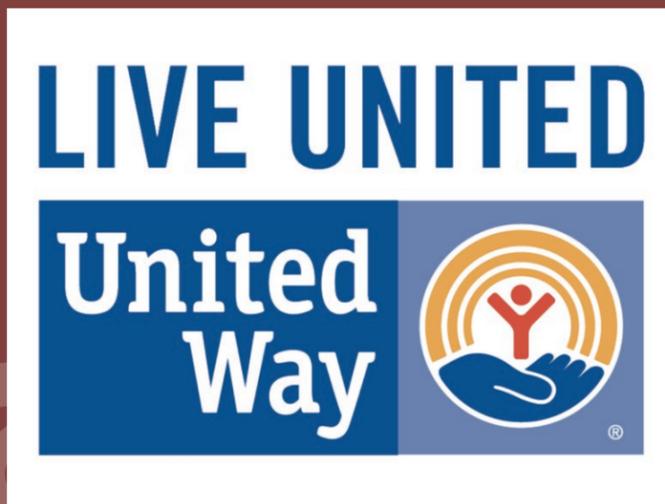
The event will take place on Thursday, November 13th from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Zart1312, located at 1312 Locust Ave. in Downtown Des Moines. A brief program will take place at approximately 6:30 p.m. Tickets may be purchased through our website at [www.mainstreamliving.org](http://www.mainstreamliving.org). You may also contact Amber Corrieri at 515-232-8405 or [acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org](mailto:acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org) to RSVP and to pay at the door. Join us for good beer for a great cause!

## Community Connections

Mainstream Living is proud to be a United Way of Story County Partner Agency. United Way of Story County has continued to be an invaluable partner to our organization – providing grants for emerging needs, educational opportunities for staff, and access to important non-profit resources. Recently, Mainstream Living was awarded a \$75,000 Community Impact Grant which will be used to complete a safety and accessibility project at the Mainstream Employment and Learning Center in Ames.

Each year, community members are asked to support local agencies by donating to the United Way. The 2014 LIVE UNITED Campaign kicked off September 5th. Mainstream Living provides services in a number of Central Iowa counties and we encourage all of our staff, families, and stakeholders to support Mainstream Living and the LIVE UNITED Campaign in your local community. Great things happen when we

### LIVE UNITED!





# A word on innovation

Someone once told me, "If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always gotten." While this may certainly be a successful model for some, businesses today

— including those in human services — must be willing to change and adapt to avoid being left behind. Innovation is one of the principle values at Mainstream Living and we consistently evaluate services and programs in order to find a new (and hopefully the best) way of doing something to effectively meet the needs of those we serve.

This year we have innovated more effective services through our Visible Leadership Program. This program strives to improve the communication and visibility of our mid-management leaders, and utilizes our managers as role models and mentors for the direct care employees. Staff, as well as consumers and family members, are receiving more direct contact with Mainstream Leaders and appreciate the enhanced interactions.

For direct service operations, we have developed improved methods to include all members of the service team in the development of each consumer's plan and individualized service budget. We have also increased access to technology at each

## Board Member Spotlight

Paul Murrell has provided veterinary care to companion animals at his private practice in Nevada for 26 years. He and his wife, Carol, have three adult children and four grandchildren. He is an active member of North Grand Christian Church in Ames and enjoys golf (when time allows) and watching a variety of sports. Although Paul and Carol and have a son with disabilities, he originally knew very little about Mainstream other than recognizing the building on 13th Street (Mainstream corporate offices). "I had no idea what Mainstream Living did, and frankly was not even aware that there were organizations such as Mainstream. Today our son, Luke, has lived in, and I might add, has thrived in, Aspen House for over six years," says Paul.

Paul currently serves as the Chair of the Program Development Committee and Mainstream, but will leave his position on the Board when his second term expires in October. "It has been an interesting experience viewing Mainstream Living both from the perspective as a board member as well as a parent of a consumer. I have grown to appreciate more and more what a great organization Mainstream really is. I have developed a great appreciation for the challenges that an organization like this faces, having to deal with governmental agencies, staffing,

growth, change, etc., and yet maintaining its focus on consumers and serving them," says Paul. Mainstream Living is fortunate to have a dedicated and engaged board and truly appreciates the time, knowledge, and resources that Paul has provided to the organization over the last six years.



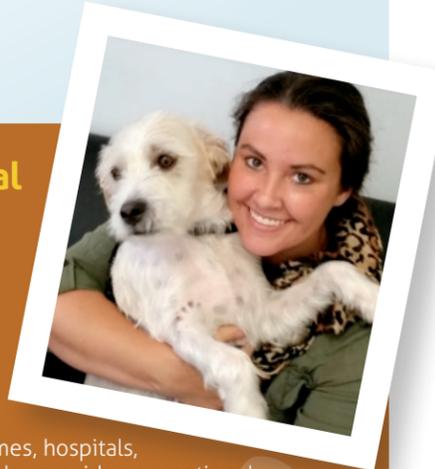
of our locations to make it possible for direct care staff to input required documentation on-site. These small, but important changes have helped to reduce costs and increase efficiency of service delivery.

Just this year, Mainstream has made significant changes in providing more innovative counseling and therapy services for persons with mental illness who are served out of our Des Moines office. Additionally, we have renewed our focus to build or remodel more affordable homes to serve persons with intellectual disabilities, while providing services to those with a wide range of abilities in the same home. This newer model promises to be more cost effective and would provide easier integration into the community.

There are many exciting prospects and challenges ahead as we continue to innovate our services and settings to meet future needs. In an industry that continues to change rapidly, being innovative is a necessity. Each department at Mainstream Living has made it a priority to streamline the way we operate, while improving the quality of the services.

**William Vaughn**

President/CEO



## Innovations in Mental Health Therapy

Earlier this year, Mainstream Living took an important step in integrating a therapy dog into our existing therapy services. Therapy dogs have been thought to relieve stress, reduce blood pressure, as well as raise the spirits of clients in retirement homes, hospitals, and mental institutions. They can also provide an emotional connection for individuals who are often unable to provide to one another. As our industry continues to identify ways to best address mental health needs, the use of therapy dogs has increased and there is now a growing demand for this unique component.

Oliver, the therapy dog, was adopted by our therapist, Brittney Peterson, in February of 2014. Oliver has completed an obedience training class at Canine Craze in Urbandale, Iowa, where he learned basic commands such as sit, stay, lie down, go to place, and impulse control. Oliver and Brittney passed the final test with a perfect score. Oliver then went through a significant approval process with CEO William Vaughn and Vice President of Mental Health Services, Luanne Wingfield.

After gaining approval from Mainstream Living leadership, Oliver began to sit in on therapy sessions with mental health clients. During the sessions, Oliver interacts with participating clients by sitting with them, playing, responding to commands, as well as allowing them to pet him. The clients at Mainstream Living have responded very positively, often times asking, "Where is Ollie?" the minute they walk through the door. The connection that our clients have made with Oliver has been truly remarkable and we are confident that we will continue to see positive responses from those we serve.

# Tech Savvy Programs

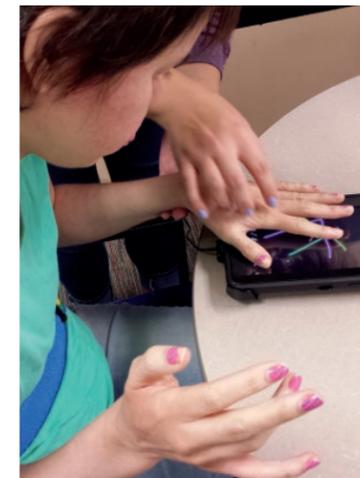
## MAINSTREAM EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING CENTER SENSORY PROGRAM

Innovation has played a key role in the continued growth and success of the Mainstream Employment and Learning Center (MELC). Over the years, MELC has evolved from a workshop setting to a multidimensional program, offering a wide array of day habilitation and employment services. The program has been particularly innovative through the integration and implementation of Snoezelen concepts in an effort to improve and modify our day habilitation programs.

The Sensory Program (Snoezelen) focuses on a structured environment that incorporates exploration and relaxation. By providing an opportunity to exercise choice through action, participants of the Sensory Program are able to explore sensory items on their own or with encouragement by the team of experienced and dedicated Activity Coordinators. Sensory exploration may offer the participant something as simple as running his or her hands through different grades of sand, or something more complex with the use of tablet computers or hand-held electronic devices.

With the support of grant opportunities and fundraising activities, we have brought new and exciting sensory equipment and technology to the participants, of the Sensory Program. The simple addition iPods and tablet computers have brought growth and development beyond staff expectations. Carol, one of our program participants has expanded and increased her general use of speech since she began using hand-held devices. Carol especially enjoys using the application "Talking Tom," which displays an image of a cartoon cat who will repeat words and mimic sounds of the user. What was originally perceived as a fun activity for Carol has quickly become a tool that encouraged her to speak more frequently. Carol's team is very pleased with the increase in her verbal interactions with others. In seeing Carol's interest and development in speech, Carol's parents, Norm and Beth Cheville, donated an iPod and case for the team to utilize in the Sensory Program.

Looking forward, we know that technology will continue to be an integral part of our daily lives and the services we provide. The Mainstream Employment and Learning Center staff are dedicated to ensuring the best possible service is offered to those we serve and continues to identify new and emerging ways to provide quality programming. The use of technology is quickly becoming a larger and more dominant element, and will continue to be one that helps shape the lives of the participants of the Sensory Program.



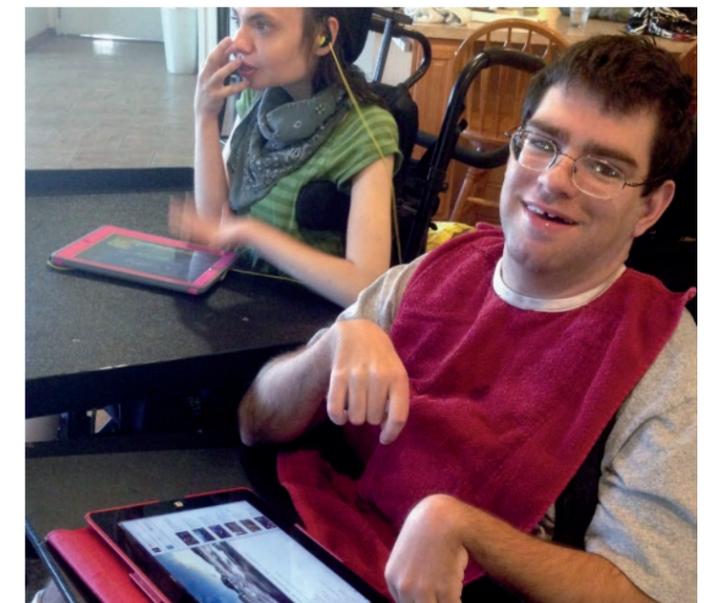
## MEDICALLY FRAGILE HOMES

It is becoming more and more difficult to get through the day without using some form of portable technology. iPads, Kindles, Google Chromebooks, and smartphones have made it possible to send emails, catch up on the news, buy a new pair of shoes, pay bills, watch your favorite television show, and even play a board game with friends — all with the touch of a screen. While some will debate whether technology has made us more or less connected to the outside world, it has certainly made a significant impact on the lives of some of the individuals served by Mainstream Living.

Each of our medically fragile homes serves five young adults with severe disabilities and high medical needs. The individuals receiving care at these homes typically require specialized medical care and are non-ambulatory and non-verbal. Communicating with staff, family, and friends can be a difficult and frustrating task for our consumers and while various devices have been developed that have provided some options for communication, they have all been fairly limited in functionality.

A few years ago, Andy, who lives at Aspen House, began using a staff member's iPod to look at pictures and listen to music. He enjoyed it so much that his parents purchased an iPad for him that staff say has "opened his world." Andy uses his device to email family members, take pictures, and listen to his favorite music — including the Iowa State marching band. Andy even uses his iPad to find and print pictures on the Internet and show them to staff as a way to communicate. Recently, he found and printed pictures of sharks to let the house staff know that he wanted to watch "Shark Week" on television. With the use of his iPad, Andy has improved hand/eye coordination, is able to communicate more effectively with staff, and engages with his family at any time throughout the day.

As a result of Andy's success, staff continues to introduce new technology to those at our medically fragile homes and other parents are purchasing devices for their children.



Mainstream Living is now on Facebook! Connect with us on Facebook for updates on special events and other important things happening at Mainstream Living.