



For Alisha, Tasks Unlimited is not just like a family—it is family.

Back in 2009, after a series of jobs that left her both unfulfilled and without the support she needed for her mental health, Alisha turned to her father, Patrick. **“I have the perfect job for you,” he said.**

Knowing her passion for cleaning and her mental health challenges, Patrick connected her with Tasks Unlimited’s Jobs Training Program, which offered a path to a janitorial position at one of Tasks’ work sites. How did her father know Alisha would find this role the perfect fit? **He, along with Alisha’s uncle, were both employed through Tasks.**

Having now been at her job for more than a decade, Alisha says, “I feel Tasks is like another family outside my family. The people are wonderful and kindhearted, they always welcome me with open arms and never judge me.”

A welcoming, judgment-free zone was incredibly important for Alisha, who has struggled with depression and anxiety since she was 15. “At other jobs I had [before Tasks], they didn’t understand mental health.” In fact, Alisha says she was let go from a previous job when the employer failed to understand the mental health crisis she was experiencing.

Tasks flipped that entire narrative. “The supervisors, coordinators, and everyone here are so understanding. I know that when I’m going through something or in crisis, I can reach out right away and they’ll understand and relate.” While this kind of mental health support is a constant presence during work hours, Tasks staff has gone above and beyond for Alisha, too—again, like a family would.

This past March, while experiencing an anxiety attack, Alisha called her coordinator at the time, NanElise, to tell her she wouldn’t make it to work that day. NanElise did more than talk it through with Alisha—she drove her to the ER.

“She sat with me in the ER until I got back on track,” Alisha

recalls. “I’m so thankful for her, she was there for me at that time because she could tell I wasn’t myself. If she reads this: thank you, NanElise!” Alisha avoided hospitalization, reached out to her psychiatrist, and adjusted her medication. “Ever since that day I’ve been back on track and much better,” she says.

Alisha also fondly remembers the baby shower her coworkers threw for her before she had her son, Darius. “That meant the world to me and I still remember it like it was yesterday,” says Alisha.

Like many other Tasks Supported Employment workers, Alisha has found janitorial work a great fit for her mental health needs. “I tell everybody, cleaning takes my mind off the stressors in my life. When I go to work, I can feel free and focused on my job.” She also says it’s improved her physical health: she recently lost over 100 pounds. “The job keeps me active and helps me reach my goals. I changed my habits, stopped drinking and smoking, got fit and healthy.”

These strides all help Alisha excel in another role: being a great mother to Darius, now 11 years old. “It’s not easy being a single mom with mental health issues—it’s a struggle but I made it. I try to be the best mom I can, and this job has been a big support in raising him. He’s been my world and I’d do anything for him. That’s what keeps me going every day, to take care of myself and him and my mental health.”



Coming full circle, Alisha says she does it for her father, too. He passed in December of last year. “My dad was my best friend. He was so glad I had this job, and hopefully I can continue to make him proud.”

Alisha remembers how much it meant for her coworkers to throw her a baby shower 11 years ago.



A GROWING SERVICE

CASE MANAGEMENT AT TASKS UNLIMITED

As Tasks Unlimited aims to meet the rising needs of our clients, case management has become our fastest growing area of service. Between 2018 and 2021, Tasks more than doubled the number of people receiving these services, from 130 to 267. To meet this rising need, we now have 10 full-time case managers serving roughly 30 clients each.

While the name may sound formal, the program is all about personal connection, building trust, and hearing and responding to each person's goals and needs. Once a case manager has a clear assessment of what the client needs and strives to achieve—from securing housing to stabilizing their mental health to getting medical care or finding a job—they build an ongoing relationship to ensure the client is moving toward and reaching those goals.

“A lot of clients just want to feel like they are being heard. I may not be able to solve your problems right away but at least they know someone can hear them and understand what they are going through without judging them.” - Aaron, Case Manager

The challenges our clients face are great—lack of affordable housing, long waits to get critical mental health care, lack of timely and humane crisis services, and systems that are confusing and often don't allow for how mental illness can impact follow through. For the many clients with criminal records or who are homeless, the barriers are even more daunting.

Case managers serve as advocates to help their clients “get their thoughts and feelings and questions out there,” as one case manager said, with providers, the county, housing workers, landlords, social security and others. They use their extensive knowledge of resources and collaboration to link people to Tasks' programs and to our community of partners who can help clients find their path to stability and independence.

Case managers also build a foundation of trust that allows them to make a difference at the most critical times:

“I had a client call me over the weekend. He said, ‘I'm sorry I know this is your weekend off, but I felt like I was going to harm myself and I need somebody to talk to.’ He was reaching out to have someone talk to him like a normal person, to talk to him like a human being.” - Alexis, Case Manager

Tasks case managers use their knowledge and skills, with empathy and caring, to be there for their clients and help them move forward on their path to stability and independence. As one case manager put it: “I think a case manager is not just a county worker, sometimes we are a client's family, sometimes we are the client's trusted friend.”

Also of note: 95% of first-time case management clients last year were completely new to Tasks. This not only expands our reach to serve a greater range of people across the community but opens the door for these new clients to find further support through our Housing, Employment, and other programs.

Adult Mental Health Targeted Case Management is a service for people with serious and persistent mental illness to help them gain access to needed medical, social, educational, vocational, and other necessary services as they relate to the client's mental health needs.

To Connect with Case Management:

Hennepin County, Call Front Door 612-348-4111.

Dakota County, Call Adult Services Intake 651-554-6424.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Toro Delivery

Thank you to the Toro Company for a generous donation of equipment! We received 13 total snowblowers, trimmers and mowers to be used in grounds and lawn maintenance at our supported employment contracted worksites as well as at Tasks Lodge residences.

Photography Residency

Another successful photography residency wrapped up in October, led by Teaching Artist Mica Lee Anders and made possible through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. Participants from Tasks Training Center and other programs learned basics of composition, camera tips, and a variety of styles and techniques, and practiced their skills on field trips to the Weisman Museum, Lake Harriet Rose Garden and Commons Park.

Drumming at the Senior Lodge

Back by popular demand, Teaching Artist Mick laBriola led his Rhythm and Roots drumming workshop at the Senior Lodge this fall. Participants learned rhythms from around the world, with their historical and cultural background, including the Middle East, Bulgaria, Cuba, and more.

New grant funding for drop-in community center

We are thrilled to announce that Tasks Unlimited has been awarded funding from Hennepin County to open a new drop-in community center at our Nicollet Avenue vocational training site in south Minneapolis. The new center will offer greatly needed community support for people with serious and persistent mental illness and serious mental illness to pursue steady employment, stable housing, recovery from substance use, and more. Stay tuned for much more news about the new program in 2023!

CCL Conference

The 38th Annual Coalition for Community Living (CCL) conference took place on September 20-22 this year in Erie, PA. We offered the conference virtually so that more staff could attend—10 staff and one board member attended. Attendees reviewed the Fairweather Model and training manual, with the goal of lodge revitalization and better outcomes for lodge residents.



Nearly 1,000 pounds of donated Toro equipment for Tasks worksites and lodges.

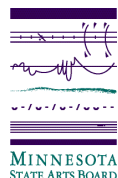


Jesse used manual photography skills and got his feet wet (literally) to get the shot he wanted, which he called "life standing still."



Drumming at the Senior Lodge with Mick laBriola

Arts activities are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



FILL THE NEW CLOTHING CLOSET AT NOOC!

Minnesota's chilly season has arrived. With cooler days and cold nights, warm clothing is important for all of us, but especially those without permanent housing like many of the clients who stop by Tasks Unlimited's Northeast Outreach and Opportunity Center (NOOC).

Since it opened, the NOOC has partnered with Hope Avenue Clothing Closet to provide new and gently used clothing options on site. Over the summer, Hope Avenue relocated, making this resource inaccessible for clients with transportation challenges. Seeing an ongoing need to offer essential clothing items— socks, t-shirts, sweatshirts, underwear, and outerwear—NOOC staff is setting up a clothing closet to offer these items.

Help us Stock the Closet!

You can help keep the winter chill at bay several ways. Tasks Unlimited has an Amazon wish list that includes in-demand clothing items. When you order from the wish list, the items will be delivered directly to Tasks. Hosting a clothing drive with your workplace, faith community, or social group is another way to fill the NOOC Clothing Closet.



For more information on these options, please contact Dana Hays (dhays@tasksunlimited.org).

NEW: COUNSELING SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE

Adults, couples, families and teens who are looking for counseling services can now come to Tasks and work with our licensed therapists and supervised, prelicensed therapists. These skilled professionals can help individuals and families with a range of concerns including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, personality disorder, trauma, co-occurring disorders, stress, gender, sexuality, identity, relationships and more. Insurance is accepted and a sliding fee scale is available to those who qualify. Both in-person and telehealth appointments are available.

To schedule an appointment or learn more, email counseling@tasksunlimited.org or call 612-767-2053.

MAX OUR MATCH!



Tasks Unlimited is grateful to have a generous, matching gift donor again this year which means your donation and impact, up to \$25,000, will be doubled until the match is met. If this

newsletter arrives in your mailbox before Nov. 17, join us for Minnesota's annual day of giving – Give to the Max Day. If you miss Give to the Max, Tasks Unlimited still needs your support to provide high quality services to adults with serious mental illness as they seek stable housing, fulfilling employment and welcoming community, and your gift will be matched until we reach \$25,000! Help us raise these essential funds. Visit givemn.org today!

Follow us online or sign-up on our website to receive updates, information about upcoming events, and opportunities to become more involved with the work and mission of Tasks Unlimited!

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tasksunlimitedinc

Twitter: www.twitter.com/tasksunlimited

Email: info@tasksunlimited.org

Online: www.tasksunlimited.org

Guided by the Fairweather Model, Tasks Unlimited provides supported employment, housing and recovery services to create opportunities for people with mental illness so they can achieve their full potential.

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