



Stevens County Developmental Achievement Center

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Thank you to the Stevens County ARC. It is wonderful to have you here supporting the work at the DAC. Your support and the people that we serve continue to be the true constants of our mission. Everything else is changing.

The terms we use, the rules we follow, the fees we are paid, the way we describe our services, the amount of public oversight; all these things are in a state of change. But not our mission and not the people that we serve. As long as we remember to greet our clients with: respect, care, kindness and dignity, we will continue to serve their true needs. Acceptance and opportunity. That is what we sell at the DAC. Acceptance and opportunity.

Because the things that they can do, matter. We reach out to 18 community work places and we assemble products that business customers depend on all over the world. We are not defined by our limitations because the things that we can do really matter. We are a vibrant part of this community and we perform work that pays fair wages to clients for work that is both meaningful and important.

In the years ahead, we will continue to evolve into a community service delivery program that spends more time away from our building. That is clear. However, it is also clear that we will continue to need our building to serve people that are more seriously challenged and we will continue to need our building for program time for everyone that is not available in community job sites all day, every day. People that work part-time jobs in the community will still need part-time program opportunities here in our headquarters. Because the people we serve will continue to be the constants of our mission.

So looking forward, we need to embrace change and we need to be flexible. We are challenged by funding shortages and we need to pay our staff a living wage. I truly believe that the work they do is important work and it deserves to be truly valued by the State of MN. Until that day, we need to thank them for working here. Some of them, like me, have been in this service for many decades. Others are just getting started. Either way, we couldn't do anything without them. The work that staff do matters and they do it very well. We thank them for their service by asking the legislature to authorize fair wages for staff in Home and Community Based Services.

Charlie Oakes, *Executive Director*
Stevens County DAC, Inc.