



Kathy Reed, who with her father, Dr. Ron Reed, inspired Flutter Productions.

▶ Father's Love Inspiration for Flutter Productions

Flutter Productions is entirely possible thanks to our generous community. Because you contribute and purchase tickets, the all-ability theater is able to produce two original productions every year, providing transformative experiences for performers and audience members.

Community support makes Flutter possible today, but all-ability performing arts in our state started with one man almost two decades ago: Dr. Ron Reed.

Ron and his wife, Marion, are fierce advocates for their daughter, Kathy, who is supported by Black Hills Works, and for all South Dakotans with disabilities. Dr. Reed served as a theater professor at USD and the Black Hills Playhouse, among many other instrumental roles in education and construction.

Dr. Reed and Kathy often attended Black Hills Community Theater rehearsals. As they watched the curtain call one evening at a dress rehearsal, Kathy told him that she wanted to go up on stage too. Without hesitation, Dr. Reed led her up to join the performers. Witnessing her excitement while she stood on stage,

he knew it was time for adults with disabilities to take their place in the spotlight. In 2006, Kathy and other performers from Black Hills Works joined ensembles from Black Hills Community Theater and Central High

Theater in a production of Oklahoma. This paved the way for Flutter, the first all-ability theatre company in South Dakota.

For his vision and inspiration, Dr. Reed will be inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame in September. Kathy's wish, combined with her father's leadership, have led to vibrant arts opportunities for adults with disabilities in our area. "Ron Reed's contributions to South Dakota have forever enhanced opportunities in the arts for all of our citizens," said Laurie Becvar, Chief Executive Officer for the South Dakota Hall of Fame.

"We are honored and privileged to

induct Dr. Reed into the South Dakota Hall of Fame, where we will continue to partner with him and his family to document his legacy."

Dr. Reed's leadership and your volunteer and financial support has meant dozens of performers of all-abilities take the stage each year, defying perceptions, and inspiring audiences. Thank you, Dr. Reed, for your groundbreaking efforts in disability rights and inclusion, and for your support in keeping all-ability arts available in our community.



Dr. Ron Reed



▶ First Responders Answer the Call

First responders help keep our communities safe, especially in times of emergencies. They also help to create connections and build communities. Police and fire officials have even visited our group homes to help the people we support feel more at ease.

When the Police Department received a grant to train officers how to safely and sensitively interact with people with disabilities and asked Black Hills Works to be involved, we jumped at the chance.

“We are piloting a model community crisis response curriculum that will be delivered nationally – the program will be beneficial for creating a response and service delivery framework to the network of different service organizations and partners in the community,” said Dave Kinser, Research and Development Specialist for the Rapid City Police Department, who secured



Scott Keiser with Lieutenant Tim Doyle at Scott's Home.

the Crisis Response and Intervention Training (CRIT) grant. “Black Hills Works has been a great partner.”

Dallas Caylor, a behavioral specialist for Black Hills Works, edited the curriculum and is an instructor. Trainings are planned each quarter, with growing demand among officers.

“You can’t always tell the difference between someone who has communication challenges and someone who is being uncooperative,” said Dallas. “This training aims to help with that, making interactions so much safer for everyone involved.”

“Black Hills Works is incredibly grateful to our police department for providing its officers the training needed to safely interact with people with disabilities who may not understand that an officer is there to help,” said Andrea Serna, Black Hills Works Foundation President. “We’re equally grateful for the opportunity to partner. This will benefit our entire community.”



▶ Citizens Race Like Firefighters for Charity

On July 8, Black Hills Works, United Way of the Black Hills, The Boys Club, and Youth & Family Services joined forces to show our support for first responders and have some fun with a firefighter obstacle course!

Four teams of five people raced for their favorite charity. They took on an obstacle course built by the First Responders Institute for firefighters. The course involved hauling a hose-pack up a 5-story tower, hoisting a hose roll up to the top of the tower, dragging a 110-pound mannequin, hammering, and hosing down a target.

“We were pleased to participate in support of Black Hills Works and first responders,” said Sean Hollearn, Wellness Coordinator for the Rapid City Police Department and team captain. “This was a really fun way to challenge ourselves and show our firefighter comrades that we have what it takes to conquer their course. It was some good-natured competition in the name of guns versus hoses.”

Black Hills Works and its nonprofit partners are grateful to the participating teams and for the opportunity to bring the community together to celebrate the work of our local first responders. Thank you!



Kerry Lassaux, United Way of Black Hills (far left), and Tamie Hopp, Black Hills Works Foundation (far right), celebrate with the Rapid City Police Department Team, Officers Nick Friedman, Ekaras Jackson, Grant Scane, and Sean Hollearn.

▷ Travel for Work Required

Your donations help 289 valued employees with disabilities get to work! Government funding is extremely limited in supporting the cost of work-related transportation, whether it's the vehicle, fuel and maintenance, or public transportation costs.

Your contributions make work possible, and it's a significant impact. In addition, a recent \$15,000 United Way of the Black Hills grant, for example, is helping Nancy Weiss and nearly 40 others who rely on Dial-A-Ride to get to work. Nancy, an artist at the Suzie Cappa Art Center, is not able to drive and counts on Dial-A-Ride to get to the job she loves. Yet, after paying rent and with the rising cost of groceries, she has very little left over each month to pay for her bus pass and other necessities. United Way recognizes that by helping her and others get to work, they elevate their independence



and productivity, benefitting our entire community.

You fill the gap where public transportation doesn't go. Your contributions keep our fleet of 120 vehicles fueled and maintained so the people we support can get to work. This includes the 62 mission-critical employees that travel nearly 85,000 miles every year

to support our troops at Ellsworth Air Force Base. You made this happen! Six vans and a team of drivers are available 21 hours a day, 365 days a year, going to and from the base. Community contributions, including support from Meade County Commissioners, help provide the transportation needs of these workers who supply and feed our troops and help keep their work and living spaces clean.

The dignity of work is a powerful thing! Your heartfelt gift of reliable transportation makes work possible for nearly 300 people with disabilities in our community. Thank you!

▷ Medical Support Assistants Connect People to Healthcare

Terry Wagner, one of four Medical Support Assistants (MSAs) at Black Hills Works, spends more time behind the wheel than she does in her office. Reliable transportation is key, and you make that happen! Your donations support vehicle maintenance throughout the year, so Terry and her colleagues can help ensure healthcare needs are met.

MSAs get people supported to their medical, dental, and therapy appointments throughout the year. In any given week, the minimum number of healthcare appointments each MSA covers is 15, or three appointments per day. Urgent needs mean they can have 20 or more appointments each week.

“Our job requires a lot of time on the phone to coordinate schedules with individuals, their staff, and medical offices, and a lot of time on the road,” said Terry. “The people we support live busy lives. Like a

typical family, we're scheduling around work and other activities. The difference is, we are a very big family!”

In spite of the challenges, she loves her job and is grateful to the donors who make it possible. “I get to spend the day with some pretty great people, helping to make sure that they are living healthy, happy lives.”

Thank you for ensuring the people we support get the healthcare attention they need!

Terry Wagner, MSA, helps Thomas Emley get to his medical appointment. Thomas is one of at least 15 people supported each week by Terry and her fellow MSAs.



▶ Volunteer Bridges the Communication Divide



As a Black Hills Works community volunteer, Makenzie Ovenstone fills a vital need by teaching staff American Sign Language (ASL) in several homes where the people we support have hearing loss as well as other disabilities. Importantly, her unique skills help Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) communicate more effectively with the people they support.

Makenzie works at Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) as a community support specialist and generously offered to help when she learned of the need.

Makenzie's enthusiasm for her volunteer role is undeniable. "I love to see everyone doing their best to communicate with hearing loss adults. I also love to teach ASL," she exclaimed.

"Since Makenzie has volunteered, we can better communicate with Kevin [Carpenter, a person supported]," said Terri Elkins, a Direct Support Professional. "She has had amazing patience with teaching us as we were all pretty new to sign language and now we can sign to Kevin and he lights up!"

Through her generous gift of volunteering, Makenzie has made an enormous difference in many people's lives.

"Makenzie is an amazing person and we are so grateful to her," Terri happily exclaims.

Thank you, Makenzie!

Make Your Impact!

If you are interested in helping the people we support learn a new skill or just hang out, we will work to find your fit! Contact Carrie at 605-718-6207 or cmoser@bhws.com to learn more.



▶ ASL Communication Inspires Confidence

Mackenzie Ovenstone has been volunteering as an American Sign Language instructor for over a year in one of Black Hills Works' home (see related article). Her students are our staff; her co-instructor is Kevin Carpenter, a person supported who uses ASL.



Kevin and Linda Carpenter, with Henry Olivier, in the Flutter Production, HOPE.

"I always see in Kevin's eyes that he enjoys joining the signing sessions and quizzing his staff," said Mackenzie. "He feels proud of himself to teach his staff. I love to see that!"

Kevin has been supported by Black Hills Works since 2018, and in that short time, his confidence has soared. He's not only helping teach his staff ASL, he's also participated in three Flutter productions with his mother, Linda Carpenter, providing ASL interpretation during rehearsals. In the 2021 HOPE production, Linda even joined Kevin on stage, performing an ALS-tribute to Emily Dickinson's famous poem, "Hope is the Thing with Feathers."

"Since moving to Black Hills Works, Kevin has really embraced activities of all kinds," said Veronica Carda, Internal Support Coordinator. "He's a joy to be around and is always ready for any adventure. It's wonderful his staff have taken on the challenge of learning ASL so they can support Kevin that much better, and it's even neater that Kevin is helping teach them!"

Kevin's mom, Linda, agrees. "Kevin is doing great! He has really enjoyed being part of Flutter, and he's so proud about being able to help his staff learn to communicate better with him and others experiencing hearing loss. We're both really grateful for Black Hills Works. Kevin is thriving!"

Thank YOU

Your Donation Changed Lives!

Because of you, your friends, neighbors, volunteers, and co-workers with disabilities are thriving! Your generous support of Black Hills Works means they can live, work, and enjoy all our community has to offer, just like you and me. Thanks to the following donors who gave so generously from May through July 2022.

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"We're both really grateful for Black Hills Works.

Kevin is thriving!"

~Linda Carpenter, mom to Kevin, supported since 2018

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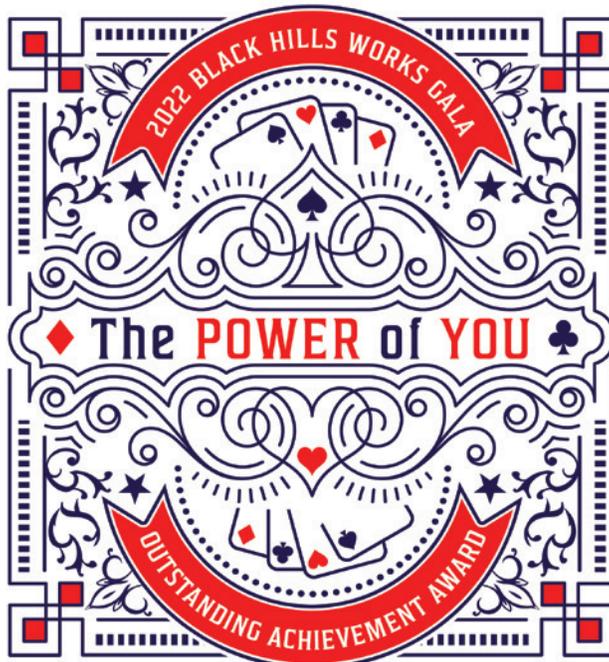
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