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**Options of Linn County forms partnerships that overcome obstacles in unique ways**

For more than 40 years, Options of Linn County has bridged partnerships between businesses and persons with disabilities enabling both to help each other succeed.

Options of Linn County is an agency that helps people with disabilities find employment which brings new opportunities to them, while engaging them in the workforce. Often, Options' clients overcome tremendous challenges through their own strength and perseverance and the support of those around them.

When Cedar Rapids experienced devastating flooding last June, many area businesses also faced what seemed like insurmountable challenges – destroyed property and buildings, displaced workers, and an unsure future.

United Fire Group, an Options of Linn County business partner, was among the displaced businesses.

For over 60 years, United Fire Group has been a prominent business in downtown Cedar Rapids, providing insurance services. And every day for nearly 10 years, Donnie Bolton, an Options client, has worked for United Fire Group. In today's marketplace, it's impressive when someone has worked at the same place for 10 years. But even more impressive are the challenges Donnie has overcome to be such a long-standing employee.

Donnie has quadriplegia, which means he is paralyzed from the neck down. With the use of a head stick, Donnie is able to accomplish a remarkable number of tasks, including shredding paper for United Fire Group – with the assistance of a device built specially for his task by the Rockwell Collins Retiree Volunteers.

"Donnie's achievement and commitment is a great example of what we can accomplish when businesses and individuals come together with a common goal," said Danielle Allen, Procurement Specialist for Options of Linn County.

In the same way, United Fire Group showed a remarkable commitment to its employees, when they were displaced after the flood. The company continued to provide employees, including Donnie, with full benefits and pay, regardless of whether they were able to access the workplace. "It was the right thing to do. That's all there is to it." said Vice President and Human Resources Director Tim Spain.

Now that United Fire Group has returned to its building, Donnie has also returned to his job at the company. And at the end of the day, their story is one of many that demonstrate the impact that businesses who partner with Options of Linn County have on individuals with disabilities.

For more information on how your business can partner with Options of Linn County, please contact Danielle Allen at (319) 892-5800 or [danielle.allen@linncounty.org](mailto:danielle.allen@linncounty.org).

**About Options of Linn County**

Options of Linn County was formed in 1966 as a non-profit organization providing opportunities for persons with disabilities to engage in the workforce. Over the course of more than 40 years, Options of Linn County has employed thousands of persons with disabilities, while providing services to dozens of businesses.

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