

THE BUZZ!

FOR ALL THINGS NEWSWORTHY AT WACOSA

SPRING/SUMMER
2025



OUTREACH



WACOSA AMBASSADORS FOR RESPECT RECEIVE MOHR'S CHOICE AWARD

WACOSA's Ambassadors for Respect was awarded the 2025 MOHR (Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation) Choice Award. The Ambassadors for Respect program invites individuals with developmental disabilities into 4th grade classrooms to teach students to include others, use Person First language, and advocate for themselves and others.

To date, we have fourteen Ambassadors who have presented to sixteen 4th grade classes throughout our community. Congrats to the Ambassadors and their

support team. Thanks to Ambassadors for Respect, PeaceMaker Minnesota, and the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities for making this program possible.

OUR AMBASSADORS

David W.	Hannah B.
John J.	Robin H.
Sara K.	Julie H.
Rachel M.	Lisa S.
Troy M.	George B.
Chad P.	Jim N.
Sara D.	Katrina M.

THE POWER OF THE WAVE

Every weekday afternoon, a heartwarming scene unfolds on the Southside of St. Cloud, bringing joy to everyone involved. Jack and his mother, Gladys, live along the route of a WACOSA bus, and they make it a point to watch for it each day. On that very bus, a group of folks are on their way home from WACOSA, and they're just as excited to see Jack's house. As the bus approaches, a beautiful moment happens: everyone exchanges cheerful smiles and waves!

This simple act of kindness, a friendly wave, has blossomed into a cherished daily ritual and a truly special friendship. Jack's sister, Brenda, shares how much it means to him, saying, "The afternoon wave is meaningful for Jack; it brings him joy to share a smile with others."

During the holiday season, Jack's generous spirit shone brightly when he sent a box of delicious chocolates to WACOSA, a sweet reminder of his kind heart. For the WACOSA participants and staff, this friendship is just as precious. Darci Fischer, Team Lead at WACOSA, explains, "Jack and his family are such mood boosters for us. Seeing Jack waving and smiling always brightens our day."

A heartfelt thank you to Jack for being such a wonderful and caring friend to everyone at WACOSA. Your kindness makes the world a little brighter.



JACK

GEORGE BABB

When I met George for the first time, I could immediately tell that he's the type of guy who lights up a room the moment he walks in. Around WACOSA George is known for his positive energy, outgoing way of being, and his love of hard work. He not only works in DocuShred here on-site, but also works at Stang Precision, all while finding time to participate in Ambassadors for Respect as well as weekly volunteering in WACOSA's North Program by playing his guitar for others to enjoy!

George is supported through WACOSA's programs and has become a reliable, dedicated worker who is always eager to lend a hand. I recently had the privilege of sitting down with him to get to know him even better, and here's what he had to say:



GEORGE PERFORMS A SING-ALONG FOR THE NORTH PROGRAM

Meghan: George, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

George: I grew up in Chicago, worked in a department store and then as a teacher assistant, and worked with people with disabilities for 11 years. I had my own condo for a number of years, then I moved to Saint Cloud in 2011 and started working at WACOSA. My favorite sport and team is Chicago Cubs baseball, I watched them win the World Series in 2016.

Meghan: What makes you laugh?

George: Jokes! Here's a joke: How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb?

Meghan: ...You got me... I give up!

George: Just one. But the lightbulb has to want to change!

Meghan: What is your favorite job or task to do?

George: My favorite is working in public schools, helping children.

Meghan: What would your dream adventure/vacation be like?

George: San Francisco! I would tour the art museums. Can I add something to what you put in the interview?

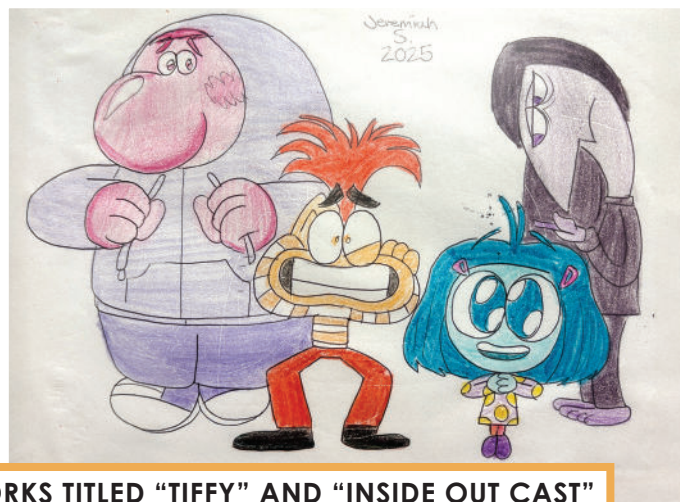
Meghan: Certainly, George!

George: I want to say that Saint Cloud is "hands-up" the best!



GEORGE BABB

MOSAIC – FEATURING WACOSA ARTISTS



JERIMIAH'S ORIGINAL ARTWORKS TITLED "TIFFY" AND "INSIDE OUT CAST"

WELCOME TO THE WACOSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"I look forward to serving on the WACOSA Board of Directors as a way of furthering my commitment to the disabled community."

– Dennis Meemken

DENNIS
MEEMKEN

Dennis attended St. Joseph's School in Waite Park, MN and Cathedral High School in St. Cloud, MN. Dennis remained very close to his family in Waite Park and came back to help care for his developmentally disabled brother Jimmy (James). Jimmy was a client of WACOSA for 40+ years, prior to his death in 2021. Today, Dennis remains active and continues to devote his time to the developmentally disabled. Dennis currently works for Quality Care Services and Home Instead, providing care and companionship for developmentally disabled men and veterans.

Please join us in welcoming Dennis to the WACOSA Board of Directors.

"We are so fortunate and proud to have Dennis on our board, he and his family have been instrumental in WACOSA's foundational success over the decades."

– Nancy Betts, WACOSA Executive Director

WACOSA'S FUTURE, YOUR LEGACY

Hello friend!

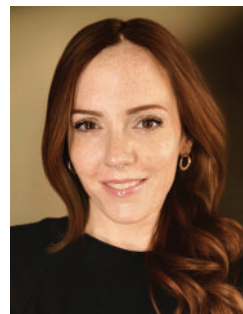
At WACOSA, we believe in creating opportunities that last a lifetime and beyond. One way to ensure that our mission continues for future generations is by including WACOSA in your estate plans.

Legacy gifts provide long-term stability and growth, allowing us to confidently build programs that support employment, independence, and community engagement for the people we serve. Best of all, planned giving doesn't impact your daily finances. A simple gift through your will, trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy can make a powerful, lasting difference.

By choosing to leave a legacy with WACOSA, your values continue to shine far into the future. You'll be

helping create a more inclusive world, and we'd love to welcome you into the WACOSA Legacy Society, a community of thoughtful supporters securing tomorrow's possibilities today.

If you're curious or already considering it, let's talk! There are many simple ways to make a lasting impact, and I'm excited to help you explore the option that feels right for you.



**Contact Development
Manager Meghan Hines at
320-257-5193
or mhines@wacosa.org**

LEADERSHIP
TEAM

Nancy Betts

Executive Director

Meghan Hines

Development Manager

Ann Kennedy

Sales & Marketing Director

Traci McKinnon

Finance Director

Mary Rothstein

Program Director

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Human Resources Manager

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**310 Sundial Drive
P.O. Box 757
Waite Park, MN 56387**

Policy Revision Notice

For updated 245D Policies, please visit wacosa.org/client-services or contact us at 320-251-0087 to request a written copy.

WACOSA is an EEO/AA Employer

WACOSA provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status, familial status, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, or status with regard to public assistance. We will take affirmative steps to ensure that all of our company's employment practices are free of discrimination.



PO Box 757
Waite Park, MN
56387

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ST. CLOUD, MN

SAVE THE DATE!

SEE YOU THERE!

SAVE THE DATE!

SAVE THE DATE!

ARRGH!! A PIRATES VS. WITCHES GRANITE CITY SING-ALONG

Join us for an Empowed Stars Play! Free and open to the public. No ticket needed!

06 - 26 - 2025

WHEN

11 am
Thursday, June 26th, 2025

WHERE

Paramount Center for the Arts
913 W St Germain St, St Cloud, MN 56301

WACOSA NIGHT AT THE ROX

Enjoy a game of baseball with your family and friends! Proceeds benefit WACOSA.

Order tickets by scanning this QR code or purchase at WACOSA, 320 Sundial Drive in Waite Park, Door 3.

06 - 27 - 2025

WHEN

7 pm — 9 pm
Friday, June 27th, 2025

WHERE

Joe Faber Field
5001 Veterans Dr, St Cloud, MN 56303

**SCAN FOR
ROX TICKETS**



PIZZA RANCH FUNDRAISER

Pay at the door.

07 - 07 - 2025

WHEN

4 pm — 8 pm
Monday, July 7th, 2025

WHERE

Pizza Ranch
110 2nd St S #119, Waite Park, MN 56387

WACOSA 2025 BASH!

Italian Meal, Silent Auction, and Live music featuring Second Rate Radio.

08 - 16 - 2025

WHEN

3 pm — 6 pm
Saturday, August 16th, 2025

WHERE

Moose Lodge in Waite Park
1300 3rd St N, Waite Park, MN 56387

**SCAN FOR
BASH TICKETS
OR T-SHIRT**

