

Living Life to the Fullest

Agency: DakotAbilities

Program: Alternative Services

Service: Provides social and recreational opportunities to individuals as an “alternative” to vocational programs. Activities included in the program are designed to provide quality of life experiences to individuals served by DakotAbilities.

Need: There are over 18,000 individuals in the Sioux Empire with some sort of disability. In 2008, over 15,300 hours were spent in the community in Alternative Services activities, including swimming, going to movies, pet therapy and more.

What does that mean to me? DakotAbilities and their Alternative Services program help those with disabilities participate and enjoy activities that we normally take for granted.

Swimming, going to the movie theater, and walking on the bike trail are things many of us take for granted. But for people with physical disabilities, being able to do these things would be impossible without help from the Alternative Services Program at DakotAbilities.

“Sara came to us several years ago after being diagnosed with MS,” said Bob Bohm, DakotAbilities Director. “Since that time her disease has progressed to the point of being in hospice care.”

Swimming had always offered hope to Sara, even with the debilitating disease. Recently, Sara made a comeback.

“She had recovered to the point, she could get back into the pool,” said Bob. “The pool relaxes her and she could talk again. She goes from a restricted life to feeling free.”

Alternative Services provided specialized staffing and equipment that enabled Sara to fulfill her desire to swim. This year DakotAbilities will give 50 individuals the opportunity to improve their quality of life, thanks to funding from Sioux Empire United Way.

Helping individuals like Sara experience life to the fullest, “She gets to be who she used to be, even if only for a moment.”