

50 Years Tells A Story ...

ESI Celebrates 50 Years!

New Sheltered Workshop Opens in Early January

Self-gratification and an incentive to learn wages are among the goals of a new adult facility scheduled to open in Algoma Thursday, Jan. 1.

Identified as a sheltered workshop, the facility will be operated by the Kewaunee County Development Center, a non-profit organization which also funds the pre-school program which was set up a few years back and continues to occupy space in Algoma United Methodist church.

The new workshop for adults is in the former Wisconsin Public Service sales building on Algoma's Fourth street. Director of the overall program is Ron Opicka, a Casco town native who gave up a position with the Community Service Center at Green Bay to take charge here.

"We anticipate 10 participants at the beginning," Opicka said, "but this number is likely to increase. Up to now, eight of these have been taking part in the program offered at the Community Service Center at Green Bay."

The participants will be based to Algoma from all areas of the county. They will be transported by Mrs. George Seidl, Luxemburg, who also buses Kewaunee county trainees to Algoma. Since September, the trainees have been provided accommodations at Algoma Elementary school.

Because the adults will be housed with the more youthful trainees, their time schedules will coincide. The Fourth street center will probably be in operation from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., or possibly from 8:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Exact hours will depend on the length of the day run. **Busy Schedule Planned**



RON OPICKA is director of the Kewaunee County Development Center, a non-profit corporation which is offering a new program starting Thursday, Jan. 1. Identified as the Kewaunee County Sheltered Workshop, it will occupy the former Wisconsin Public Service sales building on Algoma's Fourth street. Opicka, a native of the Town of Casco, was field representative of the Community Service Center at Green Bay, a similar facility, before accepting the Kewaunee county position. — Record Herald Photo



Development center offers opportunities

by Mike Boucher
ALGOMA — The Sheltered Workshop program of the Kewaunee County Development Center demonstrates that persons with disabilities can lead productive lives if granted a job opportunity and the dignity work provides.

"The people like to work, need to work and are happiest when they are working," Development Center Director Ron Opicka said. The Kewaunee County Development Center was established in 1974 as a private, nonprofit corporation to provide evaluation and/or rehabilitative services to the developmentally disabled, handicapped and

services offered by the agency, Opicka explained.

Through a variety of programs, day services provide academic, arts and crafts and recreational training.

The sheltered workshop provides a realistic opportunity for clients to learn about the business world, earn an income, develop job skills and the dignity associated with work. The sheltered workshop program consists of sub-contract work from area industries and businesses and the agency's manufacturing business of floor mops.

The Development Center purchased the rights for the production of the floor mops from the Algoma Manufacturing Business



Ron Opicka

amount of work) on some contract work," Opicka of-

in sub-contract work, the Center's main emphasis is on the production of their own products (mops and hammocks). Both products are produced and packaged for distribution at the Center.

"We are most optimistic about developing the mop business and continuing the sub-contracts with industries in our area," Opicka revealed.

The Center receives state, federal and county funding. Reductions in aid have already caused a staff reduction of two positions (\$55 direct staff and 2 non-direct staff are presently employed).

"As for the future?" "No one really knows. I'm optimistic for 1987, but

savings, according to Opicka.

"We've worked hard to do a good job," Opicka said.

"We would like community support; it doesn't have to be financial," he added.

The Algoma Lions' Club is sponsoring a pancake-porkie breakfast at the Riverside Restaurant Feb. 21 with proceeds going to the purchase of a sewing machine for the Development Center. The machine will be used in the hammock production.

"We try to become a part of our clients' lives and make us their place of work and school," Opicka concluded.

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Empower

Annual Newsletter from ESI

2023 Fall / Winter Edition



Empowering
& Supporting
Individuals

Looking Back Is The Key To Moving Forward

A message from ESI President & CEO, Tracy Nelson

December 11, 1973 seven Kewaunee County residents filed articles of incorporation with the state of Wisconsin to officially form the Kewaunee County Development Center at 510 4th Street in Algoma, Wisconsin.

On January 2, 1974 ten adult individuals were provided work services by the Development Center. They were busy earning a paycheck assembling keychains for a contract with Leyse Aluminum. At the time these were just days. They looked like most of the other days, but when we look back 50 years we see them now as much more than just days. These “days” laid a foundation for services that provided the resources for hundreds of individuals with disabilities in Kewaunee County to have a life filled with dignity and respect. We are thankful for the seven directors, the ten clients and the companies like Leyse Aluminum who wanted something more for people with disabilities in Kewaunee County.

Looking back on the last 50 years, it is impressive to look at the list of clients, donors, staff people, and subcontract partners that helped ESI string together all the “days” that built this organization. Today ESI is admired around the state for the quality services it provides, despite the fact it resides in a small rural county where cows are more common than people.

Knowing what evolved out of those early days and all those days in between makes it exciting to imagine where we will be 50 years from today. We will keep putting “days” together; moving forward as we work towards creating a community that is inclusive of all people. We will continue to have compassionate donors, quality staff, engaged subcontract partners, and amazing individuals who choose ESI for their services. We will spend our “days” fulfilling our mission of helping people with disabilities achieve their personal independence and employment goals.



**COME CELEBRATE
50 YEARS WITH US!**



OPEN HOUSE

**Thursday
November 30
2:00 - 6:30 pm**

**Facility Tours
Giveaways
Refreshments**



**ESI
813 Rabas St.
Algoma, WI**

esiempowers.com

ALL ARE WELCOME!



We're Turning 50!

Highlights over the
last 50 years



In the beginning ...

As the second half of the 1900's began, the desire for special education services in the public schools was voiced by local parents. In 1951, the May Smithwick School opened in Rio Creek. By 1953, the Kewaunee County Association for Retarded Children was organized.

In 1966, when some of the first children who had been schooled approached adulthood, their parents looked for continuing services from Brown County Association for Retarded Children in Green Bay. The desires of those early parents blossomed with the opening of the Kewaunee County Day Development Center in Algoma in 1970, in rented space from a local church, with a goal of providing service for all ages of individuals who had developmental disabilities.



1973

It was time to have a sheltered workshop closer to home. The first staff member, Ron Opicka, was hired in 1973 and the new, nonprofit Kewaunee County Development Center was incorporated.



1974

Kewaunee County Development Center opened in rented offices in downtown Algoma in 1974. Ten individuals began receiving services as clients. That same year, Kewaunee County government advanced its human services commitments by starting up what was then known as the 51.42 / 437 (Unified) Board, today, Kewaunee County Human Services.



1977

The year 1977 brought a generous contribution from Fred and Thea Jay Peterson and continuing financial donations from energetic area families through numerous card parties. Additional dollars were secured through an SBA loan to build a new facility on Rabas Street. Services were further expanded to include all disability areas. Twenty six people were receiving services by this time.



1981

An important decision was made in 1981 to purchase a small mop manufacturing business in Algoma from Mr. & Mrs. Herb Stephenson, which became a division of Kewaunee County Development Center. Algoma Mop Manufacturers would grow to meet its mission, becoming an important supplement to the stability of contract work opportunities and a stable revenue generator for the parent organization.



1990

In the 1990's, KCDC's partnership with the State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provided community employment opportunities for clients guided by KCDC job coaches. Many community workplaces began to take on a more diverse look.



1999

In 1999 Ron Opicka, Beth Shad, and a group of community members came together and decided to put together an annual golf outing to benefit East Shore Industries. Irv Vincent, owner of NEW Plastics Corp in Luxemburg was instrumental in helping put this together. The outing was called East Shore Industries Golf Challenge.



2000

The year 2000 started with a clearer identity. The confusion of thinking that the government provided all KCDC's financial support was deflated with a new name, East Shore Industries Inc. Those words, together with waves to show geographic and cultural connection, helped people envision that what goes on "up on the hill" is energetic and industrious.



2001

Generous and meaningful financial commitments also heralded the new century. Charlene and Carl Langenbach's gift of \$200,000 made the dream of an endowment come true. The newly formed Friends of East Shore Industries launched the "It's All About People" campaign to further the endowment and advance the programs and services of East Shore Industries. By mid-2001, pledges and gifts totaling more than \$750,000 were received from a supportive community of individuals, businesses, and foundations.



2007

The Mission Mop was introduced. This mop was the first mop product produced by ESI/Algoma Mop for the residential market. The production and marketing of this product was made possible by a generous \$150,000 donation from Ronald & Joan Olson. This donation created the Ronald & Joan Olson Independence Fund.



2015

Kewaunee County administered long-term care program's transition to the state programs of Family Care and IRIS as part of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' initiative to expand the state long-term care system. Goals of Family Care, according to DHS, include giving people better choices about where they live and what services they need, creating a cost-effective system, and improving access to services and quality through a focus on health and social outcomes.



2015

On April 1, 2015, Ron Opicka retired as ESI's first CEO and Tracy Nelson began her tenure as ESI's second CEO.



2020

In August of 2020, select staff and board members came together to create a Strategic Plan that would focus on the organization's Mission and Vision for the next three years. Part of this plan included a rebrand of East Shore Industries, Inc. to ESI - Empowering and Supporting Individuals. In October of 2020 ESI's updated logo (ESI - Empowering and Supporting Individuals) was introduced to the clients, their families, staff members, and the public.



2023/2024

ESI Celebrates 50 years of service!



HELP US TO RAISE \$50,000 IN HONOR OF 50 YEARS OF SERVICE!

**\$25,000 MATCHING
GIFT CHALLENGE**

**DOUBLE
THE
IMPACT
OF YOUR
GIFT!**



The following ESI supporters have pledged a total of \$25,000 to match your contribution \$1 for \$1, as ESI seeks to raise a total of \$50,000 in honor of its 50th Anniversary.

Terry & Kris Fulwiler

Ron & Joan Olson

Lynie & Michelle Vincent Family

Vern & Jennifer Vincent Family

Please consider donating to help double the impact your dollars can make!

*Scan with your phone to
donate on our website!*





Together we can make a difference!

ESI is able to provide services thanks to the support of our donors. Would you consider supporting ESI with a donation today? Every donation makes a difference, regardless of size.

Ways to Give

We offer several ways to make a contribution. Please choose the one that is most convenient for you. We thank you in advance for considering a donation to ESI.

Give online

For a convenient, safe way to make an online gift, visit us at esiempowers.com and click on "Giving"

Give by Check – A Donor Envelope is included for your convenience

Please make your check payable to ESI and mail to:

ESI
Attn: Donations
813 Rabas Street
Algoma, WI 54201

Amazon Wish List

Our Amazon Wishlist helps our facility get the tools and supplies we need and use on a daily basis. Our Wishlist is a great way to help ESI with specific items. Please feel free to help by checking out our official Amazon wish list at <https://a.co/dHxoPFK>

Planned giving

Planned giving is a win-win approach to philanthropic donations that support ESI and can benefit you now or in the future. It's easy to do and includes several flexible giving options. These donations can also offer many advantages:

- ▶ Reduce estate taxes
- ▶ Provide a life income stream
- ▶ Allow you to make a much larger gift than you thought possible
- ▶ Receive a current income tax deduction
- ▶ Reduce or avoid capital gains tax
- ▶ Determine the legacy you leave behind while supporting the work of ESI

For more information or to have a confidential discussion about how your planned gift could support ESI's mission, call Tracy Nelson, CEO at (920) 487-3541 ext. 221.

\$25,000 MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

2024 Wish List Items

Agency Wide

- A car to help get clients to work or job experiences
- Refrigerator w/freezer
- Utility Cabinets

Snoezelen Room

- Touch sensory magic computer
- Seating bench or sensory chairs
- Additional Solar projector discs
- Interactive and tactile items

Day Services Supplies

- Seasonal crafts and supplies
- Puzzle boards
- Washable markers
- Colored pencils
- Sculpting clay (Polymer or Sculpey Air Dry)

Manufacturing

- Ergonomic chairs for production floor
- Furnace for loading dock area
- Table saw

Classes (\$75 - \$500)

- Zumba/Yoga
- Dance
- Pottery/Ceramics

Outings (\$75 - \$400)

- Weidner Center
- Bowling
- Movie Theaters (Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay)
- Agriculture Education Center
- The Farm in Sturgeon Bay
- Green Bay Botanical Gardens
- Museums
- ↳ (Green Bay, Manitowoc, Sturgeon Bay)

Gift Certificates to:

- Amazon
- Dollar General
- Family Dollar
- Gas Cards
- Hobby Lobby
- IGA
- Michael's Arts & Crafts
- Piggly Wiggly
- SuperValu
- Target
- Walmart



Bob

I have been a client for 49 years. It's nice to have a place to go close to home. When I was getting services in Green Bay I had to travel at 6:30 am and didn't get home until 5pm! I like ESI.



Lisa

It's like a family to me here. We are all friends and I like that. I like to work on all different types of jobs.



Rita

I have been coming since 1983 and have been here for every name change. I like having conversations with others at ESI and I like how everyone is different.



What is ESI to Me?



Karrie

ESI is a place for me to come to get out of the house. I get to make money and I get to meet new people. I love the MyCommunity Program because we get to form relationships with others in the community.

Adam

I love the staff and I love music class!



Brian

I like working on different jobs. I love talking to my friends. ESI gets me out of the house.



Carol

I enjoy coming to ESI. I like being with people and meeting new friends.



Josh

I like coming to ESI. My favorite things are BINGO on Tuesdays, working in subcontract and doing stuff with my friends.



Amber

I really like it here. I like working on jobs.



Volunteers are vital to ESI!

Become a VOLUNTEER and help EMPOWER and SUPPORT the Individuals ESI serves

Please consider volunteering your time and talents.

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities to suit your skills, interests, passions, and schedule.

We are looking for . . .

STEAM Group Assistants: *STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) assistants will provide hands on assistance during group and individual projects.*

Game Room Assistant: *Come hang out in the game room with us and play pool, bowl on the Wii, or take a turn at ladder golf.*

Personal Readers: *Come in and be a guest reader during our book club programs.*

Bingo Assistants: *Assist a client during a game of BINGO (Tuesdays 1:30 – 2:30)*

Arts & Crafts: *Tap into your creative side and assist a group of individuals as they work on various art projects.*

Transportation Volunteer: *Provides individuals with scheduled rides to his/her place of employment.*

Historical Organizer: *Looking for someone to come in and organize our historical files. This is a perfect opportunity for someone with an interest in history and a passion for organizing.*

Work Readiness Program Volunteers:

- *Do you own or work at a business that would give us a tour?*
- *Maybe you can offer a job shadow experience where individuals can shadow a worker to see different types of work and see if it is a good match for them.*
- *Perhaps you are skilled in resume building and interview preparation and would share your expertise with us.*
- *Maybe you would like to give a presentation on career tips— i.e.: What should I wear to an interview, what types of questions are asked in an interview, etc.*

If you're interested in sharing your talents with us, fill out the online application at esiempowers.com/volunteer. You can also contact us via phone: (920) 487-3541, or email: info@esiempowers.com.

*You can't
buy time,
but you
can give it.*

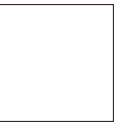






50 Years of Memories!





**To learn more about our history visit
esiempowers.com**

**Thank you to all who have been part of
our last 50 years!**

