



## Celebrating Our Founders

On June 17, Mainstream Living hosted a Founder's Celebration to recognize and honor the four founding families who started the organization in 1975. Ellen and Don Hadwiger, Beth and Norman Cheville, Marvin and Maxine Julius, and Robert and Jan Samuelson simply wanted what all of us want for our children. They wanted their children to live a happy and healthy life as part of the community. Fortunately, there were many parents ready to lead the way. They organized, raised money, advocated, and fought for solutions. Those solutions led to an organization that has grown dramatically in nearly five decades and that's more than a cause for celebration!

Founding members and their families from near and far joined us to celebrate. President and CEO Bill Vaughn formally recognized the contributions of the Hadwiger, Cheville, Julius, and Samuelson families. In addition to the four founding families, former President and CEO Reno Berg

was recognized. For 36 of Mainstream Living's 50 years, the organization was led by Reno. His foresight and innovation in delivering services and his mentorship to many created an organizational culture that is still in existence today.

As part of the celebration, two special pieces were created. The first was a custom art piece created by local artist Ben Schuh. The artwork, entitled "Living Mainstream", depicts the vision of our four founding families coming together to create the organization. The original piece is displayed at our Ames office, with a reprint on display at the Des Moines office. Along with the artwork, a booklet was put together chronicling the history of Mainstream Living and disability services in central Iowa. The pictures and stories document the evolution of services while capturing the spirit of all those who have been a part of the Mainstream Living family. If you would like a copy of the booklet, please contact Amber Corrieri at [acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org](mailto:acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org).

# A Message from Bill



Greetings-

I want to thank all of our esteemed board members (present and past), dedicated staff, cherished families, valued members, and our incredible community of supporters, partners, and funders. My time at Mainstream Living has been an incredible journey, and I would not have been successful without your friendship, mentorship and enduring support.

As I write this today, emotions swirl within me—gratitude, humility, and a deep sense of appreciation for the journey we’ve embarked upon together. Most of you know that I started as a direct care worker for Mainstream Living, and worked at many levels of leadership. For 43 years, I’ve had the honor of serving Mainstream Living, with the past 11 as CEO. As I reflect on

this journey, I’m reminded of a theme that resonates deeply with me: the concept of a tribe—a close-knit community bound by shared values, common goals, and an unbreakable spirit of unity.

I believe Mainstream Living represents a tribe, defined not by blood ties, but by a collective commitment to breathing life into our mission. A tribe is characterized by loyalty, support, and the belief that individual contribution is essential. Our staff is the core of our tribe and their tireless efforts transform our mission into tangible impact. The smiles on their faces, the milestones they’ve reached, and the dreams they’ve fulfilled serve as a testament to the collective power of our tribe.

These accomplishments wouldn’t have been possible without the unending support of our families. Your trust in us has allowed us to guide and empower your loved ones, and we’re deeply grateful for the partnership we’ve formed. The very foundation upon which Mainstream Living was built owes its existence to the vision of our founding families and the unwavering support of our community. They began a legacy that continues to thrive.

As I step aside from my role as CEO, I find myself looking towards the future with optimism and excitement. Mainstream Living’s journey is far from over, and I have complete faith in the leadership of our new CEO, Kris Eastman. Kris not only shares our values but embodies them. She is steadfast in her commitment to promoting our culture and steering us toward continued success.

While my role may be changing, my dedication to our shared cause remains. Mainstream Living is a tapestry woven with care, passion, and hope, and as each of you contributes your unique thread, our collective impact grows stronger. Thank you for contributing your time, your energy, and your unwavering belief in our mission.

As we look ahead, let us do so with a sense of purpose, unity, and determination. Mainstream Living has the power to create a brighter, more inclusive future for all, and together, we will continue to enhance opportunities, create success, and fulfill dreams.

Thank you.

Bill Vaughn.

# Messages to Bill

The first time I rode Ragbrai with Bill was when I earned (from him) the title of Sherpa. As an initiate of Team Skunk that year, I was tasked with carrying the miscellaneous gear of some senior members. As I did so and kept a light sense of humor about it, Bill started to introduce me to complete strangers as “Our Sherpa”. I am not from the Himalayas, but I did provide support for Team Skunk’s trekkers of Ragbrai’s mountainous terrain, so the title fit.

One person from Australia whom we had just met along the route willingly paid Bill a dollar to have their picture taken with the Sherpa after hearing of my accolades (I’m sure he gave them their dollar back shortly after the award-winning photograph). To this day, Bill still calls me the Sherpa. – **Andrew Gomez**

Our organization takes great pride in our culture. Bill has led this for many years at many levels, making it difficult to ever think of leaving and impossible to ever replicate elsewhere. He has been a mentor, role model and friend to so many of us. While it will be hard to see him move on, he deserves the best of all retirement opportunities, and he has worked hard to prepare us to continue our success. To one of the greatest Mainstream legends, congratulations! – **Traci Miner**

Bill, I’ll always remember your special birthday surprises for the office employees. A few examples: thoroughly saran wrapping a desk, chair and phone, frosting an entire desk with cake icing at least an inch thick, rearranging furniture, and hanging dead fish from the ceiling. Your ingenuity and humor have always been notable! – **Connie Mortvedt**

I have served on the Mainstream Board since 2019. I remember when Bill Vaughngave me the initial training. He drove me to some of the homes, walked me through the administrative offices and the drop-in facility, walked me through the financials and the orientation handbook, and gave me a book on board member orientation. I left impressed that this was an organization that does not want its Board to mess up, and that I was not sure I understood my responsibilities this well when I started my tenure at City Council. Bill—thanks for your many years of service to Ames and Central Iowa and for your loyalty to our residents with special needs. – **Peter Orazem**



The first day I met Bill it was during part of my initial training with Mainstream. He was demonstrating how to handle a crisis situation without physical interventions. Bill came running up to me and started yelling “PEACHES”. I thought “what have I gotten myself into.” Bill then asked me what I would do if a consumer did that to me. I told him I have no idea and his response is that I am here to teach you. I wasn’t sure how long I would be staying at Mainstream, but 27 years later I am still here. Bill is one of the people that has made me want to stay. He treats you like you are a member of his family and he will be missed. “BIG VIRTUAL HUG”. I am also probably one of the only people in Mainstream that could surprise hug Bill at any time and get away with it. – **Tracy Moore**

I remember the day I met Bill, we sat on the living room floor at Villa Vista and he completed my training! – **Robin Brown**

# Messages to Bill



I remember Bill doing my evaluation early in my career. He would take his staff to lunch and everyone seemed to enjoy it. When it was my turn, Bill told me that he takes people to the truck stop and, in fairness, that is where we would go too. I was not too excited, but I couldn't expect more than everyone else got. At the truck stop, I ordered a hoagie burger thinking it would be loose meat and loaded with crisp veggies. I got a hamburger shaped to fit a hoagie bun. Later Bill confessed I was the only one he took to a truck stop. He thought he was hilarious! – **Kris Eastman**

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When my wife and I began our family, we would regularly visit my in-laws. During one of these visits, I related one of Bill Vaughn's escapades. My mother-in-law, being a bit of a prankster herself, loved the story. For years afterwards; whenever we would visit, she would inevitably ask, "What has Bill Vaughn been up to lately?" She and I shared many good laughs thanks to Bill. – **Rick Sharpe**

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I can always count on Bill for a friendly "Good Morning" and an entertaining story, even if it's not true, I usually believe him and he ends up with a good laugh knowing he "got me" again!! – **Lynda McCalley**

Bill is a servant leader. His dedication and devotion to adults with intellectual, physical, and mental disabilities is inspiring. Our family know this firsthand, we are so thankful for the years of service because we know Alan is in the best hands. Alan continues to have birthdays year after year because of the care and love the team shows him each and every day. That kind of culture happens because of a great leader. I also saw this come to life as a board member. Bill leaves an amazing legacy and foundation for Mainstream Living to be a strong resource for generations to come. – **Alissa McKinney, former board member**

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When Reno Berg retired we wondered if we could ever replace him. And then along came Bill Vaughn who grabbed the baton, picking up where Reno left off, and eventually taking Mainstream Living to even greater heights. "They say", all of us can be replaced, and perhaps that's true.

But there can be no debating the fact that Bill has served MSL with honor, steadfast dedication, and distinction, and shown love and genuine compassion to all of those who trust Mainstream Living for their care. Thank you Bill for serving as an inspiring leader and shining example of what it means to give, live, and lead selflessly. – **Jeff Iles, former board member**

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Bill, it has been a privilege to work with you the past 7 years. As a board member and past chair, I was able to witness your calm and in control demeanor through Covid, multiple MCO's and numerous challenges. I have personally enjoyed our bike rides, annual reviews and phone conversations. You have been a mentor to me (even if you didn't know it) and built a legacy to be proud of. – **David Tucker, former board member**

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"The very best to you, Bill in your retirement. I'll always remember our first meeting on the High Tressel Bike Trail. It has been an honor to serve with you as a Mainstream Board member. You have created a great example for your staff and all those you have worked with over the years. I know that you will be missed. Thank you for your dedication and service to making things better." – **Rich Roepke, board member**

# Messages to Bill

It has been such a pleasure getting to know you and to observe your leadership. You are a role model and inspiration, and your influence will be felt in the good works of Mainstream for countless years to come. Enjoy your well earned retirement! – **Karen Scheel, board member**

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I wish you and your family all the best upon your retirement. Your selfless and passionate leadership of Mainstream Living will never be forgotten. Thank you so much for all that you have contributed to our organization and the families and communities we serve! **Dave Williams, former board member**

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One of my favorite memories with Bill was Cycle gAmes back in 2018 and the celebration at Time Out afterward - it was a great event and there were lots of laughs! I was still relatively new to the Board, and it was a wonderful opportunity to get to know everyone. Such a warm and welcoming group! Ashley and I wish Bill all the very best in retirement - cheers! – **Nathan Thompson, board chair**

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As a board member, I was always impressed by Bill's capacity to be optimistic and determined despite whatever headwinds Mainstream might be facing, including the pandemic. As a parent and guardian, I am eternally grateful for his wisdom and leadership which makes possible the safe and nurturing environment in which my son lives. Wishing you a relaxing and rewarding retirement, Bill! – **Kathy Schnable, parent, former board member**

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Thank you for the passion and dedication that you have given for the success of Mainstream Living. Enjoy your retirement. – **Carroll and Jill Simbro, parents, board member**

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I will be forever grateful for Bill's mentorship. He recognizes individual strengths and talents and makes the conscious decision to invest in people. Bill often ends meetings with the statement, "go do good things" and it always strikes me how something simple can have so much impact. – **Amber Corrieri**

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Throughout Bill's tenure we have witnessed great forward momentum and seen continued transformation and success. Bill fostered a culture of inclusivity, teamwork and continuous learning, creating an environment where each voice matters and innovation thrives.

The indomitable spirit that Bill has infused into Mainstream will forever remain a part of our DNA. He is leaving the future leaders with a solid foundation and roadmap for success that will guide us into the future.

May your retirement be a time of exploration, relaxation, and new adventures. – **Stuart Ambrose**



Since 2001 the Mainstream Living Foundation has awarded \$5,000 per year in educational grants to current Mainstream Living employees or their dependent children. The grant amount has been approved annually by the Board of Directors with the Nominations Committee reviewing the applications and determining the number of recipients and the amount of each grant. Recipients are recognized each summer at a luncheon. Congratulations to our 2023 Education Grant award winners: Allison Berstler, Jordan Corrieri, Delaney Filling, Kirsten Hetland, Reagan Livingston, Jolyn McCalley Eve Taoh.