2018 ANCOR Award Honorees

Hammer Residences is proud to share that two employees in our organization earned honorable mention at the 2018 ANCOR awards. ANCOR, also known as the American Network of Community Options and Resources, is a national organization whose mission is to “advance the ability of our members in supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to fully participate in their communities.”

Brenda Barthel supports individuals in one of our homes, while Grace Gullixson works in our in-home services department. The award recognizes caregivers who are advocates for the individuals they support, display leadership skills, are innovative, encourage relationship-building, and demonstrate various codes of ethics.

Brenda Barthel
Brenda works in a home where she supports four women. One of Brenda’s greatest strengths is her ability to creatively help the individuals she supports reach their goals. One activity she has helped the women achieve is traveling, and she personally makes sure they have that opportunity. This past year, the group went to Duluth, led by Brenda. Brenda also used her creativity to come up with a “salon night” for the women. Each week, she gathers the ladies and does each of their nails. This allows the household to come together and bond as a group. It is important for the women to build relationships with each other, and Brenda has helped make this happen.

Grace Gullixson
Grace spends a lot of her time working with a man named Matthew. Prior to working with Grace, it was often difficult for Matthew to be comfortable at social events. Now, he enjoys going to these events, as Grace will step away with him if the atmosphere is too hectic. This helps Matthew stay happy and comfortable.

Since Grace has a person-centered approach in situations like this, Matthew has made more friends. In addition, Grace works to tailor an event to Matthew’s liking. For example, one of Matthew’s favorite gatherings is game night. One night, the group was playing cards, which Matthew doesn’t enjoy. Grace made up a game that was more suitable for Matthew rather than leaving the event. Because of her creativity, Matthew stayed in a social setting with friends and enjoyed what he was doing.

Hammer is grateful for the support that Brenda and Grace provide to each individual. Their dedication and person-centered approach demonstrate the foundation on which Hammer’s support was built. We are honored to have them on the team.

Union Place
Home Systems + Interior Design

Union Place | Home Systems + Interior Design assists homeowners and industry professionals with the design, purchase, and installation of audio/video systems and interior design products and services. With a focus on design and decorating, Ann Fenger established the company in 1976 in Excelsior on Union Place. The company moved to its George Street location two years later, where it has existed and expanded for 40 years. Ann’s daughter, Maud Duggan, joined the company full-time in 1994 as the company continued to expand. Brian Duggan had collaborated on many projects but in 2000 added home systems and audio-video into the business, creating opportunities for in-depth integration of design and AV functionality. Maud and Brian Duggan have been working together ever since to deliver the right technologies along with award-winning design.

The roots of Union Place are still evident when you visit their showroom. Union Place is involved in all aspects of the design process. They are the only design showroom in the area with in-house work rooms for draperies and shades, custom bedding, cushions, and pillows. They have a second work room for upholstered known for its custom beds, headboards, seating, ottomans, and cornices along with reupholstering clients’ existing furniture. As a design aesthetic, Maud Duggan specializes in blending the old with the new, breathing new life into client’s existing pieces while adding furniture, accessories, and window treatments from their extensive lines of custom and semi-custom manufacturers. Union Place provides complimentary design service consultation and on-going service for clients purchasing any of the products and services offered. This approach applies to clients needing anything from pillows, draperies, and shades to an entire home makeover.

The newest addition is in the home systems category, which involves home automation, distributed video and audio, security, and networking. Union Place works with clients in existing homes as well as people undertaking a new home build or remodeling project. Brian Duggan has been helping people navigate the changes in audio and video since 1994 and has received numerous awards from CEHD and Electronic House magazine. He is certified by CEDIA, RTI, Savant, and Control4. Often, he is designing projects for home theaters, media rooms, and house-wide audio-video systems, but many simple projects are completed every day by their in-house technicians. A common thread is to keep a harmonious existence between design and technology, and many of the AV products and solutions Union Place sells are by design-minded companies.

In some projects, the synergy of the two is highly beneficial to a client. The workroom professionals often will work on-site helping craft the finishing touches of a home theater acoustic treatment, or a client struggling with how to conceal a TV will find options they didn’t know existed. In all areas, Union Place’s goal is to work with the client, expanding and refining their ideas and presenting turnkey solutions that are professionally crafted and installed. Let them help you end the audio/video vs. design debate at your house once and for all.