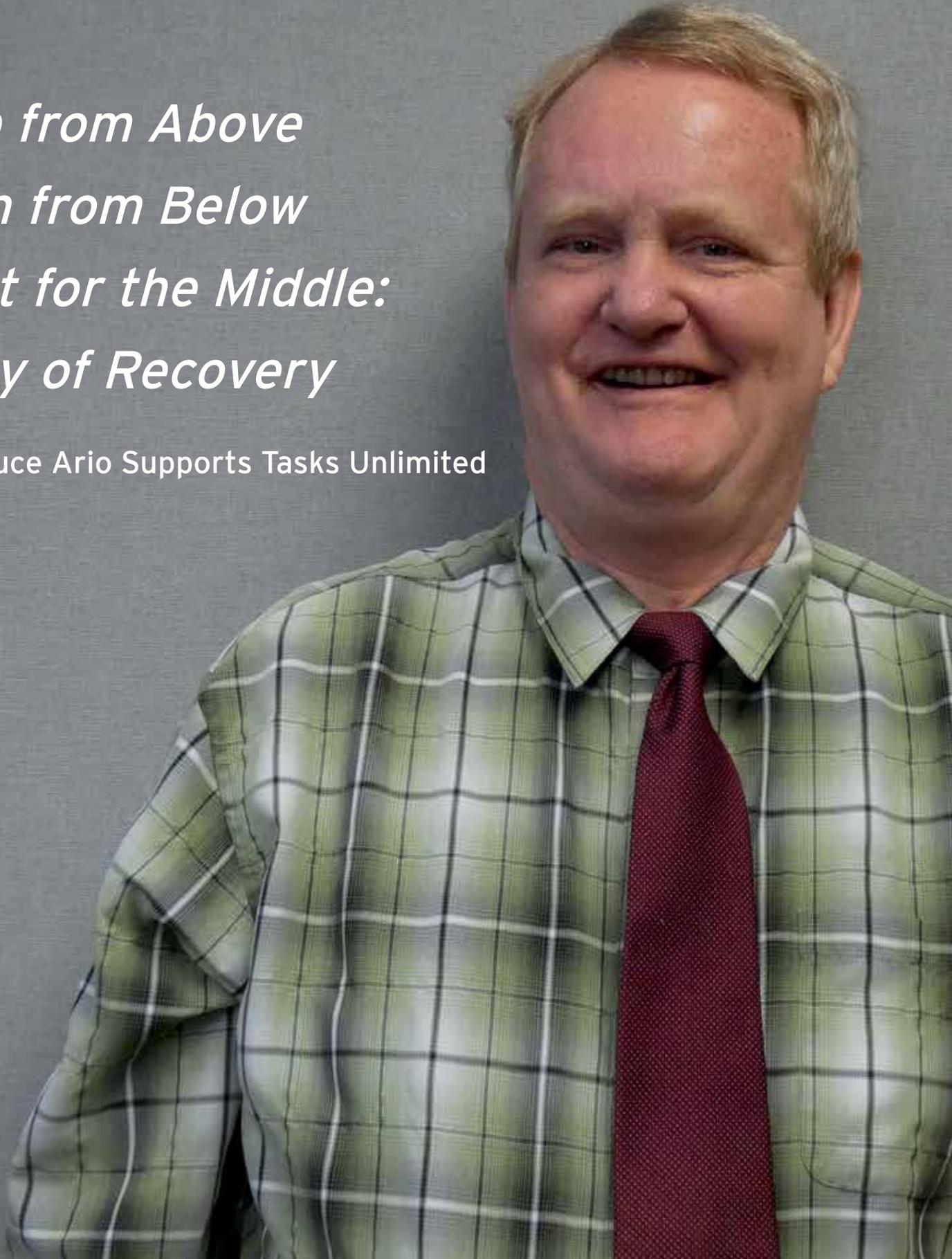


*Help from Above
Push from Below
Fight for the Middle:
Story of Recovery*

Why Bruce Ario Supports Tasks Unlimited



Bruce Ario Supports Tasks Unlimited

Bruce Ario joined Tasks Unlimited 30 years ago in the spring of 1988. "It all started with vacuuming this conference room we're sitting in now," remarked Bruce Ario during a recent interview in the Tasks Unlimited Boardroom. Before coming to Tasks, Bruce had been homeless, arrested, and living in a halfway house. "When I was at the halfway house, they told me that I needed to find a job. So I found a job and then lost the job, and then repeated that cycle a few times. I felt hopeless." Eventually, Bruce's social worker and psychiatrist suggested Tasks Unlimited. Bruce recalls being hesitant about Tasks—"That's the place that's gonna make me a janitor. That's blue collar." Bruce did eventually apply, and credits feeling a deep pride for blue-collar work and promotions for staying in the program as long he has.



Bruce Ario

In April 1988, Bruce moved into the Lodge Training Program. He remembers it being like "boot camp...it was tough. And making less than minimum wage was challenging, but I passed." In fact, Bruce did so well in the program that he completed it in three months—one of the fastest completion times.

Before being homeless and living in a halfway house, Bruce was going to law school. It was then when his mental illness first appeared. For a while, Bruce tried to ignore it but that didn't work. "I was stymied, and I had to deal with the diagnosis and it was devastating." Accepting the diagnosis took some time; Bruce didn't think he was disabled. Bruce credits the psychiatrist at the halfway house as helping him to accept and move forward with his mental illness.

A key component in Bruce's recovery has been working. After completing the lodge training program, he started as a janitor. A few years later he was promoted to crew chief and finished the career ladder program to become a supervisor. In November of 1995, Bruce was asked if he wanted to be the supervisor of the Army Corp of Engineer's mailroom. "I had enough background working in a mailroom in college and a strong track record in janitorial that the Tasks staff felt confident I could lead the mailroom." Bruce has been the supervisor ever since. "I'm not a hardcore boss, but I do make sure that the work gets done and that everyone is happy!"

Joining Tasks made it easier for Bruce to accept his mental illness. He says that's because "everyone else had done the same thing and was supportive." Bruce believes the most important work that Tasks Unlimited does is helping people recover. "I've seen people recover and come into a sense of stability and wellbeing. Most people don't know how to manage their illness so they push it under the rug and try to do the best they can. Tasks deals with the issue straight on. We don't pretend that it's not there."

Working at Tasks has given Bruce a clear vision of his future. When Bruce was living on the streets, he said he felt his next steps were unclear. There were times when he feared things could have ended tragically. Since coming to Tasks, it's been different. Bruce can see where he's going. Through Tasks, he's been able to save money and plans to retire in seven years, something he would never have dreamed of while living on the streets.

Bruce will be the first person to tell you that he's not a philanthropist. However, he firmly believes in giving back to his community. "There are people who need those funds just as much as I do or more." Rooted in what inspired Bruce to go to law school years ago, he firmly believes in fighting for and helping others. "I always pull for the underdog."

Tasks Unlimited also shares this vision. "What I love about Tasks is that even when someone costs them money, they still fight and look for ways to help them." Bruce also donates to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the Barbara Schneider Foundation, and his church.

Since the 1990s, Bruce has been writing and publishing books, poetry, and theatrical plays. Most recently, he's focused on novels. Inspired to write while living in the halfway house, Bruce has published

Bruce Ario (Cont.)

...four books; most prominently, "City Boy," a memoir about growing up with mental illness in Minneapolis during the 1960s and 1970s. And, "Help from Above, Push from Below, Fight for the Middle: Story of Recovery" a novel about a young man battling mental illness while seeking to live a normal life. You can find all of Bruce's work on Amazon Kindle.

Join Us for Bruce Ario's Book Release - May 5th, 2018

We are thrilled to announce that Barnes and Noble in Roseville will be hosting a book fair and reading for Bruce on: May 5th, 2018 at 2:00 pm. Bruce will read some excerpts from: 'Help from Above, Push from Below, Fight for the Middle: Story of Recovery.' Bruce will also be available to sign books afterward. We hope you can make it! Everyone is welcome!

Toro Company Donation

In 2017, the Toro Company donated a Workman GTX Series grounds and turf crossover vehicle to Tasks Unlimited Building Services—along with a Cab and bench seat.

Toro's donation will help Tasks Unlimited Building Services continue delivering award winning janitorial, mailroom, and event services. We are excited to put it to good use during the summer months! We recently used it to move trash at the 2018 Wayzata Chilly Open on February 12th.



2017 End of Year Fundraising Campaign Raised the Bar

The 2017 Winter End of Year Campaign demonstrated that the Tasks Unlimited family is continuing to grow. This year's campaign more than doubled last year's number of individual contributions. While we fell short of our goal of \$50,000, finishing with \$31,215, the growth in the number of people donating is a positive sign.

Every cent goes directly into providing affordable housing, wraparound mental health services, and job training for nearly 300 clients. For those who donated, thanks again for your contribution!

For those who were unable to donate but would like to, visit us online at www.Tasks Unlimited.org, and click on the big blue "Donate" button in the upper right-hand corner.

ALSO! Consider setting up an automatic monthly donation to Tasks! As little as \$5 a month can go a long way in providing stable housing, employment, and mental health. And for everyone, let's keep the momentum! Tell your friends, neighbors, and acquaintances about Tasks Unlimited. Together we will continue to grow!



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Follow us online or sign-up on our website to receive updates, information about upcoming events, and opportunities to become more involved with the work and mission of Tasks Unlimited!



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