

LIVING OUR MISSION

Connecting people, creating opportunities, and nurturing growth since 1957.

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More Than You See 2019 - Record Breaking Year!

EPI AND ONE VISION DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP

by Chris Sparks

As an important part of the EPI family, we wanted to share with you a developing partnership with a long-term collaborator, One Vision, head quartered in Clear Lake.

Both EPI and One Vision are healthy, viable, successful organizations now and into the foreseeable future. Both serve similar populations of people in need of support to live successfully in their communities.

Our two organizations have been close collaborators for many years - drawn together by our common vision of inclusion, a shared spirit of innovation, and strong commitments to quality service. We're exploring what our two organizations might do together through a partnership.

The developing collaboration comes as a direct result of dramatic changes in the service and funding environments, both at state and national levels. As we've been sharing, funding pressures and regulatory expectations, including requirements of managed care organizations in lowa, are causing many organizations to

look for innovative ways, such as partnerships, to be **strong into the future**.

Our motivation is to keep the promises we've made to our customers - to moms and dads, our staff, persons served - to ensure each can count on us well into the future.

Both organizations are united by their commitment to workforce. We need every great staff person we have and are not looking for efficiencies by way of position reduction. Rather, we see our organizations working together to focus on recruitment, career ladders, succession planning, and retention of our workforce.

Financial stability in our current environment is significantly influenced by how effective we are with relevant public policy and reimbursement structures (think Medicaid funding and how providers get paid). Together we can create a more effective platform to be heard, to advocate, and to have an impact on these important decisions that affect our organization and the services we're able to offer you.

Together we will have capacity to launch new and needed services.

Through this process our dedication to persons served, to our valued stakeholders, and to high quality service remains our central focus. So much so, it's our desire to *ensure very little disruption* in day-to-day activities and services received. Our relationship with One Vision will continue to be defined over the next several months.

At a time of great change such as this, we reflect on the innovative, fearless, collaborative spirit that drove our founders in 1957. They created services when none existed and developed critical partnerships all while remaining focused on the vision.

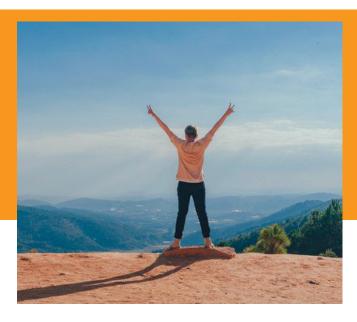
Like our founders, we're fundamentally focused on persons served and their families. And, it's those same core values that motivate us today - to continuously look towards the future and to strengthen our organizations so we can more assuredly offer the stability you deserve.



CHRIS' CORNER

CATCH THE LATEST NEWS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - CHRIS SPARKS.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



LIVING WELL WITH MS
TAKES RESILIENCE
BY DIANE
HOLMES, LISW

The onset of symptoms, the diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis, and daily life with a chronic illness is destabilizing for the individual and those who care about them. With the availability of disease modifying drugs, the diagnosis may not be as daunting as it once was. But, those who live with MS learn life management is important to a healthy life. To do so, requires resilience, defined by Mayo Clinic as, "inner strength that helps you rebound from a setback or challenge".

Building resilience includes focusing on strength and health, attending to physical, cognitive, and emotional health. Thanks to medical advances, there is a wide range of medications to prevent disease progression, treat exacerbations, and manage symptoms. But, that is just the beginning. Being physically healthy includes:

Healthy Diet. There is no "MS diet".
 Specialists suggest eating the same

low-fat, high-fiber diet recommended for other health conditions. Some research has found Vitamins A, B, and D, and Omega oils helpful for people with MS. However, these vitamins can cause complications, so consult your medical provider.

Regular Exercise. People with MS
benefit from regular exercise. It builds
cardiovascular health, strength and
flexibility, reduces fatigue, and can
alleviate bladder and bowel problems.
A physical therapist can recommend
an exercise routine that best meets
individual needs. People who have
limited mobility often benefit from water
exercise, which makes it possible to do
things they could not do on land.

Research shows that 65% of people who have MS experience changes cognitive functioning, such as the speed of thinking, memory, and attention. People with "cognitive reserves" from intellectual challenges, education, interesting work, and leisure activities can slow cognitive decline from disease and aging. Activities

MS GROUP MEETINGS & LOCATIONS

June

Bremer/Butler, 6/12 - 10:30 am Waterloo, 6/19 - 11:00 am

July

No group meetings in July.

August

Bremer/Butler, 8/14 - 10:30 am Waterloo, 8/21 - 11:00 am

September

Bremer/Butler, 9/11 - 10:30 am Waterloo, 9/18 - 11:00 am

October

Bremer/Butler, 10/9 - 10:30 am Waterloo, 10/16 - 11:00 am

Bremer/Butler

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 2001 W Bremer, Waverly (2nd Wednesday)

Waterloo

EPI, 760 Ansborough Ave, Waterloo (3rd Wednesday)

that challenge the brain, such as reading, board and card games, word puzzles, creative expression, and game shows can build and maintain good cognitive health.

Relationships and regular social interaction benefit cognitive health, as well as providing support and acceptance throughout life. For people who need care from others, relationships provide opportunities to be a listening ear for someone else, contributing to a sense of self-worth. Social interactions are often part of leisure activities that can provide new experiences and fun.

People with MS experience depression at higher rates than the general population. Counseling and, when needed, medications can help improve mental health. Being emotionally healthy makes it possible to find meaning in our struggles and, according to Dr. Viktor Frankl, "turn their predicaments into human achievement".

Building resilience is a "package deal" requiring attention to our diverse human needs. But, when approached with patience, determination, and a dash of humor, people affected by MS can live a life of quality and fulfillment.

SOURCES:

Mayo Clinic.org
Build Skills to Endure Hardship

* nationalmssociety.org/ living-well-with-MS

* Kraft, G.H., Catanzaro, R.N., Living with Multiple Sclerosis: A Wellness Approach; 1996

* Hopkins-Holmes, D.C.; Building Emotional Resilience In The Face of Multiple Sclerosis; Graduate Research Paper, 2006

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL AWARD



CRYSTALINTEGRATION SPECIALIST

We chose Crystal to be nominated for ANCOR's DSP of the year because of her compassion. She effortlessly exhibits the core values of EPI in her daily work life. Crystal has a contagious positive attitude in all interactions with persons served and members throughout the community.



MARY ANN DSP 3

Mary Ann is approaching her 10th year within the EPI family and we are so lucky to have her. She always goes above and beyond to ensure the people she supports are getting everything they need. Her level of professionalism and upbeat attitude is what got her nominated!



WILSON DSP 4

Wilson has this laid back personality that really appeals to persons served. It makes him approachable and they feel they can really open up to him. He's helped one individual in particular lose over 50 pounds. He is extremely committed to those he serves and for that, we thank him.



Ben Grimshaw



Tabitha Roberts



Carrie Armbrecht



Emily Randle

MEET OUR NEWEST PROGRAM MANAGERS

Exceptional Persons, Inc. is excited to announce we have welcomed four new Program Managers to our team since January!

Ben Grimshaw, Carrie Armbrecht, Tabitha Roberts, and Emily Randle, are the four new faces you will be seeing within the residential daily team.

We feel they are all fully equipped to support the EPI mission of *connecting people*, *creating opportunities*, *and nurturing growth*.

Give them a warm welcome when you see them!

JOIN OUR TEAM

CURRENT CAREER OPENINGS:

- Administrative Assistant
- Bus Driver: Full & Part-time
- Child Care Center Assistant
- Day Habilitation Group Leader
- Direct Support Professional 2
- DSP2 Night Attendant
- Direct Support Professional 4
- DSP Weekend Package (DSP2 Night Attendant)
- DSP Weekend Package (DSP2)
- Health & Wellness Professional
- Integration Specialist
- Job Coach

- Payroll Specialist
- Program Manager
- QI Auditor

APPLY ONLINE AT WWW.EPISERVICE.ORG

WHY EPI?



GREAT INSURANCE

Health | Dental | Vision



COMPETITIVE PAY

Plus, it's meaningful work!



GROWTH

We provide you with multiple training opportunities.



TUITION DISCOUNTS

Save 10 - 20% on tuition at Upper Iowa University.



A CHANCE TO QUALIFY

The student loan forgiveness through the public service loan forgiveness program.



PAID TIME OFF

Generous vacation, holiday, and personal days.



WELLNESS SOLUTIONS

Free access to recipes, menu planning, and healthy options.



PET INSURANCE

Employee paid premium for pet insurance available.

BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

When you work at Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI), you're working to make the world a better place for persons with disabilities - starting right here in Iowa.

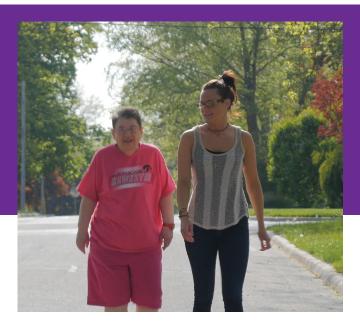
We work hard, we work together, and we're focused on putting people first.

It takes a strong team to continuously build on the 60+ year legacy EPI has developed. We employ nearly 350 staff in a variety of positions. Because we're rapidly growing, we're always on the look out for great new talent.

We're looking for hardworking, energetic, compassionate and trustworthy role models to join our team. Both full-time and part-time positions are available, as well as a variety of work hours. Take a look at our career opportunities online at www.episervice.org.

To stay up to date with the newest job openings follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or Twitter! You can also subscribe to our job email list by clicking "Sign up for Email Updates" at the bottom of our homepage.

HEALTH & WELLNESS



EPI RECOGNIZED FOR MY25 AWARD
BY BETHANY
GIACHINO

As evidence of our substantial commitment to the health of people supported, EPI has been awarded for the second time with the Gold Award for Health Leadership Excellence by Mainstay/My25.

Mainstay and its choice-based My25 programs are the acknowledged leader within the human services industry regarding health outcomes improvement related to overweight/underweight status, diabetes, hypertension, and associated chronic conditions.

Since September 2013, all staff and person's served by EPI have had access to Mainstay/My25.

Mainstay/My25 has advocates at least 25 grams of fiber each day and incorporates the appropriate ingredients into the person-center choice menus, coining the phrase "fiberizing." Fiber is now not only the confirmed super solution materially reducing obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, but it contributes to

longer and higher quality of life, and less expensive medical treatment overall.

From a recent landmark study, the World Health Organization (WHO), calls utilizing the high fiber recommendations within Mainstay/My25 "cutting edge within human services".

These findings validate the reason Mainstay/My25 took this approach. The focus on fiber as a means to affordably spur better eating habits is innovative, substantially, and sustainably maximizes health for the people we serve.



INNOVATIVE THINKING

YOUR HEALTH IS IMPORTANT TO US

Did you know EPI uses a Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST) to screen for health risks associated with a wide variety of disabilities? The goal is to provide the team with guidance in determining the person's need for further assessment and evaluation to address identified health risks. We're interested in the persons we support living a long and healthy life - full of the activities they enjoy.

OTHER WAYS WE PROMOTE WELLNESS HERE AT EPI

EPI's Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee brings challenges to staff and persons served to focus on our health together.

The committee launched a water intake challenge where groups were assigned at random and worked together to increase their daily water intake. Each week, staff reported the totals for their own group.

"We had a lot of fun participating in this challenge together. When the people I support saw me drinking water, it was a reminder for them as well", said Tracy, Direct Support Professional 4, member of the committee.

The winners of the challenge won day passes to The Falls Aquatic Center in Cedar Falls with bottles of sunscreen. The winning team had a combination of 3,638.14 total ounces!

Another initiative spear-headed by the committee over the holidays is "Maintain Don't Gain". With the help of PDCM

Insurance, we have three weigh-ins/ check points between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day to increase awareness of holiday eating habits.

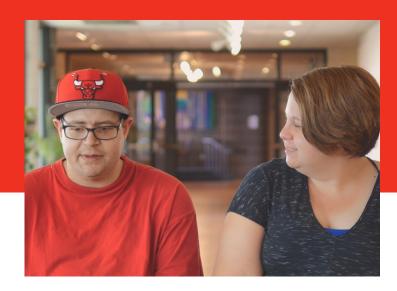
The committee knows losing weight during the holidays is almost impossible. Instead, they invite staff and persons served to challenge themselves to maintain their weight.

For this challenge, they pick winners at random from the list of those who participate. This year's winners either won a massage, a FitBit, or a gift card to Ninja U - Obstacle Gym.

The Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee is now looking forward to hosting their second staff and persons served Health Fair early this summer.

They have invited a variety of companies to come and share information on ways to better one's self. Vendors like My25 with healthy recipes and food samples and UnityPoint with blood pressure checks and tips will participate.

PEOPLE ARE THE HEART OF EPI



We know you are an important person in the life of someone we serve.

That's why we ask for your feedback on a regular basis to see how we're doing.

We don't stop there - we listen to the persons we serve, our employees, the community, and the list goes on. The feedback we receive helps us provide the highest quality of services.

In our most recent survey, respondents were asked to provide feedback on 6-7 key questions across each of the seven services areas in which they have had involvement.

Comparing the previous year's survey to this year, we were happy to see a number of service areas realized improved scores in key areas. Our overall satisfaction average rating, evaluated on a five point scale, improved from 4.03 to 4.07.

WE'RE LISTENING BY KATIE SLADE

As results are shared throughout the organization, each service area reviews their survey feedback and creates an action plan based on identified areas to prioritize.

As an organization, a couple of key areas stood out for us to work on together. We're actively working on being responsive (responding to requests in a timely manner) and communication (communicating significant changes in a timely manner).

Email is one of the best ways we can get information to you quickly. *Do we have your preferred email address?* Drop us a line at communications@episervice.org with your first and last name so we can verify.

Thank you for your thoughtful responses. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with you. Please look for a new invitation in your inbox this fall to give us more feedback.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED

LIKE US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

in O Just by sharing our posts you help engage others with EPI!



SEND US YOUR EMAIL
If we don't currently have
your email, we'd love to!
Send an email with your info to
communications@episervice.org.

HAWKEYE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER - ALC

By Mary Janssen

The Hawkeye Child Development Center - ALC opened on January 14, and in just a few short months of being open we continue to hear good things about what the center is providing for its families and their children .

Here's what one parent has to say about sending her 1 year old, Brooks,



"We're beyond impressed daily by what the center provides our son. The Kinderlime app they use is the coolest! We get updates about

his naps, activities, eating/drinking, moods throughout the day. It's amazing!"

We are currently fully staffed and looking forward to opening the preschool room this May for ages 3 - 5.

As we do for any new center, Child Care Resource and Referral has been offering their expertise to get the center up and running.

We are also grateful to the Black Hawk County Child Care Coalition to thank. The coalition has been working to raise the awareness of the need for quality child care by bringing together organizations, business owners, and funders. This sparked the idea for EPI and Hawkeye Community College to develop the center.

Start-up funding was received from our friends at the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa.

We continue to be grateful for everyone who has made this center possible.



SERVICE EXCELLENCE



We are pleased to report to you that Exceptional Persons, Inc. has been accredited for a period of three years. The latest accreditation is a Three-Year Accreditation that the international accrediting body, CARF, has awarded to EPI, lasting until February 28, 2022.

This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows our organization's substantial conformance to the CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has endured a rigorous peer review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and

EPI RECEIVES HIGHEST CARF ACCREDITATION BY MAGHAN BOWMAN

optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that emphasizes continuous improvement in services that center on enhancing the lives of persons served.

Our CARF accreditation underscores our commitment to improving the quality of community inclusion and the people we serve. We take pride in receiving this high level of accreditation.



MOVEBy Nicole Rand

We have decided to move our Southbrooke Day Habilitation

program to a more accessible location – 3675 University Avenue in Waterloo, also known as, the Deery Center. This move will likely take place by May 28.

We believe moving to the Deery Center will be a more appropriate spot within the community — moving us closer to locations we frequently network with.

There will be no changes to the service days attended, length of time, or transportation received.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION

DAY HAB VOLUNTEER LOCATIONS

- Americans for Independent Living
- · Angel's Park
- Bickford Senior Living
- Catholic Worker House
- Cedar Falls Health Care
- Cedar Falls & Waterloo Libraries
- Cedar Falls Main Street
- Cedar Falls Schools Foundation

- Cedar Valley Arboretum
- Waterloo Center for the Arts
- Grout Museum
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore
- Hartman Reserve
- House of Hope
- Humane Society
- Kingdom Kids
- Lakeview Lodge
- Northcrest Specialty Care
- Northeast Iowa Food Bank

- Prairie Lakes Church
- Rosewood Estates
- Salvation Army
- Senior Center in Cedar Falls
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Sunrise Children's Petting Zoo
- Waterloo Schools
- Windsor Care

DAY HABILITATION VOLUNTEERS THEIR TIME

By Bethany Giachino

Every week, twice a week, EPI's Day
Habilitiation (Day Hab) program visits
Habitat for Humanity's ReStore to volunteer
the room for their 6th Annual I
Than You See fundraiser. With their hel
the room was set in under an hour and
looked beautiful!

Each day, the people we serve through the Day Hab program are presented with a variety of activities and able to choose what they would like to participate in.

"When I see ReStore on the list, I always choose it. I enjoy giving back to my community", said Amanda, pictured on the right.

Her favorite activity while at the ReStore is determining the price for new items, price tagging, and placing them on the shelves to be purchased.

Since 2016, EPI has had a Day Hab group out at ReStore volunteering, and more than once they have won the "Volunteers of the Month" award.

But, the efforts don't stop here. When volunteer time is available, the Day Hab program takes it. On April 5, a Day Hab group came out to the Hilton to help EPI decorate the room for their 6th Annual More Than You See fundraiser. With their help, the room was set in under an hour and looked beautiful!



EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS FOUNDATION



MORE THAN YOU SEE 2019 RECORD BREAKING YEAR BY STACEY LANCOUR

EPI's 6th annual More Than You See benefit was a huge success! We had a record breaking year, and we are so grateful to everyone who joined us for a memorable night to support a very important cause.

More Than You See was created with the intent of raising awareness that we are all more than what meets the eye and encourages people to look beyond first impressions to the unique talents within. This year, we recognized EPI may be "more than you see" with the exciting addition of our new child care center inside the Hawkeye Adult Learning Center.

We have so many reasons to celebrate at EPI, and that's just what we did!

The night was filled with laughter, dancing, singing *Baby Shark*, a fight song battle, and so much more. Guests enjoyed dueling pianos from an incredible duo with 176 Keys Fun Pianos and bid

on auction packages that ranged from a fabulous in home dinner party to a breathtaking Alaskan Cruise.

We had the largest group in attendance to date, and we were able to raise over \$48,000 to support EPI's mission! Funds raised will support critical needs such as employment services, critical housing improvements, and the essential needs of individuals supported by EPI.

Thank you to all of our sponsors, donors, volunteers, and guests who joined us at this year's More Than You See! We are blown away by your generosity and are so thankful for your continued support.

Be sure to follow EPI on Facebook to see more photos from the event!



YOU CAN HELP



Exceptional Persons
Foundation in your will and
estate planning to ensure
EPI services will live on
forever.



Consult with your financial advisor on how to make a tax free donation to EPI as part of your IRA required minimum distribution!

Want to Make a Donation?

Your generosity means so much - thank you! Donations allow us to fulfill our mission when other funding runs short. We accept donations anytime. Visit us online at www.episervice.org.

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OUR MISSION

Connecting people, **creating** opportunities, and **nurturing** growth since 1957.



OUR VISION FOR TOMORROW

Working together we will realize a future where all people are recognized as valued citizens – encouraged and supported to live, work, and grow – in their communities.



GET SOCIAL

Follow, like, add us on social media! We have Facebook, Vimeo, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. This is a great way to keep up with the latest news and events for EPI!



QUESTIONS?

Contact our Communications Specialist, Bethany Giachino, with any questions about our newsletter.