



NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019

IN THE ISSUE:
EPI's Newest Members
of the Five Star Club



LIVING OUR MISSION

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

WWW.EPISERVICE.ORG

760 Ansborough Ave. Waterloo, IA 50701 | (319) 232 - 6671

ABOUT US

AGENCY LEADERSHIP TEAM

MARY JANSSEN
Children & Family
Services Director

DEB JUNGLING
Chief Financial Officer

KATIE SLADE
Organizational Development Director

CHRIS SPARKS
Executive Director

EPI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SUE FANGMAN - President
U.S. Bank

DEB LILLY -Vice President
Hawkeye Community Foundation

STEVE LINDAMAN- Treasurer
Veridian Credit Union

JUSTIN STOCKDALE - Secretary
Dike New Hartford Schools

VICKI PARSONS - Past President
Farmers State Bank

MEGAN FEREDAY
Attorney

KYLE HENDERSON
Doerfer Companies

BOB KAHLER
Volunteer

DAN LEVI
Levi Architecture

DAVE LYMAN
VGM

BRUCE MEISINGER
Volunteer

JOHN MONAGHAN
PDCM Insurance

GIA SHANNON
Volunteer

STACEY SMITH
Mercy Health

GINA WEEKLEY
Waterloo Community Schools

EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KIM FETTKETHER - President
Veridian Credit Union

CHRIS FEREDAY - Vice President
PDCM Insurance

LARRY K. FOX - Treasurer
Larry K. Fox & Associates

FRANK ESSER - Secretary
UNI Foundation

RUSS CURTIS - Past President
Volunteer

JORDAN ALBORN
FSB Premier Wealth Management, Inc.

KRISTEN JUHL
Redfern Mason Larsen & Moore, PLC

SUE FANGMAN
U.S. Bank

BRIAN GABEL
Panther Sports Properties

HEATHER GUNDERSON
BerganKDV

WADE ITZEN
Banklwa

DEB LILLY
Hawkeye Community Foundation

THERESA PAGEL
UnityPoint - Allen Hospital

VICKI PARSONS
Farmers State Bank

FLOYD WINTER
Volunteer

IN THE ISSUE: PAGE 3.

Chris' Corner
State of EPI

PAGE 4 - 5.

Family Care Givers
MS Support Group Meetings

PAGE 6 - 7.

Meet our 2019 DSP Five Star
Club Honorees!
Career Growth Opportunities

PAGE 8 - 9.

Finkenaur Visits ALC
Borrow Health Equipment

PAGE 10 - 11.

Your Time is Valued
Thank You PDCM

PAGE 12 - 13.

Maghan Bowman Elected to
ANCOR's Board of
Representatives
Day Habilitation Collaborates
with Cedar Valley Trails

PAGE 14 - 15.

Giving Tree Tradition to Run
November 25 - December 13
Grants Awarded to Support
EPI's Mission
More Than You See Save the
Date for 2020!

STATE OF EPI *by Chris Sparks*

EPI leadership has always made a specific point of remaining aware of trending information in our business environment. Over the last couple of decades this has taken the form of environmental scanning and tracking changes in customer demands, regulatory changes, and payer system reform.

Medicaid is by far EPI's largest source of funding. Iowa's move to a fully managed care system for all Medicaid funded services on April 1, 2016, along with the federal evolution of Medicaid funding has sharpened our focus on rightsizing services, efficiency, and managing antiquated and often inadequate rates.

The governing board and leadership of EPI has been intentional about evaluating the ideal budget size, service geography, and number of covered lives needed to be successful in a managed care system. While we learned much that has been beneficial, one clear objective became to seek partners through agreements, mergers, and/or to consider a national affiliation. To be strong into the future we have to build

strength and capacity and to leverage service results in an increasingly challenging business environment.

Regarding possible mergers, EPI and One Vision, a Clear Lake based provider, spent several months working together and engaged in the due diligence process evaluating a potential merger. As a result of insight gained during due diligence, leadership of the organizations determined it would not be advantageous to move forward with the merger. Throughout the negotiations we were impressed by each other's values, mission, openness, and dedication to enrich people's lives with services for people with disabilities.

EPI leadership staff and board are still committed to evaluating partnership and merger opportunities that strengthen agency services, build capacity, help with leadership and succession planning, and most of all keep us strong for current and future customers. Stay tuned for further developments.

CHRIS' CORNER

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



MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



Research by the Family Caregiver Alliance and AARP in 2015 found 43.5 million people provided unpaid care for a family member, valued at \$470 billion. Despite the development of disease modifying medications to address the progression of Multiple Sclerosis, worsened or new symptoms still occur or the disease progresses, leading to the need for additional care, often provided by a family member. Whether the care is occasional shopping or housekeeping, or more complex, like bathing and dressing or managing medications and medical care provided at home, the relationship is changed.

The Wellspouse Association website broadcast a webinar, “New Active Coping Strategies for Caregivers”, featuring Barbara Kivowitz, MSW talking about her book, *Love in the Time of Chronic Illness: How to Fight the Sickness, Not Each Other*. Ms. Kivowitz offers some practical

LIVING WELL WITH MS TAKES RESILIENCE BY DIANE HOLMES, LISW

advice based on her experience as both caregiver and care receiver with her husband.

- **Changes to the Relationship** – New roles and responsibilities need to be negotiated in the relationship. A loving connection between the individuals does not guarantee things will go smoothly, particularly if the relationship was a difficult one before the need for care arose.
- **Communication and Secrecy**– Negotiating the changes in the relationship takes open and honest communication. Ms. Kivowitz suggests regular communication in which one person listens with the goal of understanding the concerns of the other without blaming or trying to solve the problem. Just listen. Problem solving can come later.
- **Active coping** – Sometimes a situation can be changed, preserving our ability to cope with it. Other times, what needs to change is our own attitude toward the situation.

MS GROUP MEETINGS & LOCATIONS

November

Bremer/Butler, 11/13 - 10:30 am
Waterloo, 11/20 - 11:00 am

December

Bremer/Butler, 12/11 - 10:30 am
Waterloo, 12/18 - 11:00 am

Bremer/Butler

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

Waterloo

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

- **Develop a job description** – Discussing the needed level of care helps preserve the independence of the person needing care and provides guidance for the caregiver. Focusing on the person, instead of the disease helps preserve the love that motivated providing the care in the first place.
- **Work as a team when dealing with health care providers** – Become educated about the disease and treatments so that you can ask informed questions. When needed, take time to talk through treatment options, instead of feeling pressured to make an immediate decision.
- **Stay as close to normal as possible** – Maintaining schedules and relationships preserves a sense of normalcy.
- **Create hope** – Set small, achievable goals such as a “good day” or looking forward to a special event. Feel the love that motivated the care relationship in the first place. Connect with something greater, such as a beautiful flower, a close friendship, or spiritual beliefs.
- **The “Plexiglass Shield”** - In the close relationship between caregiver and care receiver harsh words and anger can erupt. Ms. Kivowitz suggests learning not to take those words personally by putting on an imaginary “Plexiglass Shield” to protect one’s self. Talking things through when both are calmer can build a new trust and understanding.

SOURCES:

Family Caregiver Alliance -
caregiver.org

Wellspouse Association –
wellspouse.org

National Family Caregivers Association
– caringcommunity.org

RESOURCES:

The Caregiver Survival Series by
James R. Sherman, Ph. D.

Preventing Caregiver Burnout
The Magic of Humor in Caregiving
Creative Caregiving
Coping With Caregiver Worries

STAFF EXCELLENCE

MEET OUR 2019 FIVE STAR CLUB HONOREES!



FIVE STAR CLUB

The Five Star Club is a way to honor the DSPs who go above and beyond in their careers here at EPI.

We are excited to announce our newest members of the Five Star Club: (from the left - back) Neil, Chu, Rachael, Trista, (front) Marcy, Deb, Linsey, Gloria, Michelle, Jamie, and Jenny!

Once inducted into the Five Star Club, the DSP will receive an exclusive “Five Star” jacket, an award, and recognition at our annual Direct Support Professional Ceremony.

Each DSP exemplifies our mission of **connecting people, creating opportunities, and nurturing growth.**

They **connect people** by assisting with creating relationships and participating in their community.

They **create opportunities** by advocating for the people they serve while in the community, in a healthcare visit, or while in their home.

They **nurture growth** by coming up with innovative ways to teach new skills and modeling healthy lifestyles to encourage eating right and exercising daily.

Of course, this is not all they do, the full list would go on for far too long. We will continue to raise up their praises and tell each of their stories on online throughout the year.

From this list, Chu Conrad, Rachael Tyler, and Gloria Mulbah will be nominated for American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)’s national DSP of the Year recognition.

Want to help?

If you are a parent or guardian to someone served or if you are served by one of our DSPs and you want to tell us just how amazing they are, email communications@episervice.org to nominate someone you know.

JOIN OUR TEAM

CURRENT CAREER OPENINGS:

- Building Maintenance Manager
- Child Care Center Assistant Teacher
- Child Care Center Lead Teacher
- Child Care Consultant
- Direct Support Professional 2
- DSP2 Night Attendant
- Direct Support Professional 4
- DSP2 Weekend Package

- Integration Specialist
- Job Coach
- Information Systems Specialist
- Information Systems Support Intern
- Program Assistant

This is working at EPI - connecting people, creating opportunities, and nurturing growth. **REAL CAREER. REAL PURPOSE.** - apply at www.episervice.org



THIS IS WORKING AT EPI - CAREER GROWTH

We recently sat down with Program Director, Bonnie Kipper, who has been with Exceptional Persons, Inc. for 22 years now. We wanted to hear more about her journey and the opportunities she's had to grow her career within our agency.

She started her career as a CHOICE (also known as, Day Habilitation) Group Leader. We have a friend of Bonnie's to thank for encouraging her to apply in 1997.

"When I was a choice group leader, I supported a woman who would roll my car window down while we were driving and whistle at construction workers. I still think of her every time I see one."

She was happily in this position for five years before transitioning to a coordinator where she worked with the intermittent services team.

After about a year in this position, a manager position was offered to her where she began

her journey within the Intellectual Disability (ID) Residential Daily program.

From here, Bonnie was promoted to the Program Director of the ID Residential Daily program in the year of 2004.

When asked what she is most proud of during her time here, she answered simply, her team. Her team, all EPI staff, and the people we support are exactly what Bonnie loves about working here.

Bonnie went on to say, "My team is committed and passionate - they inspire me daily. My coworkers are amazing, and always available when needed. The people I support continue teaching me how important it is to truly understand, listen, care for one another, cherish relationships, and most importantly, celebrate all accomplishments, big or small."

Bonnie shares that one of her favorite memories of her time here at EPI was when she attended a wedding for two of the people she supported.

"If you want to make a difference and want the opportunity to grow professionally, then EPI is where you'll want to be."

HEALTH & WELLNESS



FINKENAUER VISITS EPI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER **BY MARY JANSSEN**

Black Hawk County child care data sheet developed by IowaCCRR.org.

We see families in the Cedar Valley struggle to find child care. EPI's Child Care Resource & Referral office sees the struggle daily as we help families try to find child care.

With the child care shortage, businesses and organizations struggle to find and keep employees.

"Safe, affordable, and enriching child care is such an incredible need in our community and we see that with our employees," Chris Sparks, Executive Director at EPI said. "We as an organization have been wanting to offer this benefit to staff for a very long time."

We were honored to have the opportunity to show Abby Finkenauer around the Hawkeye Child Development Center, it was a fun day for the children and staff alike!

Representative Abby Finkenauer visited the Hawkeye Child Development Center - ALC to talk about the innovative child care partnership between EPI and Hawkeye Community College.

EPI, through its Children and Family Services department, has been working to raise the awareness of the need for quality child care. Through these efforts the Black Hawk Child Care Coalition was launched bringing together other organizations, legislators, business owners, and funders.

This partnership, sparked within the coalition, is now being used as a model to help other businesses look for opportunities in finding their employees quality child care.

The gap between available child care and children in need is growing in Black Hawk County while the total number of child care programs over the last five years has declined by 41% according to

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.



DONATE HEALTH EQUIPMENT

The use of durable health equipment often lets people remain in or return to their own homes rather than move into a more expensive or restrictive setting such as a nursing home.

That's why we work hard to provide critical health equipment to families without health insurance.

All equipment is loaned **at no cost for as long as needed**, whether that may be for two months, two years, or even a lifetime!

Equipment utilized in our borrowing program is obtained solely by donations and we currently need your help! If you

have health equipment you no longer need and would like to donate to this program, please contact our main office at (319) 232 - 6671 to learn more.

Below is a list of the items we are currently in need of:

- commodes
- shower chairs
- knee scooters
- shower transfer benches
- seated walkers
- toilet seat risers
- wheel chairs

Thank you for your generosity!

PEOPLE ARE THE HEART OF EPI



WE VALUE YOUR FEEDBACK BY KATIE SLADE

If you have recently received a survey, via letter or email, it is because we know ***you are an important person in the life of someone we serve.***

That's why we're asking for your feedback - to see how we're doing. What we are doing well and what needs to be improved to provide the highest quality of services.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this survey. Space is provided for comments in the survey. All responses are held in the utmost confidence. Your participation in this survey helps us grow.

What do we do with the feedback?

We ask for feedback across many areas of our organization - from the people we serve to our employees. Your feedback is a gift to us.

Next, we listen. We look for specific areas where we need to follow up as well as

overall - or systemic - themes where we're doing well and where we can improve.

We share the results throughout the organization. Then, we focus on finding solutions and create an action plan to use your feedback to provide the very best services.

We sincerely appreciate your time, thoughtful review, and trust as a community partner.

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.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED



LIKE US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

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



SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Stay up to date on the latest happenings around 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.



THANK YOU PDCM INSURANCE

by Stacey Lancour

This summer, PDCM Insurance played in the Chubb Charity Golf Challenge in Des Moines to benefit the Exceptional Persons Foundation. Team PDCM finished the tournament in 1st place, raised over \$5,500 to support the mission of EPI, and went on to compete at the national tournament in Kohler, WI.

Once in Kohler, PDCM placed 11th out of 45 teams across North America, earning \$12,000 more to support EPI. We are so grateful for their continued support!

The PDCM team consisted of Chris Fereday and Kent McCausland of PDCM, Tyler Sturtz of Geater Machining & Manufacturing, and Bryan Earnest of Amperage Marketing & Fundraising.



SERVICE EXCELLENCE



MAGHAN BOWMAN ELECTED TO ANCOR'S BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES **BY KATIE SLADE**

At EPI we believe it is critical we stay attuned to important and emerging information on a state and federal level. Consistently feeding this information into our environmental assessment and planning helps us prepare for ongoing service system transformation and payer system reform.

Staff are encouraged and supported to be active in key local, state, and national organizations. We are excited to announce EPI's Quality Improvement & Outcomes Director, Maghan Bowman has been welcomed as a new member of American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) Board of Representatives.

"Maghan brings an important perspective to the conversation through her role as the Quality Improvement & Outcomes Director at EPI. In this time of rapidly evolving payer models, Maghan's knowledge of Managed Care and Data Collection expectations will be invaluable," said Chris Sparks, EPI's Executive Director.

Maghan has been with the EPI family since 2015, when she started as the Service Options Manager. Six months later, she advanced her career to Improvement & Outcomes Director. We at EPI are very excited for this new opportunity for her and believe she is a perfect fit to represent Iowa.

"I am beyond thrilled and honored to be a part of ANCOR representing Iowa. It is not a secret Iowa is rapidly changing and the collaboration ANCOR provides is paramount. I have to thank EPI and the leadership team for making a career goal of mine a reality," said Maghan Bowman.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION

DAY HAB VOLUNTEER LOCATIONS

- Americans for Independent Living
- Angel's Park
- Bickford Senior Living
- Catholic Worker House
- Cedar Falls & Waterloo Libraries
- Cedar Falls Main Street
- Cedar Falls Schools Foundation
- Cedar Valley Arboretum
- Cedar Valley Trails
- 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
- Salvation Army
- Senior Center in Cedar Falls
- St. Vincent DePaul
- Sunrise Children's Petting Zoo
- Waterloo Schools
- Windsor Care

DAY HABILITATION COLLABORATES WITH CEDAR VALLEY TRAILS

EPI's Day Habilitation program is partnering with Waterloo Leisure Services staff and Cedar Trails Partnership to help keep Cedar Valley trails maintained for the community to enjoy.

The volunteers will assist Waterloo Leisure Services, Cedar Falls Parks staff, and Cedar Trails Partnership who already devote time and energy to trail maintenance, "The volunteer work that EPI is proposing to do will be of great benefit to the community. We are excited about this partnership!" said Todd Derifield, Waterloo City Forester with the Waterloo Leisure Services.

"So strong are the relationships that have been developed, the people we serve spend some of their free time volunteering at sites outside of the program. They develop friendships, contacts, and even personal references to use on job applications." remarked Chris Sparks, EPI executive director.

The Day Habilitation group currently volunteers at the businesses listed above.

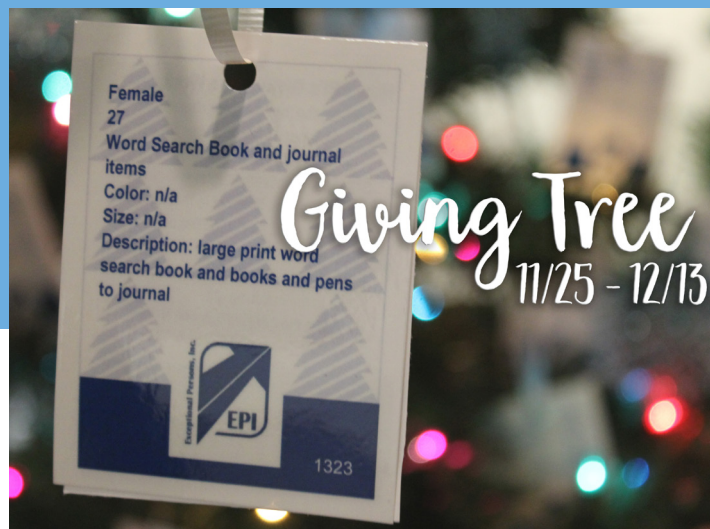
"When we volunteer, I feel like we're doing the right thing." stated Kay Arms a member of the volunteer group.

EPI's Day Habilitation program is out every weekday of the year volunteering or looking for ways to volunteer and make a genuine difference in the community.

"When the word "volunteering" comes up in a conversation, I want people to think "EPI," Tom Engelbrecht, EPI's Business Developer. "It's truly one of those win-win opportunities."



EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS FOUNDATION



EPI's Giving Tree event started over fifteen years ago as a way to meet modest needs of individuals served by EPI which would otherwise go unmet. Over the past few years needs have nearly doubled, and the number of requests now exceeds 400 needs!

You can be a part of the Giving Tree tradition and bring joy to someone this holiday season.

The Giving Tree event will begin Monday, November 25 and will run through Friday, December 13.

GIVING TREE TRADITION TO RUN NOVEMBER 25 THROUGH DECEMBER 13 **BY STACEY LANCOUR**

The Giving Tree holds tags with modest needs such as winter coats, clothing, books, and more. Tags can be picked up at EPI's Ansborough Office or Deery Center locations starting Monday, November 25. Or, you can visit EPI's website to designate a monetary gift to the Giving Tree and we will do the shopping for you.

With your support, we can ensure no one's needs go unmet and everyone will have a gift to open for the holidays.



MORE
THAN YOU *see*

FRIDAY, APRIL 3
6:30 PM | HILTON GARDEN INN

YOU CAN HELP



Cornerstone Giving

Please include the

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



Qualified Charitable Distributions

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.



GRANTS AWARDED TO SUPPORT EPI'S MISSION

EPI was recently awarded \$17,500 in grant funding to help us further our mission.

The Otto Schoitz Foundation awarded EPI \$15,000 to benefit our employment program. With the support of grant funds, we can continue to offer this crucial service for individuals following their dreams of finding and keeping a job in our community.

EPI also received \$2,500 from the Veridian Credit Union Fund with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa to support EPI's greatest needs.

Thank you to the Otto Schoitz Foundation and the Veridian Credit Union Fund with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa for your investment to ensure EPI's critical services remain available when needed most.

Exceptional Persons, Inc.
760 Ansborough Ave
PO Box 4090
Waterloo, IA 50704 - 4090

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 1778
Waterloo, IA

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Exceptional Persons, Inc.



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.