



EPI News

Exceptional Persons, Inc.



New Business Partners

- Durham School Services
- Kwik Star
- Mallard Point
- Noble Oak
- NorthCrest Specialty Care
- Yarwood Insurance

For more information about providing employment opportunities to persons served contact us by phone, (319) 232-6671.



Brittney with her coworkers at Talk To Me Technologies

Lasting Partnerships

Finding a job and moving out of your parents' house is a common next step many twenty somethings make. And, Brittney is no different. However, finding employment you'd like to stay with until you retire may not be typical for her generation.

Brittney started her journey by joining a work crew at a nursing home through our Employment Services – and she soon began to excel.

EPI staff shared with Brittney that there was a job available at Talk To Me Technologies and Brittney eagerly pursued the next steps. She quickly applied and reached out for our suggestions to prepare for her interview.

She got the job and now no longer needs EPI's support to be successful in her position!

"EPI knows what they are doing when they help someone find a job," Brittney said when asked about her journey.

Brittney is just one of the 135, and counting, people EPI has had the honor of helping succeed in her employment quest.

Kate Dunning, co-owner of Talk To Me Technologies, told us her goal was to "give back to the community" when she became a business partner with EPI.

Kate watched Brittney grow from having a small table and simple list to having her own desk among her coworkers with a long list of complex tasks. Kate says the partnership is something she has gotten far more out of than she dreamed.

"I think businesses fear that it'll (employing persons served) add more to their 'tick list' but after meeting with EPI we realized this is something we should've done years ago." - Kate Dunning.

▶▶▶
Chris Sparks celebrates 25 years with EPI!

1957
EPI Opened,
Bill Brown Founding
Executive Director

1983
Gary Mattson named
Executive Director

1998
Chris Sparks named
Executive Director

*Contact with
Newsletter
Questions:*

BETHANY GIACHINO
Communications &
Development Specialist

Chris Sparks Celebrates 25 Years with EPI



Join us in congratulating Chris Sparks, Executive Director, on celebrating 25 years with EPI!

Chris came to us on October 1, 1991, with experience working as a “house parent” or what we today call a direct support professional, with his wife Rusti back in St. Joseph, Missouri. It was there that he worked his way up to becoming the Executive Director and accomplished his Master’s degree in Public Administration - with an emphasis in non-profit management.

Diane Holmes said, “I met Chris his first day at EPI, I was one of the first people Chris supervised in my role as Director of MS Services Program. My work with Chris is just a fraction of what Chris has contributed to assure quality services are accessible for people with disabilities, in the Cedar Valley, the state of Iowa, and around the nation.”

Following Gary Mattson, Chris became EPI’s third Executive Director of EPI on January 1, 1998.

Later Chris completed a Master’s Degree in Social Work, became a licensed social worker, and became a certified facilitator of Franklin Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People Signature Workshop.

Strategic planning is something that happens here at EPI and is taken seriously due to his leadership. It’s not just a plan, but a living document.

“I’ve come to admire Chris’s dedication to EPI and his ability to demonstrate integrity in his everyday work practices.” - Bonnie Kipper, Program Director.

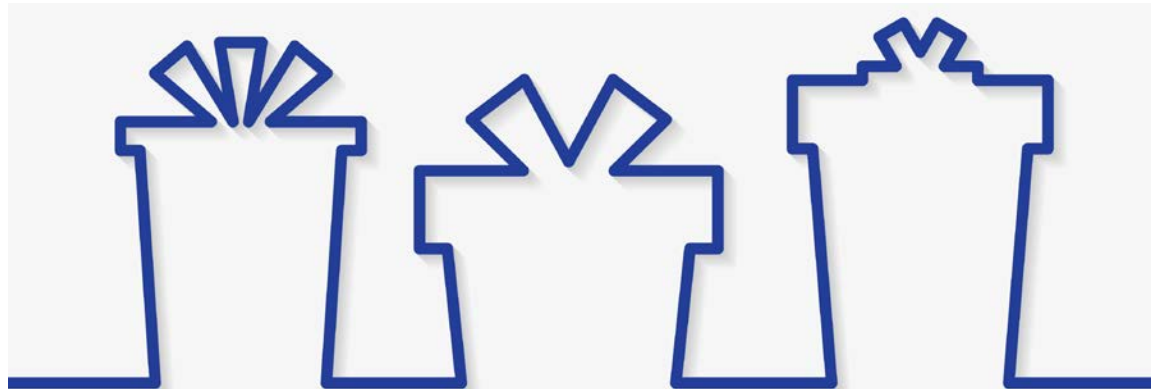
His vision and leadership keeps us moving forward proactively ensuring EPI is well prepared for changes that continue to occur in our field.

“He works hard to get to know you as a person and develop a relationship with you. That always reminds me he is a great leader who truly cares about the people he works with.” - Mary Janssen, Children and Family Services Director.

There is no doubt in our minds that Chris is one of the most passionate people in our field.

Thank you for your service, Chris!

Qualified Charitable Distributions - A Tax Savings Opportunity



Qualified Charitable Distributions are now a permanent part of the tax code as a result of legislation passed by Congress a year ago. We will give you a quick idea of how this charitable giving tool could benefit you.*

If you are over 70 1/2 years old, you are allowed to give up to \$100,000 annually to a qualified charity directly from your individual retirement account (IRA).

Why is this beneficial? The Qualified Charitable Distribution qualifies as a non-taxable distribution. While you will not receive a charitable gift tax deduction, the distribution will count toward your required minimum distribution without increasing your adjusted gross income.

Most significantly, you will be helping an organization that you care about, like The Exceptional Persons Foundation, by providing financial resources that will enable it to better achieve its mission.

For a gift to fully count as a Qualified Charitable Distribution, the following factors must be satisfied:

1. You must be at least age 70 1/2 when the gift distribution is made.
2. The distribution must come from an IRA (Traditional, Inherited, or Roth). Employer sponsored plans do not qualify.
3. You will need to submit a distribution request letter to your IRA administrator.

4. The distribution must transfer directly to a qualified charity. The Exceptional Persons Foundation and other 501(c)(3) organizations qualify.

5. You must receive a confirmation letter from the charity. The letter must state that no goods or services were received in exchange for the gift.

Now is a great time to talk to your financial professionals to find out if Qualified Charitable Distributions are right for you.

*This information should not be viewed as financial/tax advice, please consult your financial advisor for details.

◀◀◀ For more information contact your financial advisor

The Exceptional Persons Foundation is hosting its 4th annual *More Than You See* fundraising event.

Big thanks to our sponsors who have committed to this event on March 31, 2017:

Presenting Sponsor:
Dan Deery Motor Company

Piano Sponsor:
PDCM Insurance

Friend Sponsor:
Levi Architecture
Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare

Supporting:
Tony's Plumbing
Magee Construction
Warren Transport, Inc.

Media Sponsor:
97.7 KCRR

If you or your organization would like to become a sponsor, please contact us, (319) 232-6671 or communications@episervice.org for more information.

Contact EPI ►►►
to find out how
you can fulfill a
need this year!

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AEA 267



Giving Tree is Here!

Be a part of EPI's tradition by fulfilling
a need on this year's Giving Tree.

Over a decade ago, the staff at
Exceptional Persons, Inc. created
the Giving Tree to see that these
individuals are remembered around
the holidays.

Last year, with your help, we were
able to fulfill all 227 needs on the
tree. Let's do it again this year!
There are a number of ways you can
participate in the Giving Tree.

- Stop by any of our EPI offices and
take a few needs directly from our
trees!
- Contact us through Facebook and
we will let you know a need or two
that needs to be fulfilled.
- Let us do the shopping for you!
Visit www.episervice.org to
designate a monetary gift to
Giving Tree.

Looking for a gift for the holidays?
You can fulfill a need on the Giving
Tree in honor of a loved one and we
will give you a card to give to them.
Or make it a fun family outing! Grab
a handful of needs from the tree and
go out and shop for the gifts together!

Just Briefly

Here's what you might
have missed between
the issues.

Also, a special thanks to the following
businesses in our community who are
supporting the Giving Tree this year
by hosting a tree.

- Ameriprise - Larry K. Fox &
Associates (open to public)
- CBE Companies
- Harrison Truck Centers
- Waterloo Police Protection
Association

If you have any questions about
the Giving Tree, please feel free to
contact us! Happy Holidays!

Remembering Beth Billick

(1961 - 2016)

For those of us lucky enough to
have known Beth, we will always
remember her as the lady who
lived life to the fullest. Her room
was decorated with ribbons
she won displaying her athletic
accomplishments. She was even
awarded an opportunity to travel
to New York City as a runner in the



Special Olympics. She was a strong
woman with a will to
be as independent
as possible. She had
a spunky personality
with a big smile that
will be forever missed.

Partnerships Strengthen EPI, Iowa, and Beyond

It's been a long standing tradition at EPI to participate in important activities on the local, state, and national level. We believe it's through this collaboration we can strengthen EPI by learning of critical information early on in order to prepare our services and stakeholders for the future. It's also through these partnerships we're able to help shape public policy on behalf of the people we serve.

Here are just a few of the collaborations EPI staff are currently serving on:

- Executive Director, Chris Sparks, recently completed a two-year term as President of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) Board of Directors - a national association. He will now serve two- years as past president as well as co-chair of the Governmental Relations Committee.
- Services Director, Susan Seehase, was recently elected President of the Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP) Board of Directors.
- Program Director, Nicole Rand, and Associate Program Director, Nicole Ericson, both serve on the Iowa APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First) Board of Directors.
- Program Director, Megan Henning, serves on the Brain Injury Advisory Board for Iowa.
- Child and Family Services Director, Mary Janssen, serves on multiple statewide groups to enhance child care in the Cedar Valley.



While this isn't an exhaustive list of past and present activities, it does cause us to pause and reflect on some of the important work we've had the honor to participate in.

Over the years, we've sat at the table with our state and national leaders discussing important issues, promoted better pay and training for Direct Support Professionals, advocated for underfunded populations and services, served on state task teams to shape services and promote early child care, supported employment, community living, and so much more.

In the wake of the election, we'll continue to prioritize the importance of these partnerships to advocate and bring forth positive change on behalf of all we serve.

Exceptional Persons Foundation Board of Directors

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Volunteer

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Volunteer

Current Career Openings

Child Care Consultant

CHOICE Group
Leader

Continuous Quality
Improvement Auditor

Direct Support
Professional

DSP II/Job Coach II

Human Resource
Benefits Manager

Integration Specialist

Program Manager

Program Manager II

Quality Improvement
Staff Development
Assistant

Quality Outcomes
Specialist

Service Coordinator

Agency Leadership Team

MARY JANSSEN
Children & Family
Services Director

DEB JUNGLING
Business Director

LISA PATERNO
Human Resource
Director

SUSAN SEEHASE
Services Director

KATIE SLADE
Organizational
Development Director

CHRIS SPARKS
Executive Director



Healthy Emotional Coping Skills Improve Quality of Life with MS

by Diane Holmes, LISW

A vexing symptom affecting most people with MS is fatigue. But, even after years of research, there are different theories about its cause.

One theory is that abnormalities in the autonomic system, which controls involuntary functions such as heart rate, blood pressure and gland activity, may cause fatigue. Dr. John Carter, Associate Professor at Mayo Clinic suggests that, if a person with MS complains of feeling tired all the time, including when they awaken, they may have a sleep disorder.

Another theory for the cause of fatigue in people with MS, particularly those who are over-weight, is they may have obstructive sleep apnea. In addition, symptoms of depression can cause problems sleeping and fatigue.

Fatigue specifically caused by MS, the most common theory holds, is that people with MS use five times more energy to complete a task than a person without MS, because of the inflammatory process of the disease.

Therefore, before treating fatigue in people who have MS, the cause of the fatigue needs to be correctly identified.

Characteristics of MS-related fatigue can include:

- Heat and humidity make it worse
- Causes physical limitations
- Comes on easily
- Feeling tired/the need to rest
- Sleepiness
- Worsens as the day progresses
- Can occur daily, but is unpredictable

No matter what the cause of fatigue, there are numerous ways to manage the symptom. Daily strategies can include rest, cooling, modifying the environment, adaptive aids, body mechanics, and energy conservation measures. Occupational therapists can develop customized strategies for each person. Examples include:

Personal care - Put clothes out ahead of time and sit while dressing.

Use elevated toilet seats, grab bars, a shower chair or hand-held shower to conserve energy. Avoid bathing in hot water.

For desk work - Maintain good posture by adjusting chair height and having good back support. Have filing cabinets, computer equipment, and supplies easily accessible.

Home activities - Gather supplies before starting a project. Slide heavy items instead of lifting them. Eat prepared or frozen food, or one-dish meals. Prepare foods while sitting and arrange frequently used items on the most accessible shelves. Carry things in pockets to eliminate unnecessary steps. When working outside, take frequent breaks, work in the cool part of the day, and avoid doing everything in one day.

Dr. Schapiro, well known neurologist, reminds us people with MS are not fragile. He and others recommend regular exercise, pointing out inactivity leads to muscle atrophy and deconditioning, making fatigue worse. And last, a healthy diet provides the fuel our bodies need to function best. With planning, determination, and humor, people with MS can achieve their goals, despite fatigue.

MS Support Groups

December

- Bremer/Butler, 12/14 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 12/21 - 11:00 am

January

- Bremer/Butler, 1/11 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 1/18 - 11:00 am

February

- Bremer/Butler, 2/8 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 2/15 - 11:00 am

March

- Bremer/Butler, 3/8 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 3/15 - 11:00 am

Meeting Locations

Bremer/Butler

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

Waterloo

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

Sources:

www.unitedspinal.org/msscene/2005/07/16;
Strategies for Fatigue Management

www.medscape.com;
Wilner, A.N., *Managing Fatigue in Your Patients with MS*; 6/20/16

www.medscape.com;
Anderson, P.; *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Improved Fatigue in MS Patients*

Schapiro, R.T.; *Managing the Symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis, Fifth Edition*, 2007

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

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Our Mission

Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI) makes a positive difference for people living with disabilities, enhances community child care, and strengthens families.



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 our website at www.episervice.org.



Cornerstone Giving

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



Mark Your Calendar

March 31 More Than You See is back this year at the Hilton Garden Inn in Cedar Falls with MC Cory Ford from KCRR 97.7! Get your tickets online at www.episervice.org today.