



# News

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## More Than You See

**We envision a world where society regularly looks past the disability they see to the person within.** With that vision in mind, Exceptional Persons Foundation is ready to kick off its second annual silent auction, dueling pianos benefit.

More Than You See will take place on Thursday, November 13 from 6 pm until 9 pm at Sunnyside Country Club in Waterloo.

Last year we saw our vision come to life. Some of our favorite remarks from our guests included:

- "It was so lively and fun - we didn't want the night to end."
- "This was a great event to bring my friends to - low pressure and very entertaining."
- "My favorite part was seeing persons of all abilities and backgrounds interacting - especially when all guests came together to sing *Lean on Me*."

Come be a part of the fun and celebrate persons of all abilities. Maybe you will be the one to walk away with one of the auction items, like a trip for two to Hilton Head, South Carolina or a trip for two to any concert in the continental United States!

**Reserve your seats today by going online, calling our office, or by simply returning the form in this newsletter.**

All money raised from this event supports Exceptional Persons, Inc. in making a positive difference in the lives of persons living with a disability.

So bring your friends and join in on the hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, and laughs provided by our guest MC, Gary Kroeger. 176 Keys Fun Pianos, back by popular demand, will entertain with their dueling pianos. We hope to see you there!

Supporting ▶▶▶  
the Panthers is a  
favorite pastime  
for many.

“This rule  
seeks to ensure  
individuals  
receiving Home  
and Community  
Based Services  
(HCBS) have  
access to the  
community at the  
same degree as  
other individuals.”

*Contact with  
Newsletter  
Questions:*

BETHANY THOMAS  
Communications &  
Development Specialist



## Legislative Watch

### New Rules for the Home and Community Based Services

In January the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) changed the definition of “community.” Since then, they have issued a toolkit including technical guidance for the transition plans.

With this in mind, let’s continue talking about how this affects persons with disabilities and our organization.

The rule introduces several terms EPI has embraced for many years, including “integrated,” “choice,” “individualized,” and “community access.” At EPI these are more than just terms, it’s a way of life.

#### Residential Services

For many years we’ve been offering services in homes to three to four persons. The smaller setting gives the persons served greater choice. Such as where to live, with whom, and greater access to do the activities they enjoy in the community.

#### Employment Services

We work hard finding employment within the community for anyone who is able and willing to work.

We believe employment is key to gaining community membership and social relationships. With this in mind, we strive to find not just a job, but a job that matches the varied interests and desires of each person we serve.

Some come into our services ready to work and find a job immediately. Others need help refining their work skills first. For the latter, we offer training through a process that helps gain necessary skills. Typically within six months to a year they are ready to hold a competitive job within the community.

EPI is also a service provider for the Walgreen’s Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative, also known as the REDI program. This is an extern training process that aims to help achieve retail and customer service skills. The REDI program works closely with community organizations and vocational rehab agencies to train and develop candidates.

#### Day Habilitation

Our CHOICE Day Habilitation program gives participants the opportunity to independently make decisions about activities they wish to take part in during the day. By participating in CHOICE, people develop social skills in a variety of settings within the community.

**Often, we think of our services as a bridge when we think of each service we provide. We assist the community in getting to know persons with disabilities and persons with disabilities to fully participate in their community.**



◀◀◀ Ready to  
march in a  
community  
parade

## Working Towards an Accessible Community

**Walking across the street.  
Driving to an appointment.  
Opening a door to a business.  
For many, achieving these  
activities are relatively simple  
— we might even take them for  
granted.**

To many of the persons  
served by EPI; however,  
these activities are full of  
barriers and unspoken  
messages.

Imagine waiting for a  
bus, your only means of  
transportation, on a cold  
winter day without shelter.

Consider how you would feel  
if you couldn't cross the street  
because you can't get over  
the curb at the street crossing  
with your wheelchair. Or,  
being stuck outside, forced  
to wait for the kindness of a  
stranger, just to open the door  
of the business.

While our community has  
come a long way, there are  
still many more solutions we  
must find together. That's  
how the Accessibility

Committee at Exceptional  
Person's, Inc. got its start.

Here's how it works...a  
person with a disability  
contacts the committee with  
concerns of barriers they've  
encountered.

**Our committee then works  
together with various  
stakeholders to find solutions  
that work for all parties  
involved.**

Sometimes it's as simple as  
offering alternatives. This was  
the case when a rent box was  
located at the top of stairs  
— out of reach for tenants  
unable to use stairs.

A committee member  
together with the tenant  
reached out to the  
apartment's office and came  
up with three solutions such  
as staff picking up the check  
and accepting payment  
by mail or electronic fund  
transfers.

Sometimes it may look like  
no solution can be found.

It felt this way with one  
area business who didn't  
have automatic doors. As  
our committee engaged  
in discussion, we learned  
the layout of the building  
prohibited the installation of  
automatic doors.

Upon further discussion, the  
business is moving towards  
a doorbell system ensuring  
guests won't be left outside  
waiting too long for the door.

These are but a few of the  
recent projects this committee  
has had a hand in. As we look  
back on the years of service,  
the committee recalls curb  
cutout projects allowing for a  
smooth transition across the  
street and bus stop shelters  
among some of their most  
proud accomplishments.

**With the help of the  
Accessibility Committee and  
all who work together to bring  
about change, we can make  
this community accessible and  
welcoming for everyone.**

*Business partners  
employing  
individuals with  
disabilities:*

American Color  
Imaging  
Brown Bottle  
Dan Deery Motor Co.  
Doughy Joey's  
Easton  
University Hy-Vee  
Waterloo Walmart

For more information  
about employing  
a person with a  
disability, contact us  
at (319) 232-6671.

Participants ►►►  
out helping  
Iowa become a  
healthier state at  
the Healthiest State  
Walk



## Just Briefly

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

### EPI Board of Directors

WADE ITZEN - President  
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### Healthiest State Walk

Shoes were laced up and a number of walkers took off for our third annual Healthiest State Walk on October 8. EPI is proud to do our part to help Iowa become the healthiest state when it comes to being physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy.

Congratulations to the winner of the fitness basket (valued at \$200)! A big thank you to everyone who took the time to walk with us at Prairie Lakes Park. A special thank you to our CHOICE program for making snacks and Hy-Vee for providing the fruit and water.

### Charles "Chuck" Ohi (1961 - 2014)

Chuck was born in Waterloo, Iowa. He was known by many here at EPI as a fantastic DSP who worked with persons served for five years.

Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers go out to his family. Chuck will be missed greatly by those he supported and by the many friends he made at EPI along the way.

### Seehase Elected to IACP Board

Join EPI in congratulating our very own Susan Seehase for being elected onto the board of directors of the Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP). The IACP is a member trade association for community providers within the state. Susan will be participating on the board of directors during a pivotal time in our industry.

Providers of disability services like EPI are learning to be responsive to managed care and the new federal definition of community services (CMS). Providers have historically been nimble, but the pace of change continues to increase. That's why we are excited Susan is able to be a part of the board during such a dynamic time. We know her involvement will benefit persons served and our entire organization.

### Create a Fundraiser for EPI

Sharing just got easier! Over the years our donors have asked to fundraise on our behalf. Now you can use our online giving site to fund a cause.

Here's how it works, visit our website at [www.episervice.org](http://www.episervice.org) and click on the link to "Fundraise for EPI." Next, create a fundraising page about a cause you feel most passionate about, like the essential needs fund or helping persons with disabilities find employment, and share it with your network. It's that simple!





## The Importance of DSPs

What is a Direct Support Professional? In the words of a person served, "She is there when I need help." Another person goes on to say, "She pushes me to be the best person I can be."

**One DSP stated, "A DSP sees the individuals we support not for their disabilities but for their abilities." While this is the voice of just one DSP, we know it's a belief shared by many and what makes the DSPs at EPI among the very best.**

September 8-12 was recognized nationally as Direct Support Professionals Week. Within EPI it's a time we slow down and sincerely thank the DSPs we count on each and every day.

But, it's not the only time we recognize the dedication and commitment of our DSPs. Each month we award a DSP of the Month. Congratulations to the recent DSP of the Month winners, Catherine Ehlers, Dave Stentiford, Jennifer Phelps, and Kyla Krouse.

These outstanding DSPs have been nominated by their peers for their accomplishments, the relationships they develop, the advocacy they put forth, the sacrifices they make, the creativity they showcase, and the leadership skills they possess.

If you know a DSP, take the time to express your appreciation today.

## The Giving Tree

Deck the halls because the Giving Tree is just around the corner! We decorate the tree with tags that include modest needs and desires for persons with disabilities - adults and children - whose requests would otherwise go unmet.

**Stop by our Ansborough office beginning November 21 to find needs hanging on the trees.** Your generosity will make spirits bright for persons and families right here in the Cedar Valley. Last year we were able to fulfill all 267 needs and would love to do it again this year. Pictured is one of last year's Giving

Tree recipients with the gifts she received from generous donations. Consider grabbing a tag and spreading some joy this year.



◀◀◀ "We see abilities not disabilities."

## Exceptional Persons Foundation Board of Directors

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Program Manager

Staff Development  
Manager



## The Rewards of Being a Family Caregiver

by Diane Holmes, LISW

We're all familiar with the costs of being a family caregiver - stress, hard work, long hours, depression, social isolation, and financial pressures. But that perspective overlooks the value of services provided by family members, estimated at \$306-450 billion annually. More importantly being a family caregiver can be enriching, rewarding, and a powerful act of love. James R. Sherman, Ph.D. wrote a series of books about making the caregiving experience a good one - for the people giving and receiving care - as well as ways to prevent and cope with the related stresses. This article focuses on using creativity, humor, and a positive attitude.

Much of caregiving involves unexpected challenges, but with creativity, challenges can be successfully overcome. Problems seen as opportunities to play and experiment with until a solution is identified can build a sense of pride and can be fun for the caregiver and person receiving care. Our biggest obstacle can be believing "that will never work." Sometimes the craziest

ideas can lead to the best solutions, if we openly explore every option.

Attitude about situations can make life miserable or outstanding more than what actually happens. The good news is that we have the ability to change our attitude. The challenge is becoming aware of the thoughts and attitudes that lead to feeling overwhelmed, angry, or hopeless, and making a conscious choice to choose healthy ones. We can eliminate negative input by not watching TV or reading newspapers that focus on the negative, substituting reading or programs that are inspirational and optimistic; writing down inspirational quotes or sayings and putting them in a small box to pull out daily. We can boost our attitude with exercise, calling a friend, or giving flowers to the person for whom we provide care. These changes can reorient our thinking and attitude.

Let's face it, funny things happen when providing care for another, if we are paying attention. Have you ever flushed underwear down the toilet trying to clean up after an

episode of incontinence or gotten trapped between the toilet and a wheelchair trying to help someone use a public restroom? As Bill Cosby said, "If you can find humor in it, you can survive it." To feed our humor we can have a "humor buddy" to tell a good joke when we need it, or build a "humortorium," a place where we keep funny books and movies, clown noses, and soap bubbles. As the great sage Dr. Seuss said, "From there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere." We just have to look for it.

#### Positive Caregivers

- are realistic
- feel good about themselves
- trust others and are compassionate
- feel they are in control of their lives
- feel challenged, courageous, and competent
- have healthy ambitions and pursue realistic goals
- are creative and competitive in constructive ways
- are good friends with their care receiver and others
- have no difficulty in developing healthy interpersonal relationships
- can take a position on a sensitive topic without becoming obsessed
- are tolerant of others, even those who have different belief systems
- see themselves as others do and are comfortable with what they see

## MS Support Groups

### October

- Tama, 10/29 - 9:30 am

### November

- Bremer/Butler, 11/12 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 11/19 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 11/26 - 9:30 am

### December

- Bremer/Butler, 12/10 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 12/17 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 12/24 - 9:30 am

### January

- Bremer/Butler, 1/14 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 1/21 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 1/28 - 9:30 am

### February

- Bremer/Butler, 2/11 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 2/18 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 2/25 - 9:30 am

## MS Support Group Meeting Locations

### Bremer/Butler

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

### Waterloo

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

### Tama

Senior Center Community Building,  
103 S. Church, Toledo  
(Last Wednesday)

### Sources:

Sherman,  
J.R., Creative  
Caregiving, The  
Magic of Humor In  
Caregiving, Positive  
Caregiver Attitudes

[nfcacares.org](http://nfcacares.org)

[everydayhealth.com](http://everydayhealth.com)

### Agency Leadership Team

MARY JANSSEN  
Children & Family  
Services Director

DEB JUNGLING  
Business Director

LISA PATERNO  
Human Resource  
Director

SUSAN SEEHASE  
Services Director

KATIE SLADE  
Communications &  
Development Director

CHRIS SPARKS  
Executive Director

Please remember the  
Exceptional Persons  
Foundation in your  
will and estate planning.



## Our Mission

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



## Wish List

- Twin size mattress/box spring
- iTunes gift cards
- Green cleaning supplies
- Swiffer dusters
- Magic Erasers
- Games for Wii

A complete wish list can be found online. Remember other items can be donated through EPI's account at Stuff, Etc. in Waterloo. Proceeds from these sales are passed on to persons served to shop for essential needs. Call (319) 233-8009 or go online to [www.stuffetcwaterloo.com](http://www.stuffetcwaterloo.com) to set up an appointment.

## 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 cash donations anytime. Scan the QR code to the left or visit our website at [www.episervice.org](http://www.episervice.org) and click "donate now."

## Mark Your Calendar

**More Than You See** - Thursday, November 13 at Sunnyside County Club, 6:00-9:00 pm. Reserve your seats by returning the form in this newsletter, by visiting us online, or by calling.

**Giving Tree** - Trees will be up by November 21 and donations will be accepted until December 12 at 760 Ansborough Avenue in Waterloo.