

Spring 2016



EPI News



New Business Partners

- Black Hawk Gymnastics
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Cedar Falls Health Care Center of Iowa
- Cherry Creek Grill
- Dalton Plumbing, Heating, & Cooling, Inc.
- Hansen's Dairy
- Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers
- Sam's Club
- Talk To Me Technologies
- Witham Auto Center

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

You Make the Difference

Your decision to give doesn't just make a difference, it makes the difference in the lives of those served by EPI.

EPI provides over 15 critical services to persons with disabilities. Funding falls short for many of these services. That's why the Exceptional Persons Foundation works to fill these gaps each year.

Your decision to give to the Exceptional Persons Foundation, which supports EPI, ensure these important services are available when they are needed most.

Your decision to give means John can accomplish his goal. His goal of finding a job he loves in the community where he lives. This could only be possible with your support of EPI's Employment Services.

Your decision to give helps Beth be more independent. Where she once needed assistance getting up the stairs to her front door, she now

can do it herself with the ramp built through the critical housing fund that your donation supported.

Your decision to give provides necessities for people when they are needed most through the Essential Needs Fund. Rent assistance for Colin when one of his roommates moved out. Groceries for Dennis when his funds were short. And, even a new pair of shoes for Joyce when hers became a too worn to wear anymore.

So, we could simply say "thank you" but that wouldn't quite cover it. You make the difference in the lives of many. Your gifts truly make dreams come true. And, your support of the Exceptional Persons Foundation is, to put it simply, inspiring.

To find out more about how you can support the needs of persons with disabilities, call or email us, we would be happy to talk about how you can make a difference.

For more ►►►
information visit
www.dhs.iowa.gov

**Numbers to Call
for Scheduling
Non-Emergency
Medical
Transportation
Rides (NEMT):**

**Amerigroup Iowa
Inc.**
Logisticare
(844) 544-1389

**UnitedHealthCare
Plan of the River
Valley, Inc.**
MTM
(888) 513-1613

**AmeriHealth
Caritas, Iowa Inc.**
Access2Care
(855) 346-9760

*Contact with
Newsletter
Questions:*

BETHANY THOMAS
Communications &
Development Specialist



IA Health Link Began on April 1

Most Medicaid and new Medicaid members who became eligible after April 1, 2016, have enrolled in IA Health Link.

Some Medicaid members will continue to receive coverage through a Medicaid Fee-for-Service (FFS) program without transitioning to IA Health Link.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) continues as is for members who did not transition to the IA Health Link. The FFS members use Access2Care for their transportation broker. Appointments can be scheduled by calling them at (866) 572-7662.

For NEMT services, each Managed Care Organization (MCO) has selected their own transportation vendor to provide authorization and schedule rides. Contact the NEMT broker assigned by the MCO to schedule this type of service.

We encourage you to continue to read more about this transition and visit the dhs.iowa.gov website to stay up-to-date.

EPI will continue to be here for you as we both transition into this new health coverage plan.

Pedersen, Dowie, McCausland Center Opens

We are deeply grateful to Mac McCausland, John Pedersen, and Frank Dowie for making their building available to us at a reduced price.

“It was important to us to pass the building on to an equally invested community partner,” stated Mac McCausland.

In addition, PDCM Insurance left much of their office furniture for our use. We are happy to say our staff have officially moved in and are settling into the new space.

“This group continues to invest in the Cedar Valley through their generosity,” remarked Chris Sparks, Executive Director.

The additional space, open by appointment, will house service delivery supervisory staff for our growing services. The Ansborough office will continue to provide administrative services open to the public from 8 am-5 pm.





More Than You See An Event For All

"More cowbell!" shouted many attendees from around the room.

For those of you who have seen Saturday Night Live's "More Cowbell" skit, imagine getting to see it live, in person.

For those of you who have not, imagine two grown men playing the cowbell while dancing intensely to the song, Don't Fear the Reaper.

This was just one of the highlights of the night at this year's More Than You See.

Brian, a person served by EPI, was among the 214 new friends made that night.

We were especially glad to see Brian because given the choice, he'd rather stay home than go out most days.

When Brian was offered the opportunity to attend More Than You See he became so excited it became all he talked about.

Brian started leaving his home to walk a couple of miles to the library to research previous More Than You See events.

On the night of the event, Brian was able to get out of the house, have some fun, and he even made a few new friends along the way.

Aside from the music and dancing, More Than You See is a silent auction, dueling pianos benefit for EPI.

In 2013, the event was created to encourage society to look beyond a person's exterior and really see the person within.

The goal was to come together regardless of our differences and enjoy a common love for musical entertainment.

The money raised during this magical night supports EPI's mission.

It may be help making a month of rent, job skill training necessary to get and keep a job, or critical housing improvements.

Thank you to our sponsors, auction donors, volunteers, attendees for making this night one to remember.

We thank you all for your commitment to EPI.

Join us next spring for More Than You See 2017!

Presenting Sponsor:

DanDeery Motor Co.

Piano Sponsor:

- Community Bank & Trust
- PDCM Insurance & Group Benefits Design

Friend Sponsor:

- Dennis Kruger
- Levi Architecture
- Mudd Advertising

Supporting Sponsor:

- Banklwa
- Felix & Fingers
- FSB Premier Wealth Management, Inc.
- Magee Construction
- Northwestern Mutual
- Schumacher Elevator Company
- Veridian Credit Union
- Warren Transport, Inc.
- Wells Fargo
- Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare

Media Sponsor

- 93.5 The Mix

Contributing Sponsor:

- Zsavooz Sports Lounge and Grill

Serving ►►►
meals at the
Salvation Army



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CHOICE Gives Back

Our list of partners for CHOICE's give back projects is growing! We could use your help to keep the motivation going.

EPI's CHOICE day habilitation program gladly offers up their volunteer services by giving back to the community. Serving lunches at the Salvation Army, sorting and stocking at the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, and making dog treats for the Humane Society, just to name a few.

Contact us today at (319)232-6671 if you have any opportunities for us to offer our services to your business.

Newly Certified Brain Injury Specialists

Join us in congratulating Dawn Lammers, DeVonne Bates, and Brian Brandau on becoming Certified Brain Injury Specialists.

The Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) offers a voluntary national certification program for both direct care staff and professionals working in brain injury services.

Just Briefly

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

Remembering Doug Oberman (1945 - 2016)



Doug Oberman served on EPI's board of directors for many years and we are better for having known and worked alongside of him.

Later, Doug was EPI's legal counsel for many years providing trusted and consistent guidance.

At age 8 Doug was diagnosed with polio, losing the use of his arms and creating life long breathing challenges. Doug went on to become an international spokesman for the eradication of child polio in underdeveloped countries.

Our deepest condolences go out to Doug's friends and families, he will be missed by many.



DOL Overtime Exemption Rule Proposal

On May 18 U.S. Department of Labor's Overtime Exemption Rule was released later updating the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) salary threshold to more than double the current salary threshold at which workers are exempt from overtime requirements.

This rule applies to all Executive, Administrative, and Professional (EAP) workers. Meaning, many of our frontline supervisors would become eligible for overtime payment for hours in excess of forty in a week.

To be clear, we are certainly not opposed to paying our employees better wages. In fact, we are wildly in favor of paying the staff who do this important work more.

Our dilemma is this: there is no money to fund this increased expenditure. Without a corresponding change in our Medicaid rate there is truly no mechanism to cover this expense.

Providers like EPI are almost entirely funded with federal Medicaid dollars. We have little flexibility to negotiate higher rates, even as operating costs rise and demand for services increase.

The increase in the overtime threshold - while obviously well intentioned - is simply solving the wrong problem. Our staffing crisis is in our direct support professional positions.

We take our mission of supporting people with disabilities to fully participate in their communities seriously.

The raise of the salary threshold for overtime exemption will be enforced on December 1, 2016.

We urge Congress and the Administration to approve a temporary Medicaid funding increase for providers.

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Current Career Openings

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Discharge Manager

Bus Driver

CHOICE Group
Leader

Direct Support
Professional

Integration Specialist

Program Manager

Agency Leadership Team

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Healthy Emotional Coping Skills Improve Quality of Life with MS

by Diane Holmes, LISW

There has been controversy about the relationship between the mind and the body since the 1600's, but over time research has found emotions do affect physical health. Negative emotions, such as depression and anxiety, are associated with coronary heart disease, cardiovascular and immune system responses, as well as pain and fatigue. These findings are pertinent to people with MS, who experience depression at a rate three times higher than the general population. Depression affects quality of life by compromising cognitive function, may lead to suicidal intent, impairs relationships, reduces compliance with medications, and increases anxiety.

The diagnosis of MS can be overwhelming. Physical changes and limitations in function can lead to loss of identity, which is repeated with each new lost function. Research has found depression is more than the reaction to MS, but also related to the biology of the disease, including inflammation, neuroendocrine dysfunction, or

regional brain damage. A number of studies found psychological stress increases the risk of relapse in MS.

A 2014 study, Symptom Changes in Multiple Sclerosis Following Psychological Interventions: A Systematic Review, reviewed 200 articles, which were reduced to 22 studies that evaluated treatments of:

1. Reported outcomes on physical health
2. Investigated the effects of psychological treatments
3. Outcomes included comparison between a treatment group and randomized controls
4. Each study had at least 10 participants

Psychological interventions included cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation training, meditation, stress management, and coping skills. The psychological treatments, which were found the most effective intervention, improved quality of life and psychological well-being, reduced symptoms of depression, anxiety, and perceived stress. The majority

of psychological improvements were on perceived general health, including reduced fatigue, thus reducing physical limitations. There were also improvements in sleep, physical vitality and vigor, and the perception of pain. Objective measures of stress management interventions found a reduced number of brain lesions, and a patient education program reduced the number of relapses. The study found the more intense and effective the psychological interventions, the greater the changes in physical function.

Based on the findings of this and many other studies, the founders of the Multiple Sclerosis Services Program and EPI were clearly ahead of their time, developing a program for people affected by MS that included counseling, education and advocacy services provided by a professional. While treatments for MS have improved, the need for effective, ongoing services for people has not. With EPI, people with MS continue to have services that not only improve emotional wellbeing, based on research, also benefits physical health.

MS Support Groups

June

- Bremer/Butler, 6/8 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 6/15 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 6/29 - 9:30 am

July

- Bremer/Butler, 7/13 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 7/20 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 7/27 - 9:30 am

August

- Bremer/Butler, 8/10 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 8/17 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 8/31 - 9:30 am

September

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

October

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

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:

Pagnini, F; Bosma, C.M.; Phillips, D.; Langer, E.;
Symptom Changes In Multiple Sclerosis Following Psychological Interventions: A Systematic Review; BMC Neurol. 2014;14(222)

Rosenbaum, J.F.; Covino, J.M.: *Stress and Resilience: Implications for Depression and Anxiety; Medscape Psychiatry & Mental Health, 2005;10(2)©2005 Medscape*

Direct Support Professionals of the Month

EBONI COATS
August 2015

DUSTY MARTIN
September 2015

LARISSA DEEDS
October 2015

JACK SEALS
November 2015

MILKA PANIC
December 2015

SAMANTHA CARPENTER
January 2016

GWEN LEWIS
February 2016

HARRINAN JOWAY
March 2016

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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.



Thank You

Zsavooz hosted a four person best shot golf tournament at South Hills Golf Course. Proceeds from this event benefited EPI. Thank you for supporting our mission!