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## More Than You See

Mark your calendars for **More Than You See**, a dueling pianos benefit for EPI, Thursday, November 13 at Sunnyside Country Club.

Reserve seats online at [www.episervice.org](http://www.episervice.org), by calling (319) 232-6671 or simply scan the QR code below to be taken directly online to reserve seats.

Join EPI for hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and back by popular demand, dueling pianos by 176 Keys Fun Pianos. We hope to see you there!



## Iowa DSP of the Year

At EPI, Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are the true backbone of the organization, showing everyday their willingness to go above and beyond to support persons served.

Once a year, the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), recognizes DSPs for the inspiring work they do. Out of hundreds of nominations, Mitch Tyler (pictured above, left), one of EPI's own, was selected to receive DSP of the Year for Iowa. Awards were presented in May at the 2014 ANCOR Conference: Beyond the Envelope in Miami, Florida. EPI's executive director, Chris Sparks, who is also the National Advocacy Committee (NAC) co-chair, had the honor of speaking at this year's awards ceremony.

Only those who personify the values of ANCOR's National Advocacy Campaign are given this prestigious award. Judges are looking for the DSP's ability to bridge social networks for persons served, substantive community participation, and advocate for the people they support.

Mitch does all of these things and then some. He has been with EPI over six years and is always willing to go the extra mile for those he supports. His nomination talked a great deal about his leadership and his ability to truly be there for those he serves.

"Mitch's leadership is a pivotal component of the strength and endurance of his team. The bond Mitch develops with each person is strong and he works diligently to ensure that those he supports live a full life the way they would like."

Mitch was nominated by a group of his peers and received DSP of the Year shortly after he was awarded DSP of the Month at EPI. What a year for Mitch!

Mitch is the third DSP from EPI to be recognized through the ANCOR recognition program as DSP of the Year for Iowa. Chris Sparks commented, "We at EPI are proud of Mitch. The award shows the dedication he has to support people with disabilities and reflects the quality of services provided by EPI."





## Legislative Watch

### Legislators Compromise on MH/DS Funding

From infoNET,  
[www.infonetiowa.com](http://www.infonetiowa.com)

Iowa's mental health and disability services system (MH/DS) has been something Iowa Legislators have been working on for almost two decades. Over the last two years, they have made some very important changes to the way non-Medicaid services are delivered.

As of July 1, 2014, the changes that have been made will be fully operational, moving Iowa toward a more uniform regional system.

Regions will now all be required to have a set of basic "core services" that are available to Iowans with intellectual disabilities and mental illness. Regions will also be encouraged to begin developing "core plus" services such as crisis stabilization, as funds are available.

Previous redesign legislation did make a lot of changes but not all of them were permanent. State funding for the system was only in place until June 30, 2015, and local funding (property tax) was only allowed through June 30, 2016. However, the biggest challenge was figuring out how to calculate the savings, called "Medicaid Offset," these counties might see from people signing up for health insurance through the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan.

The good news is Legislators were able to find common ground. A small group worked out the details of a compromise that will provide regions with greater financial stability for the next two years. This will allow time to determine how much money is needed to

provide core services, core plus services, and services to other populations (i.e. people with brain injuries and people with developmental disabilities other than intellectual disabilities.)

Here are the details of the Medicaid redesign:

- **Increases funding for regional mental health and disability services by \$735,435.** This maintains the \$47.28 per person spending level.
- **Extends the "Equalization Formula" and county property tax levies for another year (through June 30, 2016).** Since the authorization was set to expire after next year, this will give regions the stability to evaluate the impacts of the redesign, health care reform, and the new payment system.
- **Continues the Medicaid Offset, but outlines a process for calculating actual savings.** The Medicaid offset reduces funding to MH/DS regions who "save" money because of the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan. The formula passed will look at actual county expenses.
- **Allows counties to maintain a 25% ending fund balance.** The Redesign Interim Committee felt it was important for counties to have enough money in the bank to get through the first three months of the fiscal year. Anything over 25% of the county's budget is to be spent on expanding core services and developing core plus services.

### Contact with Newsletter Questions:

SARAH PAVELEC  
Communications &  
Development Associate



## EPI Artist Inspired by Music, Poems

Since the young age of two years old, Susan DeLoff knew she wanted to be an artist. She created her first piece of “art” on the wall of her home with tubes of colored lipstick brought over by the Avon lady.

Not wanting to have her daughter continue to use the walls to paint her masterpieces, Susan’s mother brought home water colors, coloring books, and crayons to feed her need to create. Susan’s mother was also her first critic, telling her that the horse she drew didn’t look quite right. She then went on to major in art at UNI for her undergraduate degree as well as her master’s degree and receive her teaching certificate from ISU to teach community college art.

Since then, Susan has not stopped creating art, drawing and painting hundreds of pieces. Susan takes inspiration from music lyrics from such artists as the Beatles, Paul Simon, and Bob Dylan, as well as poems, classical music such

as Beethoven, and famous painters, Van Gough, Picasso, Rembrant, and DiVinci.

When she begins work, Susan literally doesn’t stop until a piece is finished. She once stayed up three days and three nights to complete a painting. Much of her work didn’t take quite that long but she stated, “I won’t stop until it’s finished. Ten hours without stopping, no eating or sleeping.”

Susan also takes the time to name each piece of art work she creates. Beautiful titles such as “Forgiving Jesus,” “Celestial Mansion,” and “Lion Lady,” are just a few of the titles of her work.

Her art has been displayed at a multitude of places, including galleries in New York, San Francisco, and right here in the Cedar Valley. Most of her pieces are in the permanent collection at the Waterloo Center for the Arts and can also be seen at the Hearst Center for the Arts as well as the University of Northern

Iowa. While Susan was attending UNI, the President of the University and his wife saw one of her paintings and immediately wanted it displayed in their home.

“Susan creates canvases of rare beauty.” “A contemporary masterpiece.” These are just a few of the words said about Susan’s magnificent pieces of art. She said when she paints, “I try to make beautiful work. Pictures of plants, people, flowers, and trees.” Her favorite part about painting? “The colors. All the colors are the best part.”

In addition to being a wonderful artist, Susan is forever the teacher, always wanting to share her wealth of knowledge to those wanting to learn.

What’s next for Susan? She continues to create art, but wants to start writing a short biography of each piece, why she painted it, the story behind it, to make sure future generations will know the true meaning behind her work.

◀◀◀ Acrylic art work done by Susan DeLoff. Susan, pictured below, is an artist, teacher, and person living with a traumatic brain injury and mental illness.



*Business partners employing individuals with disabilities:*

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

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



EPI Staff and individuals served walked in this year's My Waterloo Days Parade

## EPI Board of Directors

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## Just Briefly

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

### [Congratulations to the Graduate](#)

You may recall we recently asked for your help. A young man who has received services from EPI most of his life, recently graduated from high school. Having lost his only parent not long ago, he didn't have the funds to experience what most high school graduates do. With your help, he got the experience he wished for. Over \$800 was donated to assist with the costs, his suit for senior pictures was donated by Men's Warehouse and the pictures donated by American Color Imaging. Walking tacos and pizza were enjoyed at his party. Finally, his graduation gift was a long time dream come true - a three wheeled bike so he can ride in the community. Thank you to everyone who helped make this day a success and to the graduate - congratulations and job well done!

### [Thank You to Our Volunteers](#)

Since 1997, a group of volunteers, called the Gopher/Gopherettes, assist those we serve by sewing/mending clothing as well doing household repairs. We would like to say a big thank you to them all: Gene Anderson, Gary Baish, Sharron Bergmann, Rose Dobbs, Shirley Fogleman, Joan Hauck, Shirley Hendrington, Barb Jacobson, Jim Johnson, Sharon Johnson, Chuck Lidtke, Mary McCalley, Sharon Naylor, Marie Nitzschke, Voila Polk, and Nancy Golvinaux. Thank you for giving of your time to persons served.

### [Blood Drive](#)

EPI recently held a blood drive to benefit the American Red Cross. There were over 30

donors in attendance, many of which were EPI staff members. The Red Cross had a goal to collect 20 units of blood and that's exactly what they received. Those 20 units of blood will affect the lives of 60 patients in need of blood products. Thank you to all who came to give!

### [My Waterloo Days](#)

We had a great time walking in the My Waterloo Days parade this year. Afterwards, we received a wonderful email from a community member who attended the parade: "I just wanted to tell someone that I saw people wearing shirts that say "I'm more than you see" at the My Waterloo Days parade. I just wanted to let you know that it really touched everyone in our group. People forget to not stare and point at people who are different and that one little statement really touches your heart."

### [Integrated Health Home](#)

Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center, Pathways, and Lutheran Services in Iowa are now providing services through the Integrated Health Home (IHH) to those with mental health illness. Medicaid eligible adults with a serious mental illness and children with an emotional disturbance, affecting functioning at home or school, are eligible for this free program. For more information please call the IHH Directors: Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Center at (319) 234-2839 extension 301, Lutheran Services in Waterloo at (319) 233-3579, or Cedar Valley Mental Health Center, a division of Pathways at (319) 235-6571.



## CHOICE Gives and Receives

EPI's CHOICE Program provides meaningful day activities for individuals with disabilities. Giving back to the community has always been an important part of the CHOICE program. Over the years they have given many homemade items to organizations and businesses in the area (such as blankets, pillows, wreaths, and treats).

Recently, the Covenant Comprehensive Breast Center raised funds to support the CHOICE Program as a thank you for the support they've shown over the years. "They (the CHOICE program) definitely make sure we know how much they appreciate us. The folks at CHOICE have been donating handmade items (wreaths, blankets, and more) to the center for a while and we just wanted to do something nice in return."

Covenant sold T-shirts in support of breast cancer awareness and donated almost \$1,000 of the proceeds to EPI. It's only through the support of businesses such as these that EPI is able to make a difference.

The breast cancer awareness wreath displayed at the Covenant Comprehensive Breast Center receives many compliments.

Wreaths can be made from ribbon or burlap and can be customized with different colors or other embellishments. They make a great gift or wonderful decor for your home.

If you'd like a beautiful handmade wreath made by CHOICE, visit us online to check out the handmade gifts page to see some examples and place an order.

## Healthiest State Walk With EPI

Lace up your walking shoes for the third annual Healthiest State Walk with EPI. We will be at Prairie Lakes Park, back lake, in Cedar Falls on October 8, 2014, to walk 1k with thousands of others across the state of Iowa.

We're switching things up this year with the 1k walk kicking off at noon and a drawing for a fitness related prize afterwards for those in attendance! We will have snacks, water, and giveaways. Come spend 12 minutes or more with EPI! Endorsed by the Healthiest State Initiative.

◀◀◀ Staff and members of CHOICE receiving funds from the Covenant Comprehensive Breast Center

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## Current Career Openings

Direct Support Professional

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Staff Development Manager

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CHRIS SPARKS  
Executive Director



# Cognitive Functioning and Multiple Sclerosis

by Diane Holmes, LISW

Prior to the 1980s MS was believed to affect only physical functioning. Newer research, however has found 43% - 80% of people with MS experience cognitive symptoms. Research has also found cognitive symptoms can occur in people with minor physical symptoms and is not related to how long they have MS.

Like physical symptoms of MS, cognitive symptoms are related to the size and location of lesions. Missing any of the four steps of “working memory”, (paying attention, learning information, retrieving information, and putting information into action) affect cognitive functioning. Symptoms can include:

- Memory: difficulty remembering the plot of books, losing items, forgetting names or appointments, problems learning or recalling new information.
- Information processing: reduced information processing speed, although accuracy is maintained. Information from two sources at the same time can slow cognition, interfere with working memory, and affect planning and executing tasks.
- Attention and concentration: problems screening out distractions and dividing attention such as having a conversation while the TV is on, difficulty sticking to one task, and organizing information for recall later.
- Ability to shift between tasks: difficulty resuming a task after an interruption, and shifting back and forth between tasks.
- Conceptual reasoning and problem solving: These symptoms can be subtle and difficult to recognize. Symptoms include problems following complex instructions, solving puzzles or riddles, or not “getting” jokes.
- Executive function: Trouble organizing and following through with tasks, establishing priorities, and not knowing how to begin a task.
- Visual perceptual functioning and spatial orientation: Getting lost in a familiar area, confusing “right” and “left”, and problems judging distances between objects, which causes problems when driving.



Other cognitive problems can include “cognitive fatigue,” especially doing a series of calculations, “emotional disturbance” such as depression, euphoria, bi-polar disorder and pathological laughing or crying, and “Pseudobulbar affect disorder,” related to the ability to regulate emotions. Cognitive functioning can also be affected by fatigue, depression and side effects of medications.

There are a number of tests to measure cognitive function.

Test results are used by neuropsychologists, psychologists, speech-language and occupational therapists, and counselors to develop an individualized cognitive rehabilitation program. In his book, “Facing The Cognitive Challenges of Multiple Sclerosis” author Jeffrey N. Gingold suggests four goals for living with MS.

- Goal 1: Cognitive Education - inform your support team (medical and family) of your symptoms and use humor to cope.
- Goal 2: Take Action - find activities that keep your mind sharp.
- Goal 3: Reach for Available Answers - learn about cognitive symptoms and plan your life accordingly.
- Goal 4: Leave Room for Slow Hugs - cherish the people you love and enjoy life.

Wise words from a person living with MS!

## MS Support Groups

### August

- Bremer/Butler, 8/13 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 8/20 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 8/27 - 9:30 am

### September

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

### October

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

### November

- Bremer/Butler, 11/12 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 11/19 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 11/25 - 9:30 am

### December

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

LaRocca, N.; Kalb, R.; Multiple Sclerosis: Understanding The Cognitive Challenges; 2006

Shi, J.; Khurana, S.; Cognitive Issues in Multiple Sclerosis; Unitedspinal.org/mcene/2007/04/24

NMSS Cognition and MS Task Force; Expert Opinion Paper: Assessment and Management of Cognitive Impairment in Multiple Sclerosis

Gingold, J.; Facing The Cognitive Challenges of Multiple Sclerosis; 2011



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Please remember the  
 Exceptional Persons  
 Foundation in your  
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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.

## Connect With Us



## Wish List

- Gas grills
- Bicycles
- Green cleaning supplies
- Gift cards to Kohl's for bedding/bath items
- Gardening tools/items
- Gift cards to Gordman's for home decor
- Tickets to entertainment (hockey, baseball, basketball, festivals, theatre, bowling, etc.)
- iPads
- Durable medical equipment

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) 233-8809 or visit them online at [www.stuffetcwaterloo.com](http://www.stuffetcwaterloo.com) to set up an appointment.

## Mark Your Calendars 2014

### Healthiest State Walk With EPI

Wednesday, October 8 - Prairie Lakes Park, walk starting at noon.

### More Than You See - Thursday, November 13

Sunnyside County Club, 6:00-9:00 pm.

To reserve your seat, please visit [www.episervice.org/morethan](http://www.episervice.org/morethan) or call (319) 232-6671.

## 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".