



# EPI News



*from the heart*

DSP RECOGNITION WEEK:  
SEPTEMBER 9 - 15

## Quotes from Persons Served about the DSPs in their Lives

“My staff helps me and makes me smile.”

“I hope my staff stays for a long time”

“My staff is a sweet person who I like a lot”

“What I like about my staff is she takes us places that we like.”

“I like that they are there when i have a problem.”

“I like that she helps me be healthy!”

“I want my staff to stay forever.”

## Thank You, Direct Support Professionals

When you became a Direct Support Professional, you knew you would help people acquire skills necessary to live their lives - activities of daily living, chores around the house, or grocery shopping.

What you might not have known is you would quickly become a pseudo family member, an advocate, and someone who holds a special place in hearts.

You probably didn't know you could be caught jumping up and down, screaming at the top of your lungs or even showing off your best happy dance, because you witnessed someone's first sign, first steps after a bad fall, or their first chance at a real job.

You probably didn't know you would be compelled to passionately bring an injustice to the attention of a complete stranger at a movie

theater because they called someone you care about the R-word. Now, sticking up for what is right just comes naturally to you.

What's amazing is, becoming a Direct Support Professional is far more than that. It's becoming someone's person, confidante, and friend.

While one week is certainly not enough, we - and the rest of the nation - set aside the second week in September each year to extend our gratitude for all of the hard work you do that does not go unnoticed.

Direct Support Professionals are truly the backbone of EPI. And for that, we thank you.

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More information and helpful resources can be found at [www.ancor.org](http://www.ancor.org)



### Cornerstone Giving

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

*Contact with Newsletter Questions:*

BETHANY GIACHINO  
Communications & Development Specialist



## Legislative Watch: Celebrating Success!

In late 2016, Congress had ordered states to install Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) systems - one way to prevent fraud in Medicaid as part of the 21st Century Cures Act. Many implementation challenges arose after this bill had passed. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) did not release guidance on the EVV statute until late May of 2018, leaving states in the dark for a full 18 months following the EVV law.

Despite CMS's guidance, many concerns remain about which disability supports and services are required to comply with the rule. Additionally, there was little stakeholder input, questions about privacy, costs and other aspects of compliance.

Along with American Network of Community Options (ANCOR), we asked you to let Congress know it was time to step in and give everyone more time to make sure EVV was done the right way.

Thanks to your efforts, we are celebrating success! The Electronic Visit Verification Delay Bill headed to

the President's desk and was signed on July 30, 2018.

This bipartisan bill delays implementation by one year until January 2020 and permits an additional one-year good faith effort delay. This allows states to request an extension for implementation until January 2021.

The next step in our EVV efforts is to continue working with CMS on improved guidance and considering a larger legislative fix to the EVV legislation.

Make sure to sign up for our action alerts by subscribing at the bottom of [www.episervice.org](http://www.episervice.org) to continue to stay updated on this and much more.



◀◀◀  
Day Hab  
Volunteering on  
Main Street in  
Cedar Falls

## Nurturing Growth in the Community

“We like to help out in our community. It was hard work but it was a lot of fun!” said a member of EPI’s Day Habilitation program after planting on Main Street one afternoon.

When EPI’s Day Hab program decided to adopt the 300 block of Main Street in Cedar Falls, they knew it wasn’t a small task.

Adopting this stretch of Main Street is about planting and maintaining the flower beds along the sidewalks and sculptures, but also about being responsible for the routine cleanup of the entire block.

To kick off the summer, Day Hab spent one afternoon dedicated to gardening, never missing the “lavender by the door for good luck,” rule they wanted to apply to each business door front.

When talking with Tom Engelbrecht, Business Developer at EPI, he had many great things to say about the influence volunteering has on the people we serve, and about the importance of the connections we make with people along the way.

“We do a ton of impactful and meaningful things with our Day Hab groups in the community every day, a lot of which is aimed at helping those in need and working with other non-profits in the area.” said Tom.

“One unique and great thing about this arrangement with Cedar Falls Community Main Street is that this is something every single person that goes down the street gets to enjoy, regardless of who they are or where they come from.” he continued.

Community members and beyond are certainly enjoying this 300 block of Main Street, as we have been thanked multiple times from Cedar Falls Downtown District and many of its members.

Our hope is to continue to spread joy wherever we may go.



### 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!

Mary Janssen ►►► receiving her Ovation Award, pictured with members of her team!

### EPI Board of Directors

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### Mary Janssen Receives Ovation Award

Congratulations are in order for our Children and Family Services Director, Mary Janssen! Earlier this summer, she received an Ovation award as one of the Iowa Women's Foundation Tributes.

Mary is a truly remarkable woman who is constantly advocating for children and child care for Iowa. Her leadership style stresses communication and teamwork that's reflected in her team. She is a wonderful role model and we are very lucky to have her!



### EPI Receives Grant for Employment Services

We are pleased to share that EPI recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Otto Schoitz Foundation that will benefit our employment program!

With the support of grant funds, we can continue to offer this crucial service for individuals to follow their dreams of finding and keeping a job in the community. Thank you to the Otto Schoitz Foundation for your investment to help us further our mission!

## Just Briefly

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

### Voter Registration at EPI

In honor of National Disability Voter Registration Week, EPI partnered with League of Women Voters of Black Hawk and Bremer Counties and held a Voter Registration Drive at the Deery Center. We believe voting is a form of advocacy for the people we serve and want to make Voter Registration as easy as possible.



### Kim Davis 1961 - 2018

Kim Davis, of Waterloo, passed away in late July. Kim was born in Little Rock, Arkansas and later moved to Iowa in 1982.

Kim became a member of the EPI family in 1991. Our thoughts are with her friends and family. Kim will be missed by all of us here at EPI.

### Tim Gates 1968 - 2018

Tim Gates, 49, of Waterloo passed away on July 17. He joined the EPI family in 2005.

Tim will be greatly missed here at EPI. Please join us in extending our deepest sympathies to his family.



## Move in Packages Providing Necessities for Persons Served

At this spring's More Than You See dueling pianos benefit, attendees joined forces to raise funds to provide 25 move in packages for individuals served by EPI.

This fund was created to support persons entering services with little to nothing and no resources to establish their home.

Move in packages provide everyday essentials such as bed sheets, towels, kitchen items, and hygiene items to individuals in need.

Since April, we have fulfilled seven move in package requests for individuals entering our services! Each move in package we are able to fulfill helps make a person's move into their new house feel more like a home.

Thank you to all who helped us reach our goal at More Than You See and who continue to support the individuals we serve!

## Remembering John Deery Sr.

With heavy hearts we share the news of the passing of John Deery Sr. on July 18.

Mr. Deery has been a staple in our community for several years and a longtime supporter of EPI. Our Deery Center location is named in honor of John and his wife Marlene who sold the building to EPI at a bargain sale in 2004.

We will forever be grateful for John's generosity and compassion for his community. He will be greatly missed.



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## Current Career Openings

Direct Support  
Professional

Direct Support  
Professional - Night  
Attendant

Integration Specialist

## Find us at the Job Fairs:

- **August 22:**  
at Hawkeye  
Community  
College from  
10 to 1 pm
- **September 17:**  
at UNI from  
11 to 3 pm
- **October 4:**  
at Wartburg  
from 11:30  
to 2 pm

## Agency Leadership Team

MARY JANSSEN  
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Services Director

DEB JUNGLING  
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LISA PATERNO  
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KATIE SLADE  
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Medical marijuana, from the plant *Cannabis Sativa*, has been used for medical purposes for thousands of years. But, because marijuana is an illegal, Schedule I drug in the USA, research, using the scientific protocol required for approval by the FDA, is limited. While, study results are contradictory, many people who use it report its benefits. In fact, Multiple Sclerosis is the second most common reason for medical marijuana use in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

The plant, *Cannabis Sativa* continues tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which has psychoactive effects and cannabidiol (CBD), which does not. The *Cannabis* strains that contain CBD levels equal to or higher than THC, are reported to have positive effects on muscle spasticity and pain in people who have MS, and was reported to be safe by The American Academy of Neurology in 2014.

## Medical Marijuana to Treat MS Symptoms

by Diane Holmes, LISW

The National MS Society reports a 2012 study, “MS and Extract of Cannabis” (MUSEC), found an oral cannabis extract improved muscle stiffness, body pain, spasms and sleep quality. A 2018 article, reported on Medscape.com, suggested medical marijuana could be a viable alternative to opioids to treat chronic pain, stating, those who use it “require fewer prescriptions for painkillers and other medications”.

Other studies have found improvement in MS-related symptoms including tremor and bladder problems; jerky eye movements, called nystagmus; tremor and spasticity; depression; anxiety; tingling; numbness; weight loss; and leg weakness.

However, smoking medical marijuana can pose significant health risks, including cancer or impaired lung function. Marijuana use has also been linked to

increased risk of heart attack and seizure, as well as problems with memory, confusion, coordination, walking, and mental health issues. It can also be addicting for some individuals and interact negatively with medications.

In 2017 the Iowa legislature approved the legal use of CBD Cannabis Oil with a maximum of 3% THC for people with a “qualifying condition”. “Multiple Sclerosis with severe and persistent muscle spasms” is one of the “qualifying conditions”, but physicians can also recommend it to treat symptoms due to other causes. Requirements to become a Medical Marijuana patient in Iowa include:

- must be an Iowa resident with a valid Iowa ID
- medical records indicating the diagnosis of a qualifying condition
- written documentation from a physician licensed in Iowa verifying the qualifying condition
- apply for and receive a Medical Marijuana Card from the State of Iowa

To legally possess and use cannabidiol, the approved medical marijuana extract, a

patient or primary caregiver must submit an application to the Iowa Department of Public Health. When approved, a registration card can be obtained from the Iowa Department of Transportation. Cards are valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

## MS Support Groups

### August

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

### September

- No group meetings this month

### October

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

### November

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

[nationalmssociety.org](http://nationalmssociety.org), “Managing Pain & Sleep Issues in MS”

US National Library of Medicine, NIH; *Frontiers in Neurology*; 2017; 8:299

[MS Center.org](http://MSCenter.org)

[medscape.com](http://medscape.com);  
Watson, J.; *Smoke and Mirrors: Is Marijuana Actually Medicinal? 2018*

[iowadot.gov](http://iowadot.gov)

## *Latest Business Partners for Employment Services*

- Menards (Cedar Falls)
- Walmart (Independence)
- Pepper Jax Grill
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- Okoboji Grill

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

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Waterloo, IA

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



### **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.



**October 15** Looking for a career change or know someone who is? Join us for an EPI Job Fair at the Deery Center on 3675 University Avenue from 4 - 6 pm. We will be holding on the spot interviews for Direct Support Professional (DSP) positions. Watch online for tips and more details to come!



### **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](http://www.episervice.org).