



Fall 2013

on the inside

Giving Tree

We invite you to stop by during regular business hours between December 3 and 13 to pick up a tag (or two) and support a person in need, 760 Ansborough Ave., Waterloo. You can also stop by the Larry K. Fox & Associates Ameriprise office, 3404 Midway Dr., in Waterloo to grab a tag during regular business hours.

The Traveling Giving Tree is back

EPI is again joining with the Waterloo Police and Protective Association and making stops in the community. Join us at:

- PDCM - December 3, 10:00 AM
- Waterloo City Hall - December 3, 11:00 AM

Visit www.episervice.org for more information.



The Tradition Continues

Visits to grandma's house, hanging stockings, or cooking a family recipe, each of us have our holiday traditions. The Christmas season is almost upon us and with it brings one of EPI's favorite traditions, the Giving Tree.

Last year, EPI staff and the community showed an overwhelming amount of support, filling over 280 requests and providing gifts for more than 75 individuals as well as gifts for the CHOICE and Children's programs.

Taking a tag from the tree provides much more than a simple gift. Many families and individuals served truly have no funds for gifts. A warm pair of gloves and a scarf, new pillows or a pair of tennis shoes are just a few of the modest needs that have been requested in the past.

These gifts not only fulfill a need, but also give the individual the joy of opening a gift this holiday season.

At EPI, we again look to our friends in the community to help make spirits bright this holiday.

Stop by 760 Ansborough Avenue between December 3 and 13 to find a special need you'd like to fulfill.

There will also be opportunities to visit us at one of the traveling Giving Tree stops in the community. Continue to check our website, www.episervice.org, our Facebook page, or sign up for our email updates to find out where the tree will be stopping next.

We ask for wrapped gifts to be returned during regular business hours by December 16. Monetary donations, hand written cards, and wrapping paper are also welcome.

From everyone at EPI, thank you for your continued support of this cherished tradition.



Legislative Watch

Information from
Iowa Info Net.

As of October 1, 2013, enrollment has begun for the Iowa Wellness Plan and the Marketplace Choice Plan, and it is important to know what these programs are and who is eligible for them.

The Iowa Health and Wellness Plan is Iowa's answer to Medicaid expansion and it is still awaiting the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approval. Although enrollment began in October, participation will not be effective until January 1, 2014.

Part one of the two-tiered plan is the Iowa Wellness Plan. Those eligible are people age 19-64 who earn up to 100% of the federal poverty level (\$11,490 and below annual income for one person and \$15,510 and below for a family of two.) The second part of the plan is the Marketplace Choice Plan. People age 19-65 who earn between 101%-135% of the federal poverty level are eligible for this plan (between \$11,490 - \$15,512 annual income for one person and \$15,510 - \$20,939 for a family of two).

There will be no monthly premium payments for 2014, but in 2015 those earning over 50% of the federal poverty level will pay \$10 a month for the Iowa Wellness plan and \$20 a month for the Marketplace Choice Plan. This amount increases for participant's with higher incomes.

Premiums can be waived if those enrolled participate in "healthy behaviors." This includes a wellness exam and health risk assessment

in the first year. If a person does this in 2014, the monthly premiums are waved in the second year. Beginning in the second year a person is enrolled (and annually after that), a person will have to do two of the following annually for premium co-pays to be waived: health risk assessment, wellness exam, smoking cessation program or be a non-smoker, lower body mass index, or participate in health education programs or preventive screenings. Those who do not pay their portion or do not participate in one of the "healthy behaviors" are subject to de-enrollment.

The state is also asking that waivers be approved for the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan. Some of these waivers are choice of provider, cost sharing caps, and payment for non-emergency transportation. The CMS will give Iowans a chance to submit comments and will consider these comments before deciding whether Iowa can implement the program as outlined in the waiver applications. The federal government can either approve the plans, approve the plans but deny some of the waiver requests, or reject the plan.

*Contact with
Newsletter
Questions:*

SARAH PAVELEC
Communications &
Development Associate



Creative Take on Wellness

EPI's second annual Healthiest State Walk was a success with over 175 community members coming together to support wellness in the Cedar Valley.

The Healthiest State Walk isn't the only thing EPI is doing to become more active. We're using many creative approaches from new technology to zombie apocalypse fitness groups. (Yes, you read that right.)

In today's fast paced, ever-changing world, technology has become an integral part of everyday life. The great news is we're finding new technology has some great health benefits, too.

We've been so fortunate to have donors donate iPads over the last few years. The iPad technology is used at EPI's CHOICE Day Habilitation program and throughout many residences of EPI.

Early uses of the iPads were centered around

help in communication and scheduling help but now we see many other applications. One individual is using his iPad to learn how to cook. Utilizing an app that creates photo directions to prepare a recipe.

Technology isn't the only creative approach. For many, one of the struggles of staying active is keeping it fun and interesting. One staff, Tony Harting, did a little out-of-the-box thinking with his team and persons served, and came up with a great way to do just that.

They took their love of zombie movies and want of an alternative fitness program and turned it into Z.A.S.T., which stands for Zombie Apocalypse Survival Training.

Along with training for a 5k, the group involves much more than a simple workout. Those involved have a point system, which does reward weight loss, but also rewards lifestyle changes which can be equally important.

The system includes writing out weekly menus, incorporating fruits and vegetables into each meal, eating breakfast daily, and achieving weekly exercise goals.

The ZAST results are in. Individuals who completed the training not only lost weight and lowered their body mass index (BMI) but also starting eating breakfast more regularly, incorporated fruits and vegetables into their diet as well as increased the amount of sit ups, pushups, and jumping jacks they were able to do.

EPI cares about our staff and persons served. We want a long and healthy life for each. That's why wellness is so important to us and why we celebrate creative approaches.



2013 Healthiest State Walk.

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Senator
Harkin with
Doughy Joey's
employee, Steven



Just Briefly

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

Thank You
to these area
businesses who
employ persons with
disabilities:

- Doughy Joey's
- Waterloo Walmart
- University Hy-Vee
- Brown Bottle
- American Color Imaging

For more information
about how your business
can employ a person with
a disability, contact us at
(319) 232-6671.

Harkin Visits Cedar Falls

Senator Harkin recently made a visit to Doughy Joey's Peetza Joynt, a Cedar Falls restaurant that employs individuals with disabilities. A growing number of businesses in the Cedar Valley employ individuals with disabilities. Harkin, senate author of the American with Disabilities Act law, is working to get people with disabilities employed and has set a goal to increase employment of people with disabilities by 20 percent by 2015.

Three DSP's Join EPI's 5 Star Club

EPI's 5 Star Club continues to grow with three new members joining the ranks as Direct Support Professional's (DSP) of the month.

- Kimberly Bumgardner-Bergman - July
"Kim is always keeping in mind what is best for the people she supports and works with them to be as independent as possible."
- Marlena Onken - August
"Marlena provides the persons she works with many opportunities to become involved in the community and works with persons served to build their confidence."
- Kiara Sime - September
"Kiara strives to support persons served in living a full life of meaning and plays an important role in advocating for them."

Levi and Slade Chosen as Courier's 20 Under 40

EPI Board Member, Dan Levi, and Communications and Development Director, Katie Slade, are current recipients of the Waterloo Cedar Falls Courier's 20 Under 40 recognition. This award honors outstanding young people in the Cedar Valley who are making a difference in their work and personal lives to make the area a better place. Levi and Slade were chosen by a committee from more than 70 nominations.

Healthiest State Walk a Success

EPI hosted its second annual Healthiest State Run, Walk and Roll at Prairie Lakes Park in Cedar Falls. There was an overwhelming turnout, with over 175 run, walk, or rollers who joined the other 298,000 Iowans in helping to make Iowa the healthiest state by 2016.

A special thanks to the 12 booths that participated, 93.5 The Mix for the music to keep everyone moving, TK for brining some Panther Pride to the walk and Group Benefits Design, a division of PDCM, for sponsoring the event.



◀ ▶ ▶ Participant number 6, Diane, walking at EPI's Run, Walk, or Roll 5k

Diane Holmes Joins Therapy Practice

Diane Holmes, Multiple Sclerosis Services Director at EPI for 23 years, has joined Cedar Falls Counseling Associates as a therapist.

Diane joined EPI in October 1990 and has been a tireless and effective advocate, counselor, and resource for people with multiple sclerosis and others effected by this chronic illness.

Joining Cedar Falls Counseling Associates as a therapist accomplishes a long held career goal for Diane.

EPI will continue to offer services for people affected by multiple sclerosis and Diane

will still be involved with service delivery by leading monthly support group meetings, writing the newsletter article, MS Matters, and providing counseling.

EPI's Intake and Referral staff are available to support MS-related questions. Continue to call (319) 232-6671 for your MS-related questions.

Diane will surely be missed at EPI and we wish her nothing but the best in this new chapter of her life.

Permanent Planning, Inc. Offices Move

Permanent Planning, Inc. (PPI), a non-profit agency providing guardianship for people with intellectual disabilities, is moving after many years of being located at EPI's Ansborough Avenue office.

PPI is now located at the Summit Office Complex in Cedar Falls. Their new address is 4901 University Avenue, Suite D in Cedar Falls.

Although PPI has moved office space, they will continue to partner closely with EPI as they have done in the past.

Additionally, PPI is expanding their services by providing medical advocacy services to elderly persons.

Questions about the move may be directed to PPI's new number, (319) 277-1410.

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

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Volunteer

CHRIS MUDD
Mudd, Inc.

A. MILLER ROSKAMP
Roskamp Leasing

KATY WILLIAMS
Volunteer



More Than You See Raises Awareness

Singing, laughing, and dancing were in full supply at EPI's first benefit, "More Than You See." A piano duel between UNI and ISU's fight songs and a gathering of the entire room on stage, standing arm in arm singing, "Lean On Me," were just a few highlights of the night.

Thank you doesn't seem to quite cover our appreciation of the overwhelming support we received from the community. With the help

of our many great sponsors, the community, and an amazing dueling pianos show, we raised over \$16,000 to support persons with disabilities in finding meaningful employment and fund critical housing needs.

Check out more photos from the night at www.episervice.org or on our Facebook page.

Mary Ann Dahl (1954-2013)

On August 12, 2013, Exceptional Persons, Inc. lost a dear, special friend and dedicated employee.

Mary Ann began her employment with the organization 14 years ago. She had an ability to make everyone she met feel comfortable and at home. You never felt like a stranger when in her presence. Mary Ann was passionate about the organization and its mission. She truly understood what EPI's services meant to the people supported.

She was an inspiration to all of us and will be remembered for her smile, contagious laughter, and her unyielding devotion to her family, faith, and friends.

It's hard to believe we will never again see

Mary Ann grace our halls, hear her laughter, or see her smile, but with this realization we also know she will continue to live on through our hearts and memories each and every day.

She will be missed but never forgotten.





Got “Stuff” to Donate?

We are so appreciative that our friends in the community think of us when they no longer need items around their home (clothing/furnishings/etc.).

While the persons we serve do have many needs, regrettably the majority of the generous items we receive don't immediately match up with a specific need.

For example, we often get bags of great clothing and we may know of a person who has a clothing need, but unfortunately the size and style doesn't match the person in need.

For a while now, we have been doing our best to store these items until a need

arose. Unfortunately, we are just plain out of space.

We've come up with a new solution we hope you'll agree is a win-win all around. Here's how your “stuff” can still benefit the persons served by EPI....

1. Look to our EPI online wish list first.

We will continue to accept items that are found on our wish list (visit us online - we're continuously updating the list to reflect our most current needs, www.episervice.org)

2. Take it to EPI's account at Stuff, Etc.

If it's not on our wish list, make arrangements to bring it to Stuff, Etc. in Waterloo.

Simply tell them the account is under Exceptional Persons, Inc. (EPI).

When your items sell, EPI will get 50% of the proceeds. Those proceeds will be passed on to the individuals we serve to meet specific needs in the form of vouchers to shop at Stuff.

We're really excited about this opportunity for the persons we support to have the ability to shop for and choose items that match their preferences.

The ability to choose is a gift we know the individuals we support will certainly enjoy. Thank you in advance for your support!

Payee Services Moves to New Location

Payee Services, formally called Representative or Rep Payee, is a program of Exceptional Persons, Inc. that assists individuals in managing their public assistance. Payee Services has recently moved from the Ansborough office to

2745 University Avenue. This includes Financial Advocate Services as well. You can expect the same quality service just offered from our new location. Please call (319) 232-6671 with any questions

Set up an appointment at Stuff, Etc.

There are a couple of ways to set up appointments:

- Call (319) 233-8809
- Visit www.stuffetcwaterloo.com and click “Schedule an Appointment”

Once set up, take your “stuff” to 1210 Flammang Drive in Waterloo. Make sure to let them know it's for EPI.

Current Career Openings

EPI is hiring the following positions:

- Direct Support Professional
- Program Manager
- Job Coach



Employment and Multiple Sclerosis - Part 1

by Diane Holmes, LISW
MS Services Director

Note: “Employment and Multiple Sclerosis” is a two part article. Part I provides information for employees and employers about their rights and responsibilities from job applications through retaining employment. In the next issue of EPI News, Part II will include information about work incentive programs and health insurance coverage for people approved for Social Security Disability or SSI due to disability.

With continuing improvements in medical care, fewer people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) are developing limitations significant enough that they are unable to work. Since most people with MS do experience some limitations the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) affords equal opportunity to apply for and maintain employment.

The ADA requires a balance of rights and responsibilities for both the employee and employer. First, an individual must meet the definition of disability: “having significant and permanent difficulty performing a major life activity”. The person

must be qualified for the job and able to perform the “essential job functions” with or without “reasonable accommodations”. These requirements apply through the hiring, recruitment, and interviewing process. Employers cannot ask about a medical condition before offering a job. Medical examinations can be required after a job offer, but should be related to the needs of the business. People cannot be denied a job based on the medical exam unless the applicant cannot perform the “essential job functions” with or without “reasonable accommodation” or if the health condition poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others or themselves.

An employer is not required to give preference to a person with a disability but a qualified job applicant cannot be disqualified because they cannot perform marginal job functions. Employees can be expected to meet the same attendance requirements and provide medical excuses for absences as other employees. An employer is not required to

provide accommodations that cause “undue hardship” defined as “extensive, substantial, disruptive or fundamentally alters the nature or operation of the business”. Information about accommodations is available through a number of sources such as the Job Accommodation Network [see sidebar]. Reasonable accommodations can include accessibility to a building such as a ramp, communication such as large print materials, job restructuring, eliminating marginal job duties, flexible leave policies and work schedules, most of which require minimal cost. Tax incentives are available to offset the cost of reasonable accommodations.

Most people with MS are employed when they are diagnosed. They want to continue to work and their employers want to retain their skilled workers. Working together employees and employers can identify effective accommodations to meet that goal, creating a win-win situation for everyone.

For more information or to request professional support, contact us at 319-232-6671.

MS Support Groups

November

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

December

- Bremer/Butler, 12/11 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 12/18 – 11:00 am
- Tama, NO Meeting (Holiday)

January

- Bremer/Butler, 1/8 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 1/15 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 1/29 - 9:30 am

February

- Bremer/Butler, 2/12 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 2/19 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 2/26 - 9:30 am

March

- Bremer/Butler, 3/12 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 3/19 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 3/26 - 9:30 am

MS Support Group Meeting Locations

Bremer/Butler -

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

Waterloo -

EPI, 760 Ansborough Ave, Waterloo
(3rd Wednesday of the month)

Tama -

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

Sources:

Job Accommodation Network
1-800-526-7234 or at
<http://askjan.org>

Great Plains ADA Center
1-800-949-4232
or [http:// www.pgadacenter.org](http://www.pgadacenter.org)

Department of Labor,
Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
<http://www.dol.gov/odep>

Employer Assistance & Resource Network (EARN)
1-866-327-6669 or
<http://www.earnworks.com>

One-Stop Career Center Business Services
1-800-JOB-IOWA or
<http://www.iowaworks.org>



(319) 232-6671 | www.episervice.org



Our Mission

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

Wish List

- Mini fridge
- Plates and silverware
- Green cleaning supplies
- iTunes gift cards
- Magic Erasers
- Swiffer dusters
- Projector
- Tickets to entertainment (hockey, baseball, basketball, festivals, theatre, bowling, etc.)
- iPads
- Durable medical equipment

A complete wish list can be found online. Bring donated items to our central office at 760 Ansborough Avenue in Waterloo. Gift-in-kind donation forms can be found online and at the central office.

Mark Your Calendars

Giving Tree

Open to the public December 3 - 13
at 760 Ansborough Ave office.

Stop in to make someone's holiday bright.

Connect With Us

