



Winter 2015 on the inside

Legislative Watch P.2
More Than You See P.3

Just Briefly P.4

What Does Our Money Really Buy? P.5

Sign on Bonus for DSPs P.5
Multiple Sclerosis Matters P.6



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

Love the Work You Do

Amy's dream was to work with children. Like many of us, Amy experienced a number of challenges on her path to fulfilling her dream. She could have given up many times – instead she persevered. Now Amy's an inspiration to many – read on for her story.

In high school, Amy volunteered to work with students in an after school program. After high school, Amy enrolled in college taking an Early Childhood Education course. Unfortunately, she couldn't find the proper resources to support her learning disability and needed to discontinue the course. She quickly changed her focus to gaining real work experiences but her search was disappointing. Amy drew upon her resourcefulness and opened her own business – providing home cleaning and pet care services.

All the while, Amy never lost sight of her passion to work with children. It was around this time Amy was introduced to EPI's Employment Services which focuses on matching skills and desires with work opportunities.

Through training and practice, Amy gained the confidence she needed to participate in a job interview without interfering anxieties getting in her way. She finally landed her dream job at a child care center for a trial work period.

Three short weeks after starting, Amy was offered a permanent position. Her supervisor reports, "Amy exceeds my expectations by helping her co-workers, reporting job related issues, and by asking questions. She fully ensures the wellbeing of the children in her care and has become an integral part of the team."

We're fortunate to work with 62 individuals just like Amy – determined to find a job in the community where they can be successful, earn a living wage, and contribute to society. If your business is interested in learning more about providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities, contact us today at (319) 232-6671.



For more ►►► information on this topic visit the Des Moines Register's website

Quick note from ANCOR.org:

“The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act cleared Congress on December 16, 2014, as part of a package of tax extenders. The measure passed the upper chamber in a vote 76 to 16. On December 19, President Obama signed H.R. 5771 into law which includes the ABLE Act Language.”

Contact with Newsletter Questions:

BETHANY THOMAS
Communications &
Development Specialist



Legislative Watch

Governor Branstad's Plans for Medicaid Managed Care

In Iowa alone, Medicaid covers 546,000 people which is **18 percent of the population**.

In Iowa total Medicaid expenditures by state and federal government top **\$4.2 billion annually**, which includes \$1.5 billion of state money. EPI receives over \$13 million in Medicaid reimbursement providing services to persons with disabilities.

Many states have already placed managed care shifts in order to help cut Medicaid costs.

Managed care is described as a set of techniques to be used for reducing unnecessary health costs while improving the quality of health care.

Governor Terry Brandstad recently introduced plans to hire a private managed care company, or companies, to help run Iowa's Medicaid program.

Private companies are involved in managed care arrangements to help oversee health care programs and share the savings they obtain by making care more efficient.

Governor Branstad believes if the government is able to spend less on Medicaid, the quality of care should improve greatly by lowering medical costs and hospital visits.

Though the full plan will not be available until after **March 1** Branstad is projecting it would **save \$51.3 million** during the first six months after implementation.

The focus of managed care is not to be based purely on saving money, but rather on improving the care and health of Medicaid recipients.

Legislators are being careful to make sure this shift won't lead to cuts in services or payment rates to medical providers.

What Does This Mean for EPI?

Managed care is likely to present both challenges and opportunities for service providers. There will be an emphasis upon the development of natural supports with dual goal of improving community inclusion and quality of life while managing costs. Managed care companies will pay attention to preventable health conditions (like diabetes, obesity, and hypertension) and their management.

We anticipate continued scrutiny of large congregate and segregated services. There will be tools utilized to guide the approval of service levels in an effort to achieve "rate rationality" or an objective base for rate determination.



◀◀◀ Attendees dancing on stage at the More Than You See benefit

More Than You See Raises Awareness

More Than You See was created after learning of an actual situation we fear happens all too often.

While attending the movies a couple of years ago, a person with a disability was called the “R-word” by another moviegoer.

Saddened and hurt, this person asked his direct support staff to help him approach the group and ask them not to use that word again. Judging from the response they received.... maybe they will and maybe they won't.

Upon learning of this situation, we were flabbergasted. “It’s the 21 century,” we thought, “why is this still happening?” Then we asked ourselves, “What can we do about this?”

One of our ideas was to create an event to help raise awareness that persons with disabilities are more than you see.

We wanted to create an opportunity for people of all backgrounds and abilities to come together, enjoy a common interest (live music!), and see beyond first impressions to the unique talents within.

The video shown that night asked persons with disabilities, “What makes you more than you see?” Responses, varied from “I’m a fisherman,” to “I’m a good friend.”

Around the event, artwork from talented artists were displayed. Susan DeLoff (acrylics), Margaret Miller (mixed medium), and Ian Rivers (photography) loaned some of their favorite pieces out for the evening.

Photographer, Ian Rivers, photographed many of the highlights from the evening (visit us on Facebook to view our photo album).

Friends, family members, and volunteers came together

– each fearlessly dancing and singing along with our entertaining emcee, Gary Kroeger, and dueling pianos.

Thank you to all who supported this event – as a sponsor, participant, or volunteer.

The money raised through this benefit supports making the world a better place for persons with disabilities.

Specifically, much of the funds raised will make critical housing improvements – making homes more accessible and safe for persons with disabilities.

We invite you to join us for the next More Than You See dueling piano benefit. Save the date for **April 2016!**

Thanks to Our Sponsors

Presented By

DanDeery Motor Co.

- Community Bank & Trust
- Dennis & Holly Kruger
- Levi Architecture
- Magee Construction
- The Mudd Group
- PDCM Insurance & Group Benefits Design
- Banklowa
- Warren Transport, Inc.
- FSB Premier Wealth Management
- UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital
- Clark & Associates Prosthetics & Orthotics
- Sulentic-Fischels Commercial Group
- Nichols Home Improvement

A glimpse at ►►►
this year's
Giving Tree



Just Briefly

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

EPI Board of Directors

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How You Helped

The Giving Tree of 2014's holiday season was a success! The tree was decorated with 227 tags that listed modest needs, and because of you, each was fulfilled.

More than...

- 29 blankets, sheets, and curtains
- 65 sweaters, shirts, and pants
- 20 coats, hats, gloves, and boots

... were graciously donated by our community for persons with disabilities in our community.

A very special thank you to Larry K. Fox & Associates for hosting one of EPI's Giving Trees and filling the needs on it, to the Waterloo Police and Protective Association for hosting the Traveling Trolley Giving Tree, and to the Waterloo Warriors hockey team for fulfilling many needs.

Remembering Barbara Shinstine

(1958 - 2014)

Barbara was born in Waterloo and was known at EPI for being a positive and passionate woman. She had a smile that was contagious to all!

Our most sincere thoughts and prayers go out to her family and friends. Barbara will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Remembering Fayrene M. Jackson

(1946 - 2014)

Fayrene Jackson of Waterloo was born on January 13, 1946 in Little Rock, Arkansas. We knew her well at EPI as someone who touched each life with happiness.

We pray for her family and friends. Fayrene will indeed be missed by all who were lucky enough to know her.

Foundation Board of Directors

Thank you to Bill Wilson of VGM Insurance for your time spent on the Exceptional Persons Foundation board of Directors. Your presence on the board was appreciated.

We would also like to thank Judy Benson of Correll, Sheerer, Benson, et.al., PLC for her service on the Exceptional Persons Foundation board. We appreciate your time and efforts put forth.

The Exceptional Persons Foundation Board of Directors would like to welcome our three new members, Theresa Pagel of UnityPoint - Allen Hospital, Chris Fereday of PDCM Insurance & Group Benefits Design, and Larry Fox of Larry K. Fox & Associates.



◀◀◀ Chris Sparks,
ANCOR's new
Board President

Exceptional Persons
Foundation Board of
Directors

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UnityPoint - Allen Hospital

VICKI PARSONS
Kailo L.C.

A. MILLER ROSKAMP
Roskamp Leasing

FLOYD WINTER
Volunteer

What Does Our Money Really Buy?

EPI's very own Chris Sparks has recently become the President of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) Board of Directors.

ANCOR is a national nonprofit trade association representing over 800 private community providers who service people with disabilities.

Through his work with ANCOR, Chris will be writing regular articles found on ANCOR's blog. A recent post by Chris is, "[What Does Our Money Really Buy?](#)"

This is a story about how Chris finds out, at a very young age, "you don't always get what you think you are buying."

He directly relates this to working for a provider of services for people with disabilities and how there are a variety of needs that come from a single funding source, Medicaid.

With only this one funding source, Chris points out that once this money became available to community-based services we want to become better than state institutions. The services created were delivery systems that were *in* but not always *a part* of the community. Chris knew we could do better.

Find out how and continue to read this article by going to our website, www.episervice.org, and follow the link to take you to Chris' article.

Sign on Bonus for Direct Support Professionals

Spread the word.... EPI is offering a **\$750-\$1,000 sign on bonus** when hired as a Direct Support Professional.

EPI employs over 450 staff in a variety of jobs. Both full-time and part-time positions are available, as well as different shifts.

We're looking for hardworking, trustworthy, energetic and compassionate role models to be a part of our team.

Join our rapidly expanding organization where your work has purpose. Check our website daily for a list of current job openings.

Sign on bonus!

earn **\$750 - \$1,000**
when hired as a direct support professional

Current Career Openings

Direct Support
Professional

Group Leader

Job Coach I

Job Developer

Program Manager

Agency Leadership Team

MARY JANSSEN
Children & Family
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Business Director

LISA PATERNO
Human Resource
Director

SUSAN SEEHASE
Services Director

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Communications &
Development Director

CHRIS SPARKS
Executive Director



2014 Multiple Sclerosis Research in Review

by Diane Holmes, LISW

The year 2014 was a busy one for research and developments in the understanding and treatments of Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

MS continues to be the most common, and most costly, chronic disease affecting the central nervous system. The costs include more than medical care and medications. These additional costs include lost income due to disability-related unemployment, reduced quality of life, and MS-related complications.

While researchers hone in on the cause of MS, many questions remain. A recent presentation by Dr. David Hafler of Yale University School of Medicine confirmed the long-held belief that MS is an "immune-mediated disease." This includes both genetics and the environment. But, he states, "it is not bad genes or a bad environment; it is the bad interaction between genes and the environment." Environmental triggers for MS include cigarette smoking, low vitamin D levels, obesity, Epstein-Barr virus, and high salt intake.

Based on 21 years of experience with disease-modifying medications, studies find early disease-modifying treatment of MS is key to preventing disease progression and disability. In 1993 when Betaseron, the first disease-modifying drug became available, supplies were limited, and available only by a lottery system.

Now there are 11 disease-modifying drugs with more being researched. But these medications are only effective if taken regularly. Dr. Bruce Sherman, consulting corporate medical director of the Employer's Health Coalition at Walmart Stores, Inc., points out failure to take medications has multiple causes including depression, fatigue, cognitive status, patient attitude and belief, and lack of clear instructions and attention to side effects by physicians. He states, "maybe there is a problem with the delivery system [and] we cannot just blame the patients."

Quality of life can be affected by MS and conditions that often accompany the disease, referred to

as “co-morbid conditions.” Examples include pain, cognitive dysfunction, depression and suicide risk, vision and hearing problems, seizures, bladder and bowel problems, and sleep disorders, which affect as much as 70% of people with MS. Depression is a significant concern. It affects people with MS at a higher rate than the general population and can be a side effect of disease-modifying drugs, as well.

At this very time more, but also increasingly expensive, treatments are available for MS and related conditions. Healthcare reform is driving the focus on patient centered care, and quality improvement requiring a multi-disciplinary approach to MS treatment. Thanks to funding from the Exceptional Persons Foundation’s “MS Services Endowment,” services are available locally to support people affected by MS as they navigate the complexities of life. For more information contact Exceptional Persons, Inc. at 319-232-6671.

MS Support Groups

April

- Bremer/Butler, 4/8 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 4/15 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 4/29 - 9:30 am

May

- Bremer/Butler, 5/13 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 5/20 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 5/27 - 9:30 am

June

- Bremer/Butler, 6/10 - 10:30 am
- Waterloo, 6/17 - 11:00 am
- Tama, 6/24 - 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:

The American Journal of Managed Care, Implications for Multiple Sclerosis in the Era of the Affordable Care Act: A Clinical and Managed Care Perspective; Vol. 20, No.11

First Report Managed Care, AMCP Conference: Multiple Sclerosis Remains a Top Concern for Costly Disease Management; Vol.11, No.11;

nationalmssociety.org/About-the-Society/News/Strides

medscape.com

Direct Support Professionals of the Month

CATHERINE EHLERS
April 2014

DAVE STENTIFORD
May 2014

JENNIFER PHELPS
June 2014

KYLA KROUSE
July 2014

BECKY GRIMM
August 2014

MEGAN McCUE
October 2014

NICKI SCHOLES
November 2014

MIKE PETERSON
December 2014

TRANG CONRAD
January 2015



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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

- Canvas & oil pants
- Tickets to local entertainment
- Gardening tools
- Gas grill
- Kitchen Aid mixers
- Dyson vacuum
- Patio pots

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 to set up an appointment.

Mark Your Calendar

May 22 DSP Celebration Event at Sunnyside Country Club in Waterloo.

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 and click "donate now."

