

# THE REM IOWA VOICE

December 2016

## REM IOWA DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES



*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." - Aristotle*



# In Honor & Appreciation

## Our DSPs

Each year in September, REM Iowa recognizes all of our staff in direct support roles by celebrating National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week. Our direct support professionals (DSPs) are dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, brain injuries and other challenges, and we take the opportunity of National DSP Recognition Week to honor their tremendous commitment to our mission and the people we serve.

Executive Officer of The MENTOR Network, our national partner.

"I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of our employees in direct support roles for their tireless dedication to our mission."



DSPs make our work possible. Without their passion and hard work to make a difference in the lives of the individuals we support, we couldn't carry out our mission. Their work allows people to participate fully in community life and to pursue their



COUNCIL BLUFFS

"Every day, our direct support staff go above and beyond to enhance lives, offering the individuals we serve the opportunity to live rich lives in their communities,

build meaningful relationships and follow their dreams," says Bruce Nardella, President and Chief

of our staff in direct support roles, and to recognize their vital contributions, REM Iowa hosted events and giveaways across the state. Some areas hosted picnics, pot lucks and open houses for DSPs, and t-shirts, specialized thank you notes, and a variety of other tokens of appreciation were given out to employees.



COUNCIL BLUFFS

While small gestures like these will never be enough to fully thank our DSPs for their hard work, I hope our gratitude is apparent. Day in and day out, DSPs make an enormous difference in the lives of the people REM Iowa serves. I hope you join me in honoring our talented direct support staff and the crucial roles they play.



### Marion DSP awards

2016

MARION



CLINTON



CLINTON



HIAWATHA

# We are proudly accredited by CARF

It is my pleasure to inform you that **REM Iowa Developmental Services** has been issued a **CARF accreditation** based on its recent survey.

The Three-Year Accreditation applies to the following service: Community Integration. This accreditation will extend through September 30, 2019.

This achievement is an indication of REM Iowa Developmental Services dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of the persons served. Services, personnel, and documentation clearly indicated an established pattern of conformance to standards.

REM Iowa Developmental Services received many noted strengths as a part of this survey process.

- Commended for promoting the principles of person-centered planning and an emphasis on converting congregate day programs to services that assist the individuals served to access desired activities that are predominately offered in the community.
- Management emphasizes the importance of safety in all service areas, including a quality improvement team who are routinely monitoring key safety areas and evaluating progress towards improvement.
- Commended for developing and implementing a highly documented and thorough employee training curriculum that offers critical information designed to offer effective, safe support services.



**SARA DRISH**

Regional Director

- Employs many warm, competent, and respectful staff members to provide services to the individuals. Staff members were observed displaying dedication, respect, professionalism, compassion, patience, enthusiasm and pride in the supports they provide. They extend themselves beyond assigned responsibilities and are always available to the individuals served. Staff members believe in the organization's mission and it is clear that REM Iowa Developmental Services is truly individual driven.
- Acknowledged for the person-first attitude that is displayed throughout the organization.
- Stakeholders provided one-word descriptions of services (when interviewed): "caring", "consistent", "patient", "motivated", "committed", and "sensational".
  - Family members expressed high levels of satisfaction with the services and supports provided that lead to many positive outcomes such as: increased independence, better communication & social functioning, greater involvement in the community, skill acquisition and happiness.
  - The community integration program is very successful and has impacted the lives of many individuals. They consider the choices of the individuals served as the most important part of the program.
- Individuals served appeared to be happy and engaged in activities they seem to enjoy, sharing how much they liked and valued their staff members and the different activities in the community that were provided.
- The organization is complimented for creating opportunities for the individuals served to develop/increase self-advocacy skills.



## GLOW WALK 2016



REM Iowa in Clinton joined Devan Douglas, from the Harlem Globetrotters, Tricia Petersen from the Rejuvenation Station Day Spa and many others to show support for a great cause. This was the Glow Walk's 4th year successfully raising awareness about anti-bullying and suicide. The aim is to get help to those with possible mental health issues and to raise awareness throughout area schools. The glow walk raises funds, of which a large amount of the proceeds go to Bridgeview, a community mental health center, to help students in kindergarten through 12th grade. It also provides money for teen screenings in the high schools and helps to pay for processing the information from the screenings. The results of the screenings then are used to reach out to students who may need help.

## Supporting Team Blue

REM Iowa in Vinton, Clinton and Davenport wanted to take the time and give back to the officers that serve and protect us every day.



Officers were given heart-felt messages of gratitude and support tied together with snacks. We appreciate all of the sacrifices they make to help the community and especially the individuals we support to be safe.

# UPDATE ON IOWA HEALTH LINK

MDHS and the Governor's office recently released the first **Quarterly Report** following the implementation of managed care for Iowa's Medicaid program. According to their review, Iowa has saved money by cutting out waste and abuse, streamlined services and implemented efficiencies. The Governor's office highlighted a positive roll out and implementation with all three MCO's achieving the data points required in the contract.

The Legislative Interim Committee, Health Policy Oversight, reviewed the report and heard from the public and the three MCO's. The media reports following that committee meeting described a different situation with providers not being paid, Medicaid members not getting their services/needs met and the MCO's losing substantial amounts of money.

The experience for each person receiving Medicaid and their providers has been varied. REM Iowa

has encountered some challenges as well as some positive moves forward. REM has experienced incorrect payments for services, non-payments for services, denial of some services and delays in approval for services. While this has impacted us financially, we have been able to maintain all services. All MCO's have communicated that they have little room for rates beyond what was contracted which will limit REM and other providers' ability to serve new high needs individuals.

All three MCO's have met with REM Iowa Leadership and we have open lines of communication with each of them. Each MCO has been very supportive and appreciative of REM's services. As we move forward, we will continue to partner with each MCO to maintain and develop the services and supports that meet the needs of the people being served. REM Iowa is committed to the people we serve and adapting to the new system of managed care.



**PAT COSTIGAN**  
Regional Director

## Advocacy and Awareness

In January, Marshalltown RDS started their advocacy group. When deciding on a goal that they would work on throughout the year, it was decided that everyone wanted to invite politicians to RDS to show them all of the important things we do. Invites were sent out, and on September 13th, **Senator Steve Sodders** took the advocacy group up on their invite. During his visit, he received a tour of our building from an individual, had his own personal bell performance, and received homemade cookies. On his way out, Senator Sodders said he was looking forward to visiting again sometime and would love to give everyone a tour of the capitol.



Lynda Knecht, DSP at Children's ICF in Council Bluffs, was selected to be a recipient of the **Community Champions Award** for the 4th Quarter. Lynda has been with

REM Iowa for 10 years. In addition to her time with REM, Lynda is also very active with her church. She collects donations for the church's "Give Away" where the items are given to people in need and volunteers with the Sunday School program. Furthermore, Lynda volunteers at Church Camp every summer where she helps

lead the campers in craft activities. Lynda spends a lot of time planning these activities to ensure that the campers will have an enjoyable time as well as some fun keepsakes to remember their time at camp. We are thrilled that Lynda will be receiving this award to donate back to her church and are proud of her continued commitment to her community.



Because community service is The MENTOR Network's way of life, The Foundation created the Community Champions program to recognize our employees who devote extraordinary amounts of their time and energy to local charities. Champions receive recognition throughout The Network and their chosen nonprofit receives a grant of \$500.00. Community Champions may be nominated by colleagues and supervisors and are announced on a quarterly basis.



Supplies In Demand

REM IOWA COMMUNITY SERVICES IN ATLANTIC ORGANIZED A SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE FOR WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN ATLANTIC, IA. KIM BROWN, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ASSISTED WITH ORGANIZING THE DRIVE AND ON 8/26/16 PROVIDED THE SUPPLIES TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. SUPPLIES GATHERED INCLUDED NOTEBOOKS, FOLDERS, PENCILS, PENCIL BOXES, ERASERS, CRAYONS, COLORED PENCILS, SCISSORS, TISSUES AND ANTIBACTERIAL HAND SANITIZER GEL AND WIPES. THESE SUPPLIES WILL BE SHARED WITH CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL THROUGH 3RD GRADE. THE TEACHERS AND STAFF AT WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY WERE VERY THANKFUL FOR THE LOCAL SUPPORT.

# Adwe



## ADVENTURELAND

On July 12, REM Marshalltown spent the day enjoying each other's company throughout Adventureland Park in Des Moines. Half of the group enjoyed some relaxing time by the pool, while others chose to take advantage of the rides, including a group favorite, the Tornado. A special "THANK YOU" for the courtesy and accommodations extended by the Adventureland staff.

## Vinton's got Talent

On 7/26/16, individuals from Vinton REM Iowa Developmental Services (RDS) presented their first annual talent show.

The individuals were actively involved in choosing their acts and designing their poster boards for the show. From cat jokes and dancing to a ballpark homerun, the individuals incorporated some of their own personal interests into making this show fun and entertaining. The RDS staff participated in the festivities as well. Overall, everyone had a great time and the RDS team looks forward to presenting RDS Has Talent next year! Thank you to everyone that came to show your support. Listed below were the individual acts:

- Jessica B.** – played guitar and sang to the song 'Sandy' from Grease
- Twyla G.** – Rendition of 'so you think you can dance?' 60's edition
- Mike N.** – hit the ball out of the park as a player of the Chicago Cubs
- Amber U.** – The amazing Amazon 'Heavyweight Champion'
- Chasidy Z.** – had the audience laughing with her silly cat jokes
- Anita F.** – host of 'family feud'



## ok•TĒM•ber-fest:

Marshalltown RICS participated in Marshalltown's Oktoberfest Parade on 9/24/2016. Participants had a blast riding on the float and waving at the crowds.

Submitted by: Felicia Perez, Program Director

if you're:

- CREATIVE
- MOTIVATED
- ORGANIZED
- CRAFTY
- DETAIL-ORIENTED
- OUTGOING
- MULTIFACETED
- DESIGNER
- GO-GETTER
- MOVER
- SHAKER
- MAKER
- PROFESSIONAL
- RESPONSIBLE
- STYLISH
- TRENDSETTER

WE'RE HIRING!

### REM IOWA

is looking for passionate and innovative people to join our AMAZING team!!! We offer flexible hours, competitive pay, and a chance to create a wonderful and positive relationship with the most incredible people on the planet!!!

Don't Delay, Apply Today!

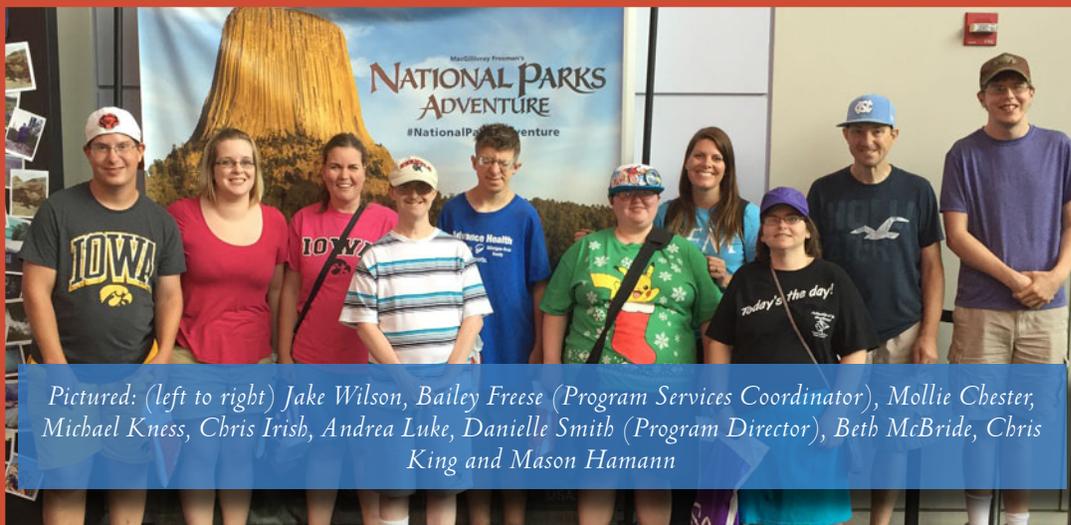
[Jobs.thementornetwork.com/iowa-jobs](http://Jobs.thementornetwork.com/iowa-jobs)



# Adventure



In August, several individuals from Mt Pleasant *also* spent the day at [Adventureland](#). Those participating played games, went to the circus, and enjoyed the rides and a variety of food. Tim Jensen, map in hand, led the group to their favorite rides and helped locate the best places to eat. Said Whitney Shoemaker, "I got to ride the Dragon twice, and I sat in front!" For Mike Sauer, this day marked his very first roller coaster ride. And Brandon Downing was totally impressed with the fried Twinkies and the gift shop items. - Submitted by Theresa Himes, CBIS Program Coordinator



Pictured: (left to right) Jake Wilson, Bailey Freese (Program Services Coordinator), Mollie Chester, Michael Kness, Chris Irish, Andrea Luke, Danielle Smith (Program Director), Beth McBride, Chris King and Mason Hamann

## Host Home, Away From Home

On August 2, 2016 REM Iowa Host Home made quick work of finding a new day trip activity when their visit to the [Blank Park Zoo](#) was rained out. All enjoyed the day at the Des Moines Science Center learning about astrology and great white sharks.



On July 2nd, individuals from Coralville, Hiawatha, Vinton, and Waterloo participated in the Freedom Festival Parade, in Cedar Rapids. The individuals had a good time riding on the float and waving to the crowd. Some even walked the parade route and assisted with handing out frisbees and popsicles to the spectators.

## Freedom on Parade



## GET YOUR KICKS with the Davenport RICS



Clinton and Davenport program directors, program coordinators, and direct support professionals joined together and played on an after-school kickball league at the Clinton Recreation Center.

The individuals really enjoyed coming out on Mondays and Wednesdays and cheering on the staff in a friendly game of kickball.



# Brain Matters

## Unmasking Brain Injury

Unmasking Brain Injury started as an Arts and Crafts project at Hinds' Feet Farm, a Non-Profit Organization in North Carolina that supports individuals with Brain Injuries. The project served as a way for individuals to have a voice and express their feelings of sadness, frustration, loneliness, and anger, but for some, feelings of happiness and joy were expressed because they are thankful to have survived.

The mission of the Unmasking Brain Injury Project is to 'promote awareness of the prevalence of brain injury; to give survivors a voice and the means to educate others of what it's like to live with a brain injury; to show others that persons living with a disability due to their brain injury are like anyone else, deserving of dignity, respect, compassion and the opportunity to prove their value as citizens in their respective communities.'

The small project that started in North Carolina would eventually travel across the country, educating people on brain injury and raising awareness, and it didn't take long for the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa to jump on board.

In June, REM Iowa in Davenport and Clinton participated in the Unmasking Brain Injury project. Several individuals used the project as a way to express themselves and say what they have longed to say but didn't know how or couldn't find the words. One mask said "I'm still Heather" and another said "I was definitely born different". Once the masks were complete, they were sent to the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa to join the other masks from across the State in spreading awareness.



**TRACY KENNIS**  
Brain Injury Specialist

## Also, NAMI Walk...

REM Iowa Community Services in Davenport and Clinton helped raise awareness for mental illness by taking part in the 14th annual National Alliance on Mental Illness walk on September 23rd. NAMI offers support and education to families and individuals affected by mental illness and to eliminate stigmas about mental illness.



# Introducing...

Hello, my name is Tina Richter, and I became the Quality Improvement Manager of Iowa in June, 2016. The Quality Improvement Team in Iowa strives to focus on the individual experience and to ensure that those receiving services do so in a safe, person-centered environment. The team also assists the operations groups with implementation of new forms or plans, trainings, internal audits, promoting a culture of safety for staff and individuals, and risk management. I have been working with adults and children with developmental disabilities and mental health diagnosis for over 15 years. Now, I would like to introduce the rest of the REM Iowa Quality Improvement Team.



- **Angela Wax** is the Quality Improvement (QI) Specialist supporting the western side of the state. Angela was previously a Program Director with REM. Angela enjoys working in QI because she gets to work with all of the service lines and develop a better understanding of the challenges that each service line faces.

- **Kerry Clark** is a new Quality Improvement Specialist supporting Southeast Iowa. Kerry was previously a program director with REM. Kerry enjoys working with the quality team and is looking forward to learning her new position and supporting the operations teams and the people REM serves.

- **Christy Gawne** is a Quality Improvement Specialist supporting Northeastern and Eastern Iowa programs. Christy has been working for REM for seven years in various leadership roles. Christy likes being a part of the QI team because it allows her to interact with individuals and that she gets to watch them achieve greater independence.

- **Stephanie Bawek** is a Quality Improvement Specialist supporting Northeastern, Central, and Southeast Iowa Programs. Stephanie was previously a Program Director with REM. Stephanie enjoys being a part of the QI team because she is constantly learning new things, and there is never a "boring" day.

**BreeAnna "Bree" Hibbard** joined the REM Iowa team in December 2015 as our Human Resources Generalist.



Bree earned her bachelor's degree from Franklin University in Management and Leadership. She hit the ground running after joining REM, focusing on employee safety and risk and employee relations. Bree's customer first approach and desire to provide quality services have been valuable in her HR Generalist role. In her spare time Bree keeps busy crafting, skydiving and planning for her wedding next summer. We are thrilled to have Bree on the REM Iowa team!



# Happy Birthday Robert!!

In August, Robert Conley celebrated his 60th birthday with friends and staff at Grandview Park in Des Moines, Iowa. As the picture shows, all had a good time and plans are already underway for next year's party!

## IN RECOGNITION...

REM Iowa has an employee recognition program to express our gratitude to the dedication of our long-term employees. This is an opportunity for us to recognize our employees for his or her years of service and loyalty. REM Iowa has been providing services since 1979 and this is made possible by the on-going dedication and commitment of our employees. Continuity of services and care is critical to our quality and the stability of the individuals we serve. We would like to congratulate and express a heartfelt "thank you" to each employee being recognized.

For **10 years** of service – Irma McLaurin, Karen Sward, Patricia Wardenburg

For **5 years** of service – Calvin Ash, Bobbie Bickford, Darrin Eige, Roger Feldmann, Lora Michl, Patricia Miller, Bonnie Moore, Ashley Rasmusson, Elijah Ruiru, Elizabeth Stout, Sarah Taylor, Matilda Tolbert, Kerri Weaver, Monique Williams, Melanie Zimmerman

## Hats Off to Connie

*Submitted by Nora Byers, REM Iowa  
Developmental Services (RDS)*

When Connie Rothfus first arrived to RDS in West Des Moines it didn't take staff long to notice how talented she was at crocheting. Connie stated, "A staff in my home taught me to crochet blankets, doll clothes, hats, scarves, and purses". RDS staff reached out to Mercy Hospital in Des Moines to see if there was a need for Connie's talents.

Connie was excited when asked if she would want to crochet hats for newborn babies.

Connie made her first newborn hats delivery



on September 9th. The hospital was extremely grateful for the gift. Connie said, "I am happy because I was able to help babies." Way to go Connie!



### *A Holiday Greeting from the Executive Director, Lisa Pakkebieer*

It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone, and the holiday season is upon us... On behalf of REM Iowa, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person that has helped touch and enhance the lives of the people we are

honored to support. It takes every one of us working collaboratively towards a joint mission.

As I reflect on this past year, I am in awe of the dedication and commitment that I saw from the entire REM Iowa team; it was beyond impressive. Thank you cannot begin to touch the gratitude that I have for this incredible team. Every single day we strive to provide the best quality of care and customer service. If we don't meet expectations, whether internal or external, we learn and grow from it. We embrace change.

It is an honor and a privilege to be entrusted with someone's life and we take that responsibility and commitment very seriously. On behalf of REM Iowa, thank you for putting your faith and trust in us.

During the Holiday Season more than ever, our thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made our progress possible. And in this spirit we say:

*Thank You and Best Wishes  
for a Wonderful, Safe, Happy and Healthy  
Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!*

REM  
IOWA

Place  
Stamp  
Here

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