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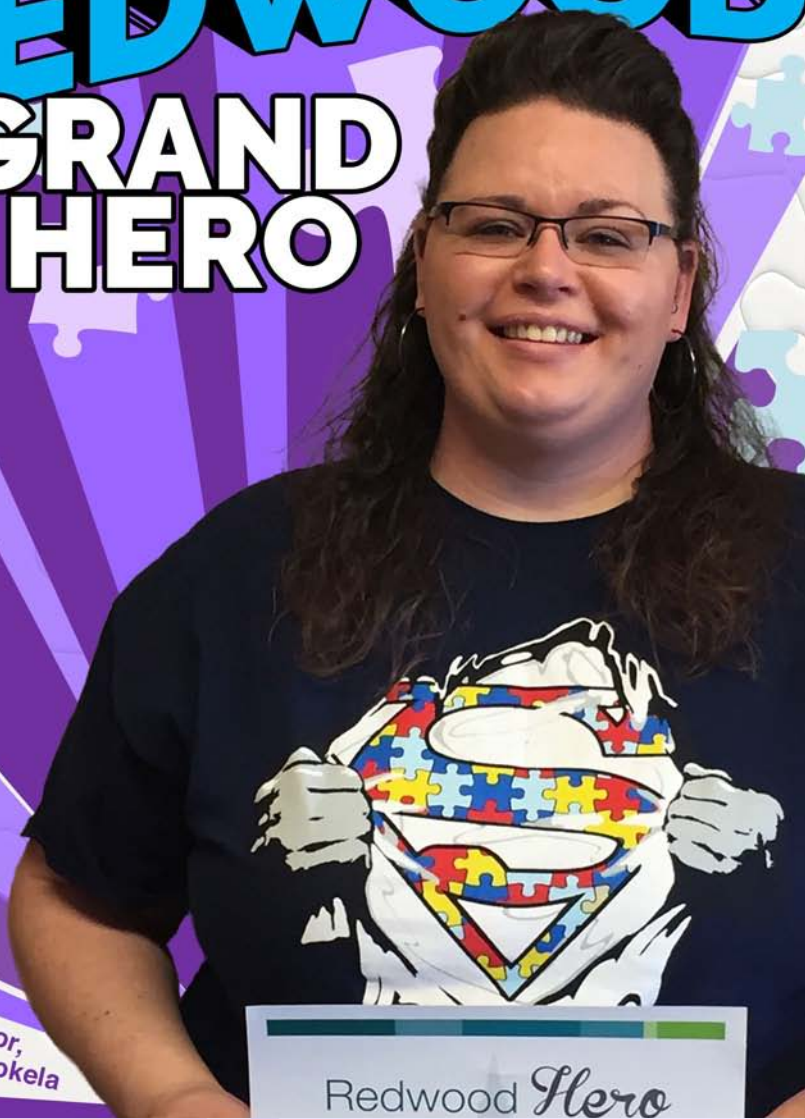
REM

IOWA

VOICE

April 2017

# REDWOOD GRAND HERO



Program Coordinator,  
Tammy Kayokela

Redwood Hero



# Our 1st Redwood Grand Hero

## Tammy Kayokela

**Tammy Kayokela**, a program coordinator in Hiawatha, has long shown her dedication, compassion, commitment, and strong understanding of the three individuals she works with. These connections, paired with dogged persistence, helped her to recognize that one of “her guys” had developed an acute illness and averted a potentially serious medical condition. For this reason, Tammy was selected to be a Redwood Hero. Redwood Heroes is an employee recognition program in **The MENTOR Network’s** Redwood group that distinguishes exceptional contributions that directly impact the individuals we support. One Redwood Hero, per quarter, is further recognized as the Grand Hero. We are proud to announce that this quarter’s Grand Hero award went to Tammy. Here is her story...

Tammy supports a non-verbal man who has a diagnosis of autism and has lived in a REM Iowa home for the last seven years. This past fall, Tammy observed that the man was atypically tired, congested, and coughing. These symptoms were so unusual and troubling that he was taken to the emergency room. The ER physician examined the individual, but felt a chest x-ray was



probably unnecessary; however Tammy, knowing him so well, firmly urged that he have the x-ray anyway, before leaving the ER. The x-ray results revealed bilateral pneumonia and the individual was admitted to the ICU for treatment. The ER physician thanked Tammy for her advocacy and commitment to this man and stated it was possible he may not have made it through the night, had she not pushed for further evaluation of his symptoms. Due to Tammy’s familiarity with the individual and courage to speak up on the man’s behalf, he was accurately diagnosed and promptly treated.

Tammy is a fierce advocate for this individual and his roommates. She knows them so well that when something is not quite right, she senses it and is quick to seek assistance. Tammy’s incredible commitment to her job and to ensuring the health and safety of the people she works with every day make her a clearly deserving recipient of this quarter’s Redwood Grand Hero.

Congratulations, Tammy! We are proud of your achievement, your hard work, and your steadfast advocacy on behalf of “your guys”.

*“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.”*

*- Christopher Reeve*

## Redwood Heroes

**Redwood Heroes is a recognition program that recognizes employees who have made exceptional contributions that directly impact the individuals we support.**

In October of 2016, REM Iowa's Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) in Washington was recognized for a very special accomplishment: The facility earned a rare, deficiency-free survey from the Iowa Department of Inspection and Appeals (DIA). This is the first deficiency-free survey the Washington facility has ever received. Annually, DIA surveys ICF facilities throughout the state, evaluating quality of care, dietary services, member involvement in the community and home, nursing care, and a whole host of other quality indicators - 389, to be exact. So, a deficiency-free outcome is a remarkable achievement that we felt deserved a celebration.

We are proud of - and wish to honor the accomplishments of - our Washington team. Congratulations to Program Coordinator, Sara Miller; Lead Direct Support Professional, Cole Davies; Registered Nurse, Dawn Boyd; and Direct Support Professionals, Kayley Clark, Samuel Roman Costa, Dorrie Deich, Dustin Dittrich, Angelic Ehret, Carman Ehret, Victoria Entsminger, Estrella Gordon, June Love, Chelsie Jacobson, Corinee Sines, and Jemmieblle Tenney. We are grateful for your dedication and hard work!

Survey Says:  
"Deficiency-Free!"  
Submitted by:  
Tammy Hulst, Program Director



"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence."  
- Vince Lombardi

## electronic documentation systems arrive at REM Iowa Developmental Services

The MENTOR Network (TMN) has been working towards the implementation of iServe, an electronic documentation system designed by TMN, across all states. In Iowa, REM Iowa Developmental Services led this initiative in day programs across Iowa and has been

supporting this process for over a year now with great success. This fall and winter, REM Iowa Community Services rolled out iServe across the state in our 24hour/SCL programs.

iServe has brought a streamlined documentation system and process to our services in Iowa. It has allowed opportunities for consistency, accessibility and continuity of care.

I want to THANK all those actively involved in this implementation, particularly the IT iServe implementation team out of Boston, MA, our REM Iowa quality improvement team, and REM Iowa leadership.



**APRIL 1, 2017** marks the one year anniversary since the implementation of **IA Health Link**, Iowa's Medicaid managed care program. While we have experienced some bumps in the road, **REM Iowa** diligently continues to work with the three managed care organizations to resolve these challenges and issues. Up to this point in time, we have continued to provide the same supports and services as we did in years past. The media has publicized information related to the massive losses the three managed care organizations have reported. Per a spokeswoman from the **Department of Human Services**, some losses are expected, as the managed care organizations are making a long-term investment in Iowa's **Medicaid** program. This kind of information, however, can be unsettling and does not go far to ease the minds of providers, guardians, families, and members signed up for IA Health Link.

In February, we learned that **AmeriHealth Caritas of Iowa**, the managed care organization with the largest number of Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS), sent letters to providers who negotiated rates above the floor rate (set by the state of Iowa) stating that, after April 1, 2017, they would no longer pay above the floor rate. On February 10, they also announced that they would be ending some of their contracts with community-based case managers and gradually moving these services in-house – also starting April 1 – in an effort to “improve consistency in the case management processes and recommended services”. For some, this news brings questions and concerns. What is important to remember is that we at REM Iowa continue our dedication and commitment to those receiving our services and

“So long as we have enough people in this country willing to fight for their rights, we’ll be called a democracy.”

– Roger Nash Baldwin

support, and we will continue to work with the managed care organizations, to that end. This is what is in the best interest of the people we are

blessed to support as well as other stakeholders. REM Iowa continues its efforts to advocate for the members we serve and for all Iowan's under the managed care umbrella. There are system issues at the state and legislative level that must also be addressed, in addition to accountability from the managed care organizations. On March 7, 2017, Lisa Pakkebie, Executive Director and I had the pleasure of meeting with **Senator Liz Mathis**, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Human Resources, and **Senate Democratic Leader Robert Hogg** at the Capitol to address some of these issues. While we know change is not immediate, we feel it is vital for all stakeholders' voices to be heard with legislators at a local and federal level. Many providers, family members, guardians, advocacy

groups, and other stakeholders are sharing their stories and advocating on behalf of this vulnerable population. We will

continue to advocate and encourage others to start and/or continue their efforts.

There are many ways for you to advocate and each and every voice is powerful. No effort is too small. One of my favorite quotes is by Anita Roddick: “If you think you are too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room.”

Advocacy resources can be found on the following websites (or contact me at [susanna.streng@thementornetwork.com](mailto:susanna.streng@thementornetwork.com) for further information):

<https://namiiowa.org/>, <http://www.biaia.org/>, <http://disabilityrightsowa.org/>, <http://nacdd.org/>, <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>, <https://www.iowaaging.gov/state-long-term-care-ombudsman/managed-care-ombudsman-program>.

REM employees and host home mentors can also add their email to our advocacy alert system at <http://thementornetwork.com/what-we-promise/advocacy-action/>, so that they receive updates on any future actions alerts that we send.

In addition, thanks to advances in technology, we have direct access to many of our legislators 24 hours a day, through platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The political world moves fast. We encourage you to make a phone call, write a letter, email a representative, tweet a congressman, message a senator, attend a local legislative forum, and make your voice heard.



From left: Senator Liz Mathis; Business Development Director, Annie Streng; Executive Director, Lisa Pakkebie; and Senator Rob Hogg



**Ken Rizer, Iowa State Representative**, visited REM Iowa Developmental Services (RDS) on Friday, December 16th. REM Iowa leadership visited with Ken about our services, community integration, and potential barriers our members face legislatively. Ken enjoyed meeting many of the people at RDS.

# NETWORK PRESENTS GRANT

The MENTOR Network Charitable Foundation's Community Partners are change agents within human services. They are 501(c)(3) organizations that are either delivering innovative care or developing new ideas and models for doing so. They also mirror the Network itself: creative, effective, and focused on the highest quality standards. Since its inception in 2007, more than 215 Community Partner grants have been awarded to organizations in 26 states. In fiscal year '16 alone, The MENTOR Network Charitable Foundation was proud to award Community Partner grants to 24 organizations in 11 states.

Throughout the year, leaders from the Network visited some of our Community Partners to personally deliver the grants from The MENTOR Network Charitable Foundation and learn more about the important work being done by these organizations in their communities. Lisa Pakkebie, Executive Director, REM Iowa, presented the Community Partner grant check to Amy Jellison, Vice President, Families Helping Families of Iowa, to support their Spread Your Wings Program.

Families Helping Families (FHF) of Iowa offers programs and services designed specifically to assist children in foster care and the families that care for

them. From supporting children in their academic pursuits to providing clothing and school supplies to foster families throughout the year, FHF helps better the lives of thousands of Iowa's children. Their Spread Your Wings Program provides scholarship funding for children in family foster care to gain self-confidence by supporting their participation in extracurricular activities, such as sports, art, music lessons, dance, gymnastics classes, martial arts, Special Olympics, and summer camps. Because the stipend foster families receive often only covers the basic expenses of welcoming a child into their home, the "extras" often have to be bypassed. The Community Partner grant from The MENTOR Network Charitable Foundation will support additional scholarships for these youth.

To learn more about The MENTOR Network Charitable Foundation and their many Community Partners, visit or engage the following address/link:

<http://networkcharitablefoundation.org/grant-programs/community-partners/>



FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES  
— OF IOWA, INC. —

## FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Families Helping Families of Iowa offers several programs to help support the foster families and children throughout Iowa and the Linn County area. Their mission is to meet the needs of youth who have been abused or neglected to allow them to have the same chance as their peers to be healthy and productive citizens.

Families Helping Families hosts an annual holiday party, inviting children in foster care, relative placement, approved placement, or those who have been adopted through Iowa's foster care system. Ages range from one up to 18. Each year, thousands of Iowa children are placed in transitional housing or foster homes, while their family works hard to bring them home.

With the support of local businesses and organizations, as well as donors and sponsors, Families Helping Families provides a variety of activities and fun for the children and family guests. A variety of activities take place, such as face painting, crafts, games, activities, food and drinks, as well as a visit from Santa.

This year, the annual holiday party took place on December 17, 2016. Children danced, played games, and shared a few words with Santa. REM Iowa volunteers, along with their family members, assisted the children in decorating Christmas ornaments and building Lego's. What a great way to celebrate the season, the children, and the families!





# The REM Iowa MOVEment Program

Submitted by: Kelly Flanagan, Regional Director

REM Iowa started a wellness program on February 1, 2017. The REM Iowa MOVEment is a voluntary program for all individuals receiving services and for all staff. The intent is to Move Ourselves Voluntarily Everyday (MOVE), with an emphasis on making better dietary choices, overall wellness, and maintaining an active lifestyle. Points were earned for exercising, monitoring food portions, drinking water, not eating fast food, not having pop/soda, and not using tobacco products. There have been many positive changes noted and much excitement for the "MOVEment". The first 'season' of the REM Iowa MOVEment ended March 17, 2017. It was quite a battle amongst all the teams, with "I Like to Move It, MOVE it" narrowly claiming victory over "Gym-n-Tonic" by nine points.

"Season 2" of REM Iowa's MOVEment began March 19, 2017 and is a "Biggest Loser"-like competition. Using learned tools/skills from the first challenge, this next phase is a self-motivated, volunteer challenge, open to all those individuals receiving services and all staff. The challenge will end May 31, 2017 with one individual participant being crowned the biggest "loser" for the highest percentage of weight loss. Additionally, the office that loses the most pounds will win the team challenge.

**REM** Iowa Community Services, located in Council Bluffs, sponsored a bingo night for individuals receiving services, staff, and community members. The theme for the evening was "Brain Injury Awareness". Everyone in attendance had a great evening and lots of laughs.



More Fun Than Ever  
**B**  
**4**

# Purple for a Purpose



Brain  
Matters

In the month  
*of* **MARCH,**  
**REM Iowa**  
*joined*

The Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa  
**and**  
The United States Brain Injury Alliance  
*in turning all 5 Thursdays*  
*into*

**PURPLE THURSDAYS**

to help spread brain injury awareness.

#bipurplethursday



**TRACY  
KENNIS**  
Brain Injury  
Specialist

Brain Injury Hill Day was rescheduled from February 15th to March 21st, but that didn't stop REM Iowa from making our presence known. Nearly 50 attendees, including survivors, direct support professionals, program coordinators, program directors, area directors, REM Iowa's business development director and executive director traveled to the Iowa State Capitol in order to advocate for individuals with brain injuries and Brain Injury Services in Iowa. Iowa representatives who were available to listen to the information that we had to share included Linn County's [Liz Bennett](#), [Art Staed](#), [Todd Taylor](#), [Ashley Hinson](#), [Ken Rizer](#), and [Kirsten Running-Marquardt](#); Black Hawk County Representative [Sandy Salmon](#); and Scott County Representative [Phyllis Thede](#). Missed attending in person? We took a lot of pictures. Click [here](#) to see more.

## HILL DAY 2017



# REM Angels

7/25/54 - 12/7/16

Charles "Tom" Felling was born July, 25th, 1945, and had lived at REM Iowa for the past 27 years. He was living in the ICF facility in Washington, IA, at the time of his passing.

Tom loved listening to Jonny Cash and Elvis Presley, having his head rubbed, and sitting outside in the sunshine listening to the birds. Some of Tom's favorite things were his Koosh ball, hot coffee, popcorn, and outings with



his friends. He also loved his summer camping trips to Camp Courageous and Camp Reece.

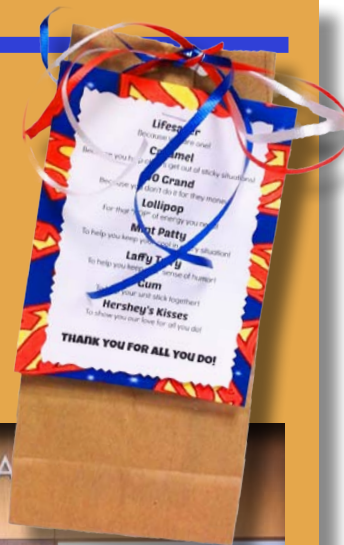
Tom taught those he touched many lessons, especially how to appreciate life regardless of what obstacles we have to face and that love needs no words.

Tom was loved, and his infectious smile will be missed by all of his REM friends.



# THANKS TO YOU MARION BLUE

Last fall, individuals from REM Developmental Services in Marion put together candy gift bags to present to their local police department, to show them thanks for all their efforts to serve and protect our community. The individuals had a blast making the gift bags and got a tour of police station and were able to meet one of the police dogs. Thank you, **Marion Police!**



*"Understand, our police officers put their lives on the line for us every single day. They've got a tough job to do to maintain public safety and hold accountable those who break the law."*

*- Barack Obama*



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