

Positive Outcomes

Fall 2022



From the Executive Director's Desk



Dear North Star Community Services' Family and Friends,

North Star Community Services recently celebrated our Direct Support Professionals as part of DSP Recognition Week, September 12-16. It was nice to be able to take a few minutes each day to do something special to recognize those who perform the direct service to those we serve.

It is with pride that I get to share the essence of North Star's committed staff via a few memories:

- Amy, a DSP, recognized that a person she supports was having arm pain. He told everyone he slept on it wrong, which was not the case. She was concerned, and although she was told she did not need to stay, she continued to work with him and monitor him. Amy took him to the ER, and they learned he had a dislocated arm! She stayed with him the entire seven hours...even through the procedure, because the doctors said her support was calming to him. He was scared and nervous until they gave him a sedative to put the arm back into place. Afterwards, he told Amy she was his best friend. This is a result of the trusting relationship that Amy has established.
- Windy, a DSP, who is a part of North Star's safety committee decided to contact the Waverly police department, fire department, and EMTs. She invited each department to visit the day program to introduce the first responders to the persons attending the program, and for participants to learn more about the first responder's role. The fire department even initiated a fire simulation activity.

In addition to these memories, we received another three-year CARF accreditation, and developed our new Strategic Plan to guide us. This is quite an accomplishment considering all the challenges we have encountered the past few years such as COVID and a workforce shortage! All employees have remained mission and member focused, while accepting additional responsibilities, and giving even more of themselves to ensure the highest quality of care is provided to those we serve.

While I want to continue to highlight the dedicated work of our employees, I need to redirect your attention to the upcoming legislative session. Thank you to everyone who took time to help advocate on our behalf in 2022, as it resulted in a rate reimbursement increase of 4.25%. And while this was a welcomed outcome, it really is only a small step forward. As wages (and expenses) across the nation continue to rise, Medicaid funded disability service providers, like North Star, are unable to respond in the same manner as other industries do, by adjusting the price of their product or service to offset increasing costs.

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Who We Are:

ADULT DAY SERVICES

Waterloo, Waverly
Newel Post
Canterbury Center

SUPPORTED COMMUNITY LIVING

Serving people from offices in:

Waterloo
Waverly
Mason City
New Hampton
Vinton
Marshalltown

MISSION

North Star Community Services empowers each person to realize potential, pursue dreams, and enjoy life.



Accredited for Community Integration
and Supported Living

SAVE A TREE

In an effort to be good stewards of our earth, not to mention saving some green, we would like to e-mail our newsletter to you.

Join our online community.
Please send your e-mail address to:
jmuller@northstarcs.org

A Project from the Heart ♥

In May, the day habilitation program in Waverly began a new community service project, which they have titled “Adopt a Grave.” Over the years, the day hab program has visited Harlington Cemetery in Waverly frequently because it is a nice quiet, safe place to walk for exercise. Ray Dixon,



North Star employee and project coordinator related, “When I walk in a cemetery I see hundreds of life stories, and I have always been fascinated with the past. We began to use a grave location app during our walks to make things more interesting, because sometimes obituaries are included. During our walks, we thought it was so sad that so many of the old headstones were in such poor condition and hard to read. One day, during a walk, we met a stone mason working on a new headstone and during our conversation, we learned what materials were safe to use to clean headstones, and our idea of adopting an old grave was born.”

After getting permission from Harlington Cemetery to adopt a grave and take care of it, they began the project, by first choosing a headstone. They set their own rule that the grave should be over 100 years old. And so, they chose the grave of Mr. Friederich Krumweide, who passed away on September 24, 1887. Travis and Hope (pictured above) used some good old-fashioned hard work, and were surprised how much better the headstone looked after some cleaning.

Next, they made a chalk rubbing of the headstone and went to work to see if they could discover more about this early settler of the Waverly area. Eventually, the project participants found his obituary at the library in the *Waverly Democrat* newspaper. Friederich “Fred” Krumweide was born in Hanover, Germany and immigrated to America in 1851, first settling in Illinois, but moving to Bremer



County around 1867. He passed away from peritonitis following surgery, after having been afflicted with a “breech” (hernia) for years. And, according to the obituary, “so far as we know, he was an honest man and good citizen.” The project continued as the participants painted kindness rocks, which they have placed on many of the cemetery’s headstones, including Mr. Krumweide’s.

Putting Life Skills' Curriculum into Practice

Key to North Star's Day Habilitation program is to provide the opportunity for persons served to acquire and/or improve upon skills required for daily living. Recently, the curriculum, "Life Skills" has been the focus for some groups in Waterloo. They have been working together to learn about some of the different food groups, healthier food choices, and then putting knowledge into practice by choosing a recipe. It has been fun putting what has been learned inside North Star into practice outside North Star; making a shopping list, going to the grocery store, searching for ingredients, staying within a set budget, and using the self-checkout (which everyone agreed was possibly the most fun of all!). In the instance of the Greek Pasta Salad (*recipe left*) stretching food dollars became the focus of another lesson; for example: choosing the green bell peppers for \$.78 as opposed to red bell peppers costing \$1.48, or substituting a seasoning blend already in your cupboard, as opposed to purchasing several different containers of spices.



Greek Pasta Salad

- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 ½ tsp. each dried basil, dried oregano
- ¾ tsp. ground black pepper
- ¾ tsp. white sugar
- 2 ½ cups macaroni, cooked and drained
- 3 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 15 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- ½ cup sliced green onions
- ¾ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- ¾ cup pepperoni, cut in strips

In a large bowl, whisk together olive oil, vinegar, garlic powder, basil, oregano, black pepper, and sugar.

Add cooked pasta, mushrooms, tomatoes, red pepper, green onions, feta cheese, and pepperoni.

Toss until evenly coated. Cover, and chill two hours, or overnight.

Meet North Star's Board of Directors (seventh in a series)



Alison Henkle joined North Star's board of directors in 2021. She grew up and attended high school in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Alison attended several colleges in many different states but graduated with a B.S. in Human Resources Management, and earned a Master's degree in Organizational Design and Development from Upper Iowa University. She is the Human Resources

Director at Friendship Village in Waterloo, and currently resides in Urbana with one large, fat cat named Dwight.

In her spare time, Alison enjoys spending time with her grandchildren, or outdoors kayaking, paddle boarding, hiking, or camping. Alison is an active community member and volunteers her time with several organizations. She relates, "I have a nephew back in Canada with developmental disabilities, so helping this population was instilled in me from a very early age. I started to volunteer to help those with disabilities before I even started high school!"



A group from Waterloo Day Hab recently enjoyed a fun visit to Fontana Park near Hazleton.



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Last night, I visited a fast-food restaurant and ordered a “Value Meal” (sandwich, fries, and medium soft drink) ...the total was \$8.34...WOW! I guess that shouldn’t have been surprising as this place’s starting wages are \$13-\$14/hour. But, North Star is unable to increase the rates for the services we provide...that takes legislative action. Therefore, we need your help in communicating to our legislators the value and need of Medicaid funded disability services in the State of Iowa.

You can help me! Help me, share the message about how important and valuable our services are to the people we support. Please feel free to reach out to me at vschwager@northstarcs.org, or call (319) 236-0901 if you want to make a difference but are unsure of who to contact, what to do next, or have any other questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Valerie L Schwager
Executive Director

Ducks on Parade....



To generate some excitement for our Great Rubber Duck Splash, North Star took a giant inflatable duck, someone in a duck costume, some bubbles, and rubber duck race-themed float on the road and participated in four parades this summer - - and won prizes in two of them! My Waterloo Days (Theme Award), Sturgis Falls, Summer Soul Classic (Best Float Entry), and Waverly Heritage Days. Thank you to everyone who helped - - it was a quackin’ good time!



Make your voice heard!

Direct support professionals (DSPs) provide mental health and disability supports and services. They are the reason that 160,000 Iowans, including the 415+ served by North Star, are living, learning, and working in a community of their own choosing, as independently as possible, rather than in an institution. DSP’s jobs are essential. Their work impacts the lives of Iowa’s most vulnerable citizens.

It is quite simple. North Star cannot compete with what other entry-level jobs can pay. We cannot increase our rates (what we charge) to fund wage increases, as Iowa Medicaid sets our rates. The ONLY way to increase them is through legislative appropriation, which will help ensure competitive wages to recruit and retain a skilled workforce. We are at risk of losing committed, talented, compassionate employees because we can’t offer a livable wage. And this isn’t okay when it affects the lives of other human beings.

You may be asking, “But what can I do?” Do not underestimate the power of your voice. Talk to your legislators. Talk to your neighbors, friends, employers. Share your story. Let them know how important services are to you, your loved ones, and the community. Let your voice be heard. The legislative session begins on January 9th, so make some noise and make your opinions heard.



North Star Hosts a “QUACKTASTIC” Inaugural Rubber Duck Fundraiser

On August 13th, a huge flock of 2,000 ultra-cool rubber ducks descended into the Cedar Valley as North Star hosted their inaugural “Great Rubber Duck Splash.” Early last year, North Star was searching for a more unique way to build awareness and raise some funds to support North Star’s programming in the process. The duck race idea came about during a meeting in which a board member mentioned a duck race in his hometown, Ottumwa. It truly “takes a village” to make an occasion like this successful, and we are grateful to our community who embraced every aspect of this fun event!



It was 9:00 a.m. on a nice, sunny Saturday morning after a 3:00 a.m. thunderstorm (*phew* ☺) at The Falls Aquatic Center as a few hundred attendees and volunteers converged on the

pool in Cedar Falls. The event featured a Duckling (kid) Zone with games and prizes, balloon twisting by Living Characters, and face painting by the Hearst Center for the Arts, plus food from Scoopski’s Ice Cream and Nelly’s Hot Dogs & Paninis. Thank you to Bucky from the Waterloo Bucks for making an appearance.

2,000 rubber ducks were dropped into the lazy river feature at The Falls by several members of Denver High School’s Cheerleading Squad, with play-by-play commentary provided by Greg Holt and Dolly Fortier. It took just over five minutes for the ducks to float, tumble, and bob their way around the river for some great cash prizes for the adoptive “parents” of winning ducks: \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second place, and \$250 for third place.



A huge quack-out to the media sponsors who helped us get the word out: KWWL Television, Coloff Media (The Mix, Cruisin’ KCFI, Corn Country), Lamar Advertising, and Moving Visual Film. Thank you to the Waterhawks, Greenwood Pharmacy and Compounding Center, David’s Taphouse, and Lark Brewing for allowing us to hold adoption events, and special thanks to Hansen’s Dairy Store in Cedar Falls for helping to sell duck adoptions for North Star!

Heartfelt appreciation to the event sponsors who believed in North Star’s vision for a new fundraiser and helped make this terrific event possible (listed alphabetically). Allen College SOTA, The Arc of Cedar Valley, Greenwood Pharmacy, Kaiser Corson Funeral Home, Karen’s Print-Rite, Kate & Co. Salon Spa, Liberty Car Co. 2, The Muller Family, Riley Floors, Dale & Valerie Schwager Family, Sugar Mill Baking Co., Tyson, Upper Cervical Health Center, Veridian Credit Union, and Vine Valley Real Estate.



Additional thanks go to North Star’s employees, persons served, and our families. Kudos to the staff at the Falls Aquatic Center for hosting a truly fun event, and to the employees of the duck parent’s company, GAME, for helping make

the experience easier. And of course, thank you to everyone who adopted ducks. We sold out of ducks three days early! Keep watching North Star’s social media for ducky appearances throughout the year, and “Quacky aka Bob McQuacken,” will be back with his friends next summer for even more fun and 5,000 ducks to adopt! If you would like to help us get our ducks in a row and assist with next year’s event, please call Jodie at (319) 226-8304. Thank you, or as the ducks say, “quack, quackity, quack 🦆🦆🦆!”



Golfers “Chipped” in “Fore” North Star...

Friday, July 29th turned out to be a perfect day for golf as 21 teams and numerous volunteers converged on Gates Park Golf Course in Waterloo for the 26th Annual North Star Van G. Miller Memorial Golf Outing. Kicking off the day was a group of North Star participants present to perform “Proud to be an American,” sung in Van’s memory, and then, of course, the “Star Spangled Banner.” Congratulations to the winning team of Brad Grieves, Dan Oltrogge, Troy Creery, and Bruce Westemeier (pictured right) with a team score of 59 and overall winner, Mark Weidner, shooting a 74!



A huge, heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported North Star, as this year’s terrific golf event was only possible due to the generous support of some generous donors and numerous sponsors (listed alphabetically): Adaptive Golf Iowa, Arc of Cedar Valley, BankIowa, Brummel Madsen Insurance, CCLTC Pharmacy, CUNA Mutual Group, Dale & Valerie Schwager Family, Dale’s Service, Deery Brother Collision, Dupaco Credit Union, Financial Decisions Group, Hogan Hansen CPAs, Hugh Field, Kaiser Corson Funeral Homes, Kent & Barb Opheim, Magee Construction, Messingham’s Snow Removal, Monat Wealth Management, PDCM Insurance, Rosemont Companies, Sinnott Agency, Storey Kenworthy, Upper Iowa University, Van Meter, Inc., VGM Group, and Western Home Communities.

Additional thanks go to Print Innovations for the great signage, Tyson Fresh Meats for providing the meat and Blue Barn BBQ in Cedar Falls for cooking the amazing pulled pork. Thank you to Hy-Vee College Square and Martin Brother’s for helping provide lunch to our golfers. We are also grateful to Lark Brewing, and Steege’s Meats for bringing tasty treats and a great raffle prize.



A shout-out to all our fabulous volunteers who make this such a fun event each year! Kudos to Nate Lubs and the staff at Gate Park Golf Course for hosting an outstanding event. By all reports everyone enjoyed a day full of fun, friends, games, food, and of course, golf! As we hear repeatedly from many golfers, “This is my favorite golf event of the year!” So be sure to stay tuned as we announce next year’s event and join us!

Reaching for the Stars! When Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk launched their passenger rockets, persons served in Waverly’s day hab program wondered what that would be like! And so, they spent some time building a rocket from an appliance box. Everyone had the opportunity to work on the project, and enjoyed using the control box, “Houston Control.

This is Starfire 219!” A staff member brought his VR headset in for the “launch,” and those interested got a chance to try it out, and feel like they were walking on the moon.



CARF Accreditation recieved...

North Star recently received a three-year accreditation for Supported Community Living and Community Integration (Day Hab) programs through CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). This is the *twelfth consecutive* three-year accreditation presented North Star, and the highest award possible. Attaining and maintaining accreditation status requires significant effort, strong teamwork, and a commitment to providing quality services and enhancing the lives of the people served by North Star.