



Inspirations

WINTER 2023



Handicapped Development Center

Cover: Deb Kistler and Jamie Gerten ring in the new year together.



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Mission Statement

As a premier service provider, we passionately advocate on behalf of individuals with disabilities by creating opportunities for them to succeed, to achieve, to grow, and to be happy.

Inspirations is a quarterly publication of the Handicapped Development Center.

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In Search of Excellence

Jeff Ashcraft, *HDC President/CEO*

Candidly, I've been in search of excellence lately. There seems to be so much negative energy floating around the world these days that there is little to no excellence to be found. No compassion or appreciation or patience for that matter. None. Nada. Zip.

Or is it just that we so get blinded by all the negativity that it can be hard to focus on seeing excellence?

As I sit here tapping away on my computer keyboard on Thursday, December 22, 2022, the weather outside is awful with blowing snow, and wind chills in the -20 degree range. Day services have been cancelled for tomorrow and it appears we are going to have a white and very cold Christmas. With all of the rush to Christmas and the latest "blizzard of the century" in full swing, I am consumed with two very different situations with which I was confronted recently; two phone calls back-to-back at absolute opposite ends of the spectrum.

The first call was from someone who had a legitimate concern with an HDC process. Frankly, a system failed and sort of made a very minor mess of a situation. No one was injured or anything – it was inconvenient, but minor. Situations like this literally happen every day in virtually every organization. Processes breakdown. Humans make errors. Our world is imperfect, and yet, we/I apologized and took responsibility. However, this

person was boorish, rude and just plain bratty. Their disappointment was shared as if we had intentionally set out to maliciously injure them, and then requested some restitution; for which the answer was "no". Why do we allow these people to



Jeff Ashcraft,
HDC President/CEO



Participants celebrate the start of a new year.

deposit their trash in our heads? Their toxicity can absolutely ruin a day.

Hanging up frustrated, I made phone call number 2. It's a few days before Christmas Day, and I learn one of HDC's front line employees is making a full-blown, made from scratch, four-alarm holiday feast with ALL the fixin's. She is cooking all this food for any participant or staff who will not be with family or friends for the holiday and serving it, at her own cost, to any participant or colleague who may want to enjoy a Christmas dinner. There it is! Hitting me directly between the eyes, this simple, yet gracious, act of selfless giving so that others may be cared for - there it was - EXCELLENCE! She is joyfully sharing a menu, and selling it in such a way so that no one could feel as if they were imposing. My final exclamation of appreciation before ending the conversation shocked her and me. I simply said, "You are a blessing. I love you." In response, she replied, "I love and appreciate you too."

I've been needing to see some excellence, and the truth is excellence found me. It gazed directly into my face and reminded me that it is there for anyone willing to look. As a Rotarian, we call it service above self. Excellence can be found in everyday illustrations of love in a world that just needs to look a little closer. I need to look a little closer.

It's going to be a happy new year.

Celebrating Achievements & Excellence

Friends, supporters, staff, and participants gathered at the HDC Recognition Dinner to wrap up the year, acknowledge accomplishments and show appreciation. The evening was filled with gratitude for what participants have achieved and what staff have accomplished. The evening was also an opportunity to show supporters what they have made possible.

Videos of each award recipient can be found on the HDC website at www.handicappeddevelopment.org. The following participants and staff received awards:

Daily Discovery East Achievement Award – Roger Prior

Roger is best known for his whimsical and sarcastic jokes that keep everyone on their toes. He helps out in the Daily Discovery classrooms by offering activity ideas and participating with his peers. Roger has experienced many changes in his life during the past year, but he has taken it in stride and used his sense of humor to help him adjust. Although these changes were challenging, Roger managed to persevere and still accomplish much through his determination.



Daily Discovery West Achievement Award – Jamie Gerten

Jamie is a fun-loving guy who greets others with his signature fist bump. He is kind, patient and encouraging to everyone around him. When participating in classroom activities, he is everyone's biggest cheerleader. When not



attending Daily Discovery, Jamie works at McDonald's as a dishwasher; a job he truly enjoys. In everything he does, Jamie displays a great attitude and he brings smiles to those around him. He is pleasant, respectful, and a friend to many.

Residential Center Achievement Award – Daniel Michael

Daniel is a quiet young man who moved into the Residential Center after a death in his family. Adjusting to both a new home and the loss of a loved one, Daniel had a lot to deal with. However, Daniel managed his new situation with grace. Over time, he has begun to join in activities with his peers and enjoys walks around his new home. During the past year, Daniel has made great strides in his goals, navigating through situations that cause anxiety and coming out on the other side with a renewed sense of accomplishment.



Community Residential/ Endeavor Living Services Achievement Award – Stephanie Kester

After an initial period of adjustment when she began receiving residential services, Stephanie has made tremendous progress. She has built meaningful relationships with her roommates and staff. She enjoys participating in activities, and she is growing accustomed to accessing all the community has to offer. During all this, Stephanie has developed some new skills, including cooking, which has



become such a joy for her that she cooks nearly every evening. Stephanie has also developed a green thumb and is learning how to care for some of her favorite plants. Her interests and her achievements continue to grow.

Employment Achievement Award – Dale Barchman

As an HDC Enterprises Associate, Dale is a human steam engine as he assembles boxes or completes any of the other assignments he is given. Dale loves his job, and though he has reached retirement age, he has no plans to hand in his resignation. Dale is considered a near perfect employee with excellent punctuality and attendance and laser-focused attention to quality. Although Dale is quiet and reserved, when he wants to recognize a work accomplishment, he will "raise the roof" in celebration with his co-workers and supervisors.



Daily Discovery East Staff Excellence Award – Tanica Ware

Tanica is one of the first faces to greet people at Daily Discovery East each morning and one of the last faces seen at the end of the day. After assisting with unloading vans, she heads to her classroom where she provides engaging activities for the participants throughout the day. Her duties also include coordinating physical therapy for participants and ensuring they receive the intervention they need. Tanica is excellent in her position. She approaches her job with humor that helps her handle even the most trying days with ease. Always with the HDC mission in mind, Tanica's



focus is the participants' happiness and continued growth.

Daily Discovery West Staff Excellence Award – Megan Dillon

To help participants focus on promoting their health, Megan set a challenge for her room to complete one million squads. With many others throughout the building joining in, the goal was achieved just over one year later. Megan's enthusiasm for goals and for the participants achieving their goals makes her an exceptional mentor in the Daily Discovery program. She has a good rapport with them, is encouraging, and positive, and she loves to see the participants learn and experience new things every day.



Employment Services Staff Excellence Award – Tess Haas

Tess is a diligent worker who not only fulfills her job coaching duties well, but she is also responsible for scheduling all the other job coaches each week. With ever-changing schedules, the task is never complete; however, Tess makes it happen. Her many valuable traits, including a strong work ethic, excellent attendance, and a calm demeanor, make her a wonderful employee and a great role model for the participants in the employment services programs. She provides them with individualized attention to ensure their success on the job.



Continued on next page...

Residential Center/Group

Homes Staff Excellence Award – Shelley Nordeen

Shelley began her job as a Group Home Manager with the idea it would be a short-term gig, but she soon learned to love the job that she does so well. Shelley is a team player who has a great attitude that sets the tone for a positive home environment for the group home residents. She advocates for the participants and strives to provide them with a peaceful and comfortable place to live. Her commitment to her job and the individuals under her care is truly making a difference in their lives.



serves as a role model for treating others with dignity and respect. Dawn loves to plan activities that bring joy to the participants at Daily Discovery East. She organizes them and ensures everyone participates, but her satisfaction comes when she sees others having fun and relishing the experiences. Dawn's can-do attitude sets a positive tone for staff, even on days when things are challenging. Her willingness to help wherever and whenever needed provides a boost to others and builds teamwork throughout the program.



Newest Hall of Fame Honorees

Three new, and very deserving, HDC Hall of Fame honorees were recently added to the distinguished group of individuals, volunteers, and organizations who have previously received this award.

Established 28 years ago to recognize and honor those who have supported people with disabilities in this community, the HDC Hall of Fame offers inspiration. At the Hickory Grove Road building, plaques are hung in the hallway, so all can understand and remember the important contributions these people have made to enhancing the lives of others.

The 2022 Hall of Fame honorees included **KWQC**, an organization that has been and continues to be a great community partner with HDC. Countless times throughout HDC's history, KWQC has helped promote events and assisted with staff recruitment efforts as the television media market leader. Recently, a different relationship has emerged, as KWQC hired the

HDC cleaning crew to complete housekeeping tasks at the station. This partnership has developed into more than a cleaning contract, with the housekeeping associates being brought into the fold like any other KWQC employee. Todd Grady, KWQC General Sales Manager and HDC board member, explains, "Our staff at the station love building relationships with the HDC crew, and the associates love the work. I'm not sure who is getting more out of this, but it really is a win-win for everyone involved."

Jody Mapes was also inducted into the Hall of Fame as a volunteer who wears many hats and has a tremendous impact. As the HDC Booster Organization president, Jody leads the group by raising funds for needed projects, planning social activities for participants, showing appreciation for staff, and organizing events that enhance others' lives. Jody is also a valued voice on the HDC board of directors. As a parent, Jody's perspective and insight educates the board and helps them consider a different point of view. Because she is involved in multiple and varied ways, Jody touches the lives of many.

The Hall of Fame individual recipient was **Lori Elam**, Scott County Community Services Director. In her role as director, Lori advocates

Jody Mapes (third from left) gathers with other Booster members at the Halloween dance.



As part of his cleaning crew tasks, Tom Kulcsar empties the trash at the KWQC studios.



Lori Elam receives her Hall of Fame award from HDC President/CEO Jeff Ashcraft and board chair, Jeff Hassel.

for legislation that is favorable to people with disabilities. Her efforts impact the lives of many lowans with disabilities, not just locally, but around the entire state. She serves as guardian for many, ensuring vulnerable people have a voice and are not forgotten. Prior to her present job, Lori worked in various capacities at HDC. During her HDC career, Lori worked in both residential and day programs where she always insisted on quality care from staff and where she developed meaningful relationships with participants.

HDC is grateful for the many contributions of these new honorees and welcomes them into the Hall of Fame. Thank you and congratulations.

Enjoying her strut down the red carpet, Gloria Williams looks beautiful in her fashion show gown.



A Quarterly Snapshot: Daily Discovery East

New Name, Same Great Program

The name might have changed, but the program is still the same. Formerly known as Personal Independence Services, Daily Discovery East helps over 120 people celebrate every day. No special event is needed; no holiday has to be on the calendar. Celebration and discovering is at the heart of what they do at Daily Discovery East, because every day they celebrate people.

Generally, the individuals at the program located on North Brady Street require more attention and assistance, but they still take pride in accomplishments, great or small. The Fall Fashion Show was an example of this, when everyone had the opportunity to show off and celebrate their own unique style. Complete with a runway and a room full of supportive and adoring fans, individuals made their way down the red carpet to the sound of cheers and applause. A recent Art Show also provided individuals with a chance to express themselves. They discovered a variety of mediums used to create artwork that they later shared during an art show to celebrate their achievements.

Daily Discovery East is never short of creative ideas for finding reasons to celebrate, whether it's a door decorating contest for the holidays, an "HDC's Got Talent" event, or a science fair, the staff and participants are busy with fun and engaging activities. They work side-by-side to ensure the best experience for everyone and that everyone is involved in the celebration. Recently, the job title "Instructor" was changed to "Mentor" to more accurately reflect that relationship between staff and participants.

"When the two day programs were combined into one Daily Discovery program, more service consistency was possible, which improves services for everyone," explains Katy Decker, Vice President of Daily Discovery and Employment Services. "Two casemanagers work with people at both the east and west campuses, so the experience for new folks is better and the continuity between the two buildings is much improved."

Although Daily Discovery East has undergone some recent changes, one thing has remained constant and that is the desire to help people celebrate their life.

Katy Decker, Vice President of Daily Discovery and Employment Services



Performance objectives for the period October 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022:

- 100% of participants maintained or increased their health status.
- 96% of participants attended services full time.
- Ranked on a 4-point scale, performance objectives were achieved at the following levels:
 - Participants were offered access to community activities: **3.9**
 - Participants increased their independence: **3.1**
 - Participants were made aware of options for other services: **3.8**
 - Participants achieved at least one goal during the year: **3.3**
 - Participants were given choices: **3.2**
 - Participants were overall satisfied with services: **3.6**

Our Thanks Goes To...



WE APPRECIATE YOU
Davenport high schools' honor students raised money for **Brittany's Gifts**. From their efforts, they were able to deliver presents and good cheer to the residents at the Residential Center during the holidays.

ABOVE: Although the Brittany's Gifts students were unable to come inside, their warmth and compassion was felt throughout the Residential Center as they waved their holiday greetings through the windows.

OUR THANKS GOES TO
The **Regional Development Authority** generously granted \$25,600 during their Fall grant cycle to help ensure the completion of the Residential Center front entrance project.

RIGHT: Linda Hartzell will not have to spend as much time out in the cold after the Residential Center's new entrance is constructed.



WE ARE THANKFUL FOR
Tommy's Car Wash had an "HDC Day" with a portion of all car washes during that day going to HDC.

ABOVE: Resource Development Coordinator Lexi Keppy accepts a check from the fine folks at Tommy's Car Wash.



THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT
The **HANDS Auxiliary** presented a check in the amount of \$63,500 to HDC, as a result of their 2022 fundraising events. During the presentation of the check, members of the HANDS group acknowledged the generosity of sponsors and event participants who made it possible to provide these funds to HDC.

LEFT: HANDS members Samantha Schulze and Kendra Mulcahy, along with Amber Deere (standing) helped golfers check in at the HANDS Golf Outing last summer.

YOUR SUPPORT IS AMAZING

Valley Construction conducted a company campaign to raise funds for individuals with disabilities at HDC. The tremendous Valley employees supported the effort, and the result was a very generous contribution to support the mission.

RIGHT: Valley Construction President Greg Hass presents a really big check from their company campaign to participants in HDC's Daily Discovery West program.



OUR GRATITUDE GOES TO
Continuing their highly-anticipated and much-appreciated annual tradition, the **Davenport Police Association** provided a delicious turkey dinner in celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday.

LEFT: A member of Davenport's finest helps D'Mel Williams with his tray filled with turkey, dressing, and all the other Thanksgiving dinner staples.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR
Ed and Verna Lucier had a son who participated in HDC services. Larry attended day services, and he also lived in a group home for a time before moving to an apartment with support from HDC staff. The Luciers valued the services Larry received and they showed their gratitude by making a provision in their will. Ed and Verna made sure Larry was taken care of, and after Larry and his parents passed, HDC was one of the remainder beneficiaries of their trust.

HDC is thankful for these thoughtful provisions, which are a wonderful legacy for grateful families or others who want to support HDC beyond their lifetime.

Accreditation: Mission Accomplished

In October, three surveyors from CARF, an international accrediting body, visited HDC for three days to conduct their examination. After a thorough review of how HDC meets their rigorous standards, the surveyors presented their findings. A final report was received later which granted HDC another three-year accreditation, the best result possible.



This accreditation marks the fourteenth consecutive survey at HDC, and never before have so few recommendations been included in the final report. This is an accomplishment for which the entire HDC family can be proud.

Welcome Aboard

At their annual meeting in October, the HDC Board of Directors voted in two new members that will join a talented, dedicated group who share their time and expertise to enhance the lives of people with disabilities at HDC.

Sharon Sarver

Sharon Sarver’s extensive background in the non-profit human services sector will be a great addition to the HDC Board of Directors. Not only has Sharon overseen departments on the programming side of things, she has also done communications, marketing, and fund development during her nearly 30 years working in the non-profit world. Currently, Sharon is the Foundation Coordinator for the Bettendorf Public Library Foundation. She also teaches online classes on organizational behavior and is an active member of the Rotary Club of Bettendorf.



While attending Iowa State University, Sharon worked part-time in a group home for children with significant special needs. That experience sparked an interest in helping others; an interest that Sharon has cultivated throughout her career. Because of that involvement, she has always felt “a special connection to the work of HDC”.

As she begins her board of director duties, Sharon looks forward to being “all in”. Sharon explains, “In my various professional roles, I have come to understand what an organization needs from its board, and I am committed to being active and supportive.”

Jody Britton

Jody Britton describes herself as an innovator who is an out-of-the-box thinker. Those traits

have served her well in her professional career, especially as the owner of Sweet Tooth Snacks, a wholesale confection and retail gifting operation based in the Quad Cities.



After graduating from St. Ambrose University with a political science and marketing degree, Jody earned recognition in several sales positions before becoming the owner of her business, which supplies retail outlets across the country. She’s a person of action who likes rolling up her sleeves and doing what is necessary to get the job done. Many volunteer organizations have benefitted from Jody’s energy and passion, and now, HDC will be benefiting too.

Through her work and other involvement, Jody has developed vast community connections that she hopes to share with HDC. Jody explains why she joined the Board of Directors, “I would love to use my talents, resources, and relationships to help a wonderful organization like HDC.”

Parting With Our Thanks

After two stints on the HDC board of directors, Tom Licea, stepped down this year. Sally Dickey also completed her term on the board. Both Tom and Sally expressed their appreciation for HDC and vowed to continue to stay involved to support the mission.

Everyone at HDC thanks Tom and Sally for their contributions to the board and for sharing their talents for the betterment of HDC and the participants.

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Monday, June 5, 2023

Crow Valley Golf Club



1st Annual HDC Scavenger Hunt

Saturday, August 26, 2023

Start and finish at HDC

Brady Street building