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Member News!

Welcome to the Dispatch!

We make it our goal to offer up something above and beyond your typical newsletter. Something more interactive. Something more engaging. Our newsletter features big, beautiful pictures of our members and employees doing what they do best, as well as reflections and stories written by the people who were there. We want to bring the reader closer to experiencing the wonderful things we're lucky enough to experience first-hand, around here, every day. For those of you who receive the newsletter online or via email, go crazy - click and touch away. Many of the pictures and highlighted words are linked to additional information, for those of you who want to learn more about anything we've written here. We hope you enjoy the Dispatch. See you next quarter!

Whenever you see this icon, touch or click for additional pictures!



Whenever you see the "Play" arrow, touch or click for video!



The Dispatch is a quarterly publication of Discovery Living, Inc., © 2013. If you are interested in receiving a copy of our newsletter by email or traditional post, please contact **Leon Bohn** at leon.bohn@discoveryliving.org.

THE Dispatch

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~2015~
Cultivating
the new
Field of Dreams



An adventurous group of individuals took a little vacation to **Branson** in early November. The highlight was the **Legends in Concert** show, featuring tributes to Elvis, Rod Stewart, Reba McEntire, The Blues Brothers, and Nat King Cole. We also enjoyed a performance by The **3 Redneck Tenors**, where Keith's perfect comedic timing was a big hit, as he playfully heckled



A BREAK in BRANSON



them from the audience. Later, we boarded the Branson Belle Showboat, where an incredibly sweet fellow tourist purchased souvenir drinks for everyone in our group. More highlights from the trip included The Dixie Stampede, which put on an amazing Christmas show; The Oak Ridge Boys, which was Lorie's favorite; and the Shepherd of the Hills Christmas Light Tour. Our accommodations at Indian Point Resort were perfect and we had a beautiful view. Everyone appeared to have a wonderful time!



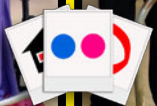
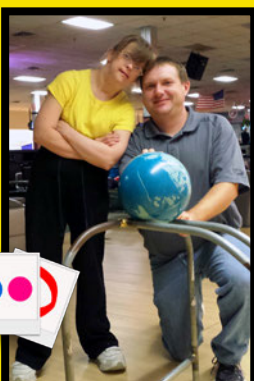
"I don't think of all the misery but of the beauty that still remains." ~ Anne Frank



...worth 1,000 words

Kevin Baldwin and his 2 silver medals from **Special Olympics** Winter Games skiing.

The Northbrook 2 Crew enjoys a night on the lanes. Look out, pins!!





DOUGLAS COURT DAY AT THE MUSEUM



MONSTER BASHES

Halloween Fun at the Houses



DONOR SPOTLIGHT Cal & Marguerite Wagner



Discovery Living was recently blessed with the single largest estate gift we have received in our 33 year history. This gift was made possible by the thoughtfulness and generosity of Clarence “Cal” and Marguerite “Marge” Wagner.

Cal Wagner grew up in a large family near Dubuque. Cal worked very hard as a young boy and enlisted in the United States Navy, serving during World War II and Korea. Cal then started his long and distinguished career in Law Enforcement. He served as a Dubuque County Deputy Sheriff before embarking on a 34-year career with the Iowa Highway Patrol. He was a great fisherman, enjoyed hunting fowl, was a physical fitness advocate, and served on the

Highway Patrol Sharpshooter Team for many years.

Marguerite Vomacka’s family resided in Cedar Rapids. She worked for many years as a legal secretary and at the Linn County Recorder’s office. She enjoyed gardening, bird watching, playing cards, and entertaining. Marguerite would meet the love of her life at the Linn County Courthouse when Cal administered her driver’s license test. Cal and Marguerite were married November 24, 1949. The couple enjoyed 61 years together, until Cal passed away February 23, 2011, at the age of 86. Marguerite passed away May 1, 2013, at the age of 87. During their many years together, they enjoyed traveling across America in their Cadillac. They were also lifelong members of **All Saints Catholic Church**. Cal and Marguerite are survived by one daughter.

Cal and Marguerite were lifelong friends with Tait and Dottie Cummins, and enjoyed attending the **Discovery Living Travel and Adventure** movies. Continuing a lifetime of community involvement, Cal and Marguerite made sure that **Discovery Living, Camp Courageous**, and several other fine organizations received a gift from their estate. We thank them for leaving a lasting legacy. We also want to give special thanks to Gerald and Althea Anderson, the Executors of the Wagner Estate. We have appreciated their support and assistance. Discovery Living is pleased to call them friends.

The Annual Appeal is Underway!

Many of you received a mailing from Discovery Living in November that asked you to support our annual appeal. The annual appeal campaign is critical if we are to continue to purchase and adapt homes, vehicles, and equipment in order to meet the changing needs of the people we serve. Your support also enables us to expand services to support the more than 40 people who are on our waiting list. Any and all gifts are appreciated and, rest assured, that all of the proceeds directly support the people we serve - none of the proceeds are used for administrative purposes. On behalf of all of us at Discovery Living, thank you for your support.

Discovery Living recently became a member of the **AmazonSmile** network. Here are a few details about how you can support Discovery Living by simply shopping at Amazon:

- Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Discovery Living, Inc. whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.
- AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service. Best of all, the donation costs you nothing, as it is made by Amazon – based on the price of your purchase(s).
- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at smile.amazon.com.

Next time you are shopping on Amazon, please remember to click on the AmazonSmile icon and make sure that a portion of your purchase price goes to support our work.

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

OUR FAITHFUL FRIENDS

Discovery Living would like to thank the following **Knights of Columbus** Councils for their support from the 2014 Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (PID) tootsie roll drive:

12136 - North Linn, 5677 - Cedar Rapids, 11942 - Fairfax/Walford area, 5544 - Cedar Rapids, 14952 - Cedar Rapids, 909 - Cedar Rapids, 5390 - Marion, 12131 - Center Point, Walker, Urbana area, 15921 - Hiawatha, 13426 - Mechanicsville area. Additional thanks goes out to support received from the **State Knights of Columbus council**. The Knights of Columbus are once again the single largest source of donations to **Discovery Living**.

Dedicated Knights of Columbus volunteers donate their time, energy and enthusiasm to help ensure that the people we support are able to live fulfilling lives, near family and friends.

Hebrews 13:2 - Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.



“Oh, my friend, it’s not what they take away from you that counts. It’s what you do with what you have left.” ~Hubert Humphrey

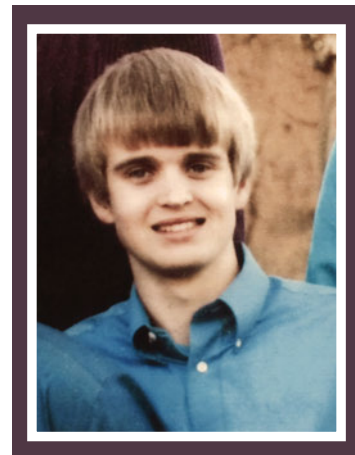
DID YOU KNOW?

- Discovery Living was awarded a “Three Years with Excellence” certification during our most recent Home and Community Based Services certification review. This certification is the highest attainable for a service provider, and a direct reflection on the quality work put forth by our dedicated employees.
- 32 of the people supported by Discovery Living have received our services for more than 20 years
- 53 of the people we support are at least 50 years old

Welcome, Peter

The 16th Street Crew was pleased to welcome a new friend on August 1st.

Welcome, Peter Knudson. May you find comfort, warmth, and laughter in your new home!



Christmas Bells Are Ringing!

Aaron Schantz, Aaron Reid, and Scott Edgerly ringing the bell for the Salvation Army on 12-18-14 at the Marion Walmart.



Options:

UPDATING . . .

Work to CREATE Employment OPTIONS

By Ben Rogers, Linn Co. Supervisor, Guest Columnist,
Cedar Rapids Gazette - December 6, 2014

Since 1966, **Options of Linn County** has provided day habilitation and prevocational services (sheltered workshop) to people with intellectual and physical disabilities. Options is unique in that it is the only county-funded provider of such services for people with disabilities in Iowa.

Through fierce and passionate advocacy in the 1960s and 1970s, people with disabilities began to come out from the shadows of institutionalization and were integrated back into the light of the community.

Options of Linn County was created to serve these exceptional individuals with day habilitation and job training opportunities. This same movement has created new challenges and opportunities for further integration into the community through competitive employment, instead of sheltered workshops.

The Options Future Planning Task Force was created by the Linn County Board of Supervisors to examine the changes in federal regulations and funding restrictions that could require the closure of the Options sheltered workshop, which affects nearly 100 Options consumers. After a year of study and review, the task force identified three key issues that directly impact its future:

- 1) federal regulations that view sheltered workshops as a restrictive environment that segregates the disabled from the community;
- 2) requirements that employers pay minimum wage to people with disabilities in a sheltered workshop instead of the current subminimum wage, which is based on their ability and productivity; and
- 3) changes in the state's reimbursement rate for Options to far below the cost of providing these services. The task force estimated the funding gap to be several hundred thousand dollars annually.



Furthermore, the Linn County Board of Supervisors cannot, by law, allocate additional dollars into the Mental Health/Disability Services levy to subsidize this gap.

The Options Future Planning Task Force — consisting of family members of Options consumers, disability advocates, disability service providers, Options and Linn County staff — voted unanimously to recommend to the Linn County Board of Supervisors that the sheltered workshop close by June 30, 2016.

This date represents the end of Linn County's fiscal 2016 budget.

The task force also recommended restructuring the day habilitation services provided by Options to comply with new federal regulations requiring more community integrated programming.

The task force recognizes not all Options consumers in the sheltered workshop will be able to find, or work in, competitive employment. For those who cannot, they will be able to work at Options until the closure of the sheltered workshop and can receive day habilitation services following the closure.

Linn County case managers will work with Options' consumers and family members to assist them during this transitional period.

The closing of the Options sheltered workshop is not the outcome many had hoped for. However, it is the only feasible alternative available at this time.

I am working closely with area employers to educate them on the benefits of hiring someone with a disability. It can improve a company's culture, bottom line and the social good.

It will take a collaborative effort among family members of Options consumers, disability advocates, Linn County, the private sector and the greater community to make sure the disabled have every opportunity for inclusion and employment.

This truly will take a village.



...worth 1,000 words

The men at Wesley took advantage of the beautiful fall colors and got out for some group pics.

Medicaid... A Promise to Keep

By Bob Hebl, Guest Columnist,

Cedar Rapids Gazette - January 7, 2015



A number of years ago the state of Iowa made a commitment to reshape the manner in which support services are delivered to people with mental health or developmental disability related service needs. Legislative action was enacted, rules were written, stakeholder input was solicited, and numerous task force meetings were held in 2012 and 2013. Effective July 1, 2014, the state of Iowa had reshaped mental health and developmental disability (MH/DD) service delivery from a county managed system to a regional service delivery model. Ultimately, Iowa's 99 counties formed 15 regions. Ideally, this restructuring would result in more uniform service access and delivery across the state.



While the regional system is still a work in progress, there was another key component of the system redesign that involved the state of Iowa assuming fiscal responsibility for the non-federal share of Medicaid funded services. The idea was that the state could collect needed revenues and administer [Iowa Medicaid](#), while the regions were left to focus primarily on service delivery and funding for services not covered under the Medicaid umbrella. Assurances were made by state leaders that those who rely on Medicaid would not see their services reduced or eliminated due to this initiative but, rather, service access would improve under the new system.

Medicaid funding is based on the economic well being of each state and the [Federal Medical Assistance Percentage \(FMAP\)](#) increases or decreases in accordance with the current state fiscal environment. The good

news is that Iowa fared better than many other states during the recent recession. The bad news is that Iowa's share of federal funds (FMAP) has decreased each of the last several years, creating a significant funding gap for Medicaid services. In short, having fared better than most states during the recent recession has resulted in the federal government funding a smaller percentage of Iowa Medicaid expenses each of the past several years. Since Fiscal Year 2012, Iowa's Federal Medical Assistance Percentage has decreased over 7%, resulting in the shifting of responsibility to pay for millions in Medicaid expenses from the federal government to the state of Iowa. In Fiscal Year 2016 alone, further reductions in federal funding are projected to result in a \$56.1 million Medicaid shortfall in Iowa.

My employer, [Discovery Living, Inc.](#), is a local, non-profit provider of community based residential supports to over 150 people with intellectual disabilities in the greater Cedar Rapids area. Medicaid is the primary source of funding for virtually every person we support. On a state level, Medicaid is expected to be accessed by over 800,000 Iowans in 2016.

Clearly, a program the size and scope of Medicaid needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that Medicaid funds are utilized for their intended purposes. It is also important to remember that reductions in federal funding, which state leaders anticipated, should not be used as an excuse to compromise services for those who need them. As the state budget is prepared, I hope our political leaders remember the commitment they made to their fellow Iowans and fully fund Medicaid.

"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." ~Ronald Reagan



Health and Wellness (and You!)

What is the Health and Wellness Committee?

Our Health and Wellness Committee consists of Kim Larimer and Casey Wells, and its purpose is to gather information and ideas from staff and members relating to fun, innovative, and inspiring ways to live a healthier lifestyle. Kim and Casey will be inviting houses to participate in round table discussions and brainstorming sessions throughout the year to generate ideas that can be passed on to the Discovery Living family. Every quarter, about five houses or so will be invited to participate. Be on the look-out for your turn so you can come share your ideas. We look forward to meeting with you! In addition to the monthly forums, Kim will pass on information to the houses about different health initiatives, special awareness days, and special health information for members and staff. If you have any ideas in the meantime, please don't hesitate to stop in and see [Kim](#) or [Casey](#) - or give us a call at 319-378-7470. We'd love to hear your ideas for how members and staff can lead healthier lives.

Remember: It's Your Health, Your Life, and Your Choice!





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Place
Stamp
Here

www.discoveryliving.org
(319) 378-7470

*Helping adults with
intellectual disabilities
live successful,
satisfying lives in the
mainstream of the
community.*