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What Matters Most...



Al Ropa brings his violin to Music Therapy. On this particular day, he accompanied the music to the tune of Brooks and Dunn's "Boot Scootin' Boogie".

Ray mentioned a little over a month ago that he missed his friend Bobby, so we arranged for Bobby to come to the Rec Center today so that they could spend the day together. They ordered out for lunch (Culver's) and had a great time seeing one another.

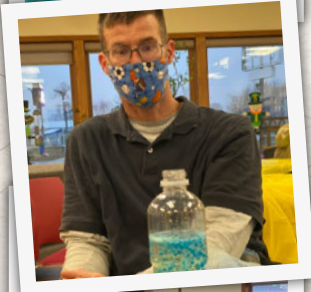


Mars Rovers!!



"If people are doubting how far you can go, go so far that you can't hear them anymore."
- Michelle Ruiz

St. Patty's Day SCIENCE!!!



Valentine's ~ at the ~ Rec Center!



NIGHT & SHINE
TIM TIGROW
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Critical to our mission at Discovery Living is to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of the people we support, our employees, and other stakeholders. The past year has presented unparalleled challenges in this regard. The Covid pandemic has resulted in our having to make many decisions in which we balance health and safety, member rights, family preference - and numerous other variables. Through it all, we have kept moving forward. In the past twelve months, we have:

- Purchased three new homes
- Started serving several people who were on our waiting list
- Retained, recruited and hired dozens of high quality employees
- Expanded our Recreation Center services by launching a companion program called the Sensory Center
- Enhanced our employee benefits by adding **Careots**, a wellbeing platform that allows employees to holistically enhance their emotional health

Perhaps above all else, our employees focused on ensuring that the people we serve received high quality services, even in the most difficult circumstances. The completion of our third and final Covid vaccination clinic on March 6 marks a significant milestone in our effort to contain the spread of the Covid virus.

Please see the article below for more information regarding the clinics.

While we need to remain vigilant, it is very encouraging to see a light at the end of what has been a very long, and often dark, tunnel. Thanks to you for your continued support and, rest assured, Discovery Living is ready for whatever the future may bring.

"Happiness depends more on the internal frame of a person's own mind, than on the externals in the world."
George Washington

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

We are pleased to announce that Discovery Living successfully partnered with **Walgreens** to administer COVID-19 vaccine to any person served or employee who chose to be vaccinated. Walgreens graciously agreed to conduct vaccination clinics at the Discovery Living administrative office on January 23, February 13 and March 6. Because of this joint effort, over 250 people received both COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Special thanks go to Jamie Panosh, CPhT, Walgreens' senior pharmacy technician and COVID-19 vaccine lead, and her Walgreens team. Jamie and the team collaborated with Kim Larimer, health services coordinator, to iron out the many details needed to coordinate three successful clinics. Along with Kim, we want to thank the numerous Discovery Living employees who helped facilitate and transport members to the clinics.

Walgreens

What Matters Most...

Bob Hebl, Executive Director



MEET OUR *Leadership Team*

This is our third entry in our three-issue series introducing our leadership team. This issue, we are featuring more of our office-based and outbound team. Each one's role is crucial in ensuring the organization's mission and member's needs are supported. We are grateful for their talents and dedication.

Krista Sigel
Director of Residential Services

Krista began her career in the disabilities field in 2008 as a counselor at Camp Courageous of Iowa. She then worked at Reach for Your Potential while completing her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Dance at the University of Iowa. Krista has worked in disability services positions around the US, including the SmartHome program with Imagine! in Colorado, an assistant manager of a group home with WWARC in New York, case management in Missouri, The Arc of ECI, running their group and getaway program, and UHC as a case manager.

Krista is proud to have become a member of the Discovery Living family in 2019 as a coordinator. She was promoted to a director of residential services on January 4, 2021.



Lynette Vozenilek
Finance/HR Assistant

Lynette began her career as an accountant at Prototype Consultants and then worked for the Muscular Dystrophy Association as an administrative assistant for 10 years. Her duties included assisting with fundraising, coordinating volunteers, and supervising front desk activities.

She joined Discovery Living in 2009 and has an Associate of Arts degree in accounting from Hamilton Business College.



Kim Carr
Finance Assistant

Kim began her career in 1994 when she coordinated billing activities for Iowa Health Physicians in Cedar Rapids.

Prior to joining Discovery Living in 2004, Kim prepared and processed billing and was a grants specialist at Four Oaks for eight years.

Kim has a Bachelor of Finance degree from Western Illinois University and completed an internship with the financial director of Graham Hospital in Canton, Illinois. She has extensive experience with Social Security and Medicaid audits.



Melinda Collingwood
Associate Director of Planning and Training

Melinda was hired at Discovery Living in 2012 as a direct care worker. Melinda then served as an associate coordinator for three years before being hired as the associate director of planning and training in 2017. Melinda has a Master's Degree in Social Psychology from the University of Northern Iowa and is a certified First Aid and CPR instructor.

Prior to her career in social services, Melinda earned a bachelor's degree in studio art from the University of Iowa and worked newspaper production and graphic design for 20 years, including 16 years at The Gazette in Cedar Rapids.



Brad Jacobson
HR Generalist

Brad joined Discovery Living in November 2016 and has served as community living Assistant, associate coordinator, and human resources generalist. Prior to coming to Discovery, Brad spent 14 years in the human services field, primarily working with mental health populations as a support worker, case manager, and team leader.

Brad received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Iowa, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology from Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia.



Cathy Mahan
Administrative Assistant

Cathy joined Discovery Living in June 2019 as the administrative assistant. Prior to coming to Discovery Living, Cathy was the office manager for a flooring distributor for 8 years. Before that, she completed medical transcription for various physicians and therapists in the fields of orthopedics, neurology, neurosurgery, physical and occupational therapy, and mental health for over 12 years.



Linda Christiansen
Office Assistant

Linda joined Discovery Living in December 2006 as the office clerk. Prior to coming to Discovery Living, she worked for Meals on Wheels delivering meals to home-bound individuals. Linda enjoys playing the piano, crafting, and volunteering at church.



Joshua Mirindi
Information Svcs Associate

Joshua moved to United States in 2016 from Africa, where his desire to help others in need first took root. In 2018, he joined Discovery Living, initially as a direct support professional. Two years later, he adopted a split schedule and now divides his time as a member of the Information Services team and as a DSP on the 16th Street team.

Joshua has an Associate Degree in Applied Science and Technology from Kirkwood community college. He is a member of various non-profits organization, advocating for refugees and underprivileged children in Africa.



Josiah Coder
Maintenance Assistant

Born and raised in Cedar Rapids, Josiah attended college in Minneapolis, MN. In 2015, he became a part of the Discovery Living team, first as a part-time member of the maintenance team, then adding DSP hours in 2018.

In his free time, Josiah enjoys reading, traveling, and learning new (and ancient) languages.



2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

By Bob Hebl, executive director

The Iowa legislative session is nearing completion and the overall budget will increase by approximately 3.8% (290 million) in spending from FY21. The total Iowa budget is 7.82 billion for FY22.

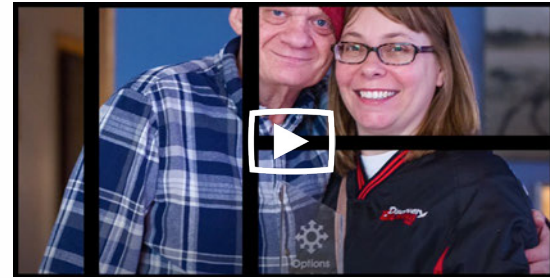
- The budget would leave 340.9 million in unspent income, which would bring Iowa's reserve (rainy day fund) to 825 million.
- Funding for schools and Medicaid account for 60.2% of the overall state budget.
- The budget allocates between 8-11 million dollars, which will be eligible for federal match funds, in reimbursement rate increases, for HCBS providers - like Discovery Living.
- The state is phasing out property tax dollars as a primary funding source for non-Medicaid funded mental health and disability services. This tax reform bill would replace property tax dollars with state and other funds that would be kept in one joint account that each region would access, along with sharing a joint risk pool.
- The budget proposes increasing the child/dependent tax credit threshold for families from \$45,000 to \$90,000 annually, which would enable many more families to access this benefit.

On the federal level, Iowa's FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) will remain at an increased level at 67.95%. The enhanced FMAP percentage means that 67.95%, of all monies spent on Medicaid in Iowa will come from the federal government - which is over 6% higher in federal match funds than pre-pandemic. The enhanced FMAP rate will result in the states receiving nearly 45 billion in additional targeted federal Medicaid funds in calendar year 2021, a portion of which Iowa will receive. The federal government is also considering allocating additional funds that Medicaid providers can access to help cover increased expenses directly related to Covid 19.



Chocolate chip muffins are the breakfast of champions. Change my mind.

"SERVICE TO OTHERS IS THE RENT YOU PAY FOR YOUR ROOM HERE ON EARTH."
MUHAMMAD ALI



Are you interested in helping ensure that Discovery Living is here for the long haul, while also benefiting from [Endow Iowa](#) and other tax credits? If the answer is yes, then supporting Discovery Living's endowment funds at the [Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation](#) is a great way to show your support.

To learn more, click on this link or give Bob Hebl a call at (319) 378 7470



We are Blessed!

Annual Appeal 2020

Last year, we launched our annual appeal, a few months after the Derecho and during the COVID-19 pandemic, knowing that everyone had had a tough year. We are beyond thankful and blessed by you – our faithful supporters – as you showed up for us. Because of your donations, you made this annual appeal our best year ever by donating over \$54,000 to help us fulfill our mission. This year, your donations specifically assisted with our recreation center so that the people we support could enjoy a healthy and safe environment during the pandemic - and beyond. We are both grateful and humbled by your support.



The Power of Positivity

Lisa R. Yanek, M.P.H, from Johns Hopkins medical center - along with several colleagues - recently completed a study regarding the benefits of maintaining a positive attitude. Assessments measured each person's cheerfulness, energy level, anxiety levels and satisfaction with health/overall life. The results were used to determine the level of negativity and positivity displayed by the test subjects. Here are a few findings of note:

- People who were typically positive were 13% less likely to have a heart attack or other cardiovascular event than those with a typically negative outlook.
- While the relationship between health and positivity remains somewhat murky, what is clear is that there appears to be a strong link between positivity and health. Some studies suggest that negativity can actually weaken immune responses
- Additional studies have demonstrated that a positive attitude can improve outcomes and life satisfaction across a spectrum of conditions, including stroke and acquired brain injury.

The good news is that you can take a few basic steps to increase your level of positivity, such as:

- Smile more often. A University of Kentucky study found that smiling, even if you are faking it, reduces your heart rate. Seek out opportunities to routinely laugh and smile.
- Practice reframing. For example, if you are in a traffic jam, try to focus on how lucky you are to have a car. You could also make a phone call or listen to music, and understand that there is nothing you can do about the traffic jam.
- You can build resiliency by working to maintain positive relationships with family, friends and coworkers.
- Accept that change is part of life.

It can be a challenge to maintain a positive attitude, especially considering how stressful 2020 was. However, by taking a few simple steps you may be able to alter the way you see the world and improve your health along the way.

Lisa Yanek is an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine, and Co-Director of the GeneSTAR Research Program, a longitudinal study of families with premature cardiovascular disease.

JOED RAYMAN

Discovery Living is sad to report the loss of Joed Rayman who passed away from natural causes just before midnight on March 17th. Joed was well-liked by the many folks who lived and worked with him at Aosse and 49th Street. He joined the Discovery family in July of 1988 and would have been 80 in May. Joed could most often be found in his sanctuary: a personal TV room where he unwound with his record collection or some cartoons.

He enjoyed a clean shave, storytelling, and the certainty of exactly fourteen dollars in his wallet each day. And given an open ear, Joed would seize any opportunity to reminisce about the farm and tractors. Coordinator, Winston Jamison reflects: "if you ever saw Joed smiling, it would have made your day." Joed, your quiet demeanor and wonderful smile will be greatly missed. Godspeed.



"The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what's important."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

(HAVE YOU TRIED YOUR)

CAREOTS

Discovery Living remains committed to your wellbeing. It has been a month since we rolled out the new benefit program, **Careots/Happify** for Full and Part-Time employees. This benefit is being offered to allow access to a multitude of resources to support wellbeing. Resources like wellness assessments, mediation, monthly wellness topics, as well as fun gaming options that promote a positive and healthy lifestyle.



Discovery Living

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Changing Lives Since 1981

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The Dispatch is a quarterly publication of Discovery Living, Inc., © 2021. If you are interested in receiving a copy of our newsletter by email or traditional post, please contact **Leon Bohn** at lbohn@discoveryliving.org.

7



We will always remember...



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

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