

# THE Dispatch

A PUBLICATION OF DISCOVERY LIVING, INC. 

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## CARF INTERNATIONAL

A Three-Year Accreditation is issued to

**Discovery Living, Inc.**

for the following program(s)/service(s):

**Community Integration**

This accreditation is valid through

**January 31, 2027**

First accredited in 2024

The accreditation seals in place below signify that the organization has met annual conformance requirements for quality standards that enhance the lives of persons served.



This accreditation certificate is granted by authority of:

*Donald J. Dew*

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Brian J. Boon, Ph.D.  
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LET'S HAVE  
A-PAWS

A ROUND OF



*"No one can make you feel  
inferior without your  
consent."*

*Eleanor Roosevelt*



The Centers  
took a field  
trip to the local  
YMCA for some  
indoor exercise



We are honored to share that Discovery Living has achieved our first accreditation through **Carf International**. CARF®

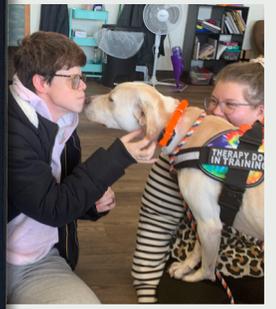
International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services. Programs are evaluated based on a rigorous, independent review of several hundred standards, supporting evidence that an organization actively pursues efficiency, fiscal health, and most importantly, service delivery.

Upon completion, Discovery Living was issued a three-year accreditation – a rare accomplishment for a first-year survey. Krista Sigel, our director of operations, had this to say: “This is a testament to the hard work and high quality of services that everyone provides, as well as the services that we have been providing for the past 43 years. ...a special thank you to the Center teams and support staff for their hard work and dedication. I'm very proud to be a part of this amazing team!”

Discovery Living's accreditation will extend through January 31, 2027.

*“This achievement is an indication of your organization's dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of the persons served. Services, personnel, and documentation clearly indicate an established pattern of conformance to standards.”*

Carf International, on Discovery Living's accreditation



## Cupid's Ball!

*“To love a person is to see all of their magic, and to remind them of it when they have forgotten.”*  
- Anonymous

# Don't Forget!

## UNIFIED SOFTBALL!!

### Prospect Meadows

Tuesday nights at 6  
Starting June 4th!



# Employee Satisfaction Survey – We Shine Brighter Because of You!

**Readers**, we're thrilled to share the results of our recent employee survey! This year, an impressive 81% of our employees participated, which is a 13% increase from 2023. **Team**, by now we hope you feel confident that your voices matter around here. This strong response rate allows us to truly understand your experiences and tailor our efforts to create an even better workplace.

## Thank You for Your Feedback!

We were delighted to see such overwhelmingly positive input across the board. 75% or higher of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all areas of the survey, with an overall average favorability of 87% across the 19 questions!

Here are some highlights:

- 98% of you believe Discovery Living has a positive reputation in the community, something we all take great pride in!
- 96% reported enjoying your day-to-day work activities, making Discovery Living a place where you feel fulfilled.

These results underscore our commitment to creating a strong mission-focused culture with knowledgeable, committed, and dedicated employees at all levels.

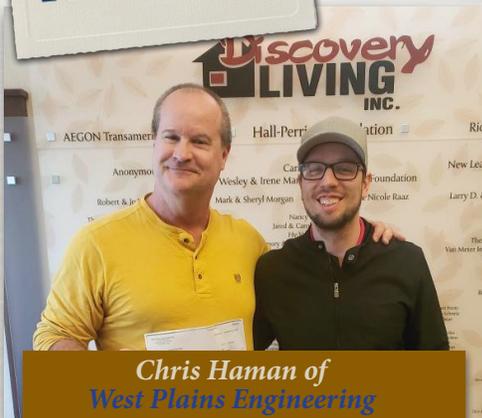
Of course, your feedback is not just about celebrating successes, it's also about identifying areas for improvement. You highlighted the need for:

- **Additional Training:** We recognize the desire for more training opportunities, particularly for working with the IDD population and for professional growth. We're actively developing new programs to address your needs.
- **Enhanced Communication:** You requested improved communication, specifically when changes occur. We're committed to providing clear information, allowing time for questions, and explaining the impact on your work.

We appreciate the honest feedback of our employees, and we're committed to using it to make Discovery Living an even more rewarding place to work. A strong, satisfied workforce makes a significant difference in the lives of the people we support.



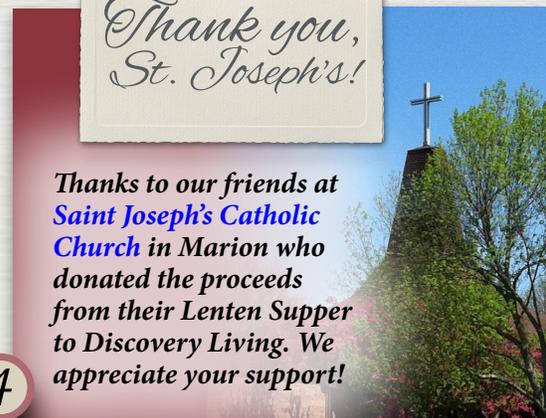
With Gratitude!



Chris Haman of West Plains Engineering



Jessica Pleggenkuhle of New Leader Manufacturing



Thanks to our friends at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church in Marion who donated the proceeds from their Lenten Supper to Discovery Living. We appreciate your support!



WHEN MEMBERS OF THE COLLINS MOD CENTER FUNDRAISING TEAM DROPPED OFF THE SANTA BAGS FOR OUR INDIVIDUALS, THEY ALSO BROUGHT IN TWO LARGE BOXES FULL OF DVD'S FOR OUR INDIVIDUALS TO TAKE WHAT THEY WANTED.

BIG FANS OF MOVIES, THE GUYS AT MEADOW COURT (AT RIGHT) TOOK A GOOD LOOK THROUGH THE BOXES.

AND OF COURSE, WE HAVE HAD MANY OTHER INDIVIDUALS IN AND OUT OF THE OFFICE, CHECKING OUT THE SELECTION AND ADDING TO THEIR PERSONAL COLLECTIONS. VISITORS LOVED THE SURPRISE "POP-UP VIDEO STORE!"

THANKS, MOD CENTER!!

The Mod Center and Kris Vanourny donated over \$3000 worth of Christmas presents for our members this year!



Thank you to the Mod Center!



Did you know you can find out more about nonprofit organizations and activities in your community by visiting the [Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation](#) website?

The [Nonprofit Calander](#) highlights events, activities, and fundraisers as well as how you can get involved and support these nonprofit organizations in Linn County.

The [Nonprofit Giving Center](#) is a hub where you can search for a fund, organization, or cause to support. Check out Discovery Living's agency and endowed fund information [here](#).



# BIRDIES FOR CHARITY 2024

Every birdie, every swing, every dollar counts! [The John Deere Birdies for Charity tournament](#) is scheduled for July 1 – 7, 2024.

We are blessed to partner with our friends at [John Deere](#) as Discovery Living receives 100% of your donation and John Deere adds a guaranteed 5% bonus in matching funds.

Please be on the lookout for the pledge card from Discovery Living in May.

We appreciate your support!



# Recent Legislative Update

## 2024 Legislative Update

**Bob Hebl**  
**Executive Director**

Our elected officials just wrapped up the 2024 legislative session and, while many details are not known, here is what we do know:

- Governor Reynolds budget proposed 8.92 billion in total state spending, which would leave 700 million in surplus or rainy-day funds for FY25. It seems the final budget will be close to the Governor's recommendation. The Governor appropriated 14.6 million to increase Home and Community Based Service providers reimbursement rates for fiscal year 25, which will take effect July 1, 2024. This would be welcome news, especially given that we did not receive a reimbursement rate increase in fiscal year 24.

A few other bills of interest have been sent to the Governor, including:

- SF2252, which would extend Medicaid postpartum coverage for pregnant women from 60 days to 12 months.
- HF2698, which would provide rate increases to Mental Health providers

**Several bills, including Senate File 7, which would have exempted the first \$10,000 of direct support professional wages from state income tax, did not pass. We appreciate your advocacy for this bill and hope it is reintroduced next session.**

Another bill that did not pass was SF2045, or the Work Without Worry bill, which would allow people with disabilities to earn much more income than they can now, without losing entitlements. We hope this bill is reintroduced next year.

Krista Sigel joined me at the State Capital on February 6. We met with several legislators to discuss issues impacting people with disabilities. **Thanks to Senators Charlie McClintock and Molly Donahue, and Representatives Tom Gerhold, Art Staed, Jeff Cooling, and Eric Gjerde for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with us.**

In addition to the items outlined above, we advocated for the allocation of savings from the

closure of Glenwood Resource Center to be utilized for community-based service provider funding, and expressed our support for efforts to allocate set aside funds to help disability service providers increase employee wages.

The Federal Department of Justice is working on an initiative with Iowa Medicaid Enterprises to reduce the maximum number of people served in daily Home and Community based services homes, like those operated by Discovery Living, from 5 to 4. At first glance, reducing the number of people per home may seem like a good idea, until you dig into the details. Below are comments our organization shared with state officials:

*"At a time when Iowa and the rest of the nation are facing a critical shortage of affordable and accessible housing, this initiative will further limit choice and access to suitable housing for people with disabilities. In our home county (Linn) the Alliance for Equitable Housing recently issued a report that can be found at: [CITYofCR.com/housing](http://CITYofCR.com/housing) or [linncountyiowa.gov](http://linncountyiowa.gov). This report details the critical shortage of affordable and accessible housing in Linn County, which will be made worse by the proposed elimination of 5 person settings for people with disabilities."*

We have structured our service model to serve 5 people per site to keep rent, utilities, and other household costs - that are paid for by the people served - at a level they can afford. By doing so, we have provided affordable and accessible housing at a time when expenses are rising. This structure also allows for additional staffing, vehicles, and other critical supports.

The Director of Iowa Medicaid Enterprises has assured service providers that this initiative is intended to gradually reduce the number of 5-bed homes over time, and we are also being assured that no one will be displaced. We at Discovery Living, and hundreds of other service providers, are weighing in and monitoring this issue. If our concerns are not addressed, we may be asking for your support as we advocate for the people we support.

You can contact Bob Hebl, [bhebl@discoveryliving.org](mailto:bhebl@discoveryliving.org) (319) 378 7470 or go <https://www.iowaddcouncil.org/infonet> to learn more about state legislation.

**"Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment we rise above ourselves."**

*Mason Cooley*

## Man Visits City of Angels



Dalton having fun in the California sun

# The Fatal Five Fundamentals

Essential Knowledge on the  
Fatal Five

- Aspiration
- Bowel Obstruction
- Dehydration
- Seizures
- Infections/Sepsis



*"The simple act of caring  
is heroic."*  
Edward Albert



The Fatal Five refers to the top five conditions linked to preventable deaths of individuals in congregate care settings or in community-based, residential settings. These five conditions are most likely to result in death or health deterioration for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Discovery Living has been granted access to a series of self-paced, eLearning courses centered on the "Fatal Five" conditions, including two bonus modules: ("GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease)" and "When to Act").

These online programs are part of several comprehensive, spectrum-of-developmental-disabilities, training resources and include targeted training for DSPs working with developmentally disabled adults. Awareness of the "Fatal Five" is critical for providing adequate support and appropriately targeting treatment needs.

DSPs will gain knowledge on how to spot and report conditions by working through real-world scenarios and how to handle them. The learner will use visual aids, answer interactive questions, and will have access to downloadable worksheets for referencing, when/if needed.

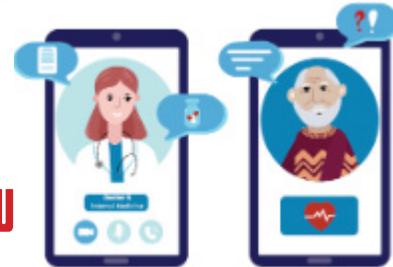
Learners are empowered to observe, make informed decisions, and take action. These trainings will also help build DSPs' confidence and skills, and prepare them to effectively answer triage questions by health professionals.

More information on the Fatal Five course will be revealed in upcoming trainings. Let's work together to transform the "Fatal Five" into a "Fantastic Future" for the care of the individuals we support!

This project is funded by a mini grant from the ON TRAC project of Iowa's. This project and these mini grants are funded by the Administration for Community Living's (ACL) community-based transition grants.

**STAY TUNED!**

**TELEMEDICINE  
COMING SOON TO A  
LOCATION NEAR YOU**



We are excited to share that Discovery Living, along with our individuals, will soon have access to even more health medical expertise as we begin to utilize Telemedicine services.

[CareBridge \(Iowa Total Care\)](#), [StationMD \(Molina HealthCare\)](#), and [LiveHealth \(Wellpoint\)](#) offer free telemedicine services, 24/7 for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

This free service will provide an extra layer of support for health medical needs and easy access to physicians, nurses, and other health experts. These appointments, via electronic device, phone, etc., will help to evaluate, assess, diagnose, and treat health medical concerns or other emergent issues.

Telemedicine never replaces the individuals' Primary Care Physician (PCP), and the PCP will continue to be the first contact for health medical needs. However, if their PCP is unavailable, cannot see the individual in a timely manner, or health medical concerns/issues arise outside of normal business hours, then Telemedicine services would be available for use.

Telemedicine has shown a significant improvement in timely, high-quality health medical care and appropriate use of Urgent Care or the Emergency Room, saving time, resources, and finances.

There are many reasons why telemedicine will benefit our individuals and caregivers: One of the most exciting benefits is that most telemedical appointments can be resolved without the individual ever leaving their home setting. Another is the improvement that can occur in the lives of individuals able to access quality health care in a much more timely manner.

In the everchanging world of medicine, it is always important to seek out those services that will meet the needs of the individuals we support and allow them to live a fuller, healthier life.

Donate Today

The Dispatch is a quarterly publication of Discovery Living, Inc., © 2024. If you are interested in receiving a copy of our newsletter by email or traditional post, please contact [Leon Bohn](mailto:leonbohn@discoveryliving.org) at [leonbohn@discoveryliving.org](mailto:leonbohn@discoveryliving.org).



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