

THE Dispatch

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A Look Back at



Issues

...of the
Discovery Living
Dispatch

www.discoveryliving.org

April - June 2025



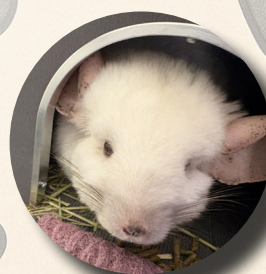
★ ★ ★
*"We need hope,
 or else we cannot
 endure."*
 Sarah J. Maas



FUN WITH THE CENTERS



Meet
"BELLA,
 our new Chinch-ella"
 at the Rec Center!



BEEP BEEP



A Living Portrait

What began in 1990 as a simple, black-and-white internal newsletter—an "experiment" and just a couple pages long—has changed quite a bit over the last 35 years. For more than two decades, this humble publication served a practical purpose: welcoming new staff, sharing helpful resources, recognizing great work, and keeping employees grounded and informed in their important roles. It was, in many ways, a reflection of the organization's heart—focused, hardworking, and deeply committed to the wellbeing of the people we support.

Over the years, different looks, different messages, different names. But from 2010 - 2012, we shook things up a little. With a fresh vision and deep respect for what had come before, we reimagined the newsletter as something more expansive—something that could reach not just employees, but the wider community. We imagined a publication that would speak to individuals receiving services, their families and guardians, case managers, donors, stakeholders, and even future employees who might find themselves inspired by a story or photo. In the end, we pictured something more like a magazine: bold, beautiful pictures. Joyful, and deeply human.

From that transformation came this quarter's milestone—the 50th issue in this current format. Fifty issues filled with big, bright photographs of the people we support—living independently,

learning, giving back, dancing, laughing, working, exploring. Fifty issues highlighting the creativity and compassion of our employees—dreaming up new ways to make life richer and more connected. Fifty issues celebrating victories, explaining changes in legislation or Medicaid, tackling big questions, and championing inclusion in the community.

It's become, we hope, more than just a newsletter. Maybe a living portrait—one that continues to grow and evolve with every issue. In print, it feels good in the hand and clipped stories and covers hang on refrigerators and office bulletin boards. And digitally, it's become more interactive and far-reaching—clickable, shareable, filled with links to partner organizations, legislators, photo galleries, and videos that bring each story to life.

We owe a great debt of thanks to all of the employees in the field. We wouldn't have any of this without the amazing stories and photos that continue to hit our inbox weekly. Every quarter, we hear from readers who say they were moved by a story, charmed by a set of photos, inspired to give, or encouraged to apply.

So here we are, 50 issues later—still telling stories, still chasing joy, and still so honored to share the people who make this organization what it is.

Thank you for reading. And here's to the next 50.

Time Once Again for the Night to Shine



to Shine". In 2025, faithful host **FaithLife Church of Marion** returned, bringing this wonderful experience back to our community. Attendees were treated like kings and queens, with crowns, tiaras, flowers, a delicious meal, drinks, and desserts. Karaoke, professional

On a chilly February night, several of our friends attended a truly magical event. Since 2015, the **Tim Tebow Foundation** has organized "prom night" events for individuals with special needs, aged 14 and above, called

"A Night



hair and makeup, photography, a fantastic DJ, shoe shiners, a red-carpet entrance with cheering fans, and limo rides to the main venue added to the excitement.

Volunteers dressed to the nines accompanied each attendee, dancing, talking, and laughing the night away. This unforgettable event, as it has now for so many years, brought a joyful opportunity for all involved to lay down the boogie.





Deb enjoying some nice furry company for dinner.



He shoots...
HE SCORES!!

Special Olympics basketball brings joy, teamwork, excitement, and unforgettable fun moments!



**"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."
- Martin Luther King Jr.**



A lively Berginer house roams the city, chasing thrills, cracking jokes, sharing stories, and turning every outing into unforgettable adventures.

Endow Iowa Tax Credit Facing Elimination



There is a proposal in the Iowa Legislature that would eliminate the Endow Iowa tax credit program. The proposal is part of the **Iowa Department of Economic Development bill** and will be reviewed by the **Iowa House and Senate Ways and Means** committees. If this passes, both the subcommittee and full committee, the full state legislative will vote on the elimination of Endow Iowa later this Spring and the Endow Iowa tax credit would end June 30, 2025.

If you are considering a gift that would qualify for the Endow Iowa tax credits, there's still time! We encourage you to make your gift as soon as possible.



On February 18, Executive Director, Bob Hebl was honored to attend the **Knights of Columbus Council 15921** meeting at **Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Church** in Hiawatha. He thanked and updated the council for their support with the annual PID (tootsie roll fund drive). As our readers know, the Knights of Columbus are our founding fathers and have been steadfast supporters of our mission for over 40 years. We are truly blessed by the kindness and dedication the KC's demonstrate year after year.



Congratulations **West Music!!!**
Thank you for everything that you do for us!

- Emergencies are simulated during routine activities (e.g., yell "Fire in the living room!" during lunch or have individuals shout "Fire in the dryer!" while doing laundry).
- For tornado drills, DSPs mimic a tornado siren with their voices or phone. Upon hearing it, individuals are informed of the tornado and guided through the appropriate response.
- When outdoors, staff simulate a sighting by announcing, "I see a tornado on the horizon!" and lead individuals to safety.

Regular, realistic drills ensure individuals and employees are prepared to respond confidently and effectively in real emergencies, prioritizing the safety and well-being of all. That's our commitment to safety!

Every birdie, every swing, every dollar counts! **The John Deere Birdies for Charity tournament is scheduled for July 2 – 6, 2025.**

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 look out for the pledge card from Discovery Living in May.



We appreciate your support!



A special thank you to the Mod Center with Rockwell Collins. You truly made the holiday season extra special for several grateful individuals.



Discovery Living is committed to providing a safe environment for individuals served and employees. Each individual has a fire and tornado/severe weather plan outlined in their care plan, and all employees are familiar with and review these plans regularly.

Every residential home and day habilitation center is equipped with:

- A designated meeting location for fire and tornado/severe weather emergencies.
- Emergency supplies, including:
 - Weather radio and flashlights with spare batteries.
 - Water, non-perishable snacks, and sensory items suited to individuals' needs.
 - Games, books, and activities for comfort during severe weather.

Drills and Response:

- Fire drills are held monthly, except in February and August, when tornado/severe weather drills are conducted.
- Drills are varied in day, time, and location to ensure realistic practice.
- For fire drills, staff place a fire image by the front door and encourage individuals to respond appropriately.

COMPLIANCE

Monica Ravn, Director of Compliance

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Advocacy Update

On Tuesday, March 4, Krista Sigel, Sabrina Strella, and Bob Hebl visited the State Capitol to discuss issues pertaining to services and support for people with disabilities. Topics covered included:

- Ensuring that Iowa fully fund their share of Medicaid funding.
- Expressing our support for an increase in the monthly personal allowance allocation for people we support.
- Work without worry legislation that allows people receiving Medicaid to maintain employment without losing Medicaid coverage.
- Legislation that allows for up to a \$5,000 scholarship to assist students with disabilities as they transition from school to work.

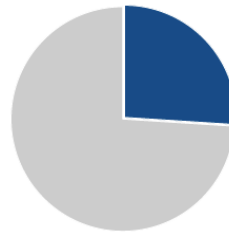
We want to thank the following elected officials for taking time out of their busy schedules to meet with us: From top to bottom: [Senators Art Staed](#) and [Molly Donahue](#), [Representatives Tom Gerhold](#), [Sami Sheetz](#), [Aime Wichtendahl](#) and [Eric Jude](#).

"Success is never final. Failure is never fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts." - Winston Churchill

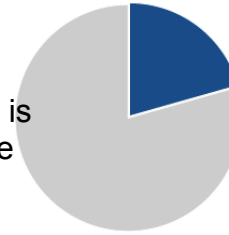


MEDICAID IN IOWA

678,107 enrolled in IA Medicaid

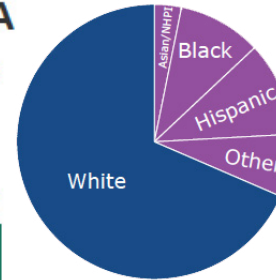
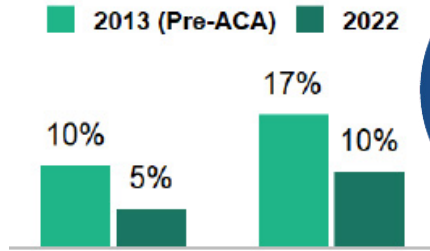


26% of IA population is low-income (<200% FPL*)



21% of IA population is covered by Medicaid/CHIP

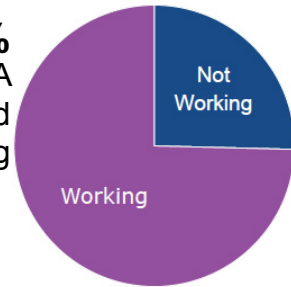
Uninsured Rates in IA



32% of non-elderly Medicaid enrollees in IA are people of color

75% of adults in IA on Medicaid are working

75% of adults in IA on Medicaid are working



In IA, Medicaid Covers:

- 1 in 6 adults, ages 19-64
- 3 in 8 children
- 1 in 2 nursing home residents
- 1 in 7 Medicare beneficiaries
- 3 in 8 working-age adults with disabilities

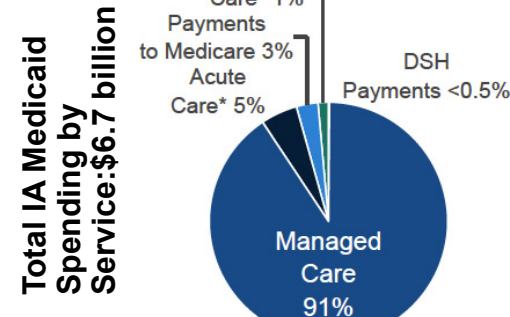
1 in 6 adults, ages 19-64

3 in 8 children

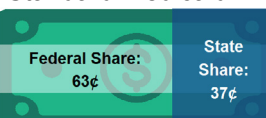
1 in 2 nursing home residents

1 in 7 Medicare beneficiaries

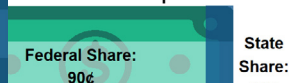
3 in 8 working-age adults with disabilities



Standard Medicaid



Medicaid Expansion



Medicaid Enrollees & Expenditures in IA

Enrollees

Adults & Children 83%

Elderly & Individuals with Disabilities 17%

Expenditures

Adults & Children 49%

Elderly & Individuals with Disabilities 51%

ANCOR - The State of America's Direct Support Workforce Crisis 2024

The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) recently released a report detailing how an ongoing shortage of Direct Support Professionals (DSP'S) is impacting community providers ability to provide essential services to persons with disabilities. Of the 496 providers of disability services in 47 states who responded to this survey:

- 90% experienced moderate to severe staffing shortages in the past year
- 69% reported turning away new referrals
- 39% discontinued services
- 64% delayed starting new services
- 34% are considering further cuts to services
- 57% of Case Managers reported struggling to connect people with services

We certainly understand that our Direct Support Professionals are at the core of our service delivery system. Thank you to our employees who strive to provide high quality support services every day. You can rest assured that Discovery Living will do all we can to continue offering competitive wages, giving wage increases, and providing excellent employee benefits. We want you to feel that working at Discovery Living is not just a job, but a long term career.





Winston

Forever
in our
Hearts...



On March 8th, Winston Landt passed away at age 62 – off to Heaven to reunite with his parents and hero, Mr. Rogers. Forever young at heart, he insisted he was always 19. Winston was loyal, kind, and beloved by many. A founding member of Just Ducky Shredding, he worked and charmed for 15 years. He will be deeply missed at Discovery Living, Milestones, O'Connells Transport, and in music therapy. He leaves behind stuffed monkeys, transistor radios tuned to KHAK, and lasting friendships. Now, he's free to sing with Elvis and Johnny Cash anytime he wants.

Winston will so surely be missed, but from his viewpoint, it's now a "beautiful day in the neighborhood".



Discovery Living lost a member of the family on March 30 when Bihari Richards passed away at the age of 55. Bihari joined Discovery Living in 2018 and made many friends here and at Milestones. He loved to entertain and often channeled his inner Johnny Carson. He enjoyed listening to "Purple Prince" and could dance with the best of them. Most of all, Bihari enjoyed spending time with his devoted parents, Doug and Maya. He visited them often and they enjoyed many great trips and adventures together. Rest in peace dear friend.

Bihari

CELEBRATING 50 ISSUES WITH 50 SIMPLE HEALTH TIPS!

Submitted by: Kim Larimer, BSN, RN, DON

You don't have to make major changes to live a healthier lifestyle. Taking a few simple steps can change how you feel and improve your health, little by little. Try switching up a few old habits for some new ones or just try some of the tips below a few at a time to begin to have a beneficial impact on your health!

1. Walk for 30 minutes a day
2. Drink lots of water
3. Portion control
4. Think positive thoughts and not negative
5. Get 7-8 hours of sleep each night
6. Meet with friends and socialize
7. An apple a day does keep the doctor away
8. Take the stairs
9. Cook at home

10. Start each day with breakfast
"Wait a minute, that's not 50!"
Yep. good eye. Ran out of space. Check out the other 40 here: <https://www.guardiancu.org/blog/50-simple-health-tips/> It's definitely worth a visit. It's surprising how many simple things can make such a big difference. Remember: Set Goals, put your mind to it, and start now!



Donate Today

The Dispatch is a quarterly publication of Discovery Living, Inc., © 2025. If you are interested in receiving a copy of our newsletter by email or traditional post, please contact Leon Bohn at leonbohn@discoveryliving.org.





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