

RISE REPORTER

DECEMBER 2015 | VOL. 39, NO. 4



IN THIS ISSUE:

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

At Rise, we're all about supporting people as they make choices that allow them to live a life filled with purpose. The stories in this issue highlight people we serve, business partners, and other community organizations who are key stakeholders in the important work we do. They also highlight how each person we support at Rise defines his or her own personal measure of success---and it's our responsibility to create opportunities that are based on those choices.

I'd like to thank everyone who helped make the 2015 *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* such a great event, including all of our 500 guests. It was a very special evening for us as we were able to honor people we serve, extraordinary team members, employers, and other community supporters. It was especially gratifying to share the successes of the *Rise'ing Stars* and the *Champions of the Mission* who exemplify the values of Rise in action and whose stories are covered in this issue. I couldn't be more proud of the work our team does every day.



WHO WE ARE

Rise unlocks potential and opens doors to success for people with disabilities or other challenges through creative solutions and customized support. We envision a progressive, supportive, and collaborative environment that fosters meaningful growth and provides opportunities to live a life filled with purpose.

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ON THE COVER

Janice Grendahl has worked as an office specialist at Medtronic in Brooklyn Center for 27 years. She is one of the many proud people appearing in Rise's new video, *Unlocking Possibilities*.





OH, WHAT A NIGHT!

It was a most special evening with spectacular fundraising results. We also honored extraordinary people and employers, debuted a new video, and had a lot of fun!



THROUGH THE GENEROSITY of nearly 500 sponsors and guests, as well as other *Celebrate Rise* donors, we raised more than \$130,000 at our *4th Annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala!* It was held October 8 at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest.

These crucial funds will enable Rise to “unlock possibilities” by providing creative solutions and customized support for people as they strive to live a life filled with pride and purpose.

Emceed by Jason DeRusha, news anchor from WCCO-TV, the evening was filled with many special activities. Guests enjoyed fun social hour games, raffle drawings, great food, and an entertaining awards program.

Above, Rise’s Board of Directors Chair Tom Kettleson and President Lynn Noren listen to a special video message that U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar sent from Washington, D.C. to gala guests.

For more about the evening, including links to Rise’s Flickr and YouTube pages, visit Rise’s website at <http://tinyurl.com/zwd2e3j>. Find additional photos on the back cover of this *Reporter*.

We hope you will mark your calendar for next year for the *5th Annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* on Thursday, October 6, 2016, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park. Information regarding sponsorships, volunteer opportunities and registration will be available next year.

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MEET THE RISE'ING STARS



Kari Hanssen, Custom Futures

Kari has overcome many significant challenges in her life. With support from our Rise team, Kari has been working successfully at Dollar Tree since March. Impressed with her solid work ethic, pleasant personality, and job skills, Kari's supervisor believes she will make an excellent assistant manager. Kari loves her job and is proud of her success.



LaWanda Jackson, Custom Futures

LaWanda recently earned state certification as a peer support specialist from the Minnesota Department of Human Services. LaWanda is intelligent, insightful, caring, and sensitive--and her openness and honesty are truly inspiring to others who are struggling. With support from Rise, LaWanda plans to pursue a career working with children.



Ademola Koleosho, Creative Partnerships North

Never shying away from a tough job or learning a new task, Ade not only works hard on his own vocational goals, he eagerly supports his co-workers, too. Preferring recycling jobs, Ade is organized, methodical, and attentive to details in his work. With his outgoing and charming personality, Ade is considered the official "goodwill ambassador" at Creative Partnerships North in Crystal, greeting visitors and chatting with his co-workers as they arrive each day.



Shannon Nurmi, Job Placement and Follow-Up

Shannon wanted a career in which she could care for people and help make their days a little brighter. Shannon works at Park Health & Rehab Center in St. Louis Park as a culinary assistant. Her manager appreciates Shannon's work ethic, loyalty, and positive attitude. Shannon goes out of her way to treat all of the residents with the best possible care, paying special attention to their unique dietary preferences and needs. Shannon describes it as her "dream job."



Matthew Wilson, DataAbility

Matthew Wilson has a way of lighting up the room with his infectious smile. A data entry clerk at Rise's Data Ability program in Crystal, communication has always been challenging for Matt so he advocated to get a new computerized device. This has helped him be more productive, tripling his DataAbility production. And with the ability to better communicate with others, Matt's world has really opened up to reveal his skills and talents. He has also expanded his social activities with others, done some travelling in the U.S. and abroad, and connected with friends and family on social media.



Ryan Woodruff, Sensory Support Job Placement

After working at HOM Furniture assembling chairs as well as at one of Rise's production facilities, Ryan developed a new career plan with an occupational communication specialist. With his tremendous drive, motivation and perseverance, he found a great job sorting small packages for FedEx ground/home delivery. Originally, Ryan started work at 3:30 a.m., but has since been moved to a regular day shift. He recently got married and lives with his wife in West St. Paul.



Marian Bodin, CBTE Site Supervisor at Federal Premium Ammunition

Employed at Rise for more than twenty years, Marian has had a positive impact on scores of Rise participants. She understands each person's unique goals and aspirations, gives them positive feedback, and assists them to do their very best work while also meeting Federal's high standards of production. Marian is proud that her team has a perfect safety record!



Anna Green, Case Manager for DataAbility

Anna is considered to be a tremendous asset to the team with whom she has worked for more than 10 years. She is committed to service excellence and her work ethic is unparalleled. Anna is a natural leader among her peers, and is upbeat, kind and respectful to everyone with whom she interacts. Most impressive about Anna is the absolute joy she takes in her job.



Jill Johnston, Placement Specialist with Employment Innovations

Jill has truly made a tremendous impact on many people's lives who are struggling to find meaningful employment, increase their self-sufficiency, and be successful. She frequently works with Rise's Mental Health & Housing Support Services to provide ongoing coordination and help resolve critical issues in a job-seeker's life.



Sarah Kohl-Leaf, Customized Job Developer with CIP-Coon Rapids

Sarah is a high-energy, positive and dedicated team member who is passionate about helping people find just the right job. She encourages individuals to believe in their own work abilities and assists each person in facing new challenges. Sarah supports people as they strive for success and increase their self-esteem and independence.



Linda Kolander, Marketing / Production Project Supervisor

Linda has worked in a few positions since she started at Rise in 1987, including a van driver and production floor supervisor. In her current job, she is a calming force in the busyness of production and works diligently behind the scenes to help make everyone successful. Linda is dedicated to Rise and the people we serve, willing to help out wherever she is needed.



NaTasha Olson, Employment Consultant with Mental Health Employment

NaTasha is motivated and passionate about seeing individuals with disabilities find meaningful work and be active members of their communities. She always has a "can do" attitude and approaches each situation with a positive outlook. NaTasha treats each person with the dignity, compassion, and respect they deserve.



Heidi Palmer, Executive Administrative Assistant

Heidi is a hard-working, experienced, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic professional whose skills in data management, computer systems, and organization, as well as her strong work ethic, benefit Rise in many ways every day. In addition to her tremendous work on key administrative projects, Heidi has also helped lead the way on many other special projects including Rise's first-ever Employee Recognition Week, our annual United Way fundraising campaign, and developing the online Rise Store.





LUNDS & BYERLYS, ROSEVILLE

Deli workers communicate effectively to ensure team success

APRIL MARTIN (center), deli manager at the Lunds & Byerlys in Roseville, and her team were quick to welcome DJ (second from right) into their busy, friendly work environment. Since DJ is deaf, his co-workers have established their own methods to communicate with him; some have even learned some basic American Sign Language. The deli team members appreciate DJ's hard work and really make him feel part of the team. Some of his co-workers have even attended DJ's sporting events after work. Their interest in and support of DJ have helped ensure his success at Lunds & Byerlys.



WALGREENS, CIRCLE PINES

Manager's support enable peoples to do their best work



KRISSY PARNELL, manager of the Walgreens store in Circle Pines, is a great supporter of her team and is willing to make on-the-job accommodations when necessary. She is friendly, kind, understanding, and willing to work with people to help them do good work and contribute to the Walgreens team. Krissy also helped Rise placement professionals identify additional employment opportunities at a variety of local Walgreens stores, which have led to other people being hired.

CHECK OUT EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT RISE!

Rise is seeking creative, compassionate people to join our team. Fun, fast-paced work environment, excellent training opportunities, and the chance to make a difference in people's lives. Learn more about available positions and apply today!

For current job openings, visit Rise's website at
rise.org/jobs



Occupational Communication Specialist Katrina Schiferl follows up with Ryan Woodruff at work at FedEx.



ARMHS

Identifying and connecting with community resources and support from Rise assist people in moving forward

DESPITE THE COLD November rain falling, it was going to prove to be a great night for Connie Cheeney when she met with Rise's Mental Health & Housing Practitioner Holly Brabeck at a local McDonald's. She would proudly pay off her fourth bill in its entirety as well as find out that she will receive money from Rise's *Advancing Lives Fund* to make some major repairs on her car.

Connie has relied on a kind co-worker for a ride to work these past several weeks, so with support and guidance from Holly, she has been exploring economical places to have major car work done. She was excited to discover the Lift Garage in South Minneapolis, a non-profit which provides car repairs for people with low incomes.

Since learning about Rise's ARMHS (Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services) from a neighbor about a year ago, Connie and Holly have been meeting a few times a month to address issues which may impede her independent living and connect her with other community resources for assistance. They focus much of their time together on budgeting and financial concerns.



Connie meets a few times a month with Holly to address critical issues.

The mother of three grown daughters and six grandchildren, ranging in age from 5 to 19, Connie works as a paraprofessional transportation aide for kids with special needs. After being out of work for two years, Connie is especially appreciative of having a job she enjoys so much.

“ I'm learning to stop second-guessing myself and trust my own judgment because I can make good decisions. ”

“Having hearing and speech impairments, I've had a lot of the same issues as these kids and can really identify with them,” said Connie. “I take the time to build a rapport with them so they know I understand them and they can trust me.”

As hard as she works, Connie often struggles to make ends meet. She acknowledges that having

gone through several major changes in her life in a short period of time sometimes causes her to experience anxiety and periods of being overwhelmed.

“Holly is so supportive and gives me the positive feedback and validation that I need to get through some of these issues,” Connie noted. “She's helping me go from always being a care-taker to really taking care of myself. If I get down on myself, Holly points out my accomplishments and I realize how far I've come in the past year in setting healthy boundaries and being more assertive.”

“Connie is an inspiration to me in that she is so motivated to face her challenges head on and works hard to find the answers she needs to make a change,” said Holly. “She is not afraid to seek out additional resources and support, and I'm happy to assist her how and when she needs me.”

For more information about Rise's ARMHS, call 763-786-8334.



LISTENING IS KEY

Although Rise services have always been customized, implementing new Person-Centered Training tools expands opportunities to meet people's needs and desires.

SINCE RISE WAS SELECTED to be one of four agencies in Minnesota to participate in a yearlong demonstration project to implement Person-Centered Thinking (PCT) into all aspects of Rise, the preliminary results have been exciting.

Vice President Tim Dickie explains how PCT is transforming the way Rise carries out its important mission.

Is PCT a new concept at Rise?

PCT is more of an extension of how Rise has always delivered its customized services.

Thanks to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, who is sponsoring this project with the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI), we have the tremendous advantage of having almost our entire staff trained by experts to use some truly effective tools that will change the way we deliver services.

The PCT methodology gives our team members new tools which are proving to be effective in further expanding their relationships with the people they serve.

How is PCT being implemented?

Following their two days of intensive training from ICI staff, Rise team members are incorpo-



Lucy Mae Livingston attends Rise's Adult Day Program (ADP) in Golden Valley three days a week and says she has "improved a whole lot by walking and talking" and participating in social activities with others. ADP Service Team Leader Lisa Heffner says Lucy is warm and caring to all. Lucy wrote "I am a PERSON" (see the next page) at her residence and Rise staff were able to learn a lot more about her and then specifically tailor Lucy's services to suit her needs and personality.



rating the many new PCT tools on a daily basis. We also have a team of 17 leaders and coaches who meet on a regular basis to evaluate, plan, and coordinate efforts to embed PCT into all Rise services and programs. They exchange “what’s working and what’s not working” and pass those lessons on to Rise team members.

We have been pleased with how our professional team members have embraced this new approach, enabling us to move forward rather quickly with its implementation.

Give an example of PCT at work.

About 12 years ago, Lucy Mae Livingston had a bad headache and laid down to take a nap. She woke up hours later, her life changed

forever due to a massive stroke. After living at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute for a year, she moved to a residential facility and started coming three days a week to Rise’s Adult Day Program. Rise’s team members provided her with customized services, but when Lucy put together a one-page profile, one of the great new PCT tools, it gave her ADP team members a much broader perspective of her and helped them better address her needs, interests, and goals.

What is ahead for PCT at Rise?

Rise will have at least 150 team members trained by the ICI by March. In addition, Anne Mornes who is our mental health coordinator for employment services

in Hennepin County, and Crystal Woolcott, Day Training and Habilitation coordinator in Central Minnesota, are undergoing training with the ICI to be PCT trainers. They will continue training new employees in these methodologies.

PCT is also helping us think differently about our human resources and administrative practices. It has already resulted in a redesign of our performance appraisal system as well as standards of excellence for team members.

We recently found out the project has been funded for another year which means Rise will continue to receive technical consultation from ICI in our efforts to become a model person-centered organization.

I am a PERSON by Lucy Mae Livingston

You see a wheelchair and a person. I AM A PERSON ...who happens to use a wheelchair.

You see an elderly person. I AM A PERSON...who has lived an eventful life, personally earning each one of these graphic and expressive lines!

You see a person who is overweight. I AM A PERSON...who struggles with heart and diabetic issues that gravely impact my weight.

You hear a person who slurs her words. I AM A PERSON...who understands you. Yet, due to my stroke, it is difficult for you to understand me.

You hear a person who is tired and complains. I AM A PERSON...who has numerous pains inside this aging body compliments of diabetes, neuropathy, a congestive heart, and having survived a stroke.

I was once young and energetic like you, too. I raised three children as a single parent. I lived through segregation and the Southern racial riots of the 1960s. I chose to move north to Minnesota where there were more opportunities! I worked with inner city children as part of the Head Start program. Eventually, I opened my own daycare for children who had a multitude of challenges. I am a grandmother to 13 and a great-grandmother to 11 beautiful children. I helped raise many others. My home was opened to many people who had no where else to live. I took good care of ALL the people who entered my life -- loving each and every one of them while giving them my undivided attention.

Now it is my turn to need care from you.

When you provide me services, you are providing services to a PERSON.



IT'S GREAT TO BE AT THE YMCA

Rise adds third Adult Day Program at the YMCA in Mounds View

THE HALLS OF THE Mounds View YMCA are bustling with activity with two busloads of kids on a school retreat as well as a group of older adults arriving for the Seniors Sneakers program.

And just down the hall is where Rise's third Adult Day Program (ADP) is located, the second program hosted in a YMCA.

Rise launched the ADP in mid-August to serve people who have intellectual disabilities and higher medical needs who were not interested in working, yet still wanted day services. The program currently has five people enrolled with plans to grow to fifteen, with a staff-to-participant ratio of one-to-three; at full program capacity, there will be five staff.

Over the past three years, Rise's ADP at the Emma B. Howe Northtown Family YMCA in Coon Rapids has grown tremendously. Anoka County Community Health & Social Services managers asked Rise to expand the program to another location which would then free up openings for people on the waiting list in the Community Integration Program (CIP) in Anoka.



Patty enjoys her one-on-one time with Activity Specialist Jennifer Ryan.

"The YMCA has such great programming directed at seniors so this partnership is a perfect fit for us," said Program Coordinator Becky Cordes. "We look forward to continuing to work together with YMCA staff and expanding our participation in their many activities and classes."

People in the new program seem to really enjoy their new activities and are benefitting from the additional learning and personal growth opportunities. Rise plans to add music and art therapies as well as personal trainers in 2016.

"We appreciate how YMCA Community Program Director Nate Danielson and his professional YMCA staff have supported Rise in getting the program off the ground," said Becky. "Everyone enjoys and benefits from their involvement in a wide range of healthy activities, and the Y mem-

bers have been most welcoming. We really appreciate this great collaborative partnership."

Patty Welsch, whose parents filed the historic lawsuit (Welsch v Noot, 1967-1980) which closed Minnesota's state institutions, received support at CIP-Anoka for many years, but over the past few years, hasn't wanted to keep working.

Her family said that transitioning to the Adult Day Program was a really good opportunity for Patty. Her residential staff and former CIP-Anoka staff have commented on how Patty seems calmer and more independent since starting at the Mounds View YMCA. Patty enjoys going for walks, going out for coffee, and spending one-on-one time with ADP team members, as well as auditory and tactile sensory activities.



TELLING RISE'S STORY

by Alex Gaterud, Fast Horse

AS PART OF THE TEAM from Fast Horse who has been working with Rise managers this past year on some key strategic communication projects, I'm proud to help introduce a new look for the *Rise Reporter*.

The transformation of this news magazine is part of larger refresh of Rise's branding. We've been working with Rise's Board of Directors and team members on updates to the agency's mission, vision, values, and key messages.

Fast Horse's creative communication team have helped redesign Rise's look which we feel better reflects the agency's flexibility, as well as its upward, positive movement and energy.

Accompanying the logo is a new tagline: "*Pushing boundaries. Unlocking possibilities.*" which represents the most important aspects of Rise's work. It means never shying away from a challenge. It means always searching for creative solutions. And it means providing uniquely tailored programs, tools and resources that empower the people Rise serves to choose their own path and achieve their full potential.

Most of Fast Horse's agency clients are Fortune 500 companies: General Mills. Heineken. Coca-Cola. A lot of opportunities, awards and attention come from doing this high-profile work, but

none of it is more meaningful or important than the projects we do with local nonprofit organizations like Rise, who have much smaller budgets for much bigger missions.

“ For me, working with Rise has quickly become one of the most rewarding experiences of my career. ”

This past summer, I was in charge of a unique and enlightening video project – the results of which many you saw at the *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala*. Along with a film crew from Minneapolis-based A2F Pictures, I got the chance to truly look inside Rise – and I was buoyed by what I saw.

We visited Rise service locations across the Twin Cities, filming everything from Art Speaks, music therapy and Rise administrative offices to Data Ability, the

YMCA, several community partner businesses, and much more.

Everywhere we went, including below at American Converters, Inc., we met people who were eager to share their stories and show us exactly what they were working on. Each person we spoke to was proud of the work he or she was doing and excited about the possibilities Rise was helping unlock.

You can see the video we created on the Rise website – it's only two minutes long, but it encompasses three whirlwind days of filming proud people, smiling faces, and new potential.

Although the crew and I only got to spend a short time inside Rise, we all felt like we had grown a deep connection to Rise's mission. It was both a personally and professionally gratifying experience, and it's left me more energized than ever about helping tell Rise's inspiring story to the world.



A2F Pictures' Scott Regan and Mark Mazur filmed dozens of Rise people over three days.



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TWIN CITIES, MN

Scenes from the 2015 Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala: **1.** Champion of the Mission Anna Green with her family.

2. Chet Tollefson, who founded Rise in 1971, with Board Member Jim Abeler, Anoka County Board Chair Rhonda Sivaraja and her husband Ran. **3.** Tracy Shanahan won the grand prize on the prize wheel. **4.** Emcee Jason DeRusha led the singing in wishing David Belcourt a Happy Birthday. **5.** Volunteers Betsy & Tony Jaros. **6.** Generous donors raised more than \$130,000!



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