

# RISE REPORTER

DECEMBER 2017 | VOL. 41, NO. 4



Chad Dmytryszyn enjoys his job as a merchandizer for Pan-O-Gold Baking Co., stocking Country Hearth baked goods in retail outlets located throughout Central Minnesota. Read more about Chad on page 15.

Photo by Tilt Photography, Minneapolis





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## A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LYNN NOREN

Greetings and Happy Holidays --

We are thrilled to share this issue of the *Rise Reporter* with you. There are stories about the people we serve, some of whom were recognized at our *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* as Rising Stars and the opportunities they are creating to live lives filled with pride and purpose. You will also read about Rise's award-winning Champions of the Mission, team members who were recognized for their outstanding service to the organization and the people we serve. Of course, our success is not possible without the wonderful business partnerships with area businesses and community agencies who were also recognized. It was a very special evening of celebration.

In recent weeks, I've also had the opportunity to meet with families of people we are serving. In this time of rapid policy change, I am grateful to be able to share critical information, listen to people's concerns, and answer their questions. We are partners in creating the future, working together to advocate for the individual needs of each person, as well as seeking out innovative solutions in a changing environment. I look forward to continued dialogues in the future.

Now, more than ever, we know that Rise's core mission to "push boundaries and unlock possibilities" will continue to be central to our work as we move forward. Each person we serve has a unique story that makes Rise's mission come alive. Enjoy the stories in this issue -- we hope you are inspired by them.

From all of us at Rise, we wish you a most happy and healthy 2018!



## 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

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## AT RISE

**Tom Kettleson**  
Chair, Rise Board of Directors

**Lynn Noren**  
President

**Noel McCormick**  
Director of Advancement

**Beth DePoint**  
Director of Public Relations; Editor





*‘Life is a great adventure’ said Helen Keller - a most fitting theme for this year’s Celebrate Rise gala!*

THROUGH THE GENEROSITY of close to 500 guests, corporate and individual sponsors, and other event donors, monies raised at our *6th Annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* topped \$120,000! The event was held October 5 at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park.

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 Kate Raddatz, news reporter from WCCO-TV, the evening



*Generous and enthusiastic guests helped Rise raise money for critical program services.*



Guests enjoyed fun social hour games, prize drawings, great food, a live auction, and an entertaining awards program.

Volunteer Co-Chairs Angie Franzen and Jenny Poyorena are grateful to the men and women who volunteered their time and talents to help plan and carry out the evening’s festivities.

Rise is also appreciative of the outpouring of generous donations of items and services from area businesses and individuals for the auction, games, and drawings.

To view other photos taken that evening by Brian Tanning, visit Rise’s Facebook page: [Rise, Incorporated](#). Find additional photos on the back cover of this *Reporter*.

We hope you will mark your calendar for the *7th Annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* on Monday, October 22, 2018. Information regarding sponsorships, volunteer opportunities, and registration will be available this coming spring.

## PREMIER SPONSOR



## GOLD SPONSORS



## Jack and Jan Grunewald

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Electrolux Major Appliance  
Hays Companies  
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## BRONZE SPONSORS

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## TABLE HOSTS

Conductive Containers Inc.  
Cummings, Keegan and Co., PLLP  
Blake Elliott  
Lynn Noren  
Palisade Asset Management, LLC  
Bob and Mary Sue Poirier  
Prowire

## CO-CHAIRS

Angie Franzen  
&  
Jenny Poyorena

## WE HONOR THIS YEAR'S RISE'ING STARS



### KEVIN ARRIAZA, HCMC

Kevin is a central processing technician at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) in Minneapolis. He collects medical equipment throughout the expansive medical campus and brings it back to the labs where he sterilizes it. Kevin then packages and delivers it all back to the proper departments and locations. His co-workers appreciate that he is reliable, dependable, and a quick learner; his managers give him great reviews. Kevin hopes to attend college in the near future.



### STACIE DZIEDZIC, CUMMINS POWER GENERATION

Stacie's enthusiastic and cheerful personality make her a great team member at Cummins Power Generation in Fridley. Stacie says she feels that she learns something new there every day. In her free time, Stacie is active with the Committee on Advocacy and Leadership. She attends many conferences and training sessions to learn more about key issues affecting people who have disabilities and shares what she learns with others. During the legislative session, Stacie visits representatives at the state capitol to discuss important issues.



### JOHN FLEAGLE, HOM FURNITURE

Living up to his nickname at HOM Furniture, "Hercules," is hard work, literally – but John gives it everything he's got every day. As one of the first to join the crew at HOM Furniture in Coon Rapids more than ten years ago, John is a veteran who can be counted on to do a great job on all the various job tasks there. A quiet, get-it-done kind of guy, John always works with a smile. With his team, John helps HOM recycle more than 2.5 million pounds of cardboard, plastic, and Styrofoam every year.



### JULIE FORSLUND, ARMHS

After overcoming some major health and life challenges, Julie reached a turning point in her life a few years ago. Through hard work and determination, she is now on a great path. Julie has been employed as a security guard for almost three years and enjoys working in a grade school as well as some additional businesses during the summer break; she receives rave reviews at work. Julie is an inspiration to others, especially her children and grandchildren.



### KEN JOHNSON, CUMMINS POWER GENERATION

Ken is excited to put his analytical, problem-solving skills to work on a wide range of projects and help create solutions for Cummins Power Generation as a business analyst in their manufacturing supply chain. This past year, Ken spoke to professionals and consumers at a statewide mental health conference about what a positive impact working has had on his overall health and well-being as well as the importance of effective career planning and support services like those he has received from Rise. Ken and his wife are the proud parents of five children.





## EXTRAORDINARY PERSERVANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS



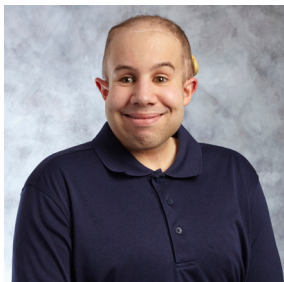
### TOM QUINN, CONNECTIONS

A tragic accident left Tom with a brain injury just after graduating from college, changing his life forever. He feels he now has a mission in life to help others. As a member of a Rise speakers panel, Tom has spoken to area high school students to help them better understand the perils of drinking and driving; he hopes it will help save someone else from a brain injury. He is active in his church where he has many good friends. Tom is proud of the quality production work he does at Rise.



### SEANN THOMAS, FEDEX

Seann works fulltime at FedEx's Mahtomedi facility as a package handler where he is a valued member of his team. When he was first hired as a part-time worker, Seann's five-hour roundtrip bus commute took more than an hour longer than his entire work shift – but it was worth it to Seann to have a good job. Early on, Seann's FedEx supervisors noticed his hard work and he quickly became their “go-to” guy. They appreciate his fine work and dedication.



### DUSTIN TRUDEAU, WALMART

A cancerous brain tumor and life-saving treatments left Dustin Deaf when he was a toddler. But he never quit fighting and today is a proud employee of Walmart in Roseville. Dustin works with the maintenance team and also enjoys assisting customers. Walmart co-workers appreciate his positive attitude and solid work ethic. Having enjoyed a trip to Ireland with his mom through Make-A-Wish Minnesota, Dustin enjoys competing in golf tournaments to help support this great organization.

## *HOM Furniture named Minnesota Organization for Habilitation & Rehabilitation (MOHR)'s 2017 Outstanding Employer of the Year*

AT THE GALA, Rise was also happy to recognize HOM Furniture in Coon Rapids with whom we have enjoyed a mutually beneficial “partnership that works” for almost 12 years. Rise workers from day training and habilitation programs perform a wide range of tasks at HOM, including collecting and recycling more than 2.5 million pounds of cardboard, plastic, and Styrofoam annually, running the floor scrubber, and kitting. HOM Furniture managers and Rise team members work closely, supporting and training workers on individual tasks. People are treated with the utmost dignity and respect, and are recognized individually and collectively for their good work at HOM's annual employee recognition event.



*Warehouse Manager Dan Lentz (black shirt) and members of the hard-working team at HOM Furniture in Coon Rapids.*

## SALUTING OUR CHAMPIONS OF THE MISSION



### AUSTIN BEATTY,

#### MINNESOTA EMPLOYMENT CENTER TEAM LEAD

In just the last year, Austin has assisted more than 35 people who are Deaf and Deafblind find and keep their jobs. Austin's high internal standards shine through in his work and he is always advocating for and motivating others to develop top quality program services. Austin is deeply committed to the people and communities he serves and is always ready to give a co-worker a hand when needed.



### KRISTEN ENGHUSEN,

#### CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS NORTH CASE MANAGER

During her six years at Rise, Kristen has been the “go-to” staff for many of her coworkers and is always happy to help them out, whether it is with her sage advice or hands-on assistance. Kristen is person-centered and committed to providing the best services for everyone. Not only does she have great ideas, but she has designed and created several additional sensory activities as well as developed a rotating schedule of life-enhancing activities like healthy cooking with vegetables grown in Partnerships North's garden in Crystal.



### KATHY FRANK, EMPLOYMENT EXPLORATION & CONNECTIONS CASE MANAGER

Kathy is a great advocate for the people she supports, whether that is in their annual meetings, working on the production floor, or assisting them reach their individual employment goals. Kathy exemplifies Rise's person-centered approach by professionally supporting each person to live their life in a way they desire.



### DONNA KLAPHAKE,

#### HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST

Donna has worked in Rise's Human Resources Department for more than 20 years and demonstrates her dedication to Rise team members as well as the people we serve on a daily basis. She works hard to help Rise attract and retain exceptional people who embody our mission. Donna is passionate about helping create a welcoming, positive work experience and safe work environment for everyone. She treats people with dignity and respect, making certain everyone feels valued.

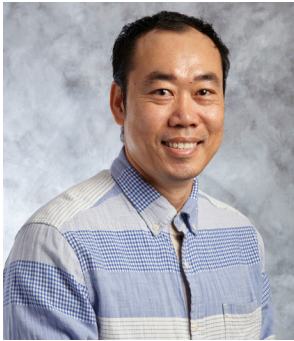


## DYNAMIC, INNOVATIVE, CARING PROFESSIONALS



### MILCART ROBERT-CLERGE, DT&H SUPER SUB

During her 17 years at Rise, Milcart has developed positive, supportive relationships with persons served at various community work and center-based locations. She is kind, respectful, reliable, and flexible. Her Rise team members agree that Milcart is simply the best and they appreciate her keen ability to support so many people working at different kinds of businesses throughout the Twin Cities on a wide range of job duties. The people Milcart supports think she's a rock star.



### CHIT THAITAI, INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION SERVICES TEAM LEADER

Chit came to work at Rise through our Pathways refugee job placement program in 2010 and worked hard to become a full-time employee of Rise. He is caring, soft-spoken, dependable, and willing to lend a helping hand whenever and however needed. He always has a smile and a kind word for everyone – the people we serve and Rise team members alike. Chit recently passed his test to become a U.S. citizen; he is proud of this accomplishment and worked hard to earn it.

*In addition to generous corporate and individual sponsors,  
we extend our sincere thanks to:*

- \* American Converters (Amcon), Inc., Fridley
- \* Balloons Galore & More, Coon Rapids
- \* Capture Film Co., Minneapolis
- \* Elizabeth Erickson, ASL Interpreter
- \* FABULOUS planning and event volunteers
- \* Fast Horse, Minneapolis
- \* Kathy Michael, ASL Interpreter
- \* Midwest Vending, Burnsville
- \* Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
- \* Kate Raddatz, WCCO-TV News
- \* Rise Art Speaks Artists
- \* Brian Tanning, Photographer
- \* Tilt Photography, Minneapolis
- \* Gary, Nancy, and Kari Wagner
- \* Joy Wiegand

*A team from Amcon designed and created the many colorful, fanciful hot air balloon-related decorations, including this popular photo booth!*



## VALUED COMMUNITY BUSINESS PARTNERS



### AMC COON RAPIDS 16 THEATERS

AMC Coon Rapids 16 Theatre is one of the best places to watch the latest Hollywood movies. And over the years, many individuals served by Rise have also found it to be the best place to work. People enjoy their work duties, including greeting people, taking tickets, directing guests to their movie, and cleaning the theaters in between showings. Managers respect and appreciate the good work they do and let people's strengths and skills shine. Nationwide, AMC Theaters is rated by the American Association with Disabilities and the U.S. Business Leadership Network as one of the best companies to work for, scoring an impressive 100 percent in all its measurements. Rise couldn't agree more!



### LSG SKY CHEFS

LSG Sky Chefs is the world's largest airline catering company. In the past year, more than 30 people served in Rise's welfare-to-work programs, most of whom are refugees and immigrants, have been hired by LSG in a wide range of positions. The company has a welcoming and supportive approach to employing people who have a strong work ethic and are motivated to work hard and advance their careers. LSG Sky Chefs offers free Academy of Learning classes onsite so people can hone their work skills, improve their English, as well as learn computer and basic math skills – even get a driver's license. They celebrate with their employees when people reach milestones and are flexible and accommodating to people's needs and interests.



### RMS SURGICAL / CRETEX MEDICAL

Rise has partnered with CRETEX Companies since 2001 and last October, began working with one of its subsidiaries, rms Surgical in Anoka. In the first year, the Rise team of workers learned and performed more than 25 different jobs in this exciting medical device company. They have really enjoyed developing new job skills and feel that they are making an important contribution to the medical industry. More importantly, people from Rise feel they are valued members of the team at rms Surgical. Managers are continually looking for ways to open doors to new and exciting work opportunities.

~ Gala honorees' photos by Tilt Photography





# Juliana proud to be earning her way in America

WHEN JULIANA KORKOR moved from Ghana to the United States with her extended family in May 2016, she was determined to make a good life for herself in this new country. Despite having only an eighth-grade education and never having worked before, Juliana, who is 24, was motivated to improve her English speaking skills and get a job to help support her family who had settled in Woodbury.

Through a new Adult Mental Health Grant, Rise expanded its career planning, job placement, and follow-up support services in Washington County on the eastern side of the Twin Cities metro area in early 2017.

When Juliana applied for services, her county case manager referred her to Sarah Kohl-Leaf, a Rise placement specialist who works out of two county community services offices in Stillwater and Cottage Grove.

“Juliana was eager to work and open to any kind of a job,” Sarah remembers. “Transportation was a major challenge so we needed to find employment within walking distance of her house. We found the perfect position for Juliana at Jerry’s Foods.”

A busy, bustling place, Jerry’s Foods features a bakery, deli, meat counter, grocery store, and meeting spaces all in one great Woodbury location. When Sarah initially approached managers, Juliana was admittedly shy and had limited English skills so she assisted the young woman with filling out the job application, as well as accom-



*Juliana appreciates the customized career planning, job placement, and follow-up support services she receives from Rise Placement Specialist Sarah Kohl-Leaf, made possible with an Adult Mental Health Grant through Washington County.*

panying her to the interview and orientation once she was hired.

“Jerry’s managers were warm and understanding, and willing to give Juliana a chance,” said Sarah. “It’s proven to be a perfect fit.”

Juliana works part-time in the deli washing dishes, cleaning, and stocking dining supplies. Sarah continues to meet with Juliana a few times a month to help with any work-related issues.

“She’s a good, good help to me,” said Juliana of Sarah. “If I have a problem or don’t understand, she helps me. I like working at Jerry’s – it’s a big place, but very nice. I like how they talk to me and understand me. They are really, really nice people and I like them.”

In addition to assistance from Sarah, Juliana’s team of Washington County therapy and support professionals provide ongoing follow-up services to help ensure that she continues to do well and prosper in her new country.

When she first arrived in the Twin Cities, Juliana attended Harmony Learning Center, a nontraditional school offering special

education services. She greatly improved her English language skills (she also speaks French and her native tongue, Twi) and expanded her education. But transportation from Woodbury to Maplewood was challenging so she no longer attends. Juliana hopes to someday complete her GED (General Education Diploma or Degree).

The close-knit family of eight live in a comfortable, joy-filled home. Juliana is proud to note that all the adults work, including her mom Florence Asmoah, sister-in-law, and brother Alex Asmoah. Her niece and nephews, 11-year-old twins Andrew and Audrey, and 10-year-old Aaron, are doing great in public school.

Juliana’s little son Joshua still lives in Ghana. He turns five in December and she is proud to earn money to send back so Joshua can attend school.

Juliana’s family enjoys spending time together and is active in the International Christian Faith Center in Vadnais Heights where people from many nations attend.

## Area employers play critical role in Rise's comprehensive evaluations

FROM THE TIME WE were still very young, people have asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Our answers probably have changed several times over the years, but the older and more serious we became, perhaps the more difficult it was to reply.

Most people base their vocational choice on what they enjoy doing, what they are good at, and often, what is financially rewarding.

Dan Meyers leads Rise's team of vocational evaluators – Shannon Wagner, Annah Gruber, and Christel Pederson – in assisting people to learn more about their own work potential and then make plans to realize their goals.

Rise offers customized, one-on-one evaluations in community businesses in several career fields. Depending on the individual's specific needs and interests, people can choose to have vocational assessments in retail, clerical, reception, production / manufacturing,

*Rubehah (Ruby) Manasra, 19, spent ten days at Broadway Pizza in Champlin doing a variety of food prep and kitchen tasks before moving on to Global Health for another ten days of assessment in data entry, packaging, and production tasks. Evaluator Christel Pederson will make service recommendations for Ruby to help her decide on the next steps to take in her career path.*



data entry, food services, activities (child care, senior care), custodial, and customer service.

"We have developed some great partnerships with area businesses and really appreciate their willingness to let us conduct assessments in their workplace," said Dan.

"This arrangement enables evaluators to put together the most comprehensive assessment possible. They are able to address the person's general work skills and behaviors as well as the specific job skills and physical demands required for a particular type of work to determine if it is a good fit."

Evaluations are typically conducted in four-hour shifts and last between one and three months; evaluatees are paid minimum wage.

Some of the businesses who allow evaluations to be conducted in their workplace include:

- Global Health Ministries, Fridley (production, janitorial, clerical warehouse, data entry)

- Walgreens, multiple metro stores (stocking, janitorial, retail)
- The Farmstead Presbyterian Homes, Anoka (dietary, clerical, janitorial, and activities)
- Broadway Pizza, Champlin (food prep, janitorial, dishwashing)
- Anoka Historical Society (data entry, clerical)

"Employers' support in this evaluation process is tremendously valuable to us as we work to gather as much information about the person so he or she can make the best choices in career planning," said Shannon.

"We rely on and really appreciate their observations, constructive feedback, and input as to how the person performs in the workplace. This information is critical to helping us then provide a complete and comprehensive assessment report."

Erika Johnson, owner of Broadway Pizza in Champlin, has opened her restaurant doors to Rise for evaluations for the past six years.

"I want Broadway Pizza to be known as a community business and feel strongly about being involved however and whenever we can," said Erika. "It's important to give back, too."

Christel says that Erika and her kitchen and wait staffs are "awesome -- friendly, accommodating, welcoming and make my job so much easier."

"Our bottom line is to help each person meet his or her own personal measure of success in the workplace," Christel added.

"It's great when people get into an actual work environment to try out different kinds of jobs and see what they're good at and enjoy doing. It's an exciting part of the journey to finding one's career path."





## Randy's career is 'going to the dogs' which he finds fun & truly rewarding



OPENING THE DOOR to Woof Central in Richfield, one is greeted with the cacophony from dogs of all sizes, breeds, and barking abilities. About 75 dogs a day go there for doggie day care, boarding, training, and/or grooming.

Having grown up on a farm with lots of animals in Pennsylvania, Randy Fritz feels right at home there. He finds his job as a dog handler (in training) most rewarding.

"I love to win a dog over – you have to read their body language and then meet them at their level, let them come to you."

In the doggie day care areas, the dogs are separated according to their size (small, medium, and large). Each breed has its own characteristics and each dog has its own personality; Randy works to know them all well. He says the best part of his job is interacting with the dogs individually, giving them plenty of play, care, and attention.

Over the years, Randy has worked in a wide range of career fields, including manufacturing, health care, landscaping, graphic arts, and retail. With a family history of depression, Randy has struggled with low levels of depression since 1987.

But when his partner Charles died in 2010, Randy's grief compounded his depression and for the next few years, he was treated on an inpatient and outpatient basis. He lost his job in 2014 and "the bottom just kind of dropped out."

Yet Randy kept pushing forward, and despite some addition-



*Dogs appreciate the love and care Randy gives each of them at Woof Central in Richfield.*

apply his skills and interests.

Lori assisted him through the planning, job searching, and applying processes. "I enjoy my job at Woof Central so much that it doesn't feel like work," he noted. "I really put all of myself into my job."

Lori says Randy has been great to work with, follows through on his goals, and now is "receiving the benefits of all his hard work."

Not only is he happy to be working again at a job he loves, but Randy says he also wants to use his mental health experiences to help others in a positive way. He hopes to speak at the HCMHC outpatient group. "I want people to hear my story and know that you can come out on the other side and live a good life."

Randy says that through his journey of finding answers, making changes in his medications, and exploring new interests with others, he has found a good balance in his life.

In his free time, Randy enjoys camping and hiking with a group called Outwoods. He also joined Cook Boys whose members take turns each month hosting a dinner party based on a special theme. Randy is active in his church, Mount Olive Lutheran Church in South Minneapolis, where he volunteers in their soup kitchen and ushers at services. He and his friends often get together to play board games and go biking.

al physical limitations, by 2016 he was ready to re-enter the workforce.

"My overall goal was to feel better and get beyond the depression," he said. "I wanted to get back to work and contribute to society, but I was having a hard time finding a job on my own."

Randy learned about Rise's career planning and job placement services through the Hennepin County Mental Health Center (HCMHC). Lori Clauson, an employment consultant in Rise's Creating Access program which is offered in conjunction with the Center, began working with Randy to determine what kind of career he was interested in and where he could best

# Volunteers find many ways to support Rise ~

## Are you interested in helping Rise with our important mission?

By Volunteer Coordinator Zoe Leonard-Monrad

RISE IS HONORED TO have more than 100 volunteers who have served 3,000-plus hours this year to help us achieve our mission of *unlocking potential and opening doors to success*.

We are thankful for our volunteers who:

- \* Prepare the people we serve for their important job interviews by conducting mock interviews and providing professional attire through Michael's Clothing Closet
- \* Support artists to share their voice through art in Art Speaks
- \* Teach the people we serve financial literacy
- \* Assist on fun outings like bowling, Meals on Wheels, and other community activities
- \* Help organize and make our special events run smoothly
- \* Participate in recreational activities with the people we serve in our Adult Day programs like crafts, exercising, and playing games



*Billy Whalen was part of a group of volunteers from KIND who went bowling with people from Rise's Adult Day Program. He and Bob Grzybowski had a great time.*

- \* Bring in their therapy animals to help relax the people we serve and our team members
- \* Welcome people into our administrative offices as a volunteer receptionist.

If any of these activities caught your eye, or if you want to get involved in some of our new opportunities listed here, please fill out our volunteer application today!

You can find more details on Rise's website at: <http://rise.org/give/volunteer-opportunities.html>

### **Interesting new positions**

We have added some new volunteer opportunities for 2018:

- \* Yoga/fitness instructor
- \* Social media volunteer
- \* E-mentor
- \* Basic technology trainer
- \* First Aid instructor
- \* Volunteer receptionists

### **How about an internship?**

If you are interested in doing an internship, check out our website in early 2018 for information about our summer internship cohort opportunities, including in the areas of:

- \* Development and special events
- \* Human resources
- \* Mental health job placement
- \* Marketing and communications
- \* Case management



*It took many community volunteers to help us plan and host this year's Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala. We couldn't have done it without them!*





# ADULT DAY PROGRAMS HOST OPEN HOUSES

## Find out more about our two new locations:

**Maplewood Community Center YMCA**, 2100 White Bear Avenue, Maplewood

Tuesday, January 23, 3 - 4:30 p.m.

**Fridley Community Center**, 6085 N.E. 7th Street, Fridley

Thursday, January 25, 3 - 4:30 p.m.

Light refreshments. No RSVP necessary.  
Questions? Contact Judy at  
email: [jandersen@rise.org](mailto:jandersen@rise.org); 763-567-0626



Rise's **Adult Day Programs** serve men and women, ages 18

and older who have brain injuries or physical disabilities and no longer wish to work. People benefit from a wide array of recreational, social, health/fitness, and creative activities. Rise also offers ADP services at the **Emma B. Howe Northtown Family YMCA** and the **Mounds View Community Center YMCA**.

## Check out exciting career opportunities at Rise!



Rise is all about **people** and **potential**.

We attract and retain exceptional people who embody our mission. Rise is a **fun, exciting place to work** where our team members **make a difference** in people's lives. Here is Employment Innovation DSP Lead Cherie Wallin with her hard-working lawn maintenance team in Lindstrom. Learn more about available positions and apply today at [rise.org/jobs](http://rise.org/jobs).

## Rise's refugee employment programs recognized by the state for 'laying a strong foundation'

TRUC PHAM, RISE'S DIRECTOR of MFIP and welfare-to-work services, recently accepted a special recognition on behalf of his hard-working team from the Minnesota Department of Human Services' Resettlement Programs Office.

Minnesota honored Rise for its "contributions in laying a strong foundation for Minnesota's future and expresses its appreciation for your service. The new refugee arrivals you assist are tomorrow's workforce, civic leaders, and business owners. When you help them succeed, we all benefit from the contributions they make to our communities."

Rise's MFIP team members assist new refugee arrivals to become more self-sufficient by helping them find good jobs in unsubsidized employment with benefits.

In the latest report from October 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017, Rise achieved 152.1 percent of the state's expected placement goal over the required minimum of 75 percent of people placed into jobs.

## DeafBlind Club provides social outlet, mutual support events

DOZENS OF DEAFBLIND people from around the Twin Cities gather once a month for food, fun, and mutual support.

Says club host and founding member, Steve Oglesbee: “The DeafBlind Club was set up so that people could chat and play games. With the help of several organizations, DB Club has continued to meet the third Saturday of each month and we have added support service providers and interpreting students. It is great to see people from the DeafBlind community come together every four weeks.”

The group meets at Rise’s Minnesota Employment Center (MEC), located at Lifetrack in St. Paul. In addition to providing the space for DeafBlind Club to meet, MEC team members are also on hand to assist with whatever is

needed -- setting up the room, getting things ready for the pizza or potluck lunch, assisting with communication access as needed, and overall community involvement.

MEC’s Lead Occupational Communication Specialist Austin Beatty has been active with the DeafBlind community for more than eight years, and brought that involvement to his work at Rise.

“This is a great group of people who enjoy getting together for socializing and support from others with a shared experience,” said Austin. “This is one of a few ongoing social opportunities for DeafBlind people in the metro area. It also gives people an opportunity to share information relevant to the community, such as legislative updates, voting information, or other events of interest to DeafBlind people.”

A secondary, but equally important function of DB Club is to provide a welcoming space for students of ASL interpreter training programs to get exposure to the DeafBlind community and become more familiar with their unique language demands.

Working with DeafBlind people requires a different set of skills which most interpreter training programs don’t often focus on. Volunteering at the DB Club is a way to get people involved at an early stage in their careers as well as increase the pool of qualified DeafBlind interpreters and support providers.

A much-anticipated event is the annual Minnesota DeafBlind Association (MDBA) Thanksgiving Banquet, now in its 38th year. It was held on November 11 at the Ramada Plaza in Minneapolis. People from across Minnesota, as well as from eight other states, attended this year, and enjoyed not only a great turkey dinner with all the trimmings, but raffles, door prizes, and many awards and recognitions to community advocates and supporters.

MEC sponsored a table and six MEC team members volunteered their time in various capacities throughout the evening.

“This banquet is, by far, the biggest event of the year for the DeafBlind community,” said Austin. “I have been attending this banquet since 2010, and each year seems to be bigger and better than the last.”

For more information about the DeafBlind Club, or if you’d like to attend a gathering, contact Austin at MEC: [abeatty@rise.org](mailto:abeatty@rise.org).



*The 38th annual Thanksgiving Banquet, hosted by the Minnesota DeafBlind Association, is always a favorite event.*





## Chad has the drive to continually better himself

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that not many people have Hollywood movie roles or Calvin Klein modeling gigs on their resume, but Chad Dmytryszyn does. As a young child actor, Chad had bit roles in movies like *Animal House* and *Sixteen Candles*, and the TV hit show *Miami Vice*. He was also featured on a *Got Milk?* campaign billboard and modeled designer clothes.

Although Chad still has dreams of being a famous actor, these days he's enjoying being involved in ABC (A Bunch of Characters) Theater Company's production of *The Miracle Worker* in Braham. He is also taking some college acting classes in his free time.

Chad, who is 46, is back at home in Cambridge after living on the East and West Coasts as a child. He has struggled with mental illness for many years, and 17 years ago, a county social worker referred him to Rise for vocational services.

First honing his skills at community manufacturing sites with Rise work teams, Chad was eventually ready for competitive em-



*Rise Placement Specialist Jill Johnston has worked with Chad throughout his career.*

ployment with follow-up support.

Over the years, Chad has held several different positions in local retail stores, restaurants, and businesses. His employers found him to be hard-working and quality-conscious.

In August, Chad was hired as a part-time merchandizer for Pan-O-Gold Baking Company. He stocks Country Hearth baked goods in grocery outlets in Isanti County, about an hour north of the Twin Cities metro area.

"I like the job because it's straightforward and I work independently," said Chad.

Through it all, Jill Johnston, a placement specialist with Rise's Employment Innovations program in Greater Minnesota, has been a steady source of support for Chad.

"I've had a lot of different people helping me through ups and downs over the years," Chad said. "But Jill has always been my 'home base' – someone I know I can count on and I am so thankful for her."

Chad also receives ARMHS (Adult Mental Health Rehabilitative Services) from Rise's Deloris Beehler who assists him with independent living skills, connecting him with local resources, and managing his symptoms.

"It has been amazing to me to watch Chad persevere, always trying and doing his best," Jill noted. "He's a hard worker who just keeps plugging away, through the good times and the not-good times, always striving to better himself. Chad's an all-around good guy."

Chad likes small-town living and hopes to do more theater work with ABC. He also enjoys working with his hands and carpentry projects. Chad hopes to return to college someday.

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**Scenes from the 6th Annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala, held October 5 at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest -- Thanks to our friends and supporters, it was a fabulous evening!**

**Top row:** **1.** Rise President Lynn Noren expressed her appreciation to nearly 500 guests. **2.** Gala Volunteer Co-Chairs Angie Franzen & Jenny Poyorena drew for door prizes. **3.** Auctioneer Andy Imholt from Fladaboe helped raise tens of thousands of dollars. **Second row:** **4.** Jody Heim won the balloon pop and took home two roundtrip plane tickets from Orbitz. **5.** Chet Tollefson (center front), who helped found Rise in 1971, enjoyed the evening with family and friends. **6.** Board Member Rachael Smith spoke eloquently on "Life is an adventure."



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