

RISE REPORTER

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Published by Rise, Inc., a nonprofit agency assisting people in the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota advance their lives through employment, housing, and personal growth



Caitlyn Bosley loves her job as an on-call substitute teacher's aide at the Minnesota Renaissance School in Anoka. Read more on page 11.

RISE to the OCCASION

More than 430 people joined us for this year's *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* at the Marriott Minneapolis Northwest in Brooklyn Park. The event generated \$107,000 in overall revenue, with \$21,000 in special gifts going for Rise's new ADVANCING LIVES FUND. This special fund will support people who could use immediate assistance for employment, housing or personal growth needs which aren't covered by other funding sources.

Guests enjoyed a fun evening of great food, live music, and inspiring stories from the people Rise serves. One of the many highlights of the evening was the premier of two video productions. You can view them online at: <http://rise.org/46/celebrate-rise-fundraising-gala.html>

For other photos of the evening, go to:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/128376896@N07/>

What a *great* night it was!
Fun festivities, live music,
delicious food,
heartwarming stories,
extraordinary honorees --
and generous supporters
for Rise's new
ADVANCING LIVES FUND!



Alok Maskara (fourth from left), president of Pentair Technical Solutions, and Rise President Lynn Noren (second from right) joined Pentair managers, including Sherry Robinson (fourth from right) who serves on Rise's Board of Directors, and Jason DeRusha, WCCO (right).

Rise President Lynn Noren presented a plaque to Mary Zins who will be retiring from the Board of Directors at the end of 2014 after 17 years of service.



Thanks to these great volunteers

Mark Bergmann
Jane Campe
Lori Clauson
Becky Cordes
Josh Craig
Paula Foley
Tim Foley
Angie Franzen
Annie Heggernes
Bonnie Japs
Betsy Jaros

Tony Jaros
Cindy Lund
Timothy McCormick
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Annette Suggs
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Katie Whiteford
Mary Zins

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Prowire

Table Hosts:

John Barrett
Noel and Timothy McCormick
Lynn Noren
Bob and Mary Sue Poirier
Julie Weaver



Jason DeRusha, WCCO-TV news anchor, was the guest emcee for the tenth year.

Rise honors two great employers

Not only is John Dolin a successful business owner of **Post-Haste Business Solutions** in North Branch and has hired workers from Rise, but he has also partnered with Rise's Employment Innovations program to offer one- to two-month work evaluations. These job-tryouts enable people to see if the graphic design, retail, shipping and receiving, or clerical fields are of interest to them. John often refers other business owners to Rise when they are looking for quality employees, has donated signage and other printed materials for Employment Innovations' lawn care services, and has subcontracted with Rise for short-term production projects. We appreciate John's support of Rise's people and employment services. Congratulations, John!



Since the store opened in the summer of 2013, **Walmart in Blaine** has hired several people from Rise in a wide range of positions, including greeter, cashier, maintenance, cart attendant, and stocker. Store managers and human resources staff have been supportive of each person from their initial interview process through training and on the job. They have an

"open door" policy with their employees and also keep in good communication with Rise placement staff so that any necessary adjustments can be made and people will be successful in their work. Friendly co-workers help create a positive, team environment at this busy store. Hats off to Walmart!

Special Thanks To:

2020 Brands,
South St. Paul
Art Speaks Artists
Balloons Galore & More,
Coon Rapids
Central Avenue Liquor,
Minneapolis
Central Parks Liquors,
Spring Lake Park
Cosmos Restaurant,
Minneapolis
Dangerous Man Brewing,
Minneapolis
Jason DeRusha, WCCO-TV
Fast Horse, Minneapolis
Forever Floral, Coon Rapids
Gould's Jewelry, Anoka
Midwest Vending, Burnsville
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
Star Liquors, Coon Rapids
Anoka County Sheriff
James Stewart
Stinson Wine, Beer and Spirits,
Minneapolis
Team Liquors, Coon Rapids
Venture Photography,
Minneapolis
Wiser Choice Liquor,
Coon Rapids

Rise honors six extraordinary

CHAMPIONS OF THE MISSION



Lee Felton, Maintenance Supervisor

Lee leads a hard-working team of people who maintain all of Rise's properties. In addition, Lee sets up production jobs on the workfloor and keeps all of Rise's specialized equipment in tip-top shape. Lee also designs and makes customized work aids which enable people to increase their productivity and wages.



Sandy Jorgensen, Mental Health & Housing Practitioner

When people in Anoka County are in a housing crisis and contact Rise, Sandy is the first one who addresses their immediate needs. Sandy also works directly with individuals and families, and every day empowers people. Most importantly, she gives them hope as they move forward to a more independent and affordable living situation.



Tom Kreiner, Community Integration Prog. Specialist

Tom has been a supervisor at several Rise community work sites for the past 21 years. Tom's primary focus is assisting people in developing work skills and giving them the support they need to be successful. In addition to his CIP duties, Tom conducts CPR, first aid, and forklift driving certification training for Rise staff.



Marsha Morey-Rasheed, MFIP Coordinator

A natural leader among Rise's welfare-to-work staff, Marsha gives people the support and encouragement they need to become self-sufficient, contributing members of the community. Marsha has developed program classes for empowerment, providing people who are on public assistance and striving to enter or re-enter the workforce with the tools they need to be successful.



Jessica Robey, Employment Consultant

Following a term as an AmeriCorps member with Rise, Jessica was hired as a placement specialist, and is currently an employment consultant assisting individuals with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder as well as ex-offenders find employment. Jessica was also honored this summer as the *Twin Cities Job Coach of the Year* by the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation.



Henry Smith, Service Team Leader, Central Minnesota Works

Henry supervises mental health employment and housing staff in Rise's Elk River and St. Cloud offices. Among his many accomplishments is the development of Rise's new Re-Entry program to assist ex-offenders find suitable employment. Henry's passion for the Re-Entry program is evidenced by how far the program has exceeded its original goals.

RISE'ING STARS demonstrate exemplary fortitude, drive

MaryGrace Alton, Creating Access

Highly motivated with an intense desire to work, MaryGrace has overcome overwhelming challenges to rebuild her career in the financial industry. She is excited to be working as a sales representative for AmTrust Financial Services in St. Louis Park and is proud to be able to help support her family again. Mary Grace says that her job has had a tremendously positive impact on all aspects of her life and she is grateful.



Kianna Burks, Mental Health & Housing Support Services

Having faced many difficult obstacles in her life, Kianna is thriving with a positive attitude. She has established a comfortable home, has worked at Waltek in Anoka for the past four years, attended college, and hopes to be a pharmacy technician some day. Kianna is working hard to build a good life for her and her young son, Terrance. She enjoys community volunteer work, and she and Terrance love to draw, dance, sing, and play outside together.



Mary Franzen, Community Integration Program-Coon Rapids

Mary bounds out of bed every day at 5:00 a.m., excited to go to work at Pentair in Anoka with a work team from the Community Integration Program in Coon Rapids. Mary assembles kits that Pentair uses for many of its products sold worldwide. Mary is proud of her good work at Pentair and saves most of the money she earns so she can travel to visit family, go to the Minnesota State Fair, and attend Camp Friendship.



Thomas Gerads, Employment Innovations

Thomas has chosen to change his life and daily demonstrates his tenacity and courage. Thomas worked hard to get a job at Arby's and has proven to be an exceptionally valued employee. He has never missed a day of work and is trained in three different areas so he can back up his co-workers. His Arby's supervisors appreciate his work ethic, energy, and enthusiasm, and say he is an inspiration to others. When Thomas is working, they note, his attitude is infectious and people smile more, they move faster -- the day just goes smoother.



Dorinda Tvet, DataAbility

As a data entry clerk at DataAbility, Dorinda loves to learn new things and undertake additional job responsibilities. Dorinda's work is always accurate and her co-workers appreciate her strong work ethic and positive, professional attitude. In addition to Dorinda's work at DataAbility, she is an accomplished artist, exhibiting her work at several public art shows and completing one commissioned piece for her church.



List of outdoor maintenance tasks is long and varied -- just the way the team likes it!

Cummins Power Generation's headquarters in Fridley has acres of beautifully landscaped lawns as well as parking lots for its hundreds of employees and visitors. Keeping it well-maintained is a massive undertaking, but one that Mike Elwell and Lewis Hotchkiss enjoy very much.

The list of job tasks is long and varies with the Minnesota seasons, but that's precisely what the two men both like about their jobs best – that, and getting to work outside.

Reporting directly to Cummins Facilities and Maintenance / Manufacturing Leader Greg Schrader, Mike and Lewis plan their work schedule around the necessary tasks. Both are hard-working and responsible and need little supervision. They keep Cummins' expansive grounds mowed, bushes and trees trimmed, and sidewalks and parking lots swept.

Fall meant lots of raking and preparing for winter. And with Minnesota's early winter, the two men have already been working to

ensure the sidewalks and walkways are clear of snow and ice.

"I really like working outside and moving all the time," said Lewis, who started at Cummins this summer. "I feel so much healthier now that I'm working again. Mike and I know what needs to be done to 'prettify' the grounds and we get it done."

"The Rise employees have added another level of diversity to our organization that has enhanced the Maintenance Department and all Cummins employees," said Greg.

Mike had worked on the recycling team at Cummins for four years before this opportunity opened up. He grew up helping his dad with his sod farm business, so the job at Cummins was a natural fit for him. "I like working independently in the wide open spaces," Mike said.

When their outside work is done, Mike and Lewis take on other projects for Cummins's maintenance team such as cleaning and invento-

Mike (left photo) and Lewis kept Cummins's grounds green and trimmed. When Minnesota's winter arrived early in November, they brought out the shovels (above) and are keeping the walkways clear and safe.



rying the tool room and washing windows. This winter, they may take on some indoor painting projects.

"I'm really proud of Mike and Lewis," said Lisa Carlson, an employment specialist with Rise's Supported Employment Services (SES)-Anoka County program. "When the Cummins plant was closed one extra day for the Labor Day holiday, Lewis still came to work because he wanted to keep to his lawn maintenance schedule. I was so impressed with his dedication and work ethic."

In addition to Mike and Lewis working with the maintenance team, there are more than 30 people from Rise who work at Cummins doing subassembly, kitting, recycling, and clerical work.



Diane found it hard to get her foot in the door when job searching, is grateful for assistance from Rise's MEC program

Her behind-the-scenes job at Arc's Value Village in St. Paul is a great fit

Arc's Value Village in St. Paul is a bustling thrift store on White Bear Avenue where shoppers can find great deals on clothing, household items, and seasonal decorations. Last year, more than \$2 million in sales went directly to support The Arc Greater Twin Cities' programs that help adults and children with disabilities in our community.

In the back room, where donated goods are prepared for the retail floor, you will find Diane Blashill hard at work sorting and price-tagging merchandise. A proud Value Village employee for more than five years, Diane has worked in a number of jobs, but prefers to work behind the scenes.

Diane came to Rise's Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) Program for People Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing more than ten years ago for help finding a job. With support from a Rise occupational/communication specialist, Diane got a job at a rebate processing center in White Bear Lake where she worked for five years before it went out of business.

So Diane restarted her job search and found MEC's customized services, including career planning and mock job interviews, to be most helpful.

"It's really hard to find work when you are Deaf," Diane said. "When I found out I was hired at Value Village, I was so excited – I kept saying, 'Thank you, thank you!' Without help from Minnesota



Diane Blashill is a valued employee at Arc's Value Village in St. Paul.

paperwork, or anything else that comes up on the job.

"Diane is instrumental in making sure our merchandise is stickered, tagged, priced, and categorized appropriately for stocking and sales purposes," said Value Village Store Manager Kris Wolfe. "We rely on her help each week to ensure we can meet the purchasing demands of our customers."

In her free time, Diane and her husband Bob are active with the Thompson Hall Deaf Club in St. Paul. They also enjoy camping and going for walks.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services or a program like MEC, it's really hard to get your foot in the door. I like this job at Value Village even better than my first job."

Diane is well-liked among her co-workers and managers who communicate with her by writing notes and using some basic American Sign Language (ASL) signs and finger spelling they have learned. "They are very friendly and nice; we tease each other and have fun while we work."

Michelle Rimmer, an MEC occupational/communication specialist (OCS), follows up with Diane so that her work at Arc's Value Village continues to go well. Michelle often ASL interprets for Diane at staff training or presentations, helps with

Fluent in ASL, an OCS helps educate consumers, employers and other members of the workforce about clear and effective communication. They promote independent, shared communications between consumers and their co-workers, employers, and service providers. An OCS also helps implement reasonable accommodation strategies and advocates for the rights and integrity of consumers and their hearing co-workers and employers.

For information on Rise's MEC program, contact Program Coordinator Blaine Newberg at bnewberg@rise.org.

Rise's collaboration with Hennepin Health is featured in an August *Minneapolis Star Tribune* editorial, highlighting the positive impact working has on one's health

Rise's collaboration with Hennepin Health, a pioneering medical program for low-income adults living in Hennepin County, was featured in an editorial piece in the August 22, 2014, issue of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* headlined, *Getting at the root of health care costs: Pioneering Hennepin County reform is delivering results.*

Hennepin Health staff recognize that joblessness and homelessness are often at the root of its clients' health challenges. So they contract with Rise to provide individualized career planning, job placement, and follow-up support services to its enrollees. The results are manifold, including an improvement in people's overall health and a reduction in their medical costs.

For more than 40 years, Rise staff have seen the direct benefits of how going to work improves people's mental health and enhances their recovery. In 2006, Rise was one of 21 agencies nationwide to participate in a four-year study by the Social Security Administration. The results of the study clearly demonstrated how working can positively impact a person's well-being.

Eddie Johnson was willing to tell his story to "put a face" on the benefits of this interagency effort for the *Star Tribune's* editorial piece. Eddie had suffered a traumatic brain injury as a child and dropped out of grammar school; eventually he earned a GED. This, along with other physical ailments, made find-

ing and keeping a good job challenging. He was also homeless.

But with his health issues recently under control and support

from Rise Employment Consultant Pat Meacham, Eddie was optimistic that he was ready to put his skills to work in a good job and would become more self-sufficient.

Eddie was excited to be hired in October as a machine operator for Greatbatch Medical, a developer and manufacturer of metal enclosures for implantable medical devices in southeast Minneapolis.

"Being a technician brings me back to where I was before all my trials and tribulations," said Eddie. "I feel comfortable operating machinery--it's what I know, what I'm good at. The atmosphere here at Greatbatch is so positive, it's beautifully fierce. My co-workers are great and it feels so good to be working."

In the *Star Tribune's* editorial piece, it was written: "The expansive, not-limited-to-the-doctor's-office approach taken to improve Johnson's health is a key reason why the Hennepin Health program is among the nation's most innovative health reform efforts.

"Now in its third year, the county-led program, which serves some of the metro's poorest and sickest patients, keeps delivering impres-



Eddie Johnson says it's great to be working again as a machine operator at Greatbatch Medical in Minneapolis.

sive results...and should be looked to as a national model."

The article further stated that, "Recognizing poverty's link to illness and emergency room visits, Hennepin Health staff began addressing joblessness and homelessness to improve health and reduce dependency on government programs."

And by weaving "social services into patient care, [it] gives the program new financial flexibility to innovate and focus on prevention....Costs for patients who were placed in jobs dropped 60.3 percent (measured on a per-member-per-month basis). Keeping one patient out of a hospital bed for one day is enough to cover a month's housing for a Hennepin Health enrollee getting housing assistance."

To read the complete editorial, go to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune's* website at:
<http://www.startribune.com/opinion/editorials/272227551.html>

Wells Fargo volunteers from across the country conduct work seminars, mock job interviews for nearly 100 Rise job-seekers

By Luke Kretchmer,
New Sector fellow

Together in a quiet computer room at Rise's Northeast Minneapolis office, Douglas Taylor sat with Frank Lide carefully reviewing Douglas's resume and discussing his career plans. At the same time down the hall, seven job-seekers listened carefully to Neil Serdinsky's presentation on the basics of customer service jobs.

Thanks to the volunteer efforts of 18 Wells Fargo employees from across the country, nearly 100 Rise job-seekers were able to go through a realistic job interview and get valuable feedback.

Volunteers were divided among three Rise Twin Cities office locations. Kelly Fant-Kelly, a Wells Fargo implementation consultant for the Technology Operations Group in North Carolina, worked with Rise staff to coordinate the day's events.

The goal was to make it a meaningful experience for both the volunteers and the job-seekers. The event was important for raising

awareness about the challenges people with disabilities face in finding employment.

But the primary focus of the day was to provide career training and one-on-one consultation to people participating in Rise's employment services programs. Wells Fargo volunteers were engaged in helping them develop resumes tailored for jobs in their field of interest and refine their interviewing skills.

In addition, Wells Fargo employees conducted workshops that focused on a variety of topics such as the basics of customer service, call center training, and hiring practices.

"Rise and Wells Fargo are so well-connected in their vision and values," said one volunteer. "We should find organizations like Rise in every city and engage with them in a formal and consistent way."

The training offered by volunteers reinforced the role fulfilled by Rise's dedicated placement staff every day to help individuals reach their employment goals. It was an invigorating day for everyone.

"I was shocked at how fulfilled I was at the end of the day!" said another volunteer. "I volunteer over 60 hours each month and none compared to this. It was a very rewarding and incredible learning experience."

"Doing mock interviews at Rise, Inc. was both fulfilling and enlightening," said another volunteer from St. Louis. "It was fulfilling because I was able to provide feedback and coach. It was personally enlightening because my special needs son may well need these types of services in the future. I'm very glad they exist."

The quiet computer room in which Douglas and Frank met will soon look different. In addition to volunteering their employees' time, Wells Fargo provided a generous grant to Rise to expand and update its computer technology for people to use in their job searches.

The job-seekers who participated in the day's events, as well as Rise's team of employment consultants and job placement specialists, send their sincere thanks to the Wells Fargo volunteers!



Frank Lide (right) met with Douglas Taylor and provided him with valuable feedback and advice.



Neil Serdinsky conducted one of the many valuable mini-seminars to job-seekers.

Rise Board welcomes two new directors

The Rise Board of Directors recently elected two new community volunteers to serve a three-year term.

Kathy Klang of Minneapolis is a CPA and managing partner with Cummings, Keegan & Co., P.L.L.P. Kathy is excited to serve on Rise's Board of Directors and put her financial and strategic business planning skills to work for Rise.



Jim Abeler is a chiropractor from Anoka. He served as a Minnesota state representative from 1998 to 2014, and was chair of the Health Policy and Finance Subcommittee

for the Health Care Cost Containment Division. Jim's background in government and health and human services will be a great asset to Rise.

Rise receives three-year CARF accreditation, cited for excellence

Based on an intensive, three-day survey conducted by four CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) surveyors, Rise was awarded its tenth three-year certification, the highest level of accreditation.

Surveyors thoroughly examined and evaluated all aspects of the agency, including Rise's management system, employment programs and services, production procedures, funding sources, and administrative organization to assess its compliance with CARF's international standards of performance.

"CARF accreditation gives con-

sumers confidence that an independent monitoring system is in place which is specifically concerned about their best interests," said Rise President Lynn Noren.

"The community can be assured of Rise's accountability and high-level performance," she added.

"Surveyors also interviewed Rise board members, staff, parents and guardians, program participants, employers, community volunteers, and business associates regarding Rise's services."

In their final report, surveyors noted that Rise is to be complimented for its outstanding leadership, as well as its governance policies, strategic planning, code of ethical conduct,

and its ability to manage funds and maintain a stable financial position.

"At Rise, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to have a meaningful life, live safely, contribute to the community, and experience their own personal measure of success," said Noren.

"We are proud of the housing, employment, and personal growth services we offer, and congratulate our hard-working staff for their efforts in carrying out Rise's mission. With more than 1,000 international program service standards reviewed, the CARF surveyors had only one recommendation for improvement which is excellent."



Looking for a great career?? Come work for Rise!

We pride ourselves on hiring the brightest and best to help us carry out our important mission.

Rise offers competitive salaries and benefits packages, good working conditions, great co-workers, and interesting jobs. For more information, check out Rise's current job openings at www.rise.org/2/join-our-staff.html
(Here are CIP Service Team Leader Becky Cordes and Steve Johnson)

Special grant enables Rise employment staff to address specific needs of people who have a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Balancing the demands of two part-time jobs while finishing up your last year in high school can be a real challenge. But Caitlyn Bosley finds that when you enjoy both working and school, it makes it easier.

Having a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) can also be challenging to one's job success. But with support from Rise staff, Caitlyn is working successfully at Arby's in Coon Rapids and at the Minnesota Renaissance School in Anoka as an on-call substitute teacher's aide.

This summer Rise received funding from the Minnesota Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (MOFAS) for two years to offer people who have FASD in career planning and job placement services. Caitlyn is one of the first people to participate in this specialized job placement program.

Caitlyn's mom, Cindy, had been active for years with MOFAS since adopting three daughters each of whom has FASD. When she learned about the new program, Cindy was excited about the possibility that Caitlyn and her sister Kylee could work successfully in the community with the appropriate supports offered by Rise's employment staff.

Jessica Robey, a Rise employment consultant, met weekly with Caitlyn to assist her in updating her resume, putting together a career plan, and searching for appropriate jobs she was interested in. Caitlyn applied for many different kinds of jobs in the Anoka area, but not having her own transportation further complicated her job search.



Cindy Bosley is proud of her daughter Caitlyn's employment success.

"I love working at the Renaissance School because I get to help the kids with fun things like crafts, recess, lunch, and other activities," said Caitlyn. "They are toddlers to pre-Kindergarten so they're busy. But I have experience being with feisty kids!" She volunteers with her sister Chloe's Girl Scout troop and had also worked two summers at a YMCA camp with school-aged kids.

At Arby's, Caitlyn is trained in a variety of positions, including food prep, cashiering, and dining room attendant so that she can work wherever they need her.

"I want my daughters to be more independent, but I know the struggles they have and that they need specific supports," said Cindy. "I want them to have self-confidence and be successful. Having a good job is a great first step in their independence."

Jessica also keeps in touch with Cindy so she, too, can provide Caitlyn with the employment supports she needs. "For instance, counting back change at Arby's was hard for Caitlyn so we practiced that a lot at home. She also processes

information slowly – it's not that she's not trying hard, but it may take a while to learn a new task. Thanks to Jessica, employers understand that."

"Jessica was a great advocate for Caitlyn, especially when she was interviewing. She had trouble opening up about herself with a stranger; Jessica really was fantastic in getting her through those."

"I'm really impressed by how hard Caitlyn has applied herself in the job search and how dedicated she is to each of her jobs," said Jessica who also went with Caitlyn to her job orientations and training sessions, job coached her on the cash register, and helped her with paperwork. "I enjoy being part of her continued success."

To be eligible for employment services under this MOFAS grant, you must be at least 18 years of age, live in Hennepin or Anoka Counties, and have a diagnosis of FASD (or display FASD indicators). For more information, contact Anne Mornes at 612-706-2517; email: amornes@rise.org. Check out MOFAS at www.mofas.org.



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**ADVANCING
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