

# 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



**Corey Johnson** received money from Rise's new **ADVANCING LIVES FUND** to help purchase a new communication device which is critical to his data entry job at Data Ability in Crystal. Read more about how donors' gifts are making a difference on page 11.

# Anoka County has been key supporter, partner since Rise began in 1971

When a small, but determined group of community volunteers began working to incorporate Rise in the early 1970s, the Anoka County Board of Commissioners granted \$10,000 as “seed” money. It was a great show of support and underlined their belief that such an agency would be a tremendous asset to the northern community.

More than 40 years later, the partnership between Anoka County and Rise continues to be strong and progressive. The leadership and staff have built effective, mutually beneficial partnerships which help ensure citizens have the services they need.

“Both Rise and the County have similar missions which boil down to meeting people’s needs through quality services,” said Jerry Pederson, who was recently promoted to director of Anoka County’s Social Services and Behavior Health after 23 years working in multiple service areas.

“Rise and the County’s services and systems have changed and developed over the years, mirroring each other’s growth. Although the issues we are addressing are complex, we are going in the same direction. Such partnerships are crucial for government to provide critical services most effectively and efficiently, and helps us all fulfill our missions.”

“Years ago, there was a lot less regulatory complexity so it was much easier to do the planning around service development,” said Rise President Lynn Noren. “Today, we are working hard together to work through the funding issues and public policies to do the best for those in need. The great relationship we have with

Anoka County enables us to sit face-to-face to brainstorm ideas, solve problems, and figure out how to best get things done together.”

Jerry agreed. “After years of working together toward common goals, we have the benefit of years of earned trust and credibility. We work as partners to address today’s issues and challenges in the most cost-effective,

with people who have mental health issues find and maintain good jobs, we realized many didn’t have safe and affordable housing which directly affected their employability. So Rise and Anoka County came together to specifically address that critical issue by developing several housing support services for people with mental illness. Rise’s success enabled us to expand those services to Central and East Central Minnesota, as well, so our initial work with Anoka County ended up benefiting hundreds of people in other communities.”

Over time, governmental and private funding ‘streams’ have changed, regulations have increased, and additional service vendors have come into the Anoka County area. Lynn and Jerry agree that this has not only enabled more people to receive the services they need, but having more stakeholders “with skin in the game” has enhanced the quality of services.

“At the state level, there are many new initiatives and changes related to disability services,” said Cindy Cesare, the new director of Anoka County’s Human Services Division. Like Lynn and Jerry, Cindy has worked in a variety of human services positions for more than 20 years. “There will be opportunities to work more closely with our community partners on expanding supportive housing and employment services. We look forward to this challenge and the opportunities that change can bring to enhance the quality of our services.

“In Anoka County, we are fortunate to have strong collaborative partnerships with our community providers including Rise. They provide valuable services to our most vulnerable citizens.”



*From left are Jerry Pederson, Lynn Noren, and Cindy Cesare*

results-producing ways – and as a result, everyone wins.”

Anoka County and Rise managers have always been on the lookout for funding and grant opportunities which could help jump-start service development.

“We’ve established a lot of creative ‘pilot’ projects over the years -- and a majority of those services are still available to Anoka County citizens today because the needs are still there,” Lynn noted.

“Rise’s Mental Health and Housing Support Services is a good example of a creative collaboration. In working

# Julie 'climbs her mountain' one step at a time, determined to make a better life

**M**ore than ten years ago, Julie Forslund lost custody of her three children due to her drug addiction. Today, clean and sober for almost a year, she is working to re-establish close relationships with them and her young grandchildren, and is motivated to make a better life for herself and her family.

"I want to be there for my kids and grandkids," said Julie. "Furthermore, I want to be a productive member of society instead of a hindrance. I realized this was a cycle I was going through and so I choose to strive, not for perfection, but for progress. I now have the drive to make things better."

Julie had been living with her parents for three years as she worked hard to get back on her feet. "I loved living with my parents, but I was getting complacent and knew I had to start moving on," she said.

She was referred to Rise by Anoka County for mental health and housing support services and was able to move into one of Rise's Transitional Housing apartments in April 2014.

She meets weekly with Rise Housing Practitioner Brenda Sorgdrager to address mental health and housing-related issues. Although Julie is eligible to live in the unit for up to two years, with Brenda's help, she started applying for permanent, subsidized housing at their first meeting.

"Many landlords don't want to rent to me because I have a criminal record so it's going to be hard."

Julie also meets with a 12-step program sponsor once a week and attends a bible study. She is involved in a "celebrate recovery" group which meets for fun and support.



*Julie Forslund (right) meets weekly with Housing Practitioner Brenda Sorgdrager, whom she considers one of her most supportive advocates.*

"All the support I receive helps me keep balanced," said Julie. "Brenda is one of the most supportive advocates I have. She is so helpful and, most importantly, believes in me."

"I believe in Julie because her actions match her words," Brenda said. "People are willing to stand behind her and give her the support she needs to 'climb her mountain' because she's the one doing the hard work."

As much as she enjoys her current job as a security guard, Julie would like to further her career by going back to school.

"I would like to take my experiences and help others by becoming a counselor," she added. "I think I could really make a difference. My middle daughter is studying to become a social worker and I think her drive to help others has come from the hard times we've gone through. I'm very proud of her."

A seven-year cancer survivor, Julie also enjoys volunteering, especially at Feed My Starving Children and the Special Olympics, both of which she finds very fulfilling.

Despite her busy schedule, Julie is able to spend a lot of time with her four grandchildren. She loves being a grandma and is excited that she has another grandbaby on the way.

"We lost a lot of years together, but I know my kids love me," said Julie.

Moving forward through life is a process, Julie acknowledges. "I'm taking baby steps, but I'm making progress!"

For more information about Rise's mental health and housing support services in Anoka County, contact Becky Rother at 763-792-2432; Central and East Central Minnesota residents can contact Amy Carter at 320-656-5608.

# Amcon adds a Rise team to their workforce and finds it's a perfect fit

Walking through American Converter's (Amcon) expansive foam fabricating plant in Fridley, one is struck by the number and wide variety of customer projects in progress. In the midst of the well-orchestrated busyness are workers from Rise, intent on their jobs at hand.

After having worked on a wide range of both short-term and ongoing projects for Amcon over the past ten years at Rise's production facilities, Sales and Marketing Rep John Nielsen was pleased last fall when COO Dave Nypower and Production Manager Jason Hanson agreed to bring in a Rise team to Amcon's Fridley plant to work on a contract.

"We considered this a pilot project, but I was confident our workers could prove to Amcon that this was a great working arrangement," said John. "By having a team of workers in Amcon's plant, I knew we could help them expedite the project as well as save them on shipping costs. It also helps carry out Rise's mission of having people integrate into community businesses."

Since 1976, Amcon has been develop-

ing creative solutions for custom-cut foam products, including design, engineering, fabricating, packaging, and delivery. They consider their flexibility and quick response time to customers' specific needs to be their greatest strengths.

"The Rise workers just nailed it -- we were all very pleased," said Dave. "By adding the Rise team to our workforce, we are able to free up our more skilled laborers for other tasks."

Rise Site Supervisor Lisa Fischer helped develop the site and now supervises the team. In the past few months, the number of workers has increased to about ten and the variety of projects they are working on expands on a daily basis as Lisa and John explore other possibilities throughout the plant. Rise workers enjoy the different jobs as well as the friendly, bright, and clean working environment.

"The men and women are pleasant, diligent workers who fit really well into our distinctive work culture," said Plant Manager Tom Hall. "Their attitude is contagious. Having a supervised and stable workforce that can expand and contract based on Amcon's production needs is a great help."

Amcon is an employee-owned company which

*Lyle Wedebrand works together with an Amcon employee to apply leather for a shoe insert.*



*Theresa Brun routers a part for Vexilar electronic fishing equipment.*

is committed to community involvement, Dave noted. "I consider this part of our calling. We believe in Rise's mission and think that our two companies fit together well."

Amcon was a bronze sponsor of the 2014 *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* last October. Amcon employees who attended had the opportunity to learn more about the programs Rise offers and the people we serve.

Their heightened awareness only seemed to solidify Amcon's interest in and willingness to support Rise. Controller Jenny Poyorena discussed with Noel McCormick, Rise's director of Advancement, how Amcon might get more involved.

Amcon employees' first opportunity to help came just two months later. During the December holiday season, Amcon employees purchased gifts for the children of three families who are being served in Rise's Mental Health and Housing Support Services programs.

"We so appreciated their kind generosity in helping make the holidays brighter for those eight kids," Noel said.

"I think we will be able to develop natural avenues of growth with Rise," said Production Manager Jason Hanson. "I'm on the hunt for more opportunities to work together."





# Starting a great new job at Walmart on his birthday proves to be good luck for Matt

Despite the cold Minnesota winter morning, Matt Lien still has a spring in his step as he begins his two-mile walk home after working an overnight shift of stocking merchandise and groceries at the Walmart Supercenter in Fridley.

Matt and the rest of the stocking team have worked hard to get the expansive store fully stocked and shelves are “faced” so that Walmart customers can find what they’re looking for.

Originally referred to Rise by the Minnesota Workforce Center in Blaine for job placement services in August 2012, Matt had jobs in retail and restaurants before being hired as a custodian at Rise’s corporate headquarters in Spring Lake Park. He was well-liked by Rise staff who appreciated his strong work ethic, positive attitude, and careful attention to detail.

After a year and a half, Matt decided he was ready for a career change and enlisted the help of Tim Alberts, a Rise employment consultant. Together they developed a career plan for Matt and began a new job search in earnest.

Without a car of his own and not living on a bus line, Matt wanted to find something within a few-mile radius of his apartment because he would be walking to work. He is also the father of two young sons, ages 6 and 9, with whom he spends every weekend so Matt needed to find something that would accommodate his family commitment.

Having just missed a hiring open house at Walmart by a few days,

Matt politely asked the store manager for an interview and was granted one. “I was determined to get a job there so I looked them straight in the eye and answered their questions as best I could,” said Matt who was thrilled to be hired. He started work on his birthday, September 4, which he considered to be a good omen.

Tim provided Matt assistance with some pre-start things like completing paperwork, getting him appropriate work clothing, and supporting him during Walmart’s comprehensive orientation and computer module training.

Matt works Sunday through Thursday, 10 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. and said he caught on to his tasks quickly. Working as part of an efficient team, he considers his co-workers the best part of his job. “They have been good mentors for me and took time to help me learn my job. I know I can ask anyone for help and get support from the team or my managers.

“Depending on who is working that night, the managers put us in the area they think we will do best; I usually work in groceries and the deli, but I’ve been all over,” Matt added. “We flag each other down if we need help with something. It’s an awesome work environment. I think I fit in perfectly and they like me. We share a lot.”

“Matt is an enthusiastic and engaged associate,” said Store Manager Barb Ball. “He catches on quickly when assigned new tasks and is an asset to our Walmart team.”

Weekends are busy with his two sons, and together the guys enjoy being outside, watching movies, playing video games, and participating in activities at Christ Lutheran Church in Blaine with “some awesome people.” Matt graduated from Spring Lake Park High School in 2002 and also attended Century College.

“I really enjoy working with Matt because he has the ability and the drive to accomplish anything he chooses to do,” Tim added. “I am happy that things are working out so well for him at Walmart and will be happy to continue to support him as needed as he moves forward.”



*Matt is a proven asset to the Walmart store team.*

# New state-funded placement program who are deaf; DJ and Ryan's skills shine

Even in the middle of the night, the FedEx Home Delivery facility in St. Paul is bustling with activity. Ryan Woodruff works at a steady pace with his partner sorting small packages which will be delivered throughout the Twin Cities area.

"It was hard the first week or so and took a little bit of time to get used to, but my body has adjusted and now it's fine," said Ryan who wakes at 1 a.m. to get to work on Metro Mobility by 3:30 a.m.

He and his co-workers make a great team. "We respect each other and help each other out," said Ryan. "It's nice." Ryan works Tuesday through Saturday and his shift ends when all the packages have been sorted for loading onto delivery trucks, usually by 6 a.m., unless it's the busy holiday season. He started work on October 27.

Ryan, who is deaf and has cerebral palsy, is an engaging young man who has ambitious goals. Intent on working independently at a business in the community, Ryan worked with Rise Occupational Communication Specialists Katrina Schiferl and Beth Spreigl to identify jobs which would be interesting and challenging.

Ryan is one of the first ten people who are deaf and have additional disabilities participating in the Sensory Quality Improvement Project (QIP) – Home and Community-Based Services Performance-Based Incentive Payment Program (HCBS PIPP), funded by the State of Minnesota.



*Ryan Woodruff is an ambitious guy who enjoys being part of the team at FedEx Home Delivery in St. Paul. He starts work at 3:30 a.m. and his shift ends when all the packages have been sorted.*

"It's exciting to assist people in achieving their dreams to obtain and maintain meaningful employment," said Beth.

"Each person we work with has a unique set of skills that shine through."

Katrina helped Ryan with orientation and job training. Katrina and Beth, who are fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), then joined Ryan at the job site to assist with communication. They also helped his supervisor, Cassie Melcher, make some simple accommodations so he could communicate with his co-workers and make a good transition to the worksite.

Since the others don't know ASL, Ryan uses gestures, writes notes, and is allowed to text on his iPhone to converse with them.

Ahavah Cook, an occupational communication specialist with Rise's Minnesota Employment Center for People Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, assisted Katrina and Beth in getting the project off to a good start. Together they identified people from Rise's DTH (Day Training and Habilitation) Sensory Support Unit who wanted to pursue competitive employment in area businesses.

In the initial six months of the program, Katrina and Beth assisted people with developing individual Discovery Plans to identify their interests and skills, developed career plans, honed their job-seeking skills, and practiced job interviews.

Three people were in the job placement phase and collectively applied for 84 jobs in area businesses. Those three now have competitive jobs and work an average of 22.75 hours, earning an average wage of \$10.28.

*Katrina Schiferl checks in with Ryan to see how work is going. They communicate using ASL.*



# provides customized services to those through in their new competitive jobs

“I love working with such incredibly motivated people in finding their match for employment,” said Katrina. “Ryan was so determined and presented himself confidently in his job search. Now, it’s great to see him happily working -- it’s a good fit for him, and FedEx’s work environment is wonderful.”

“Ryan is an exceptionally driven, hard-working individual who is meticulous and detail-oriented in his work,” added Beth. “The FedEx job is a good match for him.”

Ryan had previously worked with a team of Rise workers who are all deaf. “That was much easier than being on my own like I am here,” said Ryan. “But I like the challenge and being much more independent at work is very satisfying. I like being able to show people what I can do on my own.”

Cassie describes Ryan as a great addition to the team. She and his co-workers say they admire his reliability, strong work ethic, and careful attention to detail – all attributes which make him perfect for the FedEx position.

Not only are Ryan and his employer happy, but his family is also excited. They say that Ryan feels better about himself and is reaching out to others who are deaf to encourage them to pursue their own dreams.

Ryan has found that he enjoys having the days to himself with an open schedule. He and his fiancé plan to get married in June.

Equally excited about his competitive job, Daniel Johnson, who goes by DJ, says he loves his dishwashing

position at Byerly’s deli in Roseville.

DJ admits it was a big transition for him to work independently in a competitive job without the daily support of staff and co-workers who are fluent in ASL, but he is thriving in his new position. His Byerly’s co-workers were quick to welcome him into their friendly work team and have established their own methods of communicating. They appreciate his good work.

Katrina and Beth help out with any issues that may come up when they stop in for their regular follow-up visits. They also assisted DJ with learning Byerly’s policies and procedures when he first started back in November.

“DJ has an engaging personality with a smile that’s contagious,” said Katrina. “He’s genuine in wanting to help everyone and takes great pride in his work.”

April Martin, deli manager at Byerly’s, agrees. “DJ has fit in really well in our department. He is a hard worker and very careful about his work. Even though we didn’t know much sign language when he came, we easily developed ways to communicate with him. He is fast learner and a great addition to our team. He has quickly become a member of our Byerly’s family.”

“Even though it’s really busy here, we still have a lot of fun,” said DJ, who works 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., three days a week. “We like to tease and



*DJ fits in well with his co-workers at the Byerly’s deli in Roseville and enjoys being part of the hard-working team.*

joke with each other. I feel independent working here. Sometimes I get to try other tasks; I really like learning new jobs.”

Working back in the award-winning deli definitely has its advantages. “We have had some great food as a thank you and during the holidays,” said DJ who said he especially likes Byerly’s Oriental chicken and rice dish.

In his free time, DJ loves playing league basketball and bowling in St. Paul. Some of his co-workers plan to cheer him on at upcoming games. “Life is good,” DJ signed with a smile.

“Both FedEx and Byerly’s have been great employment matches,” said Beth. “Their managers and employees have been amazing with making quick accommodations, having open communication, and giving positive encouragement to Ryan and DJ. Katrina and I are confident they will continue to do well.”

# Joe is excited to be back working after a tragic accident left him with a brain injury 9 years ago

The Family Pathways Thrift Store in Wyoming is a busy place where customers know they will find plenty of great treasures at good prices. There, Joe Solomon can walk almost five miles in a four- or five-hour shift as he helps unload delivery trucks and private donations, sorts and tags items, stocks the shelves, and assists customers on the retail floor.

Joe loves his job, especially after not having worked for almost nine years following a tragic accident at his construction job in his early 20s. Working to save for college, Joe suffered a traumatic brain injury, resulting in memory and mental health issues. A settlement from the accident helped him buy a home, but after years of not working, it went into foreclosure; Joe lost his home in 2012.

Joe was referred to Rise by his case manager at People, Inc. Monica Zachau, a housing support specialist in Rise's Employment Innovations office in Cambridge, assisted Joe and his wife find an apartment in Wyoming for their young family. Monica also helped him apply for one year of rental subsidies while she and Joe put a more permanent plan together.

"I thought Joe would really benefit from going back to work and I knew Jill Johnston could help him find just the right job so I kept encouraging Joe to meet with her," said Monica.

Jill, a Rise placement specialist, arranged for a three-week work eval-

uation through Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Joe at the Thrift Store to help assess his work skills and interests. He excelled at the job and was well-liked by his co-workers.

"I have had other jobs before, but I really struggled," said Joe. "None of them worked out because people didn't understand about my memory issues and I didn't have good people like Jill and Monica to support me. Working with Rise has made all the difference for me."

A few weeks after his work evaluation ended, Joe ran into a manager from the Wyoming store at a grocery store. She asked if he had found a job yet and when she found out that Joe was still looking, she invited him to apply for a position. He started the next day and works 20 hours a week.

Joe says he loves the variety of job duties and has great co-workers.

"I am so excited to be working again after all those years. It feels so good to be productive and a part of society. I make sure I do the very best I can and I think my co-workers appreciate my work."

"What a transformation Joe's gone through since he started working – he's so much more outgoing and self-confident!" said Monica. "Now we're working on fulfilling Joe's



dream of finding an affordable house to rent with a nice yard for his kids."

"Joe unfailingly comes to work with a smile on his face and a positive attitude," said Manager Corinna LaChapelle. "He is always willing to do whatever is needed for the day. As a committed team player, he steps in with a lending hand to help others achieve their goals for the day. We value Joe's work and are grateful to have him as a part of our Family Pathways family."

"Jill and Monica have been so helpful to me and have supported me in many ways," Joe added. "I appreciate all the services Rise has to help me."

He continues to meet with Monica weekly and Jill a couple of times a month to help ensure things continue to go well and address issues as they may arise.

"Monica and I are certainly happy to support Joe, but he's the one doing all the hard work," said Jill. "We're proud of him and pleased things are working out so well for him."

Joe lives less than two miles from the Thrift Store. He and his wife have a young son and daughter. In his free time, Joe enjoys spending time with his family bowling, going to movies, and playing games.

# Anglers keep their equipment tangle-free with Deluxe Ice Advantage Rod Case assembled by Rise workers

Ice fishing is a favorite pastime of many Minnesota sports enthusiasts. Anglers love reelin' them in, especially in the dead of winter.

As most fishermen have a lot of specialized equipment, storing and transporting their gear safely and tangle-free is important. Rise workers at Amcon are proud to be assembling the Deluxe Ice Advantage Rod Case, a favorite among ice fishing enthusiasts throughout the northern U.S. and Canada.

The case is the brain child of Greg O'Dell, a former fishing guide and avid ice fisherman, who with his wife Angela, started a specialty company in 2010 called Ice Fishing Innovations. Up until they first partnered with Rise last November, Angela and Greg constructed these cases by hand in their home to sell at local sportsmen shows and on their website, [icefishinginnovations.com](http://icefishinginnovations.com).

"We started this side business out of a true love for the sport," said Angela who also works full time at Amcon in customer service and training. "Our goal was to get this into people's hands because ice fishing is a great way to spend time with family and friends.



Photo

"We always assumed we couldn't afford to hire others to help with the assembly so we did it all at home. But during peak sales periods from early November through April each year, the cases completely took over our living space. I knew Rise's Marketing Rep John Nielsen from Amcon and we explored the possibility of having the Rise team who works at Amcon help us on the assembly and packaging."

Rise workers carefully insert the foam that holds six rod and reel combos and place in four tackle boxes. It requires precision and careful attention to detail.

"There are so many things that can go wrong in this assembly, but the first order they did was 100 percent perfect – it was just fantastic" said Angela. "Greg and I appreciated not only their high quality work, but their speedy turn-around time and the price.

"While at the Ice Fishing and Winter Sports Show held in December at the St. Paul River Centre, we met a very special young man, Luke Rodger (left in photo at right). We added him to our Pro Staff team because he was such an enthusiastic user of our product. In our conversation, we explained that a Rise work team assembled the cases for us at Amcon. Luke was excited to tell us that he, too, is a Rise worker at Cummins Power Generation's manufacturing plant in Fridley.

"We're very pleased with our partnership with Rise and are looking forward to future opportunities," Angela added. "We appreciate not



*Pearl McNamar applies the glue for the last piece of specialized foam to be inserted in the case before it's packaged and shipped to customers.*

only their quality work, but that they are flexible enough to be able to respond quickly to help us fill orders on an as-needed basis. We could not have gotten through our high-volume sales periods without their efforts. Working with Rise has exceeded our expectations. From the beginning, it has been a wonderful experience and we know we have found a great partner."

"They take so much pride in the work they do and it shows in every case they assemble," said John. "We're confident we can continue to meet Innovations' needs and expectations, and look forward to helping them grow their company."



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

We pride ourselves on hiring the brightest and the 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/](http://www.rise.org/2/join-our-staff/)

*(Here are DTH Sensory Support Service Team Leaders Jessi DuVall and Krystle Kleven)*



## Rise workers at Federal Premium Ammunition move into spacious new building with great amenities

Since 1987, Rise workers have been a valued addition to the workforce at Federal Premium Ammunition in Anoka. The team of more than two dozen workers, along with CBTE Site Supervisor Marian Bodin and CIP Specialist Melissa Pavek, were excited to move into a new building on Federal's compound in November.

The workspace is bright, spacious, and gives them the room they need to do a wide range of tasks disassembling Federal's shotgun shells and scrap ammunition.

The Federal work team also loves having a new break room, complete with storage cupboards, two refrigerators, and three microwave ovens. When the weather warms, they will be able to eat at picnic tables on a patio right outside the door.

Melissa and Marian (shown below with Rodney Swanson and Sharon Kampa) appreciated working with Federal's facilities operations managers Mike Johnson and Melissa Jacobson on the workspace design and are really pleased with the building.

"With feedback from Rise employees, Federal Premium Ammunition staff were able to design a space that could accommodate current and future team needs," said Mike. "We hope the Rise employees enjoy the new work space for years to come."

"We have a reliable, hard-working team of people here who have always felt to be an important part of Federal's overall operations," said Marian. "There's a lot of work to do - and they do it well. We love the new building and all its amenities!"



*Ted Brown, one of the original four people who started when Rise opened in 1971, has worked at several community work sites and individual jobs. Ted says he especially enjoys working at Federal.*



# Grateful recipients of Rise's new ADVANCING LIVES FUND use gifts for a wide range of one-time needs

Guests at the 2014 *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* held last October not only enjoyed a fun and festive evening, they also seemed to enjoy generously donating to Rise's new ADVANCING LIVES FUND. They helped raise more than \$20,000.

In its first few months, more than a dozen people served by Rise have benefited from these special gifts which are to be used to meet needs that aren't covered by other funding sources.

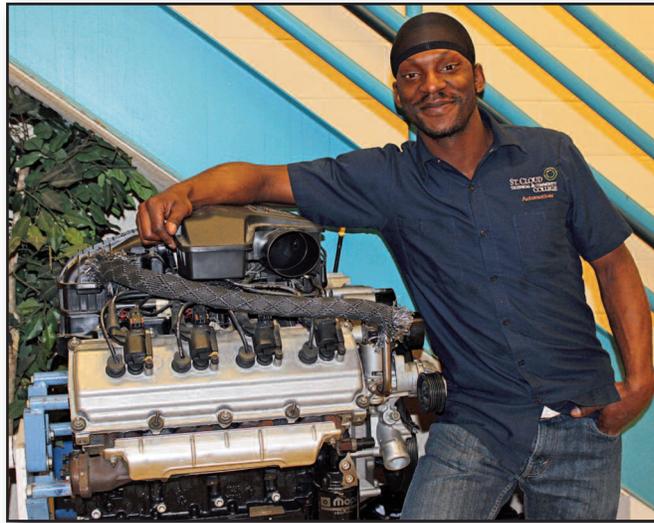
Individual gifts so far have ranged from \$75 to \$500 for a wide range of items, such as:

- \* Wheelchair ramp for home
- \* Communication software
- \* Car repairs
- \* Tools for use at school for automotive repair training
- \* Computer and internet access
- \* DynaVox communication equipment for work
- \* Lock box for medication
- \* First month's rent and security deposit for new housing
- \* One-month bus pass
- \* College textbooks
- \* Haircut and job interview clothes

One of the first recipients of ADVANCING LIVES FUNDS is Miranda Siedschlag (*shown at right*) who started at Anoka-Ramsey Community College in January. Her goal is to complete general studies and then transfer to a four-year college to major in marine biology because she wants to help rescue dolphins.

Rise's Mental Health & Housing Practitioner Holly Brabek works with Miranda and helped her apply for ADVANCING LIVES FUND monies to purchase textbooks for her college courses as well as a bus pass.

Miranda is excited to be back in school and says she believes a college degree is the ticket to a better life.



*Martin plans to graduate in May 2016 with an associate of applied science degree and then earn his master's certification. He hopes to work in a car dealership or on his own. Housing Support Specialist Paul Kuhlmann assisted Martin in applying for ADVANCING LIVES FUNDS.*

Martin Tipton received \$500 to help purchase tools for his automotive technician courses at St. Cloud Technical and Community College.

"It means everything to me to get these funds because these tools are the key to my future and I simply couldn't afford them," said Martin. "School is my Number 1 priority now and I'm getting this degree for my kids and to be able to move forward. I can't emphasize enough how important this is to me. Thank you."



## *ADVANCING LIVES FUNDS are:*

- \* Available for a one-time need that help move a person toward greater self-sufficiency (not ongoing bills)
- \* Limited to a maximum \$500 per person per year
- \* Issued on a first-come, first-served basis
- \* Paid directly to the vendor, not the individual

## *To be eligible to apply for Rise's ADVANCING LIVES FUNDS, you need to:*

- \* Be served in a Rise program
- \* Have explored other funding options without success
- \* Work with your Rise program manager to apply for funds

## *If you would like to contribute to the ADVANCING LIVES FUND, please:*

- \* Visit our website at <http://rise.org/46/give.html>, or
- \* Contact Advancement Director Noel McCormick at 763-783-2832; email: [nmccormick@rise.org](mailto:nmccormick@rise.org)



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*Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala*  
Thursday, October 8!

## WHO WE ARE

Rise unlocks potential and opens doors to success for people with disabilities and 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.

## RISE REPORTER

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