

RISE REPORTER

SEPTEMBER 2016 | VOL. 40, NO. 3



LOOKING BACK OVER RISE'S 45 YEARS:

Circa mid-1980s: Jenny Johnson assembled electronic components and conducted quality control at Multi-Tech Systems, Inc. in Mounds View for several years. Jenny is one of the people featured in Rise's *45 Stories for 45 Years* series. Find out what Jenny is up to today at rise.org/our-story/45-stories/ (She's #22!)





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A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LYNN NOREN

Earlier this summer, I attended a day-long workforce summit that was convened by the Minnesota Department of Human Services in partnership with a variety of provider associations which support people who have disabilities, are elderly, and/or who have needs that are supported by direct support professionals. With a booming economy, all of us are finding it challenging to attract and retain team members.

At Rise, we know that our team members are our most valuable resource. We set objectives every year to address our workforce needs. The summit discussions were very much aligned with our current strategies at Rise:

- Provide high quality / person-centered supports
- Create career ladders
- Improve workplace culture
- Expand the use of technology

Today there are more than 135,000 people working as direct care / support workers in the state of Minnesota. Each year, the demand for these workers grows, while at the same time, the people available to fill the jobs decreases. The Minnesota Demographic Center projects that with population growth and an increase in the number of people wanting care and support at home, there will be a need for an additional 59,000 workers in the coming years.

Rise is experiencing unprecedented challenges in hiring direct support professionals and so we're happy to be partnering with the Department of Human Services and other community organizations to seek solutions to some of the challenges facing organizations like us. The bottom line is, the people we serve deserve to have the highest quality supports possible, and without staffing stability, it's challenging.

We must do more to address the shortage and retention of direct support professionals, and find ways to make caring for our state's most vulnerable people a valued profession. We hope you will join with us in the coming year to advocate for legislative action and policy changes that will ultimately impact not only our workforce, but the lives of people we serve at Rise.



WHO WE ARE

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

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ON THE COVER

LOOKING BACK OVER RISE'S 45 YEARS: Circa mid-1980s: Jenny Johnson assembled electronic components at Multi-Tech Systems, Inc. in Mounds View for many years. Jenny is one of the people featured in Rise's *45 Stories for 45 Years* series. See page 8.



PUSHING BOUNDARIES,
EXPLORING NEW HORIZONS
The 45th Anniversary Celebrate Rise Gala

join us for the 5th annual

CELEBRATE RISE FUNDRAISING GALA

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

5:30 - 8:30 P.M.

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RSVP BY SEPTEMBER 23, 2016

Register online at: CelebrateRise2016.eventbrite.com

If you have questions about the event or wish to inquire about event sponsorship,
contact Noel McCormick at Rise: 763.783.2832 • nmccormick@rise.org



Cummins grant helps relaunch Ken's career in IT

IN THE FAST-PACED, ever-changing world of IT (information technology), a few years can mean monumental advancements in systems, hardware, and software.

Having left the IT workforce for three years due to mental health issues, Ken Johnson found re-entering the workforce to be a real challenge. Romy Sundem, Ken's therapist at Family Life Mental Health Center, suggested he work with Rise for career planning and job placement supports.

"I was very discouraged," Ken said candidly. "I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from the University of Alberta (Canada) in 2002 and worked for 13 years as a software developer in Edmonton before moving back to Minnesota with my family. I had the education and the experience, so I could get the job interviews. But explaining my long employment break to potential employers was difficult and I wasn't getting any job offers."

Rise Employment Consultant Crystal Ray, who was working with Ken on his job search, came up with a new approach. She knew that managers at Cummins Power Generation were open to meeting with people from Rise who had unique skills, but were still having trouble finding a suitable job.

Rise Senior Marketing Representative Nancy Hoff meets on a regular basis with managers at Cummins Power Generation to brainstorm ideas on ways they can partner with Rise in a wide variety of ways – from employment op-



Ken works as an IT project manager with a small team at Cummins. He finds the work interesting and the experience tremendously valuable.

portunities to supporting special projects.

Crystal and Nancy thought Ken would be an ideal candidate and set up an informational interview with Ken Harnack, Jeremy Haug, and other Cummins IT managers. They were so impressed with him that they offered Ken a three-month grant to work as a consultant on special IT projects this summer.

"Cummins has allowed me to have a 'safe' entry back into the workforce," said Ken. "I work as an IT project manager on a small team managing various IT projects. It is interesting work and the experience is awesome. I am upfront about any issues I might have and everyone has been very supportive. I feel they value my work."

Ken also credits the continued

cooperation between Romy, Crystal, and his co-workers at Cummins who have all worked together to make this work experience happen.

"I was in a really difficult situation -- but everyone involved wanted me to be successful," Ken noted. "It will be so good to have this on my resume; working at Cummins has also given me a tremendous boost in my self-confidence for when I continue my job search."

Ken and his wife Lisa have a busy household with 12-year-old twin sons, a 10-year-old son, plus 8- and 6-year-old daughters. Lisa is a stay-at-home mom and home-schools their children.

"This is just another great example of Rise's valued business partnership with Cummins," Nancy added.



Rise partners with Hennepin Health with promising results

Written by Lori Imsdahl, this article originally appeared in Hennepin County's online public health magazine, *Healthy You, Healthy Hennepin*. It was edited for length.

DASHAWANDA COLE WAS having suicidal thoughts and went to HCMC's Acute Psychiatric Services to ask for help.

In the psychiatric emergency room, staff conducted a thorough psychiatric evaluation and provided appropriate medication. Then they introduced her to Mia Debins, a community health worker, to help her navigate through the complex health care system.

Dashawanda is enrolled in Hennepin Health, a managed care plan that serves Hennepin County residents who are eligible for Medicaid or MinnesotaCare.

Assessing a person's need for social services, such as food, housing, transportation and employment, is one of the first things that care coordinators do.

The approach is unique. Tra-

ditionally, medical care and social services in America have been distinct entities. But initiatives like Hennepin Health are changing the approach to care.

"Evidence shows us that only a small piece of health and health care outcomes can be impacted by medical care," explains Ross Owen, Hennepin Health director. "Where we live and work, and the social environment around us, all matter a lot."

Mia discovered that Dashawanda had recently been laid off from a seasonal job at a department store. She lacked reliable transportation and was on the verge of homelessness. Mia referred her to Rise for employment support services through its Employment Pays! program.

Since its partnership with Hen-

nepin Health began in June 2013, Rise has worked with about 50 Hennepin Health clients; 28 of whom have found one or more jobs through the program.

Dashawanda was matched with Caitlin Engen, a Rise employment consultant. Together, they created a list of goals for her to achieve, including getting a driver's license, GED, job, college, and housing.

Improved mental health was the overarching goal. "I wanted to get back to the old me," Dashawanda says, explaining that when she has control over her anxiety, PTSD, and depression, she's a "happy person" who enjoys dancing, running, and basketball.

They updated Dashawanda's resume and began sending out job applications. Dashawanda eventually found work at a restaurant in Brooklyn Center. She's since been promoted to assistant manager.

In the last two years, she's also finished her GED, gotten her driver's license, and completed a handful of college classes at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC). She plans to eventually earn a bachelor's degree in business management.

Dashawanda confirms what Hennepin Health and a growing body of health care literature tout -- that addressing social issues like employment can improve one's mental health.

"Instead of just being de-

~ Continued on page 7 ~



"Instead of being depressed all the time, my job gives me hope that I can still succeed," said Dashawanda Cole, right, shown here with Rise Employment Consultant Caitlin Engen.

‘One team’ concept works well at LogicPD

THE BRIGHT, EXPANSIVE high-tech facility hums with a steady production flow. Rise’s team of six workers are working on several different tasks in various locations throughout the plant which are all key to Logic’s overall operation.

Logic PD in Eden Prairie provides its customers with “product lifecycle management.” They work in a wide range of industries, including aerospace / defense, commercial / industrial, and medical / life science markets.

“We have one team working here – it’s not Rise and Logic employees separately,” said Manufacturing Supervisor John Bolduc.

“We rely heavily on people from Rise to help maintain our work flow by reel winding, labeling circuitry boards with new serial numbers, and circuitry board assembly; they also work in inventory control. Their accuracy is crucial to the work we do and helps us

tremendously in saving labor costs – it’s huge for us.”

Lisa Bauman supervises the team from Rise which works from 6:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. “John and I work together to determine what’s going to work best for everyone by assessing people’s skill sets and then finding the right job and the right fit for them,” Lisa noted. “We want everyone to be successful.”

A few of the people from Rise working at Logic had been at a similar company several years ago before it relocated out of town.

“I’ve got a really great team,” said Lisa. “They were already familiar with this high-tech industry, had good work skills, and felt comfortable in this work environment. It made it easy for them to transition to Logic.”

People work both together as a team as well as independently, depending on the work tasks.



Site Supervisor Lisa Bauman appreciates that Sarah Todd is very task-oriented, always focused on the job, and willing to learn new job tasks.

Dawn Snyder works in receiving where she opens incoming packages, scans packing slips into the computer, and organizes and stores parts for future use. Her position requires 100-percent accuracy, and Lisa and John are confident in her work.



Rocky Brodersen does many different jobs at Logic, including assembling circuitry boards.



In addition to the people shown in photos here, John Passon is cross-trained on a number of different jobs throughout Logic and is always willing and able to fill in for others or assist wherever he is needed.

“It is great to know Logic values our input and the work we do for them every day,” said Senior Marketing Representative Nancy Hoff. “We also appreciate John and his team for helping make ‘work’ fun!”

“We have a great partnership with Rise,” John added. “Everyone is reliable, dependable, and hard-working – we couldn’t ask for more than that!”



Mellissa Paffel works primarily in the warehouse storing parts and delivering product to the workforce. Mellissa also changes her daily work tasks to accommodate Logic’s production needs.

Going to work improves one’s health - from p. 5

pressed all the time, my job gives me hope that I can still succeed,” Dashawanda explains. “It gives me stability which a while ago I didn’t have. Working helps in a big way.”

Despite these accomplishments, it’s not always easy. Caitlin supports and encourages Dashawanda when times are challenging.

“With Caitlin by my side, I’ve accomplished a lot of goals,” Dashawanda says. Engen inter-

jects: “While I do provide some support to Dashawanda, her success is her own. I’m here to help, but if she didn’t have the ambition to go for it, it wouldn’t get done. Every goal she’s set she’s accomplished. I think wherever she wants to go, she’ll end up.”

Ultimately, Dashawanda wants to work as a mental health advocate.

“I just thought this was some-

thing that everyone went through,” she says. “It took me a long time to accept my mental health diagnoses.”

Dashawanda urges others with mental health conditions to take advantage of social service resources like employment support.

She adds, “Don’t hide it. Be more open about it because it gives other people going through it a better chance at recovery.”

‘Give to the Max Day’ is Nov. 17

give
MN.org

Tens of thousands of Minnesotans will be logging in to donate to their favorite charities during this 8th annual 24-hour give-a-thon.

Rise will be among the many deserving charities to whom you can contribute. We hope we can count on your support!

Check us out at: givemn.org/organization/Rise-Incorporated

Rise has 45 years of great stories to tell!

In honor of Rise's 45th anniversary this year, we are telling you about some of the many great people associated with Rise so you can see how we are continually pushing boundaries and unlocking possibilities for men and women who have a wide range of abilities and challenges. We hope you enjoy reading about them! Here are just a few of the people we have featured so far:



#18 - EMILY WARD loves her job at Taylors Falls Elementary School. When school let out for the summer, she joined her co-workers from Employment Innovations in Lindstrom to work at area businesses.



#20 - JUSTIN STRANTZ keeps a busy schedule at CIP-Anoka with production work and community volunteer projects. He also enjoys Art Speaks and music therapy.



#21 - JOE JEPSEN works at AMC Coon Rapids 16 Theatres. Joe says the best perk from his good job is that he gets to see as many movies as he wants!



#23 - ROSEMARIE DIETRICH has worked at many companies throughout her career with Rise. She is a great leader at work and is always willing to assist her co-workers at Amcon.



#26 - PATTY WELSCH attends Rise's Adult Day Program at the Mounds View YMCA. In the 1970s, her father was instrumental in changing the lives of all Minnesotans who have disabilities.



#27 - DUSTIN TRUDEAU survived brain cancer as a baby, but it resulted in him being deaf and having learning disabilities. Today Dustin enjoys working at Walmart, golf, baseball, and hanging out with friends.

The *45 Stories for 45 Years* series can be found on Rise's website at: rise.org/our-story/45-stories/



Project SEARCH's preparation, internships lead to good careers

OLIVER McDOWELL IS PROUD that his work helps ensure that hospital patients are well-cared for. He is a Central Processing Technician I and sterilizes medical equipment at Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) in downtown Minneapolis.

To get this good job, Oliver participated in Project SEARCH Minnesota, a collaborative program designed to assist students who have developmental disabilities train for and find a community job that fits their interests and needs. Key to this process is the opportunity for them to participate in three rotating internships within HCMC to help them decide on a career path.

Modeled after Project SEARCH at the Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati, this program has multiple participating entities, including Rise, HCMC, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota Vo-



ational Rehabilitation Services, Hennepin County Developmental Disabilities Services, and the Minnesota Department of Education.

Students from Minneapolis Public Schools participate in their last year of high school and are between the ages of 18 and 22. They attend accredited classes in vocational readiness and training as well as participate in three internships lasting six weeks each. Students may work in HCMC's Central Processing Department sterilizing surgical instruments, sort and deliver correspondence in the mail room, unload deliveries in the docking department, and work in the main kitchen and cafeteria.

People benefit from doing actual work in a prestigious hospital, giving them a boost of confidence in addition to important marketable skills. In addition to the specific job skills they learn in each of their three rotations, the "soft skills" they learn are crucial to any kind of job they may apply for.

Students are referred to Rise's Employment Consultant Ebony Johnson in December before their upcoming graduation in May to begin their job development plan. Ebony assists them in finding competitive employment within

Kaleem Pemberton participated in Project SEARCH last year and is part of the team at WalMart in Brooklyn Center. His co-workers appreciate his hard work and good work ethic.



HCMC or out in the community; she then provides follow-up support services. This summer, Ebony worked with twelve students, six of whom have already been hired into great jobs, including at HCMC and the new US Bank Stadium.

Starting its third year this fall, the team of Project SEARCH collaborators work well together and maintain constant communication regarding the students' activities and progress to help ensure their overall success.

Oliver, who was hired in January 2016, says the best part of his technician position at HCMC is the people with whom he works.

"The hospital staff here are wonderful in that they really get to know the students and treat them as part of the team," said Ebony. "They are interested in the students' careers and do what they can to support them as they go through training, providing a real sense of community and camaraderie."

Rise is proud of award-winning team members

RISE IS PLEASED TO recognize two of its direct support professionals, Sue Krause and Ebony Johnson, both of whom received statewide awards for their exemplary work. The awards were presented by the Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR) at their annual training conference held this summer in Onamia.

Sue was honored with the *Enrichment Award* for organizations in the Greater Twin Cities metro area. She is the activity coordinator for Rise's Adult Day Program in Golden Valley which serves people with traumatic brain injuries and other physical disabilities.



Noted for being an amazing advocate for the people with whom she works, Sue's number one passion is to walk along on the journey with each person to see them accomplish everything that they can for themselves. She is always looking for new and creative ideas to stimulate and broaden the cultural impact of all those who come to Rise and enrich each person's life. Sue is never satisfied with the ordinary and consistently pushes the boundaries of what can be.

Ebony Johnson was the winner for MOHR's *Employment Award* for the Greater Twin Cities area. She was honored for her efforts to empower people to reach their highest potential and achieve success with their employment goals.

Ebony works with two distinctly different Rise programs. In Project SEARCH, she supports a group of transition-aged youth who have developmental disabilities to find and maintain competitive employment after the completion of their transition program at the Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC).

Ebony also works with Rise's Employment Pays! program sup-



porting individuals, many of whom have undiagnosed mental health and chemical dependency problems, at the Adult Correctional Facility in Hennepin County. She assists them in finding employment opportunities once they have completed their sentence.

In both of these programs, Ebony has built strong professional relationships with the individuals she supports, community agencies, and employers. Her ability to collaborate in a professional manner has diminished barriers that once appeared unmanageable for the purposes of gaining employment.

Congratulations to Sue and Ebony! You make all of us at Rise proud!

CHECK OUT EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT RISE!

Rise is seeking creative, compassionate people to join our team. We offer a fun, fast-paced work environment, excellent training opportunities, and the chance to make a difference in people's lives. Here is Case Manager Kristen Enghusen at Creative Partnerships North in Crystal with Robin Anderson.

Learn more about available positions and apply today!

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





Mike's engaging personality make him a great guest experience representative at U.S. Bank Stadium

by Ian Plitnick, Rise Development Manager

NEARLY 200,000 MINNESOTA Vikings fans descended upon the new U.S. Bank Stadium in downtown Minneapolis the weekend of July 23-24 to get their first up-close look at one of the finest sports venues in the country.

Mike Hill was one of many guest experience representatives on hand to welcome visitors, scan tickets, and help see to it that everyone had a good time.

Mike's warm and engaging personality made him a perfect candidate for this job. With the support of Rise Job Developer Mary Steinmetz, Mike attended a job fair earlier this summer hosted by SMG, a worldwide entertainment and convention venue management company. SMG contracts with U.S. Bank Stadium for support services positions.

Mike prepared for the job fair by getting a dress shirt and tie from Michael's Closet, a 'clothing boutique' at Rise where the people we serve can find donated professional clothing and accessories for their job interviews and work at no cost. He was so determined to make a great first impression that he watched a You Tube video to learn how to tie his tie.

As a result of Mike's thorough preparation, he was hired immediately.

Mike attended four training sessions this summer prior to the start of the big open house to learn the many tasks he will be doing.



Mike is excited to be part of the Game Day Team at U.S. Bank Stadium.

"I will be working two to four major events each month, including Vikings games, sporting events, concerts, sponsored events -- even weddings." Mike noted. "My main zone will be behind the goal posts on the field. It's a super fun job -- it's a dream come true!"

"I couldn't have done this without Mary and [Service Team Leader] Lori Clauson plus all the support and encouragement that I got from everyone at Rise. There are no words to describe how happy and excited I am!"

When not working at U.S.

Bank Stadium, Mike will continue his work at Rise through the Connections Brain Injury program. He specializes in clerical and data entry jobs.

Mike may have a busy schedule at work, but every Sunday, he serves as a greeter at his church. Mike also volunteers at a local nature center at the front desk where he takes tickets, sells merchandise, and greets guests. Mike says his volunteer work gives him one more way to make a difference in this community.



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TWIN CITIES, MN

Rise is celebrating its 45th anniversary all year long with several special events!

Top row are scenes from *Tapping Into Possibilities* at Bauhaus Brew Lab in July : **1.** Area restaurants and delis generously donated fabulous food. **2.** Guests enjoyed a wide assortment of craft beers. **3.** Battlelegs shared their musical talents. **Second row are scenes from *Celebrate Summer! Rise's annual picnic in August:*** **4.** We appreciated Coon Rapids North Star Lions who served as grill masters. **5.** It was a beautiful summer afternoon! **6.** People enjoyed dancing to DJ John Thorp.



*To see more photos from these events, check out Rise's Facebook photo albums at:
facebook.com/Rise.Incorporated/photos*

www.rise.org | Facebook: Rise, Incorporated | Shop the RiseStore: printstore.rise.org
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