

RISE REPORTER

FALL 2018 | VOL. 43, NO. 3



Roger Samsa helps keep the Kohl's store in Cambridge clean and inviting for its shoppers. Find out more about Roger on page 7. *Photo by Tilt Photography, Minneapolis*



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A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LYNN NOREN

You may recall that in the last issue of the *Rise Reporter* in June, we covered the challenging 2018 Minnesota legislative session that resulted in a 7% cut to providers of Home and Community-Based Services funded by the Medicaid Waiver. Both the House and Senate had passed bills which addressed the cut and restored the funds, but ultimately, the final bills got caught up in political challenges when the Human Services Omnibus spending bills were vetoed by Governor Mark Dayton.

Since that time, provider organizations and four individuals who have disabilities and receive Medicaid-funded services have worked together to file a lawsuit in federal court to stop the cuts immediately until the issue can be addressed in the next state legislative session. Unfortunately, the request for immediate relief was denied by Judge Wilhemina Wright. The following quote from Julie Johnson, president of MOHR, a trade association representing providers like Rise and ESR, sums up our disappointment on this issue.

“This was a complicated case, and ultimately, we respect the ruling of the court. Legislators supported a fix, but in combining that fix with other unrelated items, it got caught up in a political battle. The great tragedy here is that Minnesotans who have disabilities and the hard-working staff who support them have been allowed to become collateral damage of partisan battles at the State Capitol.”

So where do we go from here? There are individual rate appeals being made as rates are impacted, as well as further discussion about continuing the lawsuit. What we know for sure is that the Minnesota Legislature will be called upon to resolve this challenge in 2019 and we will need your support on advocating for resolution.

This issue of the *Reporter* contains so many hopeful and exciting stories. Our focus at Rise will continue to be on making a difference in the lives of the people we serve every day, regardless of the tumult going on around us. We are excited that ESR has merged with Rise, and we believe that together, we are better organizations. It will be exciting to watch as opportunities arise from our partnership and we collectively look forward to a bright future.



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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AT RISE

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Chair, Rise Board of Directors

Lynn Noren

President, Chief Executive Officer

Noel McCormick

Vice President of Advancement

Beth DePoint

Director of Public Relations; Editor



We delight in the beauty of the butterfly,
but rarely admit the changes it has
gone through to achieve that beauty.

— Maya Angelou —



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After proving herself as a hard worker, Alice assists others learn the ropes as a McDonald's crew trainer

THERE AREN'T TOO many places in America busier than a McDonald's restaurant at noontime. And the one located on West Orleans St. in Stillwater, just a few miles from the Minnesota-Wisconsin border, is certainly no exception.

Alice Kane handles the steady stream of hungry customers with welcoming and friendly efficiency. Whether they are traveling through town or regular diners, busy workers, school athletes after practice, families, or soldiers, Alice and her co-workers are a well-synchronized team serving their guests good food with a lot of pride.

In her close to 30 years with McDonald's, Alice has done almost every job in the restaurant except cook. Confident and unflappable at the height of the lunch rush, Alice clearly enjoys her work.

"When I first started in May 1989, I never dreamed I would work here so many years," said Alice. "My job was just keeping the dining area clean. But when my second manager got to know me better, she thought I could do much more than clean so she trained me on all the different jobs.

"And I've had to keep learning new things," Alice added. "The cash register changes, we have new ordering kiosks, the menu changes. I am a hard-worker and I always do my very best."

Alice's positive, can-do attitude caught the attention of her managers. They encouraged her to study and take the exam to qualify to be a crew trainer. She passed with fly-

ing colors!

Since 2009, Alice has trained most of her co-workers on keeping the dining area and lobby clean, taking food orders, preparing food trays, delivering meals to seated guests, assisting people with the new ordering kiosks, keeping the counter area stocked, and attending the drive-through.

In the past ten years, Alice has trained in scores of new workers. A few of them have even gone on to become McDonald's store managers.

"Some people have what it takes to work in a busy restaurant and some don't," Alice observed.

"I have to assess each person in the trainer's log book," she added. "It takes about four days to train in a new person before they are on their own. But we always help each other out. We have a lot of really loyal employees who work here."

"Alice is a big part of our community here at work," said Store Manager Richard Shade. "Her co-workers and customers look forward to seeing her smiling face everyday."

Alice has been receiving follow-up support services from ESR, a new subsidiary of Rise, since December 1999. Employment Consultant Denise Gibson meets with her weekly to discuss any work-related issues she may have. They discuss transportation concerns and work together with the McDonald's team to ensure a great customer experience for all.

Alice, who turns the 'Big 5-0'



Store Manager Richard Shadee said Alice's co-workers and customers look forward to seeing her smiling face everyday.

in late December, works Monday through Friday, about 28 hours a week. She takes Metro Mobility as well as an ESR van to and from her foster care provider/sister Linda's home in Lake Elmo to work.

In her free time, Alice works out twice a week at a fitness center. She is also active with Guardian Angels Catholic Church in Oakdale where she volunteers as an usher and at special events. Alice enjoys bowling, going to dances and the movies, and is a big sports fan. She wears a Minnesota Twins visor at work and will soon switch to a Minnesota Vikings' visor when the football season starts.

Being so close to Wisconsin, Alice will no doubt enjoy bantering with many Green Bay Packer fans!!



RISE ADDED 115 TEAM members and began serving an additional 500 people this summer.

ESR, a nonprofit agency which provides services to people throughout Washington County, Minnesota, and St. Croix County, Wisconsin, officially became a subsidiary of Rise on July 1. The two agencies will transition into a full merger by January 2019.

After more than 40 years of working the vocational rehabilitation field, Ed Boeve, ESR's executive director, retired July 1, 2018. He is, however, working part-time through the end of the year to help the merger process.

"Initially the ESR Board of Directors was going to hire someone to fill my position, but they were also looking at other options, including merging with another agency," said Ed. "Several Minnesota organizations had expressed an interest, but after two or three

months of a mutual discovery process, the Rise Board and the ESR Board decided our merger was the best option for everyone."

Rise President Lynn Noren concurred. "Given all the changes in our industry, the leadership and boards of both organizations have concluded that this partnership will result in a stronger combined organization in the future."

"ESR has a 54-year history of providing quality employment services to the people they serve and Rise is excited for the opportunity to partner with them," Lynn continued. "Our missions and service philosophies are nearly identical, so we anticipate a smooth transition of professional team members, the people we serve, as well as their families and support staff."

ESR has five locations: Stillwater, Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, Oakdale (all in Washington County), and New Richmond, Wis.

These will remain open, although most of ESR's administrative functions, such as accounting and human resources, will move to Rise's main office in Spring Lake Park by the end of 2018.

Two members of ESR's board of directors joined Rise's board in June. Susan Langfeldt works for Bremer Bank and lives in Deer Park, Wis.; Kelly Steffens of Prior Lake is corporate counsel with Home Services America.

"In the past few months, Lynn and Rise's Senior Leadership Team have spent a lot of time meeting with ESR staff and family members at all five locations to answer their questions and address whatever concerns they may have," Ed noted. "I think people realize that, for the most part, it will continue to be 'business as usual' and that our two agencies will be even stronger together."

"Our team members are meeting with community organizations and employers to introduce them to Rise and further solidify the already-established partnerships they have had with ESR," Lynn added. "We are confident we will be able to continue to build upon these mutually beneficial work relationships."



Honoring Larry Pietrzak, Emeritus Director

ALL OF US AT RISE extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Larry Pietrzak who died August 20. Larry had been a valued member of Rise's Board of Directors since 1991, and through those many years, gave us countless hours of his vast financial knowledge and experience, as well as his heartfelt compassion.

Larry truly enjoyed his 50-year banking career, and since 1995, was the senior vice president of Northeast Bank at its Columbia Heights location. He was well-known throughout the area, and was loved and respected for his integrity, humor, and generosity. Larry and his wife of 48 years, Cheryl, were the proud parents of sons Brian and Andy, and loving grandparents of Matthew, Joseph, Ben, Sophie, and Ella. Thank you, Larry, for all you have done for Rise and the people we serve. Your gifts of time and talent will be felt for many years to come.

To meet the continuing need, Rise adds a fifth Adult Day program in the New Brighton Community Center

DUE TO THE INCREASE in requests for services, Rise has added its fifth new Adult Day Program (ADP) at the New Brighton Community Center.

Rise's ADP services are fully integrated in community settings, including at the Emma B. Howe Northtown Family YMCA in Coon Rapids, the Fridley Community Center, the Maplewood Community Center/YMCA, and the Mounds View YMCA/Community Center. In total, about 100 people are served in these five locations.

ADP offers specialized recreational, personal growth, as well as health and fitness services for people who have intellectual and physical disabilities, brain injuries, and related conditions.

Depending on the Rise ADP location, people can choose to participate in a wide range of activities, including art and music therapies, cooking and nutrition, YMCA group classes and events, fitness activities, volunteer community service projects, as well as social and learning activities.

"When I approached the New Brighton City Council about the



DSP Shari Happel takes people for a stroll around the walking track.

possibility of hosting an Adult Day Program in their community center, the city was just starting an inclusive community taskforce," said ADP Program Director Judy Andersen. "So this kind of partnership with Rise fit perfectly into

their plans for the future."

Prior to its opening on August 13, Judy and Program Supervisor Kim Sorenson worked with Jennifer Fink, the city's director of Parks and Recreation, and Community Center staff to discuss programing opportunities and determine how the two organizations could work together.

"Because Rise offers our Adult Day Programs in partnership with other community organizations, we are able to cost-effectively expand the specialized services and opportunities to better serve individuals' needs and interests," Judy explained.

In addition to the many ADP services, people will have access to the community center's resources. People benefit from having access to a great walking track, exercise machines, gymnasium, classes, and a branch of the Ramsey County Library.

With individual, flexible scheduling, people can create their full-time or part-time schedule to suit their personal needs.

"This is a great location – a really amazing facility," Judy added. "Jennifer and all of her staff have made us feel so welcome. They continue to come up with fun ways for us to work together. I know it will be a great collaborative partnership."

For more information regarding Rise's Adult Day Programs, please contact Judy Andersen at 763-567-0626; email: jandersen@rise.org.



Case Manager Rachel West leads a song fest of Elvis and Johnny Cash favorites.



Roger's work ethic, diligence make him a valued employee at Kohl's

By Samantha Schoen,
Rise's Development Manager

ROGER SAMSA GREW UP in the small town of Oconto, Wisconsin, and moved to Cambridge in north central Minnesota in 2013 to be closer to his siblings. After three years of living with his brother, Roger was eager to move out on his own as well as enter the workforce. He quickly checked "independence" off his list after moving into an apartment.

Unfortunately, Roger's new living situation didn't last long as his landlord wasn't keeping his building up to code, and consequently, Roger was forced to move out of his first independent home.

Unfortunately, Roger's new living situation didn't last long as his landlord wasn't keeping his building up to code, and consequently, Roger was forced to move out of his first independent home.

Roger's sister Mary, a pastor in Cambridge, offered Roger a place to stay. Roger knew, however, that he wouldn't be fully satisfied until he found employment and was able to pay her rent. Based on people's advice, Mary and Roger decided to check out Rise. The two stopped into Rise's Cambridge office and met Placement Specialist Jill Johnston. With Jill's assistance, Roger was hired by a custodial company contracted by the Kohl's department store in Cambridge. Although Roger was technically employed by the custodial company and not Kohl's, Roger's presence at the store lasted longer than his employer's did!

How does that work?! Answer: Exceptional work by an exceptional employee.

"Roger is truly a model employee and a very, very important part of the Kohl's community," said Cameron Hals, senior area manager for Diversified Maintenance Systems, LLC, who has been Roger's supervisor for three years.

At the same time that Kohl's was changing custodial services, Cameron also made a career move to Diversified.

Due to his invaluable work ethic, willingness to help others, and reliability, Cameron wanted Roger to make the switch to his new team just as much as Kohl's wanted to keep Roger in their store. In fact, Kohl's told Roger that he could make his own schedule, selecting the days and hours he wanted to work.

"Roger is a smiley, cheerful guy with the ability to affect others around him with it," Cameron said. "I honestly wish I could clone him for some of my other sites."

Roger was flattered yet humbled by everyone's desires for him to stay. During this four-month transition to the new company, Roger was the only custodian and worked eight- to nine-hour days, five days a week -- a schedule that was usually split between four employees. On top of his extra hours, he also trained in new employees.

But Roger loved his job and was willing to put in the extra hours. Even when Diversified's contract officially began and Kohl's was back to having four custodians on duty, Roger continued to go the



extra mile for his new co-workers.

"He has seen many other people come and go, but he keeps moving forward and is extremely diligent and adaptive to the changes," Cameron added.

Roger drives his five-minute commute to work himself and pays his sister rent with his proudly earned wages.

In just three years, Roger has accomplished exactly what he set out to do. Although it is evident that Roger's impeccable qualities led him to independence, Roger stated emphatically that he would not be where he is without the help of Jill and Rise's services.

"I have no words to describe how thankful I am for Jill," Roger said. "She has pointed me in all of the right directions."

Jill and Roger continue to meet two or three times a month to make sure all is running smoothly at his job.

Outside of the workplace, Roger likes to watch World War II movies and browse through thrift stores searching for Avon collectibles and vinyl records to add to his well-established collection.

Clayton's proud of the precision work he does for Meier Tool & Engineering

EMPLOYEES AT MEIER Tool & Engineering, Inc.'s manufacturing plant in Anoka are proud of the custom tooling design, validation, and manufacturing work they do primarily for the medical and defense / aerospace industries. Managing upward of 250 different contracted parts, their work is innovative, precise, and of the highest quality. Their customers expect no less.

Clayton Skrove is proud of the part he plays in this custom metal-stamping business. Working on a wide range of components, Clayton is one of the last pair of eyes to check for quality and accuracy prior to parts being shipped to their end-users.

His inspection job requires patience, dexterity, and complete focus. Clayton uses those attributes to inspect, sort

through, and quality-check upward of 6,000 pieces each day.

"It took me about a week of one-on-one training to learn the different jobs," said Clayton, who works from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday. "I like working on a variety of jobs. It's a quiet work place, people are very nice and treat me well, and I have my own work station. All this really helps me focus on the job.

"I take a lot of pride in my work," he added. "I think I do a good job, maintaining my speed and accuracy. I hope to stay working here for a long time."

"Clayton is a valuable member of our production team," said Production Supervisor Janelle Ticken. "He's reliable, self-motivated, and detail-oriented -- a real joy to work with. He works hard every day to exceed our customers' expectations."

Prior to getting his job at Meier



in August 2017, Clayton worked for about ten years at Lakeland Tool & Die in Anoka with a Rise work team as well as at Rise's production facility in Spring Lake Park.

When he decided he was ready for a new and more independent job in a community business, Program Supervisor Kathy Frank worked with Clayton to find just the right position. Direct Support Professional Brandon Klug follows up with Clayton and his supervisor on a regular basis to help ensure that everything continues to go well on the job and address any issues which may come up.

Receiving work experience and support from Rise has really paid off, Clayton says. For those people who are looking for employment, Clayton advises to "get good training and be patient -- in the long run, it will really pay off.

"Going to work at a job you like will bring you happiness," Clayton added. "You will feel so much better, you will improve your social skills, and it sure helps financially!"

Clayton lives in Cedar and drives to work. In his free time, he especially enjoys shopping, going to movies, and attending old car shows. His favorite models are a '57 Chevy and a '70 Camaro.

*Clayton with Meier's
Operations Manager
Jon Preston*





Employers, employees appreciate support from MEC

By Austin Beatty,

MEC Program Supervisor

ESTABLISHED IN 1996, the Minnesota Employment Center (MEC) provides employment support for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing. Over the past 20-plus years, we have supported hundreds of people successfully obtain and retain employment.

But what about the employer's perspective? What is it like to partner with MEC for the ongoing support services critical to maintaining a strong relationship between employer and employee?

ARCH Language Network currently employs two people who are Deaf, both of whom have received services from MEC's Sheila Ritter and Austin Beatty since their first days on the job.

Twila Erickson (at right in the photo with Susan Mahler), ARCH's director of operations, has been a key partner to help ensure a mutually satisfactory work experience.

Noting that ARCH uses an individualistic approach to hiring, Twila carefully determines the best fit within the company based on a person's strengths and interests.

ARCH first hired an employee who is Deaf in 2014. That person quickly acclimated to her new work environment and voluntarily discontinued her follow-up support services with MEC shortly after starting.

Twila consulted with MEC to hire Susan Mahler who works in the Financial Services department. Susan has blossomed in her role throughout the two-plus years she has been with the company. MEC continues to offer assistance.

"It has been great to partner with MEC and I appreciate their support," said Twila. "Each person brings unique attributes and barriers, and MEC has been there all along to provide resources and education about working with employees who are Deaf. I often call on Susan's occupational communication specialist [OCS] to relay new information to her to help ensure she gets it quickly and has an opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification, if needed."

Early on, an MEC OCS suggested one simple accommodation which made quite a difference to Susan. She was able to reposition her desk so that when people entered her office she could see them and not be startled. It was a seemingly small change, but one that had a profound impact on Susan's comfort and ability to work well.

When ARCH recently rolled out new software for the work that Susan does, her OCS was there on the first day to assist in this big change and has been involved in extensive hands-on training since. Clear communication is vital in training, and MEC helps ARCH ensure that Susan gets the information she needs to continue doing her job with minimal interruptions.

Susan commented that it's always helpful to have her OCS available in situations like these -- to take notes while she is visually tak-



ing in the information (via an ASL interpreter), to support her with follow-up questions that may come up later, or to formulate an email with the right wording to express her questions or concerns.

"The biggest piece is knowing about and preparing for accommodations which may be needed," said Twila. "After that, it's really not any different than having an employee who isn't Deaf."

"ARCH has been a great company to partner with and has provided a hugely supportive workplace for its diverse employee pool," Sheila noted.

"We know there are many people in the Deaf community who are ready and able to work -- and there are many great employers like ARCH who are willing to hire people for interesting positions," Austin added. "The OCSes at MEC are ready to assist in matching employers with great candidates."

For more information, contact MEC at 651.265.2337; email: sritter@rise.org. Check out MEC's website: MnEmploymentCenter.org.

Meet some great volunteers ~ read complete stories online

BEV WOLTERS -- “I think variety is the spice of life for volunteering,” said Bev Wolters. “I really enjoy doing so many different kinds of things with different people at different Rise locations.”

Bev discovered a list of volunteer opportunities with Rise online in October 2016 and met with (then) Volunteer Coordinator Zoe Leonard-Monrad to see what would best suit her interests.

“Bev is my go-to person when I have special one-time or short-term projects,” said Zoe. “She comes in with a big smile, ready to get to work on whatever we need. Rise team members really appreciate her enthusiasm and her flexibility. I know that if it works with her schedule, Bev is up for anything!”

In the past year or so, Bev has helped serve at a number of Rise picnics and holiday parties, tended bake sales, worked on clerical projects, sold game tickets at the *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala*, and even helped hang an Art Speaks exhibit at the Blaine City Hall. Read more about Bev at rise.org/volunteer-opportunities/volunteer-spotlights



HALEY BREMER -- With New Age music playing softly in the background, “yogis” Rachel and Andrea joined Volunteer Haley Bremer for an hourlong yoga class. Using a soothing voice, Haley led the two women through stretches and poses specifically adapted to meet their individual needs and physical capabilities.

“It’s nice to see people relax and just reflect on their day,” said Haley who has been coming to Rise’s Bloomington facility about twice a week since early June. “It was challenging at first, but with each session, I get to know people better and our communication improves. People seem to enjoy it more and more, and I think they find our sessions meaningful.

“It’s fun to be creative with yoga and people have really responded well to it,” Haley noted. “I try to come up with new poses to add to our practice each time and adapt poses for people who are in a seated position, concentrating mostly on their arms, shoulders, and head.”

Read more about Haley at rise.org/volunteer-opportunities/volunteer-spotlights.

Are you interested in volunteering?!

We have opportunities throughout Rise in: * Administrative services * Special events * The Celebrate Rise Gala Committee * Art Speaks * YMCA recreation * Mock job and informational interviews * Special indoor and outdoor projects * Internship opportunities

To find out more about individual and group volunteer opportunities at Rise, or to submit an online application form, check out our website at rise.org/volunteer-opportunities

Questions? Call Bethany at 763-792-2454; email: volunteer@rise.org.

Read about other volunteers online at rise.org/volunteer-opportunities/volunteer-spotlights



Where's Jean?! Enjoying her well-earned retirement after 18 years at Rise!

BETWEEN GREETING GUESTS, answering the phones, and responding to people's immediate needs, Receptionist Jean Stephenson was kept hopping at the front desk of Rise's administrative offices in Spring Lake Park. Considered by Rise team members and the people we serve to be "the heart" of this office, it was a bittersweet day when Jean retired September 4!

Jean and her husband Ted moved from Rapid City, South Dakota, in 2000 to be closer to their daughter Teri's growing family. She was hoping to find a good job that was close to her new home in Fridley since she wasn't that familiar with the Twin Cities area.

"My first job many years ago was with a nonprofit organization and my daughter Kelly had disabilities, so I was really attracted to Rise," Jean remembers. "At first, I didn't know what the parameters would be as a receptionist, but I quickly realized that my job would be doing whatever I could do to help people throughout the day. I have really enjoyed the in-

teractions I've had with so many different people – the public, the people we serve, their families and support staff, my co-workers, Rise's business partners. It was fun to have such a mix of activity."

"Jean has been an incredible gem for Rise and I'm so happy for her to be entering this new phase of her life," said President Lynn Noren.

"She has been our ambassador to every visitor who steps inside. One of the things I admire most about Jean is the way she interacts with the people we serve and their families. She is so respectful and supportive; she takes the time to get to know them in such a genuine way. Jean made all of us feel welcomed every day. We are really going to miss her."

In her almost 18 years at the front desk, Jean has undoubtedly answered thousands of phone calls. But one stands out in particular – a call from the White House!

"I had to ask twice WHO was calling, and even then, I didn't really believe it," Jean remembers.

"But I put the call through anyway and was later surprised to find out it really was someone from the White House calling. Almost every day, I have had a fun story to tell Ted when I got home from work!"

When Jean was not at her

front desk, her replacement was almost always asked, "Where's Jean and when will she be back?" Sometimes, people would wait until she returned, claiming she was the only one who could really assist.

"I've gotten to know a lot of people pretty well over the years," said Jean. "It's been really rewarding for me to help people and be there for them. Sometimes people just need another person to listen to them even if you can't really do anything to fix the situation."

Jean said she finds it exciting to see all the progress people have made in their own work experiences and careers over the years, especially those who have traumatic brain injuries and sensory disabilities.

"People are so motivated to better their lives through work," she observed. "I also give a lot of credit to Rise's staff, county social workers, and their family members. Rise's program services have proven to be very successful."

Jean notes that she feels she herself has changed some in this position. "I think I have become more tolerant and empathetic over the years. I have a better understanding of the many kinds of challenges people face."

"It sure won't be the same around here without Jean," said Kevin Whitley who is served at Rise. "She is pretty marvelous and did her job so well. She has big shoes to fill. Lucky for all of us that Tracy [Dock-Masanz, who had worked in Rise's accounting department] is our new receptionist."

Jean is really looking forward to not setting an alarm to get up early. She also plans to travel and spend more time with her family.



Mary Anderson retires from 40-year career

FOR THE PAST 40-PLUS years, Mary Anderson has devoted her professional career to supporting people with disabilities. In her many positions in Minnesota organizations, she has developed exemplary program services, advocated for systems change, served on local and statewide organizational boards and committees, and mentored many men and women.

In short, Mary has done outstanding work and left her mark on the disability field!

For the past five years, until her retirement on July 2, Mary served as the director of Rise's CIP-Coon Rapids Day Training and Habilitation (DTH) and Supported Employment Services in Anoka County.

"I wanted to come work for Rise because it has such a great reputation statewide and nationally and is known for being at the forefront of progressive program development and delivery," said Mary. "I have really enjoyed my time here! It has been amazing to work in a very positive, collaborative environment and experience the outstanding leadership of Lynn [Noren] and Tim [Dickie]."

A proud graduate of North Dakota State University, Mary grew up on a farm in "bison country." Her younger brother, Mark, was born with Down Syndrome and inspired Mary to study special education before switching to child development and family relations.

She moved to the Twin Cities after graduating from college to begin her career working in residential services for people with



disabilities in direct support positions.

"I especially enjoyed working as a recreation director," remembers Mary. "I started a softball team, took people camping in the north woods, and even toured Florida. Many had never been on an airplane or stayed in a motel."

After a brief stint in business and personnel administration, Mary went to work for CCP (Community Connection Partnership), a nonprofit organization in the Twin Cities providing skill development, employment, community, healthy lifestyle, and recreational supports to people with disabilities. She served as CCP's executive director for 21 years.

Rise Vice President Tim Dickie has known and worked with Mary for many years before she came to Rise.

"She has such a tremendous knowledge base, as well as a great business sense and effective management skills," said Tim. "But most importantly, Mary cares about each and every person with

whom she interacts and brings such an energized, positive approach to everything she does. People respond in kind and we all benefit from the tone she sets."

In 2011, Rise recognized Mary as its *Outstanding Community Partner of the Year*, honoring her 15 years serving as a volunteer on Rise's Human Rights Committee, of which she was chair.

Through CCP, Mary worked collaboratively with Rise in the development of services for some of the last people to leave the state's regional treatment centers in the mid-1990s.

"I have known and worked with Mary on state and local issues for many years," said Rise President Lynn Noren. "I have always admired her professional, compassionate dedication to people facing challenges as well as her ability to look at 'big pictures' and develop real-time solutions leading to positive changes. She is well-respected across the state and I was so happy when she came to work for Rise five years ago. Our DTH team members and the people we serve have benefitted greatly from her experience and expertise."

Mary plans to spend more time on her family farm in North Dakota and work with her brother on his art projects. She continues to serve on boards and committees where she offers her professional expertise to help improve the lives of people with disabilities throughout the state of Minnesota.

All of us at Rise offer our sincere thanks to Mary for her exemplary work and congratulate her on her retirement!



Champions of the Month--

Meet some of Rise's finest professional team members

EACH MONTH, RISE team members submit co-workers to be recognized as a *Champion of the Month*. From this group (January through August 2018 honorees), one person was selected as the *2018 Champion of the Mission* and will be honored at the upcoming *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala* on October 22.

Meet those who have been honored May through August.

Rise co-workers say **Amanda Kendall** always goes above and beyond her job as an employment consultant with Employment Innovations in Lindstrom where she has worked since January 2017. Amanda is noted for keeping communications positive, going the distance for the people we serve, and assisting others.

"I truly enjoy my position at Rise," said Amanda. "The people whom I support are all uniquely different in their personalities, backgrounds, interests, and strengths. It is amazing to watch them thrive and be successful at their employment goals!"

Congratulations to **Paul Herfindahl**, activity specialist with the Adult Day Program in Coon Rapids. His co-workers say: "Paul is dedicated to those whom he supports at the YMCA. He is always looking to make that day the best day for everyone, greeting each person as they arrive on the vans. He is so positive with both his co-workers and those he supports each day.

"Paul knows what to do to resolve any situation that may arise.

He is a fantastic team player and an overall outstanding co-worker!"

Follow-Up Specialist **Sue Featherly** is July's Champion. Her teammates were verbose in their respect and admiration for Sue as she nears her 30th anniversary at Rise. Two nominators said:

"Sue treats the people she serves with respect, kindness, and understanding of their special and unique needs. She helps improve their lives by finding out what kind of life and livelihood the person truly wants -- what will make them happy -- and then works with them so they can achieve it under their own steam."

Another said: "The people Sue serves know they can count on her as she is always there when needed and goes out of her way to give consistent, professional service. She is an excellent listener, collaborator, and advocate."

Antiwnette Holliday, a case manager with Rise's Community Intergration Program (CIP)-Coon Rapids, was August's Champion.

Her fellow team members appreciate that after a thorough analysis, Antiwnette revamped the clerical team which helped people be more confident with assignments.

They also said, "The people served feel more successful and are doing great work, thanks to Antiwnette's ideas and guidance.

"Antiwnette is always willing to help others. She is interested in finding what works best for people and helping them achieve their goals."



*Amanda Kendall,
May*

*Paul Herfindahl,
June*



*Sue Featherly,
July*

*Antiwnette Holliday,
August*



Rise and interns benefit from another successful summer cohort in a variety of agency departments

RISE WELCOMED a summer cohort of six interns in June who worked in program areas across the agency, including advancement, accounting, assistive technology, human resources, marketing, and program development.

Using the cohort model, interns also participated in biweekly training sessions to discuss a variety of professional development topics and learn from each other.

“We are excited about giving people the opportunity to learn more about nonprofits, social services, and specifically, disability- and employment-related programs,” explained Erin Braaten, Rise’s vice president of human resources. “We hope they personally and professionally benefited from their experiences here and perhaps will consider a career in this field.”

The interns came from a wide range of Minnesota and out-of-state colleges and universities, and are pursuing degrees in different areas.

Matt Klein,
data analysis

Matt is a math major heading into his senior year at Saint John’s University in Collegeville. He plans to pur-

sue a career in data analysis or a similar field.

“I came to Rise because the internship really fit what I was going to do with my future,” said Matt. “I was also really excited about how the agency provides opportunities for growth for people who otherwise may not find such a position elsewhere in the community.

“I was the first data analyst intern that Rise has had, so in a sense, I felt I brought something new to the company -- working with data sets and creatively interpreting and showcasing them for the rest of the company.”

Sarah Bergen,
program development

Sarah will start her senior year at Marquette University in Milwaukee in the fall where she is majoring in nursing with a business administration minor. After graduation, she hopes to go into health research with a primary focus in

women’s health issues, and perhaps one day, teach.

When she found Rise’s LinkedIn listing for the internship, Sarah said she “thought it was a miracle” as the position would incorporate her nursing compassion and her business insight.

“Rise has an atmosphere that is hard to put into words -- it is magical,” said Sarah. She helped structure a job club at Rise’s Coon Rapids site for people who were new to the job search process.

Rachel Wilson-King,
program marketing

Rachel graduated in May from Macalester College in St. Paul with degrees in political science and sociology, and a minor in legal studies. She will be attending the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota in the fall pursuing her master’s in public policy. Eventually, Rachel would like to do policy analysis and research in the field of education for a nonprofit or government agency.

Rachel initially came to Rise last spring as a government affairs intern.

“Grassroots advocacy, engaging with law-makers, and providing legislators with real, person-centered examples of why they should support Rise’s mission, were all areas and skills I improved with my internship. I loved that Rise primarily focused on that grassroots and self-advocacy piece as I think it is so empowering for people to have real opportunities

Morgan Parke assisted Heather Barber and other data entry clerks in Rise’s Crystal Data Ability program with their adaptive computer hardware and software.





to connect with the legislative process on a personal level.”

Rachel followed up with a second internship position at Rise in marketing and outreach this summer.

“Even though I don’t have a background in marketing, the research and outreach aspects of my projects helped me create some marketing products which I hope will be of value to Rise teams.

“My internships with Rise provided me with so many opportunities and connections which will be invaluable to me,” Rachel continued. “Not only have I gained a better sense of the nonprofit and disability services industries, but the people whom I’ve met—Rise team members, the people they serve, as well as community and business partners -- are what I’ve been most grateful for.”

***Morgan Parke,
assistive technology***

Morgan will be a senior this fall at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities studying speech language hearing sciences. She plans to attend graduate school for speech pathology and get her license to practice.

“I chose to intern with Rise because I am passionate about helping others gain communicative and personal independence,” said Morgan. “I am intrigued by the advancements of assistive technology and how Rise has incorporated various forms of it throughout its programs. Through my work here, I was able to gain a wider knowledge base about the field of assistive technology and who it can benefit, as well as see it in action.

“I answered questions about



*From top left:
Josh Stainer, Matt Klein, and Rachel Wilson-King.
From bottom left:
Jackie Bell, Morgan Parke, and Sarah Bergen.
They learned a lot from their internships as well as from each other.*

and made adjustments to people’s assistive technologies. I researched and helped improve the systems used to advance the program and improve people’s independence. I also developed guides for Rise team members to address and fix common technology issues.”

***Josh Stainer,
human resources***

Josh graduated from the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth with a degree in psychology and minors in management and organizational behavior. He is pursuing his master’s degree in industrial/organizational psychology at St. Cloud State University. He worked with Rise’s human resources team to improve training and human resources practices.

“Rise’s mission to provide opportunities to people with disabilities and other challenges really resonated with me,” said Josh. “I would like a career in training and development and/or change management. My internship provided me with valuable experiences which will help advance my future career and professional development.

“I helped identify areas in which training can be improved,

specifically looking at the direct support professionals’ position. Training is frequently related to employee turnover, so by improving training, employee turnover might decrease.”

Jackie Bell, development and special events

Jackie began her final year at the University of Minnesota Morris in August, majoring in business management with a minor in communications and an emphasis in dance. She would like to have a career in event planning.

“I wanted to learn about the nonprofit business world so the development and special events internship sounded both fun and educational,” said Jackie.

“I was really drawn to Rise’s mission. In working on the upcoming *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala*, I learned more about what it’s like to work for a nonprofit and the many facets of hosting a successful major special event for the public. I hope I also contributed additional ideas for Rise’s social media and recognition committees.”

Rise’s internship positions are posted on our website at www.rise.org/jobs.



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Invitation to Celebrate Rise Gala inside!

Interested in an exciting career? Join the Rise team! Find out more at rise.org/jobs

Meet just a few of our 400+ professional, dedicated, talented Rise team members ~

Top row: 1. Direct Support Professional Stephanie Lundeen works at CIP-Coon Rapids 2. Direct support professionals at Crystal 3. Van Driver Brian Jafvert **Second row:** 4. Program Supervisor Samantha Trebtoske with Data Ability 5. Case Manager Williane daSilva with the Adult Day Program in Maplewood



Rise is all about people and potential. We want exceptional people on our team who will help make a difference in people's lives!

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