

RISE REPORTER

MARCH 2019 | VOL. 43, NO. 1



Paul Leiter is part of the hard-working team at Activar in Bloomington. Read more about our ‘partnership that works!’ on page 3.

RISE REPORTER

MARCH 2019 | VOL. 43, NO. 1

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LYNN NOREN

The start of a new year means the Minnesota State Legislature is back in session. Again this year, they are addressing several issues that are critical to the people Rise serves, their families and supporters, and our team members who work hard every day to help us carry out our important mission.

Rise has again joined our efforts as a member of a statewide-organization, MOHR (The Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation), to partner with other providers and advocacy organizations on the Best Life Alliance (BLA) legislation which addresses workforce challenges in our industry. The BLA legislation is aimed at increasing wages for direct support professionals who provide critical supports to people with disabilities. Studies show that DSPs' (direct service professionals) wages are at least 17 percent behind other comparable jobs in Minnesota; the BLA bill implements a competitive workforce factor which would decrease the 17% gap.

Recently, Rachel Wilson-King, Rise's intern for governmental affairs, and I met with Sen. Jim Abeler (R-Dist. 35) in his St. Paul office to discuss these and other upcoming legislative issues. Previously a state representative for the Anoka area, Sen. Abeler has long been a champion for people with disabilities and a great supporter of programs and services. Among his legislative assignments this session, Sen. Abeler is chair of the Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee, which has a direct impact on Rise and the people we support.

Sen. Abeler indicated that with a new administration under newly elected Governor Tim Walz, there would be many changes which he considers "opportunities." Yet, even with a state budget surplus, Sen. Abeler indicated that funding is tight, especially as we move forward toward future bienniums.

"We will be juggling the financial demands of many competing interests such as education, infrastructure, roads, clean water, and services for people with disabilities," he said. "But thanks to all of the advocacy efforts last year, I think legislators have a better understanding of the issues facing service providers and the people they serve. It was un-



~ Continued on page 11~

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.

CONTENTS

- 03 Team work important at Activar
- 04 Crystal offers compassionate care to clients
- 05 Sheila enjoys fast-paced work at MSP Terminal 1's Caribou Coffee
- 06 Pat's new career changes her life in many ways
- 07 Mark your calendar for these upcoming Rise events
- 08 Lauren's determination results in TWO great jobs!
- 09 Team lets Cummins employees know ~ You've got mail!
- 10 Jesse puts his values to work at The Estate in Rush City
- 11 Let your voice be heard - contact your state representatives
- 12 Rise offers exciting, interesting career opportunities

AT RISE

Tom Kettleon
Chair, Rise Board of Directors

Lynn Noren
President

Noel McCormick
Vice President of Advancement

Beth DePoint
Director of Public Relations; Editor



Workers at Activar find that team work is especially critical in multi-step operation building fire extinguisher cabinets

WHEN HUMAN RESOURCES Generalist Grace Boese was looking to add more staff at Activar Construction Products Group in Bloomington, she knew just who to call: Rise's Senior Sales Representative Nancy Hoff.

The idea was sparked by another manager who suggested supplementing the firm's workforce with people from Rise. Grace had worked in HR at another Twin Cities manufacturing company a few years ago and was confident that Activar and Rise could develop a similar mutually beneficial business partnership.

"My previous experience working with Rise was a positive one," said Grace. "The individuals I worked with fit right in with our business needs and were always so positive and willing to help wherever we needed them."

Since May 2018, workers from Rise have enjoyed the fast-paced work environment at Activar. Like a well-oiled machine, six people work together to produce metal wall cabinets found in businesses around the world.

Rise's Direct Support Professional Francis Burgess supervises the team, which includes Daniel Fisher, Lisa Geng, Jason Christensen, Brian Henley, Stuart Pierce, and Paul Leiter. Most have honed their good work skills over the years at various community work sites and have now come together to form a great crew.

"Team work is especially important in this job," said Francis. "People have their favorite tasks to do in the multi-step operation,



Part of the hard-working team includes, from left, Jason Christenson, Francis Burgess, Paul Leiter, and Brian Henley.

but we also like to switch it up so that everyone is good at all the different and important parts of the process."

Once the cabinet pieces have been cut, welded together, and painted by Activar employees, the team from Rise goes to work with the finishing steps. They bring in parts from the warehouse, assemble and screw them together, quality check, package, and palletize the completed cabinets to be sent back to Activar's shipping department.

As the team became more and more proficient in their tasks, Activar production managers were open to expanding short-run operations and other special projects they worked on. For instance, Brian is now installing insulation in cabinets and Lisa has been assigned to work on other sub-assemblies or in work centers alongside Activar employees.

"I love the group's enthusiasm

to do well, along with being greeted with a wave and huge smile from each person every day," said Production Manager Jeff Rask. "So, from helping fulfill our capacity needs to lighting up everyone's mood with their personalities, I feel this has been a win-win situation."

"Everyone here at Activar is so kind and considerate," Francis added. "They show their appreciation for the work we do and support our team. People have helped train us in using the proper techniques, keeping safety in mind. If we need to adapt a procedure, they are happy to help with that, too. We want to ensure that we always meet Activar's safety and quality expectations."

Activar is an American manufacturing and distribution company engaging in construction, plastic, technical, and industrial products and services.

Crystal connects with her clients, offers compassionate care

WITH ASPIRATIONS OF being a registered nurse some day, Crystal Peterson feels that she “was born to serve. God put it in my heart to do this job.”

As a direct caregiver for Compassionate Health Care, Crystal provides home care for seven elderly people who want to live in their own homes.

Four years ago, Crystal was homeless and unemployed with young children to support. She worked with Amy Carter, Rise’s housing supports case manager in Central Minnesota, to find suitable, affordable housing and help her move toward self-sufficiency. She also receives Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS) from Lighthouse Child and Family Services in Milaca.

Her Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services counselor in Cambridge referred Crystal to Rise’s Employment Consultant Ann Hill in June 2017 for career planning, job placement, and follow-up support services. With her nursing assistant certification, Crystal first took a job in a nursing home, but found the large facility just wasn’t a good fit for her.

“So Ann helped me restart my job search for a home health care position,” Crystal said. “My best friend MacKenzie suggested I apply at Compassionate Health Care where she worked. I was straightforward with them about my PTSD, anxiety, and depression so I didn’t think they would hire me. But they did – it was so awesome!”

Crystal typically spends four hours at a time with each person,



Crystal (left) appreciates the support she receives from Rise’s Ann Hill, and is excited to be nearing her one-year work anniversary in March.

once or twice a week. Depending on their needs and interests, she provides a wide range of one-to-one home healthcare services, including bathing and personal care, grocery shopping, going out for a treat, cleaning, cooking and baking together – and most importantly, attentive, caring companionship.

Besides helping her clients, her job has made a tremendous difference in Crystal’s life, too.

“My job gives me a reason to get out of the house, something to look forward to,” she noted. “My mental health is so much better because I have a responsibility now to take care of people – so I have to take care of myself, too. I have made so much progress and have much less anxiety and fewer migraines. And even though I am working hard, I have more energy.”

Crystal is quick to note that she feels she wouldn’t be where she is today without Ann’s support.

“I would have been too scared to go to work. I wouldn’t have taken the risk of getting a job because I never thought I would be successful. Ann really encouraged and helped me believe in myself.”

“It is so rewarding to see how much my clients look forward to

my visits,” Crystal added. “I know I am where I am supposed to be doing what I am supposed to do. God just dropped this job into my lap -- it’s a perfect job for me; I love it.”

Recently, Crystal was honored as the company’s “Associate of the Month.” Her supervisor noted, “Crystal is patient and kind, and she works hard to understand her clients and their needs. Crystal has worked to make strong connections with her clients; she has a big heart of compassion for them, and she will do everything in her power to ensure her clients are receiving the best care possible.”

“I am so proud of Crystal and her determination to push through with employment services,” said Ann. “It has not been an easy road for her, and I enjoy providing the supports she needs to succeed in her important work.”

The mother of five, Crystal hosts a monthly BYOC (Bring Your Own Crafts) group at the Milaca Alliance Church. She especially enjoys creating “rustic farmhouse” pieces for her home and as gifts for others. She hopes to go to college to earn a degree in nursing when her youngest child starts school full-time in a couple of years.



Sheila Morales enjoys fast-pace job at MSP Terminal 1's Caribou Coffee

ALTHOUGH PEOPLE moving through Terminal 1 at the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport are often on their way to a fun (and at this time of year, WARM!) destination, there can still be a lot of stress in traveling. Sheila Morales and her teammates at the Caribou Coffee shop do their very best to greet each customer in a warm, friendly way, liven up their day, and brew something special for them.

A spunky and outgoing young woman, Sheila says the busy, hard work at one of the top performing Caribou locations in the country “gets me energized.”

In her first month on the job, a ‘secret shopper’ scored her work performance as “perfect.” Her manager started talking to Sheila about becoming a manager herself.

“At first, I thought she was kidding or just being nice – and then I realized she was serious!” Sheila remembers. Within four months on the job, she was promoted to shift leader.

“We all get along and really support each other on the job,” she said. “The airport is a busy, boisterous place to work – it can either get you in a good mood or give you a headache! But either way, we have fun working together. We don’t have much turnover so it’s nice to get to know people so well.”

Sheila and her husband of five years, Chris, are originally from Philadelphia, but moved to Minneapolis to be closer to his family. She had earned training certifications and worked in both the medical assistance and hospitality fields.



Following some really challenging and difficult times, including having unstable housing, Sheila has worked hard to stabilize her life. She was open to any kind of work when she was referred to Rise’s *Pathways to Success* program for career planning and job placement services. The program is funded by a special grant from Hennepin County,

Employment Consultant Rowan Radcliffe first met with her in June 2018, and by August, she was hired at Caribou as a barista. Coincidentally, Rowan had worked as a Caribou barista many years ago, too, and really enjoyed the work.

Sheila admits she never even drank coffee until she went to work for Caribou, one of the country’s most popular coffee companies. With such great choices, she has expanded her coffee palate; though, on a cold Minnesota after-

noon, she enjoys a hot chocolate with caramel steamed in topped with whipped cream.

“Chris and I would go to Caribou Coffee every week, but I never dreamed I’d be supervising one some day,” Sheila noted.

“I am very grateful for Rowan’s help in dealing with work issues and the support and guidance she gives me -- she’s been crucial to my success. Without her, I know I would still be trying to figure things out. She’s like my cheerleader in the background. She pushed me where and when I know I needed to be pushed.”

“Sheila has met adversity with hard-won resiliency and now has a serenity and gusto that has led to her success,” said Rowan. “Sheila is not only managing others at work, but feels at ease and is confident in her ability to provide for herself. She is not afraid to become independent from her supported housing grant. At this point, Sheila is ready for anything; someone could come in singing opera and juggling fireballs, and Sheila would take their order with a smile, not missing a beat!”

During the federal government shutdown in January, Sheila said she was touched by the kind generosity of the many people who purchased Caribou Coffee gift cards to give to TSA employees who were working, without a paycheck. “People have such big hearts,” she noted.

In her free time, Sheila enjoys reading some of the close to 6,000 electronic and hardcover books she has, listening to a wide array of music genres, and having Chris, who is a chef, cook her favorite chicken, mushroom, and rice dish.

Pat's new-found career changes her life in many ways

AFTER EXPERIENCING a moderate cognitive disorder, Pat Valentine thought her working days were over. An administrative executive assistant for 40-some years, she was no longer able to do her job and began receiving disability benefits. Pat moved from the state of Washington to Minnesota to be closer to her sister.

"I thought my life was over, that I couldn't do anything," Pat remembers. "I was despondent, not being able to work. At 65, I still felt young and capable, but I really couldn't function in that kind of work environment due to my neurological issues."

Once she moved, Pat went to Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services for an assessment to see what kind of work she might be well-suited for now. They referred her to Rise where she met Amber Barnes who assisted her with career planning and job placement services.

"I had always dreamed of working in a flower shop, so that's where Amber and I started," Pat said. "She came up with so many resources and ideas. I didn't have any background or training in that field so Rehab Services paid for me attend the Koehler & Dramm Institute of Floristry in Minneapolis."

Pat took two 40-hour floral design courses in which she learned to create corsages and boutonnieres, wedding and funeral arrangements, and simple bouquets.

With this training complete, she then applied to and was hired by the Hy-Vee grocery store in



New Hope which features, among many other specialty departments, a wonderful floral shop.

It was a perfect fit. Pat typically works 4 to 8 p.m., four days a week, but her schedule is flexible.

"I let them know to call me if they are short-staffed," Pat said. "When I wanted to go back to Washington over the holidays, my co-workers all helped cover my shifts. It's a great place to work with really nice people."

Pat says she has also learned a lot from Hy-Vee's professional floral designers. She waits on customers, takes care of the flowers, and makes arrangements if the designers aren't there.

"Once I started working and was doing well, I gained so much self-confidence and was willing to push myself even further. Before, I felt like I had a lot of potential – I just couldn't access it! Now all of

Pat says once she started working in the floral shop at the New Hope Hy-Vee store, she gained so much self-confidence and was willing to push herself even further.

my inabilities and my disability are pushed into the background and don't make any difference."

"It is always gratifying to be part of a person's job search and hiring process," said Amber. "But it is a special blessing when months later I am able to see how that one success has carried over into other parts of a person's life."

With her new professional successes, Pat really wanted to pay forward all the support and good fortune she had received.

In January, Pat's pastor at Family Baptist Church in North Minneapolis asked her to start a *Begin Again* program for women who are homeless or in crisis and need help in finding work, a safe place to live, rehabilitation programs, and other services so they could enjoy a more hopeful future. Pat and her church friends are starting the program out slowly. With referrals from Workhouse, they assist women move on a path to more stability and healing.

The mother of two daughters and three granddaughters, Pat said her family is so happy and excited for her new career and the important work she is doing to help others who are struggling.

"I have been truly blessed and now feel like I can do anything. Life is good, life is very good."

Mark your calendars
for these upcoming
special Rise events --
Hope to see you there!

Legislative Updates

President Lynn Noren will give information regarding the progress of pending bills, provide resources, and offer guidance on how to reach out to your state representatives. Two dates and locations:

Wednesday, April 17, 5:30 p.m.

Rise Spring Lake Park: 8406 Sunset Road N.E.

Wednesday, April 24, 5:30 p.m.

Rise Oakdale: 7800 - 3rd St. North, Suite 800

Celebrate Talent!

April 9, 7 - 8:30p.m.
A fun showcase of
people's talents!

* **Free admission**
Doors open at 6p.m.
Light refreshments
for purchase

Fridley High School Auditorium,
6000 West Moore Lake Drive

Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala

October 21, 5 - 8:30p.m.
A
wonderful evening of
fine food, games, live auction,
awards and much more!

Sponsorship and ticket
information available this spring
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest,
Brooklyn Park

Tapping Into Possibilities "Friend-Raiser"

June 10, 5 - 7:30 p.m.

Fabulous live music, food,
beers, silent auction
and door prizes!

Advance tickets: 763-792-2448

**Hop & Barrel Brewery
Co. 310 - 2nd St., Hudson, Wis.**

Disability Day at the State Capitol

Tuesday, March 12
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Meet with your state
legislators about issues
that matter most
to you, rally in the
Capitol's rotunda

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther Jr. Blvd.
Downtown St. Paul

Lauren's determination pays off with TWO great jobs!

By Michael L. Sack

GROWING UP IN Mapleton, a small town in south central Minnesota, Lauren Ireland enjoyed school and having fun with her friends, but was not really sure what she wanted to do in the future. Today, after a long journey, Lauren is grateful to have two good jobs. She is ecstatic that her adventure has led her down this path.

After graduating from Maple River Senior High in 2006, Lauren moved to Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute and joined their Independent Living Skills program for three months. "I worked with people who had all different disabilities," she mentioned.

Lauren went on to attend Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall in 2007 for one semester. College life, however, became "too stressful" for her, so she eventually moved to Dunganwin in Eden Prairie in 2008. Lauren found her calling nine years later.

In early 2017, an acquaintance told Lauren about Rise and she was excited to check out employment opportunities at their Bloomington location. When Lauren started as a data entry clerk at Rise in October 2017, she was nervous about what to expect.

But that feeling quickly faded into thin air because Lauren made "wonderful friends" almost immediately. In her first few weeks working at the person-centered program, she found what she was looking for all along.

As a data entry clerk, Lauren likes entering dates to prepare



Lauren enjoys both her jobs - a data entry clerk at Rise Bloomington and working with kids at the Burnsville YMCA daycare.

upcoming timesheets. She enjoys doing dates so much, that her supervisor, Piper Wohlfeil, suggested that she take on new projects. Lauren "gets along with supervisors well." Lauren is also learning how to be a receptionist at the front desk and use a multi-line phone.

In addition to working hard, Lauren enjoys other aspects of her day in Bloomington. "I like Rise's Art Speaks program and my massage therapy," Lauren explained. "I also appreciate the community outings Rise provides."

As she became more comfortable at Rise, Lauren was thrilled to discover that Rise had a program to assist people find community employment. Lauren began meeting with Job Placement Specialist Sarah Gustafson about job exploration. Together, they talked about Lauren's skills and interests. "Sarah assisted me with applications, trainings, and transportation issues," Lauren said.

Following ten submitted job applications and three interviews, she landed a job at the Burnsville YMCA helping with kids in their daycare program!

"Lauren's sparkling, positive and intelligent approach to her job search made it a real joy to be a part of," says Sarah. "Lauren has a marvelous sense of humor and is quick to laugh and find the fun, thus making time spent with her a pleasure."

"Without Sarah's help, I wouldn't have my job at the YMCA," Lauren said. "I love the kids I work with. It's a challenge, but that's okay because that is what I wanted."

Lauren works at the YMCA five days a week, from 6 to 9 a.m. Then she goes to Rise Bloomington to work another four-hour shift on four of those days.

When she's not getting up extremely early to get to work, Lauren loves to read and uses the skills that she acquired from the Art Speaks program for projects at home. She has a therapy dog who keeps her busy. "I also like to visit with other residents who live in my group home campus," she added.

Lauren is currently figuring out how to, in her words, "balance my work and social life." She is well on her way. In the near future, Lauren will no doubt have it down pat, enjoying a career she long envisioned.

Michael Sack is a data entry clerk at Rise Bloomington. Check out his blog, Two Men On, which he and his buddy, Sam Graves, write about sports. You can find it at: gravessack.wordpress.com.



Team lets Cummins employees know - 'You've got mail!'

AMONG THE MANY things the mail delivery team at Cummins in Shoreview enjoys about their work are the excited reactions they get when they email or call a Cummins employee to let them know they have a package to pick up.

"Are you sure it's for me – I never get packages!"

"Can you tell what's in it?!"

"I'm in India right now – could you hold it for me until I get back?!"

So it stands to reason that when asked what they like very most about working at Cummins, everyone replied, "the people."

The team rotates two- or three-day shifts at the Cummins Shoreview office and includes John Cremer, Tracy Bird, Jennifer Weldon, Lori Mayo, Tony Bidwell, and Catherine Gustner. The remainder of their work week is completed at Rise Crystal or Rise Spring Lake Park where they work as data entry clerks.

Incoming mail and packages are delivered from Cummins's headquarters to Shoreview where the team sorts and delivers it to mail stations throughout two floors. They also maintain a roster of sent messages to employees, and hand out packages when they

come to pick them up.

It took team members a while to learn the 'lay of the land' of the expansive complex when they first started in September 2018. Case Manager Milcart Robert-Clerge and DSP Darnetta (De) Thomas-Jackson took people around so they could get acclimated and make deliveries on their own.

Lori Mayo, who has worked at Rise Crystal for many years, says she likes the change of pace a few days a week – and the money is good, she added through her voice communication system.

This is Jenny Weldon's first job in years so she's excited to have "more purpose" in her day. "It keeps me busy, that's for sure, and everyone here is so nice."

Denise Coppess was one of the original team members to work at Cummins. This additional clerical experience was great to put on her resume. Look for an article on Denise's new job in an upcoming issue of the *Rise Reporter*.

"Having the Rise employees work with us daily is such a joy," said Sondra Blackwell, the workflow coordinator. "They are so efficient and positive in their work."

"Since October, Rise colleagues



Tracy Bird delivers mail to one of the many mail stations throughout the Shoreview building.

Lori Mayo uses an infrared dot on her forehead to activate her Accent communication device to send emails to Cummins employees that they have packages to pick up.



working at the Cummins Shoreview facility have provided suggestions or opportunities for improvement, helping Cummins company to become an 'employer of choice' for individuals with disabilities, short- or long-term," said Emily Kocik, the Corporate Responsibility leader for the Power Systems Business Unit.

"Cummins facilities and maintenance teams have taken these into consideration and are working toward completing such improvements, which will ultimately lead to a better workplace environment for all employees at this location."

Rise and Cummins have been business partners since 2006. Scores of people served by Rise have enjoyed working at their manufacturing plant in Fridley for many years in a wide range of job duties and departments.

Jesse Skare puts his values to work at The Estates in Rush City

WHEN JESSE SKARE sat down with Rise Employment Consultant Michelle Thompson to discuss his next career move, she asked him about his work values and how important they were to him. Jesse was clear that he valued having a real purpose by helping others, being able to express his talents creatively, and having some independence and flexibility on the job.

After years of working at a few different East Central Minnesota dining/hospitality businesses, Jesse seems to have found the perfect fit. In his position as a culinary service aide at The Estates at Rush City, a skilled nursing facility, Jesse seems to have checked all his boxes of what's important to him.

"I love working here and have enjoyed it from the very first minute," Jesse said enthusiastically. "I like dishwashing because it's not too stressful, but I also get to do many other things like help the cook set up for dinners, put food on the residents' trays, and pour their beverages. I have gotten to know the residents and love helping them."

The Estate's kitchen is a busy

place all day long and it takes teamwork to ensure that the residents are well-cared for. Jesse has found his co-workers to be patient, kind, and supportive; they all get along together really well.

"Jesse's enthusiasm and enjoyment for work shows in his attitude the moment he walks in the door," said Kristie Frazier, Culinary Services director. "He greets everyone with a smile. He is always willing to go above and beyond and help out whenever needed. He is truly an asset to our Culinary Department."

Michelle continues to provide follow-up support services for Jesse, assisting him in addressing any workplace issues he may have and helping coordinate reliable transportation. He lives in a group home two miles from The Estates and cobbles together the Heartland Express public transportation, taxis, and volunteer drivers to get to and from work on time.

Jesse and his significant other, Michelle Collis, have been together for 16 years. In July 2017, they celebrated their lifetime commitment to each other with a special ceremony.

In his free time, Jesse attends services and a small group Bible study at Access Church in North Branch. Jesse also volunteers at the Family Pathways thrift



store in North Branch.

His family is important to him and Jesse enjoys spending time with them. "I have a very loving and supportive family, and when it comes to me being such a hard worker, they and Michelle have helped make me who I am today."

Jesse loves music of all genres, especially R&B and country. He enjoys karaoke and volunteers his time singing for The Estate residents.

Among Jesse's favorite songs to sing are *A Matter of Trust* by Billy Joel, *Rock My World Little Country Girl* by Brooks & Dunn, and *In This Life* by Collin Raye.

"Jesse really strives to be the best person he can be, both in his personal life and his work life," Michelle noted. "He always wants to make the right choice and takes great pride in his work and accomplishments. Jesse is always setting his goals higher."

"I can't say enough about how much this job means to me," said Jesse. "I hope to retire from here."

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 8TH ANNUAL CELEBRATE RISE FUNDRAISING GALA

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019

HOW CAN YOU HELP US PREPARE? WE ARE LOOKING FOR \$25-\$100 GIFT CARDS TO THE BEST RESTAURANTS AND ATTRACTIONS IN THE TWIN CITIES AREA. IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WOULD LIKE TO DONATE GIFT CARDS, PLEASE CONTACT SAMANTHA SCHOEN BY PHONE AT 763-792-2450 OR EMAIL AT SSCHOEN@RISE.ORG

WE APPRECIATE YOUR WILLINGNESS TO HELP US MAKE CELEBRATE RISE ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EVENT!



Lynn Noren's letter continued from page 2 ~

fortunate the bill to implement the competitive workforce factor that would provide funding for services provided by organizations like Rise was vetoed last year.”

Sen. Abeler said he would encourage people to continue their advocacy efforts and reach out to their representatives to give them information and feedback about these important issues.

“We need to continue the dis-

cussions and help figure out what the future is going to look like,” he added.

It's a daunting task, but one that all of us need to keep working on. I am hosting two legislative informational update meetings in April and I hope you can attend. Look for the dates and locations on page 7.

“I am an optimist – let's keep trying,” Sen. Abeler told Rachel

and me.

I, too, am an optimist and ask for your help to reach out to your state legislators, urging them to support the Best Life Alliance legislation, so that everyone who needs employment, life enrichment, and support services will have access to them.

Let your voices be heard - contact your representatives

DURING THE 2019 Legislative Session, Rise is supporting the legislation brought forth by the Best Life Alliance of Minnesota. The main goals of this legislation are:

1. Restore the 7% rate cut by implementing a Competitive Workforce Factor.
2. Adjust the timing of the automatic rate adjustments to every two years to better keep pace with actual economic conditions.

The Get Involved / Advocacy page on Rise's website has information and links for self-advocacy: <https://www.rise.org/advocacy/>

There are a number of ways to get involved in the legislative process.

Make sure you know who represents you. These are the people who will be voting on the legislation that affects you and your community, which means they are the best people to contact about the issues that matter to you!

Contact your legislators to let them know what is important to you and how services have made a difference in your life.



Our website has fact sheets with updated information as well as links to finding who your representatives are and how to contact them. You can also find sample letters and phone scripts to help you get started.

Writing a *Letter to the Editor* to your local newspaper can be a great way to get the rest of your community involved in an issue. It's important that you personalize it as much as you're comfortable by making it clear why this issue matters to you.

We have samples and links on our website for that kind of project,

as well as links to specific newspapers.

Rise will have opportunities for person's served and their families to stay informed about the ongoing legislative session. This year, we will be having two family meetings so that we can accommodate our new locations in Washington County. For information about those, make sure you like us on Facebook and subscribe to our email list for Weekly Legislative Updates. The calendar on page 7 of this issue has dates and locations.

We will also be organizing legislative visits during *Disability Day at the Capitol* on March 12. Stay tuned to Facebook and email about that opportunity as well!

We are always looking for volunteers who are interested in advocating on behalf of the people we serve. Advocacy volunteers can take on a variety of roles and time commitments can be as much or as little as you'd like.

For more information about becoming an advocacy volunteer, email: volunteer@rise.org.



Administrative Offices | 8406 Sunset Road NE | Spring Lake Park, MN 55432-1387

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Permit No. 94279
TWIN CITIES, MN

INTERESTED IN AN EXCITING CAREER AT RISE? FIND OUT MORE AT [RISE.ORG/JOBS](https://rise.org/jobs)

Rise is all about people and potential!

We want exceptional professionals on our team who will help make a difference in people's lives -- like Milcart Robert-Clerge, a case manager who here is assisting Jenny Weldon at work in the mail room at Cummins in Shoreview.

Meet other Rise team members and find out how they spend their work day and what they enjoy most about their career at rise.org/team-member-spotlights

