

RISE REPORTER

DECEMBER 2019 | VOL. 43, NO. 4



Ashley Kimlinger was nominated for a Rise'ing Star honor this year by Kurt Langer, the production manager for the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) in Brooklyn Park. Ashley was one of six Rise'ing Stars recognized at the 8th annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala on October 21. Read more about the gala and other honorees inside.



RISE REPORTER

DECEMBER 2019 | VOL. 43, NO. 4

A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LYNN NOREN

As we near the end of 2019, I'd like to take a moment to express our sincere thanks. *Thanks* to the people Rise supports in our programs and services who inspire us every day to learn and grow through their accomplishments. *Thanks* to our Board of Directors and staff team members who lead and carry out the work of Rise in an exemplary way every day. *Thanks* to our business and community partners without whom we could not be successful. We are also thankful for the legislative support we received last year from the Minnesota State Legislature. Although there is always work to be done, we made significant progress in advancing legislation to support disability services this past session.

The *Celebrate Rise Gala* held on October 21 was a highlight of the year for all of us at Rise. This year's event was our best yet in terms of the funds raised for the organization. The excitement of everyone in attendance, joining in celebrating the accomplishments of the people we serve at Rise, is something that can't be measured, but is what makes the evening so special. We are grateful for everyone's support!

Last year at this time, we were preparing for our merger with the former ESR programs. I'm happy to report that we are now operating as "One Rise!" So much has been accomplished in the past year to integrate the two organizations; it has been satisfying to grow Rise's reach into the eastern Twin Cities metro area and into western Wisconsin.

Every day at Rise, I get to meet people who make our mission of *unlocking potential and opening doors to success* come alive. This issue includes some great stories and I hope they inspire you. I feel grateful to be part of such a thriving organization.

Thank you all for your support. We look forward continued partnership in 2020!



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 Oh, what a special night *Celebrate Rise* was!
- 04 Meet this year's extraordinary *Rise'ing Stars*
- 05 Rise honors our 2019 *Champion of the Mission*
- 06 We value our 2019 *Community Partners of the Year*
- 07 Thank you to our *Making a Difference* volunteer awardee and gala volunteers
- 08 Adult Day Program supports Dan in building new skills after brain injury at work
- 09 Cliff finds a great job at Aspen Waste Systems
- 10 Adult Day Program joins art mural project at New Brighton Community Center
- 11 Working at FedEx Ship Center helps Liz build self-esteem
- 12 Dan finds a great job fit at Cub Foods
- 13 Online shopping at Amazon keeps Jason busy - just the way he likes it
- 14 Rachael's passion for awareness, understanding leads to position on Rise Board
- 14 Mario serves up a slice of Italy at Fat Lorenzo's
- 15 Re-Entry program assists people acclimate to community life
- 16 Meet Rise's Champions of the Month
- 19 Ronnie Watson is appreciated for his quality work at New Plastics Plus
- 20 Scenes from our 2019 *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala*

AT RISE

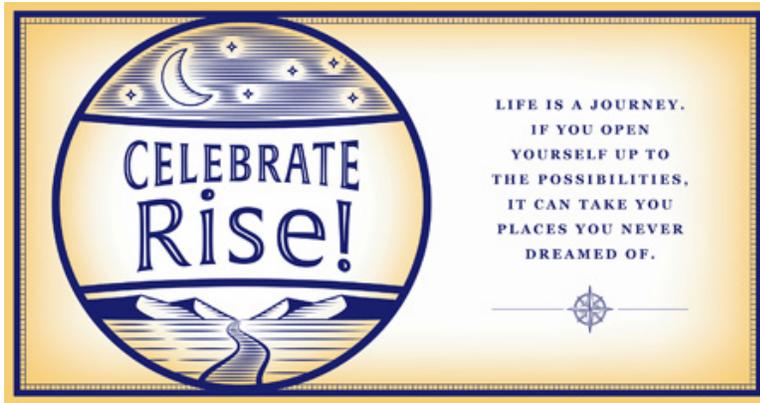
Tom Kettleon
Chair, Rise Board of Directors

Lynn Noren
President

Noel McCormick
Vice President of Advancement

Beth DePoint
Director of Public Relations; Editor





Oh, what a night!

More than 450 community partners, family, friends, Rise team members, and people we support, attended the 8th Annual *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala*. It was held October 21 at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park and was a festive evening of great food, fun and games, special honor awards, and much more!

Through our guests' and sponsors' generosity, we raised more than \$140,000! Proceeds from the fund-a-need ask went to Rise's *Advancing Lives Fund* which supports people we serve with one-time awards of up to \$500 to finance items needed for employment and independence not covered by other sources.

Additional funds raised went to Rise's general operating budget to support our employment, housing

supports, and life enrichment program services.

We were honored to have Karla Leis, vice president and general manager of nVent's Enclosure Segment, give opening remarks.

We were proud to honor the 2019 *Rise'ing Stars*, the *Champion of the Mission*, our *Community Partners*, and *Making a Difference* honorees. Please read more about them on the following pages.

Photos from this year's event are included on the back cover as well as posted on Rise's Facebook page: Rise, Incorporated.

Thanks to everyone who attended, supported, volunteered, donated, and sponsored our 2019 *Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala!* We appreciate your generosity and hope you had a great time!

Next year's gala is already set for Monday, October 26, 2020.



Rise President & CEO Lynn Noren and Board of Directors Chair Tom Kettleon greeted our guests.

PREMIER SPONSOR



GOLD SPONSORS



The Grunewald Family



SILVER SPONSORS

Dan's Complete Automotive
Medtronic
Northeast Bank

BRONZE SPONSORS

Amcon
Bank of America
Bobcat and Ruan Trucking
Bremer Bank
Cretex Companies, Inc.
Hoglund Bus & Truck Co.
Medica
North Central Bus & Equipment, Inc.
Sheila Minske
Winthrop & Weinstine, PA

TABLE HOSTS

Bridges MN
Cash Software
Conductive Container Corp.
Cummings, Keegan, & Co., PLLP
Denise Ferraro
Liberty Diversified International
Kevin McKenzie
Lynn Noren
Bob and Mary Sue Poirier
Prowire
Chester Tollefson
Wells Fargo

WE HONOR THIS YEAR'S RISE'ING STARS



DENISE COPPESS

Denise is a financial office support person at Arch Language Network in Little Canada. Working for many years as a receptionist and administrative support person for Rise, Denise always had her sights set on getting a good job with a great company in the community. Denise verifies people's insurance coverage for interpreting and translating services and completes the paperwork for submission. ARCH trained her in three health care insurance providers' systems and verifies about 100 claims a day. Denise finds the work interesting and loves that she continues to learn and grow in her position.



BOB HAGGLUND

Bob has overcome many challenges in his life and today is proud of his accomplishments. After searching for just the right job, Bob has been working at Paradise Car Wash since this past summer, and hopes to move up the ranks into detailing. Having good, steady employment has enabled Bob to fulfill one of his long-term goals of moving from a residential group home into his own apartment. He attends monthly support meetings and is proud to be sober for the past two-plus years.



LAUREN IRELAND

Lauren first came to Rise about two years ago and did data entry work at Rise Bloomington. But as she further developed her career plan with assistance from a Rise employment consultant, Lauren decided she really wanted a job working with animals or children. She ended up doing both! Lauren was hired at the Burnsville YMCA working with kids in their daycare program. Lauren's sparkling personality, great sense of humor, and positive attitude make her a natural to work with young children. She works different shifts at the YMCA, and some days gets up at 4 a.m. to get to the Y by 6 a.m. to work a three-hour shift. Lauren is also a part-time ambassador for Finley's Barkery marketing team, handing out pet treats at grocery stores and special events.



ASHLEY KIMLINGER

Ashley currently works at nVent, but is also part of the great team from Rise Coon Rapids who works throughout the year on special projects at Data Recognition Corporation in Brooklyn Park. It was Kurt Langer, the production manager there, who nominated Ashley for this award. Kurt noted that Ashley is an enthusiastic, hard worker who is dedicated to doing the best job possible. He added that she is very good at following directions and is always concerned about doing the job correctly. Everyone at DRC appreciates the fine work Ashley does and enjoys having her on the team. She is a great team worker wherever she works!

EXTRAORDINARY PERSERVANCE & ACHIEVEMENTS



JACOB MACMAHON

Jacob walks in the door at the New Brighton Community Center weekday mornings with his contagious, positive energy and brings a smile to everyone's face. He is a natural leader among the group at this Rise Adult Day Program, encouraging people to join in the many activities and events which make their days so enriching. By working hard to overcome his fear of heights – the walking track there overlooks the gymnasium below – Jacob now exudes confidence in all he does. He leads others by his fine example and is known to be thoughtful, kind, compassionate, and polite to everyone.



IA THOR

Ia has faced and overcome many barriers in his lifetime, including being homeless for a time, as well as having limited education, and a 17-year gap in employment. But he was determined to turn his life around. With support from Rise's Minnesota Employment Center for People who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, Ia was hired at Mister Car Wash in St. Paul. One year later, Ia is still doing great on the job and his managers and co-workers enjoy working with him. Ia gets great job reviews and his pay raises have enabled him to find a nice place to live. With all these positive changes in his life, Ia says even his overall health has greatly improved.

SALUTING OUR 2019 CHAMPION OF THE MISSION



CASEY STRACK

Casey started working for Rise as a director support professional (DSP) at Coon Rapids in April 2012 and was promoted to program supervisor before moving over to Rise Spring Lake Park to take on a new position as Quality Assurance specialist in July 2018. In this role, Casey helps keep Rise in compliance with Department of Labor regulations. Casey also conducts Wage and Hour training sessions at all of Rise's locations as well as time studies to ensure Rise is up-to-date with Hourly Performance Evaluations, WIOA, and other related regulations. She is well-known for and appreciated by her co-workers for being detail-oriented and easy to approach with questions.

"I love this job!" said Casey. "I love that I have learned so much and there is a lot more to go. I love my co-workers and the environment I get to work in everyday, too. Rise is the best of the best. There is no other organization that I'd rather work."

Nominated by her co-workers, Casey was selected for this honor from among 12 other 2019 *Champions of the Month*. Meet them on pages 16-18.

VALUED COMMUNITY PARTNERS



K-TEK WISCONSIN

K-TEK has partnered with Rise for almost 20 years at our production facility in New Richmond, Wisconsin, providing a wide variety of subcontract production work. K-TEK has also been a community supported employment work site for teams of Rise workers. One of the largest of Rise's customers in Wisconsin, K-TEK engineers have provided outstanding support to the people Rise serves in many ways, including constructing fixtures to accommodate individuals' needs to get the jobs done efficiently. In addition, K-TEK donated a lift pallet and other equipment to Rise as well generously contributed to special events such as golf tournaments, holiday parties, and Special Olympics.



Medtronic was also named 2019 Outstanding Employer of the Year by the Minnesota Organization of Habilitation and Rehabilitation (MOHR)!

MEDTRONIC

Rise has partnered with Medtronic for more than 40 years in many different ways. Not only have they hired several people to work full-time in a wide range of positions, departments, and Medtronic locations, but they are also one of Rise's top customers for Industrial Services contract work. The support Rise team members receive from people at all levels within the Medtronic organization is phenomenal and they enjoy the opportunity to collaborate and work with their talented professionals. Medtronic managers help redesign work duties and match the right person to the right job, so everyone is productive and successful. Several people have enjoyed long careers (as many as 30 years!) and retired from Medtronic. Over the years, three executives have served on the Rise's Board of Directors, including current Board Member Sheila Minski (center). The Medtronic Foundation has also been a generous supporter of various Rise projects and special events, dating back to 1978.



NEW BRIGHTON COMMUNITY CENTER

Rise offers one of its five Adult Day Programs at the New Brighton Community Center serving 35 people who no longer chose to work fulltime, but still want to stay active and be a vital part of the community. The Community Center staff and the New Brighton City Council members have not only welcomed Rise in, but have worked with Rise managers to expand activities and opportunities as well as developed additional ways for the Rise program can be included in the New Brighton community. For instance, Adult Day participants can participate in their exercise class and have been included in Community Center events and activities such as their community art mural project. Community Center staff have made it a point to get to know the people whom Rise serves and connect with them in many ways throughout the day.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE HONOREE



DIXIE MENGELKOCH

Much of Dixie's adult life has been centered around important issues pertaining to people who have disabilities. Dixie believes that as a parent, you can never stop advocating for your child and trying to make a difference. Her daughter Tracy has worked at Rise Coon Rapids as well as in community businesses for the past 25 years.

A self-avowed 'rebel' and advocate, Dixie has worked for decades to help ensure that future state policies are rational and that processes are in place so people have choices for employment options and living situations. Dixie served as a member of Rise's Board of Directors for more than 20 years and also volunteers at Rise in a variety of roles, especially in advocacy at the Minnesota State Legislature.

Dixie says that you have to be ever-vigilant because with government programs and funding as things can change quickly and dramatically. "You can never sit back and think your work is done -- you always need to keep an eye out." Thank you, Dixie, for your many years of *making a difference!*

WE EXTEND SPECIAL THANKS TO ~

- * Art Speaks artists who created the gift notecards for guests
 - * David Evans, ASL interpreter
 - * AJ Herculeidez, ASL interpreter
 - * Fast Horse, Minneapolis
- Paula, Warren and Jenny Johnson, presenters
 - * Karla Leis, nVent Enclosures
 - * Nancy Lyons, emcee
- * Minneapolis Marriott Northwest
 - * Brian Tanning, photographer
 - * Tilt Photography
- * Many generous individual and corporate donors of items for our social hour games, live auction, and door prize drawings

WE APPRECIATE OUR GALA VOLUNTEERS!

Stephanie Ableiter | Zita Calderon | Lori Carlson | Susan Carter | Lori Clauson
Matt DePoint | Paul Fredendall | Camille Gross | Lynn Haslup
Lisa Heffner | Annie Heggernes | Bev Herkenratt | Barb Herrick-McCracken
Bonnie Japs | Russ Japs | Ashley Klingbeil | Nancee Magistad | Dan Meyers
Andrew Owzarek | Chris Poppe | Lisa Poppe | Jenny Poyorena | Sheila Ritter
Jean Stephenson | Juanita Traufler | Joyce Velzke | Payton West | Teri West
Paul Widstrom | Bev Wolters | Natalie Zacharias

Adult Day Program supports Dan in building new skills after brain injury incurred at work changes his life forever

By Samantha Marks,
Rise Development Manager

ON THE MORNING OF April 9, 2007, Dan moved through his usual routine to prepare for another day on the job at Mitsubishi Motors where he had worked as a service technician for the past fifteen years. He kissed his wife of eleven years goodbye, knowing that he would be reunited with her and his son by dinner time.

Little did Dan know, those last precious moments would have to fulfill him for the next week.

After beginning a regular day on the job, Dan went to grab a box of light bulbs from the top shelf of the warehouse. His ladder gave way, and Dan fell thirteen feet onto a ceramic tile floor and experienced a traumatic brain injury. Dan was put into drug-induced coma for seven days.

He awoke with his family at his bedside, a moment described by his wife as “experiencing someone

who had died coming back to life.” After they celebrated his life, they were left with uncertainty about what the future would look like.

Dan spent three months at the hospital. His wife was right there with him each and every day while continuing to work.

Although his recovery process went better than expected, Dan and his family still feared he would never be able to go back to work. Not only was he worried about supporting his family, but Dan had always been a hard worker and took pride in a job well done.

As soon as he possibly could, Dan insisted on re-entering the workforce. However, he had new, unfamiliar barriers holding him back. He was no longer able to drive, lost his sense of smell and taste, and was now extremely sensitive to sound.

Feeling frustrated with these life-altering adjustments, Dan felt like he was at a dead-end. Sitting at home did not align with his

hard-working mentality.

Three years ago, Dan began attending Rise’s Adult Day Fridley Program four days a week.

“In the past if you had a disability, you were written off,” said Jayna Allshouse, Dan’s case manager and the activity coordinator at Adult Day Fridley. “The Adult Day Program gets people out of the house and provides social interactions and activities that aid in building their fine motor and cognitive skills.”

Our Fridley Adult Day program is designed to meet the needs and interests of adults who can benefit from life enrichment activities and remain an active part of their community. Everyone in the Fridley program has a brain injury with some memory or cognitive loss.

“I have built skills here that I wouldn’t have gotten at home,” Dan shared. “Rise is family-oriented, structured, and enjoyable. I look forward to coming every day.”

“Dan is incredible to have in the program,” Jayna continued. “He helps everyone and easily makes friends. Dan’s engagement with others has grown and his fine motor skills improve daily.”

Dan also volunteers at Global Health Ministries on Thursdays packaging outdated medical to send overseas to developing countries. He is a devoted husband and enjoys spending time with his son, usually fishing when he is home from college on the weekends.

Dan enjoys volunteering at Global Health Ministries where he helps prepare shipping cartons to send much-needed medical supplies overseas.





With support from Rise and HCMHC, Cliff finds a great job at Aspen Waste Systems that suits his personality perfectly

STARTING HIS DOWNTOWN Minneapolis route at 5 a.m., Cliff Meacham winds around through the Mill City ruins area and then on to the University of Minnesota campus, emptying mostly dumpsters. “It’s fun to see large pieces of furniture get crushed in the garbage truck!” he said with a laugh.

Ironically, the Number 1 job on his high school career assessment was a garbage truck driver! “It fits my personality perfectly. There is no typical day – each day is its own adventure!”

Having a good job that he really enjoys has made a “night and day difference” in his life Cliff added. “It’s pretty much amazing. I have noticed an uptick in positive feelings – it’s all good.”

Cliff was hired by Aspen Waste Systems in June of this year. Prior to starting there, he was working for a local brewery as a buyer. But when that job became too stressful for him, Cliff’s therapist at the Hennepin County Mental Health Center (HCMHC) connected him with Rise’s Individual Placement and Support (IPS) team.

Employment Consultant Dave Gonzalez assisted Cliff with career planning and connected him to Aspen for a job interview. He had never worked a CDL (commercial driver’s license) job and said he had to study hard to pass the written and driving tests.

After getting his CDL, Cliff trained for a month with another driver and subsequently was promoted into a full-time garbage



Cliff says every day is an adventure on his Minneapolis route. Having a job he enjoys has made a positive impact on his life.

truck driver position.

“Within reason, I’m my own boss,” said Cliff. “Now that I’m driving alone, I can drive the route the way I want to and have a lot of flexibility. It’s so different than previous office jobs I’ve had as I’m not cooped up. Every day is something new and different, and I never get bored.”

Cliff appreciates the services and support he received from Rise, which he says plays a huge role in his continued success on the job. He has some advice for others who might be in the same situation.

“I would say to not be stoic,” Cliff says. “In the past when I lost a job, I would take it all on myself and not use community resources. This situation taught me that there are a lot of support resources out

there. You must have an openness and willingness to accept assistance.

“Talking about your situation with others, like a psychiatrist, will lead you to resources that can help,” Cliff added. “Have the mindset to pull out all the stops to get back on your feet.”

Cliff also advises to never lose hope. “But you need to treat your job search as a fulltime job; spend as many hours you can a day to accomplish that goal. When I met with Dave, I was very specific with my interests and needs -- that helped me get a job I really wanted.”

In his free time, Cliff enjoys spending time outdoors with his five-year-old son, going to dog parks, fishing, and hiking.

Collaborative art project enhances New Brighton Community Center

YOU CAN'T HELP BUT slow down and take a nice, long look at the new piece of art adorning the whole north wall of the New Brighton Community Center located on N.W. 10th Street just off I-694. It's colorful, whimsical, and beautiful!

The City of New Brighton was awarded a grant to participate with the Metro Regional Arts Council and artist Pamela Sukhum for a collaborative art opportunity called *The Beautiful Project*.

People participating in Rise's Adult Day Program (ADP) there were to invited to work on the massive mural.

Both Roberto Marquez and Jerianne Lindman enjoy participating in Art Speaks with Art Therapist Stacy Gross, as well as ADP's drawing class, and other art activities. They joined Pamela and other contributing artists, including students from a local elementary school, on this summer-long project.

Community Center staff also asked others served at Adult Day to paint rocks for the rock garden beneath the mural.

"I had fun -- I have always liked art," said Roberto.

"It was really fun to see how much it changed from the begin-



Pamela gives Roberto, who says he has always liked art, some artistic guidance.



Jerianne Lindman and Roberto Marquez put their talents to work on this collaborative art project.

ning of the project to the end," Jerianne added.

"It was an amazing and beautiful opportunity to bring the community together," said Rise ADP Case Manager Aubrey Ripken. "It was really neat to see people from our program be a part of something that will be in the community for such a long, long time."

Born out of her passion for creating art and desire to share that joy with others, Pamela launched *The Beautiful Project* in early 2006 and has since worked to inspire and empower communities worldwide through the vehicle of art.

Pamela has worked closely with communities in eight countries across the globe and more than 20 cities in the United States. Through art, she brings people together as a healing and self-empowering force in their lives.

People from Rise's Adult Day Program painted rocks to be included in the community art project.





Liz finds working at FedEx Ship Center helps make her feel more productive and builds her self-esteem

WITH THE HOLIDAY shopping season in full swing, Liz is excited to have a role in making sure people across the country get their gift purchases on time. Working at the FedEx Ship Center in Maple Grove, Liz is on the ‘front line’ of package distribution for the Twin Cities area.

“It’s a really busy time,” said Liz, who is 54 and works three hours a day, four days a week. She typically works with a partner scanning barcodes on packages and filling distribution bags. Liz said she enjoys working with people who come from a wide variety of world cultures. “We all get along great,” she added.

“I feel so much better when I am working. Getting out, going to work, and being with other people helps me feel more productive and builds my self-esteem.”

Since 2010, Liz has worked with various Rise team members to assist her in job development and follow-up employment support services as well as housing supports a few years ago.

“Over the years, I’ve had some great support from some really nice people at Rise,” Liz noted.



Rise Employment Consultant Ben Streitz meets with Liz twice a month to help ensure her continued success on the job at a FedEx Ship Center.

“They know how to listen, give me good advice, and help me with paperwork.”

After being unemployed for about six years, Liz’s therapist suggested she contact Rise again for assistance in finding a job. Liz also started her own networking and a neighbor friend put her on to job opportunities at FedEx.

LaNay Koralesky, a counselor with Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services, assisted Liz develop her employment plan.

Rise Employment Consultant Ben Streitz, with Rise’s IPS (Individual Placement and Support) program, now meets with Liz twice

a month to address any work-related issues she may have as well as helps her monitor her benefits so that Liz better understands the impact of her wages on them.

“I think it’s important to open up and tell your story,” said Liz. “We all need to help each other and can get some good ideas from other people.”

Liz enjoys going to Bridgeview Drop-In Center at the Lee Carlson Center for Mental Health and Well-Being in Fridley where she has made many friends. She enjoys playing board games and taking the variety of classes Bridgeview offers.

Liz has two grown sons of whom she is very proud and especially loves spending time with her two granddaughters who are two and six years old and live nearby.

She lives in a cozy apartment filled with photos of family, expressions of her faith, and her beloved cat, Stella. Liz enjoys scrapbooking and is (SSSHH!!) working on some for family Christmas gifts.

Rise can help you find & keep good workers!

As an employer, you know how important it is to gain a competitive edge in the labor market. Rise matches hard-working, dependable individuals with temporary and permanent employment positions in businesses throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

We can assist you with recruitment, selection, on-the-job training, follow-up support services, and job customization. Check out our website at rise.org/become-a-community-employer for more information.

Bringing energy and enthusiasm to his work, Dan Beauregard excels at cashiering job at Cub Foods

WITH THE STORE well-stocked and decorated for holiday grocery shoppers, Cub Foods at Northtown in Blaine is ready for the busy weeks ahead. From the bakery to the deli to the floral department to the shelves lined with groceries, Cub team members are primed to serve their customers.

Standing ready at his register, Dan Beauregard greets each shopper with a genuine, friendly smile. He is efficient in his scanning and checking people out and also assists customers who use the self-checkout registers if they need help. It's readily apparent he enjoys this busy job.

"I never thought retail would be for me," admitted Dan. "I was originally hired to stock shelves, but everyone who works at Cub is also trained in as a back-up cashier. I would always be the first one they paged to come up front because I was good at it and I got a lot of compliments from shoppers. So they changed my job to just cashiering and I really like that."

After graduating from Coon Rapids High School in 2009, Dan came to Rise for vocational and employment services. He worked at Rise Anoka as well as Federal Premium Ammunition in Anoka for a few years.

"Then I decided it was time for a change," he said. "Ross Wangenstein helped me with a career plan and then find this job. My mom used to work at Cub years ago and liked it. I started last December.

"Now Tate Wegleitner checks in with me periodically to see how I'm doing and if I need help with anything. But things are going great."

"Dan takes his job at Cub very seriously and has received nothing but excellent reviews from all his managers," said Ross. "His coworkers have said they love the energy and enthusiasm he brings to any situation with customers and coworkers alike."

Working between 15 and 25 hours a week, Dan says that helping customers is his favorite part of the job.

Helping people seems to be a big part of who Dan is. He also volunteers twice a month at Unity Hospital in Fridley where he is a messenger and dispatcher, running errands and assisting people however he can.

"My mom had volunteered at Unity years ago when she was pregnant with me," said Dan who is 31. "She wanted to start up again and asked if I wanted to join her so I said sure!"

"One time there was a patient who was really lonely and didn't have any visitors," Dan remembered. "They asked if I would want to go sit and visit with her for an hour or so and I was happy to do that. I think that made a difference for her."

Dan said his long-term career goal is to be a nursing assistant and he is researching local training programs to complete that certification.

Engaged to Heather, the "love of my life who I wouldn't trade for anything," Dan enjoys spending time with both her and his mom. He has a special interest in cars and does a lot of research into them.

"I am really happy here at Cub and like it a lot. It's a nice environment to work in. I plan to stay a long time."





Online holiday shoppers keep Jason especially busy at Amazon distribution center -- just the way he likes it!

By Samantha Marks,
Rise Development Manager

JUST LIKE YOU AND ME, Jason Hyland is preparing for the hustle and bustle of the “most wonderful time of the year.” Not only is he searching for those perfect gifts for his fiancé and two young children, if you are an Amazon shopper, Jason is also ensuring that you get your special purchases for your loved ones in time for the holidays as well.

Jason started at the Amazon distribution center in Shakopee in 2016, the first week it opened. He credits his previous work experience as a critical spring board for where his career journey has taken him.

Eight years prior, Jason started his career path on a Rise supported employment team at Harvest Hills Beverage Company in Elk River. Once he became comfortable and gained confidence in his abilities, Jason began job searching.

Compiling the vocational skills he had acquired at Rise with additional computer tech support training from Hennepin Technical College, Jason was proud to have landed a job at the largest company in the world, all on his own.

Starting as an order picker, then a packer, onto leadership, and now working as an ambassador, Amazon has given Jason many opportunities to advance and grow in his career.

His supervisors are continuously impressed by Jason’s time



Jason appreciates Sue Featherly’s continued support.

management, dependability and problem-solving skills. Their trust in him has only further solidified Jason’s confidence in himself.

“Jason has shown so much growth in his vocational abilities, and his self-esteem has developed along with it,” said Sue Featherly, Jason’s Rise follow-up specialist who continues to meet with him twice a month.

In his current ambassador role, he is responsible for training in new employees and attending weekly status updates and annual trainings to bring back work process updates to his co-workers.

“I enjoy training others,” Jason stated. “I like watching others develop their skills and go on to be successful.”

His supervisors also placed him on their “away team.” Earlier this year, Jason was flown out to Rialto, California for a week to train in employees at a new Am-

azon distribution center opening there.

Typically working four ten-hour days, Jason’s hours are currently increased to five eleven-hour days due to the high demand during the holiday season, and the necessity to get your purchases on your door step just in time!

Jason is looking forward to spending the holidays with his fiancé, who has also received Rise services, and their 6- and 8-year-old boys.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today without Sue’s support. I hope her supervisors know what a great job she does and that they treat her as well as mine treat me!”

Rest assured Jason, we appreciate Sue’s tireless efforts to support others just as much as you do! In fact, we celebrated 30th years of her commitment to our community this past year.

Rachael Smith's passion to help create awareness and understanding leads to position on Rise Board of Directors

By Shannon Widstrom,
Volunteer & Recruitment Coordinator

HAVING BEEN A MEMBER of Rise's board for the past five years, Rachael Smith prides herself on being the "voice of the people."

Back in 2015, Rachael's Special Olympics golf coach was aware that Rise wanted to add to their volunteer board of directors.

"Rise was looking for someone who could be a voice for others," said Rachel. "So I said, of course!"

Since joining Rise's board, Rachael has enjoyed contributing to the Board's important work by speaking up and offering her opinions about what fellow Board members may need to know about how to assist people in achieving a life filled with purpose.

Rachael has always been passionate about spreading awareness and helping others fulfill their dreams. She has served as a mentor, and as Rachael says, "was a role model for those who needed a little bit more help with becoming more independent."

A graduate of Hennepin Technical College, Rachael works as a special education paraprofessional at an Anoka-Hennepin District #11 school.

A former Special Olympics athlete, Rachael enjoyed several sports, including bocce ball, bowling, and golf. She has also participated in pageants through Pageant of Hope, an organization which helps young women with disabilities build their self-esteem and confidence.



Rachael brings her enthusiasm to work on Rise's Board of Directors.

One thing is for sure, Rachael is determined to spread her message to all those she meets, letting them know to "be willing to go all out, in pursuit of your dreams. Ultimately, it will pay off. You are more powerful than you think you are."

Mario serves up a slice of Italy at Fat Lorenzo's



Mario's good job at Fat Lorenzo's has enabled him to move into his own apartment.

THE SMELL OF OREGANO and other earthy spices hit you immediately when you open the door to Fat Lorenzo's Italian restaurant in South Minneapolis. You just know you're in for something special from their award-winning menu!

Rise Employment Consultant Amber Barnes was excited one day this summer when she stopped to check in with Mario Bowie. Amber had worked with Mario to put together a career plan and assisted him in finding a good job there earlier this year.

"Mario was hired as a dishwasher in April, but when I stopped in Fat Lorenzo's, he was making pizzas and served me my order! I was so pleased for and proud of him."

Mario, who is 25, has worked at a lot of different jobs that didn't quite work out. But he really enjoys having a good, steady job at Fat Lorenzo's and was able to move into his own apartment earlier this year.

"I do whatever they need me to do," Mario said. "It's good team work. "I hope to work here a long time."



Rise's Re-Entry program assists people reacclimate successfully to the community, find sustainable work

HAVING WORKED A WIDE range of temp jobs over the past several years, and being on supervised release for 25 years following his incarceration, it was difficult for Lars to find a good job. But with career development, job placement, and follow-up support from Rise Employment Consultant Cassie Anderson, Lars has been thriving in his job at a distribution center.

"When I started working with Rise, I was unemployed and living at a place for homeless men," he remembers. "Now I rent my own place and have a job that I really like with full benefits and insurance, and a 401K account. I am caught up on my child support and can afford my therapy so I don't have to go back to prison! Rise has really helped me."

Lars was referred to Rise's Partnership for Successful Re-Entry program in Region 7W (Central Minnesota) by his mental health therapist. The program works with ex-offenders who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness, and is a collaboration between the Central MN Re-Entry Project and Rise. It's completing another year of funding from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

From Rise St. Cloud, Re-Entry uses a person-centered approach that involves working one-to-one with each individual prior to release. The overall goal is to decrease a person's odds of reoffending and returning to jail or prison and successfully acclimating people into the community to be productive, contributing members.

"We knew that one key compo-

nent to people's success is meaningful employment that pays a sustainable wage as well as safe secure housing near public transportation," said Program Manager Maeta Burns-Penn.

"We also educate employers, landlords, community members on the importance of offering individuals second chances, and the vital impact that has on the growth and safety of the community."

"It makes me feel good to be able to pay my own way by working hard." ~ Hank

During the program's most recent year, Rise served 72 people, 47 of whom (or 65 percent) achieved competitive employment. Their average hourly was \$13.27 (up \$1.34 as compared to other similar programs in the state) and weekly worked an average of 30 hours.

In addition, 23 people secured safe, affordable housing with transitional living expenses; 37 percent of individuals received Rise housing supports or Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services. Helping keep the recidivism rate to 2.7 percent was the fact that 94 percent of individuals served were engaged in continuous therapeutic services with an outside agency.

Hank was referred to Re-Entry by his therapist and probation officer. He had experience working in manufacturing, but had a difficult time balancing his treatment obligations and work schedule.

After helping him find a job as a fiberglass fabricator this fall, Cassie continues to coordinate

with Hank's parole officer, therapist, and housing case manager to ensure that he receives the full benefit of 'wrap-around' services.

"I am thankful to have been given a chance to work with Rise," said Hank. "Cassie goes above and beyond what anybody has ever done for me. It makes me feel good to be able to pay my own way by working hard. And the best part of it is that Cassie helped me find a job that I really like and everyone there treats me really good, especially my supervisor."

"Historically, this population has been underserved due to the level of complexity of needs acknowledged by other providers in the region," Cassie explained. "The success of this program is a direct result of the partnership and better coordination of services with the Central MN Re-Entry project, leading to greater success and retention rates. Rise is well-known for achieving high quality case management and successful transition services."

Maeta added that Rise hopes to increase access to these services for former offenders by expanding our partnership with Minnesota Department of Corrections and Stearns County Corrections.

"They have become members of the program's steering committee and participate in regular interdisciplinary team meetings, allowing for improved communication and ultimately, more success..

"Rise continues to aggressively search on the local, state, and national level for additional funding to sustain this program."

Rise recognizes 2019 Champions of the Month for their



KELLY BAUFIELD first came to Rise in August 2017 as a case aide and was then promoted to case manager at Rise Coon Rapids. Her team members describe her as a great advocate for people served, helping to ensure they are all working to their highest potential. A real go-getter, Kelly is quick to take the lead on different kinds of projects and can be counted on to carry out her responsibilities and commitments with energy and passion. Always a smile on her face, Kelly has a positive, welcoming attitude and displays “a spirit of learning” everyday. Kelly demonstrates strong problem-solving skills, judgment, creativity, and resourcefulness, and is always encouraging to fellow team members and the people we serve.



DON GRANS works on the maintenance team out of Rise Spring Lake Park supporting all Rise office locations. Always smiling and willing to help wherever need be, Don says he is humbled by the nomination and being selected. “I know I’m appreciated and that’s enough for me! I like the wide variety of work that I get to do at Rise,” said Don, who previously worked in apartment maintenance. “Here, you never know what you will do from day to day.” Don goes out of his way to ensure we have a safe, well-maintained environment, especially during our challenging cold and snowy winter days. Don is always pleasant and happy to respond to requests for maintenance help inside and outdoors. His genuine interactions with the people Rise serves are caring and friendly. He is a true team-player and Rise team members appreciate all he does.



DELINDA (DE) SMITH has been a DSP with Rise for five years, her first four years at Rise Coon Rapids before moving to Spring Lake Park to work with people who have brain injuries. Her team members say that she is always upbeat and kind. De is quick to find a positive approach to diffuse challenging situations and set people back in the right direction. She collaborates with Rise’s maintenance staff to build customized production fixtures which give people the opportunity to work on jobs they might not otherwise be physically able to do. De’s positive attitude is infectious and she is the first to step up to help someone. She is the consummate cheerleader and inspires others to think creatively to enhance the lives of the people Rise serves.



SAVANNAH KIRBY, a DSP at Rise Stillwater, helped Rise get a new community work site at Pentair off the ground. She stepped up to the plate and pulled a great team together. Savannah and her team’s work is appreciated by Pentair, and based on what quality work they are doing, Pentair managers there are eager for Rise workers to expand their job duties. Rise is proud of Savannah’s professionalism at the community work site and great customer service to both Pentair and the people we serve. “My favorite part of this job is assisting people accomplish their goals,” said Savannah. “I chose this line of work because I like supporting people and feeling like I make a difference.”



LoWu XIANG, a case manager for MFIP employment services at Rise South Minneapolis, is appreciated by team mates for the fine work, dependability, and professionalism he brings to the table each and every day. Serving people receiving MFIP (Minnesota’s state welfare reform program for low-income families with children) can be challenging because of the diversity of cultures of people served, the multitude of government relations, and the additional challenges people face as they acclimate to a new culture. His teammates say LoWu “is purposeful in his actions to accomplish tasks. He researches how to do both work-related and personal pursuits to maximize positive outcomes.” LoWu says that the best part of his job is assisting people become self-sufficient. “Rise is a great place to work because it has strong management and a diverse workforce. I like working as a team and being held accountable.”

Note: DSP stands for direct support professional, working with people who have physical and/or intellectual disabilities



outstanding work in carrying out our important mission



LINDA VILLAGOMEZ, a DSP at Rise Coon Rapids, is known for going above and beyond her job description. Co-workers say their location is a “better place with Linda on the team! She has the steady hand in overseeing the Coon Rapids work floor that makes everyone’s job much easier.” To ensure Rise workers meet our business partners’ expectations, Linda makes sure quality on the job is always at the forefront. Linda’s co-workers also say she is organized, reliable, helpful, and an incredibly hard worker who has a great attention to detail. She “motivates people on the work floor to do their best they can every day. She takes the time with each person who needs extra attention and is always willing to come in early or leave late.”



SAMANTHA MARKS, Rise’s development manager, is considered to be “the perfect combination of hard-working and innovative and absolutely embodies Rise’s *Standards of Excellence*.” She loves to learn new things and is always the first person to raise her hand and say, *‘I’ll do that!’* She cares deeply about Rise’s mission and embodies it in everything she does.” Samantha is the lead planner for Rise’s fundraising events, manages our social media outlets, and having been a Rise intern herself a few years ago, takes on extra responsibilities to co-lead our intern cohorts. “Rise really is all that it claims to be in our mission and vision statements: progressive, supportive and collaborative,” said Samantha. “Everyone here thrives on innovation and it is such a fun process to be a part of. Every day is a learning experience here!”



SHYLO MALLIN, a DSP at Rise New Richmond, is valued by those with whom she works for always having a positive attitude. They say she continually encourages the entire team to work together to make a difference. Shylo also seems to have a special way with each of the people served and makes them feel comfortable, heard, and valued. Her teammates say, “Shylo has a big heart and truly wants to make a difference; she wants the best for the team and the individuals we serve. Her positivity is contagious and our team is very fortunate to have her.” When asked what she likes most about her job, Shylo said, “I love the people I work with. We have a great team of DSPs who are very supportive of each other as is management. I also enjoy working with the individuals daily to encourage and prepare them to be successful in the community.”



JENNIFER SAWYER is an occupational communication specialist with the DTH Sensory Support team at Rise Spring Lake Park. She is noted by her colleagues for giving everyone her 100 percent undivided attention and making things happen. She works with a team of people who might otherwise not have work and developed a cleaning crew who works at Spring Lake Park. Her vision for this group is to help ensure that everyone has the opportunity for a fulfilling job. “I truly enjoy working with everyone at Rise – everyone I support has a story to tell and I am always learning. I am also so grateful for the wonderful staff at Rise because it really does take a team to make things happen. So many people have helped me and supported me and still do.”



JENNIFER WIZA, an employment consultant with a special Hennepin County mental health employment grant, is considered to be an integral member and true asset of the team. She consistently goes above and beyond to support the people on her caseload to meet their needs. Their team outcomes have improved and the relationships with business partners, referral sources, and employers are outstanding. Jen is also great about mentoring and assisting her peers in their important work. She says, “The best parts of my job are the people I serve and seeing the glimmer of hope and excitement they get when we move along in their employment journey. I have had people cry from absolute joy and gratitude and have seen some of the best smiles. It is such an honor to be a part of people’s lives and assist them through some of their toughest situations.”

Meet two more Champions of the Month on page 18

Rise team members nominate co-workers for this honor



CHRIS DITTMER supervises the team from Rise Coon Rapids at Ruan in Otsego which he helped develop back in September 2018 after having worked with a team at another community work site. His team mates say that Chris is a great problem-solver and ensures that people's needs are met. "He wears Rise's *Standards of Excellence* on his sleeve and represents Rise in the utmost professional manner." Chris does not shy away from a challenge and is willing to try new sites and support people who have struggled at other work locations in the past. Known for being a self-starter, Chris actively works toward integrating people into different areas which might be a good fit -- so now his team works throughout the expansive Ruan facility.



TINA STRINGER, an employment consultant, is a valued member of the team at Rise Lindstrom. Her co-workers say she is an innovative and creative problem-solver as well as a tireless, trusted advocate for the people they serve. "She embraces change and challenges and does not let them be an obstacle, but rather, an opportunity to learn and grow." Tina has assisted several people find good employment in the ten months she has worked at Rise and works hard to provide customized supports tailored to meet their specific needs. She ensures each person feels valued and respected and encourages them to be self-sufficient. "I love helping people in their journey. When the hard work leads to finding that 'right fit' job, you see the ripple effect. The confidence level and sense of pride goes up, and a connection to the community develops." Tina grew up in and lives in East Central Minnesota and says it feels great to be working in the small towns she calls home.

*Your gift to Rise is an investment in people!
Generous supporters contribute to Rise's in many ways ~*

Please consider some of the wide variety of ways you can support Rise:

- * **Celebrate Rise** sponsorships, donations of raffle and live auction items
- * **Planned giving** through a bequest, will, trust, life insurance policy, retirement account, or stocks and assets
- * **Workplace giving** through the United Way or employer match
- * **Volunteer**, individually or as a group, in a wide range of activities and projects
- * **Give to the Max Day:** Online giving at GiveMN.org in mid-November each year
- * **Smile.Amazon.com:** Sign up online to have a percentage of your purchases donated to Rise -- simple, automatic, and no cost

For more information about these and other ways to support Rise, please contact Samantha Marks at 763-792-2450; smarks@rise.org.

A retired architect, Volunteer Steve Fiskum conducts mock job interviews to help people prepare for the real thing, helping build their skills and self-confidence! Steve's brother Ernie was served by Rise for many years until his passing.





Ronnie is known for doing quality work at New Plastics Plus

KEEPING A STEADY, even pace, Ronnie Watson feeds large pieces of plastic trim from production jobs into a massive grinder which pulverizes them into tiny pellets for recycling. His co-workers bring him gaylords a day and Ronnie seems to thrive on staying busy and meeting their production needs.

New Plastic Plus, Inc. is a custom plastic thermoforming manufacturer to a wide range of industries, including transportation, agriculture, recreation, and medical companies. Their new building in St. Michael is spacious, bright and clean, and filled with high-tech equipment producing parts for Fortune 500 companies throughout the country.

After working at other community work sites with teams from Rise Coon Rapids, Ronnie was recommended for this position at New Plastics Plus and was hired in February 2019. The company was looking for someone who would be diligent in ensuring that the recyclable plastic was first cleaned 100 percent (pure of contaminants) with an air hose before being



placed into the grinder.

“Since Ronnie has started, New Plastics has not had a single gaylord sent back due to contamination,” noted Rise Employment Consultant Jennifer Bracht. She checks in with him twice a month to help ensure all continues to go well on the job.

“His co-workers and managers always have wonderful things to say about what a great job he is doing,” she added.

Ronnie is enthusiastic about his important job. “I like to stay busy – and I am really busy here.

I have great co-workers and get along good with them. I plan to stay here a really long time.”

As New Plastics Plus employees settle into their beautiful new building, new equipment is also being added to their manufacturing processes. Senior Accountant Bruce Rabago indicated that Ronnie would be soon working on a new grinder.

“We want to make sure he is taken care of, too, and that he has a comfortable, safe work station.”

Bruce said he continues to keep an eye out for other kinds of job tasks for which people from Rise might be well-suited.

“Ronnie is a very valuable employee here at New Plastics Plus,” said Production Manager Michelle Raph. “His positive attitude, friendliness, and passion to do a good job make him a pleasure to work with. Ronnie has become not just a part of the team, but part of the NPP family.”

Ronnie lives in an apartment in Columbia Heights, and in his free time, enjoys watching movies and listening to CDs.

INTERESTED IN AN EXCITING CAREER AT RISE?

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 Art Therapist Stacy Gross who offers Art Speaks opportunities to people participating in Rise's Day Training & Habilitation programs. Here she is with Lisa Poppe at Rise Crystal. 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. Current openings are at rise.org/jobs.





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

Scenes from the 8th Annual Celebrate Rise Fundraising Gala, held October 21 at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest -- Thanks to our friends and supporters, it was a fabulous evening!

Top row: 1. Generous guests donated to Rise's Advancing Lives Fund. 2. Chester Tollefson, who started Rise in 1971, was recognized by guests. 3. Karla Leis, vice president of nVent Enclosures, opened the dinner program highlighting Rise's long partnership her company. **Second row:** 4. Warren, Paula and Jenny Johnson spoke on why they appreciate and support Rise. 5. Jan and Jon Grunewald accepted gifts from President Lynn Noren in honor of long-time board member, their husband and father, Jack Grunewald. 6. Volunteer Annie Hegernes presented a lucky winner with her gift basket.

Photos by Brian Tanning



To see more photos from this and other 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

Send mailing changes to: Samantha Marks | 763.792.2450 | smarks@rise.org