

Shifting Gears at the 2015 ARRM Annual Conference

Approximately 1,000 attendees gathered at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington on May 13 and 14 for ARRM’s 2015 Annual Conference. The ARRM Annual Conference provides excellent training opportunities for Direct Support Professionals as well as managerial staff. This year’s conference was titled “Shifting Gears”.

The highlight of the conference is the ARRM Cares Awards honoring dedicated Direct Support Professionals for their exceptional work with people with disabilities across the state. The Award program began in 1996 to recognize professional caregivers who provide exemplary services to people with disabilities. Recipients must demonstrate a commitment to providing innovative, professional services to people.

DRCC is very proud of our nominees including:

Melinda Stierns
Elizabeth Hastings
Joyce McIntyre
Cynthia Hickey
Clint Miller
Lawrence Letourneau
Cynthia Hafvenstein
Jantzen Payne
Brandon Butler
Kurt Peterson
Nikki Jasura
Katy Sampson
 and **Dominic Haugen**.
 We congratulate each nominee and say Thank You for your ongoing commitment to the people we support.



Nominees attending the ARRM conference are (left to right):
Melinda Stierns, Cynthia Hickey, Clint Miller,
Elizabeth Hastings, Joyce McIntyre and
Lawrence Letourneau.

Disappointing 2015 Legislative Session

The 2015 Legislative Session was very disappointing for the coalition of providers and advocates who supported the 5% Campaign. The goal of the 5% Campaign was to have the Minnesota Legislature pass a rate increase that would be primarily targeted to increase the wages and benefits of direct support staff. Unfortunately, in a year when Minnesota had a projected two billion dollar surplus, legislators allocated no money toward a rate increase.

In 2014 the Minnesota Legislature passed a 5% rate increase that enabled providers to give a much needed salary increase to staff.

During the years following the recession provider rates were either frozen or cut so there was an urgent need for additional funding.

There continues to be a need for additional resources. The 5% Campaign Coalition will be back at the legislature next year working even harder in support of the employees who provide direct services for individuals with disabilities.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Tributes 2

Friday Fest..... 3

Employee Milestones.....4

Little Free Library.....5

MN Self-Advocacy Conference....5

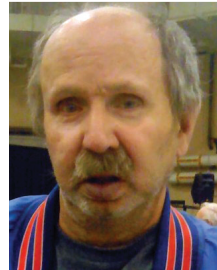
drccinfo.org

TRIBUTES

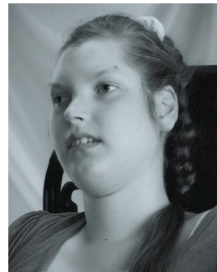
Karen Elizabeth Berntson, 59, of Duluth, passed away peacefully on Sunday, April 5, 2015. Karen was born in Duluth, Minnesota on April 18, 1955 to Julien and Lillian (Perala) Berntson. She attended Park Point and Jefferson Schools and worked at Goodwill and Pinewood in Duluth for many years. She enjoyed bowling, knitting and cooking. Despite having Down Syndrome, Karen was a social butterfly who maintained an independent and fulfilling life surrounded by family and friends. She will be fondly remembered for her kind heart and her many hugs.



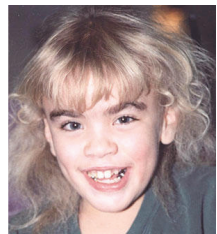
Peter Donald Morse, born on October 18, 1957 in Duluth, Minnesota was called home by our Lord on April 25, 2015. He was a graduate of Duluth Central High School. He recently retired from Goodwill Industries after 33 years of service. Peter will be missed by all who knew him.



Katie T. Stolan, age 27, a lifelong resident of Duluth, went to be with her Lord, Wednesday, February 4, 2015 while at Essentia Health Care, surrounded by family, friends and love. She was born May 4, 1987 in Duluth to David Stolan and Pamela Sedor. Katie had a sweet, innocent spirit that touched many lives and taught others how to love.



Sara Anderson, 24, was born in Duluth on Feb. 6, 1991 to Loren and Kathy Anderson. Sara was diagnosed at age 4 with Sanfilippo Syndrome. This disease would slowly rob her of many things; it became important to "Sara Proof" her home for her safety as well as the safety of others. Sara had her own way of communicating; it may have been the twinkle in her eyes or the smirk on her face. She always enjoyed her visits with her brother and sister; the news of their impending visit would always put a smile on her face. She became the proud auntie to Emma and Mariah and was able to dance at her brother's wedding.



Jason and Jake

DRCC-Tamarack men are cleaning up Esko. As they walk, Jason collects cans and Jake collects garbage from the side of the road. They are both making an environmental difference on Hwy 61 in Esko. Nice job!

Thank you

DONATIONS

George and Dadee Reilly
Dennis and Kari Ramberg
Doug and Nancy Lane
Thomas and Julie Seidelmann
The Bentson Foundation
Marlis Cran
Knights of Columbus, St. Lawrence Council
Warren and Marjorie Spannaus
Judy and Gerry Bakken

In memory of Karen Berntson:

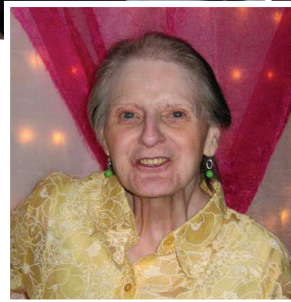
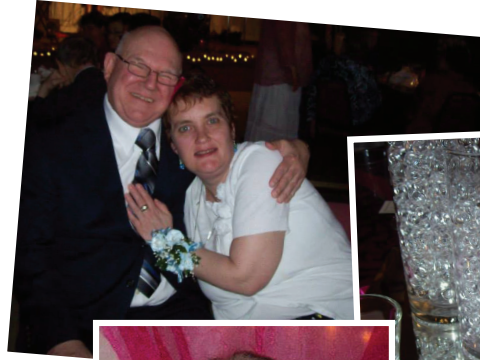
Mike Blecker
David Moschner
Sandra Anderson
Thomas Salmela
Timothy Helwig
Pamela Wutz
Patricia Toivonen
Lester Park Elementary
Richard Perala
Ruth Kalland/Kalland Family Trust
Doug and Nancy Kalland
Frank and Peg Oman
Sherry Kangas, Vicki & Kenny
Patrick and Sharon Alexander
Rod and Tricia Olson
Warren and Judy Berntson
Cindy Hickey
Kevin and Celeste Daw
Tom and Barbara Bennett
Stanley Hammer
Rolland and Marcy Royer
Holly, Stephanie and Randy Klund
Marlene Haglund
Bill and Ada Teske
Warren Lehet
Jack and Bev Hoppe
Russ and Bev Berntson
Jan and Jack Anderson
Lisa and Tim Hanson
Ted Guck
Peggy Saice
Carol Kempf
Bob Warnes
Marsha Keuten
Joan and Tim Beck and Dale
Diana and Mike Kennedy and Laney
Joan Coughlin
Kathy Mone
Sue Wilke and Stacy
Gordy and Marilyn Hanson
Ron and Maureen DeGrio
Walt and Wendy Anderson

Friday Fest

This year will mark the 7th year of Friday Fest and in November of 2015 Friday Fest will be celebrating its 75th event. The Friday Fest Committee would like to thank all of the individuals who have come to the events over the years. We have enjoyed planning events and would not be able to do it without all of you.

We would also like to thank the many volunteers that have helped out with our picnics, galas and other events.

Some of the highlights from the first half of the year include **WrestleMania XXX**, dancing, **Bingo**, **Family Feud**, a **Spring picnic**, and the **Gala**. In JANUARY, many fans were shocked when the Undertaker's 21-0 undefeated streak at WrestleMania came to an end with a loss to Brock Lesnar. In FEBRUARY DJ-Cass Act performed at the **Valentine's Dance**. Everyone's attention was captured by the **BINGO** balls in MARCH and some players found the lucky cards and won prizes. In APRIL, **Chad Marciniak** hosted **Family Feud** and everyone enjoyed ice cream and root beer floats. We had an early Spring and decided to have a **picnic** in MAY. The theme was **BBQ** and we did games that started with "B"; baseball, bean bags, and bubbles. The weather was warm and the sun shined a little. In JUNE, we were excited to have another **Gala**. The food was great and people stayed and danced right to the end. In JULY, we will be cheering on Duluth's local **Huskies** as they play St. Cloud State at Wade Stadium.



Working in the Community...

Mandy Shaw

After seventeen years of working in a sheltered workshop, Mandy, from *DRCC-Lambert*, finally realized her dream of working in the community.

She started working at the newly built Walmart store in Mountain Iron in August of 2014. Mandy likes to say, "never give up on your dream, they do come true." Congratulations Mandy!



Donovan Gibson

Donovan from *DRCC-Midway* has been working with RAVS (Range Area Vocational Supports) for almost a year. In November, he applied for a job at Herberger's and got a part-time seasonal position. Once the holidays were over he was offered a permanent part-time position. Great job Donovan!

Making a difference in the Community...

Kellie Grimsrud

Kellie from *DRCC-Galere* has been volunteering with Meals on Wheels in Duluth since August of 2014. She started delivering meals every Thursday and quickly made friends with several of the senior citizens on her route. She loves their friendly greetings and chatting with them, and they love seeing her. The staff at the Lincoln Park center where she picks up the meals are always happy to see her. Kellie enjoys carrying the clipboard with the route map and checklist. When she is done she drops off the bags and says, "All done!" Well done Kellie!



Employee Milestones



The work of DRCC is carried out by its many dedicated staff. We are again recognizing employees who have reached a milestone anniversary between January 1 and June 30, 2015. Without exception, the following employees have shown a commitment to the people they work with - staff and clients, loyalty to DRCC, and a desire to make lives better.

25 YEARS

Karen Meagher is the Program Director of *DRCC-Spruce*. She began her career with DRCC 25 years ago at *DRCC-West* as a Program Implementor (aka Program Assistant). Over the years Karen has worked at quite a few of DRCC's programs - she has been at *Merritt, Oneota, Endion*, and *14th*. She started as the Program Director at *DRCC-Valley* in 1994. Her Program Director duties increased to include the *DRCC-Gateway* and *DRCC-West* programs. In 2013, Karen became the Program Director of *DRCC-Spruce*.

DRCC is thankful for Karen's dedication to the many individuals she has worked with over the years and the quality services she has provided as a Program Director. Karen has three grown sons that she enjoys spending time with. She likes to walk her yellow lab. Her newest adventure is taking vacations and trips on a motorcycle. She doesn't drive one, but she enjoys the ride.

Pam Heinzen began working in March 1990 as Program Coordinator at *DRCC-Thalassic* and became Program Director in November 1998. She is a happy grandmother of five. She enjoys camping, traveling, four-wheeling, motorcycling, snowmobiling and spending time at her favorite place, the family cabin on Cass Lake.

Buck Erpestad has been a Program Manager with DRCC since June 1990. He and his wife, Hanna, have two grown sons. In his spare time he enjoys playing guitar, small house projects, film, travel and spending time outdoors in a moderate way.

20 YEARS

Caroline LaFrinier started her career as a Program Assistant in 1995. A neighbor provided foster care to a young child and asked Caroline if she would be willing to work with this child through DRCC. Caroline became a Program Director of the *Carlton Program* in 1996.

Caroline has always approached her job in a very "can do" fashion. She genuinely has a very positive attitude and that shows in her interactions with our families and the people we support. Caroline enjoys camping and visiting her grandchildren. She and her husband Lance have two daughters and reside in the Moose Lake area.

15 YEARS

We have several employees who reached their 15-year anniversary during the first half of 2015.

Jolynn Detlefsen - *IHFS-Lake*

Louise Holm - *Carlton*

Tia Skorich - *Endion*

Jeanne Peters - *Basswood*

10 YEARS

We also have many employees who reached their 10-year anniversary during the first half of 2015.

James Isaacson - *IHFS-Duluth*

Joanna Shady - *Triplex*

Robin Tomczak - *Soft Hands*

Michelle Mitchell - *Fairview*

Chris Freeman - *Administration*

Roseann Davis - *IHFS-Range*

Janet Hayes - *Bishop Woods*

Mary Saarela - *Carlton*

Employee Promotions

DRCC is very appreciative of our staff and would like to recognize the following employee promotions over the first half of 2015.

The following employees have been promoted to Program Director:

Edgewood Smith - *Oneota*

Paula Dalbec - *Winona*

Ida Rowson - *Fourteenth*

Amber Pedersen - *Triplex*

David Stevens - *Manumit*

Mike Gill - *Triggs*

The following employees have been promoted to Program Coordinator:

Terri Koskinen - *Lambert*

Deanna Nygard - *Soft Hands*

Mark Rowe - *Fourteenth*

Megan Kriske - *Winona*



An unforgettable vacation...

Ron from *DRCC-Triplex* recently went to see his sister in Pensacola, Florida. Ron and his staff Joanna had a great time visiting and making great memories with Ron's family. They visited the Naval Museum where he saw multiple airplanes, and he even sat in a pilot's seat. Ron seemed to love every minute and now wants to try jet skiing. This trip has unleashed an eighty-two year old to take more adventures in life.

Little Free Library

In 2009 Todd Bol of Hudson, Wisconsin built a model of a one-room schoolhouse as a tribute to his mother, a former teacher who loved reading. He filled it with books and put it in his front yard. Neighbors enjoyed the books he made available free of charge. From that one Little Free Library the movement grew. By 2015 there are over 25,000 registered Little Free Libraries all over the world.

Jennifer Hill who lives at *DRCC-Merritt* always had a goal to work in a library. As an avid reader she thought that it would be fun to work in a library taking care of books. Employment opportunities within a library system are very limited. So DRCC, through the assistance of the Golf Grant Committee, purchased a membership for Jennifer. Ryan Fraboni, a talented carpenter who works for DRCC, built Jennifer her own Little Free Library.



Jennifer and Ryan.

Jennifer takes great pride in managing the books. A variety of reading material is available for children and adults. A notebook for comments is also available and Jennifer enjoys reading the many notes of appreciation she receives.

Minnesota Self-Advocacy Conference:

The Minnesota Self-Advocacy Conference was held in St. Paul on March 27th and 28th. Several staff and clients attended the conference. The conference, sponsored by Advocating Change Together, provides training to self-advocates on how to best speak on issues that impact their lives. It is also a chance to socialize with others across the state. The Conference is a very positive experience for all in attendance.



Chasadie and Amanda.



Rita and Steph.



Mickey Ferguson, Board President Jessica Durbin, Dennis Ramberg and Kathy Anderson.

We Express Gratitude and Welcome our New Board Member

At our Annual Board Meeting, held on June 4, 2015, DRCC extended a heartfelt thank you to departing Board members **Dennis Ramberg** and **Kathy Anderson**. Dennis has served numerous terms as well as officer positions spanning 23 years. Kathy has served on the Board for 8 years and has chaired the Program Committee. We thank both of them for the commitment of their time and talents to DRCC.

Jessica Durbin continues as President for a second year. We also welcome **Mickey Ferguson** as a new Board member. Mickey has previously served on the Board.



728 Garfield Avenue
Duluth, MN 55802-2634
(218) 722-8180

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MISSION STATEMENT

*To support individuals with disabilities
by creating opportunities to live rich and
meaningful lives with family, friends,
work and community.*



DRCC Board of Directors

Jessica Durbin, President
Myron Stevenson, Vice President
Kirk Wimmer, Secretary/Treasurer
Tony Mancuso
Julie Seidelmann
Nancy Lane
Mickey Ferguson
Pam Sedor

*The Duluth Regional Care Center is
a private, nonprofit organization.
Services are paid with a combination
of funds from St. Louis, Carlton, Cook,
and Lake County Social Services, the
State of Minnesota and the Federal
Medicaid Program.*