



"The People Company"

Serving Persons with Special Needs Since 1998

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From the Director's Desk ~

We are a growing company and have enjoyed the strife and struggle of growth. As we have expanded we have needed to add several new people to our leadership team. I participate in a group every month. In this group we read books that hopefully will have a positive impact on our business. One of our recent books highlighted the importance of having the right people. In fact in developing a successful business it was emphasized that it was "first who, then what." I am glad that I had the opportunity to have confirmed what I knew to be true. It is the right people that make a company great. At AmeriServe International we have the right people. That is what makes us "The People Company"

Tom Hoff

The Connector

Choice ~ Respect ~ Participation ~ Presence

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AmeriServe International, Inc.

Making life better tomorrow because of what is done today.

Volunteers Honored at Luncheon

Hello, my name is Catherine Yopp. I am a support staff at The Planning Center, which is AmeriServe International's day habilitation program. I want everyone to know that with choices and opportunities our clients can be a very productive part of the community. As part of our emphasis on supporting clients to become productive citizens, we have had the opportunity to volunteer for Meals on Wheels of Council Bluffs this past year. With verbal prompts and hand-over-hand assistance, many of our clients had the opportunity to deliver meals to people throughout Council Bluffs a total of

97 times in 2006.

Volunteering for Meals on Wheels provides many opportunities for our clients and our program. It gives us the opportunity to apply many of the skills that we work on daily at the Center, such as social skills, personal hygiene and grooming. It teaches responsibility and what it means to be dependable. An unexpected benefit of participation in Meals on Wheels is the exercise it provides – getting in and out of the car, and walking to and from the homes and apartments. Finally, a big plus of delivering meals is the chance to meet many nice people along the route.



To honor the clients and all volunteers, Meals on Wheels, along with Harrah's Casino, sponsored a Volunteer Luncheon at Harrah's Grand Ballroom on March 12th. I was taken aback at how excited Todd, Billy and Bryan were to be part of the bigger picture. As a group, we were greeted just inside the doors to the ballroom. We sat at a table where a smaller group of people were already seated. Everyone exchanged hellos

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What We Do

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Habilitation, Respite, Consumer Directed Attendant Care, Group homes

Day Treatment

Adult Day Habilitation and Community Integration Services

Residential Support

Supported Community Living, Specialized Living Arrangements

Building Community

Building community is all about forming connections and relationships.

I used to live in the Des Moines area. I would always eat lunch at the same Village Inn. People would often ask why I always ate at the same place. I would reply that I always got gasoline at the same place too. When belabored for a more detailed response I would tell them, "I was raised in a small town. Both my parents and their parents and their parents were raised there also. Community is something I grew up with. There was not effort required to make associations. They were just there." This was very important to me and something I greatly missed in my life after I moved away.

As I moved around I discovered that the familiarity of friends and acquaintances was something I had to create. That just being present in a community did not make it my community nor make me a part of it. My way of building community for me and my family was simple. Just go to the same places with enough frequency that people will begin to become comfortable with my presence and begin to interact in a friendly and supportive way. The way in which each of us goes about accomplishing that is different.

At the Village Inn the wait staff knew where I liked to sit and pulled shades so the sun would not bother me. They did not even bother to bring a menu as they knew which four items I liked best and just asked which one and I wasn't that

big of a tipper!! The folks at the gas station would inform me which coffee pot was the freshest have my cigarettes at the counter and knew my favorite LOTTO numbers.

Ok, this doesn't sound like much of a deal, but the point I intended to illustrate was that connections are important to us all and they are only made when there is frequency of contact which, in turn, develops familiarity and relationships. When we frequent places relations that are supportive are formed. These informal support networks are the source for friends, acquaintances and relationships that are supportive and in many cases, long lasting. These relationships are the building blocks of a community.

This is a struggle for people with disabilities, particularly those who have had multiple challenges or histories of institutional care. Many have not had opportunities to interact and learn how to form relationships. The opportunities have been in groups which the care giver / support staff has always led the interaction and the persons was just "along for the ride." Groups

larger that 1-3 have a tendency to isolate in and among the participants. People in the community tend to not interact with groups as well as they interact with individuals.

Leading the way to make connections is an important role of anyone providing support to individuals with challenges. It is the responsibility of the support person to demonstrate, by virtue of their interactions, that the person is approachable and someone with whom others might want to get to know. It is equally as important to ensure the person frequents places and has a function in their presence there. It is the perception that others form from the repetitive presence of the person that will turn this from a "community outing" into an opportunity for a connection that may blossom into a relationship.

We at AmeriServe International strive to ensure that we create opportunities for connections to be made. Our personal network planning process is designed to support people in building community for them. Our community connections Planning Center works within the context of community presence, participation and roles of value to make a positive contribution. In

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Building Community (cont.)

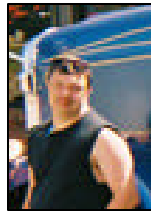
doing so, people have both the opportunity and the challenge required to form the association and relationships that make up a community.

Community is not a place but a set of relationships and

connections that form around people. Community brings a sense of belonging. Making a contribution brings a role of value and purpose to the lives of those who have met with the challenges of having a disability and overcoming those challenges

through a true support network.

After all is said and done, we all have need for the sense of belonging that community brings.



Volunteers Honored at Luncheon (con't)

and I felt confident that a good time was to be had by all. Todd, Bryan and Billy were very attentive throughout the ceremony, and were elated to see their picture printed on the certificate that we were given.

After lunch we stopped in at the Casino for a few minutes to try our luck. With just a few dollars and

few prompts we had the slots rolling and everyone laughing. Billy was surprised when a friend stopped by to say hi and exchange warm welcomes with everyone. I am honored to be part of AmeriServe International.

Respectfully,
Catherine Yopp,
Client Services Representative



Support Options

1. In-home Support—training to increase self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills within the home and community.
2. Day Treatment— specialized sensory-motor, cognitive, communicative, social, interaction and behavioral support.
3. Residential— designed to maximize consumer successes through the use of habilitative therapies, special developmental skills, participative enhancement, and sensory-motor development in the group home or specialized living setting.

**Call for more
information
today!**

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Making a Difference

AmeriServe International, Inc. carefully selects all personnel to ensure that they possess beliefs, experiences, skills, and knowledge that will assist persons with special needs in exercising a quality of life of their choice. If you or someone you know is interested in doing the right things, in the right way, for the right reasons, at the right times, we are looking for the right people.

Please call **712-322-0272** to find out how you can make a difference.



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