



**"The People Company"**

Serving Persons with Special Needs Since 1998

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### From the Director's Desk ~

*As usual requests for service have been pouring in. We have been building a new way of doing the business of supporting lifestyles of self direction and self selection for persons with significant challenges.*

*We have carved out a niche in the area of serving those that have not previously met with success in community living. In doing so, we have developed the processes that make the transition to community life a more effective experience. Our employees and the leadership team have created a company that is unlike others in the field. Going the extra mile to ensure people meet with success and creating new ways of getting it done is what makes AmeriServe International 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.

### What It Means To Be A Fisherman

A person who surrounds themselves with rods and reels, lures and stringers, and even a net is probably a fisherman. This person also sorts through their lures when it is too cold to fish, just dreaming of the day when it will be nice enough to go.



When asked for Brian's opinion on catching the big one he said, "Bigger lures mean bigger fish."

When a fisherman meets someone for the first time, the first question asked is "Do you like to fish?" Usually one of their favorite foods to eat is ... you guessed it, fish.

All of these things describe Bryan. As you peer into his room the first thing that catches your eye is a big net that he uses to pull the "bygones" out of the water. Next you spot the

tackle box chucked full of lures of every kind, and several rods that are stored gently in the corner. You can often find Bryan in the comfort of his room handling each and every lure as if it is a piece of gold. He has his favorites of course, but there aren't any of them that he would part with. When he finishes organizing them he then moves on to the string-

ers, he lays them out flat, carefully making sure there are no kinks. Bryan is very meticulous with his treasures and handles them as if they were eggs. If that isn't enough, he also has fishing pictures on his wall and albums that are oozing with pictures of fishing trips with his family.

Bryan's favorite restaurants include Red Lobster, Long John Silvers and of course the one inside of Bass Pro Shop.

In February Bryan was lucky enough to move to a house that is within walking distance of a huge lake. He hasn't had the chance to fish, yet, although he mentioned the fact that he

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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

## There May Be Angels Unaware

There was no shortage of surprises at the 2006 Ministry for the Mentally Handicapped Christmas Program. MMH retold the Christmas Story that happened in Bethlehem so many years ago. Over thirty individuals that attend this weekly ministry had a part in an exciting on-stage performance. Some of the character roles depicted were Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men, Shepherds, sheep and a host of Angels. Those performers kept the audience entertained with subtle changes, not written into the original script.

Mary waited for her cue to be seated at center stage. Doug, however, seized the moment for stardom and suddenly vacated the group of Angels in the background to occupy her empty chair. The program

managed to proceed as if it needed a star Angel at center stage all along. The many friends and family in the audience of over 100 people never knew the script had been changed.

The joy and pride showed on the faces of the performers and was obvious to all in attendance. I'm sure that a real Angel's excitement could not exceed that of Frank's when he got his wings and was able to display them on stage.

The MMH program, active in the Council Bluffs area for over 15 years, adds an important dimension to the

lives of those we serve, and the 50+ others that enjoy this weekly ministry. Whether it be the spiritual truths or the developing of "brotherly love and unity" within this fellowship, those attending MMH benefit in many ways. It may be as simple as a smile or assistance going up and down the steps that make the day special. As it says in Hebrews 13, we should always show caring and kindness for those around us, as we may be entertaining angels around us.

Larry Taylor

Client Services Coordinator



## New Additions to AmeriServe International Team of Professionals

Alan R. Blakestad and Gina Smith have joined the AmeriServe International Team!!

AmeriServe International, Inc. announced the appointment of Alan R Blakestad as Area Director and of Gina L. Smith as Client Service Coordinator Specialist.

They both have joined the corporation as part of a strategic response to the changing trends in providing services to persons with special needs.

In the Area Director position Mr. Blakestad will have operational oversight of services provided in the Council Bluffs and surrounding area. As a member of the Leadership team, he will provide direction to the development of program services for those who choose AmeriServe International as a means of support. As Area Director, Blakestad will assist AmeriServe International, Inc. expand its role as a provider of consulting and innovative specialized services for persons having significant challenges as a

result of their disabilities.

Mr. Blakestad come with a great many attributes of personal experience and personal value that he brings to the team. He served as a leader of service development in the community for persons with developmental disabilities in south-west Iowa with Lead-Way Centers Corporation in Shelby, Iowa. He also has served as a senior executive with the REM Corporation for many years. He was Regional Director of Martin Luther Homes in the mid-west during which time I had the pleasure of working with him for over 12 years.

In her role as a Client Services Coordinator Specialist Gina will provide direction and support to supervisors of several locations and will assume oversight of new locations being opened later this year. She is currently filling a vacancy created by another member of the leadership tem being on Maternity leave. As a member of the leadership team, Gina will provide oversight to the development and implementation of client services.

Gina comes to us with many years experience is serving person with significant challenges. She served as a leader and a program coordinator for REM in Council Bluffs for many years. More recently she had served as a Service Coordinator for the Department of Health and Human Services in Nebraska. Her extensive experience in providing supports will be an asset to the team in their efforts to effectively deliver services to those who have significant behavioral challenges.

We wish to welcome both Alan and Gina to the team. They will assume their positions with AmeriServe International, Inc. in March.

AmeriServe International, "The People Company", with headquarters in Council Bluffs, Iowa, serves nationally in response to changing trends in specialized service delivery and innovative supports for persons of special needs.

## What It Means To Be A Fisherman con't

has never tried ice fishing before.

The newest addition to Bryan's new house is a fish aquarium. It took him over two hours to pick out the perfect tank and all it's fix-ings. Bryan is very proud of his tank and will show you the second you walk into the door. For now this satisfies Bryan's tast for fishing but soon enough he will be at the side of the lake with a pole in his hand...waiting for the "big one."

Yes, Bryan is definitely a .....FISHERMAN!

## 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 rehabilitative therapies, special developmental skills, participative enhancement, and sensory-motor development in the group home or specialized living setting.

**Call for more information today!**

**AmeriServe International, Inc. ~ 712-322-0272**



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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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