

The Connector

MARCH 2010

IOWA

**SERVING
PERSONS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES
SINCE 1998**

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What's In a Life?

Life is full of little things that make it worth living. Mostly they go unnoticed until they aren't there anymore.

We tend to look at others and judge their happiness by those things that are obvious. A nice home, a job with reasonable income and possessions that reflect their interests, etc. are obvious to most of us. Yet, the real key to happiness lies in those things we may not even notice.

Our presence in their life may be one of the things we don't notice that makes them happy. The

presence of others and the type of daily routine activities in which they engage are all things that we may not fully appreciate, yet they are keys to their degree of satisfaction with life. Who are we to judge what those things may be? Happiness is in the eyes of each of us as individuals. Things that make one happy may differ greatly from another. Recognizing them and knowing what those things are and being able to acquire them is a matter of time and experience.

Looking for those

little things takes considerable focus and effort. As people who have chosen to support those that have challenges in life and who may not have many of the little things present we have accepted this as our mission. The primary task that lies before us is focus on the things in life that really matter. Knowing each person well enough that we are able to help discover what those things may be and learn ways to have them become a regular aspect of life as they know it is what sets us apart.

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What We Do

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Habilitation, Respite, Attendant Care, In-home Supports

Day Treatment

Adult and Child Day Treatment, After School and Summer Programs

Residential Support

Supported Community Living, Specialized Living Arrangements

Employee Spotlight: Meet Nicole Pullen



With expansion of Hourly SCL Services at AmeriServe International came the need for someone to

coordinate the services. Nicole Pullen was recently hired to fill that position. Nicole is a Nebraska native and completed her BS degree in sociology at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. No surprise, then, that Nicole is a Big Red fan. Nicole most recently held a position in the social services department of a Council Bluffs nursing and rehabilitation center.

Nicole cites shopping,

cooking, watching movies, reading and Nebraska football as special interests outside of work. She admits to being an animal lover saying, "I have a very soft spot in my heart for all animals." Of interest to our readers might be the fact that Nicole sings songs to her cat every morning! She didn't identify the songs she sings – maybe something from the musical, CATS?

We are excited to have Nicole on board to help

us with the expansion of services to people who would like assistance on a less than 24-hour basis. As the "People Company" our goal is to provide the kinds of services which allow people to achieve greater independence, and to help people to live a life of purpose and connection to the community. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about these services please feel free to contact Nicole at 322-0272.

Time to Spring Ahead!

The calendar tells us Spring is almost here, and while there are still some snowflakes in the air, the signs of spring are becoming evident. Winter has been long, with record snowfall amounts and treacherous roads. We have had to stay indoors much more

than we would have liked. Many of us have suffered from "cabin fever" and boredom.

Warmer weather means more opportunities to get out in the community and socialize with others. The guys at Avenue F (Brian H., Ben S. and Dustin W.),

as well as other people served by AmeriServe, are getting prepared for basketball and Buddy Baseball, as well as becoming involved in Special Olympics. These activities provide an excellent opportunity for people to get active and have fun in a safe environment. Everyone

can work on team building and social skills, while getting exercise and having fun at the same time. We're ready to emerge from our winter cocoon and take advantage of the many outdoor activities that warmer weather allows.

AmeriServe International Continuing Education—Basic Communication

Friday, April 16th
3:30-5:30pm

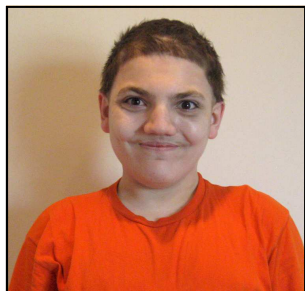
OR

Thursday, April 22nd
12:00-2:00pm

The essence of teamwork is relationships. At the core of any good relationship is effective communication. It is through communication that we share information, accomplish daily tasks and improve the lives of our clients. If you can't communicate well together, it is difficult to work closely and effectively as a team. Developing the skill of communication will help enhance your relationships, demonstrate professionalism and increase your ability to positively impact those we serve.

- Learn the process of communication
- How the 3 parts of communication can help or hinder your success
- Why there are so many misunderstandings
- Controlling the conversation

An Important Goal...Within Reach



Some teenagers complain about attending high school and can't wait until they are done. Others relish the opportunity to earn a diploma and go on to college. Brian W. is one of the "others." Brian moved to Council Bluffs and AmeriServe in March 2009 after experiencing some challenges in his young life. Brian needed time to adjust to his new-found home, new friends and new expectations. Brian had some things to conquer before the opportunity to go back to school would come his way.

Brian was sincere when he told staff he wanted to graduate from high school; he hadn't been enrolled in school since October 2008. Months passed and Brian continued to let people around him know that he wanted to go back to school. Positive changes in Brian helped convince others that earning a high school diploma was an achievable goal; he was up to the task. Contacts were made, and in cooperation with Thomas Jefferson High School and VODEC's Adult Transition Program, Brian's wish became reality when he started attending classes March 8th.

Brian is enthusiastic about the opportunity that has come his way. Never known as a "morning person," Brian now gets up early to catch a bus at 6:15 a.m. to get to school! Brian is working on math and reading as well as job-readiness skills he will need to enter the work force later on.

Brian says he wants to set an example for all the people at AmeriServe who have not, yet, earned a diploma and want to further their education. After Brian graduates at the end of this school term he wants to attend Iowa Western Community College. I wouldn't bet against him! Thanks to all those who have helped Brian reach this important milestone in his life.

What's In a Life? *Continued*

Continued from page 1 Many people we have chosen to support have had neither the opportunity nor the experience to know fully what those things may be. As we become part of their lives we must learn enough about them to be able to assist in this discovery. Our planning process incorporates an understanding that little things have big impact on our success. The proof surrounds us daily as we have participated in the lives of many who have not previously been successful in their attempts to become part of a community. We support several who have had numerous opportunities that were not successful. In one case a person had no less than 15 previous attempts that did not work for him; none of which lasted over a few months. He has been with us for over 5 years. This success can only be credited to the philosophy of the people who support him and the effort to know and understand who he is. They found the little things that make his life work for him.

"Making life better tomorrow because of what is done today" is the mission of AmeriServe International. Today is everyday and every moment. An understanding of that and knowing what to do to support it is what makes us "The People Company."

Tom Hoff,
Director of Marketing &
Business Development



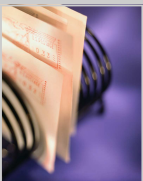
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What We Do

Residential Support

Supported
Community
Living, Specialized
Living Arrangements

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Habilitation, Respite,
Consumer Directed
Attendant Care,
Group Homes

Day Treatment

Adult Day
Habilitation
And Community
Integration Services

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, communication, 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.



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