



# The Connector

NOVEMBER 2009

I O W A

**SERVING  
PERSONS WITH  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES  
SINCE 1998**

## IN THIS ISSUE:

<a href="#">The Way We Are</a>	<a href="#">1, 2</a>
<a href="#">Employee Spotlight: Amber Points</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Ghosts, Goblins, and More!</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Pomp and Circumstance</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">ASI Continuing Education Options</a>	<a href="#">3</a>

## The Way We Are

"The Way We Were" was a great movie. At least it was back then. It was about a couple that grew to recognize that each of them was a unique individual and the experiences that made up the stories of their lives were in essence the thing that made them unique. Each played a role in the other's story and how recognition of that fact influenced the nature of their relationship.

Things have changed a lot since that movie was made in 1973. For instance, we have more computing power in our cell phones than they had on Apollo 11. But some things have not changed that much. People with disabilities still are challenged to develop meaningful relationships.

Relationships, as in the movie, evolve as we get to know the other person's story and become a part of it. From that an

understanding of what make a person unique grows.

Historically people with disabilities have had three sources of relationships; others with disabilities, family and paid support staff. From that there is one key element missing. Those associations we all call "Friends."

Friends are those we have relationships with by choice. By virtue of choice, presence and participation we have made contact with others. Through contact the association grows and by frequency of contact and interactions others have become part of our story. As each gets to know and understand the other, friendship may result.

Friends are those that bring positive things to our lives and we, in turn, contribute positively to theirs. There is value and respect. There is a mutual contribution of

support and caring. They also are relationships of choice. These things make friends unique from other relationships and associations.

As each of us become part of someone else's story and they part of ours we are both changed. The recognition of the uniqueness of individuals changes us and how we interact with them. The presentation of people's abilities and contribution changes how they are perceived by those who observe. They become more aware of the uniqueness and, by doing so, their story is changed. If you are there often enough and make contributions, others may choose to become part of your story and you may choose to be part of theirs. Again, a friendship may result.

At AmeriServe International we focus

**Continued on Pg. 2**

## Employee Spotlight: Amber Points



Fulltime employee, mother of a three-year old, guardian of a sixteen year old and college student

studying for a Master's Degree in Human Services! It is safe to assume that Amber utilizes effective time management strategies to meet the demands of her busy schedule!

Amber's employment history includes a position as a youth counselor in an emergency shelter, serving as a treatment specialist on a long-term dual diagnosis unit, and working as a team leader with people with

disabilities. Amber enthusiastically talks about the young men she works with at AmeriServe. While acknowledging there are always challenges to be met, Amber feels strongly that she has gained much from her association with the young men she serves. "It's a two-way street; they learn from us, and we learn from them." She cites the development of a relationship with each of them as "unexplainable," and the reason she finds

her job so rewarding.

In addition to spending time with her daughter, Annaliese, Amber lists playing tennis and volleyball, and watching NASCAR as interests outside of work. Amber enjoys learning and has a desire to pursue a medical degree or a PhD in Human Services. Welcome to the ASI team, Amber, and best wishes in your pursuit of higher education.

### Ghosts, Goblins, and More!

On October 30, people attending the Planning Center got to step out of character by dressing in their favorite costume and enjoying a potluck lunch together. Hot dogs from the grill, sweet potato pie and many delicious salads were enjoyed by those in attendance. Thanks to everyone who contributed food and helped with costumes. In this picture Amber assists Dusty to express, in sign, his feeling of happiness about the nice party!



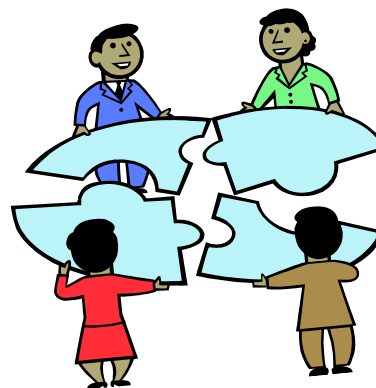
### The Way We Are, continued

*Continued from Pg. 1*

on the things in life that really matter. Our unique personal network planning process emphasizes connections with community in roles of purpose and value. The connections and resulting relationships can only create the opportunity for people

to become part of each other's story. Choosing to do so is all that remains for friendship to develop. Once the choice is made, the impact on the lives of the people involved is obvious for all to see.

We are AmeriServe International, the People Company and that's "The Way We Are."



**Tom Hoff,**  
*Director of Marketing & Business Development*

## Pomp and Circumstance

One of the goals of AmeriServe is to help our clients “lead lives of purpose and pleasure.” Like most of us, our clients have life goals that they would like to achieve, and part of our job is to help them do just that. Two of our clients, Rich and Brian, want to graduate from High School, and their treatment teams are working hard to make it happen for them.

When Rich came to AmeriServe he was excited that he would soon be receiving his High School diploma.

Unfortunately, Rich’s home school district discovered that he did not have enough credits for graduation. Knowing that this was something important to Rich, his team got to work finding out how to ensure that Rich could achieve this goal. This was the first time this situation had been encountered at AmeriServe, so it was a learning process for everyone. A few phone calls determined that Rich could be enrolled as a student at Thomas Jefferson High School in Council Bluffs. An IEP

was written that allows Rich to receive credit towards graduation by working on goals while remaining at The Planning Center, AmeriServe’s Day Habilitation Program. In the not-too-distant future, Rich will earn his High School diploma.

Another client, Brian, has also expressed a desire to complete High School. Like Rich, Brian was near the point of graduation when he moved from Wisconsin to Iowa, and finishing school “fell between the cracks.” Taking what

we have learned from Rich’s situation, Brian’s team has begun the process of finding out what he needs to complete in order to earn his diploma. Phone calls were made, faxes sent – Brian even took the initiative to follow up on getting his school records sent to AmeriServe. Thanks to his determination and the hard work of his team, Brian, too, may soon be able to achieve one of his life’s goals:



**to be a High School graduate.**

## AmeriServe International Continuing Education Options

### Incident Prevention

Friday, November 13th—12:00-2:00pm  
Thursday, November 19th—3:30-5:30pm

The best way to address an incident is not to have one in the first place! Learn the steps, tips, and techniques necessary to increase opportunities to prevent incidents.

- Understand the link between communication, relationships, and environment
- Review the stages of the behavior cycle
- Understand 5 steps related to behavior
- Establish proactive strategies
- Link the information to actions used to support specific clients

### How to Write Effective Client Programs

Friday, December 11th—12:00-2:00pm  
Thursday, December 17th—3:30-5:30pm

While writing requires creativity and gets easier with experience, there is a process or system of program writing which can make it easier and more productive. Focusing on the outcome and breaking down skill building and behavior shaping are two of the key components of that process. Join us to learn the steps necessary to get the results our clients need to help them gain the skills necessary to promote greater independence.

- The role a person’s diagnosis plays in developing a plan
- Involving the team in the process
- Identifying deficits in adaptive functioning
- Prioritizing needs
- Creating task analysis to make achievement easier
- Behavior Support Plans
- Operating according to plan



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## How to Contact Us



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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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