

Fall 2016



I-REACH 2 INC.

# Fall/Winter Newsletter

## From the Director's Chair



I-REACH 2 Inc is proud to recognize and support National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. This year's theme is "InclusionWorks."

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"By fostering a culture that embraces individual differences, including disabilities, businesses profit by having a wider variety of tools to confront challenges," said Jennifer Sheehy, deputy assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy. "Our nation's most successful companies proudly make inclusion a core value. They know that inclusion works. It works for workers, it works for employers, it works for opportunity, and it works for innovation."

I-REACH 2 has supported inclusive employment for individuals with Intellectual/Developmental (I/DD) disabilities since our inception in 1999. We want to spread the important message that we value the diverse perspectives, including those of individuals with disabilities."

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages — during October and throughout the year — by visiting [www.dol.gov/ndeam](http://www.dol.gov/ndeam).

*Tina Conley*  
Executive Director

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### IMPORTANT DATES:

- Thanksgiving, normal operational hours
- December 23—Day Services closing at 12:pm
- December 26—Day Services open at 12:pm
- January 1, normal operational hours

## Step Away From The Table

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A theme that runs throughout many of our newsletters, is the proposed and enacted changes in the Wyoming system of funding and delivering services to individuals with Intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

We return to this theme frequently because we always seem to have some movement for change coming from somewhere.

***As an organization we consistently embrace change.***

Particularly when possible improvements are so obvious. Take automobile brakes and the evolution from the Fred Flintstone model to hand brakes, disk brakes, anti-

lock brakes, and regenerative braking of today. Impressive changes that we have to love and enjoy. This does take vision. If we asked Fred Flintstone what he would want to improve regarding automobile brakes, he would have said, "Invent me some shoes."

We are presented with an opportunity to overcome some very similar issues in the design of the Wyoming service delivery system for folks with I/DD. While we wait for our state's transition plan to be approved by the Centers for Medicaid we MUST start leaning in to the fact that services are going to and should look different.

Given that opportunity over the next handful of years, let's not squander our thinking focused on yesterday's problems, today's problems, or even tomorrow's problems.

Instead, let's get people in the room who are visionaries. People who are toying with solutions to problems we will encounter 8 - 10 years from now. After all, one would think a system design should have a life of about 10 to 20 years before evolution or technology shakes it up again. At our current pace, and with our current practice, the next system design will be archaic the day it is introduced.

Why? Because we are focused on yesterday's problems. We are making inaccurate assumptions. We are not considering technology

leapfrogging a known problem. We are looking at an analog television set with a snowy picture, forgetting that analog signals ended June 12, 2009. "Oh wait – let's get a bigger antennae!" or "Better yet ... we can replay shows with a VCR."

Aaarrrrgggh! Please stop. If your suggestions for the future of services in Wyoming sound like this, please push back from the table and quietly leave the room now. We can do better.



## Room and Board Payments

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We would like to take a moment to remind all payees, parents, and guardians that room and board payments for individuals living in our Curtis Street group homes are due to the business office by the 5th of the month. We consistently are receiving room and board payments well beyond the 10-15th of each month.

In the coming months, individuals residing at our Curtis Street group homes, along with their guardians will have to sign new lease agreements as part of the Waiver Services redesign and the Centers for Medicaid final rule on Home and Community Based waiver services.

These new lease agreements will

be very similar to any residential lease agreement that a non-disabled individual would sign with a landlord, INCLUDING LATE CHARGES FOR LATE PAYMENTS.

Please get into the habit now of ensuring Room and Board payments are made by the 5th of each month.

## Planned Giving 101.

Giving to I-REACH 2 Inc. can be done either directly or through a gift model that can provide tax benefits and even income .

### Benefits of Your Bequest

- Receive estate tax charitable deduction.
- Lessen the burden of taxes on your family.
- Leave a lasting legacy.

### How Do You Make a Bequest?

A bequest is one of the easiest gifts to make. With the help of an advisor, you can include language in your will or trust specifying a gift to be made to family, friends, or I-REACH 2 Inc. as part of your estate plan.

### Your Bequest Options

A bequest may be made in several ways:

- Gift of a percentage of your estate
- Gift of a specific dollar amount or asset
- Gift from the balance or residue of your estate

### Making a Bequest of Your Retirement Assets

A retirement asset, such as an IRA account, makes an excellent bequest to us. If the IRA were given to your family, much of the value may be lost through estate and income taxes. By designating I-REACH 2 Inc. as the beneficiary of all or part of your IRA (using a beneficiary designation form provided by your custodian), the full value of the gift is transferred tax-free at your death and your estate receives an estate tax charitable deduction.

\*\*Please consult your tax advisor regarding planned giving activities.



## Person Centered Planning

A renewed focus of the Medicaid Waiver redesign is Person-Centered Planning, but exactly what does this term mean?

Person-centered planning reaches beyond service planning to help friends and supporters understand an individual's needs and preferences and plan for a positive future. It is not a new idea; it has been around for almost 20 years.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal Medicaid agency, has highlighted person-centered planning and is promoting its use through Home and Community Based Services Waivers. CMS describes person-centered planning this way:

*"Person-centered planning is a*

*process, directed by the family or the individual with long term care needs, intended to identify the strengths, capacities, preferences, needs and desired outcomes of the individual. The family or individual directs the family or*

*person-centered planning process. The process includes participants freely chosen by the family or individual who are able to serve as important contributors. The family or participants in the person-centered planning process enables and assists the individual to identify and access a personalized mix of paid and non-paid services and supports that will assist him/her to achieve personally-defined outcomes in the most inclusive*

*community setting. The individual identifies planning goals to achieve these personal outcomes in collaboration with those that the individual has identified, including medical and professional staff. The identified personally-defined outcomes and the training supports, therapies, treatments, and or other services the individual is to receive to achieve those outcomes becomes part of the plan of care."*

While I-REACH 2 has consistently embraced person-centered planning, we too, are renewing our focus in this area. We will be asking that individuals attend their plan of care meetings and working with participants and families to create meaningful and realistic goals and opportunities for everyone.

# 2016 in pictures

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## Board Members Needed:

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Are you passionate about helping others? Interested in becoming a leader in an innovative non-profit 501 (c)3 organization? I-Reach 2 Inc. is looking for new Board Members with experience in a variety of areas (Nonprofit, Developmental Disabilities, Finance, Law, Public Relations, Fund Raising/ Development,) who have proven leadership skills and a commitment to provide mission focused governance. All

positions are volunteer, but the rewards are immeasurable. To learn more about how you can help and get involved, please contact Tina Conley, Executive Director by calling 265-8086, or by email at [tina@ireach2.com](mailto:tina@ireach2.com)



## The Art of Language~ Tina Conley, Executive Director

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A few weeks ago, I was in a discussion with a colleague about language. Specifically, we were discussing how frequently the language we use in the field of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) falls short. How certain words just don't quite fit.

We talked about some of the common language pitfalls in our field – client versus participant, using terms like “money on your person” or “I went into the community today.” Pondering over this idea for a few weeks brought up one language challenge I have been contemplating lately – how often people with I/DD are described as being “vulnerable.”



Full disclosure – I have used the phrase “our most vulnerable citizens” when describing individuals who accept services from I-REACH 2. But language is an evolving thing, and I'd like to evolve with it. The more I think about the use

of the word “vulnerable” when describing individuals with I/DD, the more I realize the meaning and general understanding of the term is acting as a barrier to a more open and inclusive society.

The mission statement of I-REACH 2 is: “providing high quality, innovative, therapeutic, individualized services to adults with development disabilities and brain injuries.” and our vision statement reads, “Providing premier services that promote quality of life, independence, and ability in Natrona County since 1999” both of the guiding statements emphasize what people with I/DD *can* do, not what they *can't* do.

Using a word like “vulnerable” doesn't emphasize possibilities. It doesn't highlight strengths. It promotes what people are not. It doesn't do anything to move us forward in the effort to create a world of opportunity and lasting change.

Our very system of funding and delivering services is built on the use of terms such as vulnerable, and it has led to a system where we ration servic-

based on what people are not capable of doing.

When a jobseeker creates a resume, he or she highlights strengths. Resumes don't focus on limitations or liabilities (at least, no successful resume does). This isn't because the person creating the resume is being dishonest. It is because we all want to put our best face forward. We all want to show what we have done in the past and what we are capable of doing in the future if given the opportunity.

Does basing I/DD services on an individual's vulnerabilities instead of their strengths lead to desired outcomes? If not, should we look at a system where a person's strengths and skills are the primary factors in determining how and why services are delivered? These are tough questions, but there is no better time than now to answer them.

## Supported Employment and Other Program Highlights Jaime Cureton, Service Coordinator

- We placed 3 individuals in community integrated employment. (KJ at Ridley's (5 hours), TG at Pizza Ranch (8 hours) and RT at Intermountain Record Center (30 hours)). Two of the positions were carved for the individuals and one individual was hired for all requirements of the position. One of the individuals transitioned out of Felgoodies.
- We placed 1 individual in a seasonal position, caring for plants at Walmart. This position will be available to this individual again in the summer of 2017. This was her second job though the summer months. (12 hours a week)
- We developed a partnership with Olive Garden to provide work experience to individuals interested in bussing and hosting positions. This is a three-day, 12-hour total, event with the Olive Garden employees providing the training.
- We were referred one non-waiver individual from DVR. We placed this individual in community employment in less than three weeks. (Mendards-Part-time 30 hours)
- We met and have continued to work with the City of Casper to develop a work experience program, similar to interning, that would be available to all individuals with intellectual disabilities. A program proposal has been submitted and we are waiting for the next step.
- One of the individuals continues his relationship with the Small Business Administration (SBA). They sought him out for shredding services again this fall. He makes minimum wage and works out of their office at the federal building.
- We cultivated 4 new volunteer opportunities with the Central Wyoming Rescue Mission, The Brain Injury Alliance, The Wyoming Medical Center, and Interfaith, for approximately 20 additional hours in the community for 9 individuals.
- One of the individuals we work with is able to open, operate and close the coffee shop at Life Care independently. On occasion she works without the staff.
- We are providing personal care to an individual 3x per week which allowed her to leave the assisted living center and live in the comfort of her home with her family.
- We are providing supported living to 2 new individuals in their homes. One individual moved from Evanston and we are assisting her in making friendships and managing her day to day schedule. The other individual we are working on meal planning, preparation and keeping her schedule.
- Two individuals moved out of I-REACH 2 Inc. owned homes into a house with one more roommate who was previously living at home. They are enjoying their new neighborhood where they like to bike, bowl, and visit with a friend down the block.

## Employee Anniversaries January through October

Carey Osborn 1 Year-(also has prior service with IR2)  
 Heather Nielsen 7 Years  
 Jaime Cureton 13 Years  
 Tina Conley 5 Years  
 Jo DePaolo 2 Years  
 Kristen Smith 5 Years  
 Sandy Alexander 5 Years  
 Christina Burk 11 Years  
 Jolene Cummings 6 Years  
 Sierra Cummings 3 Years  
 Travis Johnston 1 Year

Lisa Dennis 2 Years  
 Sonny Bordeaux 3 Years  
 Micki McGuire 2 Years  
 Eric VanTassel 5 Years  
 Frankee Foley 6 Years  
 Alex Arnold 1 Year  
 Juliet Kiyai-Bartlett 1 year (also has prior service with IR2)  
 Danita Keating 3 Years  
 Derek Soltis 6 Years  
 Selena Gabriel 3 Years  
 Tracy Trumbull 1 Year  
 Durk Brown 7 Years

Heather Anderson 1 Year  
 Will Anderson 1 Year  
 Connie Davis 3 Years  
 Alex Foley 2 Years  
 Bri Sonsoucic 2 Years

***Combined years of service  
108!!!***

**"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit."  
-Aristotle**

## I Reach for ART



*I-REACH 2 would like to thank the community your support of*

### *A Night at the Ranch*

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Archery Club	Darts & Billiards	J's Pub & Grill	Old Chicago	Senator John	Wendy McGarvin
Casper Vision Center	DeAnn's Stich	Jump Craze	Old Town	Barasso	Wyoming Anglers
Charlotte Lange	and Such	Trampoline Park	Olive Garden	Shadow Ops	

**Mark your calendars for August 12th, 2017 when I Reach for ART goes**

**"Back to the Ranch"!**

**I-REACH 2 INC.**

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**United Way  
of Natrona County**

*Providing premier services that promote quality of life, independence, and ability in Natrona County since 1999.*

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