



PROGRESS NOTES

Providing residential & support services to persons with disabilities since 1971.

December 2017



DRCC has been recognized as a 2017 Top 150 Workplace by the Star Tribune – Ranked #2 in Minnesota amongst large employers

The Star Tribune's Top Workplaces recognizes the best companies in Minnesota based on employee opinions measuring engagement, organizational health, and job satisfaction. The rankings in the Star Tribune Top 150 Workplaces are based on survey information collected by Workplace Dynamics, an independent company specializing in employee engagement and retention.

DRCC participated in the Star Tribune's survey earlier this year – with an outstanding 45% response rate. DRCC is a great place to work! We are very proud of this recognition and our ranking.

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Transition Time

Earlier this year I let DRCC's Board of Directors know that I was going to retire in the spring of 2018. I gave this decision a lot of consideration and decided it was the right time for both me and for DRCC.

I have been a part of DRCC since 1993, so it will be almost 25 years when I retire. As I think about this transition, I remember all the people I've come to know and reflect on the many changes and accomplishments for both individuals and for DRCC.

It may seem like a cliché, but I believe DRCC is truly directed by its mission and guiding values. Each day staff throughout the organization make decisions and choices that are guided by these values. Whether it's a decision about services for an individual or a decision about the

organization's finances, we evaluate our plan of action in light of DRCC's values. While certainly not perfect, this philosophy permeates the organization.

I believe that DRCC is in a very good place right now. We have a committed Board of Directors, a very strong and experienced Management Team, great leadership among the Program Directors, and many, many direct support professionals who care for the individuals who rely on DRCC's services.

I am looking forward to retirement and pursuing a variety of new things but I will certainly miss everyone at DRCC.

I wish you all the best!
Michael Mills

DRCC wishes to thank the following individuals and businesses who have given generously over the past year.

- Architectural Resources Inc.
- Judy and Gerry Bakken
- Beacon Electric
- The Bentson Foundation
- Ryan and Amy Boman
- Campbell's Do-It Best
- Clearis Consulting Inc.
- Coldwell Banker (East West Realty)
- David and Teresa Corbin
- Dalco Inc.
- DSGW Architects
- Duluth Dodge
- Elite Electrical contracting
- ESC Systems
- Mickey and Joe Ferguson
- Furniture and Mattresses 4 Less
- Gausman and Moore Associates, Inc.
- Frank and Mary Gerard
- Eric Gibson
- Happy Sleeper Mattress and Furniture Store
- Hiner Home Designs
- Tom and Polly Holt
- Innovations in Quality
- Johnson Carpet One
- Johnson Mertz Appliances
- Johnson-Wilson Constructors
- Kleiman Realty
- Dale, Wendy, and Kevin Kreager
- Doug and Nancy Lane
- Licari, Larsen and Co., Ltd.
- Becky and Preston Maki
- Tony and Mariann Mancuso
- May and Vern Nordling
- Northern Business Products
- Oneida Realty
- Nick and Jan Ostapenko
- Scott Pionk Sodding and Landscaping
- PreferredOne
- Dennis and Kari Ramberg
- George and Dadee Reilly
- Martin and Laura Roller
- Tom and Julie Seidelmann
- Sinnott Blacktop Inc.
- Warren and Marjorie Spannaus
- Rosemary Tarnowski
- Kirk and Sharon Wimmer



Chili Cook off- Annette and Adam, DRCC-Laverne and Judy and Lori, DRCC-Woodland



Michael Manning, DRCC Crystal, sold over \$500.00 of fudge to raise money for People First of Duluth.

Tributes

Since the Fall of 2016 we have seen the passing of the following people who received services from DRCC. Every person will be missed for their individuality, personality and the occasional challenge. Each was full of life and will be missed by those who cared for and loved them.

- Ronny Bonneville, 63 – Burlington
- Joseph Cagle, 57 - Aspen
- Dylan Desanto, 9 – IHFS-Duluth
- Scott Kiehl, 51 – Maple
- Kim Lofdahl, 62 – Woodland
- Ron Nelsen, 84 – Triplex
- Tricia Olson, 61 – Laverne

- Russell Paaso, 64 – Aurora
- Mae Pettis, 73 – Manumit, Rockridge
- Renee Rosler – Spruce
- Richard Stangle, 71 – Woodland
- Lindsey Swartwoudt, 27 – Bishop Woods
- Marilyn Wickstrom, 66 - Rockridge

2017 Spirit Valley Days Parade



DRCC's Mission

To support individuals with disabilities by creating opportunities to live rich and meaningful lives with family, friends, work and community.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Myron Stevenson, President
- Pam Vine, Vice President
- Kirk Wimmer, Secretary/Treasurer
- Tony Mancuso
- Jessica Durbin
- Julie Seidelmann
- Nancy Lane
- Mickey Ferguson



New Home, New Adventure and New Memories

We have had a very busy building season at DRCC. Within the last year we have completed three new homes built to replace existing properties that did not meet the needs of the people we support. The properties: Burlington located in Two Harbors; Tamarack located in Esko and Juniper located in Duluth are wonderful additions. It is exciting to see how folks have responded to their new homes. Their involvement throughout the process of building gave them some ownership as to colors, landscaping and decorating their bedroom space. DRCC has two more projects that will be under way in 2018.



Employee Milestones

The work of DRCC is carried out by its many dedicated staff. We are again recognizing employees who have reached a milestone anniversary between September 1, 2016 and December 31, 2017. Without exception, the following employees have shown a commitment to the people they work with - staff and clients, loyalty to DRCC, and a desire to make lives better.

Anniversaries

30 years

Glen Billmeyer has been a reliable presence in DRCC's maintenance department since August 1986. All told, DRCC's maintenance department is responsible for 42 properties in the Duluth and Two Harbors area and the Range Cities - Glen shares that responsibility with three other men. Glen is a quiet low-key person and prefers to keep it that way. He lives in Superior.

25 Years

Lynne Thier celebrates 25 years with DRCC. Lynne's career began in 1992 at DRCC. Lynne currently is a Program Director at DRCC-In Home Family Support. She was born and raised in Iowa. Lynne is one of eleven children. Raised on a farm, she has a strong work ethic and strives to make each day better for the people she supports. She enjoys working outdoors and spending time at her cabin.

20 years

Elizabeth DeLuca has been the Program Director of the Melrose program for three years, prior to that she worked for 17 years at the Soft Hands program. Liz has had a large vegetable garden at home for many years, and worked with clients from Soft Hands to promote a DRCC garden. She is an avid runner, running marathons and ultra-marathons.

Elsa Erickson began working for DRCC in 1996 for the Woodland and Soft Hands programs, first as a Program Implementor and then as a Program Coordinator. She continues to contribute to the lives of the people she works with in significant ways. She has raised three beautiful daughters and has hosted numerous foreign exchange students in her home. Her interests include singing, kayaking and traveling.

Teresa (Tessie) Schneider started working for DRCC June 11, 1997 and is currently working part-time at Oneota where she has for many years. Over the years Tessie has also worked at Merritt and Harbor 15 (now Cedar). Along with working for DRCC she is employed as a Medical Care Coordinator and in her leisure time she enjoys cooking, taking walks and going to estate sales. She said "DRCC has been awesome to work for!"

Denise Overby started her DRCC career as a Program Implementor at DRCC-Triggs and DRCC-Glendale in December of 1997. Within the first year of her employment she was promoted twice; first to the Program Coordinator position at DRCC-Triggs, and then to the Program Director position. She remained the Program Director at DRCC-Triggs until being hired as the Program Director at DRCC-Endion in April of 2003. Denise has also been a DRCC trainer since 2003, being an excellent representative of DRCC to new employees. Outside of work, Denise enjoys being with her husband and family, her dogs, gardening, baking, hiking, and walking.

Suellen Vorderbruggen has been a Program Assistant at Triplex since 1997. She is a hard worker and very loyal to the program. Outside of work, Suellen enjoys traveling to see her grandkids on the weekends. She also likes to garden, cook, and enjoys going for long walks.

Georgette Wondolkowski began her career in our Soft Hands program and then moved to Merritt when the program was developed. She has a full-time career at Choice Unlimited but still has time to fill-in at Merritt. Fondly known as "Georgie" by the ladies who share the Merritt home she

15 Years

Carol Armstrong - Aurora
Michael Barker - Woodland
Gina Barnes - Soft Hands
Nancy Berg - Carlton
Robin Bolen - Soft Hands
Richard Fuentes - Janitor
Sandra Leino - Carlton
Ricky Lenning - IHFS-Lake

Stephanie Fremling - Oak
David Miller - Noumenon
Mary Lou Sando - IHFS-Lake
Christine Summers - IHFS-Range
Sharon Waterman - Soft Hands

10 Years

Hassan Barrie - Jitney
Kathryn Hackey - IHFS-Range
Zoey Holman - Cedar
Jared Jourdain - Fairview
Sherry Lamar - Riverside

Melissa Maki - IHFS-Range
William O'Neill - Noumenon
Ida Rowson - Fourteenth
Michele Shelton - Bishop Woods

Employee Promotions

DRCC is very appreciative of our staff and would like to recognize the following employee promotions since the Fall of 2016.

Program Director

Barb Flaig - Rockridge
Tasha Jokela - Willow
Angela Kachinske - Burlington
Vanessa Kokolis - Hillside
Melissa Koval - Crystal

Jeanne Peters - Basswood
Sara Russell - Riverside
Chris Susnik - Tamarack
Savannah Swanson - Carlton
Rob Townsend - Juniper

Program Coordinator

Lamar Bennett - Oak
Jodine Blegen - Juniper
Adam Esterholm - Willow
Dominic Haugen - Basswood
Deborah Jennison - Woodland
Jared Jourdain - Fairview
Gwendolyn Koecher - Carlton
Holly Lamar - Birch
Ricky Lenning - IHFS/Lake
Shelly Mitchell - South Grove

Shannon Murphy - Rockridge
Jade Nelson - Cedar
Jake Peterson - Tamarack
Ellyn Shomoin - Galere

Patty Tomaino has been promoted to Accounts Payable Coordinator.

Heidi Feroe has been hired as Administrative Assistant.

Staff Retirements

DRCC relies on the commitment of its employees, especially long-term employees. This past year we had a number of retirements of dedicated staff.

Lenore Ross, Program Director at Hillside for **29 years**.

Bert Clark, Program Director at Baldwin, Jefferson, Glendale and Juniper for **28 years**.

Joanne Stager, Program Coordinator at Oneota for **28 years**.

Sharon Forse, Accounts Payable Coordinator at the office for **17 years**.

Agents of Change: Mission Impossible - The 2017 ARRM Annual Conference

Approximately 600 attendees gathered at Mystic Lake Casino in Shakopee, MN for ARRM's 2017 Annual Conference. The Annual ARRM (Association of Residential Resources of Minnesota) Conference provides excellent training opportunities for direct support professionals as well as managerial staff.

Once again one of the big highlights of the conference is the ARRM Cares Awards honoring dedicated direct support professionals for their exceptional work with people with disabilities across the state. The Award program began in 1996 to recognize professional caregivers who provide exemplary services to people with disabilities. Recipients must demonstrate a commitment to providing innovative, professional services to people.

This year DRCC is proud to announce that we had an ARRM Cares Winner! Congratulations to Marcus Elliot from DRCC – Birch. Marcus works up-and-awake overnights at Birch.

"Far too often our overnight staff are overlooked" states Jeff Johnson, Program Director at Birch. Jeff goes on to say that it takes a special type of person to work overnights. Marcus does great things with the time he has to spend with the people he supports each morning when they wake up. He uses his person-centered skills to make sure they each have a customized morning based on how they like their mornings to flow. We applaud and thank Marcus for his work.

DRCC is very proud of all of our other nominees including: Jessica Bergh, Tasha Jokela, Sharon Kesti, Sherry Lamar, Amanda Carr, Barb Flaig, Cole Johnson, Carol Kainz, Gwen Koecher, Deanna Nygard, Diane Bergum and Karissa Maynard. Again thank you for your commitment to the people we support.

Autism Respite Grant

Last year St. Louis County Health and Human Services applied for a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to explore developing supports and education for professionals and family members who have children on the Autism Spectrum. Part of the grant is to provide respite care to families who are not receiving any supports through the waiver program. DRCC and Trillium services responded to the RFP (Request for Proposal) and were awarded contracts to develop services. This is truly a collaborative effort and both agencies work to meet the needs of families referred for respite services.

A large part of the grant was the development of curriculum used to educate parents and professionals. The overall theme of the training is using Applied Behavioral Analysis techniques to explore the unique needs each child has. Individuals attend a 24-hour training course developed and taught by Dr. Susan Larson-Kidd and Kara Long, OT. For sessions held at DRCC, child care has been provided by DRCC and Trillium staff. We believe that this service, and the training provided, will assist families and professionals as they work with children and adults who have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.



DRCC day of caring for the United Way.



DRCC-Winona, started his own pizza business and was hired to cook his pizzas for a board meeting.



DRCC
Supporting Abilities

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Halloween 2017



DRCC- Southgrove Merritt Days 5/10k walk/run tradition

