

REMEMBERING RENO

On May 6, 2021 the entire Mainstream Living family was shocked and saddened by the loss of former President/ CEO Reno Berg. Reno led Mainstream Living for over 35 years, leaving a lasting legacy on the organization and for people with disabilities across the state. He fought for community-integrated housing during a time when there was often push-back from neighborhoods. During one memorable moment, a public official told him he was out of order and he responded, "The hell I am." That was Reno - a

man with a big heart who never hesitated to speak the truth.

Those of us who were fortunate to work with Reno will forever be grateful for his wisdom, passion, and humor. We will remember a larger-than-life guy who loved his family and fishing and who was a fierce advocate for our members and their families. Many people have inquired about ways to honor Reno's memory. If you would like to contribute to the Reno Berg Endowment Fund, please contact Amber Corrieri at acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org.



Message from Leadership - Celebrate Success

Summer 2021 has been quite a turn from the experience of summer 2020. We are thrilled that the last few months for our members and staff has been filled with entertainment and fun. While the Delta variant of COVID-19 is on the rise in many communities across the country, we are fortunate at Mainstream Living to have a high vaccination rate among our members and staff. There is no question that the vaccine not only saves lives, but has also allowed our members to once again be involved and engaged in the community. As you can see from some of the pictures, we've been to Adventureland, farmer's markets, parades, parks, museums, circuses, and sporting events (just to name a

few). We hope vaccination rates in our state continue to increase to not only protect the health and safety of those who are immunocompromised or unable to be vaccinated, but to prevent additional restrictions that are often difficult for our members. Mainstream Living will remain cautious as we move forward. Mitigation measured will be continually assessed to protect health and safety while ensuring that members are afforded opportunities to be active in the community.

One other bright spot this summer was our recently announced wage increases for staff. Mainstream Living has been working with the Iowa Association of Care Providers to advocate for increased state reimbursements that would result in higher wages for Direct Support Professionals. Thanks to the advocacy of our stakeholders, our hard work has paid off. While there is still more to be done, our financial position has allowed us

to implement a \$1.00 per hour increase for all hourly staff and an increased starting wage for new hires of \$13.00 per hour. We are appreciative of the Board of Directors' approval in recognizing the diligence and dedication of our employees. In this challenging labor market, we are optimistic that this increase will help us to bolster our retention and recruitment efforts.

There is no question that the last 18 months has been trying. The stress, confusion, grief, trauma, loss, and loneliness, have left a lasting impact on all of us. We know the pandemic is not over and further challenges lie ahead. However, the things that our organization and our members have accomplished over the last several months are remarkable and we must continue to celebrate success. From the Mainstream Living family to yours, we wish for all of you to find your success - big or small - and celebrate with us.



Community Partnerships at Work

During the pandemic, many of our members identified new ways to be active in the community and several developed an interest in bike riding. However, going on an actual bike ride was often a challenge because staff members did not have bikes available to accompany member on their rides. Thanks to a grant from United Way of Story County, Mainstream Living was able to purchase 12 bicycles for both staff and members to use. The purchase of bikes generated a great deal of excitement and we kicked things off with a bike safety and fun event in partnership with the Ames Police Department.

Nearly 50 members and staff visited Brookside Park on a rainy day at the start of the summer to ride bikes with Ames Police Officers, meet McGruff the Crime Dog, tour a fire truck, and learn about bike and pedestrian safety. The Ames Police Foundation also generously donated 18 helmets for members and staff to take home and use while riding. Thank you to United Way of Story County and the Ames Police and Fire Departments for your support! The bikes and helmets have already been in high use this summer!



Mainstream Moments

In keeping with our theme of celebrating small successes, here are a few heartwarming stories from our members and staff.



John is a resident at Fremont, our 11-bed RCF-PMI. He is a professional photographer and recently took some lovely pictures of some other “residents” at Fremont.

William has been with Mainstream for about 15 years and three years ago moved from our hourly program to one of our daily sites. Since his move, his mental health hospitalizations have improved dramatically. He has also been able to get more assistance with binge eating and a recent doctor’s appointment found a loss of more than 100 pounds! His doctor told him he lost a whole person! It has been wonderful to see such a dramatic change in William’s health and wellness.

The team at our Stonebrooke location in Ames was recently recognized for meeting an internal goal for the first time! They were treated to a little celebration for all of their hard work.



Mainstream Living has started a new process to check in on some of our hourly members to make sure they are receiving adequate support which has become especially important during the pandemic. A recent call to Melanie proved to be a great moment. Melanie reported that she is doing well and expressed how much she has loved working with Christina and Ashley who she said are “two of her favorite people.”

Thank You

Thank you to the Mary Greeley Medical Center IT Department for spending a Saturday helping us with some much-needed yard work. The group graciously agreed to clean up multiple sites in Ames, trimming trees, pulling weeds, raking, mulching, and more. If you have a group interested in volunteering, please contact Amber Corrieri @ acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org.

