

## The Importance of Our Workforce



HCBS and mental health services. Higher rates have allowed us to raise hourly staff rates by \$1 for current staff as well as increasing our starting wage to assist in recruitment efforts.

At Mainstream Living we are proud that our current mean hourly rate for the Direct Support Professional position is \$14.28. In addition, during the past 12-month period, a full-time DSP who met the eligibility criteria received an additional \$10,000 in wage enhancements and COVID related incentives. (That translates into nearly \$5.00 per hour more based on a 40-hour week.)

Mainstream Living will continue to engage at the national, state and regional levels to highlight the issues and needs of our DSPs and members. We are hopeful that the recent attention on these challenges from our funders and policy makers can finally help pave the way for desperately needed transformations for our workforce. Longstanding staff-shortages and pay challenges persist on a state and national level. Despite very high demand for our services, wages remain low and many direct care workers live at or near poverty and rely on public assistance.

As wages in other sectors increase, it has become difficult to compete in the labor market, creating a significant shortage in the direct care workforce. Ten-year estimates project that more new jobs will be added in direct care than in any other occupation. Year after year, we have described the pressing need to address direct care

job quality, but this year is different. Direct care workers have demonstrated their importance throughout the pandemic, and the mismatch between their challenging roles and their compensation has been thrown into stark relief. If there was ever a time to transform direct care jobs and stabilize this critical workforce, it is now. The time has come for all of us to speak up. Let's build on our success. Please join us and help multiply the voice our members and families. Please share your stories with your local, regional, state and national representatives. Stress the importance of our workforce and how they support the needs of our members and families, and ask them to support rate increases that will allow us to pay our direct care staff better.

I cannot thank our staff enough for their dedication to our mission, vision and values. Mainstream Living is exceptional because of what the staff does on a daily basis. Every day at every location they are the face and voice of Mainstream Living.

Thank you,

William Vaughn  
President/CEO

At Mainstream Living we believe that the caring, committed relationships between our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and our members are at the heart of quality care. Those relationships are the foundation of our mission. Our DSPs work best when they receive high-quality training, living wages, and respect for the central role they play. Year after year we have educated and pleaded with policy makers and funders in hopes that they would prioritize the needs of our DSPs, and acknowledges the challenges we face with a diminishing workforce.

We are glad to report that over the past year we have had some real success putting the needs of our members and DSPs in front of policy makers and funders. The Iowa's 2021 legislative session was our most successful year with an additional \$11 million in funding for mental health, and HCBS services. Thank you to the many of you who have helped us in our advocacy efforts. We have seen increased funding for both

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Now hiring compassionate and dedicated **Direct Support Professionals** to work with adults with disabilities in residential and community settings.

**Full/part-time positions | No experience necessary**



## Celebrating Milestones

Mainstream Living has a well-deserved reputation for having some of the longest-serving and most dedicated staff in our industry. Each year Mainstream hosts a luncheon to recognize individual staff members who are celebrating work anniversaries. Recognition is given to those beginning at five years of service and again for each five year increment of service. Unfortunately, we have made the decision to cancel our tenure luncheon due to ongoing concerns with the pandemic. Instead, our leadership team sent personalized letters and gift cards. We are very proud to announce that we recognized and gave tenure awards to 50 employees in 2021.

- 12 people received an award for 5 years of service
  - 13 people received an award for 10 years of service
  - 5 people received an award for 15 years of service
  - 5 people received an award for 20 years of service.
- “Legends” of Mainstream Living (25+ years)**
- 4 people received an award for 25 years of service
  - 3 people received an award for 30 years of service
  - 2 people received an award for 35 years of service
  - 1 person received an award for 40 years of service

## Your Help is Needed



While Mainstream Living is often associated with our services for those with intellectual disabilities, we also operate an 11 bed Residential Care Facility for Persons with Mental Illness (RCF-PMI). The RCF provides a stable and supportive housing option for adults with

Members served at the RCF have few resources and often lack natural support networks and we tend to look to the community for donations, especially during the holiday season. This year, we are working to re-furnish the RCF-PMI with furniture that is specifically designed for long-term care facility. In the past, the furniture at the facility is used and worn and is frequently replaced. Purchasing furnishings that are intended to be used in a long-term care facility will not only provide greater comfort for the members, but give the program much-needed stability where maintenance is concerned.

This holiday season as you consider gifts to organizations, we hope that you will help support our efforts at the RCF-PMI. Persons with mental illness are some of our most vulnerable members and often overlooked and underserved in society. A gift to the RCF-PMI will make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve and we humbly ask for your support. Donations can be sent in the attached envelope or made online at [www.mainstreamliving.org](http://www.mainstreamliving.org).

For more information, please contact Amber Corrieri at: [acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org](mailto:acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org).

severe and persistent mental illness. The service philosophy centers around strengthening an individual's abilities while lessening the impact of their disability. Each member's strengths, needs, and skills are assessed and services are tailored to meet each individual's distinct needs while providing new options for gaining independence and achieving personal aspirations. While the RCF provides structure and support 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, we aim to create an enjoyable and engaging environment.

## Keeping Our Members and Staff Safe

Mainstream Living recently hosted two vaccination clinics to provide COVID boosters and flu shots to members and staff. These clinics were a follow up to those held in January and February where, in partnership with CVS, we administered COVID vaccines to over 600 individuals. To date, approximately 97% of our HCBS members and 86% of mental health members are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Studies have shown that COVID-19 is especially harmful to people with disabilities, the elderly, and those with underlying medical conditions and we are grateful that so many of our members and/or their families have chosen to protect themselves from this horrible virus. We are pleased to report that 80% of our staff is fully vaccinated. Mainstream Living continues to provide education and incentives to employees as means to encourage high vaccination rates. We are currently developing plans and policies to comply with the federal vaccination mandate should it be upheld in the judicial process.



## Remembering Beth Cheville

Beth Cheville was one of the founding families of Mainstream Living. She and her husband Norman were parents to four children, including Carol who was born with a life-threatening congenital heart defect and later confirmed to have “serious mental retardation.” The diagnostic team recommended that Carol be placed at Woodward State Hospital and Clinic, which at the time, housed 2000 residents and staffed by a mere 300. The conditions that Norman and Beth observed during their visits were troubling and, with the help of Story County social workers, Beth investigated options that would allow Carol to receive services yet live at home. Ultimately, there was not a single resource available for children with severe intellectual disabilities.



Physically and emotionally exhausted, Norman and Beth accepted that there was no alternative but federally-subsidized foster care, made possible through the creation of Medicaid in 1965. Carol joined five other children with special needs in a single foster home in Nevada, where her family and grandparents visited her as often as possible. For Beth, Carol's four years in foster care were a source of tremendous guilt. Despite Beth's efforts to visit with food, to mend Carol's clothes, and to see that the foster care family understood Carol's needs, she recognized that her daughter was losing weight. Beth informed state social workers, who upon investigation immediately closed the home. Carol returned to her family, malnourished and with no measurable gains in development.

Norman and Beth suddenly found their lives converge with thousands of parents wanting more for their children. Compelled to advocacy, Beth was guided not only by her love for Carol but her inviolable commitment to helping all children with intellectual disabilities lead fulfilling, visible lives in their communities. As Carol regained strength at home, Beth began the search for residential programs that would give her the tender care she deserved. She and Norman's efforts to navigate a broken state system were featured in an award-winning Iowa Public Television documentary titled “The Others,” which they hoped would awaken state legislators to the need for increased funding in support of the mentally handicapped. At the same time, they located a residential center in Forest City designed by a visionary mother who understood the primary role of therapeutic methods in the care and development of children with special needs. There, Carol received the love and instructive care essential to her development.

During Carol's seven years at Winnebago Handicapped Services, Beth devoted hundreds of hours to the Story County ARC and to an emerging Mainstream Living. Beth supported other mothers and their disabled children in Ames. She purchased and delivered books and pamphlets to Story County libraries so that families desperate for information might access ARC programs. At the same time, she and Norman worked closely with the Hadwigers, Juliuses, and Samuelsons to envision a non-profit organization they named Mainstream Living. In 1977, the Story County Developmental Center and Mainstream Living formed a partnership with a common board of directors. In her support of this effort, Beth assumed leadership roles and took joy in the satisfaction of seeing other children and adults access quality services for the first time.

Carol would eventually be required to leave her Forest City home due to reaching adulthood and with no adult programs in Ames, she went to live in a chronically understaffed nursing home. Through the 1980s and 1990s Beth continued to serve on ARC and Mainstream committees and boards, and with the launch of a new group home on South Duff, Carol finally moved to Ames. At South Duff and Clark Street homes, Carol has enjoyed a continuum of care and normalcy of routine absent from her life since her teens.

In 2021, Carol moved to a newly constructed home, named The Beth Cheville House, a testament to a woman who never gave up hope for her daughter. For sixty years, Beth's vital contributions to the ARC, the Story County Developmental Center, and Mainstream Living have improved the lives and learning of hundreds of children and adults in central Iowa. This house honors the inspiring and extraordinary advocacy of Beth Cheville and will always be a place for Carol. May Beth's efforts and Carol's house serve as a reminder of the constant vigilance and energy required of all those who protect the rights and opportunities of those with intellectual challenges.