

# mainstream connection

## Do Something Amazing!

**S**omething AMAZING is coming to Mainstream Living! We are excited to announce the Be Amazing! Race, a fun and unique event coming to Ames on Saturday, June 15. Patterned after the CBS show "The Amazing Race," this event combines challenges that are physical, mental, and sometimes silly, which scatters teams of two all over Ames in an effort to win the grand prize — \$1,000 cash...or MORE!

The Race begins and ends at Coldwater Golf Links in Ames, but everything in between is top secret. Like the television show, teams are given a clue at the starting location that leads them to their next checkpoint, where they must complete a challenge to receive the next clue. The race continues with teams following the clues and completing challenges until they reach the finish line.

Registration for this one-of-a-kind event opens on April 1 at [www.beamazingrace.kintera.org](http://www.beamazingrace.kintera.org) and is limited to the first

30 teams\*. While the team registration fee is just \$100, teams will be encouraged to solicit their friends and family for donations, which will support Mainstream Living's programs for persons with disabilities. Teams will also be offered incentives for fundraising, which will provide advantages throughout the Race. If you're not up for racing, or miss out on the registration, there will still be plenty of action. Come cheer on the teams or attend the Finish Line Celebration, hosted by Coldwater Golf Links that evening. Not only will the winning team be presented with the big check, but there will be plenty of food, beverages, entertainment, and fun for those in attendance.

Please visit [www.beamazingrace.kintera.org](http://www.beamazingrace.kintera.org) for information on our sponsors, schedules, race rules, and updates. If you have additional questions, please contact Amber Corrieri, Director of Development, at 515-232-8405 or [acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org](mailto:acorrieri@mainstreamliving.org).

\*Mainstream Living employees are not eligible to register for the event until April 22.

## Deana's Story



Deana's family first recognized her mental health symptoms at the age of eight, but was not diagnosed until 5th grade. She received a diagnosis of Major Depressive Disorder with paranoid features, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Psychotic Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and obsessive personality traits. At only 11 years old, Deana had her first psychiatric hospitalization.

For the next eight years, Deana was hospitalized numerous times for suicidal ideation and self-injurious behavior. From 2004 to 2011 Deana lived in 10 different placements until she came to Mainstream TAY program on February 4, 2011. For several months, Deana lived with two other roommates. She struggled to build trusting relationships with staff and her roommates. As a method to cope, Deana would often cut herself. Deana agreed to move to another TAY house, hopeful that a change in the environment would help her overcome this obstacle to her

recovery. After moving into the new house, Deana continued to engage in cutting behavior. These incidents would occur multiple times during the week and would often require medical attention. Concerned about her safety and recovery, a meeting was held with Deana to develop a support plan. Deana struggled to engage in this meeting, agreeing with staff's recommendations. A detailed support plan was put into place, but after weeks of running the new plan, Deana continued to struggle with her recovery. Another meeting was held and during this meeting Deana opened up about her barriers. Staff had assumed that Deana struggled with using positive coping skills. Deana identified asking for help as the largest obstacle to her recovery. Focusing on this, her plan was modified.

Since the modification of her plan over a year ago, Deana has only had a few minor relapses in her recovery. She is now aware of her triggers and what she needs to do for herself every day. She is now working two days a week, attending groups on a regular basis, and has become a positive role model to her roommates and other peers in the program. Her newest goal is to move out into her own apartment within the next few months. Deana has shown her peers, family and those who work with her everyday what recovery really is. Deana has helped remind all of us that even if you stumble back a few steps, you can still move forward.

### SAVE *the* DATE!

Saturday,

June 15, 1:00pm

PUTT ON THE GREEN, STUFF YOUR FACE,

LEARN A DANCE\*

& *that's just the first*

30 minutes

Win \$1000...or MORE!

REGISTRATION STARTS APRIL 1\*\*

\*EXAMPLES ONLY. NOT ACTUAL CHALLENGES \*\*EMPLOYEE REGISTRATION BEGINS APRIL 22



# A Story of Empowerment

**H**ere at Mainstream Living one of our core values is Empowerment. Kent Knoll's story paints a clear picture of a man who gained control over his own life with the support of his family.

Kent was born on March 20, 1951 to Ivan and Lola Knoll in Adel, Iowa. He lived with his mother and father until 1993. At that time his mother and father were starting to age and needed support with this incredible young man who was still living at home and getting support from his mother and father with the daily needs he could not provide for himself. Kent and his family went on the journey of finding a service provider that could care for Kent's needs and still keep him connected to the things that were the most important to him; his family and the community of Adel. Kent ended up living in a home in Des Moines with seven roommates. The situation was not ideal, but of all the options available to him it was his best option. Kent lived in a small bedroom with an adjoining bathroom that he shared with another roommate. Kent was still able to spend time every weekend with his mother and father. He was still able to get back to Adel for sporting events and celebrations. Kent was doing well, but dreamed of the day he could go back home, to Adel.

Almost 10 years later Kent and his family built a beautiful home in Adel that would support four persons with intellectual disabilities. The home is 100 percent accessible and has bedrooms that are the size Kent had dreamed about since he moved out of his family home. The home was donated to Mainstream Living with the understanding that we would provide services to Kent in his home. The home was completed and ready to go in November 2007. Kent had to have two housewarming parties because of the number of people that came to see his new home. There were more than 100 people that attended the parties. From friends, roommates, family and the community of Adel, the house was filled with people that are an important part of Kent's life.



Kent's connection to his community and the need to have contact with others is what are still his driving force today. He is very into the Internet, technology and just spending time with people he cares about. Kent used a Dynavox to type words to communicate with others. He used this keyboard and computer for nearly 20 years because he was used to it and it met his needs. Kent and his mother went out every Friday to go to a movie, walk the mall and grab a bite to eat. In August 2011, Kent's mother passed away. Kent continues to go to church with his father most Sundays. Fridays are still the night Kent goes to a movie, walks the mall and goes out to eat. He now does this with staff, roommates or his brother. Kent is still very involved in school activities, as he goes to almost every Adel home football and basketball game with his father or brother. In October of 2012, to keep up with this ever-changing world, Kent got a new WeGo communication device that will help keep him connected to everything he loves.

With the support of his family, friends and that driving force to be connected, Kent is a man who has control over his life and is where he has always wanted to be; home in Adel.



# Enclaves Provide Meaningful Opportunities



**B**efore James came to Mainstream Living, he had had severe mental health issues that were isolating him socially, and negatively affecting his health. However in the short time he has been with the organization, Jeff Franklin, his supervisor, has seen drastic positive changes within him. Franklin notes that James has opened up socially to others, is watching his diet and has made serious efforts to stop smoking. But James does not live in a Mainstream group home, nor does he receive hourly services from Mainstream. Instead, all of these positive changes came about after he began work at the Sauer Danfoss enclave, a vocational program run through the MELC program.

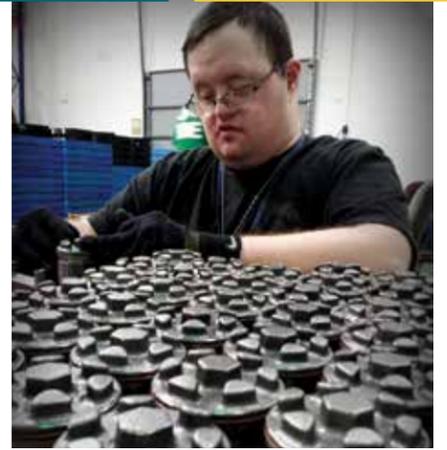
The enclave is an area within the Sauer Danfoss factory where people with disabilities can work with extra support if needed. Two job coaches supervise and support eleven people as they work on projects such as simple assembly, sorting, repackaging and other tasks. This is just one of several enclaves, which in total employ around 60 workers at four different sites in Ames and Des Moines.

Steve Gehlsen has been involved with the enclaves since their inception over 20 years ago, and has been in charge of them since 2007. The goal of the program, he says, is to help people develop job skills in order to move onto independent employment in the community. He notes, however, that there are several barriers that prevent those with disabilities from finding and holding competitive jobs. This, in essence, means that enclaves will often become a long term way for persons with disabilities to work.

Gehlsen and his team have widely expanded the opportunities for those with disabilities to be meaningfully employed and to retain employment. "[Enclave workers] know they have an advocate," explains Gehlsen, referring to enclave supervisors. Workers are of all different skill levels, and some need a lot of assistance and guidance, while others need little to none. Enclave supervisors are there to encourage people to make the right choices to remain employed. In this way, the job coaches act as a buffer between workers and supervisors, making sure both sides are able to overcome any barriers that may arise from a worker's disability.

And as the enclaves become well-established in their respective companies, supervisors and other workers begin to accept their fellow employees. One enclave has a large lunchroom, and rather than eating in a big group, enclave workers will sit at different tables and talk with employees of the company. Many have forged strong friendships because of these interactions. Gehlsen recalls that recently an employee of Sauer Danfoss went to a basketball game with Mark, an enclave worker. In this way, the program has helped to normalize those with disabilities as members of the community.

But as with all programs at Mainstream Living, the main purpose of the enclave program is to enrich the lives of participants. Evan, who has been working at Sauer Danfoss for about a year now explains how staff has helped him deal with distractions and stay focused. "Someone says bad words, staff helps calm me down," he says. David, another employee remembers other jobs he has held, and he speaks highly of his enclave supervisor. "Jeff is very nice," he says. "I have more support with him." And with James, it appears that his life has significantly improved while working at the enclave.



"He always had the skills," says Franklin. "It just seems like he's blossomed out." He goes on to describe James's exceptional abilities with mental math, and how his job has given him a useful outlet for this. As James comes to learn the value of his abilities, he has gained more confidence in himself. It is not unreasonable to think that this confidence has spilled into other areas of his life. It may well have been the impetus for his decisions to stop smoking and eat right, as well as efforts to become more social with those around him.

In the end, a steady job provides the same benefits for enclave workers as it does for anyone, regardless of ability level. It is the flexibility and advocacy of the enclave system, however, that makes jobs accessible to persons with disabilities in a much broader way. With the recent expansion of the program at Sauer Danfoss, the team at MELC hopes to reach even more people in the coming year, bringing success to everyone they can.



## A Word With You

By Reno Berg, President/CEO

You will want to check out our website at [www.mainstreamliving.org](http://www.mainstreamliving.org). If you click on "Programs and Services" you will see a new addition entitled "Virtual Tour of Homes"

We recently completed taking videos of all homes/facilities owned or leased by Mainstream Living. Case Managers, referrals, persons served and families may see all of the facilities we operate by clicking on individual sites. This will allow those being referred for services and their families to get an inside look at the facility where a vacancy has occurred. We hope this new addition to our website will prove to be useful and efficient in providing information about our residences.



Mainstream Living is now on Facebook! Connect with us on Facebook for updates on special events and other important things happening at Mainstream Living.