

LifeWORKS for Karen



When a person gets a job, there are a great deal of emotions that go along with it. People often feel happy, nervous, excited, and afraid all at the same time. Because LifeWorks helps people find and keep employment, we see these emotions all the time. We get the privilege of seeing excitement when they get hired. We celebrate with the individual. We assure them we'll be there to provide any needed supports, to ensure their success. We witness pride, especially when the first paycheck arrives. It is an honor to be part of this, in a person's life.

Karen Cirks is served by LifeWorks. She was ready and eager to find a job. Although she has an employment barrier, she also has considerable work skills. A segregated work setting like a sheltered workshop was not the best plan for her.

Karen and LifeWorks started looking for a job through our Supported Employment program. This unique service's goal is to help individuals with employment barriers find employment with businesses needing workers, for the mutual benefit of both. On March 19, 2017, Buffalo Wild Wings hired Karen and she began to work. Karen's duties include sweeping, mopping, vacuuming and cleaning restrooms. This has proven to be an extraordinarily good match. Karen says, "I like my job. I like the hours I work and being able to work gives me self-pride." Buffalo Wild Wings says, "Karen is very reliable and does quality work."

A variety of other local employers have embraced this service. Currently, LifeWorks offers job supports at 13 locations in Humboldt and Fort Dodge. We provide job development or job coaching supports to over 25 individuals. It is gratifying to see people thrilled to find a job, and employers happy to find an employee. Individuals who've found employment like to share who they work for and what they do. Pride abounds.

If you are interested in employing someone through LifeWorks, or having LifeWorks help someone with an employment barrier find a job, contact Vocational Director Curt Duffield at 515-576-2126.

Staff Anniversaries

25 Years or More

Lorraine Ackerson
Pam DeWald
Jill Matthes
Julie Miller
Damaris Moser
Teresa Naughton

20 Years or More

Diane Doolittle
Carrie Fritz
Angie Gibbs
Deb Hanson
Kristie Miller
Sharon Phillips
Richard Scisco

15 Years or More

Nancy Burnett
Lynne Doherty
Terri Friesth
Beth Lind
Joan Olson

10 Years or More

Curt Duffield
Chris Eslick
Wayne Nilles
Jeff Oatman
Patreesha Presswood
Michelle Syferd
Sandi Vaughn

5 Years or More

Sally Ackerson
Sally Andrews
Dan Brown
Angel Carr
Rebecca Evans
Dawn Fedkenheuer
Heather Fetters
Jennifer Gottschalk
Ashley Harms
Heather Hiesterman
Laurie Lagerstrom
Deb Lewis
Kelly Miller
Melissa Naeve
Joe Perry
Drew Ruby
Pam Smith
Aundre Whitfield
Rhyan Wing
Kathy Zimmermann
(as of 2/15/2020)

Doing What We Didn't Want to Do...For the Right Reasons

Although LifeWorks prefers to work with an investor rather than owning property, sometimes it makes sense to buy buildings.

West Fork Services owned the properties located at 302 9th Street North ("9th Street") and 401 South Taft Street ("South Taft Villa"). Both are in Humboldt. Thirteen individuals served by LifeWorks reside in those buildings. West Forks' Board of Directors made the decision to sell the property.



9th Street

They worked with several potential buyers, but for whatever reason nothing panned out.

Because West Fork could not find a buyer, their only option would have been to sell the buildings through auction. Such action would have entailed the property being vacated, individuals finding a new place to live, location changes, potential staff changes, and more.

Because LifeWorks is in a stable financial position, preferred to own buildings over seeing individuals required to move, and leadership supported the idea, LifeWorks' Board of Directors approved the building purchases. 9th Street and South Taft Villa were purchased in July and December, respectively. A special thanks goes to LifeWorks Board member Nick Cochrane, who donated his time and expertise as



South Taft Villa

an attorney to ensure the sale went smoothly.

Some have asked why LifeWorks avoids property purchases. After all, owning real estate can be seen as an investment. LifeWorks avoids property ownership, first, in order to focus on services. Property problems take our eyes off our mission. Secondly, it is also more natural for a person to rent from a landlord rather than a nonprofit like LifeWorks.

Vocational Site and Business
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Fax: 515-576-2251

—Attention Guardians and Conservators—

Effective January 1 2020, Iowa changed how guardianships and conservatorships are established or maintained. These reforms were at least five years in the making, and aims to improve protections for people under these rights restrictions. InfoNet Iowa Issue #12 included an article by Scott Lyon, Staff Attorney for Disability Rights Iowa. Here are highlights from his article:

—All new guardianships will require a hearing and a record of the reasons why the guardianship is necessary. Existing guardianships will continue, but may be subject to some other, additional requirements as mentioned below.

—Guardians must file an Initial Care Plan with the court, containing information about how the guardian will use their decision-making authority and what the guardian plans to do for the protected person. For existing guardianships, “Guardians [...] have continuing authority to perform acts concerning the protected person that were authorized prior to January 1, 2020 through the date of the guardian’s previously scheduled annual report.” The Supreme Court has also provided an Initial Care Form that is mandatory for use by guardians who are filing reports without assistance from an attorney. Currently serving guardians should plan to file this initial care plan with their next annual report.

—The new law requires annual reports on every guardianship. Waivers or extended reporting periods are no longer permitted.

—All new, prospective guardians will have to undergo a background check for criminal history, sex offender, and abuse registries prior to appointment.

—The new law now requires conservators (but not guardians) to post bond or a bond alternative.

For those interested in learning more about the new law, a video for guardians containing accurate information about the new guardianship and conservatorship laws will be available from the Institute on Guardianship and Conservatorship, a collaborative effort of the University of Iowa and Drake University law schools.

LifeWorks will also host an educational forum. Details are featured to the right of this article. This is a free event for anyone interested in learning more, whether a family member, a professional stakeholder, a person who has a guardianship, or even a judicial system employee.

—Guardians, Come Learn More!—

What: Guardianship Law Update

Presenter: Scott Lyon, Staff Attorney with Disability Rights Iowa

When: Wednesday, March 25th from 5pm-6pm

Location: LifeWorks vocational site, 1303 A Street, Fort Dodge (across from Tom Thumb)

RSVPs appreciated to 515-576-2126. We plan to have a light supper available. Freewill donation accepted.

The Mission of LifeWorks Community Services

To provide opportunities for growth and achievement for persons with disabilities who face barriers to independence and integration in employment and daily living.



The Fort Dodge Knights of Columbus donated \$5,463.74 to LifeWorks on January 23rd. Pictured are Lexi Weiss, Joel Groth, Teresa Naughton, and Wayne Nilles.

March is Disability Awareness Month

To increase awareness, watch for LifeWorks’ weekly Facebook posts. Share them far and wide! Be on the lookout for news in the local media as well.

If the work LifeWorks does is important to you, and you want it thrive, consider giving a gift to the LifeWorks Charitable Foundation. For more information, contact Executive Director Teresa Naughton at 515-576-2126.