

## Special Interest Articles:

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- Iowa to Co-Host National Rehabilitation Association Conference



## President's Report

What an amazing training conference we had in Ames! I think Lindsay Walker and Jessica Schneider deserve a hearty round of congratulations for putting the conference together so well, along with all the volunteers and board members who pitched in.

This is what I saw at the conference:

- Students from Drake and the U of I talking to seasoned professionals, sharing their insights and experience about rehabilitation counseling.
- Presenters and exhibitors sharing their knowledge about issues we may or may not have been aware of.
- Clients and colleagues being recognized for their efforts by an appreciative membership.

Yes, I even watched an Iowa State game. Not the way you'd expect "Mr. Hawkeye" to spend his President's Reception. But it was a BLAST!! It was one of those great IRA social moments that you always hear about but really have to be there to appreciate.

There's a New Years toast that goes "May be the best of this year be the worst of the next," meaning it's only going to get better. I know that's true for 2014. The national conference is scheduled for Des Moines and it's a fantastic opportunity to showcase IRA and what we do. Everybody's nervous about how we'll pull this off. My answer? "Like we always do." It will be off the charts. Next year is also a political year. Nobody wants to hear about that but everything we do is political. Learn the issues and how they affect not only you but the people we serve. Let your legislators know how you feel about upcoming bills that affect our lives, our jobs, and our clients.

This year we said adios to Jonathan Ice as he moved to New Mexico for a new job. This year also was the first time in forever that Tim and Marcia Gracey weren't a part of the conference. All of the members of IRA owe these three people such a debt of gratitude for their hard work and spirit that have helped shape our chapter. There are other long time members to thank too who have helped me during my tenure as president. But there are also new folks; students and other professionals that haven't been members that long, who are stepping up and becoming an important part of IRA. 2014 will be a great year for IRA and soon it will be the worst compared to the years to come. So as I said at the Awards Banquet, "If you're a member of IRA, thank you. If you're not, why aren't you?." Spread the word.

*Jeffrey Morgan*



## Conference Report

This year's 2013 IRA Conference was a great success, if I must say so myself (and hope you all agree! :) With over 70 attendees on Wednesday and over 80 on Thursday, the turnout was wonderful and I observed firsthand the involvement and dedication that our members have to learning and growing in the world of rehabilitation.

There were a few road blocks along the way, but that is to be expected with any planning, right? Due to the government shutdown, Mr. Michael Murray from the Office of Personnel Management was unable to attend as one of our keynote and breakout speakers. Mr. Murray would have been a wonderful asset to our conference, and was very disappointed that he could not make it. We hope to incorporate him into our trainings in the near future and have already started to discuss this! Thanks to some quick responses and wonderful generosity, we were able to fill Mr. Murray's breakout sessions with a nice piece on transition from Heath Pattschull with Johnston Community Schools, our own Ellen Sokolowski provided a wonderful presentation on legislation, and Dr. Bob Stensrud from Drake University spoke on employer development. I can't thank them enough for stepping up to help during that time. Of course we also had several other wonderful speakers that I will not be able to all address in this article, but was truly proud of the knowledge and insight they brought to our attendees to help us improve in our jobs and the work we do with our candidates/clients. I did want to make a quick note of the inspirational and courageous presentation that Mike Parker opened our conference with. His words were moving, uplifting, and most of all, inspiring. I walked away from his presentation with a renewed sense of dedication!!!

We were also very fortunate to have a wonderful venue, the Quality Inn and Suites. I felt as though they were extremely accommodating, and Cathy and staff were quick to help us or resolve any problem if needed. They also allowed us to bring in our own food and drink, and we were quite fortunate that Noodles and Co. in Ames offered to donate several different noodle platters for dinner during our Wednesday evening entertainment (which was wonderful as always, performed by the Heath Allen Band). They also provided us a spacious room for breakouts and the silent auction, which had a fantastic turnout! We will be donating \$100 to Youth and Shelter Services in Ames due to the great participation by all of you!!

As things slowly wind down (yes, we still are working on finishing paying bills, sending thank yous, etc.). I have enjoyed looking back on what a valuable conference we had this year and reading the feedback that each of you have provided me so that we can continue to improve each and every conference. I truly hope that all of you, as well as our community attendees, were able to walk away with a new prospective on the field of rehabilitation!

I hope to see you all at the 2014 National Rehabilitation Association conference, housed here in the great city of Des Moines next October. This will be the perfect opportunity for our state and association to show what valuable leaders we can be in the field of rehabilitation, and I am truly looking forward to it!

*Lindsay Walker*

## Conference Awards Recap



IRA Achievement Award recipient Dede Six with counselor Jessica Schneider

Nominated by counselor Jessica Schneider, Dede Six was awarded the IRA Achievement Award, which honors the achievements of a vocational rehabilitation client. Dede works full time as a front desk associate at The Best Western in Ames.

As a job candidate working with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, she successfully completed her goal of earning her bachelor's degree from William Penn. She also worked as a front desk assistant at the Fairfield Inn in Ottumwa, IA, where she built a strong relationship with her co-workers and supervisors. This gave her a competitive edge when applying for positions in the Ames area. She is now hoping to one day move into a management position. Dede continues to provide leadership and encouragement to her sorority sisters at her alma mater, William Penn. Dede accepted her award alongside her fiancé, Geoff of Ames and her parents from Batavia, IA.



IRCEA Counselor of the Year, Jackie Wiperman

Nominated by her colleague and friend, Mike Williams, Jackie Wiperman proudly accepted the IRCEA Counselor of the Year Award. High praise was given for the time and commitment she provided to her clients while working as the Director of the Iowa Client Assistance Program for 8 years. Mike highlighted Jackie's education and work history in his presentation, noting that "her honesty, professionalism, knowledge and expertise made her one of the most effective CAP advocates. She offered a model for the nation in how CAP and VR can work together to serve clientele most effectively." Jackie was also known for her time as an assistant in the counseling department at Drake University and actively volunteering her time for events for students in the counseling program. She is an active member of IRA and IRCEA, serving as treasurer. Jackie accepted her award with many thanks for the support that had been provided to her over the past year.



IRA Chuck Wood Award recipient, Alex Watters

The IRA Chuck Wood Memorial Award showcases an individual with a disability who has been recognized for their achievements and has attained a high level of independence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency in the community. The IRA Chuck Wood Award was presented to Alex Watters by IVRS supervisor Mary Ott and counselor Adam Dahlke. Alex has not only been advocated for people with disabilities since the time of his injury but also is using his voice to advocate and educate others about spinal cord injuries. Alex graduated from Okoboji High School in 2004 and went on to earn his Bachelor's Degree from Morningside College in Sioux City. He graduated from Creighton University in Omaha, NE in May 2011 with a Master of Science degree. He completed an internship through the American Association for People with Disabilities in conjunction with the United States Department of Education. His internship was in Washington, D.C. for 10 weeks. He also obtained experience in civil rights work during his internship.



Bill Donohue Award recipient, Cindy Kurtz-Hopkins

Cindy Kurtz-Hopkins of Ottumwa was awarded the Bill Donohue Award for Outstanding Service. She was presented by IRA President-Elect Lindsay Walker. Cindy has been recognized for her intense support, leadership and advocacy for Individuals with disabilities in Southern Iowa. She works as the director of Vocational Services and is a job coach for the First Resources Corporation. Not only does Cindy strive to meet the needs of her clients through community employment, but she also provides numerous hours of volunteering in her community and church. She accepted her award with her husband, William, and supervisor David Wilson, CEO of First Resources. It was quoted that once you meet Cindy, you will never forget her. She continues to inspire others around her to do their very best. Cindy will now be nominated for the National Margaret Fairbairn Award with the acceptance of the Bill Donohue.

## Counselors Learning, Growing, and Having Fun Images from 2013 Conference



## New Board Members

Announcing the results of the IRA board election held Thursday Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> in Ames!

President -- Lindsay Walker  
 President-Elect – Diane Hernandez  
 Vice President – Jessica Schneider  
 Secretary – Ellen Bunkers  
 Treasurer -- Janelle Burger



Board Members at Large (two year term)  
 Kevin Dalin  
 Brian Dennis  
 Matt Bruinekool  
 Jessica Badding (as president of JPD)

### Board for 2013

**President:** Jeffrey Morgan  
[jeffrey.morgan@iowa.gov](mailto:jeffrey.morgan@iowa.gov)  
 319-354-4766

**Secretary:** Valerie Hillner  
[valerie.hillner@iowa.gov](mailto:valerie.hillner@iowa.gov)  
 319-234-0319

**Membership Chair:** Jamie Phipps  
[jamie.phipps@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:jamie.phipps@blind.state.ia.us)  
 515-249-9137

**President-Elect:** Lindsay Walker  
[lindsay.walker@iowa.gov](mailto:lindsay.walker@iowa.gov)  
 641-682-7569

**Treasurer:** Jonathan Ice  
[jonathan.ice@blind.state.ia.us](mailto:jonathan.ice@blind.state.ia.us)  
 319-365-9111

**Publications Editor:** Diane Hernandez  
[diane.hernandez@mchsi.com](mailto:diane.hernandez@mchsi.com)  
 515-321-5393

**Past-President:** Gary Johnson  
[Gary-johnson@uiowa.edu](mailto:Gary-johnson@uiowa.edu)  
 515-491-7260

Preferred mailing address  
 (for checks):  
 509 20<sup>th</sup> St NE  
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

**Board Members:**

Jamie Phipps  
 Mike Williams  
 Matt Bruinekool  
 Jamie Schwickerath  
 Kemal Delilovic  
 Diane Hernandez

**Vice President:** Jessica Schneider  
[Jessica-Schneider@iowa.gov](mailto:Jessica-Schneider@iowa.gov)  
 641-682-7569

**Legislative Chair:** Ellen Sokolowski  
[esokowski@mchsi.com](mailto:esokowski@mchsi.com)  
 712-254-1021



Iowa YLF Alum and Intern, Emmanuel Smith

### More Pics from the 2013 Conference



Rosie Theier speaking about Drake University student chapter of IRA



## Legislative Report

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP) is taking up the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. The House of Representatives had earlier passed their version of this legislation.

On June 20, 2013, the HELP Committee held hearings regarding the “Developing a Skilled Workforce for a Competitive Economy-Reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act.” Testifying at this hearing were David Mitchell, Administrator, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Steve Partridge, President, CEO, Charlotte Works, Charlotte, North Carolina; Beverly Smith, Assistant Administrator and State Director for Adult Education, Office of Adult Education Technical College System of Georgia, Atlanta, GA; Alan Rosenberg, VP, Chief of Staff and Chief Administrative Officer, Temple University Health Systems, Philadelphia, PA.

Their testimony as well as questions and answers can be found at the Senate HELP Committee website in video format. Testimony is also available in text format as well.

*Ellen Sokolowski*

A decorative graphic featuring stylized fireworks in blue, red, and purple, and a pen nib with a blue ink trail. The fireworks are scattered around the central text.

## Iowa to Host 2014 National Rehabilitation Convention

**October 30 - November 2, 2014**

**Des Moines Marriott Downtown  
700 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50309**



## IRA Student Chapter Wins Membership Award

In our May Newsletter, we announced that IRA received recognition for membership recruitment. We are happy to announce that IRA's Award of Excellence for Student Recruitment has continued which means it covers a full year August 2012 through July 2013. Although student members are recruited all over the state, we would like to continue to

recognize the support of the Drake University Student Division of the Iowa Rehabilitation Association (DU-IRA) in their help in recruiting students.

## More about DU-IRA

DU-IRA has had a busy year which started in spring of this year when the NRA recognized DU-IRA as an official Division of IRA and Drake University recognized it as an official student organization. The students are holding regular monthly meetings during the fall and spring semesters to encourage professional growth and networking. Also, they organized this year's Brag and Steal which drew in 60 rehabilitation professionals. DU-IRA would like to announce that all IRA members are welcome to come to our meetings. IRA would like to encourage attendance to help with collaboration and networking. You may visit their website at <http://du-ira.org> to check out their **Events** Tab. You may direct any question to [info@du-ira.org](mailto:info@du-ira.org).

## Our Next Event:

12/13 - Friday, 6 - 8 pm - Holiday Social @ Star Bar

## The current officers for Fall 2013.

President - Kevin Dalin  
President-Elect - Marcela Hermosillo  
Vice President - Terry Thomas  
Secretary - Meg Morgensen  
Treasurer - Matt Lundeen  
Board Member - Diane Hernandez  
Board Member - Julia Villalta

Iowa Rehabilitation  
Association

Membership:  
304 5th Street  
Decorah, IA 52101

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We're on the Web!  
*See us at:*  
[www.iraiaowa.org](http://www.iraiaowa.org)

**Save the Date!**

**2014 National Rehabilitation  
Association  
Conference**

**October 30 - November 2, 2014**

**Des Moines Marriott Downtown  
700 Grand Ave, Des Moines, IA 50309**

**IA REHAB ASSOCIATION**  
DIANE HERNANDEZ  
MEMBERSHIP  
15278 HAWTHORN COURT  
CLIVE, IA 50325

**COMPANY NAME**