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President's Report

The tables have turned. As I write my first president's letter, I am sitting in the Mayo Clinic, supporting a family member participating in an intensive, three-week pain rehabilitation clinic. Yes, I am now on the customer side of the rehab process. I'm the one trying to make big changes -- the kinds of changes that make people motivated, scared, sometimes resistant, and ultimately empowered. I am learning so much, both personally and professionally. The folks at Mayo are (no surprise) incredible, smart, evidence-based, miracle workers.

This program strives to give people the tools they need to manage chronic pain and live full, active, satisfying lives. We are not even half way through the process, but here is a brief picture of what I have learned so far.

1. Being on this side is hard. Even in the most client-centered environment, being held accountable for whether you are reaching for your own goals can be trying, hard – so incredibly worth it – and tough.
2. The mind-body connection is freakishly cool and powerful. At its core, this program uses Cognitive Behavior Therapy to address pain. We are all (family and participants alike) learning how to live with suffering and real pain, but not let it run our lives. Mayo has a multidisciplinary approach that provides instruction and insight on how to live a disciplined, productive, balanced, purposeful life and how doing that actually reduces suffering. Living a full, active life may not decrease pain, but it can lessen the suffering that results from it. This idea gives me a feeling of satisfaction because as vocational rehabilitation counselors we know that work often provides the structure, social interaction and sense of purpose that can reduce all kinds of physical and mental pain. We should never forget that we provide more than opportunities for employment; we also help provide hope, meaning, and purpose – and, in that, actually reduce the debilitating aspects of our clients' mental or physical conditions.
3. We need people. This program at Mayo is the kind of life-altering event where you meet others who understand your struggles. You learn new

skills together -- leaning, venting and supporting each other along the way. I am eternally grateful for the people I have met here, and for you,

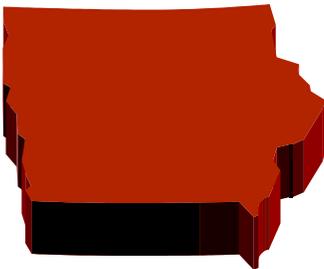
my colleagues. I will never be able to appropriately express my thanks to those who hold me up and push me forward.

You, my friends, set high bars. I am grateful for them, and for the support, encouragement and knowledge you provide to help me reach my goals. Part of the reason that IRA, and other professional organizations exist is so we can grow professionally, together. We need to celebrate the villages that propel us to new heights, and help our clients identify the supports to do the same.

So here's to new challenges and the village that is IRA and our greater disability community. I look forward to seeing how we can continue working together to help our clients address the tough parts of making change, understand how their whole being (mental and physical) contributes to their success, and assist them in identifying the supports so vital to creating a productive, rewarding lives.

In Gratitude,

Diane Hernandez



State Legislative Report By Jeffrey Morgan

The Iowa Legislature hit the halfway point this last March. The most notable accomplishment of the session so far was passing a 10 cent a gallon gas tax which will provide funds for fixing roads and bridges. The first “funnel” deadline has come and gone with the next being on April 3. Only about one in 12 bills makes it into law so we’ll see what they decide to act on. However, bills that come out of three committees (Appropriations, Ways and Means, Government Oversight) are immune to the legislative funnel deadlines. So bills that spend money, deal with oversight on government spending, or changes taxes can be discussed at any time during the session.

A number of proposed bills deal with disability issues such as mental health advocates, ICF/ID bed limit and two bills regarding the proposed closure of the two state Mental Health Institutes. One postpones the closure until “a suitable and appropriate comprehensive and long-term care and treatment plan is developed by DHS and approved by the Legislature” and the other allows them to continue admitting patients until June 30th 2015. The biggest battle over the state’s budget has yet to be resolved.

DHS is currently scheduling four public meetings across the state to discuss plans to change Iowa's Medicaid system into a managed system care, privatizing the administration of the state's \$4 billion insurance program. No-one is quite sure what this will mean for providers or when the roll out of the new system will occur.

For more details about what’s going on in Iowa, visit

<http://www.infonetiowa.org/news/newsletters/2015-infonet-4/>

DU-IRA Report

Drake University Student Division (DU-IRA) has received new life through the efforts of 1st Semester Students.

The new officers who have agreed to be in their positions through the end of the year are as follows:

Kim Karwal - President
Jenna Batten - President-Elect
Damien Chance - Vice President
Millie Cowles - Secretary
Gloria Graves - Treasurer
Ashlee Inman - Board Member
TBA - Board Member

Look for some exciting activities coming this fall, Kim

Conference Report

The conference will be held at the Quality Inn in Ames Iowa October 14, 15th, 16th. Hotel rates will be \$55 with a state ID. Speakers are getting lined up for a great conference with topics covering WIOA and motivational interviewing.

Brag and Steal

Hello everyone! I have toured the FFA Enrichment Center on the DMACC Ankeny campus, received a contract, and am waiting for the deposit check to rent their large conference room and one meeting room. Brag and Steal will be held at this facility on Friday, June 26th from 8:30am-4:30pm (registration from 8:00am-8:30am). The name of our conference is 'Culture of Collaboration'. Our committee currently includes, Jenna Batten, Millie Cowles, Ashlee Inman and Kim Karwal, all Drake University Rehabilitation Counseling students. At our first meeting, we identified topics and possible speakers, and are in the process of contacting them about their availability. Our last meeting was Monday, March 23rd at 8:00pm on the Drake Campus (Meredith Hall, Room 102). If you are interested in being on the committee, we invite your participation and input. If you have any questions or what to know how to get involved, please contact me.

Jackie Olson Leech
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SAVE THE DATE!

*BRAG & STEAL CONFERENCE
FRIDAY, JUNE 26TH*

8:00am - 4:30pm

*FFA ENRICHMENT CENTER
DMACC - ANKENY CAMPUS*

IOWA REHABILITATION ASSOCIATION

DRAKE UNIVERSITY STUDENT CHAPTER-IRA

REGISTRATION DETAILS AVAILABLE AT www.ira-iowa.org

Questions - bragandsteal@du-ira.org

Or call Jackie at (515)210-8587

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Rehabilitation
Association

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.iraiaowa.org

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**SAVE THE DATE
STATE CONFERENCE**

**Quality Inn in Ames
October 14, 15th, 16th
Hotel rates will be \$55 with a state ID**

Topics for sessions will include WIOA and motivational interviewing

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