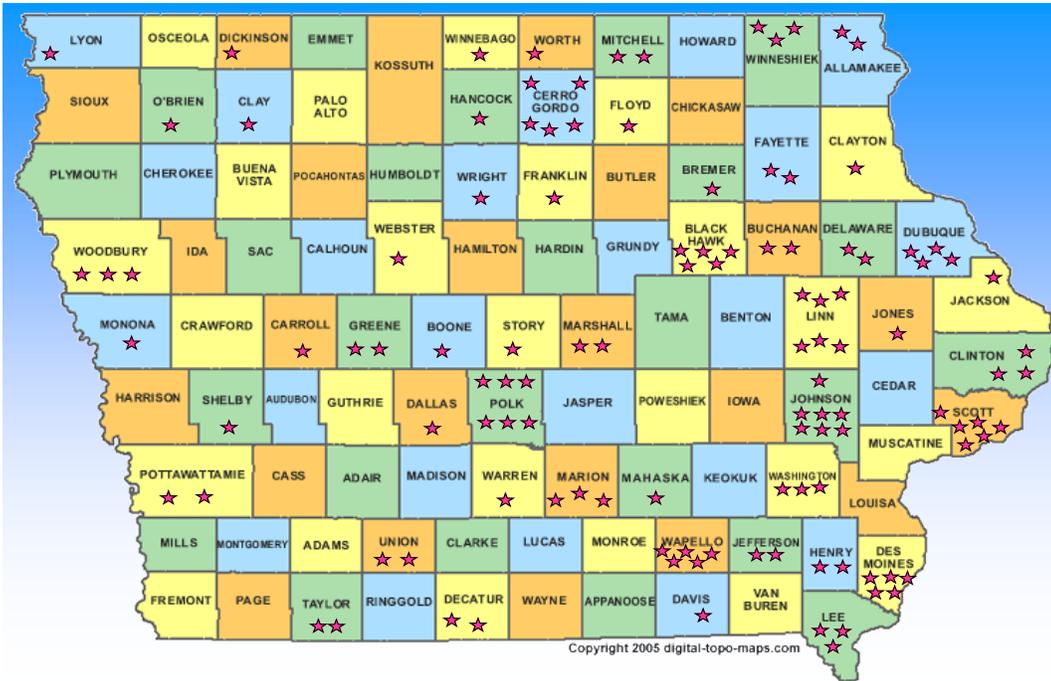


IOWA SELF-EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM — WE MEAN BUSINESS!

Feature



Iowa Entrepreneur
Emilea Hillman (and Jerri)

Read more about this young entrepreneur in these publications:

Alliance for Full Participation

Independence Bulletin Journal

Barista Newsletter

Helping 117 Iowans achieve success in Self-Employment in FY 2008–2010.

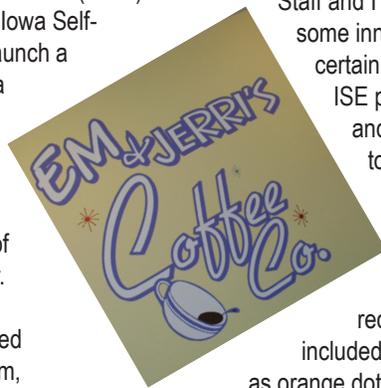
Iowa Self-Employment Program helps bring business success to Iowans

November 10, 2010

Dear Senator Schoenjahn,

There are undoubtedly a number of great things happening in your district, but I believe there is a special story that deserves some extra attention. Emilea Hillman is a client of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) who utilized the services of the Iowa Self-Employment (ISE) program to launch a coffee shop in your district. As a Business Development Specialist in the ISE program, I had the privilege to work with Emilea and want to share with you the business success of an amazing young entrepreneur.

Born with a rare birth defect called Agenesia of the Corpus Collosum, Emilea's parents were told she would most likely need to be institutionalized. The defect results in the partial or total absence of the structure that connects the hemispheres of the brain, preventing communication between the two sides. The Corpus Callosum coordinates signals from different parts of the brain and facilitates thinking. Emilea also has hydrocephalus, requiring a shunt to be placed in her head to relieve pressure and prevent further damage to fragile brain tissue.



Emilea came to Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, seeking assistance to pursue her desire to work and find a place that would allow her to do so. She wanted to be self-employed and open a coffee shop in Independence, Iowa. With family support and a job coach to assist with strategies regarding functional limitations, IVRS counselor Lois Staff and I determined that, with some innovative services, this was certainly a feasible job goal. The ISE program provided financial and technical assistance to Emilea to help make her dream of business ownership a reality. IVRS also provided funding for Emilea to receive barista training that included special task cues such as orange dots and audible sounds to assist with equipment usage, as well as flash cards designed by her job coach to help with task memorization.

Em and Jerri's Coffee Shop celebrated their grand opening earlier this year. It is a local favorite serving daily lunch, specialty coffee and teas, pastries, and ice cream. Not only does the coffee shop fulfill a need in the community for a local gathering spot, it also employs three individuals with disabilities at a rate higher than the employment wage



opportunities that might otherwise be available.

As a part of the ISE program process, I look forward to providing follow-up consultative services to Emilea over the next 24 months and watching her growth as a small business owner and accomplished individual. IVRS serves many Iowans like Emilea who are considered "Most Significantly Disabled." It has been a privilege to work with Em on her self-employment journey. She seldom misses a day and works 40 hours a week.

What a wonderful example of using the funds allotted by the Iowa legislature to help turn a tax-consumer into a tax-payer and independent business owner!

Kochell Weber-Ricklefs
IVRS Business Development Specialist