



# State Rehabilitation Council *Legislative Update*

March 2011

## Members of State Rehabilitation Council

Mari Reynolds, Chair	Des Moines
Joan Bindel, Vice-Chair	West Des Moines
Craig Cretsinger	Spencer
Angela Gandrud	Ames
Barbara Guy	Des Moines
Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel	Des Moines
John Mikelson	Columbus Junction
Jeff Mikkelsen	Cedar Rapids
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Jackie Wipperman	Grimes
Dwight Carlson	Des Moines

## Vocational Rehabilitation: Investing in Iowans FFY 2010

### Vocational rehabilitation is an investment in Iowa

- Approximately 96 percent of successful IVRS clients remain in Iowa, working, paying taxes, and contributing to their communities.
- A total of 387 IVRS clients were on public support for living expenses (SSI, SSDI, TANF, General Assistance).
- Of those, 70 now support themselves, a savings of \$489,432 annually for the state.
- Of those, 34 IVRS clients received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) at the time of their applications. Rehabilitation of these individuals saves Iowa \$136,728 per year. That's nearly \$683,640 over 5 years.

### The investment pays off

- A total of 2,217 IVRS clients with disabilities obtained employment in the 2010 federal fiscal year.
- Iowans with disabilities served by IVRS in FFY 2010 earned \$16.1 million more than was spent on the entire VR program.
- Their income is an estimated \$43.8 million annually. This is an increase of \$30.7 million annually from application.
- IVRS helps increase earnings in Iowa by over \$30.7 million; over \$8.4 million in increased earnings and over \$22.3 million from increased employment.
- After 10 years, the state receives an average \$294 return on every \$100 of State Appropriation originally invested in IVRS clients.

## *In the News*



Through his own inventiveness, Chris Gates has launched a business called Gater Unlimited LLC to design or modify equipment for the disabled. Gates was assisted by the Iowa Self-Employment Program to fund his start-up cost and enable him to have continued support. Iowa Self-Employment is a program of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

**View Story on KWWL**

## SRC holds Legislative Reception



The SRC held a legislative reception at the Capitol on March 1.

We enjoyed meeting with the legislators and having an opportunity to discuss issues in vocational rehabilitation.

**Pictured are (from left): State Representative Dan Muhlbauer, Denise Hubert (IVRS), Mary Augustus (IVRS) and Jeff Mikkelsen (SRC).**



# STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Mari Reynolds  
Chair

Joan Bindel  
Vice Chair

March 1, 2011

Dear Legislator:

The Iowa State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a body of citizens, in partnership with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS), appointed by the Governor to provide guidance and advice on issues impacting rehabilitation in the State of Iowa.

The members of the SRC realize that Iowa State Government is in a very difficult budgetary situation. For every \$21 IVRS loses in state funds, they also lose \$79 from the federal match. Therefore, over the past three years IVRS has lost more than \$6,000,000 of revenue due to state appropriation cuts.

		State \$ Cut	Federal \$ Lost	Total \$ Lost
2009 Initial Appropriations	\$5,995,123			
2009 Ending Appropriations	\$5,783,677	-\$211,446	-\$ 781,258	-\$ 992,704
2010 Initial Appropriations	\$5,301,786	-\$481,891	-\$1,780,508	-\$2,262,399
2010 Ending Appropriations	\$4,734,291	-\$567,495	-\$2,096,801	-\$2,664,296
2011 Initial Appropriations	\$5,266,421	\$532,130	\$1,966,133	\$2,498,263
2011 Current Appropriations	\$5,039,632	-\$226,789	-\$ 837,948	-\$1,064,737
2012 Governor's Recommendation	\$4,596,254	-\$443,378	-\$1,638,209	-\$2,081,587
Total		-\$1,398,869	-\$5,168,591	-\$6,567,460

IVRS staff members have done an excellent job to keep these reductions from reducing the quality services they provide. Our focus continues to be on serving people with disabilities and assisting them through education, training, and the job search process, as well as to meet other special needs. In these difficult economic times, we ask for your continued support of our programs and your full consideration of the impact that additional budget cuts will have on the people of Iowa who we serve. Thank you again for your dedication to Iowans with disabilities.

Sincerely,  
*Mari Reynolds*  
SRC Chair



## Beneficial Partnerships

Two years ago DNR and IVRS developed a partnership that would increase opportunities for IVRS consumers while proactively addressing DNR's goals for an inclusive workplace. A process of screening and referring qualified candidates for customized training and/or employment opportunities at DNR was established resulting in positive outcomes for both DNR and IVRS.

## Results to Date:

- 27 IVRS candidates referred for training
- 10 IVRS candidates hired
- 16 IVRS candidates have enrolled in national service programs

# One Success at a Time

*This article appeared in the Clayton County Register, March 16, 2011*

**By Pat McTaggart**

A combination of pluck and determination, an open-minded employer and the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) came together last fall to make a dream come true for Caroline Sparks, a young woman afflicted with cerebral palsy. The disease is caused by damage to the motor control centers of the developing brain during pregnancy or early childhood and, among other effects, results in limits to movement, posture and communication.

Caroline's wish was a simple one - she wanted a job at Fennellys' Irish Pub and Restaurant in Elkader. Although it was obvious that she had cerebral palsy, owners Tim and Trish Finley had her fill out an application, but at the time there were no openings at the establishment. Several weeks went by, and Caroline would stop in from time to time expressing her willingness to work.

Sparks was also a client of the IVRS, a service specializing in finding jobs for individuals with physical or mental impairments.

"Our objective is getting jobs for our clients and to work with employers to incorporate the clients into their workplace," IVRS Rehabilitation Counselor Bob Hendrickson said. "I'm like a career counselor for people with limitations. We key in on what they can do, not what they can't do. We also go out to employers and try to get them to consider hiring our job ready applicants. This is what we call employer development".

Hendrickson had already talked to Caroline about her wish to work at Fennellys'.

One of the services IVRS provides is customized training, which is a flexible program between the applicant and the employer and designs this individual training program based on the client's particular limitations. He went to talk to Tim, and his wife Trish, about the program. In mid-October of 2010, Caroline was hired as a kitchen



employee in the restaurant.

"We were positive about hiring Caroline," Trish said. "One of the big reasons we hired her was that she applied for a job when we didn't have any vacancies, but she kept coming back and was very persistent. The customized training program was just icing on the cake."

IVRS gets approximately 78 cents on the dollar from the federal government and is expected to get about 55 percent of its clients suitably employed in the workforce. Hendrickson's customized training program for Caroline paid 100 percent of her salary for the first week, 75 percent for the second, 50 percent for the third and 25 percent for the fourth and fifth weeks without any obligation for the Finleys to permanently hire her. There are also some tax benefits for employers employing IVRS customized training clients, called the Work Opportunity Tax Credit.

"This program gives both clients and employers time to see if the position will fit," Hendrickson said. "Caroline knew about the program and asked me to talk to the Finleys about it, but she really sold herself."

IVRS has other programs, such as on-the-job training and a process called Job Carving where we concentrate on tasks a person could do and carving out or removing some duties they may not be able to do. It is really just capitalizing on tasks that a person is good at and allowing them more time to do those tasks than spending time on the ones they can't do. Hendrickson also goes to area schools to talk to students that are referred to him by guidance counselors, nurses or special

education teachers. He tells people what his program is all about and leaves information for future reference.

"I'm trying to pick up more students in this rural area," he said. "My time is spent determining what our clients can do and finding them the right job. It's important that I refer qualified applicants to employers. We can also help with tuition assistance for clients wanting to further their education after high school and can help them explore career opportunities. Our goal is community based employment in an integrated setting. We are

also looking for employers to come to us and say they are looking to hire someone, and asking us if we have anyone that can fill the position."

As for Caroline, she says she loves working at Fennellys'. She also wants to try different jobs, and the Finleys have made her work schedule flexible so that she could also handle another part-time job. She is so eager to work and just wants a chance to prove herself.

"Caroline is a great fit for our team," Tim said. "We really like having her around."

The Finleys were also surprised to find out they had three other employees with particular limitations that were clients of IVRS, but had gotten their jobs without going through the IVRS system. On any given night, about half of the seven or eight people employed at the restaurant might be in the IVRS program.

"We would be very willing to use the customized program if the opportunity arises again," Trish said. "If we had an opening, the client can come in and get interviewed just like everyone else, and they would certainly have an equal chance."

"Caroline is one of our true success stories," Hendrickson added. "IVRS exists because there is still discrimination against people with disabilities and we exist to even the playing field. Up until Fennellys' we weren't able to get anyone else to take a look at Caroline for a true job opportunity. She was persistent in her goal to work at Fennellys', and Tim and Trish were open-minded enough to give her a shot."