



THE LARRABEE CONNECTION

WINTER 2021

Special points of interest:

- Response to the pandemic
- Same people, new titles
- Milestone Anniversaries
- New additions to ESS Staff
- Giving Tuesday
- Win/Win Raffle
- New Employees Welcomed

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From the Executive Director



Over the past year, the agency and all of us have been through a lot. The pandemic impacted almost every part of our agency. It changed how we worked with each other, the clients, and the public. It changed policies, procedures, funding sources, and safety protocols. It forced us to look at how to continue to provide client services and keep the stores open in new and creative ways. Staff have cleaned and cleaned (and cleaned) without a complaint. Staff have handled, at times, heated customer complaints and still pro-

vided great customer service.

Throughout it all, our staff have shown patience, flexibility, and grace. What you have done to keep each other safe has been incredible. Roughly 7% of staff and clients have had a positive case of the virus and that was spread out over the entire pandemic. That is simply amazing. Thank you to everyone for doing their part and continuing to be diligent with all of the safety protocols!

We also started off 2021 with changes in the agency's administration. Thank you all for the congratulations and words of well wishes as I start out in

this new role for the agency. At this time, I would also like to announce that Jessica Gulick has accepted the Associate Director position for the agency! I also updated job titles for Steph Brooks and John Lord to better reflect what they are doing. I will issue an updated chart of organization to everyone so that you can see those changes. The chart also lists key responsibilities for each member of the leadership team so that we all have a clear understanding of our roles. I look forward to this new year and the growth that is to come!

Bonnie Gesell
Executive Director

Happy Anniversary!

Congratulations to **Heather Harrington, Cindy Siemers, Marcia Parsons, Brad Kuethe,** and **Gary Kielman** who all celebrated ten years with the agency in 2020!

Congratulations also goes out to **Kenzie Miller** who celebrated five years with The Larrabee Center in 2020.

Heather has worked for the past ten years as support staff, working with all our clients. Cindy works as support staff and enjoys meeting and working with a variety of people and figuring out how to make

our clients more successful in workplace settings. She loves joking around with the clients and seeing their different personalities. Marcia has worked in multiple areas of the Waverly store: receiving, sorting hard goods, textiles and books, clerking, and custodial. She loved being the "book lady", giving that area of the thrift store the feel of a book store and chatting with her book people! Marcia has collected some wonderful and dear new friends in her coworkers and is grateful for that! Brad has worked in receiving at the Waverly Trinkets

& Togs store and has enjoyed being part of an organization that is a well-received in the community. Gary has worked in receiving as well as property and store maintenance. He has enjoyed working with the clients and staff as well as the challenges of the job. Kenzie works as support staff and has enjoyed getting to know the clients and helping them be successful in the community. She added, "it is fun to watch the clients reach their goals and learn more things. I really enjoy working for such a great organization!"



(l to r) Jessica, Kendra and Cindy masked up and ready for the holidays!

It is our mission to assist persons with disabilities and the elderly to become or remain valued members of the community.



Win/Win Raffle will start March 1 and end April 2 with our drawing taking place on April 5!

Employment Support Services



Happy New Year from the Employment Services Team!

Our team has changed over the past few months with Kendra coming on as a job coach in our small group services and Jared joining in on our individual services! They have both been such great additions to our team and hit the ground running.

After reopening after COVID, we have gradually increased our daily capac-

ity in our small group program at the Waverly Trinkets & Togs store. Now that we have gotten all the clients back up to their full schedule, we are moving forward with accepting new clients off our wait list and are hiring for our 4th job coach position.

We resumed our work crews at Wartburg College as well as our janitorial crews with Friends of the Family and the Waverly Chamber of Commerce.

Just in the past few months, we've had 2 clients start jobs in the community with our support. One is working as a dish-

washer at the East Bremer Diner and the other is in environmental services at Bartel's. A third just got hired at McDonald's and will start later this month. Finally, as we reflect on the challenges of 2020, I have to thank our ESS team for all their hard work and continued dedication toward our mission.

I look forward to the opportunities of the coming year for our clients as we support them in their employment journey!

Jessica Gulick
Associate Director

Development and Community Relations



This winter, we were fortunate that the Krumwiede family chose The Larrabee Center as one of the three non-profit organizations they wanted to support with donations they received from visiting onlookers. For many years, the Krumwiede family have put up an amazing Christmas lights display on their property and this year, they decided to donate some of the money received to The Larrabee Center! We were humbled to receive a gift in

the amount of \$620! The Larrabee Center also received a grant from the ECR Cares Act which allowed us to purchase new thermometers, hand sanitizing stations, and personal protective equipment for our administrative office and the Waverly Trinkets & Togs Thrift Store.

We also participated in Giving Tuesday and raised a total of \$3,450 through a combination of social media, giving trees, and direct mailings. Thank you to everyone who donated and who promotes our mission in the community.

Finally, we are currently gearing up for our annual Win/Win Raffle. The raffle

will start March 1 and end April 2 with our drawing taking place on April 5. More information will soon be available in our thrift stores and on our website. Encourage your friends to purchase a ticket and help support this event where 100% of proceeds benefit clients and services of The Larrabee Center.

Carrie Pint
Development and
Community Relations
Coordinator

Retail Operations

Waverly—Happy New Year! We made it through 2020! With the challenges of the past year, we continued to push forward with retail operations and adjust to the changing times. A new approach to the annual fall bag sale and Holly Jolly Open House was welcomed by our amazing customers. Our loyal donors kept the receiving area hopping and we are thankful for all of their amazing donations!

The following new staff were welcomed to the Waverly team: Monica Klinkefus, Annie Peerman, Kaytlyn Toul-

ouse, Darian Jacobs, Hannah Lechtenberg and Crystal Wedeking.

Thank you to staff and clients for your dedication as we reached a milestone, Trinkets & Togs in Waverly celebrated 25 years being a part of a community that continues to give us support and embrace our mission.

Grundy Center & Cedar Falls —What a year 2020 was! With all the challenges we faced, our retail stores continued to stay on course and move forward. This is not

only because of the wonderful customers who donated and shopped at our stores, but also because of the dedicated team members we have.

Within this past year, we have had to make daily adjustments within our retail stores. Since reopening, our Cedar Falls location has accepted contact-free donations. This is a great way for customers to social distance and drop off their donations with ease. The Grundy Center store has also made adjustments to their daily practices, to ensure a safe shopping experience.

We welcomed additional team members at our Cedar Falls location: Darcy Brede, Vesta Sobczyk, and Aaron Stumpf.

We want to thank all of our customers who continue to support our mission. We're looking forward to their continued support in the coming months and the opportunities that the New Year brings!

Darleen Lindahl—Waverly Retail Services Manager

Karla Brickhouse—Grundy Center and Cedar Falls Retail Assistant Manager

HCBS Waiver Update

This past quarter has been an interesting one, to say the least. The clients enjoyed the holidays the best they could with masks and social distancing as they ventured out to see some Christmas lights and displays. The clients really enjoyed getting out in the community to see these festive light displays, as this year, there seemed to be more of them than ever!

The mild winter has allowed the clients to get outside a

little more than usual with staff and take walks. The clients have enjoyed reconnecting with our college-aged staff who were back for the holiday break.

Thanks to various grants, the clients and staff have received some personal protective equipment such as masks and thermometers to help keep them, staff, and all who they interact with, safe!

In property news, the yellow

house was sold to Wartburg College.

In transportation news, grant dollars allowed The Larrabee Center to purchase two new (to us) cars to use for the CSS program which replaced two vehicles with over 170,000 miles.

John Lord
CSS and Property Program Manager



The Krumwiede Family has an extravagant Christmas lights display each year at their residence and The Larrabee Center was fortunate enough to be one of the three non-profits who received a portion of their donations.

Habilitation/SCL CSS

Clients and staff have been enjoying the holiday season despite adjustments that have been made due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clients received Thanksgiving food bags and Christmas gifts again this year from Trinity United Methodist Church (Waverly). Clients really appreciated the donated food and gifts to help with expenses around the holidays.

In addition, clients and staff received personal protective equipment provided by the East Central Region.

The Hab/SCL program accepted three new clients and began providing services to them this Fall. We also have one new SCL referral and hope to begin providing services in February.

Please welcome Melinda

Meyne as she has joined the program as a Support Specialist!

Stephanie Brooks
Administrative/CSS Program Manager

The Larrabee Center is on Twitter! Follow us @TheLarrabeeCtr Be sure to LIKE Trinkets & Togs and The Larrabee Center on Facebook! Invite your family and friends to like us, too!

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST EMPLOYEES . . .



DARCY BREDE

Darcy has been hired to work in Cedar Falls as a Retail Associate. She lives in Waterloo and has two grown children and has been married for 30 years. She loves to eat, read, travel, volunteer at church, and spend time with their children and grand puppy.



CRYSTAL WECKING

Crystal is back at our Waverly Trinkets and Togs working as a Retail Associate! She grew up in Nashua and currently resides in Plainfield. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and going to their ballgames, working outside in the summer, growing flowers and doing simple crafts.



KAYTLYN TOULOUSE

Kaytlyn has been hired as Retail Support in Waverly and lives in Clarksville. In her spare time, she enjoys doing puzzles, hanging out with friends, taking care of animals, and participating in band and musicals.



AMBER KRAMER

Amber has been hired to work as a Retail Associate at our Waverly Trinkets & Togs Thrift Store. She is originally from Wausau, Wisconsin and currently lives in Waverly. She enjoys reading, style/fashion, and hanging out with friends.



ABBY McGRANE

Abby has been hired to work as Support Staff and is originally from Manchester, Iowa and currently lives in Waverly. She has two brothers and a sister and enjoys hiking and spending time outdoors.



MELINDA MEYNE

Melinda has been hired as Support Staff, is originally from Waterloo and currently lives in Cedar Falls. She has two sons and recently retired from teaching French. In her spare time she enjoys gardening and biking as well as spending time with family and friends.



HANNAH LECHTENBERG

Hannah lives in Plainfield and has been hired to work at Retail Support in Waverly. In her spare time she enjoys biking, camping, arts and crafts and is a member of FFA.



TINA WHITE

Tina grew up in Waterloo, moved to Evansdale during fourth grade and currently lives in Cedar Falls. She has been hired to work as Support Staff and enjoys doing word searches, camping, reading, walking and rock hunting.



DARIAN JACOBS

Darian is originally from Clarksville and will soon be moving to Ames. Her interests include: painting, long boarding, and biking. She has been hired to work as a Retail Associate in Waverly.



KENDRA GLIEM

Kendra has been hired as an Employment Support Staff, originally from Perry, Iowa and currently lives in Cedar Falls. She enjoys spending time with her pets, playing board/card games, learning new hobbies and running long distances.



MONICA KLINKEFUS

Monica is originally from Humboldt, Iowa and currently lives in Waverly. She has been hired to work as a Retail Associate at the Waverly Trinkets & Togs Thrift Store. She loves to travel, snorkel and shop as well as do a variety of crafts/home decorating (especially for the holidays).



CARRIE PINT

Carrie grew up in Walker, Iowa and currently resides in Cedar Falls. She is engaged and hopes to get married in August 2021. Her interests include theatre and dance and she teaches dance classes at a local studio in Cedar Falls. Carrie has been hired as the Development and Community Relations Coordinator.



ANNIE PEERMAN

Annie is a Waverly-Shell Rock High School student who is involved in band and works backstage for school musicals. She has been hired to work as a Retail Associate in Waverly and enjoys reading and spending time with family and friends.



IMELDA ODJO

Imelda is from Benin, West Africa and currently lives in Waverly and attends Wartburg College. She has been hired to work as Support Staff. In her spare time she enjoys fitness, dance, singing and cooking.



JARED GERRINGER

Jared is originally from Oak Forest, Illinois and currently resides with his wife in Cedar Falls. He likes going to church with his wife and watching "Shark Tank" and "Whose Life Is It Anyway?" as well as weight lifting and running. Jared has been hired as an Employment and Administrative Assistant.



VESTA SOB CZYK

Vesta is originally from Hurricane, Virginia and currently lives in Cedar Falls. She is the mother of four, a retired RN, has been married for thirty-nine years and is a proud United States Veteran. Vesta has been hired as a Retail Associate in Cedar Falls. A warm welcome to all our newest employees!