

SUMMER
2016



headway

reflecting

ON A QUARTER CENTURY
OF EXCELLENT CARE

A photograph of three people standing in front of a pond with a waterfall. A man in a blue polo shirt stands in the back. A woman in a purple patterned shirt and glasses sits in a wheelchair on the left. A man in an orange V-neck shirt and glasses sits on the right. The man in the blue shirt has the "On with Life" logo on his chest.

On with Life

also inside:

Q&A WITH JILL HALVERSON | LONG-TERM CARE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS
GARDEN OF COMFORT | REPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY | TRANSPORTING SMILES

On With Life, Inc. headway magazine

SUMMER 2016

On With Life, Inc.

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About the Cover:

Photo by Brice Musgrove, *Images by Brice.*
From left: Kathy Herring, Dan Engelman and Marvin Tooman at a recent visit to On With Life



a letter from our director

On With Life's 25th anniversary is made possible by the determination of a small number of families who met in the early 1980s after brain injury entered their lives. Since brain injury had not yet been widely conceptualized as a distinct disability category, very few specialty services existed in the U.S. and there were almost none outside of a hospital setting. Bringing the dream of a post-acute program focused on the unique and complex needs of survivors involved innumerable stakeholders. Survivors and their families, advocates, politicians, donors, state officials, physicians, nurses, therapists, psychologists, volunteers, community supporters and board members all contributed significantly to the creation of On With Life.

One individual who personally and professionally deserves a huge amount of credit for the success that On With Life enjoys today is Dr. Marvin Tooman, our founding CEO. Taking a huge personal risk, Tooman resigned from his professional position with Iowa's Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to transform the families' vision into reality. Working diligently, he secured municipal bond funding from the City of Ankeny, along with donations from private and corporate sources to create an unheard of freestanding service model combining intensive nursing and therapy for individuals with brain injury.

Drawing on his vocational rehabilitation expertise and his participation in a groundbreaking National Rehabilitation Association forum on brain injury years earlier, Tooman worked with professionals across the country to conceptualize a community-based program dedicated to simultaneously addressing cognitive difficulties and physical deficits, which are often accompanied by emotional and/or behavioral challenges. He established a staffing model still largely in place today and later developed our Long-Term Skilled Care program in Glenwood.

For the past 16 years, it has been my privilege to succeed Dr. Tooman, building on the foundation he created and expanding on the vision of our founding families. I hope you will enjoy reading about On With Life's humble beginning from the perspective of a founding family member, an original board member, an original staff member and one of our first persons served. And I hope that you will join me in appreciating Dr. Tooman's many contributions that built the foundation we stand on today!

Julie Fidler Dixon, *Executive Director*

September 16

**On With Life Brain
Injury Rehabilitation
Conference**

FFA Enrichment Center
Ankeny, IA

September 30

**Celebrate Life
Fundraising Event**

On With Life
Ankeny, IA

SUMMER 2016

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FOUNDATION FEATURES

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Randy Jondal and Sarah Jeffries, PTA in our Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program, work in the raised garden beds located on On With Life's Ankeny campus. 1.5 acres will soon be transformed into therapeutic grounds, including a putting green, amphitheater and all-inclusive playground.

On With Life stands apart in CARF Accreditation

This spring, CARF, the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission, awarded On With Life its eighth consecutive three-year accreditation. On With Life, Inc. remains one of only a handful of programs worldwide outside of a hospital that has earned accreditation as a “Comprehensive Integrated Inpatient Rehabilitation Program for Adults and Children with Brain Injury.”



CARF International stated “On With Life has a rich history of person-focused services that are provided by highly committed and competent staff and is a national leader in the rehabilitation of persons served with brain injury.”

The three-year accreditation includes each of On With Life, Inc.’s specialty brain injury programs for adults and children, including Inpatient Rehabilitation, Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation, Independent Evaluation Services and Home and Community Services.

“On With Life, Inc. is solely dedicated to serving individuals living with brain injury and other neurological conditions and enriching their lives through comprehensive, compassionate therapeutic services,” said Julie Fidler Dixon, executive director for On With Life. “We are grateful for this recognition of our organization-wide dedication and commitment to improving the quality of lives of the person served.”



Dave Anders
Director of Therapy

On With Life professionals author chapter in CBIS training manual

As national leaders in providing rehabilitation to individuals presenting in a Disorders of Consciousness (DOC), On With Life was honored to be asked by the Brain Injury Association of America to author a chapter for the new Essential Brain Injury Guide 5.0 on Disorders of Consciousness. On With Life’s DOC program provides a unique level of care that addresses the needs of adolescents and adults with severe brain injury who present with low levels of consciousness. On With Life’s Dave Anders, director of therapy, and Dr. David Demarest, director of neuropsychology, authored the chapter.



“For individuals who are in a state of reduced consciousness, On With Life’s rehabilitation team uses specialized assessment and therapy techniques to track the rate of emergence and responses to the environment,” said Anders. “We are proud the Brain Injury Association of America recognizes On With Life as experts in serving this unique population.”

The Essential Brain Injury Guide 5.0 serves as a national and international brain injury resource and training manual for rehabilitation providers.

To learn more or to order the new book, visit biausa.org/acbis



Dr. David Demarest,
*Director of
Neuropsychology*



▲ On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults



▲ Justin Thompson, Iowa State University

#HelmetsIowa

wear your HELMET at work day

On With Life held a special "Wear Your Helmet at Work" event in May to draw attention and raise awareness of Iowa's absent helmet law. Individuals and organizations from around Iowa submitted pictures wearing their helmets at work. To learn more about Iowa's absent helmet law and to see all of our "Wear Your Helmet at Work" photos, visit onwithlife.org/helmets.



▲ West Des Moines Fire Department



▲ Joy Schiller, Des Moines University



▲ Bruce Kelley, EMC Insurance

The Iowa Clinic ▶



LSVT PROGRAM BRINGS RENEWED CONFIDENCE

JIM AUTRY

Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program

Admission: March 16, 2015

Discharge: April 9, 2015

Jim Autry can be defined by a number of his accomplishments: a pilot flying fighter jets in the Air Force during the Cold War, editor-in-chief of *Better Homes and Gardens*, an author of more than 25 poems and books, president of the magazine division of Meredith Corporation, national public speaker and consultant. But there is one thing that will not define him – Parkinson’s disease.

“It’s easy to let your disease define you, but I refuse to do that,” said Autry. “I may not always walk well or I may stagger, but I do not consider myself disabled. I am merely inconvenienced by Parkinson’s.”

Autry was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 2014. He heard about the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) program at On With Life’s Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program from a friend but was skeptical when it meant clearing an entire month of travel from his calendar. Nevertheless, he signed up for the program, and it only took a week to notice a difference.

“The LSVT program has renewed my confidence in my body,” said Autry. “I now can control the effects that Parkinson’s has on me.”



Jim enjoys working in his beloved gardens.

After the four-week LSVT BIG and LOUD program, Autry says it became his mission to share the impact On With Life had on his life.

“The therapists are wonderful, upbeat, dedicated and optimistic. When they are working with you, you have their full and complete attention,” said Autry. “I admire their professionalism and I have benefited from their professionalism and guidance.”

More than one year later, Autry still continues his LSVT BIG and LOUD exercises almost daily. Because of those exercises, he has the confidence in his body to continue doing the things he loves – gardening, walking with his wife, spending time with his family, traveling and reading poetry on the radio.

“I am confident these exercises have delayed some of the deterioration that comes with this disease,” said Autry. “Parkinson’s is my enemy, but thanks to the LSVT program, I will prevail.”

LOVE OF THE GAME

TODD BERGESON
*Post-Acute Inpatient
Rehabilitation and Supported
Community Living programs*
Post-Acute Admission: July 2000
Post-Acute Discharge: February 2001



Todd Bergeson shows his Fan of the Year Award from the Iowa Cubs.

Todd Bergeson loved playing sports as a child. That passion continued through high school where he played football, baseball and track. He loved golfing with his friends and even played a round on the day of his car accident - June 7, 2000 - that caused a traumatic brain injury. After spending time in the hospital, he transferred to On With Life, unable to walk or talk.

"I was determined he was going to walk and live independently, and I'm overjoyed that he does both now," said Veda Bergeson, Todd's mother. "We are so thankful for On With Life and the staff and to see his progression."

Todd was one of the first individuals to move into the Apartments at Owl Creek, independent living apartments on On With Life's Ankeny campus for brain injury survivors. He also receives Supported Community Living services who help Todd work on community integration skills through attending local sporting events, like the Iowa Wild hockey games, Iowa Energy basketball games, Iowa Barnstormers football games, and most important to Todd, the Iowa Cubs baseball games.

"Each year for Christmas, we get Todd a season ticket package to the Iowa Cubs," said Veda. "He goes to every game - even the cold ones. He enjoys it so much, and we love seeing his old personality back."

Last year, the Iowa Cubs recognized Todd as their 2015 Fan of the Year. As a thank you for his dedication, he received a season pass for the 2016 season and a plaque that proudly hangs in his apartment.

"I was really excited and surprised," said Todd. "I love going to the games, and it meant a lot to me to be recognized by them as one of their biggest fans."

GIVING BACK

DANIELLE BRAZANT
*Post-Acute Inpatient
Rehabilitation program*
Admit: March 21, 2012
Discharge: April 20, 2012



Danielle Brazant at Entrefest, a local celebration of entrepreneurship.

Danielle Brazant doesn't remember the car accident in 2012 when she was ejected from her car on a snowy night in Cedar Rapids. Or the doctors telling her she would have permanent brain injury as a result.

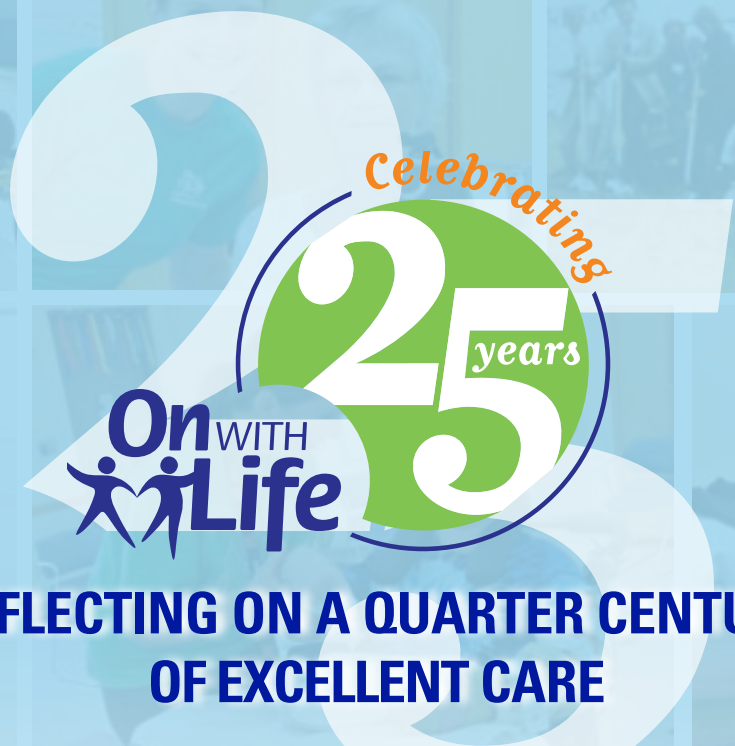
"My most lasting memories from this period begin at On With Life. Staff and nurses made everyday life at On With Life as enjoyable as the circumstances could allow," said Brazant. "I vividly remember the group sessions where TBI survivors would come and share their stories - I really cherished those times."

Brazant says she took a multi-faceted approach to her recovery, focusing first on the medical recovery, then working on the emotional, spiritual and professional recovery, which she admits took much longer.

"My emotional, spiritual and professional recovery occurred two years after my brain injury. It was then that I held a steady job, lost excess weight I gained post-brain injury and started gaining back my self-esteem," said Brazant. "The self-esteem boost was just what I needed to hit the ground running!"

And she did. Brazant obtained her insurance license with the State of Iowa and is currently an independent insurance agent and restaurant manager. She was appointed to the Marion Civil Rights Commission and now serves as a Commissioner for the City of Marion. She is active in local politics and community affairs, and serves as the Cedar Rapids Stop Violence Movement committee member liaison and volunteers for Concerned Veterans of America, the NAACP and the Linn County Republican Central Committee.

"After the accident, I thought my life was over. I wanted to forget what happened to me, but the world wouldn't let me," said Brazant. "Now I want to do my part to give back to the community and world that I now feel blessed to live in!"



REFLECTING ON A QUARTER CENTURY OF EXCELLENT CARE

For a quarter century, On With Life has experienced steady growth in size, scope and sophistication. In serving more than 2,500 persons with brain injury in that time, On With Life has established itself as a regional leader.

As we celebrate our 25 years of service to those individuals with brain injury, we are taking a look back. Through the eyes of four individuals who know On With Life intimately, we gain insight on how the early years were instrumental in forming the foundation we continue to build upon today.



The Founding Family Member: *Kathy Herring*



► **Kathy Herring and her son, Robert Rabe**

In late 1980, Kathy Herring's world was turned upside down. Her son, Robert Rabe, was the passenger in a car that was run off the road by a drunk driver. Rabe sustained a significant brain injury and required extensive inpatient care. In the midst of this chaos, Herring formed a bond with the members of seven other families in similar circumstances. It was that bond that more than a decade later led to the formation of On With Life.

"We all had a loved one we weren't sure was going to survive their brain injury," Herring says looking back. "They were all being cared for in the same hospital in Des Moines and that is how we became so close. Out of that, we decided to form a support group for family members who were dealing with the same issues we were."

Soon, it became clear to the support group that more advanced rehabilitative care was needed for persons with brain injury in Iowa. With a detailed vision, the

support group reached out to a number of healthcare providers with expertise in rehabilitation. This group was faced with challenges and obstacles, but their never-give-up attitude paid off. Tirelessly advanced by the founding families, a number of key community leaders and healthcare professionals, their vision became On With Life. It opened its doors to the first admission on August 12, 1991.

"It was a wonderful feeling," Herring says. "It is one of the loves of my life. Knowing that there is a place like On With Life to care for persons and families in need, without them having to leave the state like we did, provides me with a tremendous sense of pride."

Looking forward, Herring says she is confident On With Life will continue to grow and evolve to provide increasingly complex care and support close to home.

"Each of the eight founding families helped build the vision by dreaming big," Herring says. "The growth doesn't come as a surprise. We knew that every time a door closed, a new and better one would open."

“Knowing the high level of care he got at On With Life convinced my parents it was the right place for me.”

The Person Served: *Dan Engelman*

There is little Dan Engelman remembers about the car accident that radically changed his life. Cruising through Colorado with his fiancé to a family function, he decided to catch a little shut-eye while his fiancé took a turn behind the wheel. He was violently awoken when his car crashed into the back of a truck and horse trailer parked on the side of the interstate.

Severely injured, he was rushed to a hospital in Greeley where he remained for more than four months.

“I broke my legs in multiple places, I had a broken pelvis, my ear was torn off by skis that had flown forward from the back seat, I had blood clots in two areas of my brain and I had a severe concussion,” Engelman says as he looks back on the accident which happened on Thanksgiving morning in 1991. “I didn’t have a real understanding of what happened. I was asleep for the accident and one of the portions of my brain that was injured impacted my short-term memory.”

After being stabilized in Colorado, Engelman’s parents began to look for a place closer to their home in Iowa for what they fully expected would be a lengthy

rehabilitation. Engelman says that while On With Life had been established only months earlier, his family was already aware of the care being delivered there.

“My cousin was actually the first patient at On With Life,” Engelman says. His cousin Matt suffered a severe brain injury playing football and was moved to a couple of rehabilitation hospitals before finding On With Life. “Knowing the high level of care he got at On With Life convinced my parents it was the place for me.”

And they were right. While Engelman admits to not wanting to rehab on most days, he says the healing environment was just what he needed. He especially appreciated the way On With Life providers encouraged his friends and family to visit him while he recovered.

“There was someone coming to visit me all the time,” he says with a chuckle. “I think my record in one day was 42 visitors. That kind of interaction was encouraged as part of my recovery and it worked for me.”



◀ Dan with his wife, Kelly, and their two children.



▶ Dan at a Colorado hospital

Almost 25 years removed from the accident, Engelman is now 48 years old, married to

Kelly, father of two and volunteers at his church. All things considered, he’s thriving.

“Even before the accident, I did what I could to help others,” he says. “No matter their issue or challenge, I asked for God to teach me how I could serve them. Through this accident, He has shown me one way. I can now help others who are facing the same things I did and show them that there is still life to live.”



◀ Dan at On With Life



The Board Member: **Gail Boliver, JD, MBA, MS**



It was a conversation in Japan that led Gail Boliver to the Board of Directors at On With Life. And more than 25 years later, he happily continues to serve.

"I served in the Iowa National Guard with Marv Tooman, who would eventually become the founding CEO of On With Life. We were sitting in a café in Japan and he shared his vision for a brain injury rehabilitation center in Central Iowa," Boliver recalls of that fateful conversation. "He said he thought I could help make it happen so I said 'Yes!'"

Boliver has repeated that refrain time and again for On With Life. He has served on the board continuously since 1988 and says it has been

amazing to see the vision become a reality.

"On With Life, as you see the physical facility today, did not exist when we began," Boliver says. "It was just a concept. There wasn't a building or even the ground for it."

Tenacious work by the board, the willingness of Tooman to dedicate himself full time to the effort, generous support from a handful of private citizens, and advocacy from the leadership of Polk County paved the way for what On With Life is today: a regional leader.

"There were times when it was a question whether or not it would happen," says Boliver, an attorney in

Marshalltown. "But so many people came together and did what it took to bring the vision to life. I can't begin to list the wonderful and talented people I've been fortunate to serve with."

Boliver says his volunteer service has provided him with much more than he feels he has given.

"When someone stops you and tells you how the staff of On With Life has cared for their loved one and helped them maintain quality of life, it stops you in your tracks," he says. "It is very rewarding."

The Treatment Provider: **Judy Hilt, RN, BA, CRRN, CBIS**



It was early August in 1991 when Judy Hilt stepped on to the On With Life campus as a staff member for the first time. As the new director of health services, she quickly developed an affinity for her work with persons with brain injury.

"On With Life is a special place, it always has been for me," she says. "It's special because of the persons we serve. We are able to have an impact on their lives and see them make progress. It is an incredible thing to be able to make a difference in another's life and life of the family members."

25 years later, Hilt continues to serve at On With Life today, working to identify

patients who would benefit from the level of care offered. She says the sophistication of services at On With Life has expanded significantly since its opening 25 years ago.

"When we first started, the persons we served were much higher

"I'm very proud to look back and see how we have grown to meet the needs of those in a catastrophic time in their lives."

functioning than the persons we care for today," says Hilt, who has been instrumental over the years in developing protocols for caring for

persons with increasingly severe brain injuries. "But from the start, we knew we wanted to be able to provide a complete continuum of care. We wanted to provide a level of service that they couldn't find just anywhere. And we did!"

Looking back, she says there is pride in making strides toward that ambitious vision.

"I'm very proud to look back and see how we have grown to meet the needs of those in a catastrophic time in their lives," Hilt says. "We are now a regional leader in providing an enhanced quality of life to persons with brain injury and their families. It is humbling to play a role in that."

To see our full list of founders and read more success stories, visit our website: onwithlife.org.



Long-Term Celebrates

.....
20
YEARS

Twenty years ago, On With Life created a one-of-a-kind program in Glenwood, Iowa, to serve youth and younger adults with brain injury. To date, On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care program has served 162 individuals from Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, South Dakota and Louisiana. Seven individuals have lived at On With Life more than 16 years, and one individual has been a part of On With Life for 19 years. The campus includes a sensory stimulation gym, on-site aquatic therapy and a sensory garden. This unique specialty program employs 55 staff members and is the 8th largest employer in Mills County.



people making a **DIFFERENCE**

Reverend Jerry Sawyer



“It’s about providing a feeling of being cared for and a feeling of hope.”

Working in ministry for 61 years, Reverend Jerry Sawyer has a heart for helping others and giving back to his community. After retiring from full-time ministry, Sawyer continues his mission of helping others through his role as chaplain at On With Life’s Ankeny campus.

“On With Life has a holistic approach to rehabilitation, and that includes the spiritual needs of our persons served,” said Sawyer. “They and their families have endured immense amounts of trauma before coming to On With Life, and we want to be sure they have the spiritual support they need.”

Sawyer was ordained in 1955 and moved to Ankeny in the 1970s to start a church. He retired from full-time ministry in 1998 before joining On With Life as chaplain in 2005. As chaplain, he leads weekly non-denominational chapel services and visits

with each person served and their families. But Sawyer says his role extends beyond that. Over his years at On With Life, he has officiated baptisms, weddings and funerals for persons served, families and staff.

“It’s about providing a feeling of being cared for and a feeling of hope. Maybe they’ll leave with a little more joy than they might have had otherwise,” said Sawyer. “I’m honored that I can help with that.”

In his free time, Sawyer enjoys traveling with his wife, Gladys, and together they have visited 95 countries and every U.S. state. Gladys also contributes to On With Life by making quilted lap blankets for each person served. Sawyer also has a long history of service to non-profit boards in Ankeny.

“Giving back is a passion of mine and part of who I am,” said Sawyer. “We’ve been very blessed, and we’re going to keep giving back as long as we’re able.”

Kate Benson Larson, MA, CRC, CDMS, CLCP/R, CEAS1 **Board Member**

Kate Benson Larson's career as injury management consultant at EMC Insurance Companies provides her with a unique perspective as a member of the On With Life, Inc. Board of Directors. She joined the board in 2011 and has dedicated many hours to On With Life not only through her board role, but through her role in developing the therapeutic and sensory gardens on the Ankeny and Glenwood campuses.

What made you interested in joining the On With Life board?

As a rehabilitation case manager assigned to catastrophic brain injury cases, I became familiar with On With Life's inpatient and outpatient programs, as well as their expertise in nursing, comprehensive therapies, physician care and case management. The functional and long-term outcomes achieved by individuals treated at On With Life are impressive and prove that the best clinical care options are available right here in Central Iowa.

What makes On With Life so special and unique?

On With Life has not lost its focus on the original mission established 25 years ago by eight founding families. It has excelled and survived in a world of healthcare mergers and acquisitions. On With Life is clinically sophisticated and CARF accredited at a hospital level. Persons served are offered unique and forward-thinking therapies; the patient protocols, nursing care, case management and research participation are seen as cutting-edge in the field of brain injury rehabilitation. Finally, there is an amazing level of thoughtful care here—the passion of the staff is inspiring!

What are your goals for On With Life?

An immediate goal is to see the current landscaping plans take physical shape for a 1.5 acre one-of-a-kind therapeutic grounds project on the Ankeny campus. My long-term goals are to support the continued growth of all programs in Ankeny and Glenwood, as well as support the On With Life Foundation. It's an exciting time to be a part of such an amazing organization!



"There is an amazing level of thoughtful care here - the passion of the staff is inspiring."

The Meinders Foundation

First impressions are important, but for Mo Grotjohn and The Meinders Foundation, the first impression left a lasting impact.

"It was clear to me on my first visit that On With Life was an amazing place. I was impressed with the enthusiasm demonstrated by all the staff, as well as the level of community support shown," said Grotjohn, treasurer of The Meinders Foundation. "The positive energy at On With Life radiates from every person. Observing the interaction between staff members, volunteers, and persons served is amazing."

The Meinders Foundation, established by Herman and LaDonna Meinders in 1993, is based in Oklahoma, but their connections link back to On With Life in Ankeny. The

Meinders Foundation learned about On With Life through Grotjohn's sister, Janelle Conley, who started volunteering at On With Life in 2011. Since then, both The Meinders Foundation and the Grotjohns have been tremendous supporters to On With Life. Most recently, The Meinders Foundation made a large donation to the new therapeutic grounds on the Ankeny campus as a tribute to Meinders' many years in the floral industry.

"Herman and I hope our donations help demonstrate the support On With Life deserves, not just from supporters in Central Iowa, but throughout the United States," said Grotjohn.



Herman and LaDonna Meinders and Mo Grotjohn.

GET TO KNOW

Jill Halverson, RN
Director of Nursing



The Halverson Family

Experience:

22 years of nursing experience; 17 years in management

Education:

Diploma in Nursing from Jennie Edmundson Memorial Hospital School of Nursing

Family:

Married to Scott, three children:
Andrew (18)
William (14)
Anna (12)

Interesting Facts:

- Equestrian sports are a passion. I compete in Quarter Horse shows with my daughter.
- I love watching and playing sports. My children are involved in wrestling, basketball, track, football, dance, volleyball, baseball and softball.
- I've always been interested in neurological treatment. Even when I worked as a surgery nurse, I was assigned to the neuro team at University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Q+A



Jill Halverson, RN

Jill Halverson, director of nursing at On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care Program for Youth and Younger Adults, discusses the lifelong management of severe brain injury.

Q: What makes brain injury nursing unique?

A: One of the benefits we have at our long-term care program is that for our persons served, this is their home. We become part of their family, and we are fortunate enough to have served individuals for a longer period of time. This allows us to get to know preferences, patterns, and have a greater insight into what motivates or encourages our persons served for positive outcomes. We are able to tailor their therapies to their hobbies and interests. One of the most challenging nursing interventions with traumatic or acquired brain injury is managing behaviors, and our team has to think of creative alternatives to modify the behavior to help the persons served reach their goals. Behavior change is difficult for anyone to accomplish, and individuals with brain injury often have physical, cognitive, and emotional impairments as well.

Q: How do you set goals for persons living with long-term severe brain injury?

A: We strive to help those whom we are privileged to serve attain the highest quality of life possible and in doing so, also help their families/guardians set reasonable outcomes and hope for improvement. We look at options for realistic goals to reach each next step and result in a meaningful life with purpose and optimal health for

each person. We create an environment where the persons served feel they belong and are part of the Glenwood family. We find encouragement in even the littlest improvements, such as a smile or small hand gesture. It gives both the person served and staff a purpose and rewarding day.

Q: How is On With Life's program in Glenwood different than other long-term care organizations?

A: Long-term care medical acuity has dramatically increased in the last 20 years, and staffing of most skilled nursing facilities is challenged. However On With Life has exceptionally strong staffing ratio, more than double the industry average, and our nursing staff practices evidenced-based interventions. We have been extremely lucky to have very experienced clinical staff at our Glenwood program for many years and recently honored nine employees with over 15 years of employment. We currently have no open positions and have nurses seeking us out for employment opportunities as a result of the quality of care that is given at On With Life. We are also fortunate to have therapy programs that go above and beyond for those we serve. It is our vision to create life enriching opportunities for persons impacted by brain injury.

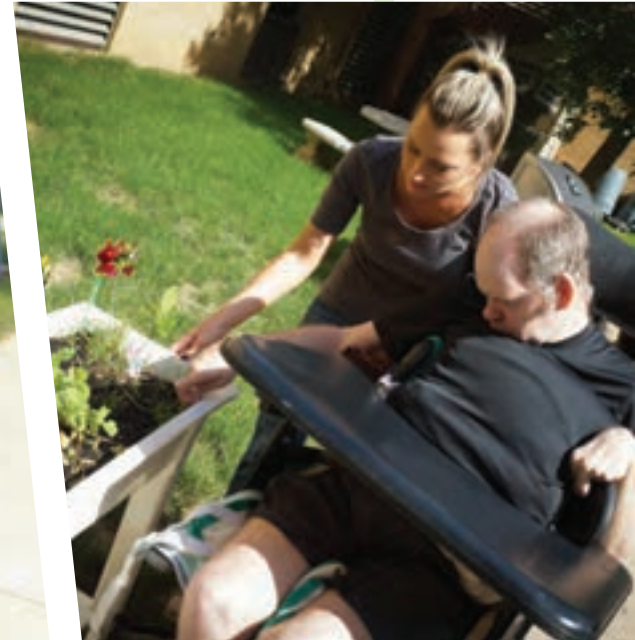
For more information on our long-term program, visit onwithlife.org.



**TO PLANT A
GARDEN IS TO
believe
IN TOMORROW.**

- AUDREY HEPBURN

Working in nature can bring various physical, mental, cognitive and social benefits. It strengthens muscles, improves fine and gross motor skills and enhances flexibility, coordination, body balancing and hand-eye coordination. On With Life has extensive gardens at both campuses, including the OWL's Nest in Glenwood and will begin the construction of therapeutic grounds in Ankeny this year.





a note from our development specialist

Throughout its 25-year history, On With Life has benefitted from the generosity of many supporters. The organization is thankful for each and every individual and company which has given time, talent and/or treasure to programs, oftentimes unsolicited. Recently, I was hired to help advance the Foundation's mission of supporting On With Life's network of brain injury rehabilitation programs which help persons served get on with their lives. I am thrilled to be partnering with many constituents to make a difference for our programs and persons served!

We are looking forward to inspiring even more to join in the good work and to continue helping On With Life change lives through our specialty rehabilitation programs. If you would like to help fulfill the mission, please connect with me at **515-289-9611** or **swilson@onwithlife.org**. I look forward to meeting you!

Sara Wilson

Sara Wilson, *Development Specialist*



Dave Russell and Bruce Schwering are honorary co-chairs for On With Life's upcoming recognition and fundraising event, *Celebrate Life: Gather and Grow*. The event will be held on Friday, September 30 at On With Life. All are invited to gather, grow and celebrate with On With Life!

Funds raised through the Celebrate Life event provide life-changing specialized therapy for persons served, and this year, event funds will be used to support two important outdoor therapy projects. The first is the transformation of 1.5 acres of green space on the Ankeny campus into a multi-faceted outdoor therapeutic grounds space. With philanthropic support, the new therapeutic grounds will include an enabling garden, all-inclusive playground, putting green, butterfly garden, music zen garden, amphitheater, basketball court and much more.

The second project to be supported by this event is the ongoing needs of the beautiful OWL's Nest Sensory Garden at On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care Program for Youth and Younger Adults in Glenwood, Iowa. The 6,000 square foot space provides an outdoor experience for individuals with severe brain injury who benefit from the garden's many sensory components and interactive areas.

Individuals and businesses are invited to help make Celebrate Life a success by sponsoring the event and/or joining On With Life for the evening! A wonderful celebration full of food, drinks, music, therapy garden unveilings and powerful stories is planned.

Visit onwithlife.org for more information on sponsorship opportunities and event details. Contact Sara Wilson with the On With Life Foundation at swilson@onwithlife.org or **515-289-9611** with any questions.



Save
the
date!

.....
FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 30
AT ON WITH LIFE

volunteer HIGHLIGHTS



FY
2015

transporting smiles

Stop by On With Life on a Wednesday or Friday morning, and you will likely see Al Cole's smile in the hallways. Al is a volunteer transporter at On With Life, and has volunteered more than 900 hours since March 2011.

After Al retired from 37 years with the Iowa Air National Guard, his wife, Kathy, suggested the couple find volunteer work.

Kathy was still working at Tone's in Ankeny and the original intent was to volunteer together. However, On With Life Volunteer Coordinator Ann Lenaghan asked Al if he would be interested in transporting persons served to and from therapy sessions, and he agreed.

When asked why he continues to volunteer at On With Life, Al spoke of On With Life's work and how much he enjoys interacting with people.

"When I first started volunteering, I was telling a friend about it," said Al. "He asked, 'Isn't that depressing?' And my response was no. Sure if you look at why people are

here – accidents and such – that's unfortunate. But I see all the progress each person makes, and it's exciting to see when people get to move on with life after leaving here.

"Plus, I feel valued. Everyone seems glad to see me here. I worked at a good place with good people, and now that I'm retired, I miss interacting with those good people. Lucky for me, there are lots of good people at On With Life."

And Kathy? She continues to volunteer for On With Life, too. She makes both tie and sewn fleece blankets and writes weekly notes of encouragement for persons served in the Post-Acute Inpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program.

If you would be interested in learning more about volunteering at On With Life's Ankeny campus, please contact Ann Lenaghan at 515-289-9600.

AL COLE

Volunteer transporter
since March 2011
Total hours: 912 hours
as of June 2016

On With Life relies on and appreciates the support of many volunteers throughout the year.

4,400*

Number of volunteer hours donated to Ankeny programs

812

Number of volunteer hours donated to Glenwood programs

\$22.25

Cost per unit of time for each volunteer hour

\$115,967

Total monetary impact raised through volunteers

* This statistic does not include groups who come to volunteer for isolated tasks.

seminarians who serve

For more than a decade, On With Life has been a partner in Creighton University's Priestly Formation program. The students



The 2015 Priestly Formation seminary students

spend about six hours per week throughout the summer at the facility working directly with individuals with brain injuries. A total 135 volunteer hours were clocked from student volunteers last summer.

Activities include working in the facility's garden, playing video and card games, baking and helping with special projects.

If you would be interested in learning more about volunteering at On With Life's Glenwood campus, please contact Jeni Durfey at 712-525-1258.

GARDEN OF Comfort

Joan and Bobbi Sue Ginsberg
Memorial Garden in full bloom.

In many ways, gardening is a metaphor for life. You have to learn to deal with the uncontrollable. It is hard to do it all alone. You have to have vision, patience and thankfulness. It is all about love. Nancé Fleming knows this all too well.

Nancé's oldest daughter, Joan, had just transferred to Portland to manage a hotel when she was in a car accident that took her life. She was 33 years old. Seven months later, Nancé experienced tragedy a second time.

Bobbi Sue, Nancé's younger daughter, was 30 years old and living in Dallas. She was driving to work one day behind a hay truck when a bale of hay fell off. She couldn't stop fast enough and hit the back of the truck. The accident happened near a trauma center – a man came and ripped the car door off Bobbi Sue's vehicle, and she was rushed to the emergency room.

Nancé had just finished with a company Christmas party when a nurse called her with the news. She was able to get to Texas as fast as possible with the help of a local businessman's jet and pilots. Unfortunately, Bobbi Sue was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury.

"It was a harrowing experience," Nancé recalled.

Bobbi Sue was cared for in Texas for two years, but Nancé, from Des Moines, wanted her closer to home. Nancé visited every facility within 50 miles of Des Moines to find a place for Bobbi Sue. Finally, she was happy to hear about On With Life. At the time, 25 years ago, On With Life was in its infancy, and the rehab center was just starting to hire staff.

After finding On With Life, Nancé said it was like her family grew. Bobbi Sue was admitted as the second person ever served in On With Life's history, and she lived here for 18 months. Nancé remembers there was a corn field where

the parking lot now sits; she remembers there was gravel where the concrete driveway now lays; she remembers how the offices began in a corner of the Casey's corporate building and how On With Life shared a phone service. Much has changed since then, but the level of care and rehabilitation remains top quality.

"One of the reasons I was and will always be grateful to On With Life is because they allowed me to have my daughter, Bobbi Sue, with me the last 18 months of her life," said Nancé. "My time with her leaves me with precious memories."

To honor both of her daughters, Nancé established the Joan and Bobbi Sue Ginsberg Memorial Garden at On With Life in 1994. Nancé lives by the words engraved on a plaque in the garden: We shall not grieve, rather, find comfort in what is left behind.

Nancé has always had an interest in gardening, and she enjoys getting out and planting. The space at On With Life she transformed was dormant green space outside in front of the chapel window – the perfect place to create a garden. In addition to establishing the garden, she cares for it each year with the help of a landscape company and On With Life staff and volunteers.

"The garden is a connection to my daughters," Nancé explained. "I needed something alive and living in order to get on with my life. After two of your children pass, what do you have to live for? I could just say, 'That's all. That's the end of my life.' But the garden is a place of peace and tranquility. The kind of place that's soft and beautiful. The girls would have loved it."

Nancé makes sure there is color all the time for On With Life persons served and family members to see when they look out the windows. She likes to use red and purple – Joan loved red, and Bobbi Sue's favorite color was purple.



**"We do it for love, and
love is all that matters."**

In addition, Nancé has even purchased a mascot for the garden – Billy, a token goat, for all to enjoy in the garden. Everyone loves to see how he and his friends get decorated for the seasons.

"I just feel that when people at On With Life see or go out to the garden, they are happier and it is better," said Nancé. "Some may never get to go home again, but at least they can have a garden here."

In addition to Nancé's connections as a family member of a person served and a garden caretaker, she also served as a member of the first Board of Directors and is a financial contributor, providing monetary donations to On With Life programs. Nancé has also named On With Life as a beneficiary in her will, and \$50,000 will be given in her honor for the new Family House, a 5-bedroom, 4-bathroom house that allows family members to stay on campus while their loved one is at On With Life.

"When Bobbi Sue was in Dallas, I received a discounted room rate at a local hotel," remembered Nancé. "It was nice, but what a blessing for families to be able to stay on site, free of charge."

Nancé takes good care of the Memorial Garden, but she also takes good care of the staff. She provides treats when she comes to tend to the garden and always starts with the maintenance and housekeeping staff as she believes they are instrumental in helping care for the garden when she is not on site. She has also been known to drop off holiday gifts and bake pies for staff gatherings.

On With Life is thankful that Nancé has made her vision to honor Joan and Bobbi Sue a reality, and we are glad she has found comfort and pleasure in caring for the Garden.

Nancé says it best, "I hope it will continue giving pleasure to all who spend time healing!"

Ultimately, the rewards for gardening and living can't be measured in time, dollars or possessions. We do it for love, and love is all that matters. And love will last after we are gone, too.



Nancé Fleming enjoys the garden at her home in Des Moines.



Billy, the garden mascot, is decorated for the Fourth of July.

If you would be interested in contributing to On With Life, donating to the garden projects or establishing a planned gift, please contact Sara Wilson at [515-289-9611](tel:515-289-9611) or swilson@onwithlife.org.



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Joining hands, hearts, and minds to help persons living with brain injury get **On With Life**.

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FFA Enrichment Center
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Ankeny, Iowa

KEYNOTE SPEAKER :

Sheldon Herring, Ph.D.
Clinical Director at Peace Rehabilitation Hospital in Greenville, South Carolina
Conscious Professionalism and Team Development

Intended for healthcare providers, the On With Life Fall Conference brings together experts from around the U.S. to discuss recent trends in the field of brain injury. Topics will include psychiatric manifestations and treatments, engagement, current brain injury rehabilitation trends, guardianship and conservatorship, the technology revolution, caregiver support, and a brain injury rehabilitation case study.

COST:

\$65 Early bird registration by August 26. **\$75** after August 26.
Other CEU fees may apply

FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND TO REGISTER, VISIT:
onwithlife.org