

# headway



## PUTTING FAMILY FIRST

ON WITH LIFE BECOMES  
HOME AWAY FROM HOME  
FOR AESCHLIMANS

*also inside:*

Q&A WITH COURTNEY HUBER | MUSIC THERAPY | PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
FOUNDATION REPORT | REPORTS FROM THE COMMUNITY | 2016 OUTCOMES REPORT

# On With Life, Inc. headway magazine

WINTER 2017

## On With Life, Inc.

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### About the Cover:

Photo by *Jen Frieden Photography*

**From left:** Brock, Chase and Lincoln Aeschliman, one year following Chase's stroke.

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#### On With Life Update:

In August 2016 On With Life recognized our 25th anniversary by honoring a number of our founding members in the summer issue of Headway Magazine. One of those founders was Dr. Marvin Tooman, On With Life's founding CEO. Sadly, one month after the magazine was published, Dr. Tooman passed away. We celebrate the life of Dr. Tooman and recognize his contribution to On With Life, which may not exist today without the leadership and vision of its founding CEO.

*Headway Magazine* is published bi-yearly by On With Life, a not-for-profit organization and a Midwest leader in brain injury rehabilitation. Email change of address information or request to be removed from our mailing list to headway@onwithlife.org.



## a letter from our CEO

I hope you will enjoy the stories of the inspirational families featured in this edition. We know that the term "family" reaches far beyond the ones you'll read about. Some of the words Webster's dictionary uses to describe family include clan, blood, folks, house, kin, kinsfolk, line, lineage, people, race, stock and tribe. And true to this conceptualization, today's family comes in all shapes and sizes. At On With Life, we use the term "family" to also acknowledge the many friends, co-workers, neighbors and community members who join the family to make up an individual's support group.

A hallmark of On With Life is recognizing the need to provide the education, support and resources necessary to help not only the individual on the rehabilitation journey, but also to equip the "family" as they accompany their loved one on the lifelong journey. Family support includes:

- Our Inpatient program in Ankeny provides a new training called BICS (Brain Injury Coping Skills), recently developed by colleagues from the Indiana Rehabilitation Hospital. This unique support model combines a lecture series with homework and interactive discussions for all persons served and families.
- Our Long-Term program in Glenwood provides ongoing support for families through their lifelong incorporation into the program, support group meetings and special quarterly events.
- Our Outpatient program provides case management and problem-solving resources to all individual and their families - those new to the rehabilitation process and those who have been navigating it for a long time.
- Our Community Service program involves families in a wide range of ways as they work to integrate their loved ones into the community.
- Our Foundation, through the generosity of donors, benefits families of those we serve by assisting with transportation and meal costs and by supporting the Family Guest House.

On With Life exists because of the advocacy of our founding families. So, whoever they are, wherever they come from, however we meet them, whatever their need, On With Life staff strive every single day to incorporate the entire "family" into the rehabilitation process in a manner which recognizes their essential role. It's our legacy.

Julie Fidler Dixon, CEO

May 17

On With Life  
Virtual Conference

Online Webinar

August 5

On With Life  
Inpatient Reunion

On With Life  
Ankeny, IA

September 15

On With Life Brain  
Injury Rehabilitation  
Conference

FFA Enrichment Center  
Ankeny, IA

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On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults program in Glenwood has an on-site pool where David Zeigler works with his therapists, Karly Kalina and Jennifer Barbour. Aquatic therapy allows movements to be completed much more easily and efficiently than on land.

## Top Five Reasons On With Life is a Top Workplace

For the fifth consecutive year, On With Life was recognized as a Des Moines Register Top Workplace! To celebrate this remarkable achievement, we asked our staff to share five reasons why On With Life is a top workplace.

1 "I love working for On With Life because it is a place where we have the fundamental values of transparency, trust and communication. We have to figure out solutions to improve the quality of life for individuals living with brain injury, and On With Life continues to challenge us to do so!"

– Jill Halverson, Director of Nursing, Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults

2 "On With Life is a Top Workplace because they offer opportunities for us to continue our education and provide us with resources on becoming more knowledgeable about brain injuries."

– Johanna Stephens, CNA, Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation

3 The amount of love and support that transcends all departments is overwhelming. Our persons served drive us to be better, to think harder, to never give up and encourage us to push the limits to do all that we can for them. They are our motivators and being a part of their journeys is a blessing and honor."

– Jess Blough, COTA, Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation

4 "On With Life truly supports and encourages a balance between work and family."

– Sue Sandahl, Occupational Therapist, Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation

5 "The people I work with are truly the best – so special, professional and passionate. But I can say, watching how the persons served continue to get stronger and better every day is what brings me back here and is what motivates me the most."

– Terri Ellison, Laundry Tech, Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation



## Long-Term Program Trials New Therapy Study

After learning about a study showing improved responsiveness in individuals within a minimally conscious (coma-like) state, On With Life's Long-Term program in Glenwood, Iowa, decided to learn more about how the study, called Familiar Auditory Sensory Training (FAST), could potentially benefit persons served.

Led by Dr. Theresa Pape, clinical neuroscientist with the Edward Hines Veterans Administration Research Service, the FAST study involves family members voice-recording pre-injury memories that are then played at prescribed times throughout the day for the person served.

The Long-Term team discussed the study with the family of Michael Mincy. Michael suffered a serious traumatic brain injury in a car accident in 2009 which left him in a disorder of consciousness state.

"Michael's family was on board with the idea right away," said Jeni Durfey, therapeutic recreation coordinator at On With Life. "We worked with Michael's mom, dad and brother to record stories from different parts of Michael's life, including stories from his childhood in Missouri, his rodeo days and his many fishing trips."

After two years of Michael listening to the recordings, the team conducted his quarterly consciousness evaluation. Michael had received a consciousness evaluation every three months since his admission to On With Life and for the first time in seven years, the October 2016 evaluation showed that he had moved into a "conscious" state. Although the team can't say for sure the change was due to the recordings, Michael's family feels strongly that it was.

"I feel in my heart that the stories are helping. I think he understands the messages, and they bring back memories of what he used to do," said Lee Mincy, Michael's dad. "He understands what's happened to him, and he's trying to make the best of it. He was never one to give up."

The Mincy family was even more thankful for their involvement in the project when Michael's mom, Pat, suddenly passed away. Just days before her passing, Pat had recorded a story for Michael.

"We are so thankful that Michael will always have that recording of his mom," said Lee. "On With Life has never given up on my son and I'm so thankful for the great lengths they go for not only Michael, but for everyone they serve."



Lee and Michael Mincy at On With Life's 20th anniversary celebration in Glenwood.



# Music Therapy

Music therapy dates back to World War I, when soldiers who suffered physical and emotional trauma began demonstrating improved physical and emotional responses to musical interventions. At On With Life, music therapy has been integrated into physical, occupational, speech and recreation therapy sessions to aid cognition, speech and movement since On With Life opened its doors in 1991. The rhythmic and melodic aspects of music can be effective in assisting persons served with aphasia to discover new ways of communicating. Music therapy can provide rhythmic structure and auditory cues to enhance or target mobility and movement, and auditory music cues can assist or promote even gait patterns when someone is relearning how to walk. Music therapy also provides unique collaborations by pairing live music with therapeutic exercise, range of motion and ambulation, even in the water, to meet the needs of persons served.





Julie with her three daughters: Brooklynn, Kinley and Willow Snyder.

## A MOTIVATED MOM

JULIE MORRIS

*Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation*

Admission: November 9, 2015

Discharge: December 3, 2015

*Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation*

Admission: January 7, 2016

Discharge: April 5, 2016

At age 34, Julie Morris is a mother of three, teacher and stroke survivor. Just ten days after the birth of her third daughter, Willow, Julie suffered a stroke. She had no warning signs; she woke up and her left arm was limp. Further testing revealed three brain bleeds, and the doctors were unsure if she would regain full use of her left side.

“The doctors don’t really know why I had the stroke,” Julie said. “It’s kind of like getting struck by lightning – it was just a freak chance.”

Julie turned to On With Life for both inpatient and outpatient neuro rehabilitation after her stroke. Her treatment was about more than relearning how to use her arm – it was about returning to her life as a mom and teacher.

“It was so hard to hold Willow and feed her. I really couldn’t do it,” she said. “On With Life staff did a tremendous job incorporating my daily living needs into each of my therapy sessions, most of which focused on how I was going to care for my newborn and family.”

“Finding what is meaningful to each person served facilitates the highest level of participation and the best outcomes. Julie’s treatments were frequently designed to specifically target the tasks she would need to be able to complete in order to care for her daughters,” said Jillian Jones, physical therapist at On With Life. “The motivation she had to return to being a mother was incredible and propelled her throughout her rehabilitation stay to reach some truly amazing outcomes.”

Julie says she’s grateful that On With Life helped her return to the life she wants to live – braiding her three daughters’ hair, kayaking and returning to work as a second grade teacher.

“It took a lot of hard work, determination and support from my family, friends and medical and rehabilitation staff, but I am so proud of myself and forever grateful,” said Julie. “You have to live each day like it’s your last, because you never know what tomorrow holds for you.”



Karen practices her LSVT BIG exercises at the Grand Canyon.

## A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

KAREN TYLKA

*Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation*

LSVT BIG

Admission: November 18, 2014

Discharge: December 12, 2014

LSVT LOUD

Admission: July 6, 2015

Discharge: July 30, 2015

Karen Tylka kept her Parkinson's diagnosis a secret for years. Watching her mother live with the disease, she was worried about how the diagnosis would affect her own life.

"I was concerned how I was going to continue being a wife, mother and IT specialist as the symptoms of Parkinson's started to show," said Karen. "But people live with this disease for many years, and I decided I had a job to do to make my life as normal as possible."

She found the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment (LSVT) program at On With Life through a local support group and began driving more than an hour round-trip before work each day to learn the exercises.

"The staff is one in a million," said Karen, who still completes the LSVT exercises nearly two years later. "The staff makes you feel like you are not fighting the disease on your own, but they are fighting it with you."

Karen says the LSVT program made her feel as close to normal as she can imagine. She also participates in On With Life's new Parkinson's boxing classes, takes weekly water aerobics classes and participates in 5K run/walks. Most importantly though, she gained a new set of friends.

"I can't imagine where I'd be without On With Life and without these friends I've made. While we have so much in common with the disease, it's so much more than that," said Karen. "No matter how bad the diagnosis, it's been a blessing to know the staff and friends I've made through On With Life. I feel very lucky."



Bill visits On With Life nearly 18 years after he was served.

## A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

BILL WHITTEN

*Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation*

Admission: March 1999

Discharge: April 1999

Shirley Whitten remembers 1999 very well – it was the year her two sons were severely injured in the same car accident, transported via LifeFlight to two different Des Moines hospitals and later transferred to On With Life at the same time.

"I had never heard of On With Life, but I'm so glad it was here when we needed it," said Shirley. "I spent every day here while my boys were at On With Life. I wanted to be sure they got great care – and they did."

Her son Bill was thrown 100 feet from the car. While his only external injury was a scrape on his shin, he suffered a traumatic brain injury and quit breathing several times, requiring the ambulance crew to re-inflate his lungs. Despite the accident ending his career as a truck driver, Bill says now he sees there was a purpose.

"I don't call it a traumatic accident. I call it an experience," he said. "I've taken time to see what I want in my life and how I want to get there."

Bill retired from the Air Force after 20 years of service in 1994 and was pursuing an MBA at the time of the accident. Now, 17 years later, he has earned a second bachelor's degree and is pursuing a Masters in Business Leadership degree. Bill and his brother, Ken, enjoy weekly golf outings together.

"I want to help others get their life back, like On With Life did for me," said Bill. "This organization has changed a lot over the past 17 years – for the better – and so have I."

# PUTTING FAMILY FIRST

ON WITH LIFE BECOMES HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR AESCHLIMANS



*The Aeschliman family*

**On an otherwise ordinary day, within the confines of their home in the tiny northeast Iowa town of Wadena, life turned upside down in an instant for the Aeschliman family. At the age of 11, Chase Aeschliman suffered a stroke and set into motion a series of events that left the family of five reeling.**

"It was the first day of school for Chase and he had football practice after school," mom, Laine, remembers of August 24, 2015. "On the way home you could tell something was wrong. We found out after he was airlifted to the hospital that he had a dissection of his carotid artery which caused a stroke."

While they will never know what exactly led to the dissection, the resulting stroke caused a brain injury in Chase. He was in intensive care at a medical center in LaCrosse, Wisc., for four days and spent a total of 11 days there. During that time, Laine and husband, Kenny, began the process of identifying rehabilitation options for Chase.

"We had a lot of people reach out to us, many we didn't even know, while Chase was in the hospital," Laine says. "They spoke very highly of On With Life and encouraged

us to give it a look even though it was quite a way from home. We wanted what was best for Chase and, in every interaction we had with On With Life, we felt like it was our best decision."

## **A Meaningful Move**

When Chase left LaCrosse in an ambulance to begin his rehabilitation at On With Life's Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation program in Ankeny, he couldn't speak and had lost any meaningful use of the right side of his body. Laine said it was hard to imagine what the family had in store.

"I was blind on what to expect," she says. "I was still in shock and trying to process everything. I didn't know if he would walk again, or if he would talk or if he would get back to being that kid who could make me laugh so easily."



Upon arrival at On With Life, Chase immediately began intense therapy, including occupational, physical, speech, recreational and music therapy. The On With Life team encouraged the family to remain involved in the process of helping Chase regain his strength, his speech and his independence. Laine says being at On With Life quickly began to feel like home away from home.



who was so appreciative of the Family Guest House, that she often tidied up around the house by making beds, vacuuming and more during the week.

“It truly became our home away from home.”

### The Family Feel

Now, more than a year removed from their experience, the Aeschlimans feel like they have gained a second family. Building that relationship started from day one.

“They planted a seed of optimism in me and Kenny,” Laine says. “We were included in everything Chase did so we could grow along with him. We feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work side-by-side with Chase’s team.”

In a lot of ways, despite the circumstances, the Aeschlimans feel like they were favored by fortune. Now that Chase is back to cracking them up, they are humbled by the care they received.

“Even though it may have been more convenient to pick a facility closer to us,” Laine says, “there have been several times where Kenny and I have looked at one another and said we are so glad that we chose On With Life. It is the best decision we could have made for Chase and for our family.”

“Even when we go back to visit today,” she continues, “we walk through those doors and we feel like we are being greeted by family. I think Chase misses all those who helped him a lot more than he ever thought he would.”

And his team at On With Life miss him too.

“Recovery doesn’t stop after three months, six months or a year, and Chase is a great example of that,” Stephanie says. “He was up for every challenge we gave him and both he and his family found ways to continue working outside the therapy day, and they’re continuing to do that even after On With Life. It’s great to see Chase still pushing himself, trying new things, and continuing to improve.”

### Home Away from Home

Whenever possible, Chase’s brothers Lincoln, now 10, and Brock, now 5, were incorporated in his therapy. From doing pushups together to keeping their big brother focused on meeting his goals and maximizing his therapy, a dose of “chaos” (as Laine calls it) went a long way toward restoring a resemblance of normalcy.

**“We feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to work side-by-side with Chase’s team.”**

“Chase quickly made connections with other persons served here and between them, his family and the staff, he had a big cheering section supporting him and encouraging him,” said Stephanie Schmid, Chase’s occupational therapist at On With Life. “Some of the sessions I had with Chase – camping in our therapy gyms and playing basketball in our aquatic therapy pool – are ones I’ll remember forever.”

Further fostering that feeling of normalcy, the family was among the first to take advantage of a new offering at On With Life. Late in Chase’s stay, the Aeschlimans began to stay weekends at the new Family Guest House on the On With Life campus.

“That last month it was so much easier to be right there on site, to have access to a kitchen so we could cook our own meals, and just to have all the amenities of home,” says Laine,



## THE FAMILY GUEST HOUSE

The five-bedroom Family Guest House is located on On With Life’s Ankeny campus and is a comfortable environment for family members of persons served as they support their loved one during the rehabilitation process. The primary goal in making the Family Guest House available is to make life a little easier for families during a difficult time.

Offered at no charge, On With Life subsidizes this benefit in light of its commitment to the vision of our founding families to “passionately serve and relentlessly advocate to create life-enriching opportunities for person impacted by brain injury.”

*To learn more about making a gift in support of the Family Guest House, please contact Sara Wilson at 515-289-9611 or [foundation@onwithlife.org](mailto:foundation@onwithlife.org).*



**Chase and his therapists on a visit to Center Grove Orchard.**



# people making a

# DIFFERENCE

## Dr. Bill Campbell



"When you've done something meaningful, the look on their faces is worth all the work you ever did."

More than 20 years ago, Dr. Bill Campbell and On With Life's founding CEO, Dr. Marvin Tooman, began a partnership between the Glenwood Resource Center and On With Life. These two pioneers collaborated to create On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults program on the Glenwood Resources Center campus, a unique program for individuals living with brain injury. The program still resides there today, and it's a decision Dr. Campbell is still proud he made.

"The fact that the missions of the Glenwood Resource Center and On With Life were focused on different disabilities didn't matter. We both strove to have our organizations focused on overall improvement and encouraging people to see they were instrumental in making a difference in others' lives," said Campbell. "It was a perfect match."

Campbell began his career in 1951 as a psychologist and served 35 years as

superintendent of the Glenwood Resource Center. In addition to On With Life, Dr. Campbell brought many other non-profit organizations on to the campus, a move that helped both the campus and the Glenwood community thrive. After retiring, he joined the board of directors for On With Life, Ltd. and the On With Life Foundation.

"On With Life has so much to offer; it encompasses some of the things I never got done in my lifetime," said Campbell. "I feel at home in that environment."

His accomplishments are numerous – a state employee for 52 years, a colonel in the Army Reserve, a leader in national organizational efforts to improve the quality of services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, a marathon runner and a RAGBRAI rider for decades – but none of those accolades matter to him.

"When you've done something meaningful, the look on their faces is worth all the work you ever did," said Campbell. "I've enjoyed every minute of it."

# Iowa Western Community College Spirit Squads

What started as a summer service learning project for the Iowa Western Community College (IWCC) Spirit Squads has turned into an annual event, one that coach Jeff Snow and his team have looked forward to each of the past four years.

Each year, the Spirit Squads return to work in the Owl's Nest, a garden for the persons served and their families at On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults program located in Glenwood, Iowa. Seeing the garden grow each year is just one reason the team likes to return.

"The team likes to see the year-to-year progress and see results from their work," said Jeff. "But they really like seeing the facility and understanding how much of an impact their efforts make on providing a beautiful and functional environment for the persons served and their families."

Their work – more than 850 volunteer hours in total – has transformed the garden. They've dug a wheelchair-accessible pathway, laid brick pavers, constructed a pergola, dug trenches, laid drain tile to fix drainage issues, dug out field stones to build new retaining walls and raised flower beds, and much more. For their work at On With Life, the IWCC Spirit Squads were awarded the Governor's Volunteer Award in 2016.

"We're so proud to be recognized, not only by On With Life, but also by the State of Iowa," said Jeff. "Each year we use our time at On With Life to reinforce the philosophy that helping others and understanding community is foundational to personal success. The people at On With Life and the time we spend there continue to make a huge impact on our team and our program."



*Above: Jeff Snow and the IWCC Cheerleaders receive their award from Governor Terry Branstad.*

*Below: The IWCC team works in the Owl's Nest.*



# Corliss McDonald

Before she retired, Corliss McDonald knew exactly what she wanted to do with her free time – volunteer at On With Life. She had heard about On With Life from her 31 years as a nurse at Iowa Lutheran Hospital, but she had never set foot inside the door. However, she knew it'd be a good fit.

"My dad suffered from two strokes, and volunteering here felt like a good way to honor him," said Corliss. "Even though I'm not serving in a clinical role, I still feel like I'm using my expertise."

Corliss has volunteered nearly 700 hours in the past four years. While she helps with the weekly chapel service and other special events, she really loves to talk and laugh with the persons served.

"If I can make someone laugh or smile, my day is made," said Corliss.

She stops by the library and brings books along with her each week. While it may look like she's just reading to the persons served, Corliss uses the books to encourage the persons served to talk with her.

"Books help the conversation get started. I get to know about them, their family and their interests. I carry on many of the conversations week after week," said Corliss. "They get to know who I am and smile when they see me. That makes it all worth it."



*"If I can make someone laugh or smile, my day is made."*

## GET TO KNOW

**Courtney Huber,  
MS, CCC-SLP, CBIS**

Speech-Language Pathologist



*The Huber family*

### Experience:

10 years as a SLP, nine of those working with individuals living with brain injury. Long-term, inpatient, and outpatient levels of care.

### Undergraduate Degree:

Minot State University, B.A., History, B.S., Communication Disorders, 2002

### Graduate Degree:

Purdue University, Speech Language Pathology, 2005

### Family:

Husband Jacob, son Everett (4), daughter Lillian (2)

### 3 Interesting Facts:

- 1) I am a Canadian citizen, but have spent virtually none of my adult life in my country of origin.
- 2) One of my bachelor's degrees is in history, but don't ask me about dates.
- 3) I married my husband less than six months after meeting him, otherwise I would have been deported. Seems to have worked out okay, we just celebrated 10 years of marriage!

# Q+A



Courtney Huber, MS, CCC-SLP, CBIS

*Courtney Huber, speech language pathologist at On With Life, discusses cognition and how it can be affected following a mild brain injury, also known as a concussion.*

### What does cognition mean?

Anytime we are using our brains, we are using cognition. Cognition refers to the way we make sense of the world and how we act in it. At its most basic, it is being alert and attending to what's going on in our environment; at its most complex, it is imagination and creativity.

### What are some cognitive challenges after a mild traumatic brain injury that often go overlooked?

We now have compelling evidence that even a single injury or concussion that has the potential to result in persisting impairments in attention, memory, emotional regulation and executive function. In addition, we need to develop a greater appreciation for changes in vision, dizziness and difficulties tolerating our sensory-rich world that can occur as a result of concussion. These symptoms do not always resolve in a matter of days or weeks, but can persist for months post-injury.

Many individuals come in after they have been experiencing symptoms for a prolonged period of time, often six months to one year post-injury. Some common symptoms include pain, fatigue, inability to tolerate sights and sounds, vision and dizziness issues and an inability to remember conversations, keep track of appointments or multitask. These issues are compounded by increased anxiety, depression and irritability.

### How does On With Life use an interdisciplinary team approach?

We know vision, dizziness/balance and sensory integration issues can be just as devastating as the cognitive changes, and addressing a person as a whole helps us to maximize outcomes. Having an interdisciplinary team has also empowered the persons we serve to advocate for themselves, as they feel supported and hopeful that they can better their life situation. In many cases, our persons served report overall improved daily functioning, self-image, relationships and quality of life, even if post-injury symptoms are not completely resolved.

### How does On With Life take a unique approach to cognitive therapy?

We have embraced the philosophy that a "mild" traumatic brain injury does not always equate to "mild" symptoms, meaning that we recognize that even small changes in a person's cognitive and physical function have the potential to wreak havoc on daily life. Our therapy team pays close attention to what a person is telling us is bugging him/her the most, regardless of the type of injury or the severity, and centers the treatment plan around those complaints. Education, self-advocacy and hope are cornerstones of our treatment program to engage the persons that we work with in the rehab process and to celebrate the victories they experience in their daily life as they learn to use their customized techniques and strategies.

# I Play for On With Life

Competition, playing, and winning are part of our lives and an essential element of the rehabilitation process at On With Life. We incorporate play into many aspects of therapy in interventions like building sand sculptures, rock climbing, hiking and shooting pool. We're also incorporating outdoor play into our one-of-a-kind 1.5-acre therapeutic grounds project being built on our Ankeny campus. It will create many opportunities for our persons served – and their families – to incorporate play as part of their rehabilitation at On With Life. Share your pictures of how you love to play on On With Life's Facebook page using [#IPlayforOnWithLife](#). To learn more about On With Life's therapeutic grounds project, visit [onwithlife.org](#).



Find us on:  
**facebook**

[facebook.com/iowabraininjury](#)



In fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016), On With Life's continuum served 564 individuals. The following is a snapshot of On With Life's outcomes; visit [onwithlife.org/outcomes](http://onwithlife.org/outcomes) to see a complete overview of outcomes achieved.

## POST-ACUTE INPATIENT REHABILITATION

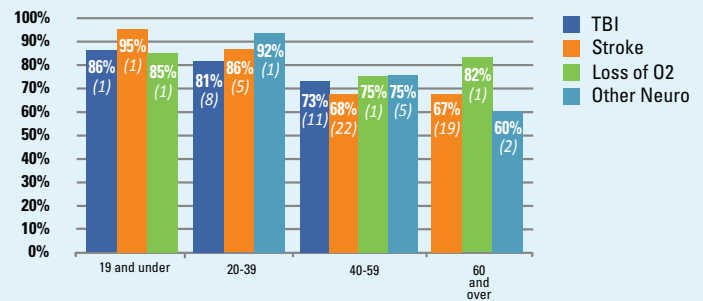
In FY16, On With Life's Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation program discharged 88 individuals from 40 counties in Iowa and 4 other states. The average age of persons served was 50 (youngest was 11 and the oldest was 83), and the average length of stay was 112 days. Of the 88 individuals served, 72 individuals were served within the traditional brain injury rehabilitation program and 16 within the specialty Disorders of Consciousness (DOC) program. The DOC program addresses the unique needs of survivors of severe brain injury who present with low levels of consciousness.

- **Type of Injury:**  
TBI - 24 | Stroke - 48 | Loss of Oxygen - 4 | Other Neuro - 12
- **Therapy Delivered:** An average of 4.1 hours of therapy were provided per day, five or more days per week, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, therapeutic recreation, music therapy and neuropsychological services.
- **Medical Acuity** (the severity of an illness/injury) of the individuals served at On With Life is more than 50% higher than other skilled facilities in the state:  
**On With Life** - 1.48 | **State average** - .96
- **Nursing Hours Provided Per Person Per Day** at On With Life far exceeds the state average:  
**On With Life** - 8.2 hours | **State average** - 3.4 hours
- **Person Served and Family Satisfaction** rate is an overall score that combines questions related to the rehabilitation experience, clinical support, therapy provided and goals met:

# 97%

### LONG-TERM GOALS MET BY AGE AND INJURY

(n)=78\*



\*Ten persons served experienced unexpectedly short lengths of stay; therefore, their long-term goals were unable to be accurately tabulated.

## OUTPATIENT NEURO REHABILITATION

In FY16, On With Life's Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program served 276 individuals who experienced a brain injury such as a TBI, stroke, brain tumor or other neurological condition such as Parkinson's disease.

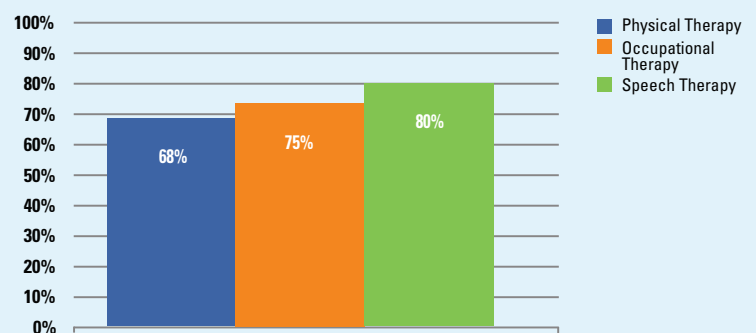
- **Diagnosis:**  
TBI - 50 | Stroke - 66 | Loss of Oxygen - 2 | Parkinson's - 60  
Tumor - 18 | Other Neuro - 42
- **Therapy Disciplines Provided:** The majority of persons served (60%) receive more than one type of therapy, while the remaining individuals receive just physical therapy (21%), occupational therapy (6%) or speech therapy (13%).

Person Served and Family Satisfaction:

# 98%

### LONG-TERM GOALS MET BY DISCIPLINE

(n)=276



## LONG-TERM SKILLED CARE FOR YOUTH AND YOUNGER ADULTS

In FY16, On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults program served 33 individuals (26 males and 7 females). The average age of persons served was 41 (youngest was 20 and the oldest was 66), and the average years post-injury was 15.6 years.

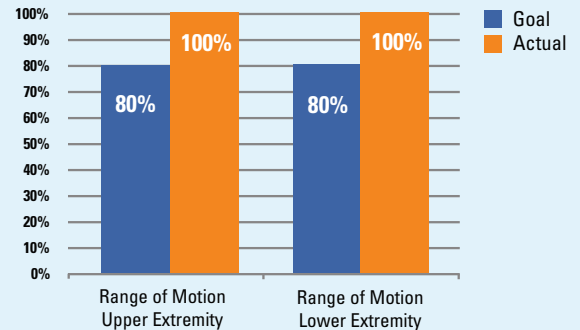
- **Type of Injury:**  
TBI - 23 | Stroke - 1 | Loss of Oxygen - 6 | Other Neuro - 3
- **Medical Acuity** (the severity of an illness/injury) of the individuals served at On With Life is more than 50% higher than other skilled facilities in the state:  
On With Life - 1.64 | State average - .96
- **Nursing Hours Provided Per Person Per Day** at On With Life far exceeds the state average:  
On With Life - 5.5 hours | State average - 3.4 hours
- **Person Served and Family Satisfaction** rate is an overall score that combines questions related to the rehabilitation experience, clinical support, therapy provided and goals met:

97%

### RANGE OF MOTION

(n) = 33

Percentage of persons served who maintained or improved their range of motion (ROM). ROM is the measurement of the amount of movement around a specific joint or body part and is measured four times per year.

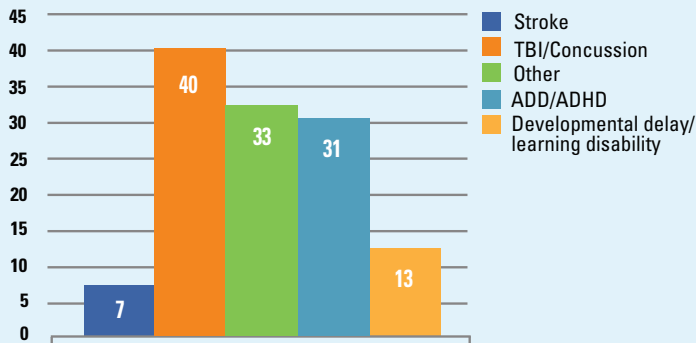


## NEUROPSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

Through the process of neuropsychological evaluation, Dr. David Demarest, On With Life's neuropsychologist, studies brain-behavior interactions, the health of the individual's brain and the problems that may arise due to an injury or condition. In FY16, Dr. Demarest evaluated 124 individuals, ranging in age from 3 to 75 years old.

### NEUROPSYCH EVALUTATIONS BY TYPE OF DIAGNOSIS

(n) = 124

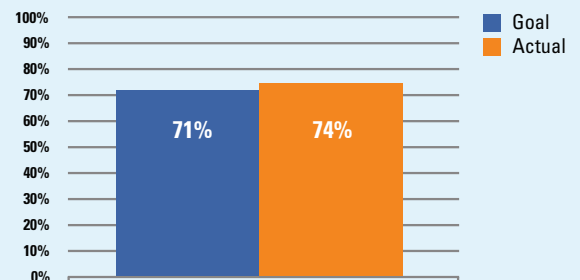


## SUPPORTED COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES

In FY16, On With Life's Supported Community Living program served 43 individuals from five counties in Central Iowa. This program provides specialized support to allow persons who have experienced a brain injury to maintain and improve their independence. A total of 18,474 supported community living hours were provided in FY16.

### PERCENTAGE OF GOALS MET

(n) = 43



Visit [onwithlife.org/outcomes](http://onwithlife.org/outcomes) to see a complete listing of On With Life's FY16 outcomes.



## THANK YOU for making a difference!

As President of the On With Life Foundation Board, I am honored to share this year's donor report with you. The Foundation has much to celebrate, and the hundreds of supporters are at the top of the list. In 2016, more than 700 donors contributed over \$460,000 to On With Life programs.

We are also excited to have enjoyed another wonderful fundraising and recognition event, Celebrate Life: Gather and Grow, last September. If you have been to On With Life's Ankeny campus lately, you know the therapeutic grounds project is underway, and the event was a great way to celebrate the beginning of a campaign to transform 1.5 acres of green space into outdoor therapy space.

In addition to continuing to grow our resources, which ensure our persons served have the equipment, services and environment necessary to succeed, we are also thrilled to be launching an annual fund. You will soon be invited to commit to On With Life's mission by supporting the On With Life Annual Fund, a fund to provide critical support for programs. These gifts, used in the year they are given, are vital because they provide flexible, unrestricted dollars to support and enhance On With Life's programs.

Included in this report is a listing of our donors and volunteers. We are honored to have each and every contributor as a partner in our work of supporting survivors of brain injury. On With Life continues to take pride in being good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, and we thank you for your support of those we are privileged to serve.

**Jeff Lamberti, JD, Board President**  
On With Life Foundation



# 2016

## FOUNDATION DONOR REPORT





# Gathering + Growing to

## CELEBRATE LIFE

Taking the time to celebrate the difference On With Life makes in the lives of others is important and reminds us of the mission our eight founding families established to join hands, hearts and minds to help persons living with brain injury get "On With Life."

With the support of honorary co-chairs Dave Russell and Bruce Schwering, former persons served and advocates for On With Life and the brain injury community, our Celebrate Life event was held on September 30, 2016.

This year's theme, Gather and Grow, was a nod to On With Life's existing and future outdoor therapy spaces. Funds raised through the Celebrate Life event, more than \$65,000, will go directly toward providing life-changing specialized therapy for those whom On With Life is privileged to serve.

Nearly 200 supporters helped us to exceed expectations as we enjoyed themed food stations, dazzling lighting, feel-good music, intriguing auction items and a meaningful program. On With Life also recognized three special individuals with awards at this year's event.

To top the evening off, a surprise announcement was made that The Meinders Foundation of Oklahoma City,

Oklahoma, is donating \$40,000 to name the Butterfly Sensory Garden for our volunteer of the year, Janelle Conley!

The new 1.5 acre therapeutic grounds on the Ankeny campus will provide sensory stimulation experiences, therapeutic challenges and respite for persons served and their families. The grounds will consist of many outdoor therapy areas including an enabling garden, music zen garden, putting green, amphitheater, family shelter, butterfly garden, all-inclusive playground and more.

With a third of the needed dollars raised to date, donations are essential to complete this one-of-a-kind project, and naming opportunities are available. If you are interested in learning more about how you can support the effort, please visit [www.onwithlife.org](http://www.onwithlife.org) or contact our Foundation at (515) 289-9611. We are forever grateful to those who have already supported the therapy grounds. Please visit our website to view a list of current supporters.



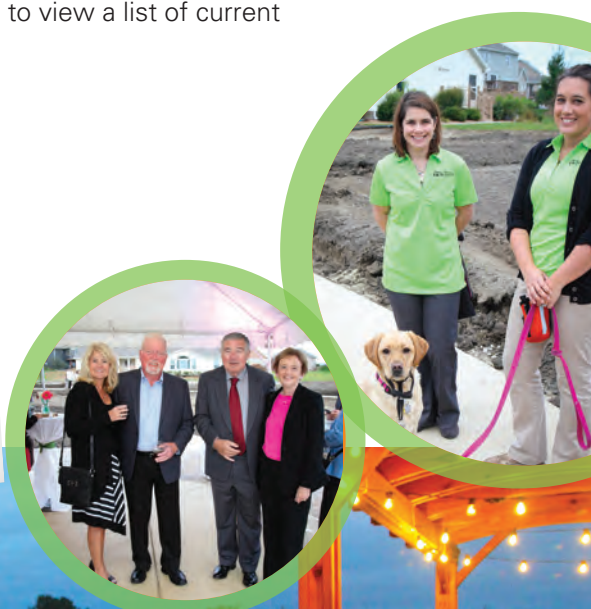
**Founder Award:**  
Jeff Lamberti



**Volunteer Award:**  
Janelle Conley



**Advocate Award:**  
Representative Lisa Heddens



# philanthropy IN ACTION



## Mary and Greg Woolever

A quarter of a century is a long time. For Mary and Greg Woolever, it has been a time of compassion, teaching, and making a difference. And for On With Life, it has been a time of celebrating people like the Woolevers who have made an impact on our persons served.

Shortly after On With Life opened, the Woolevers began volunteering in prayer services. Twenty-five years later, they continue to show up with a different group of high school students each month.

The students are part of the religious education program at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Catholic Church in Ankeny where Mary and Greg are members.

Each session begins with introductions and and "The Welcome Song," the same song that has been sung every time. An inspirational reading is shared, everyone joins hands for the "Lord's Prayer," and a closing song such as "Amazing Grace" is sung. The Woolevers then turn facilitation over to Kim Reed, On With Life recreation therapist, who leads students and persons served in an activity, such as games

Every month for the past 25 years, Mary and Greg Woolever have volunteered at On With Life.

and crafts. Afterwards, students have a chance to discuss the experience with Kim.

"We emphasize to the kids that they are doing therapy," said Mary. "For instance, while playing card games, the persons served are picking out colors or numbers, holding the cards, making decisions, and working on attention and social interactions."

When asked why they volunteer at On With Life, Greg said, "We began because we were asked, but the religious education program greatly values these visits to On With Life, which is such a wonderful and unique place."

"Compassion for families struggling with brain injury is important to us," Mary added. "Brain injury can happen to anyone. Our values lead us to care for each other – we are all related."

The students are impacted as well. Greg said it is important to bring young people in so they get the message from their adult elders that "compassion matters." And does it ever. Especially 25 years of it.

## Cindy and Tom Friedrichsen

Ten years ago Cindy Friedrichsen was looking for a job change so she could make a difference in the lives of others. Fortunately for our programs and persons served, she found On With Life.

Cindy was hired as a corporate assistant, and over the years her position morphed to support many areas including event planning, communications, project management and fundraising. Today, she is On With Life's environmental planner.

"We see families in crisis, and our goal is to do anything we can to make their stay with us more therapeutic and more home-like," Cindy said. "Through a remarkable group of volunteers, we work to ensure the environment meets the needs of those we serve and their families."

And by work, we mean work. Cindy designs, paints, installs carpet, repurposes furniture, remodels offices, builds gardens, creates parade floats and more. She often brings her husband, Tom, along for his expertise on projects, like building a fishing dock on the Ankeny campus and segments of the Owl's Nest on the Glenwood campus.

In addition to gifts of hard work and time, the Friedrichsens are also generous donors to On With Life. They have given many in-kind donations and regularly contribute financial donations.

"Tom and I have always supported our community and organizations that help others," said Cindy. "And because we truly believe in On With Life's mission, we have named On With Life as a beneficiary in our estate plan."

Gifts come in many shapes and sizes, but Cindy says it best. "When you work with survivors of brain injury, you realize that every day is a gift."

One thing is certain – Cindy and Tom are a gift to On With Life.



Tom and Cindy Friedrichsen support On With Life in more ways than one.

## EMC Insurance

One of the corporations that played a key role in the founding of On With Life is EMC Insurance Companies (EMC).



Volunteers from EMC recently helped transform the butterfly garden in one day.

In On With Life's infancy, EMC offered a large contribution to help establish programs and services for survivors of brain injury. That commitment to On With Life's mission has continued over our 25-year history with annual contributions, as well as a generous gift to support our recent expansion project.

"Year after year, the services provided by the On With Life team

give hope to people faced with the challenge of rebuilding their lives," said Bruce Kelley, president and CEO of EMC. "EMC was a founding donor and is proud to continue supporting because of the passionate team who dedicates every day to rehabilitating individuals living with brain injury."

In addition to financially supporting On With Life, EMC employees donate time to our programs. EMC recently recognized Iowa's lack of helmet laws through On With Life's Wear Your Helmet to Work campaign. This fall, more than a dozen EMC employees participated in a one-day butterfly garden build as part of our Celebrate Life event.

When asked why EMC makes giving back to the community a priority, Bruce noted, "Enhancing the quality of lives in the communities we serve has been part of our company culture since EMC opened its doors in 1911, and it is our commitment to make a difference in as many lives as possible."

# OUR DONORS



Brain Injury Rehabilitation Specialists™

The On With Life Foundation is grateful to the many individuals, corporations and foundations – those named below and those who have asked to remain anonymous – who supported On With Life’s mission through charitable donations and grants received between October 1, 2015 and December 31, 2016.

It is the Foundation’s goal to be 100% accurate in the spelling and inclusion of all contributors. If you have any questions or concerns about a listing, please contact the Foundation office at **1-800-728-0645, ext. 111** or by email at **foundation@onwithlife.org**. More information on ways to give can be found online at **www.onwithlife.org/foundation**.

## Ways to Give – Gifts to the On With Life Foundation can be made in person, online or through the mail and can include:

- Gifts made to the On With Life Annual Fund
- Gifts designated to a specific fund (for example, the Therapeutic Grounds campaign)
- Gifts in memory or in honor of friends or loved ones
- In-kind gifts benefitting our persons served/families or programs
- Employer-matched gifts
- Gift of stock or bequests in your will/estate plan
- Designating your United Way gifts to On With Life
- Sponsorship of our annual fundraising and recognition event
- Volunteering time

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

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# LOVE YOUR BRAIN

## March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

Each year, 2.5 million Americans survive traumatic brain injuries, and at least 5.3 million Americans live with TBI-related disabilities. These staggering numbers don't include the millions of families and friends whose lives, hopes and dreams are also affected by their loved one's brain injury. The month of March is dedicated to raising awareness for those living with brain injury. Please join with us to raise awareness and encourage prevention as we motivate each other to love our brains.



## HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO GET INVOLVED:

- 1 Help us spread the word on social media. 'Like' On With Life on Facebook and share our posts with your friends and family to raise awareness for brain injury.
2. Always wear your helmet and advocate for helmet laws in your state. Watch for information on On With Life's "Wear Your Helmet to Work" event this spring.
3. Wear your seatbelt and buckle children in the age appropriate safety or booster seat.
4. Find ways to love your brain - yoga, meditation, relaxation and nutrition are all great ways to start.
5. Contact the Brain Injury Association of America or the local Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa for ways to advocate for individuals living with brain injury.