

# headway

## FORGING UNCHARTED TERRITORY

DEVELOPING A COMPLEX  
CONCUSSION CLINIC  
FOR THE INVISIBLE INJURY

*also inside:*

Q&A: NEUROSTORMING | TOOLS OF THE TRADE | PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION  
FOUNDATION REPORT | OVERCOMING THE IMPOSSIBLE | 2017 OUTCOMES REPORT

# On With Life, Inc. headway magazine

WINTER 2018

## On With Life, Inc.

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Michelle Pett at On With Life.  
Photo by Brice Musgrove, Images by Brice

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## a letter from our CEO

We're excited to introduce our new CEO, Jean Shelton. Please enjoy her first article to our Headway readers. You can connect with Jean by emailing her at [jean.shelton@onwithlife.org](mailto:jean.shelton@onwithlife.org).

In my short time at On With Life, I've immersed myself in learning as much as I can about this great organization – family-focused culture, compassionate staff, great facilities – On With Life brings it all together to provide excellence in brain injury rehabilitation.

RNs and CNAs know each person served and their family as an individual with unique needs. Therapy sessions are led by experts with a joy for their work. Dietary staff create culinary works of art each day and our facilities team ensures our buildings, parking lots and sidewalks are safe for families visiting their loved ones, even on nights and weekends. IT will make sure systems are working and make sure the animated Christmas decorations in the gardens entertain our visitors. Reception team members know your name and greet everyone with a smile. Board members can be found working in the garden. Case management will work through the evening to make sure we have all insurance and admission issues addressed. Though often unnoticed, these individuals are making a notable difference in the lives of those we serve and their families.

Talent is everywhere at On With Life. It transcends through all of our programs and into each of our locations. The amazing attitudes and commitment to excellence from our staff are paramount no matter who you talk to or what location you step into. Every segment within the organization operates with the highest quality, no matter the role or position. Even our therapy dog, Lolo, is special. Excellence is everywhere.

And why do these individuals come to work at On With Life each day? The people we serve. The On With Life team understands that it takes each of us to make a difference for those we serve.

You'll find stories of amazing people in our magazine, as well. Stories of remarkable individuals and organizations that are making an impact on On With Life. I invite you to read through these extraordinary stories and be as inspired by them as I was. As you come across these noteworthy stories – of our persons served, our staff, our donors and our community members – please share them with me. I look forward to getting to know you and hearing your inspiring stories.

Jean Shelton, CEO

April 25

On With Life  
Virtual Conference  
Online Webinar

August 4

On With Life  
Post-Acute Inpatient  
Reunion  
On With Life  
Ankeny, IA

September 14

On With Life Brain  
Injury Rehabilitation  
Fall Conference  
FFA Enrichment Center  
Ankeny, IA

WINTER 2018

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Jeff Larsen shares a special moment with his daughter, Melissa, at her wedding. Jeff, who has lived at On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care for Youth and Younger Adults program in Glenwood for 10 years, was able to accompany his daughter down the aisle and was the first to see the bride on her wedding day. To learn more about Jeff, see page 14.



On With Life staff and board members accept the Best Kept Secret award.

## On With Life Recognized as a Best Kept Secret

On With Life has been named by the Greater Des Moines Partnership and the Des Moines Business Record as the “Best Kept Secret” in the large

**Business Record**



company category within the Des Moines metro. The

award is part of the Celebrate Business Awards, promoting the development of the Greater Des Moines business community by publicly acknowledging unique and enduring business initiatives.

*Here are the top three reasons we think On With Life is a best kept secret:*

**1 Our staff** Our mission impacts everything we do, including who we hire, and this has resulted in a dynamic, mission-driven team of individuals who care deeply about our organization. On With Life is proud to have staff members serving on national brain injury boards along with some of the most highly respected individuals and organizations in brain injury rehabilitation.

**2 Our expertise** Our staff are experts in brain injury, with a high percentage earning the Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) certification from the Brain Injury Association of America. Our director of therapy, Dave Anders, and neuropsychologist, Dr. David Demarest, wrote the chapter on Disorders of Consciousness in the CBIS training manual and are two of only a handful of CBIS trainers in the state.

**3 Our family focus** On With Life began as the dream of a dedicated, passionate group of families, faced with the challenge of rebuilding lives shattered by brain injury. Now 26 years later, On With Life still has the same focus on the importance of families in the rehabilitation journey. Families and loved ones are involved in the rehabilitation process and work with the therapy team to develop goals and treatment plans that are geared directly to the needs and interests of each individual we serve.

For more information, visit [onwithlife.org/bestkeptsecret](http://onwithlife.org/bestkeptsecret).



Louie, Andy and Shaylyn at the new RNR house.

## On With Life Adds to Continuum

On With Life is proud to provide a continuum of specialty services for individuals living with a brain injury, now including residential rehabilitation. On With Life’s new Residential Neuro Rehabilitation program opened in January and is a five-bedroom residential home focused solely on working with individuals who have sustained a brain injury as they learn strategies toward independence and overcome neurobehavioral challenges. The rehabilitation team will focus on promoting the overall health of the person served, community integration, independent living

skill-building and managing behavioral challenges.

"The new program is designed to serve someone who needs to develop the skills to successfully transition to a lower level of care, such as independent living," said Erik Gregersen, residential care manager.

The home is located in the Highland Park community of Des Moines.

For more information on this program, visit our website: [onwithlife.org/RNR](http://onwithlife.org/RNR) or call 515-965-6860.



Therapy stairs



FES Bike



Ceiling-mounted 12-foot walking gait track



Frenzel goggles

# TOOLS of the TRADE

On With Life is committed to providing the specialty services and equipment needed to help our persons served regain as much function as possible. Our equipment makes therapy functional and real for the individuals we serve as it simulates real-life scenarios.



Hydro-Works aquatic therapy pool - a warm water pool with varying depths and an underwater variable speed treadmill



Specialized vision and vestibular lab with Dynavision



Fit Light



Indoor hydraulic therapy car



Hank and his wife, Anita

## THE LIFE OF THE PARTY

### HANK PANGELINA

*Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation*

Admit: December 30, 2014

Discharge: April 1, 2015

*Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation*

Admit: June 8, 2015

Discharge: December 2, 2015

Admit: August 14, 2016

Discharge: December 12, 2016

In September 2014, Hank Pangelina was involved in a serious motorcycle accident that left him wheelchair bound and unable to communicate. Always the life of the party prior to the accident, seeing him fighting for his life was a shock to his family and friends. After weeks of care in Omaha and another rehabilitation center, the Pangelinas found On With Life.

“We were looking for something a little bit more individualized, and On With Life looked like the kind of place we needed,” Anita says. “We loved our experience there. Everyone was personable, knew our names and they were all there to help us.”

Hank beat tremendous odds to leave On With Life and return home. With the support of family and friends, and the expertise of the therapy staff, Hank left with his sights set on getting back to doing the things he loved prior to the accident.

With continued work in outpatient rehabilitation he has grown steadier in his walking, is back to chatting up friends and is showing improvement with each day that passes, according to Anita. Truly, Hank is back to being the life of the party.

“He is very social, so he loves getting together with his friends,” Anita says. “He is also back to doing more around the house like washing the dishes; he is working out and is fishing again.”

He is also back to his favorite game.

“He has always loved to golf,” Anita says. “So when the weather is nice, we’ll jump in the golf cart and play. He’s not hitting it like he used to, but he’s hitting it and that’s what is important. He is back to enjoying the fun stuff in life.”

## AN INSPIRATION TO OTHERS

DAWNI HILL  
*Post-Acute Inpatient  
Rehabilitation*

Admit: November 2, 1995

Discharge: September 27, 1996

On a quiet, sunny Saturday in September of 1995, Dawni was involved in a single-car accident north of Ames. At the time, she was a Gilbert High School senior and looking forward to starting college the following fall.

In the accident, her brain was severely injured. After receiving critical care for weeks, she transferred to On With Life to begin her year-long rehabilitation program. Her rehab turned out to be much longer than first estimated because of her many wonderful, unexpected improvements. Dawni's mother, Pat, says On With Life holds a special place in their hearts.

"Over that year we developed many strong relationships with the people who worked there," Pat says. "We learned to love our therapists. They were so good to us."


To which Dawni quickly adds, "They were family. It was like a family."

The Hills grew so close to their therapists that Dawni made it a point to do something special for one of them. In her rehabilitation, Dawni developed a talent for calligraphy, and employed that skill to create a decorative Bible verse as a wedding gift.

Dawni still does some calligraphy from time to time, and maintains an incredibly active lifestyle.

Like most brain injury survivors, getting to where she is today, in the face of many challenges, is the result of hard work, but Dawni also acknowledges the role her faith played in her recovery.

"We hear all the time how people are inspired by her and her hard work," says Pat. "But she always tries to give credit to God for His daily help."



Dawni (right)  
with her mom, Pat

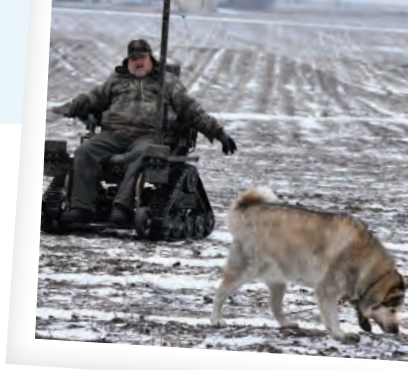
## LIVING IT UP IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

RUSS TEIG

*Post-Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation*

Admit: March 25, 2002

Discharge: May 1, 2002



In an instant, Russ Teig's life changed. The state legislator suffered a rare brain stem stroke on February 18, 2002. He beat the odds to survive the stroke and after six weeks of intensive care at Mercy Medical Center in Des Moines, he transferred to On With Life to begin his rehabilitation journey.

Looking back, Russ says the way On With Life made a commitment to ensuring he maintained his connections with friends and family was crucial as he embarked on his long rehab journey.

"It was integral to my healing," says Russ, who lives in Jewell. "I needed those connections with the people who cared about me."

The stroke left Russ virtually paralyzed, but his cognitive function was only mildly impacted.

"It was scary," he says. "I was thrust into something I couldn't even imagine in the blink of an eye. I'm thankful for the therapists and staff for all they did for me. I could barely move when I first got to On With Life, but they didn't quit on me."

Today, Russ is regularly on the move. While some tasks can still be difficult for him – like tying his shoes or walking up the stairs, they do little to slow him. Especially when his friends come calling. Two buddies from his legislative days, Jeff Lamberti and Richard Arnold, still hunt and fish with Russ on a regular basis.

"The three of us have been all over the country hunting and fishing," Russ says. "I have to give those two a lot of credit. They have patiently helped me continue to pursue my passions."

# FORGING UNCHARTERED TERRITORY

Developing a Complex  
Concussion Clinic for  
the Invisible Injury



**Left:** Michelle on her graduation day from On With Life.

**Right:** Michelle with her family and friends at the 2017 Celebrate Life event.

For Michelle Pett, a slip on the ice in 2015 changed the trajectory of her life. She received a few stitches in the emergency room but no information or treatment for a concussion. She thought her initial prognosis was very optimistic, but the days and weeks passed and her symptoms worsened. She attended therapy for whiplash and her vestibular system. Her symptoms began hindering her ability to work as a pre-school teacher, and she moved to a part-time status. Multiple visits to her family physician, neurologists and therapists couldn't give her the answers she so desperately wanted.

Michelle isn't alone – many concussions go undiagnosed, but the symptoms are debilitating: headaches, dizziness, feeling unsteady or off balance, increased irritability and difficulties with vision, reading, memory and attention. Many of these symptoms can last weeks, months and even years after the initial concussion diagnosis, leading to post-concussive syndrome.



Such was the case with Michelle. Nearly 14 months after her fall, she was still experiencing severe symptoms. She found On With Life through a social media post and took a chance at On With Life's Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program, more than two and a half hours away from her hometown of Fredericksburg. She began a long rehabilitation journey, one that has allowed her to get her life back, and she couldn't be more thankful for what the On With Life program and therapists have done for her.

"I had tried therapy before coming to On With Life, but On With Life is different," said Michelle. "The therapists have additional training on brain injury, they collaborate together and they integrate my goals, interest and family into my sessions. This organization is special."

### Developing a Complex Concussion Clinic

Because of stories like Michelle and many others, On With Life is developing a special clinic dedicated to helping those with complex concussions. Complex concussions are not just limited to athletes playing a contact sport. Many individuals experience a concussion from a fall or car accident, but many of these concussions are not diagnosed or treated. In sports-related concussions, there are strict protocols for identifying a concussion and returning to play, but no such protocol exists for non-sports-related concussions.



Michelle uses the Dynavision at On With Life.

"Concussions are often described as an invisible injury because so many of the symptoms are not outwardly visible," said Jillian Jones, physical therapist at On With Life's outpatient program. "Concussion symptoms can be prolonged and persistent for weeks, months or even years after the trauma and can be life-changing for the individual."

To help with the development of the complex concussion clinic, On With Life received a \$50,000 Telligen Community Initiative grant, one of nine organizations in Iowa to be recognized by the foundation that supports health innovation. Grant administrators viewed On With Life's proposed concussion clinic as an incredibly innovative proposal and thought the stories of those the clinic would impact were profound and powerfully conveyed the need for this work. The stories are those like Michelle's – a fall down the stairs, a car accident, a fall on the ice – all leading to a concussion and post-concussive symptoms.

And the stories all share the same sentiment – finding answers and help is more difficult than they expected.

"Michelle's symptoms did not fit neatly into one discipline or area of expertise but were widespread between physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy," said Jones. "Michelle experienced success because she had a team of therapists working for her and with her throughout her journey at On With Life."

While On With Life has treated post-concussive symptoms since the beginning of its outpatient program in 2011, the Telligen grant will allow for additional education and training for therapists, provider integration, specialized equipment and community education all related to complex concussions.

"A complex concussion requires a multi-disciplinary approach to be successful, and with our new clinic, we will have the opportunity to continue our education and the development of our approach to this challenging diagnosis," said Jones.

### Moving Forward

Even though Michelle's returning to her passions with accommodations and in moderation, it's because of On With Life that she's returning to work as a pre-school teacher, traveling to the Hamptons, reading books, shopping and attending concerts. These simple pleasures she thought were gone forever, but because of On With Life's unique approach to her therapy, she's regaining her life back.

"I thought the things I loved doing were gone for good until I came to On With Life. They helped me retrain my body, and I ultimately regained my confidence," said Michelle. "On With Life truly carries through with the meaning of their name. The life I live today is not the life I was living prior to January 2015, and it never will be, but it's a close resemblance of that life, and I owe that to On With Life."

*For more information on our Complex Concussion Clinic, please contact our Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation program at 515-289-9696 or email [info@onwithlife.org](mailto:info@onwithlife.org).*



Above: Michelle donated toys to On With Life's toy drive.

Below: Michelle brought owl-shaped fruit treats for the staff.

# people making a **DIFFERENCE**

## Sean Jenkins



Sean transports Wendy to a therapy session.

For Sean Jenkins, leaving his job at age 45 was not part of his plan. But due to the increasing symptoms of Parkinson's disease, Sean couldn't keep up with the demands of his job as an IT professional. Sean didn't know where to turn when his neurologist referred him to the LSVT BIG and LOUD program, a specialized, effective treatment program for those living with Parkinson's Disease. After just four weeks of physical, occupational and speech therapy at On With Life, Sean knew On With Life was a special place.

"I had an amazing experience during therapy. I saw incredible improvements in myself in a short amount of time," said Sean. "Each staff member was passionate about helping each person served meet and exceed their goals. I felt this on my first day of the LSVT program, and I feel it even stronger today."

Two years later, Sean is still a part of the On With Life family. He participates in the LSVT boxing program and support group, and twice a week, he volunteers as a transporter for the post-acute program, ensuring

persons served get to their therapy sessions on time. An added benefit of volunteering is interacting with the staff who made such an impact on his life.

"The staff is amazing and continue to encourage me as I'm transporting a person served down the hallway," said Sean. "They show they truly care about me, and I'm so grateful for that."

Sean's journey hasn't been easy. But he's quick to point out the blessings he's gained because of it – lifelong friendships and the discovery of organizations like the American Parkinson's Disease Association and On With Life that are changing lives for this community.

"The culture at On With Life is so strong and positive that every time I arrive I am excited to do anything I can do to help," said Sean. "On With Life is a great asset for the state of Iowa and I want to be a part of supporting it in any way I can."

*For more information on On With Life's LSVT program, visit our website: [onwithlife.org/LSVT](http://onwithlife.org/LSVT) or call 515-289-9696.*

## Sybil Finken

When Sybil Finken was asked to serve on the On With Life, Ltd. Board of Directors, she knew it would be a good fit because of her unique perspective and first-hand experience with brain injury. Her son, Seth, suffered profound brain damage as a result of meningitis when he was seven months old and has lived at the Glenwood Resource Center since 1984. Sybil assisted Dr. Marv Tooman in opening On With Life's Long-Term Program for Youth and Younger Adults on the Glenwood Resource Center campus in 1996 and has passionately served on their board of directors for nine years.

### What does it mean to you to serve on the On With Life, Ltd. Board of Directors?

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve on the board and work side by side with the other members. Each brings something unique to the board, and, although the members are experts in their fields, they are more than willing to learn something new. I feel passionate about making a difference for those with a brain injury, like my son.

### What are your goals for On With Life?

I would like to see the Long-Term program become more involved with music therapy. The research that has been done about the effect music has on people with special needs is remarkable. Also, as a retired music teacher, I would like to volunteer my time to work with the music therapy department in Ankeny to bring this opportunity to the persons served in Glenwood.



Sybil Finken

### What makes On With Life so special?

The fact that many larger programs across the country are using On With Life as a resource is evidence that we are unique. The administration and staff are exceptional in their knowledge, professionalism and dedication to the mission, and that truly sets us apart.

## Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association

Each year the Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association (INLA) holds a day of service to remember the events of September 11, 2001, and give their members an opportunity to give back to their community. On With Life was lucky to be selected for their 2017 service project.

"The day of service takes us out of the sometimes monotonous job we do each day and gives us an opportunity to serve our community and our industry," said John Hughes, president of the INLA Board of Directors. "We're able to serve our communities, educate future horticulturists and work alongside our colleagues. This day impacts us on many different levels."

More than 50 INLA members and students from horticulture classes at Iowa State

University, Kirkwood Community College and Des Moines Area Community College designed and transformed three areas near the main entrance at On With Life, all in just one day.

"We wanted to enhance the natural beauty in the atmosphere at On With Life and let that aid in the healing that happens there," said Hughes. "The landscaping we did was designed and planted in such a way that it will bring joy for many individuals for many years to come."

To learn more about our therapeutic grounds project or volunteering at On With Life, visit [onwithlife.org](http://onwithlife.org).



INLA transforms the front entrance of On With Life's Ankeny campus.

## GET TO KNOW

### Sonni Slifka

Assistant Director of Nursing  
(ADON)



Sonni's Family

#### Experience:

RN for three years. Floor nurse at On With Life for two years and ADON for one year.

#### Education:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Mercy College of Health Sciences; Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse certification

#### Family:

My parents live in Cresco, IA, with their pug, Ruby. My sister and her husband live in Ankeny with their two kids, Maverick (3) and Hailey Jo (1). I'm engaged to Tyler Ricklefs, and we're getting married July 7, 2018.

#### Three Interesting Facts:

- I attended Iowa State University for three years prior to deciding on a career in nursing (two years in Business and one year in Human Development and Family Studies). Go Cyclones!
- I am a Harry Potter nerd.
- My favorite TV shows are *The Office* and *Friends* - I watch re-runs on Netflix repeatedly.

Q+A



Sonni Slifka,  
RN, BSN, CRRN

*Neurostorming is often referred to as "weathering the storm." An individual, who moments prior had been sitting peacefully, now appears to be in a state of distress. Sonni Slifka, On With Life's Assistant Director of Nursing, discusses neurostorming and how it is managed at On With Life.*

#### What is neurostorming?

**A:** While the severity and frequency of symptoms vary from each individual and each episode, neurostorming typically includes an altered level of consciousness, increased posturing, muscle contractions, high blood pressure, overheating, high heart rate, rapid breathing, sweating, irregular heart beat and agitation. It is a common condition after a traumatic brain injury and most often seen in individuals who are in a minimally conscious state.

#### Q: How does On With Life manage neurostorming?

**A:** Identifying triggers of neurostorming, such as suctioning, bathing or repositioning, allows us to work as a team to decrease or eliminate the trigger when possible.

Our team also monitors environmental factors. Typically when neurostorming, individuals will experience an elevated temperature, so applying a cold cloth to their forehead or placing a fan in front of them can help these symptoms. Decreasing stimuli, such as darkening the room and eliminating sounds, such as the TV or music, helps to promote a calm environment.

Medication can be used to control the symptoms, but the goal, over time, is for the individual to be able to regulate their symptoms without the need for medication.

#### Q: Why is having brain injury expertise crucial in managing neurostorming?

**A:** The challenging part of neurostorming is that symptoms can mimic other health conditions such as seizure, heart attack, alcohol or drug withdrawal, pain and anxiety. Our nursing team is able to identify and differentiate when an individual is neurostorming and symptoms can be managed in the facility, and when symptoms are worsening, indicating a different condition or require a higher level of care. If the individual is in a program not familiar with neurostorming, it often leads to unnecessary tests, additional doctor or hospital visits or medication.

#### Q: How does On With Life educate families about neurostorming?

**A:** Families are an integral part of rehabilitation at On With Life, so our staff is committed to providing education about neurostorming and what to do when it happens. Families are often helpful in identifying triggers and providing treatment during a neurostorm. Allowing them to be an active part of the treatment gives families a sense of control and allows them to help in caring for their loved one.



Janelle Conley Butterfly Sensory Garden



2017 On With Life Fall Conference



Celebrate Life

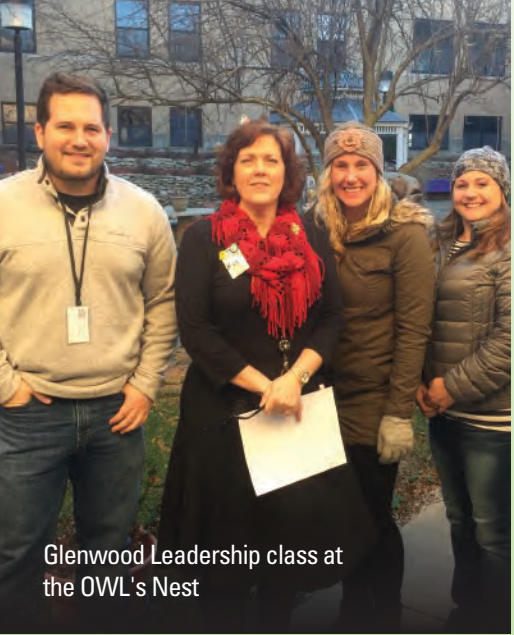


Celebrate Life



Music and Mojitos

# SHOWCASING OUR EXPERTISE + ENVIRONMENT



Glenwood Leadership class at the OWL's Nest



O'Donnell and Friends Open



Community tour at On With Life

## Long-Term Skilled Care Program for Youth and Younger Adults

On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care Program for Youth and Younger Adults, located in Glenwood, is a remarkable program that provides around-the-clock nursing, therapy and medical support. These stories share an insight into this exceptional program and the individuals that make it so unique.

### LEON LEVERING

AGE 34



Because Leon Levering's Native American heritage is an important part of his culture, On With Life staff have found meaningful ways to incorporate videos of tribal dances, drum music and the history of his Winnebago tribe into his daily activities. Outings to participate in the Ho-Chunk Nation's Pow-Wows are in the works for Leon and the staff.

"Leon's face lights up when we include music and dances from his tribe," said Jordyn Labadie, social worker at On With Life. "Seeing his beautiful smile is inspiring for us as staff, and we want to do whatever we can to encourage that level of happiness."



### JEREMY BELBACK

AGE 22

Jeremy Belback has a great sense of humor and loves to laugh. He's been known to sneak up on staff with a Nerf gun, ready to start a friendly war. Staff have embraced his competitive edge by setting up Nerf gun wars between Jeremy and his friends at On With Life.

"This is why this unique program was created – to create a place for young adults like Jeremy to interact with their peers and excel at the things that really makes them happy," said Jeni Durfey, recreation therapy specialist. "To see the persons served connecting with each other in new ways and bridging generational gaps is fun for us as staff."



### JEFFREY LARSEN

AGE 54

Anyone who knows Jeff Larsen knows about his love of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Staff found that not only do Harleys elicit a bright smile, they improve his speech communication and increase independence. Frequent trips to Holstein's Harley-Davidson store in Omaha are a joy for Jeff and staff.

"Jeff propels himself in his wheelchair around the store independently, makes conversation with store employees and can name various motorcycles and their specific parts," said Jennifer Barbour, therapeutic activity specialist at On With Life. "We love seeing his passion for motorcycles and the joy it brings him. When we can find ways to incorporate a passion like this into therapy, we take every opportunity we can."

# ON WITH LIFE SNAPSHOT : 2017 YEAR IN REVIEW

In fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017), On With Life's continuum served 598 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 Neuro Rehabilitation

PERSONS SERVED WERE FROM

32  
IOWA  
COUNTIES

7  
STATES

2  
COUNTRIES



73%

OF PERSONS SERVED  
DISCHARGED TO HOME

AVERAGE  
LENGTH OF  
STAY

97  
DAYS

## Supported Community Living

18,266  
HOURS



PROVIDED TO  
FORTY-SIX  
INDIVIDUALS

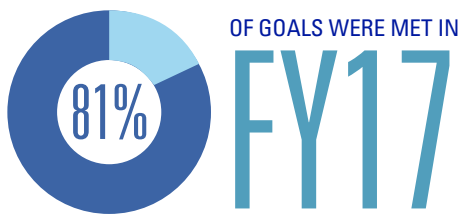
## Neuropsychological Services



55%

EVALUATIONS WITH  
NEUROPSYCHOLOGIST  
DR. DAVID DEMAREST

WERE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 2 & 19



98% SATISFACTION  
RATE

OF PERSONS SERVED AND FAMILIES

## Outpatient Neuro Rehabilitation



60%

THERAPIES:

- 1 PHYSICAL
- 2 OCCUPATIONAL
- 3 SPEECH

OF THE 308 INDIVIDUALS SERVED IN OUR  
OUTPATIENT PROGRAM RECEIVED MORE  
THAN ONE TYPE OF THERAPY

## Long-Term Skilled Care

99%

MAINTAINED  
OR IMPROVED  
RANGE OF  
MOTION

97%

RATED ON WITH LIFE  
EXCELLENT OR GOOD  
IN SATISFACTION SURVEYS





## THANK YOU for making an impact!

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 828 supporters listed on the following pages are at the top of the list.

We are celebrating the introduction of the On With Life Annual Fund in 2017. The program was introduced as a way to recruit annual donations for our programs, and nearly \$145,000 was given in unrestricted support. This allows the programs to spend the dollars on what is needed most, e.g. therapy equipment such as a tilt table, the Family House, community outings to places such as the state fair and gas cards for families who are not financially able to bring their loved ones to therapy.

The Circle of Life Society, a leadership giving designation, was also introduced as part of the Annual Fund. I am happy to report there were 36 inaugural Circle of Life members in 2017 (see page 20 for a listing of members). We look forward to growing this society and the Annual Fund in the future.

We are also celebrating the significant progress made in our fundraising efforts for the therapeutic grounds project on the Ankeny campus. More than \$370,000 was raised in 2017 to help transform 1.5 acres of green space into outdoor therapy space. We are almost fully funded in order for the project to be complete in 2018!

In addition to continuing to grow our resources which ensure our persons served have the equipment, services and environment necessary to succeed, we are working to further develop the Foundation board of directors as well. We are thrilled that Steve Van Oort and Andrea Woodard have recently been elected as members of our board, and we are excited to have their service in this capacity.

Finally, as you review the listing of donors and volunteers included in this report, please know 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Lamberti".

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



# Why Give to On With Life?

FIVE GREAT REASONS TO SUPPORT AN ORGANIZATION YOU LOVE

There are many worthy organizations to donate to, and people do so for different reasons. Read on for five examples of why donors have chosen to support the mission of On With Life.

1

## Giving benefits those in need.

On With Life's Annual Fund helps ensure brain injury survivors have the equipment and environments necessary to maximize their rehabilitation potential. **"It's so easy to take for granted how fortunate we are that our daily life tasks are simple to perform. On With Life is the hope, sometimes even miracle, available for people who have had a life-changing event which make those tasks seem impossible. We are fortunate to have On With Life here in Iowa and we proudly support their endless work helping those who need them most by simply sending our monetary support."**

~ Ann and Darwin Rohlfson

## Giving offers us the ability to bless others.

Event sponsorships not only benefit nonprofit organizations, but they also offer an opportunity for businesses to use marketing dollars to further a good cause. Last year, 65 businesses and individuals sponsored On With Life's fundraising event, Celebrate Life, in celebration of our persons served and programs. **"It is very rewarding to support and work with such an amazing organization. The staff at On With Life really make the difference and you can tell by seeing the results they get with persons served."**

~ Rockford Anderson, Right Dose Pharmacy, pictured with his wife, Megan Anderson



2

## Giving makes things happen.

Nonprofit organizations like On With Life rely on contributions to support special projects that are not budgeted. **"The therapeutic grounds will be a tremendous addition to On With Life's campus, and American Prosthetics & Orthotics is excited for the small part we could do to help with the putting green area. Our company has been a long-standing partner of On With Life, and we have seen that On With Life changes lives."**

~ Rod Cheney, American Prosthetics & Orthotics, Inc., pictured with his wife, Tracy Cheney



3

## Giving makes us feel good.

Research suggests that giving to others is directly correlated with an increased sense of happiness. **"Donating in memory of my wife not only makes a difference for the future of On With Life, but it also makes our family feel good about doing so in the name of someone who meant so much to us. You think you're doing well for others but in the end, you're doing well for yourself."**

~ Charlie Feldt

4

## Giving is in our nature.

For many, our first impulse is to help when someone is stumbling on the street or having a hard time because of an illness. When you see the struggle firsthand, it's easy to want to give what you can to help. **"Working at On With Life with persons served has taught me patience and caring. What better way to give back?"**

~ Steve Eckardt, Supported Community Living Specialist, On With Life



5

# philanthropy IN ACTION



Marilyn Howard

## Howard Charitable Foundation

From day one, the Howard family felt welcome at On With Life.

"Through the initial meeting, to the orientation process, to the various therapies, it was such a family-type atmosphere," said Steve Howard. "In turn, we felt it enabled the healing process and fostered the rehab experience."

Steve's mother, Marilyn, came to On With Life in 2011 when she suffered a stroke during surgery. She was part of the post-acute inpatient rehabilitation program for three months. The family was so impressed with the program that they believe it's important to continue to support the mission.

The Howards generously supported On With Life's expansion in Ankeny with a gift to the capital campaign in 2015, and they recently contributed to the developing therapeutic grounds project.

"We feel that we would not have our mother home, doing as well as she is, without the help of On With Life," Steve

said. "We feel it's important the organization continues on so others can benefit as well."

Giving is not new to the Howard family. Steve remembers when his dad, Dale, was a teacher and a coach and gave of his time and talent.

"Dad put into our minds at a very early age that there are different forms of philanthropy. There was giving through a sense of time and volunteering for activities," shared Steve.

Over 42 years ago, Dale bought a car dealership in Iowa Falls. After Dale's passing, Steve and his son continue to run the successful business. Dale's legacy of philanthropy continues on in both gifts of time and talent from family members and treasure from the family's foundation.

"Now that we can afford to be generous in an economic manner, we feel it's important to do so," says Steve.

## Joyce Chapman

Joyce Chapman has certainly made her mark on the Greater Des Moines community – both from a business and civic perspective. Joyce retired from West Bank at the end of 2006 after a career of 35 years and continues to serve on its board of directors. She is a well-known community figure, having served on numerous committees and boards of directors over the years. And now, she is making her mark at On With Life.

By contributing to the organization's Endow Iowa Fund\*, Joyce has invested in the future of brain injury rehabilitation.

"I've known about On With Life for many years and watched its quality work with its persons served – one of whom I knew personally," Joyce said. "I sent a donation because of my initial impression and then enjoyed reading of client successes through the heartwarming articles in *Headway*. I finally took a personal tour of the facility and was totally impressed with the services and excellent outcomes. It is

a positive place with bright and cheery décor, is a wonderfully maintained facility and most importantly, staff members have a 'can do' attitude and skills to match."

Joyce noted how impressed she is with On With Life's national reputation for its exceptional services and outcomes, yet she said central Iowa is lucky to have such a wonderful local resource.

"My donations continue because these services are important and making a difference in the quality of life of the persons served," said Joyce.

*\*The On With Life Endow Iowa Fund is a permanently endowed fund where donors are eligible to receive a 25% Iowa tax credit in addition to the federal tax deduction. Visit [onwithlife.org](http://onwithlife.org) or contact 515-289-9611 for more information.*



Joyce Chapman

## Janet and Jerry Carspecken

Janet and Jerry Carspecken give to what they know best and believe in – and On With Life tops the list.



Jerry and Janet Carspecken

The Carspeckens' first contact with On With Life was when Jerry became a board member in 2006. He was a retired Speech Language Pathologist and a friend suggested he would make an excellent board member. Jerry served on the On With Life, Inc. and Supportive Housing boards until 2011 and was president of the Supportive Housing Board from 2009 – 2010.

Throughout Jerry's volunteer board service, the Carspeckens belief in On With Life's mission grew.

"Jerry and I saw, over the years, the impact the facility had on the lives of people who

needed the services," Janet shared. "And we saw the reputation that On With Life had worldwide!"

Their belief in the leadership, staff and quality of service provided by the organization has led Janet and Jerry to donate to the On With Life Foundation on an annual basis since 2006. Through their will, a future gift from the Carspeckens will help sustain many programs for On With Life as well.

"We decided that after we had taken care of friends and family, we should donate the rest of our estate to helping to keep the future of On With Life's services alive and healthy," said Jerry.

*If you would like to visit with staff regarding a current or future planned gift for On With Life, please contact 515-289-9611 or [foundation@onwithlife.org](mailto:foundation@onwithlife.org).*

# 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 January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2017. 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 **515-289-9611** or by email at **foundation@onwithlife.org**. More information on ways to give can be found online at **onwithlife.org/foundation**.

## Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more to the On With Life Annual Fund are designated as Circle of Life Society members.



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**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

*in honor of Joshua Herman*  
Andrea Gugliuzza  
Beverly and Ronald Herman

*in honor of Ryan Jansa*  
Andrea Woodard

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Leslie and Bradley Vanderlinden  
Jeanie and Leroy Winfield

*in memory of Jean Wright*  
Kim Wright

*in memory of Paul and Margaret  
Ann Wright*  
Sharon Hansen

## Thank you to On With Life's 2017 volunteers, a group of individuals who give unselfishly of their time and talents to the On With Life mission.

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

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# MUSIC FOR YOUR MIND

## March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

This March, we're raising awareness for the impact music therapy can have after a brain injury. Did you know music is an important part of rehabilitation after a brain injury? Music stimulates, arouses and alerts multiple areas in the brain simultaneously; therefore, it supports and enhances collaborations across disciplines within the brain injury rehabilitation setting. Music therapy can serve the health and wellness of the whole person by addressing cognitive skills, mobility, communication, self-expression, creativity, leisure and cultural and spiritual interests.

The addition of a Music Zen garden, as part of On With Life's therapeutic grounds, will allow the wonderful qualities of music therapy to carry outdoors as well, with outdoor musical instruments, interactive songbooks, sensory plants, a water feature and an arbor with seating.

### 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 family and friends. #MusicforyourMind

2

Donate to the Music Zen garden, part of On With Life's 1.5-acre therapeutic grounds project.

3

Volunteer at On With Life. We're always looking for individuals – musical or not – to share their talents at On With Life.

4

Save the date for our annual fundraising and recognition event on Friday, September 28, at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny.

5

Contact the Brain Injury Association of America or the Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa for ways to advocate for those living with brain injury.

