



CARDINAL
of MINNESOTA

News From The Nest

"To provide a safe, happy, healthy living environment for our clients"

March 2019

JP's Corner



My Crystal Ball

Someone suggested that I write an article reflecting on the past, commenting on the present and what I think the future will hold. As I have become one of the senior citizens in this field that would be a book! I am 68 and have been working in this field for 45 years.

The Past: When I started, almost all of the folks we now serve would have lived in one of the eight State Hospitals. A small fraction lived in large 100+ bed dormitory style facilities – mini institutions if you like. In the two decades or so that it took to complete the process of “deinstitutionalization” of these institutions, and in the two decades since that process was completed, facilities evolved from those large dormitory style facilities to “homes” like the 40-bed Hiawatha Children’s Home, to the 15-bed apartment style “homes” like the four REM facilities here in Rochester that I helped open in the early ‘80s, to the six or eight bed homes like Bear Creek Services opened in the ‘70s and 80s, to the fully integrated, community-based homes like we all operate today. Quite an accomplishment!! Congratulations to the state of Minnesota and the Department of Human Services that guided this transition over the past almost 50 years.

The Present: John McCain said, “One of the benefits of growing old is the increased acuity of hindsight.” While not perfect, to criticize the current service model requires a lack of knowledge of where we were 50 years ago or a mindset that is determined to find fault, no matter how far we have

come. For the folks that Cardinal and our other friends serve, the present is good. Again, we have a lot to celebrate. Things that need to be improved? Of course. Archaeologists tell us that the Incas had not finished Machu Picchu when it was abandoned 500 years ago. Are we finished building New York City or Rochester? There will always be more to do.

The Future: For the first 35 years or so, my crystal ball was pretty clear. I could see that the next five years would bring continued progress toward integrating folks with disabilities into the community to become our neighbors with aspirations similar to ours. Resources grew each year and the lives of Minnesota's citizens with disabilities improved. Over the last ten years or so, my crystal ball has become increasingly cloudy. What does the future hold? I think the best any of us can do is guess. Nonetheless, as we are all aware, there is a confluence of factors in the current environment that give us serious, sometimes grave, concern for what our future holds. I could provide statistics and references for what I say here but in the interest of brevity, these factors include the nation-wide workforce shortage, Mayo Clinic's Destination Medical Center initiative that will exacerbate the dearth of available workers, stagnant LOW wages that providers have almost no ability to change and the lack of will of the Minnesota Legislature that is needed to provide the funding (to be fair, a big number) necessary to provide a living wage for Direct Support Professionals (known at Cardinal as Delight Specialists). There are other factors but the ones I just mentioned are daunting, to say the least.

The pessimist in all of us may suggest that the past few decades may play out in reverse... six-bed homes, 10-bed facilities, 15 bed, 30, 50... The optimist in me (most of my DNA) says that Cardinal has a great culture, great leaders and great Delight Specialists and that, as my good friend Luis Romero said to me over breakfast last week in Cabo San Lucas, "One way to be successful is to work hard, persevere and let nothing stop you." That's my plan, my vision, and my roadmap for the future.

Snow, what snow?

It was a snowy and cold February to say the least. With so many places closed due to weather, we stayed inside and had to find other ways to occupy our time. Hot cocoa and letting our inner artists out seemed to help. We also got creative thinking of words to define Minnesota cold. Enjoy!



Meet The Office Staff

Lori Kollasch, Executive Assistant

Explain what you do and why people should call you: I have worked at

Cardinal for 18 1/2 years and have worn many hats. I was the first full-time receptionist. I became the Payroll Manager for a few years which wasn't the right fit so I transitioned back to being a Receptionist. I plan all of the Cardinal celebrations and there are a lot of them! I also help plan client vacations, buy concert tickets, sporting event tickets...pretty much anything you need a credit card for, whether it's for the company or clients. I currently supervise the front desk receptionists. We have a great team! We are all here to do what we can to make your day go a little bit smoother.

Where is the farthest place you've been? The farthest I have traveled to is Tobago where, two years ago my oldest daughter, Stephanie, took me on a vacation to celebrate our birthdays. It was a great experience. We met wonderful people. We fished in the ocean in what I can only describe as a large canoe. It was terrifying and fun all at the same time. Our resort was about a half mile from the beach, which we walked to a couple of times every day. All of the local food vendors were outstanding; we had the best Italian food ever, all of it fresh as it is imported from Italy!

The coolest place I have been? Hawaii...I love it there! I love the 80 degree days, day after day. I walk on the beach everyday and the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables there is amazing!! Just being able to be outside so much of the time and hear birds and smell flowers- I absolutely love it!

My favorite snack food? Chips, salsa and homemade guacamole!

What is the best way to spend a Saturday? I love hanging out with my two grandsons whenever possible and shooting pool with my friends. If we have a nice day, I love to read in my lounge chair on my deck.

Disability Day at the Capitol

The legislative session has already begun and that means it's time to make some noise at the State Capitol! Fourteen Cardinal folks went up on February 19th and were able to join other local organizations in expressing our concerns over reduced funding when we already need increased funding specifically to pay hardworking DSPs a better wage. We're hoping to send an even larger group to the next rally on March 12th. Please call our main office if you are interested in joining us!





WANT HIGHER DSP WAGES? THEN IT'S TIME TO TAKE A STAND (AND HAVE SOME FUN)

Cardinal is heading to the Capitol and we want you to come too!

Cardinal believes that the Professionals who provide direct care and supports to Minnesotans living with Disabilities must see an increase in their wages if there is to be any chance of maintaining quality, person-centered services.

If you would like to help us carry this message to our legislators, please join us for this impactful and fun event. We're hoping that you can share your stories with your legislators and educate them as to why Direct Support Professionals deserve livable wages, which will require some legislative changes sooner rather than later.

Individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, and Cardinal staff are all welcome to join the Cardinal Advocacy Group first at the capitol and later the Mall of America for lunch followed by some fun at Rock of Ages Black Light Mini-Golf! If possible, plan to wear a blue shirt.

**ARRM Day at the
Capitol**

March 12th

**Meet your
legislators and
share your stories**

Capitol

9:30AM to 1PM

**Lunch at Mall of
America**

1PM to 2PM

**Rock of Ages
Blacklight
Mini-Golf**

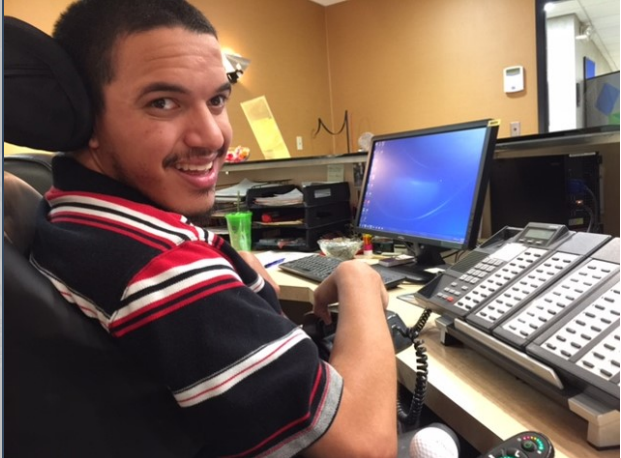
2PM to 4PM

**Pre-arranged
transportation will
be available**

**RSVP by March 5th
to reserve a
space**

We Have A Stake

We Have A Stake is a Cardinal supported initiative. The ANCOR Foundation realized that "The skill, commitment and hard work of supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) has for too long gone unrecognized." They launched a national awareness campaign to show the dedication, hard work, and



successes of people with I/DD and the people who support them.

Join Cardinal and spread the word!

[CLICK HERE](#)

[Share Your Story!](#)

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month and to kick it off, BICC (Brain Injury Community Committee) held an event at the Rochester Public Library called Making Rochester Accessible. It was a great day to share ideas.

Just a little about brain injury- each brain injury is unique to the person who sustains one and can range from mild to severe. It can sometimes be referred to as an invisible disability or can cause compounding neurological deficits.

Brain injury can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. It affects people throughout all communities, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, age, or any other variable.

Brain injury is our nation's leading cause of death and disability. In the United States, approximately 1.7 million people sustain a brain injury each year. In Minnesota alone, more than 10,000 cases of hospital-treated traumatic brain injury are reported annually and more than 100,000 Minnesotans live with a disability as a result of brain injury.

There are many ways people recover some or most function and there are great advances in the field. For now, though, there is no cure for brain injury. One thing is for certain, the brain is a dynamic and complicated organ!

-Shelly Maciujec



**WE'RE
HIRING!**

Cardinal of Minnesota



wants you!

Cardinal of Minnesota

3008 Wellner Dr. NE
Rochester, MN 55906



- Part-time and full-time positions available
- Flexible Schedules
- Competitive pay
- FUN and REWARDING Workplace

We are hiring **Delight Specialists** (Direct Support Professionals)
To support people with disabilities

For more information visit us at www.cardinalofminnesota.com

[Click here for further information](#)

Delight is one of Cardinal's Keys to Success



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