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Agency Newsletter

HOME
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HOME & COMMUNITY OPTIONS



Suzanne Horstman appointed as new Executive Director

The Board of Directors of Home and Community Options, Inc. are proud to announce that Suzanne Horstman has been appointed to the position of Executive Director.

Ms. Horstman has been an employee of Home and Community Options since 1991, starting as a Part-Time Counselor while completing her university degree. Over the next 10 years she provided support as a Primary Counselor for in-home programs, becoming Coordinator of residential and in-home programs in 2001. She was named Director of Human Resources and Property Management in 2009, and in June of 2012 she was appointed Interim Executive Director while a committee of our Board searched for the position's permanent occupant.

Times of Transition



Dennis Theede transitions to new roles with HCO

As part of a thoughtful succession plan strategy, the HCO Board of Directors recently accepted Dennis Theede's resignation as Executive Director of Home and Community Options. Executive Director since June of 1993, Dennis will continue on as a member of the management team through his new roles as Development Director, assisting with the leadership transition, and managing the newly formed Tech-Cara, LLC.

Designed to provide remote monitoring and supervision technology, Tech-Cara is owned by Home and Community Options. The company provides assistance for those who wish to utilize advanced technology to increase the independence of people who wish to live without staff in their homes.

Agency



Changes in Leadership

During HCO's annual meeting on January 19th, 2013, the Board of Directors of Home and Community Options, Inc. congratulated outgoing President Stewart Shaw for his past three years of service leading the HCO Board. Stewart was instrumental in leading the organization through changes within the agency, addressing significant budget cuts and making proactive adjustments to ensure the maintenance of quality services.

Bruce Klein was nominated and elected as the new HCO Board President for 2013. Employed as a Vice President at Rushford State Bank, Bruce has brought a wealth of leadership experience to the HCO Board since the beginning of his membership in 1997. Bruce has been an advocate for people with disabilities for many years, served as a leader for Camp Winnebago, and has also led the Lion's initiatives to help people with diabetes.

Both Stewart and Bruce served on the HCO Transition Team, providing a careful and diligent search process for HCO's new Executive Director.

Times of Transition



Kelly Borck

Newly Appointed

Kelly Borck was elected to the HCO Board at its annual meeting on January 19, 2013. Kelly is a parent of a son who receives services from HCO. She and her husband Robert live in rural Lewiston, Minnesota. Kelly brings experience to the HCO Board with her professional skills in nursing as a health care provider, but her greatest attribute is her understanding and advocacy of service needs for persons with disabilities, like her son.

Board of Directors



Mary Jo Baldus

2012 Good Neighbor Award Recipient

Mary Jo Baldus shares her kindness with others through her special gift of music. She has offered regular music therapy sessions to the children of the Family Resource Home through her work with the Sisters of Mercy, and also spends time with adults served by Home and Community Options who thrive on music as a provision of growth and enrichment.

As Mary enchants groups with her musical talents, special needs and challenging difficulties are often replaced with full smiles and total engagement. Mary has continued to offer her gift of music to these individuals, even during times when funding was unavailable, earning her the HCO Good Neighbor Award in 2012.



2012 Community Builder Awards

The Community Builder Award was founded in honor of the volunteer legacy of past HCO Board President and volunteer Mike DeBolt, a true gentleman who saw great value in the mission of Home and Community Options and its work in improving the lives of people with disabilities. This annual HCO event recognizes people who have offered their time and talent to our organization as a volunteer.

Recipients recently honored by HCO include:

Lon Keith

Mike Watkowski

Rosanne Kubicek

Florence Goetzman

Marie Marquardt

Sue Prussing

Chase and Wendy Hoffman of Jefferson's

Christopher Mechell

Morgan Gish

HOME COMMUNITY OPTIONS



Winona Community Foundation awards grant to HCO

Home and Community Options received a grant of \$2,500 from the Winona Community Foundation to support the acquisition of computers and software for the organization's In-Home Family Support Services. The program provides intensive therapy and habilitative services for children with developmental disabilities, including those with the diagnosis of autism. This grant award was made possible through the Winona Community Foundation's Community General Fund, funding that responds to needs and projects that assist our community. HCO has purchased iPads and instructional software for the program in order to provide augmentative communication training and other instructional activities designed to encourage communication and teach skills of daily living.

HCO continues to be proactive, working to leverage technology to help with the support and learning of people with disabilities. Research has documented the effectiveness of iPads as part of special instruction for children with autism. It is believed that iPads allow children with autism to have direct control over the interface, unlike a laptop that uses a keyboard and mouse.

There is a growing array of instructional software available that is particularly focused on enhancing communication – a frequent developmental deficit for children with autism. With this software installed, iPads can help children communicate desires and feelings in a way that would not be possible otherwise.

Noteworthy



Fiddler on the Roof

2013 Musical

June 13th-18th

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Page Theatre

*Performances are at 7:00 PM
June 16th Performance at 5:00 PM*

For the past 15 years, Home and Community Options has presented an annual musical as part of its fundraising efforts. These productions have become a part of local community life, bringing together some of the strongest talent in the Winona area, and have earned a reputation for consistently providing high quality performances. As the reputation of HCO shows continue to grow, so does the demand for tickets. In the last 5 years, over 25 of the performances have sold out, reaching a significant portion of the Winona population.

Grassroots Advocacy Committee

promotes system changes that will assure quality service continue:

Medicaid funding and services to people with disabilities will be influenced by the “Fiscal Cliff” and the impact of government spending cuts to balance the budgets within our state and federal government. HCO has a history of engaging participants, families, staff personnel, and community advocates to help understand service needs for people with disabilities. It is the goal of the Grassroots Advocacy Committee to assist government leaders to understand system changes that can help improve and increase efficiencies within the service system. This Committee proposes the following recommendations for State and Federal Leaders to consider:

Support a System with Funding Stability of Services

Numerous years of rate cuts have eroded funding stability for organizations like Home and Community Options. Though funding increases are difficult during deficit budgets, the service system needs to be aided through sustainable funding and reforms designed to simplify and streamline service implementation so that dollars can be used for:

- Persons with disabilities who are waiting for and need services.
- Funding to sustain a competent workforce that can make a living in providing services for people with disabilities.
- Reducing unnecessary regulations and requirements that do not improve quality, but consume resources that could be used for direct services. The primary measure of quality should be related to the satisfaction of services received as determined by the recipient and their family.
- Leveraging technology and service innovation to improve efficiencies and quality of care. Service innovation is essential, and stakeholders that are familiar with the needs of people with disabilities in their community should be allowed the opportunity to make reasonable changes.

Stakeholders of HCO expect our legislators to work collaboratively in a bi-partisan manner to resolve funding and system change issues, thereby ensuring the stability of the service system supporting people with disabilities.



David Borck

My name is David Borck. I am a 23-year-old (handsome) man who lives with my parents on a farm by Winona, Minnesota. I am employed at the Winona DAC. My job site is Sport and Spine Physical Therapy of Winona. I “usually” listen to my staff and I am a really fast, hard worker. I like sports - especially the NBA and college basketball. My favorite team is the Minnesota Golden Gophers, and I like the mascot named “Goldy” the Gopher.

After work and on weekends, my staff at Home and Community Options Saehler Drive Resource Home accompany me to social activities and events in the community. I enjoy going to the library and attending sports events. The staff help me learn new skills and also have some fun when I am away from my mom and dad. At the resource home, during my free time I can shoot hoops with my friends. I learn skills that help me become more independent. I learn math skills and how to count money to make purchases at the store. I have household chores to do at the Resource Home and I make a meal each week for everyone at Saehler. I like to hang out with my friends at the Resource Home.

Since April 2012, I can no longer stay overnight for respite care at the Resource Home because of the limitations on the Resource Home license. I have been advocating very hard to get my respite overnights back. The Resource Home program only supports services at the program site for individuals until they are 22 years old because of a state regulation. I am disappointed that I am no longer allowed to get overnight services at the Resource Home. I want my overnight respite time back so that I can spend time with my friends. My parents are not able to have time for each other and their friends because I don't have overnight respite care. My parents and I know that “not just anyone can care for me.” It takes special, qualified, dedicated, and consistent people to work with me.

Home and Community Options has been working with me and my family to change the rules so individuals like me can continue living at home, but get respite care and training skills through the Resource Home model. Services provided at the Resource Home cost less than if I had to move away from my parents. I would like to ask my legislators and the people from State why I can't continue to get my respite and support services through the Resource Home of Home and Community Options. I will be going to the Capitol again (in April 2013) this session to ask why.

Home and Community Options, Inc. worked over the past decade to design a model of service called the “family resource home” to help families of children with disabilities serve their child with disabilities. The resource home provides integrated community based services to help children grow in skills and prepare them for greater independence. Equally important, the resource home provides emergency and planned respite care for family caretakers, so the burden of caring for a child with special needs is overcome with additional assistance to keep the family stable.