

RESCARE REVIEW

Building a Culture of Teamwork and Empowerment

Laughter and light-hearted banter can often be heard within the walls of the various company locations. Rod Hotek, CEO of ResCare, Inc., believes in the importance of creating a work environment that is not only comfortable, but fun. This atmosphere “facilitates creativity and an openness to new ideas”. It is clear that he thinks that “good ideas can come from anywhere”.

Rod was appointed Chief Executive Officer of ResCare in 2002, after assuming several positions in the agency, including Director of Supported Employment, Director of Staff Development and the Director of Field Operations. Before coming to ResCare, Rod received his B.A. in Sociology from Northern

Illinois University. He then obtained his M.A. in Teaching from the College of Charleston in South Carolina, which has obviously enhanced his ability to effectively coach ResCare staff. He served in various capacities in South Carolina, including as the Regional Director of Autism for the state Department of Mental Health.

Rod believes that one of the things that makes ResCare unique is the fact that we are employee-owned, “giving employees real ownership in the company and incentive for greater pride in what we do”. He is also proud that “our mission, vision and principles are at the core of what we do, not just words on a page”. He strongly believes that irregardless of

the position held, all staff must remember why we are here. “Any position within ResCare is not just a job”, he says. “We have been hired as a company to provide services, and when we interact with those we serve, they must be treated with dignity, respect and in accordance with our principles.”

ResCare’s leadership team agrees that we are here to help individuals accomplish *their* life goals by being a catalyst in empowering them to improve their lives as *they* see fit. In the spirit of self-advocacy, Rod stresses that people with disabilities are members of their communities as much as anyone. He encourages our consumers to become involved in issues in their communities that are important to them, and he believes the community

should expect that participation. As the individuals we serve are recovering and discovering their roles, Rod considers it to be the responsibility of staff to educate people about how citizenship is an intricate part of living in any community.

When asked about the future of ResCare, Rod responds that “we will continue to seek out best practices and transfer that knowledge throughout the agency. It is important to stay on the cutting edge, while working collaboratively with funders, legislators and policymakers. It is our role to work in *partnership* with consumers, family members and other stakeholders in targeting new and existing unmet needs in Iowa and to efficiently but effectively meet those needs.”

Recovery is about Giving Back

“The best way to combat stigma is exposure”, says Chad, a member of the Phoenix House, ResCare’s Muscatine County Recovery Center. This is just one of the reasons he and other members, including Bill, Nancy, Ray and David come together to give something back to their community. Twice per month, this tight-knit group prepares a meal and takes it to the Jesus Mission, a local food pantry offering two meals daily to “anybody who is

“You can't help someone get up a hill without getting closer to the top yourself.”

By General H. N. Schwarzkopf

hungry”. “It’s important to give back”, explains Bill, as the others nod in agreement. Recovery Center members also collect

canned goods and other supplies from each other, staff and other community members for an ongoing

Food Drive for the Mission. “It is rewarding to give back”, says David, who volunteers in many different capacities and has even taken many Mission trips. “It helps keep my

mind off my own situation”, he explains. Nancy enjoys “seeing their smiling faces” when food is delivered and Ray agreed that those at the Jesus Mission obviously appreciate their efforts.

The group is also giving back to their community by allowing nursing and psychology students from the University of Iowa and Muscatine Community College to observe & participate in their recovery process for college credit. “We’re just plain-out good people,” says Ray.

I couldn’t agree more.

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Why We Do What We Do

A simple sign in the waiting area reads "Bloomfield-A Small Town that Provides Big Supports". Those words ring true in the accomplishments made by *Dora Robinson with the support of her CSS Specialist, Cyndi Lukens. But Cyndi readily gives the credit to Dora for the amazing successes she has realized, stating, "I just steer the car, you tell me where to go".

Dora has faced many struggles throughout her lifetime, including placement in an institution at just 4 years old, continuing throughout most of her childhood and adult years. Most recently, she lived at ResCare's Gateway RCF in West Burlington before moving to the agency's Northwest Apartments in Bloomfield over a year ago. Late in February this year, Dora realized one of her most coveted dreams— she moved into her own apartment in the community. In Dora's words, "I feel it's everybody's priority to get out there and set their minds and work hard at it to get out on their own in the community, and have the court commitment dropped if they want to. Thanks to the ResCare office in Bloomfield, Iowa and my worker Cyndi Lukens who helped me through this. Everybody deserves a

chance and they need someone to believe in them and praise them."

Cyndi is amazed by the transformation in Dora since she began working with her in the past year. Most importantly, she said that Dora is now "taking control of her life and advocating for herself". Previously, she often went along with the crowd and let others lead her down a path of making choices that were not in her best interest. One such circumstance resulted in Dora's involuntary court commitment, a situation that was not acceptable to her. Dora wanted to be in charge of her life, so she vowed to make positive changes. She felt like she just needed somebody to "put your trust and believe in me". She found that person in Cyndi.

A new ResCare employee, Cyndi was providing services to other consumers at Northwest Apts. when she noticed Dora, who often kept to herself. She saw Dora as somebody who was overshadowed by the needs of others and asked to be assigned to work with her. According to both Cyndi and Dora, there was an immediate connection. Dora said she could tell right away that Cyndi respected her and cared about her success. Together they went right to work identifying Dora's goals and the barriers to reaching them. Since

then, Dora has accomplished her major goals, including having her court commitment

dropped, taking control of her finances and medication management and building relationships with people she identifies as having the characteristics of a good friend.

Dora is now an inspiration to others. She is

encouraging to those who have had similar experiences, telling them "You can do it, too". Additionally, she likes to visit people living in nursing homes and is working on getting Cyndi's dog, Taylor, certified as a "Therapy Dog".

Cyndi's philosophy is simple but powerful. She says, "you must have a positive attitude". She's been pleasantly surprised by Dora's newly acquired self-confidence and dedication to her independence. Dora exclaims, "I want to go forward, not backward", and together, they are moving in that direction.

**Dora requested that her real name be used in this publication.*

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Continuous Quest for Unrivaled Quality

Twelve weeks and over a hundred charts later, ResCare's Quality Assurance (QA) Team is finishing the final leg of QA Surveys and Consumer Interviews at each location.

Twice annually the Team works with local Administrators and staff to review charts for accuracy and completeness of content. Technical Assistance is scheduled to address any issues found to be in need of improvement. In con-

junction with chart reviews, the QA Team interviews consumers of services for satisfaction measures. The interviews were just added to the process during this round of surveys, and the results have been tremendous. Consumers and staff have voiced an appreciation for the collection of this valuable information. According to Evan Clouse, QA Director, each local team continues to improve upon already excellent service provision

and documentation. An even truer measure of quality, the consumers interviewed have expressed a very high level of satisfaction with staff and services.

Throughout the summer, ResCare will be in contact with other Stakeholders, such as CPC's, Case Managers and Boards of Supervisors to assess external satisfaction levels.



"Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning."
 - Bill Gates

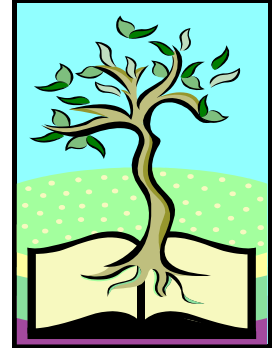
The Rehabilitation Training and Consulting Institute

The Rehabilitation Training and Consulting Institute, a Limited Liability Corporation of ResCare, Inc., was founded late last year to serve as a resource to ResCare staff and other Human Services providers. Led by Bill Baker, ResCare's Director of Vocational Services and Sue Ann Morrow, Ph.D., the mission of the institute is to "provide quality training and consultation services to Community Rehabilitation Program personnel in the Mid-West". The Institute recognizes the importance of well-trained and skilled practitioners

to serve and support people with disabilities in achieving their dreams and goals. It is committed to ensuring that quality training is available on an on-going, regular and consistent basis.

Job Development and Job Coaching Certification training was held in December 2004 and January 2005 at Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa. Twenty-five people from across the state participated. The same training is scheduled again in June at Drake University in Des Moines.

Training provided by the Institute is not specific to vocational services, however. The objective is to acquire the expertise of professionals from across the country to address various Human Services topics and Mental Health Issues. Though training will initially be conducted at the local level, the Institute hopes to attract national names. At a future date, CEU's will be made available through the Institute for various levels of professions, including R.N.'s, LISW's and other clinical positions.



Learning is not attained by chance; it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

By Abigail Adams

No Pressure with these Peers—The Peer Support Program

"Always, when I was in the hospital, I would think, 'why do I need to be a patient? I know these things. I could help somebody.'" And so she has. Angie, a Peer Support Specialist (PSS) in Mt. Pleasant, echoes the sentiments of other PSS's as she discusses the rewards and benefits of her job. Steve, in Fairfield, very directly explains, "My entire life, in a sense, has helped make me who I am right now. I had problems for a long time with periods of successes, so I have an understanding for the struggles of others".

The Peer Support Program is typically, but not always, based out of a ResCare Recovery Center. It is designed to utilize the experience, abilities and skills of persons who are recovering from mental illness to work in partnership with other mental health consumers as peers. Peer Support Specialists receive extensive initial and ongoing training, plus additional training and supervision from independently

licensed mental health clinicians.

Though PSS's agree that there are some challenges to the job, such as the need to set boundaries while also being available to peers, all see the position as rewarding. John of Fairfield's New Beginnings Recovery Center finds value in "seeing other people get better, and also in knowing there is a net for me if I have problems". Several PSS's found the position helpful in their own ongoing role recovery. Allison, also in Fairfield, explains that



she is getting over her own shyness, "The job is good for me. It makes me more outgoing and makes me be around people." Bill in Muscatine, a volunteer PSS, says, "I am changing some old patterns. This has been really beneficial. I used to sleep 12 hours a day and spend a lot of time lying down watching TV. Now I just sleep 8 hours and I'm anxious to go to work in the mornings." The program seems

to be working. For example, in Fairfield, Marlene DeMoss, Recovery Center Coordinator says that even though people are not required to come to the Recovery Center as part of their treatment, numbers are up. PSS Steve agrees, "There are a number of people attending. If they didn't feel comfortable, they wouldn't come back".

In Muscatine, Ray, a recipient of Peer Support services, exclaims, "They're all smiling" and gives a thumbs up. He agrees that Bill, who was a minister before his bipolar disorder rendered him disabled in 1995, has excellent listening and relationship skills. All of the members of the Phoenix House agreed that both Bill and Nancy, PSS since September 2004, are a huge moral support. Nancy says, "It's kind of like a friendship. Everybody needs a friend—somebody they can talk to and relate to." Though the Peer Support Spe-

cialists may have similarities in their mental health history, they have various educational and vocational backgrounds that prepared them for their positions. Nancy had worked for a time as a secretary for Community Services, but felt like she spent too much time "shuffling papers." "I wanted to help more directly," she says. Most have college degrees. As Marlene points out, "PSS's are often very intellectual people that have so much to give back".

As recipients of mental health services as well as providers, PSS's have a unique perspective about how Peer Support is different from other mental health services. Both Steve and Angie expressed appreciation for the informality of the program. According to Steve, "There's a certain sterility in seeing a doctor or therapist. Understanding each other is different."

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EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH CHOICE

Employee Ownership Can Make the Difference

Contributed by Darien Sloat, Vice President, Director of Human Resources

ResCare was founded by John Kuster and Harvey Hensley in 1987. Harvey retired from ResCare in 1994 and John Kuster became the sole Chief Executive Officer. John believed that an employee-owned company was ethically, and from a business stand point, the right thing to do. As a result of these beliefs, John named a handful of key employees as co-owners and ResCare stock was issued to those individuals; making them employee-owners. Since then, the number of stockholders has grown to around sixty. Recent changes in the laws governing "S" Corporations like ResCare, have changed from a maximum of 70 stockholders, and now allow up to 100 stockholders.

So, why is employee ownership a good thing?

1. Employee-owned companies value the employee as vital to an organization's success.
2. Employee-owned companies

have employees serve as their Board of Directors. This characteristic enhances a company's ability to make decisions: when business opportunities arise, about the quality of services or products, about the level of employee compensation, or about considering what level of risk is acceptable. In contrast, a company with a Board of Directors comprised of people outside the company may need ongoing education and awareness of a company's business environment, and as a result, may slow the business' decision-making process and efficiency.

3. For-profit employee-owned companies distribute profits (in good years) back to the employees, not to outside investors.

4. In bad times, employee-owned companies respond quickly to changes in the business landscape because it's their co-workers, and their own jobs that are at risk of being lost.

5. Employee-owned typically equates to locally-owned. ResCare currently has employee stockholders in most parts of the state where we do business.

6. Employee owned companies make decisions based on a long term view rather than on the a short-term view of satisfying outside investors' needs for return on their investment.

7. Employee ownership can assist in the attraction and retention of quality staff.

In summary, employee-ownership can enhance a company's ability to stay focused on providing quality services through higher levels of commitment by dedicated and invested staff. Those qualities should also have the effect of increased satisfaction by the people who use our services, and the people that oversee payment for them.