



ON WITH LIFE
BRAIN INJURY + STROKE + NEURO

SPRING 2024

headway



By Families.
For Families.

TOGETHER, **MORE** IS POSSIBLE.

FOUR YEARS IN
CORALVILLE
P. 5

ADAPTIVE
FITNESS
P. 13

PHILANTHROPY
IN ACTION
P. 18

ON WITH LIFE, INC.
headway magazine

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ABOUT THE COVER:

Occupational Therapist Chloe Mogler helps
Bryant Western sign "I love you" to his
mom during a therapy session.

Photos by Images by Brice

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Over the holidays, Santa stopped by On With Life with gifts for our persons served. As Santa was handing out gifts, one gentleman asked why he was getting one. Santa laughed and said, 'Didn't you know? You're on the NICE list!' Just a simple response but it conveyed so much!

On With Life is all about finding those moments that encompass the very heart of who we are. We can say 'you deserve care and compassion' or 'you deserve to be treated with dignity and respect' many times, but when we can sneak it in with Santa, well, that's even better!

Family is also at the heart of On With Life, which is why this year we are building not one but two additional homes for families on our Ankeny campus due to the generosity of Hubbell Realty Company. Our current family house, offered free of charge for families, has a waitlist, and we know what a special gift additional, on-site housing options will be for families. This access gives them one less thing to worry about so they can focus on what's important and be a part of their loved one's recovery journey. We know, and research shows, that outcomes are better for our persons served when family participates in rehabilitation.

We are extremely grateful to Hubbell and all those supporting us through the upcoming Extreme Build project. Here's to the families who will benefit from these new homes!

Jean Shelton - CEO

Spring 2024

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Tong Luvan,
dietary aid at
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For years, the food served by On With Life's kitchen staff has been raved about by fellow staff members, persons served and their families. Not only does this team serve three delicious meals a day, they create special experiences around the holidays by serving a turkey trial run lunch around Thanksgiving (pictured), and preparing prime rib for the annual holiday luncheon.

POLK CITY: OPENING SOON

In 2023, On With Life began the process of extensively remodeling a former nursing facility in Polk City to become the new location for its Long-Term Skilled Care program. The building is scheduled to be finished later this spring, with persons served transitioning from the current program location in Glenwood to Polk City in May. Highlights of this remodeled space include 40 licensed beds, plenty of bright, open therapy space and a therapy garden.



Interested in working at On With Life's Polk City location? **We're hiring!** Learn more and apply at [ONWITHLIFE.ORG/CAREERS](https://onwithlife.org/careers)



CONGRATULATIONS, DOUG WEST!

The Central Iowa Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) named former person served and foundation board member, Doug West, Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser as part of the 38th Annual National Philanthropy Day event on November 17, 2023. Because of his exceptional and humble leadership in supporting On With Life and several other Iowa nonprofits, On With Life was happy to submit his nomination.

Doug is pictured above with his family and the student artist who created his custom recognition gift.



UPCOMING LSVT BIG TRAINING

On With Life is excited to host an in-person LSVT BIG Training and Certification course at the Ankeny outpatient center this May 17 + 18! The course, presented by LSVT Global, will bring together physical and occupational therapy professionals and students from across the country to learn and practice the fundamental principles of the popular treatment program for persons with Parkinson's disease.

Visit [ONWITHLIFE.ORG/EDUCATION](https://onwithlife.org/education) to learn more and register.



The clinic first opened with four full-time employees. **Now, 10 employees are on staff** with at least two therapists in each discipline.



In 2021, On With Life hosted its first **Parkinson's Disease conference** in Iowa City. It has since turned into an annual occurrence each fall.

4 years in coralville

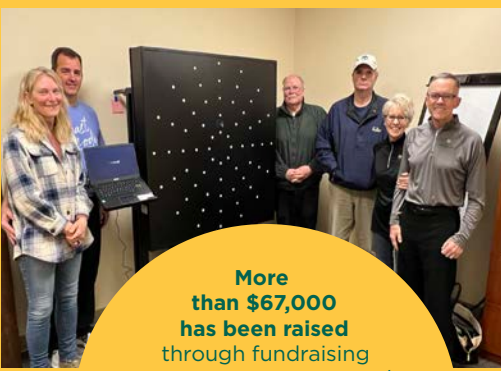


Since opening, **more than 400 individuals** with varying diagnoses have been served at the clinic.



The Coralville clinic has been voted twice as a **"Coolest Place to Work"** by the Corridor Business Journal. In 2023, they also won first place in their category at the award ceremony.

In January 2020, On With Life opened the outpatient clinic in Coralville, Iowa. Despite opening just before the pandemic, the clinic has continued to grow and serve more and more individuals in Eastern Iowa.



More than \$67,000 has been raised through fundraising events in the Coralville/Iowa City area to purchase new equipment (like the Dynavision) and enhance programming (like the driver rehabilitation program).



More than 600 therapy hours have been delivered in four years.



Countless unique therapy techniques and activities have been created by this team to help **engage and progress persons served** during their sessions.



HEIDI ERNST

OUTPATIENT PROGRAM - ANKENY

Admit: November 2023

When Adelheid “Heidi” Ernst needed physical therapy after receiving a prosthetic leg in October 2023, she knew exactly where she wanted to go. For years she had witnessed her late husband, Bill, regain independence after a stroke by attending therapy sessions at On With Life’s outpatient clinic in Ankeny, so she reached out hoping the program would now help her do the same.

Heidi, who has been diving consistently in the Bahamas for the last 12 years, was attacked by a shark after completing a dive on June 7, 2023. The shark grabbed her left leg just as she was making her way back onto the boat, resulting in substantial blood loss and a serious infection. Her best option was to amputate her leg just below the knee.

It was months after the attack that Heidi received her prosthetic leg and was able to start attending physical therapy at On With Life two to three times a week. Her first session was spent in the new Vector Elite gait track, but she quickly progressed to no longer needing it. Her therapy has since consisted of a variety of tasks, such as climbing up on the tractor in the therapy grounds, to help her get back to living independently on her acreage.

“I have nothing but praise for On With Life because of what Bill went through and was able to accomplish with their help, and now what I have been able to accomplish,” said Heidi.

“My philosophy from the get-go has been to not dwell on what happened or look back.”

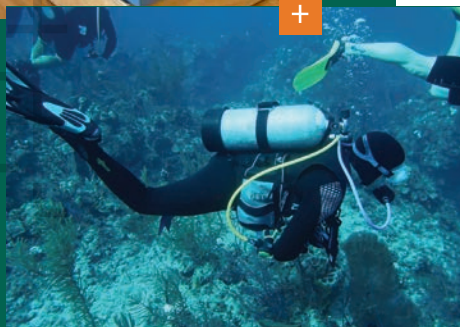
One of these accomplishments was heading back to the Bahamas for another dive trip just weeks after starting therapy at On With Life.

While her latest dive experience was difficult at times, she is determined to stay positive and keep working hard, just as she had witnessed Bill do after his stroke.

“My philosophy from the get-go has been to not dwell on what happened or look back,” said Heidi. “You just have to keep moving forward and do the best you can.”



Above: Heidi works on movement and balance with her prosthetic leg during a physical therapy session with On With Life Therapist Miranda Wesley



Right: Heidi on a recent dive trip to the Bahamas

CHUCK LAMMERT

POST-ACUTE INPATIENT PROGRAM

Admit: August 2023 | Discharge: November 2023

Chuck Lammert has always been passionate about singing and barbershop music; he was a member of "The Ambassadors of Harmony," a four-time international gold medalist chorus, for 29 years. When he suffered a stroke that resulted in left-sided paralysis throughout his body, one of his primary concerns was whether he would be able to sing again.

Chuck arrived at On With Life in August 2023 with two main goals: walking again and regaining full function through his left arm. For three months he pushed hard in therapy to meet these goals and the day he walked again was a day of triumph. But despite all the physical work and progress he made, he was still unsure whether his voice would return. Fortunately, On With Life has a full-time music therapist who was able to help him.

"I knew it would just be a matter of time to improve his breath coordination, vocal strength, posture and overall endurance," said Amy Bishop, music therapist.

Chuck worked with Amy closely to practice breath support and vocal exercises. They also worked on Chuck being able to stand



Chuck poses with his On With Life team during his graduation party

while singing, and sometimes partnered with physical therapy for cotreatments that would help him build the endurance he would need to perform again.

"So many people had asked me if I could sing for them over those weeks," said Chuck. "I knew my voice was better so I picked two songs to share with everyone."

At his graduation party, Chuck stood in front of all those who helped him along his journey and sang "Somewhere There's a Place for Us" from West Side Story and "Cherish" by Kool and the Gang. Chuck was very intentional about choosing these two songs that conveyed the challenges of his journey as well as his appreciation for On With Life staff. It was an emotional and proud moment for all those who were able to witness. +



Clayton and his family wearing matching shirts - "My mission is to kick Parkinson's butt."

CLAYTON MOGLE

OUTPATIENT PROGRAM - ANKENY

Admit: March 2023 | Discharge: June 2023

"I might have Parkinson's disease, but it sure doesn't have to control me."

The journey Clayton Mogle took to be able to say those words was a tough but encouraging one. Three years ago, a doctor suspected Clayton had Parkinson's disease, but Clayton was in denial and refused to take the tests that would confirm the diagnosis. It took two years of a worsening lifestyle and symptoms that made Clayton finally take the tests and receive his official diagnosis in January 2023.

"I just couldn't believe this could be happening to me," said Clayton.

A couple of months later, On With Life would be hosting an eight-week "Parkinson's Roadmap for Education and Support Services" series in conjunction with the Iowa APDA chapter. Clayton was tempted to back out of going to the first session, but his wife would not let him. He attended and was hooked right away, and even signed up for the LSVT program at On With Life that same day.

Clayton's experience at On With Life completely changed the trajectory of his life going forward. He could see improvements in his posture, movement and balance, and started to reintroduce his previous hobbies into his life such as listening to music and cooking. He even dug out his old pottery wheel so he could teach his grandson how to throw pottery.

"On With Life helped me get my life back," said Clayton. "I no longer think my diagnosis is a dead end."

Clayton was finally able to stop hiding his diagnosis from others. In 2023 he found the confidence to not only tell his family and friends, but to share his diagnosis with the world. He owns and wears a variety of custom shirts he has made with sayings such as "I have Parkinson's disease and I'm still in charge of the script of my life." He hopes that others who may be struggling with their diagnosis can find support through his own experience. +



To learn more about On With Life's Parkinson's disease, visit ONWITHLIFE.ORG/PARKINSONS

People Making a Difference



NATHAN SMITH



Footage captured from Nathan's most recent drone visit

Since 2017, Nathan Smith has been able to witness On With Life evolve from a unique perspective. What started as an opportunity to document the creation of On With Life's therapy grounds in Ankeny has turned into an annual visit to capture ongoing progress as the campus continues to grow.

Nathan works in EMC Insurance's Loss Control Department as an innovation specialist where one of his projects involves flying drones to inspect large insured roofs. When a board member at On With Life reached out to see if someone in the department was willing to use a drone at On With Life, Nathan was the one for the job.

At the time Nathan had never heard of On With Life but has since been able to learn more about the organization, and even witness some of the work being done there during his annual visits with his drone. His favorite part about this volunteer opportunity are the moments he gets to interact with persons served.

“One time I was able to chat with a person served who was a helicopter pilot,” said Nathan. “I could tell he was eyeing the drone as I was flying it around, so I landed it to show him the different views I had captured and the various capabilities the drone had. He seemed fascinated by it.”

Since his first time at On With Life, Nathan has seen it grow with new installments to the therapy grounds (such as the putting green and work shed) and now a whole new outpatient center. The next time he comes to visit, he will see it grow again with the addition of the two new family houses that will be built in September 2024.

“It's truly mindboggling the work On With Life does,” said Nathan. “I'm glad I am able to use my talents to help capture that.” +

In 2019, Jermayne (JT) Kuhns spent his first holiday season at On With Life's Long-Term Skilled Care program in Glenwood. His parents and several of his siblings came to visit and as part of their family get together, began to sing Christmas carols in JT's room.



THE KUHNS FAMILY

As they sang, they noticed other persons served seemed to enjoy the music coming from the room. The family decided to take their caroling to the hallways so they could spread their holiday cheer to others.

“There was no planning that went into that initial caroling event,” said JT’s mother, Char. “It was very spontaneous.”

That spontaneous moment has now turned into an annual holiday tradition. Every year JT’s family comes to On With Life to perform Christmas carols for persons served as part of their holiday celebration, with JT right by their side. It has become something that both On With Life and the Kuhns family looks forward to every year.

“We love seeing the smiles and excitement on persons served faces as they get into the music,” said Char. “It’s such a beautiful time to be an encouragement for both the persons served and staff.”

The family found On With Life when they needed it most, and were extremely grateful when their son was accepted into the long-term program. On With Life has since become an important part of their family and while they visit often, this holiday event continues to be one of their favorites. +

If you walk into On With Life's outpatient center in Ankeny on a Tuesday morning, chances are you will be greeted with a smile by Sheri Gatchel. Sheri's role at the front desk of the clinic started as a short-term volunteer gig in the spring of 2023 but has turned into a regular part of her week that she looks forward to.



SHERI GATCHEL

Sheri's daughter, On With Life employee Sara Wilson, reached out to her when On With Life's outpatient team was in need of front desk assistance due to a team member being on maternity leave. Recently retired, Sheri stepped in to help and quickly found how much she enjoyed her time there. Being a regular on Tuesday mornings, she sees the same individuals from week to week and is able to really get to know the persons served.

“I have heard some amazing stories during my time here,” said Sheri.

Being the mother of On With Life's development director, Sheri is no stranger

to the inspiring things that happen at On With Life. For years she has attended events such as Celebrate Life, but this volunteer opportunity gave her more of a personal connection. She does a variety of jobs during her shift, from filing charts to stuffing envelopes, but the time she gets to spend sitting at the front desk interacting with staff and persons served are her favorite.

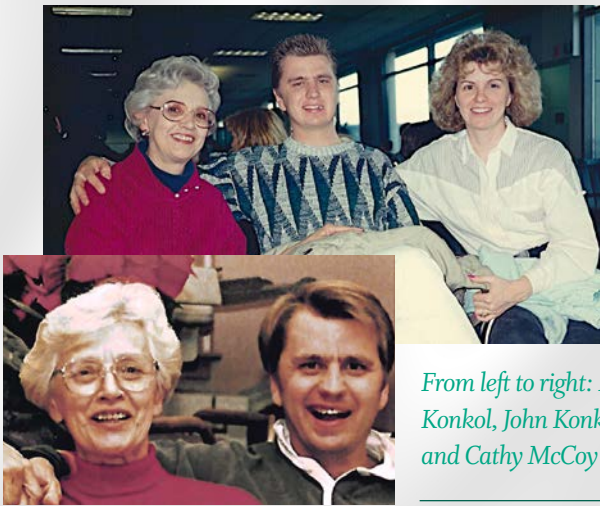
“I stick around because I enjoy it so much,” said Sheri. “I love being able to help a place that is helping so many people.”

On With Life is always looking for volunteers, like Sheri, to help with various jobs across all campuses. +

| To get involved, visit ONWITHLIFE.ORG/VOLUNTEER

By Families,

“Family is exactly how it all began.”



From left to right: Doris Konkol, John Konkol and Cathy McCoy

In honor of Doris Konkol and John Konkol

Doris Konkol, John’s mother, helped spearhead efforts to create On With Life and served on the board for several years.

John Konkol was the inspiration for On With Life in more than one way. Not only did his brain injury draw attention to a lack of needed services, the organization was named after a comment he made in a support group with other TBI survivors – “I just want to get On With Life.”

Cathy McCoy is part of one of the eight families that founded On With Life. Her brother, John Konkol, sustained a traumatic brain injury from a motorcross accident in 1985 and after his stay in the hospital, had nowhere to go. Lack of post-acute support for brain injuries not just in Iowa, but throughout the country, is what led John’s family, and several others who echoed their concern, to take action.

“We felt like we were on a deserted island in the middle of nowhere with brain injury back in 1985,” said Cathy. “There seemed to be no specialty for this particular arm of medicine.”

While establishing this specialty was important to the founding families, so was supporting future families who would find themselves in this same situation. Being heavily involved in John’s recovery journey, Cathy knows how a brain injury can impact not just the individual, but the entire family.

“On With Life was started by families who have been through it,” said Cathy. “It was our way of extending out a hand and saying ‘hey, we understand what you are going through.’”

Almost 40 years after those initial conversations started, On With Life has grown into an organization that supports individuals living not just with brain injury, but a variety of neurological conditions, through an array of programming - while keeping family at the center of it all.

For Families.

From left to right – Chloe Mogler (occupational therapist), Megan Western (mom), Bryant Western, Joel Western (dad), Matthew Poots (physical therapy assistant)

The Western family is one of many who have since benefitted from what those families created. Megan and Joel's son, Bryant, was admitted to On With Life's post-acute program in July 2023 after sustaining a traumatic brain injury in a side-by-side accident earlier that year. During Bryant's stay at On With Life, which lasted a total of four months, his entire family was heavily involved.

"We have always been a tightknit family," said Megan. "And from the beginning we had heard that family was what was going to help him through this the best."

Despite being from Edina, Missouri, about three hours from On With Life's main Ankeny campus, Bryant had a family member by his side at all times. This expanded beyond his parents; Bryant's grandparents, aunts and uncles all became familiar faces around On With Life during

Bryant's stay, traveling from as far as Arkansas to be there. Not only did they take turns staying with Bryant to provide comfort and support, but they also actively participated in many of his therapy sessions. This made a big difference in Bryant's progress, just as Megan had heard.

"We could see a contrast in productivity of sessions when family was present with Bryant versus when they were gone. He was in a better



"WE COULD SEE A CONTRAST IN PRODUCTIVITY OF SESSIONS WHEN FAMILY WAS PRESENT WITH BRYANT VERSUS WHEN THEY WERE GONE."

Megan Western and Matthew Poots help Bryant play catch with his dad during a therapy session

Bryant poses with his family and several On With Life staff members during his graduation party. Since his discharge, Bryant has indicated daily how much he misses On With Life and the therapists he worked with.



mood when he had a family member attending therapy,” said Matthew Poots, a physical therapy assistant who worked closely with Bryant while he was at On With Life. “He rarely had sessions with no family in attendance, and those sessions were usually more of a struggle.”

This comes as no surprise to On With Life’s chief clinical officer, Dave Anders, who has seen family involvement impact progress for years at On With Life. According to Dave, individuals tend to respond to familiar stimuli before responding to unfamiliar stimuli, which is why more progression is commonly seen when persons served are surrounded by family or loved ones.

“We rely on family to help us understand the best ways to engage persons served. What the persons’ served dreams, patterns, preferences, likes and dislikes are, and how we can integrate those into rehabilitation,” said Dave. “Additionally, the mere presence of someone familiar can be both comforting and engaging to the person served as they navigate the unfamiliar world of rehabilitation.”

One of Dave’s favorite memories was witnessing a man he was working with in On With Life’s Disorders of Consciousness program say “I love you” to his wife. They were the first words he had spoken post-injury, and Dave said it was their relationship that was a core driver in

progressing his communication. The Western family had a similar effect when it came to Bryant.

While progress wasn’t as obvious from day-to-day, the family was able to look back at Bryant’s journey and see just how far he had come during his time at On With Life. As they gathered to celebrate Bryant’s discharge (his mom, dad and all four grandparents included), they reflected on special moments such as the first time Bryant held his head up on his own or when he was able to go down the giant slide at the Iowa State Fair. Megan says that they owe a lot of Bryant’s recovery to prayers and the staff at On With Life, and many staff members shouted out Bryant’s family and their impact during his graduation party.

In the end it was a team effort, staff and family working together as one, truly emulating On With Life’s principle of “by families, for families” and showing that together, more is possible.

“Bryant and his family are why we do what we do here at On With Life,” said Matthew. +

HUBBELL EXTREME BUILD PROJECT

Similar to the Western family, several families of On With Life’s persons served are not local to the Des Moines metro. In 2023 On With Life was able to reopen the current family house on the Ankeny campus, allowing families to stay on campus for free during their loved ones’ rehabilitation journey. This fall, two brand-new family houses will be built in collaboration with Hubbell Realty Company as their sixth Extreme Build project! The build will take place over the course of seven days starting Friday, September 13.



GET INVOLVED

On With Life is looking for supporters and volunteers to help with this exciting project!

If you are interested in making a donation or the various volunteer opportunities for the week of the build, visit ONWITHLIFE.ORG/EXTREMEBUILD

Exercising and staying fit is a common goal for many, including persons served at On With Life. But what does this look like after a brain injury, stroke, or other neurological diagnosis? On With Life has committed to building out adaptive fitness programming so that persons served can be confident in continuing to pursue these goals not just within their therapy sessions, but out in the community as well.

In On With Life's outpatient programs, therapists incorporate types of exercise such as circuit training and boxing into therapy sessions, catering to each person served and their diagnosis. They also help persons served design at-home exercise programs to encourage them to gradually make their way to working out in a gym.

“It is about being inclusive and showing our persons served that they can still exercise, go to the gym, go to the pool and be independent in these activities,” said Physical Therapist Megan Thompson. “We want to build confidence so they can rejoin the larger exercise community.”

On With Life's inpatient program recently created an adaptive fitness gym in the building that provides



ADAPTIVE FITNESS



specialty equipment and plenty of space for weekly fitness and cardio groups. On occasion, therapists will also take persons served to various local gyms and fitness centers. Building these relationships throughout the community has given persons served a chance to attend group fitness classes or try new types of equipment. According to Recreational Therapist Christa Freeman, they hope this encourages persons served to continue utilizing the gym after discharge.

Christa also hopes that the future of adaptive fitness at On With Life moves beyond just inpatient and outpatient programs. Just recently, On With Life has partnered with Legacy Fitness, a gym near On With Life's Ankeny campus, so that persons served from all programs, their loved ones and even staff members can all utilize it. This partnership will also help enhance various groups offered through outpatient, such as the popular "Boxing for Parkinson's" program, allowing for additional space and equipment. +

Special thanks to the following for supporting the adaptive fitness gym with financial donations:

- Chris Norton Foundation
- The Meinders Foundation
- Polk County Board of Supervisors
- Prairie Meadows Racetrack & Casino

our expert

Get to Know

Chandler Yokley
MA, CCC-SLP, CBIS



Pictured with husband, Trevor, and daughters Millie (5) and Lennon (2)



CHANDLER YOKLEY

Q+A

TITLE:

Speech-Language Pathologist

I have had the pleasure of working for On With Life since 2018. I came to On With Life as a student and enjoyed my time so much that I was able to join the team full-time.

EDUCATION:

I completed my education for both my undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Northern Iowa. Go, Cats!

INTERESTING FACTS:

- + I love to bake and decorate cakes.
- + I played basketball in Amsterdam for a week with an ambassador program.
- + I am certified in PARTE (Parkinson's Art of Expression) which is an activity that combines theater and therapy.

You may have heard the term "complex neuro" used at On With Life as one of the organization's innovation centers, but what exactly does it mean? Chandler Yokley, one of On With Life's speech-language pathologists, breaks it down.

WHAT DOES "COMPLEX NEURO" MEAN?

Complex neuro describes a variety of diagnoses that provide a multitude of difficulties and impairments apart from the classically known brain injuries, like a stroke. These diagnoses are ones that doctors maybe don't have all the answers to, but there are many different symptoms and factors that we can collaborate with both therapy and medical professionals to improve the quality of life for affected persons served.

WHAT DIAGNOSES FALL WITHIN THIS CATEGORY AND ARE SEEN AT ON WITH LIFE?

At On With Life, we have treated the following complex neuro diagnoses: Delayed recovery with concussion; functional neurological disorder; post-COVID; amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease); primary progressive aphasia; frontal temporal dementia; glioblastoma multiforme; and Guillain-Barré syndrome.

HOW/WHY IS ON WITH LIFE EQUIPPED TO TREAT THIS POPULATION?

On With Life has many experienced rehabilitation professionals that are knowledgeable in a variety of interventions. As a team, we communicate and collaborate daily to problem solve and implement treatments that would benefit that person. We treat each person served individually based on their particular impairments and symptoms, not just based on the diagnosis they've been given. We strive to further our education to aid in new interventions that may continue to benefit these diagnoses. +

Continuum of Care

On With Life strives to meet persons served where they are, which is why it has developed a continuum of care that allows persons served to continue their rehabilitation journeys, wherever they may be, within On With Life.



LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH OF THESE PROGRAMS AT ONWITHLIFE.ORG

**A NOTE
FROM OUR
DEVELOPMENT
DIRECTOR**



SARA WILSON

For the past three years, I have kept a one-second video diary every day using an app made for that purpose. It's fun to take day-to-day moments and collect them in a meaningful way, and I enjoy sharing the mashups yearly as a way to quickly highlight my family's happenings.

As I reviewed the 2023 video, I reflected on how many amazing moments happened at On With Life because of so many wonderful supporters. From the opening of the new outpatient building to a record-breaking Celebrate Life fundraising event, you helped us create big moments for those we are privileged to serve! And the list goes on... toasting to an Extreme Strides beer collaboration, gathering in Iowa City to raise funds in support of our Coralville clinic, enjoying our annual Lip Sync Battle with persons served and staff performances, appreciating our Glenwood community during our final Celebrate Summer event, celebrating many graduations (discharges), welcoming hundreds to the annual reunion and so much more.

As I think about what 2024 will look like – no doubt, it will be another big year with big celebrations. We are relocating our Long-Term Care program and persons served to Polk City, growing our spinal cord injury program, and partnering with Hubbell Realty Company to construct two new family homes as an Extreme Build. Meanwhile, we will continue to soak in the day-to-day moments and be so grateful to each and every one of you who help make these moments meaningful.

Sara Wilson
(515) 289-9611
sara.wilson@onwithlife.org

On With Life's mission is supported by the generosity of many donors, volunteers and advocates who offer financial donations, in-kind donations, time and/or talent.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN 2023!

973
total
DONORS

75%
EMPLOYEES
participated in
giving campaign

85
**CIRCLE
OF LIFE**
members

1,765
VOLUNTEER
hours

6
LEGACY SOCIETY
members

As the organization looks to serve more and more in the future, individuals and businesses are invited to give, serve and love in support of On With Life. GIVE by donating to the Empower Hope Fund or a key area of support; SERVE by signing up to volunteer; LOVE by sharing our mission with others. To read more about different ways you can support those

On With Life serves, visit [ONWITHLIFE.ORG/WAYS-TO-GIVE](https://onwithlife.org/ways-to-give).



ON WITH LIFE
BRAIN INJURY + STROKE + NEURO

10 YEARS OF CELEBRATE LIFE

In 2024, On With Life will host its 10th annual Celebrate Life fundraising event! Celebrate Life started in a tent on the Ankeny campus in 2015 and most recently in 2023 had more than 400 people in attendance at the FFA Enrichment Center to break a record by raising more than \$200,000. Save the date for the 10th anniversary of Celebrate Life, taking place on Friday, September 27, 2024.

2015



2016



2017



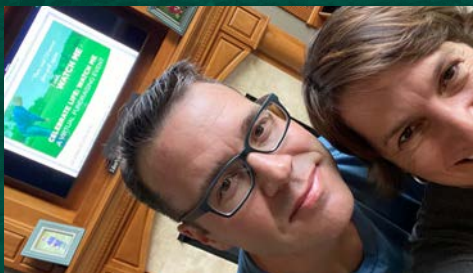
2018



2019



2020



2021



2022

2023

KREG TOOL



Kreg Tool employees (from left to right) Joe Gibson, Mark Bohlmann and Nathan Combs stand by the specially designed tables in On With Life's workshop

When Kreg Tool was approached by On With Life to support the Ankeny outpatient center expansion, they decided to participate with an in-kind donation. Together, Kreg Tool and On With Life collaborated to design and create a workshop space where persons served could participate in return-to-work activities and relearn life skills with their hands. The space includes special-built tables and work centers that are adaptable and is furnished with tools manufactured by Kreg Tool.

While this was a unique project, Kreg Tool has been a supporter of On With Life for 14 years. The company has a strong history of supporting organizations through their corporate giving strategy and prioritize organizations their employees are passionate about. Kreg Tool first sponsored an On With Life event when one of their employees had a friend

being served there after an accident, and several other employees have had connections since. Kathie Sommerfeld, manager of the Kreg Cares program, was also aware of the impact On With Life had as she has several friends who are employed at the organization.

“We continue to support On With Life for those very reasons, plus the fact it is a local organization where we can see first-hand the work being done,” she said.

Since the new outpatient center opened last summer, the workshop space has been used in a variety of ways. Some persons served benefit from being able to participate in a woodworking project, while others benefit from practicing speaking loudly and clearly across the shop. On With Life staff are continuously finding new ways to utilize the space and are grateful that Kreg Tool made it possible. +



The John Deere team poses with the custom-built combine/tractor access device made for On With Life's therapy grounds

THE PLUNKETT FAMILY AND JOHN DEERE

“You need to get combine steps.”

Brad Plunkett, a farmer who was served at On With Life in 2021 due to a glioblastoma, was passionate about adding upgraded farming equipment to On With Life's therapy grounds in Ankeny. The primary goal he was working towards in therapy was being able to climb back up into his combine; however, the tractor available and playground equipment he practiced on didn't have the same effect.

Brad then made the decision to donate half a truckload of corn (\$2,500) to On With Life so that a combine could be brought to campus and helped sketch out a rudimentary plan of how it could work. Unfortunately, Brad passed away just months later in January 2022. Knowing how much this project meant to him, his family proceeded with making the donation, and On With Life committed to driving his idea forward.

continued on next page

HUBBELL REALTY COMPANY + CONFLUENCE BREWING

Confluence Brewing, a craft beer brewery in Des Moines, started their local cause program in 2019, inspired by a similar project Sierra Nevada started to aid those impacted by wildfires spreading across northern California. Since then, Confluence supports local organizations by partnering with a corporate sponsor so that all net proceeds from the limited-edition local cause beers can be donated back to the nonprofit of choice. In 2023, that organization was On With Life.

“Community plus awareness equals purpose,” said Confluence owner, John Martin. “We love our community and wanted to bring more awareness to On With Life. Everyone deserves to be seen.”

This collaboration spurred from the upcoming Hubbell Extreme Build project that will take place on On With Life's campus this fall. A couple of Hubbell employees who consider themselves "beer enthusiasts" were aware of Confluence's local cause program and brought it to the table as a possible way to support the project.

“Teaming up with our Hubbell Extreme Build recipient, On With Life, made complete sense so we could raise awareness for the organization's mission and goals to build the family homes in 2024,” said Claire Brehmer, spokeswoman for Hubbell.

With Hubbell participating as the corporate sponsor, Confluence moved forward with creating the Extreme Strides beer, a blonde ale featuring hints of blueberries and green tea, two ingredients believed to promote brain function and health. This delicious combination was a success and between Confluence and Hubbell, \$20,000 was raised to donate back to On With Life.

“This collaboration was fun, purposeful and tasty!” said Claire. +



Team members from Confluence Brewing, Hubbell Realty and On With Life celebrate the release of the Extreme Strides beer

“Through the kindness, generosity and talent of a lot of people with a vision, this project came together,” said Brad's wife, Karmen Plunkett.

On With Life brought Brad's idea and sketch to the attention of employees at John Deere Harvester Works in East Moline, Illinois, where the company builds combines and front-end equipment. Knowing that the initial request came from a farmer who wanted to help other farmers, John Deere employees jumped on the opportunity and collaborated with On With Life to build out the concept and then fully construct a combine/tractor

access device. The employees donated not just their time, but all of the equipment and materials to make it happen.

“Our team is thrilled to have been part of this project,” said Glenn Pope, an engineer at John Deere. “It has been very fun, far from our normal projects, and has highlighted the skill and tenacity of a full spectrum of our people.”

Between the donations from John Deere and the Plunkett Family (plus support from Concrete Supply, Nehring Concrete - especially LeWayne Lures - and Snyder & Associates), Brad's dream will become

reality this spring. The brand new combine/tractor access device will have tremendous impact as On With Life's vast population of persons served in the farming community work toward their own goals during therapy.

“Brad would be so proud,” said Karmen. +



Brad Plunkett uses the current tractor at On With Life during a therapy session

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