

LifePursuits

Winter 2019

**WORK | LIFE™
EXHIBIT**

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**A LITTLE HELP
GOES A LONG WAY**

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**2020 ANNUAL
CELEBRATION
NOMINATIONS**

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Lifeworks

A nonprofit serving
people with disabilities

Lifeworks

A nonprofit serving people with disabilities

Contact Us

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2019 by the numbers HIGHLIGHTS YOU MADE POSSIBLE



95% of the people we serve feel more included in their communities



we serve more than **2,800** people from **50** counties in Minnesota

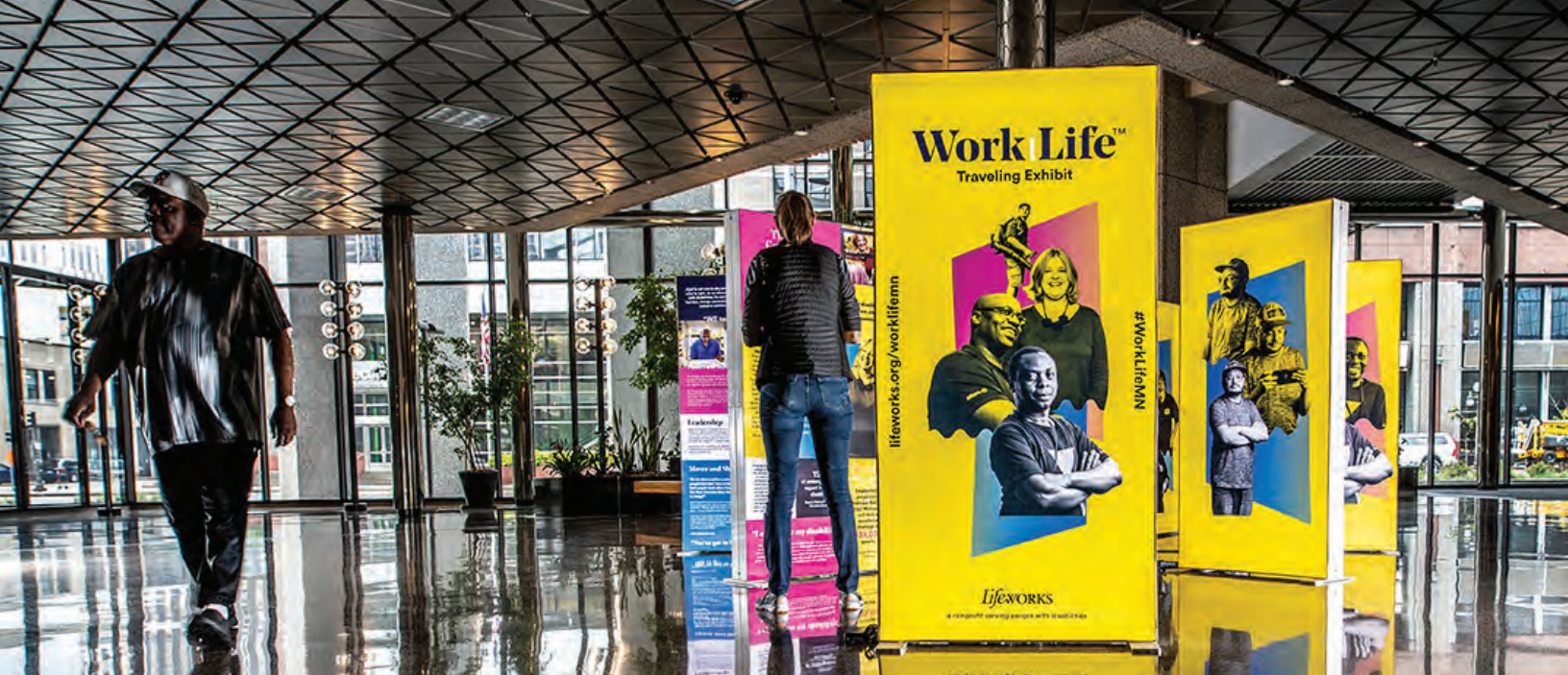


over **150** people participated in band, choir, and art opportunities



we helped coordinate over **150** job placements in the community

Pictured on cover: Kirk Langsjoen. See page 4: *From Piece Rate to Earning a Livable Wage.*



Lifeworks Develops *Work/Life*™ Exhibit for National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Held every October for more than 70 years, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebrates the contributions of America's employees with disabilities and brings attention to the value of a diverse workforce.

To help raise awareness about barriers to inclusion and to challenge perceptions about employment experiences for the people we serve, this year for NDEAM, Lifeworks created the traveling exhibit, *Work/Life*™.

Through personal accounts, photographs, data, and design, *Work/Life*™ elevates the voices of the people Lifeworks serves while addressing the disproportionate rate of unemployment among people with disabilities.

The *Work/Life*™ exhibit opening took place on Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at Securian Financial's national headquarters in St. Paul and was onsite for public viewing through Friday, October 4, 2019.

Learn more about the traveling exhibit and explore disability inclusion resources:
lifeworks.org/worklifemmn

Ashley Oolman, Lifeworks Disability Inclusion Consultant and *Work/Life*™ project lead reflects, "We were so excited to unveil the *Work/Life*™ exhibit at Securian Financial. Their willingness to learn and grow with us as we develop innovative ways to foster inclusion has provided meaningful and lasting change for our communities."

Throughout the month of October, the exhibit traveled to area businesses, including Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America, Ameriprise Financial, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, and Uponor.

Invest in Disability Inclusion

Opportunities Offered by Lifeworks:

- *Work|Life*™ exhibit rental
- Organization-wide trainings
- One-on-one consultation
- Accessibility evaluation and recommendations

Learn more and
book now for 2020!

lifeworks.org/worklifemn
612-695-2289



Become an Ally

You can foster inclusion in our communities. Help us remove barriers and ensure that all people are represented by taking the following action steps:

- Use person-first language. Emphasize the person, not the disability by using phrases such as “a person with” or “a person who has.”
- Include people with disabilities in conversations and social gatherings.
- Do not lower expectations or make assumptions about competence, character, or happiness.
- Ask your workplace about accessibility and inclusion policies, practices, and resources.
- Include people with disabilities when making decisions.
- Stay informed on topics impacting people with disabilities.
- Share information about disabilities with family and friends.
- Reach out to Lifeworks Disability Inclusion Consultant, Ashley Oolman, at 612-695-2289 or aoolman@lifeworks.org to learn more about creating an inclusive workforce.

From Piece Rate to Earning a Livable Wage



Since 1938, section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act has allowed employers to pay people with disabilities wages below the federal minimum wage (U.S. Department of Labor).

Kirk Langsjoen used to be paid by how many labels he could put on bags in a given time period. He worked on this task in a group of people with disabilities at Peace Coffee through a contract with Lifeworks.

In 2017, Lifeworks changed our business model to ensure that all people receiving employment support from the organization work in their communities and earn livable wages. All subminimum wage work ceased.

Reflecting back to that time, Kirk notes, "I thought that I was earning good money back when it was piece rate; now as an hourly employee, I realize that I'm making so much more money in comparison."

This decision to no longer offer subminimum wage work led the partnership between Lifeworks and Peace Coffee to evolve for the better – enhancing workplace culture, increasing productivity, and helping to build employees' skillsets.

Sara Lidstrom, Production Manager, contemplates the impact of the change: "When it was a large group of Lifeworks Associates doing piece-rate work, the job was more isolated. The job coach would be the quality control. The work now is more consistent. It's nice to have familiar faces around. And since it's the same people doing the job week to week, we don't have to retrain. We now have people who are really good at the job and who want to be here."

Because of Kirk's reliability, accuracy, and previous experience, Peace Coffee was happy to keep him on. Kirk, remembering how he felt when he received the news, stated,

“It was honestly a wave of relief. Having a familiar jobsite asking for me to stay on was what I needed to get my feet off the ground.”



There are 6,883 workers in Minnesota paid subminimum wage.

Source: U.S. Department
of Labor

(continued)

Working at Peace Coffee has given Kirk the opportunity to develop his talents and to use his skills in new ways.

“The package label machine doesn’t always run perfectly and I’ve got a real eye for detail. It was having a lot of problems and I just started analyzing it, figuring out how the machine works. I really do like to troubleshoot and help other people.”

Kirk’s career at Peace Coffee provides him with a sense of security and helps him remain positive. When asked about how being an hourly employee has improved his life, he explains, “In all honesty, it’s partially the money and partially just knowing that I’m doing something right. I can be very down on myself at times, so being able to hold and keep a job actually helps to boost my mood and to keep me from being so down on myself.”

Kirk lives in a townhome and visits his parents on weekends. He enjoys playing video games and travels to gaming conventions annually.

Help us fuel the ambitions of the people we serve.



We believe that every person deserves the opportunity to thrive while making a positive impact in their community. You can remove barriers and ensure that all people are represented.

- Make a donation
- Become a corporate sponsor
- Give through your Donor Advised Fund
- Make us part of your legacy through planned giving

Together, we can put inclusion, choice, and community into action.

Give, today!

lifeworks.org | 651-365-3719

Lifeworks

A nonprofit serving
people with disabilities



A Little Help Goes a Long Away

Karen met Moses on her second trip to Africa in 2004.

She was helping local communities in Nigeria and visited an orphanage where she was introduced to him – and felt an immediate connection: “I met a lot of kids, but there was just something about this kid.”

Moses needed significant medical care and after a few trips to visit him, several care packages, and navigating a lot of red tape, Karen transferred him to the United States for treatment – and the rest is history. Karen is now Moses’s mom and legal guardian.

As a social worker familiar with available resources and processes for receiving support, Karen knew that she wanted to hire

her own staff that she trusted to assist Moses versus going with an agency.

In 2011, she selected Lifeworks Financial Management Services to help take care of employer-related responsibilities, including providing staff with required training, monitoring services performed, and overseeing payroll processing.

“It’s been going really well. Once you find the right staff, they become part of your village and it’s been great to have Lifeworks to manage payroll and to help with getting all the paperwork done. I know that I can always reach out to Lifeworks with questions and they get the answers I need for anything.”

The self-directed support Moses receives has helped him thrive and Karen, as a single parent who

works fulltime, the PCA Choice and Personal Support and Respite services have offered flexibility, growth, and fun.



Karen explains, “Moses is very involved in the community. He plays baseball, builds his skills through equine-assisted therapy, and does marathons with the My Team Triumph organization. Because of Lifeworks and the staff that come in, he’s progressed to where he is today.”

Annual Celebration

Cause Marketing Opportunity

Sponsor the 2020 Lifeworks Annual Celebration

Market your brand, show your support, and enhance our communities.

Learn more:

lifeworkscelebration.org

Emily Rohrer, Advancement Manager
erohrer@lifeworks.org | 651-365-3751

Join our network of over 400 community partners.



Emergency Closings Due to Weather

Winter is right around the corner. Last year when temperatures reached dangerous levels, Lifeworks closed for the first time in the organization's history.

To stay up-to-date on closures, visit Lifeworks news webpage or our social media accounts:

 lifeworks.org/news

 LifeworksMN

 @LifeworksMN

 @LifeworksMN



Disability Inclusion:

DIVERSIFYING TALENT AND ENHANCING WORKPLACE CULTURE



An interview with Lifeworks Disability Inclusion Consultant, Ashley Oolman, pictured above.

Did you know that one in four people in the United States has a disability?*

The changing demographics of the workforce coupled with low rates of unemployment puts organizations in a place where they need to be innovative when it comes to recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees.

Lifeworks sat down with our Disability Inclusion Consultant, Ashley Oolman, to learn more about disability employment and inclusion in the workforce. Using evidence-based, best practices, Oolman provides accessibility assessments, one-on-one consultation, inclusion workshops, and organization-wide trainings for business, guiding strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to transform workplace culture and advance human rights for all people.

*Center for Disease Control and Prevention

WHAT IS DISABILITY INCLUSION?

Oolman: Inclusion is a conscious choice tied to action. Decisions have been made and spaces have been created for years without people with disabilities in mind – so essentially it is the intentional undoing of barriers and recognizing the value of including all people.

WHY IS DISABILITY INCLUSION IMPORTANT?

Oolman: People have the right to be employed. Often a lot of what gets in the way is not a person's disability, but rather bias, perspectives, and stigmas that are widely believed and are huge barriers. When you open up dialogue and break those concepts apart, it becomes clear that they are not reasons to avoid hiring people with disabilities.

Employment provides a greater level of access to rights and liberties. It's not just about earning money, but it's also about being able to accumulate wealth, provide for family, give back to the community, and invest in what matters to you.

WHAT ARE SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES?

Oolman: A common misconception is that people with disabilities cannot do the same work at the same level or productivity as those without disabilities and are therefore not as valuable as employees.

Another misconception that I've encountered in my work is that all people with disabilities need expensive accommodations. Not only is this belief

**In 2018, 80.9%
of people with disabilities
were not part of the
workforce.**

Source : U.S. Bureau of
Labor Statistics



**To learn more about
Lifeworks Disability and
Inclusion Resources and to
book a consultation
with Oolman, visit:**

lifeworks.org/worklifemn

inaccurate, but when an accommodation is needed, it is often addressing a barrier that positively impacts factors like the workflow and productivity.

WHY SHOULD EMPLOYERS DIVERSIFY THEIR TALENT?

Oolman: If you're trying to solve a problem, make a decision, or develop a product, having different perspectives at the table is valuable. Employers know this and that's why they are investing in diversity and inclusion efforts.

But one important concept to understand is that it is not a numbers game. Having a person with a disability or a person of color is not enough. To ensure that employees can be their best, authentic selves, the work culture needs to shift to represent the community – and be a place where everyone can contribute.

Also, if you are selling a product or a service and your goal is to be as profitable as you can, the more you can appeal to the masses and differentiate what you do, the better. Do you want to sell to one group of people or do you want to make something that is so amazing that everyone can use it?

WHAT STEPS CAN EMPLOYERS TAKE TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

Oolman: Step one is to get started. There are so many ways to take the first step. I recommend becoming acclimated with information about people with disabilities. There are some great resources out there such as the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability (EARN) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

The second step is to create the space for conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion to happen – and make sure that everyone's voice is heard. The goal of the conversations should be to challenge perceptions, establish inclusive policies and practices, and create a plan that connects to strategic initiatives.

Lifeworks Community Partners

TOGETHER, WE ARE BETTER.

Support from our community partners help make our mission possible. From offering careers with competitive wages for the people we serve to championing inclusion efforts and providing funding for innovation, they are essential to ensuring our impact creates systematic change.

3M
ABM Janitorial Services
Ace Hardware
Adams Auto Sales Mankato
Andersen Corporate Foundation
Aerotek
Allegis Group
Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America
AlphaGraphics
Altair ACO
AMC Theatres
American Family Insurance
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Ameriprise Financial
Anagram
Angelina's Kitchen
Ann Porter Insurance
Apple Automatic Food Service
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Arby's
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ARRM
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A'viands
Badger Magnetics
The Bailey Group
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Berquist
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Best Buy
BIC Graphic
Bloomington Garden Center
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
Boston Market
The Boulder Tap House
Boy Scouts of America
Boyer & Associates
BreakAway Arts
Bruegger's Bagel Bakery
Buffalo Wild Wings
Burger King
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Canon
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City of Eagan
City of Hastings
City of Inver Grove Heights
City of Mankato
City of Minneapolis
City of Saint Paul
City of Saint Peter
Claire's



Joe Dweh and Hannah Wagner at Atomic Data in Minneapolis.

Clifton Larson Allen
Coborn's
Coliseum Sports Bar & Grill
Community Association Group
Common Sense Building Service
Consolidated Communications
ConvergeOne
Cost Plus World Market
Costco
Coughlan Companies
Cowboy Jack's
Cow Tipping Press
Crayola Experience
Creative Visual Solutions
Creative Water Solutions
The Creativity Company
Crowne Plaza
Crystal D
Cub Foods
Culver's
Cummins Sales and Service
Cutco
Dairy Queen
Dakota County
Dakota Child and Family Clinic
Dart Transit Company
Delaware North
The Demo Group
DeWitt Mackall Crouse & Moore S.C.
Discount Tire
Dittrich Specialties
Doherty Staffing Solutions
Dollar Tree
Drummers Garden Center & Floral
DSW
Eagan Rotary
Eagan Foundation

Ecolab
Ecolab Foundation
Ecumen
Eide Bailly
Enterprise Rent-a-Car
Equiniti
Exceed Packaging
Express Employment
Professionals
Fairfield by Marriott
Family Fresh Market

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over 400
community
partners.**

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with us:
651-365-3719
lifeworks.org**

FedEx
Festival Foods
The First
Impression Group
Five Below
Five Guys
Fladeboe Advancement
Fleet Farm
FlexMation
Foley & Mansfield
Fort Ridgely State Park
Franklin Elementary
School, Mankato
Fred C. and
Katherine B.
Andersen Foundation
Fredrikson & Byron
Fuddruckers
G2 Secure Staff
Game Stop
Gap Inc.
Gary's Pizza
The General Counsel

General Mills
Gerring's Car Wash
The Glenn Hopkins
GLS Companies
Godfather's Pizza
Good Samaritan
Goodwill
Gopher Resource
Gordmans
Grandma's Bakery
Guaranteed Clean
Guitar Center
Gustavus Adolphus
College
Habilitative Services
Hardee's
Harley-Davidson
Harry Meyering Center
Hastings Bus Company
Hillcrest Rehabilitation
Center
Hilltop Meat Market
HMS Host
Hoglund Bus Company
Holiday Stationstores
The Home Depot
Home Goods
Home Instead
Senior Care
Horton
Hy-Vee
Inbox Dollars
Informatix
Innovative Office
Solutions
Jack Link's
Jake's Stadium Pizza
Janistar
Javens Mechanical
Contracting
JEM Technical
Jerry's Foods
JIMMY Johns
JMLM Restaurants
Jo-Ann Stores
Kato Cab
Kato Cable
Key Surgical
Key's Café & Bakery
Kia of Mankato
Kohl's
Kowalski's Markets
Kwik Trip
LA Fitness
Lancer Food Service
Lakeshore Grill
Laurels Peak
Rehabilitation Center
The Lawn Ranger
LDR Home Care
Legendary Baking
Life Time Fitness
Lindsay Window & Door
Little Caesars
Little Green Women

LIV Aveda Salon & Spa
Living Links
LongTerm Care Group
Lowe's
Lunds & Byerlys
Lutheran Social
Services
Macy's
Mankato City
Center Hotel
Mankato Free Press
Manpower
Mapleton Community
Home
Margaritaville
Marsden Holding
Marshalls
Masterson Staffing
Solutions
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Masterson Staffing
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Commission
Metropolitan Supply
Mexican Villa
Micro Center
Microtel by Wyndham
Mid-America
Business Systems
Midwest Rubber
The Millard Group
Minneapolis Airport
Marriott
The Minneapolis
Foundation
Minnesota Bank & Trust
Minnesota Council
of Nonprofits
Minnesota Department
of Revenue
Minnesota Quality Care
Mister Car Wash
MNCAPD
MOHR
Moran Distribution
Center
Motel 6
Nalco Holding Company
NAMI Minnesota
Neighbors Inc.
New Ulm Public Schools
Nickelodeon Universe

Nortech Systems
NuAire
Number 4 American
Bar & Kitchen
Oak Park Senior Living
Oak Ridge Place
Old National
Bank Foundation
Old Navy
Olive Garden
Our Little
World Daycare
Outfront Media
Palmer Bus Service
Panda Express
Panera Bread
Papa Murphy's
Paragon Printing,
Mailing, and
Specialties
Pathstone
Paul Davis Restoration
Peace Coffee
Perkins
Permac Industries
Pet Expo
Petco
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Piercing Pagoda
Pizza Man
Pizza Ranch
PNC Foundation
Prairie Winds
Middle School
PreferredOne
Prime Therapeutics
Prime Flight Aviation
Prospect Air
Protocol 46
Prudential Financial
Radius Global Solutions
Raising Cane's
Ranch-AI-Paca
Ranstad
Rapid Packaging
RBA
Red Lobster
Red Robin
Regal Cinemas
REI
Renewal by Andersen
Restart, Inc.
River's Edge Hospital
& Clinic
The Rivers
RJ Ryan
Robert Half
Rother Machine
Ryan Companies
S&S Motors
Saint Paul &
Minnesota Foundation
The Salvation Army
Sam's Club
Sass Boutique

Savers
 School Sisters of
 Notre Dame
 Schwickerts Tecta
 America
 Science Museum
 of Minnesota
 Sea Life
 Sears
 Securian Financial
 Securian Foundation
 Self Esteem Brands
 SEMCIL
 Senneca Holdings
 Mankato
 Service Management
 Group
 Service Master
 of Mankato
 The Shavlik
 Family Foundation
 Shell
 Shine Way
 Shopko
 The Show Syndicate
 SJ Computers
 Snell Auto Wash
 Speedway
 Spencer's
 Smashburger
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 Spoonriver
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 Thomson Reuters
 Tidy CleanTires Plus
 TJ Maxx
 Tractor Supply Co.
 Transit Team
 U.S. Aviation
 U.S. Bancorp
 U.S. Bank Stadium
 UCare

U-Haul
 United Healthcare
 Union 32 Craft House
 Unique Thrift Store
 The Urban Dog
 Uponor
 UPS
 Upstream Arts
 Valleyfair
 Valspar Corporation
 Vanderberg Clean
 Vine Home Thrift
 Wahlburgers
 Walgreens
 Walmart
 Washington County
 Water's Edge
 The Waters of Plymouth
 Weekend Projects
 Wells Fargo
 Wells Fargo
 Foundation Minnesota
 Wendy's
 Whelan Security
 White Fox Fur and
 Feather Company
 Wholesale Produce
 Supply
 Willow Pond
 Woodbury Lutheran
 Church
 Wow! Zone
 Xcel Energy
 YMCA

Lifeworks is committed to maintaining an accurate list. If you find an error or omission, please contact us: marketing@lifeworks.org

Ready. Set. Nominate!

Since 1986, the Lifeworks Annual Celebration has recognized the achievements and contributions of the people we serve and our community partners that champion diversity and inclusion.

VOICE YOUR VOTE

Nominations for the 2020 Annual Celebration are now being accepted for the following categories:

Advocate of the Year



Awarded to a person who has excelled in creating meaningful and lasting change for the people we serve and the concepts we uphold.

Organization of the Year



Awarded to a community partner or an employer committed to inclusion and ensuring that all people are represented.

Personal Achievement



Awarded to two people supported by Lifeworks who have excelled personally or professionally – and have made a meaningful impact in their community.

Staff Excellence



Awarded to a Lifeworks personnel who goes above and beyond to make a significant impact in the lives of the people we serve.

Ready to submit your nomination?

Visit: lifeworkscelebration.org

Nominations must be received by Friday, December 20, 2019.

High Marks for Lifeworks Day, Employment, and Financial Management Services

Lifeworks strives to provide high-quality services that enhance the lives of the people we serve. We do this by continuously seeking ways that we can improve to ensure that our offerings reflect the highest standard of service. We thank our dedicated and skilled staff for helping us be leaders of our industry.

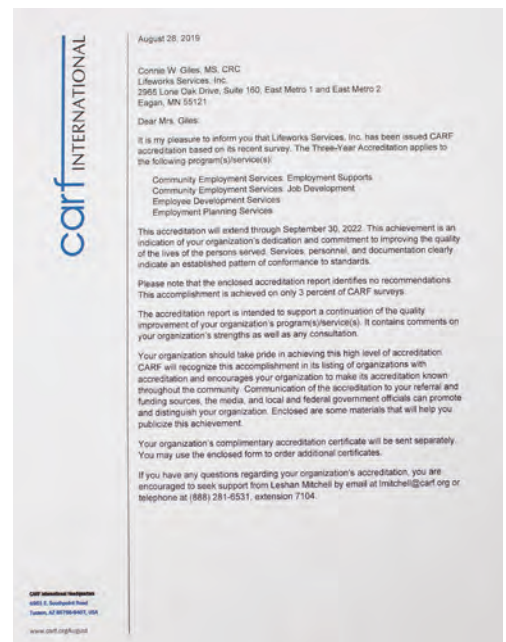
Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities

In order for Lifeworks to partner with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, we undergo an audit every three years with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International, an independent, non-profit accreditor of health and human services. They report accrediting more than 59,000 programs at over 27,000 locations worldwide.

In July and August, CARF surveyors completed a recertification audit of Lifeworks Employment Services – and they were complimentary and impressed by our work.

***“This accreditation will extend through September 30, 2022. This achievement is an indication of your organization’s dedication and commitment to improving the quality of the lives of the persons served. Services, personnel, and documentation clearly indicate an established pattern of conformance to standards.*”**

Please note that the enclosed accreditation report identifies no recommendations. This accomplishment is achieved on only 3 percent of CARF surveys.”



Readiness Review

The Financial Management Services contract with the state requires Lifeworks to pass a Readiness Review, an evaluation that is intended to determine if the organization is prepared to maintain compliance with federal, state, and local tax rules for self-directed services.

Despite being only four months into the new state contract, Lifeworks passed our Readiness Review, scoring an incredible 99 percent.

Congrats to all of the Lifeworks staff who maintain a high level of excellence on a daily basis and those who helped the organization prepare for and pass these evaluations with flying colors.

Lifeworks Mankato

EXPLORING INTERESTS AND
BUILDING SKILLS IN THE COMMUNITY



Service Facilitators, Lindsay Schmitt and Jody Decker, with Lifeworks Mankato participants.

From learning about what local businesses do to bringing food and a friendly smile to aging adults as a Meals on Wheels volunteer, the people served by Lifeworks Mankato are exploring interests, building skills, and giving back to their community.

Community Skill Building at Lifeworks Mankato is guided by the expertise of Jody Decker and Lindsey Schmitt. As Service Facilitators, they work together to coordinate experiences and encourage discussions while constantly innovating to ensure the voices of the people we serve are heard.

Lindsey explains, “Community Skill Building is a tailored service. It’s 100 percent person centered. To determine what the people we serve are looking for, we assess interests and needs quarterly and then develop a calendar based their identified topics.”

On any given day, Lifeworks Mankato serves 10-15 people

through Community Skill Building. Outings happen in the morning and then again after lunch. The community has been supportive and receptive to fostering inclusion. More than 60 businesses, including Amazon, Taylor Corporation, and Mankato State University have provided learning opportunities for the people we serve.

Along with actively engaging in the community, Lifeworks Mankato offers peer teaching, where participants research topics, create presentations, and share information with the group. Past topics include nutrition, mental health, coping skills, and more.

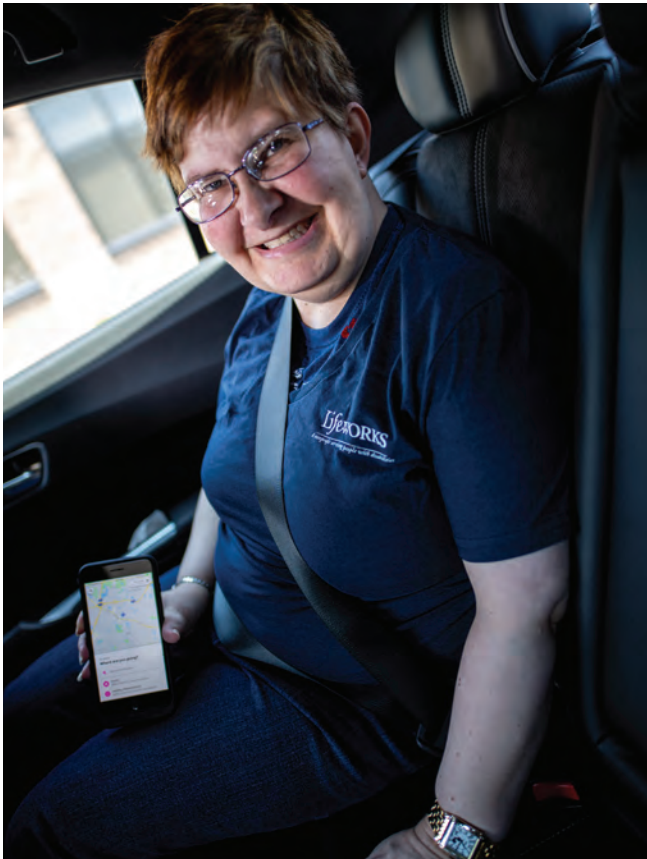
Teresa, a Lifeworks Mankato participant for over a year, thoughtfully asserts, “I like that we get out in the community. The history of this town is very interesting. When I first moved here it was hard and now I know where a lot of places are. And early on, I hardly talked to anyone, but I’ve grown. My social skills are a lot better.”

100%
person centered

**partnering
with over
60
businesses**

Ann's New Ride to Work

Ann Haumschild, Clerical Assistant, has worked at Lifeworks for the past 13 years. She used to ride a shared bus service every day to and from work. The ride into the office was perfect, but even though she lived only fifteen minutes from work, the time it took to return home varied, making it challenging for her and her family to plan evenings together.



“I live with my folks and it was hard not being able to let them know exactly when I would be home. They would text, asking, ‘When are you going to be home?’ The bus would pick me up at 2:30pm and sometimes I got home at 3:30pm, but other times I would not get home until 5:00pm – depending on who else was riding the bus and the weather.”

Realizing that a change was needed, Ann connected with her social worker and family to find another transportation option. Her social worker proposed that Ann enroll in a new pilot program designed to remove barriers to transportation.

Through a partnership between Dakota County Social Services and the rideshare service, Lyft, people who receive social services can request transportation to and from their place of employment and community offerings using a mobile app. For eligible riders like Ann, the cost of the trip is covered through Medicaid waivers. The pilot program was made possible through the Department of Human Services Innovation Grant.

Ann schedules rides through her phone each day and so far it's been a great option for her.



Ann, Lifeworks clerical assistant scheduling her Lyft ride.

“I love it. It's easy. You get to meet a lot of people and I'm getting home right on time. I've gained anywhere from an hour to two hours of time each day.”



Lookman’s Success Story

A CAREER WITH LIFEWORKS

HOW IT HAPPENED

Prior to Lifeworks, Lookman Lasisi worked at a group home for people with disabilities. Some of the people he supported were also served by Lifeworks, giving him the opportunity to visit and become familiar with the organization. During one of those times, he met Lifeworks former President and Chief Executive Officer.

Lookman reflects on that visit, “She was very welcoming and family-oriented. I asked about what it was like to work at Lifeworks. She gave me an overview. Wow. I was really impressed – especially with the amount of vacation time and their retirement program.”

With seven years of experience as a personal care attendant and an educational background in human services, Lookman decided to explore his options. He sent résumés, went on many interviews, and received several offers for employment, including one from Lifeworks.

“When I interviewed at Lifeworks Apple Valley, I noticed that the building was so brand new. Everybody was welcoming. I even ran into a few people that I used to work with back in the day. I thought, ‘I want to work here.’”

In May 2016, Lookman accepted a position as a Service Specialist at Lifeworks where he helped people explore their interests through community outings and onsite offerings as well as provided assistance with daily needs.



Lifeworks Program Manager Abu Hamad and Lookman Lasisi.

THE PROCESS

In less than six months, Lookman was promoted to Service Facilitator, giving him greater responsibility as he was working more closely with people's support teams.

His expertise and passion for the people we serve made him a knowledgeable advocate.

At the 2017 legislative wrap-up session, Lookman was honored with an inaugural Outstanding Staff Award by the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities for his work supporting self-advocates from Lifeworks Apple Valley.

THE OUTCOME

Now as a Team Lead, Lookman helps with staffing, programming, scheduling, and day-to-day operations. He appreciates having a

great supervisor and a supportive team and looks forward to continuing to build his career with Lifeworks.

"Three years has went by so fast. I've never regretted coming to Lifeworks. This has been a wonderful job. Lifeworks is always prepared for what is going to happen in the next 5-10 years and I want to be part of that future."

“When I come to Lifeworks in the morning and I see all the people excited to see me and be here – that really makes me happy.

**- Lookman Lasisi
Lifeworks Team Lead**

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Since 1965, Lifeworks Services Inc. has been a pioneer for inclusion. Lifeworks was founded by families who recognized the importance of advocacy and removing barriers for people with disabilities to be part of the community.

Mission: to serve our community and people with disabilities as we live and work together.

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