

APRIL 2025

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Iowa Focus
family options and community supports

FOCAL POINT



* CB CONNECT members celebrating St. Patrick's Day

'Focal Point' on Community



— Derek Laney

Iowa Focus has a decades-long commitment to inclusive community engagement. Everything we do is designed to assist members build, enjoy, and maintain lives of meaning and worth in their communities.

This starts at home with helpful residential supports to promote safety and day-to-day stability. But it expands beyond the home as well to include civic activities, community events, and social engagement. Our CONNECT Programs offer such integration in a shared-support model. You can look inside this edition to see many of the activities enjoyed by CONNECT attendees. But it's important to remember that Iowa Focus pursues inclusion on an individual basis also, with each person served. In our SCL and HBH Residential programs, we help members explore, engage, and become a part of their communities.

If there's a story of inclusion you'd like to share, let us know. Email the editor at derek@iowafocus.com.

Conversations with CONNECT!

Creston CONNECT Highlight



- Kaitlin Rosenbeck

The winter cold didn't stop Creston CONNECT members from exploring new activities in the community! The members have crafted at Karen's Crafty Corner, watched movies at the Grand Theater in Greenfield, went bowling at the Family Fun Center, volunteer cleaning and picking up donations for our local food pantry, chair exercise group at Gibson Memorial Library, going to Wal-Mart to get supplies for their wreath crafts, attended a community lunch at Cromwell Church, and planted a flower in a cup for National Plant a Flower Day.

In January, members bought and donated donuts to the local law enforcement center to show our support for National Law Enforcement Day. Members said that they were excited to show support to our police officers. CONNECT voted on a monthly trip and they picked Dave and Busters. Members got to eat lunch and play several different arcade games! When a staff asked member Teresa how she liked the arcade games, she said they were "Cool!".

In February, CONNECT took a road trip to Lenox for an opportunity to tour AgriVision Equipment (John Deere). Members got to see where the parts are stored, the different offices, and the area where they work on all equipment. After the tour was done, members were given a new lunch box, cup, chapstick, stress ball, pens, and a calendar to take with them! Shaun said, "Wow!". With the weather getting nice, CONNECT is starting our Freedom Rock Tour. Our goal is to see all the Freedom Rocks surrounding Creston Area!

In March, CONNECT celebrated National Pancake Day by eating pancakes at Creston Family Restaurant. Members were interested in playing racquetball so CONNECT met up with friends from Shenandoah at Clarinda Lied Center to play racquetball and have lunch as a group at Runza. The popular vote this month for a community trip was touring the State Historical Museum. CONNECT members and staff enjoyed seeing all the exhibits in the museum and learning information about the state of Iowa. Creston CONNECT member Mike McNally said his favorite thing about the State Historical Museum was learning the actor Elijah Wood was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



Council Bluffs CONNECT Highlight



– Hollie Parks

2025 is off to a great start for our Focus CONNECT members in Council Bluffs!

In January, members continued their weekly volunteering with Meals On Wheels, where they have become familiar faces to those they serve. That month, they also got a preview of the nice weather to come, enjoying each sunny day with community walks, soaking in the fresh air whenever possible.

In February, members continued their efforts to give back by choosing to donate to their community. Focus CONNECT decided that building relationships within the community would start with giving back whenever an opportunity arises. Members selected pets and animals as their first cause and shopped for items to donate to support Humane Pet Services in Council Bluffs. The Humane Pet Services were extremely grateful and thanked our members for their generosity and thoughtfulness.

In March, members had plenty to celebrate! Focus CONNECT celebrated National Pancake Day at IHOP, Something on a Stick Day with ice cream on a stick, and St. Patrick's Day by sporting all green. Members also enjoyed community walks and yard games in the park. It's safe to say that the members at Focus CONNECT in Council Bluffs are ready for the spring sun!

* Featured cover photo, page 1.



Individual Community Integration Highlight



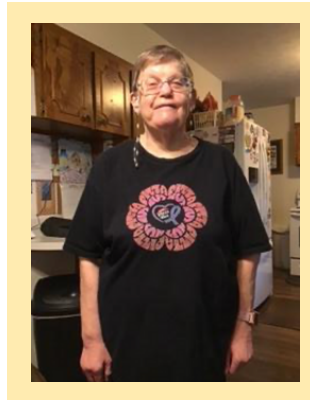
– Brenda McIntosh

Kelli Dryer, Sara Wilson, and Darlene Hamilton go bowling every Tuesday at Frontier Lanes in Clarinda. They arrive at 4pm with their shirts and bowling balls and proceed to their own designated alley. Darlene said her favorite thing about bowling is seeing her friends. Sara says she enjoys seeing her friends too, and is always happy to cheer them on.

After bowling they often enjoy eating out in Clarinda to experience different restaurants not available in their hometown of Shenandoah.

Darlene Hamilton began working at Pizza Hut in 2023. She currently holds down two shifts weekly, and is very proud to complete or surpass production goals every shift.

Shaun Stephens was awarded most improved worker this year at Southwestern Community College. His position started with one weekly shift. He was successful and quickly advanced to twice weekly. This was a huge step for Shaun, who is hesitant about community activities. Shaun says he enjoys work, especially vacuuming, and is happy with his achievements.



2025 Wellness Initiative



– Marlena Laney

Results from the Wellness Survey

Thank you to everyone who filled out the survey on wellness. It seems that there are several areas that we can better support wellness for both our consumers and our staff. Answers indicate that staff are interested in healthy food/cooking, exercise opportunities, financial planning, stress reduction, and work/life balance. Many of you answered that you feel a sense of belonging at Iowa FOCUS and that you feel appreciated by your managers. Several of you had ideas on how we can increase wellness and we will be implementing those ideas.

To start, we will be having a Getting back to Nature activity on May 24th in the parking lot of our Council Bluffs day program from 2:00-4:00pm. We will provide either a flower or herb option to plant inside of a pot to take home. Staff and consumers are welcome to attend. Several studies show that nature boosts our mental health, reduces both anxiety and depression symptoms, connects us on a biological level and has a grounding effect. Having fresh flowers and herbs are small ways to change our environments.

Please spread the word for this activity and keep your eyes on the newsletter for more!

Spring Storm Safety



— Derek Laney

Spring is a beautiful season, but it's also when most serious storms occur. **BE PREPARED!**

Safety Planning

Review your members' current Safety Plans. Each member has a safety plan with identified responses to emergency events such as Tornado, Power Outage, etc. If the member's Safety Plan is not applicable to the situation, do your best to ensure safety and caution by taking normally expected safety steps. When members are safe, contact your supervisor or Director for guidance, or 911 for emergent situations.

Sheltering Locations

Each Safety Plan will identify a recommended shelter location in the home in case of tornado or other severe storm. Be familiar with this. If the Plan is insufficient to the member or the home environment, seek the safest location in the home – which will be a small, interior room on the lowest level, preferably basement

Power Outage

Power outages are common results of Spring storms. Be sure home has flashlights with new batteries, other potential back up power supplies, and at least 3 days of non perishable food.

Emergency Kit

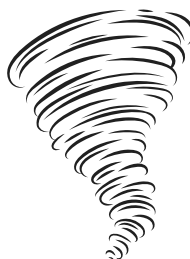
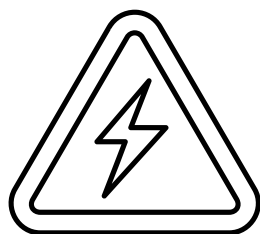
Consider having an emergency kit prepared, including flashlight, cell phone, first aid kit, medications, blankets, water and non perishable food for up to 3 days. Keep it in an accessible and central location in the home so it can be easily taken to the shelter location.

During a Tornado:

- Seek Shelter: Go to your designated safe room or the safest location available.
- Protect Yourself: Cover your head and neck with your arms, and use pillows, blankets, or other objects for added protection.
- If Outside: Seek shelter in a sturdy building or a ditch or low-lying area.
- Do Not Drive During a Tornado: If you are caught in a vehicle, park safely and stay in the car with your seatbelt on, or abandon the vehicle and seek shelter in a low-lying area.
- Avoid Overpasses: They can act as wind tunnels, increasing the danger.
- Stay Weather-Ready: Continue to listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay updated about tornado watches and warnings.

Stay Informed

- Monitor Weather Alerts: Listen to local news for updates on tornado watches and warnings.
- Understand the Difference: A tornado watch means conditions are favorable for tornadoes, while a warning means a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar.
- Act Quickly During a Warning: If you receive a tornado warning, seek shelter immediately.



When in doubt, fill one out!



— Derek Laney

At Iowa Focus we encounter a wide variety of daily situations. Many are successes to celebrate, others are challenges to face, and some are critical concerns to address.

If you encounter a critical event, notify your Coordinator or Director immediately and promptly complete a GER (general event report) on the Therap Portal.

We call this a Critical Incident Report.

These events and situations are considered **CRITICAL**.

- Medication error with a negative outcome, such as illness, injury, or death, if there is a pattern of medication errors, or if the medication error requires a consult with poison control or other medical professional
- Child or dependent adult abuse reported to IHHS
- Death
- Physician treatment at a clinic, urgent care, or hospital for a physical injury
- A face-to-face visit or phone call with a mobile crisis unit or suicide prevention hotline, admission to a crisis stabilization unit, or an ER visit or inpatient admission for a mental health concern (altered mental status caused by medical condition excluded)
- Law enforcement intervention for an incident directly involving the member or the member is arrested and/or charged with a crime or for a welfare check (excluded events are uninjured vehicle passenger in accident; witness to crime; member calling police as a 'behavior' without cause)
- Location Unknown or elopement when a provider is responsible for oversight of the member
- Urgent or emergent medical treatment at a hospital or urgent care for a medical concern (routine primary physician care excluded)
- Use of a physical, chemical, or mechanical restraint or isolation to restrict, subdue, sedate, or confine the member -- exclusions include Plan Approved 1) routine restraints, 2) standard medical treatments, and 3) PRNs.

Thank you to our community and amazing staff for all of your support and hard work!

For more updates until our July issue of '**Focal Point**', connect with us via Facebook, Instagram, or by visiting our website.

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