

FOCAL POINT



• Council Bluffs CONNECT members with their Easter donations (see page 4)

'Focal Point' on Springing Forward

 — Derek Laney

Hi everyone,

Already 2026 has been a busy year, with member activities, community events, and updates to our scheduling and time keeping systems. We also completed a three-month effort to simplify and improve your Therap Entry Experience. You can read about all of these inside this edition of 'Focal Point'.

Coming this summer, we have two more big events. Our state survey for community-based services and our national CARF accreditation process will both be hosted in July and August. You may be asked to participate by sharing your thoughts and experiences at Iowa Focus.

As always, thank you for being part of the Iowa Focus family, and for helping make the lives of our consumers happier, healthier, and more inclusive. If there's something you'd like to see included in an upcoming issue of 'Focal Point', let us know by emailing your requests, suggestions, and submissions to derek@iowafocus.com.

In the Spotlight with Joni Brown

Joni Brown is our new Office Manager in the Creston Office, and we'd like to give her a warm welcome to the Iowa FOCUS family. As this edition's subject for our 'Employee Spotlight', we sat down and asked her some questions about her role at Iowa FOCUS and her personal life. Here she is to tell you all about herself!

What is your path to Iowa FOCUS? I have lived in Creston for 26 years and am excited to be part of the FOCUS team! Previously, I worked alongside Brenda and Kindra at Midwest Opportunities for 13 years. After that, I spent 12 years at Bunn-O-Matic working in the warehouse. When Brenda shared this opportunity, it really made me reflect on my time at Midwest Opportunities. I truly enjoy making a difference in people's lives, and I felt it was the right time for a career change.



Tell a little something about your family! Outside of work, I'm a proud wife, mom of two, and grandma to two wonderful grandbabies. We also have two dogs who keep us busy. Home life is pretty quiet, and Wednesday nights are reserved for watching *Survivor*.

As summer is fast approaching, to what are you looking forward? During the summer, my family enjoys attending car shows. We have a restored 1972 C-10 that we love to show. We also spend a lot of time in the backyard grilling, playing laser tag, riding the golf cart, roasting marshmallows, and enjoying time with family. I'm also looking forward to this new chapter at Iowa FOCUS and getting to know everyone.

Iowa FOCUS wants to thank Joni for being an amazing addition and asset to our community! We are able to do what we do thanks to great people like her.

Special Edition Highlight

For the week of January 26th, one of our members was awarded Employee of the Week at Depot Restaurant & Lounge. Read the story below or [here](#) on Facebook!

"Our next employee spotlight is going to David!

David has been with us for almost 10 years as our dishwasher! His favorite thing about working here is taking out boxes and making sure our dishes get clean.

David's hobbies include VR and tablet games, and he loves walking but also driving his car. The chicken sandwich and french fries are what he enjoys the most off the menu. David loves to travel and he would love to travel to Colorado to see the mountains or Branson because there's a lot of things to do and swimming pools. When asked what's one thing he can't live without, his response was his iPhone and AI. David plays a vital role here at the depot and we are so happy to have him in our lives!" (Depot Restaurant & Lounge, *Facebook*, January 26, 2026)



Conversations with CONNECT!

Creston CONNECT Highlight



- Kaitlin Rosenbeck

So far, the new year has brought lots of fun for Creston CONNECT members and staff. We are excited to highlight several of our exciting activities.

In January, Creston CONNECT members showed their appreciation towards our local law enforcement by purchasing donuts for the crew for National Law Enforcement Day! The members enjoyed taking the donuts to the officers, who were grateful for the donuts and visit.

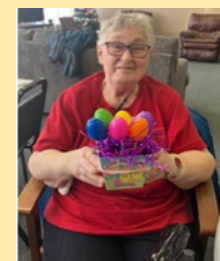
CONNECT Day Hab traveled north to the Greenfield Opera House for a tour. Members Teresa Boswell, Jackie Zadina, and Tim Bathurst said they enjoyed listening to the information about the history of the Opera House and the town of Greenfield. The gentleman who did the tour was full of knowledge!

In February, Creston CONNECT had lots of fun! Did you know National Pizza Day was on February 9th? CONNECT Day Hab celebrated by going to Fareway to purchase ingredients to make homemade pizza as a group and loved getting to eat the yummy pizza they made! Members also had an opportunity to go to their first Iowa Wolves basketball game at the Casey's Center in Des Moines. Everyone had a blast, even though the Iowa Wolves lost by a mere 4 points. It was a great game!

In March, CONNECT members happily sprung into warmer weather. To celebrate spring, CONNECT members voted on going to their local Big Açaí for a sweet treat. They enjoyed eating their healthy snack and socializing. There was no shortage of smiles from everyone.

For Easter, members wanted to make an Easter egg bouquet, so staff and members went to Dollar Tree to get all of the necessary items. After crafting the decoration, member Karen Inman said, "This craft turned out really cute!" Much fun was had by all making the bouquet, and it got everyone in the mood for spring!

To the right is Shannon H who looks dapper in a tux for Easter celebrations at Crest Baptist Church. This year, Shannon attended two services to help manage the very large number of parishioners. The congregation was grateful to have Shannon to assist their community and spread joy on the holiday.



Council Bluffs CONNECT Highlight

 - Hollie Parks

This quarter brought a fresh new year full of sunshine, shopping at local small businesses, and fun crafts.

In January, Council Bluffs CONNECT members spent time shopping locally at various small businesses. They started at Makers Street for handmade items from craftsmen within their community and continued to Hobby Town to shop for new pastimes such as puzzles, journals, and more. Members also continued their frequent trips to True Pottery where they've built relationships with the staff and are always excited to see Leticia. Most recently, CONNECT members got expressive by painting food decor on their plant pots. They also learned how to iron their own colored art onto their shirts, which proved to be a crowd favorite amongst the members.

February always brings excitement to CONNECT due to National Pizza Day. Members count down the days until their annual pizza party and submit their favorite pizza toppings in preparation for the event. This year was no different.

Later in the month, members sprung into action once Fox Run, a local nursing home within their community, posted a request asking for Valentine's Day cards for their residents. Members immediately got creative and hand-delivered a stack of cards, as desired.

Members also found enjoyment shopping at Half Price Books, exploring local produce at Take Root, and stopping by a new local business called Louie's Coffee House to support their grand opening.

In March, good weather finally rolled in which provided CONNECT members with great opportunities to get in walks at Gene Leahy Mall. Members also enjoyed National Butterfly Day at the Henry Doorly Zoo butterfly exhibit.

One of CONNECT's yearly spring traditions is selecting a place within the community to give back to for Easter. This year, members spent the month of March shopping for Easter baskets to donate to their chosen location of The Community of Christ Food Pantry. Members also took trips to the Holy Family Shrine which they'd been eager to visit since December. March provided the perfect weather to do so.



Iowa State Law for Documentation



— Derek Laney

The state of Iowa requires that services provided by staff be recorded "**immediately**". For this reason, Iowa Focus has always required Shift Entries to be completed directly at the end of each shift. For hosting staff, this has been at the end of each day.

This is still a good rule. However, in an effort to ensure Entries meet state standards, Iowa has updated this rule to allow Shift Entries to be recorded during shift time. You can get started earlier. You can record quicker. Direct support may be documented throughout the shift.

Iowa has also stressed the importance of documenting immediately by established hard deadlines. If the "immediate" deadline is not met, the state may elect to deny payment.

To help everyone comply with this state rule, more attention than ever will be paid to timely Entry completion.

Ensure member service payment and continuity by always finishing your Shift Entry 'immediately'. Begin during the shift, and always have your documentation completed within minutes of shift end.

Overtime Updates



— Derek Laney

How Overtime shows on your paystub will change this summer, as we modernize our payroll system to match new federal tax law.

Currently, if you worked 10 hours of overtime at Site A and 10 hours of overtime at Site B, your paystub shows it like this: **Overtime -- 20**

Notice that the sites where you worked those hours are not identified.

Soon this will display differently to identify the Sites where you worked and earned regular pay, and extra pay for overtime will be listed separately. This will help make sure your Overtime is not taxed!

This will not affect your pay. You'll be paid exactly the same. Any time greater than 40 hours in a work week will earn time-and-a-half.

You'll hear more about this as we approach the paystub change, which is expected to take effect on the June 20th check.

2026 Wellness Initiative



- Marlena Laney

Small Moves, Big Gains: Spring Into Wellness!

Spring is here, and a season of fresh starts, longer days, and new energy comes with it. It's the perfect time to reset routines and focus on one of the most powerful things we can do for our health: move our bodies.

You don't need an intense workout plan or fancy equipment to make a difference. In fact, it's often the small, consistent choices that lead to the biggest gains. A short walk with a consumer, stretching between tasks, taking the stairs or parking further out, or even taking deep breaths can add up more than we realize.

Movement doesn't just strengthen muscles. It can lift your mood, boost energy, sharpen focus, and help manage stress. Even brief activity releases endorphins, which are your body's natural mood boosters, and when the sun is out and the air feels fresh, a quick walk outdoors can be as restorative as it is energizing. Encouraging consumers to do these same activities can be a good partnership.

This spring, think of wellness not as an all-or-nothing commitment, but as a series of simple steps.

Here are a few ways to build movement into your day:

- Take a short walk after lunch
- Set a timer to stand and stretch every hour
- Choose stairs when you can or park further out
- Invite a consumer to join you while doing these activities
- Drink plenty of water instead of other drinks

Every step counts. Every stretch matters. Every moment you choose movement, you're investing in a healthier, stronger version of yourself.

Let this season be your reminder that big changes begin with small choices. So get up, step outside, stretch, breathe deeply, and keep moving forward.



Therap[®] Corner Updates



— Erin Spencer

General Event Reports (GERs) are completed on shift when something out of the ordinary happens. Events that should result in submitting a GER include: a missed medication, ER/urgent care visit, police intervention, missing person, use of restraint, mental health emergency, abuse/neglect reporting, serious illness, or even death.

The Therap system takes you through GER creation and submission step by step.

There are two ways to document a GER:

1. From the "Individual" tab → Click on "General Event Reports (GER) New". You will then choose your program and the person for whom you wish to write a GER.
2. From the "Home Page" tab → Select the person you wish to document. Once you've selected your individual you can click on "GER" on their "Modules", and it will drop down to "New".

When in doubt, fill one out!

If you have any more questions about documentation in Therap, please feel free to reach out to Erin Spencer via email at erin@iowafocus.com or via SComm.

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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 Instagram.com/IowaFocus
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