

# Possibilities

## in Education and Training

Fall 2019



### Algona Resident is Enjoying the “Green Green Grass of Home”

**Mike Hoenig,**  
*Program Coordinator,  
Conner Training Connection*

Tammy Eckstein is proud of her most recent accomplishments—things many of us often take for granted. She can get out of bed by herself, take care of many personal needs, and wash dishes.

As the result of an auto accident several years ago, Tammy has limited use of her right arm and leg and experiences a brain injury. Until last November, she lived at the West Bend Health and Rehab Center.

“I heard about Tammy while visiting someone else in the same nursing home,” explains Cindy Pauk, a transition specialist with Iowa’s Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. “The nursing home sent me a referral in May



*“When I saw the trees and grass outside the apartment,” explains Tammy, “I knew I had to move in.”*





One of the things that Tammy appreciates about living on her own is, “The freedom to eat what I want, when I want”.



(2018), and we started the process of helping Tammy move.”

“When I saw the trees and grass outside the apartment,” explains Tammy, “I knew I had to move in. Plus, it was in Algona where my sons John and Kris live. Algona is the only place I wanted to move, so finding an apartment there was great!”

“We had to do a lot of legwork before Tammy could move in,” Cindy told me. “MFP funded home and vehicle modifications to accommodate Tammy’s accessibility needs. We purchased medical equipment, clothing and furniture. Lining up home health care seven days a week in such a small community may have been the most difficult task of all!”

Tammy faced another barrier, too. “I struggled with alcoholism in the past,” explained Tammy. “My family is concerned about me and they weren’t sure I could stay away from the booze. Cindy had to do some fast talking. I’ve done really well with that.”

Shortly after Tammy moved to her apartment, she encountered yet another hurdle. Spirit Cares, the home health agency which

had been serving her, pulled out, leaving her without in-home support. Heather, Jane and Jolene, three former Spirit Cares employees, supported Tammy at no charge for about a month until Des Moines-based Vibrant Cares stepped in. Both Jane and Jolene now work for Vibrant Cares, providing essential services such as housekeeping, cooking, purchasing groceries, and providing transportation to appointments.

The process of overcoming barriers to living on her own has been well worth it for Tammy. “I was desperate to get out of the nursing home,” she says emphatically. “I was the youngest one there. The friends I did make died. I couldn’t smoke. I was tired of being baby-sat. I missed my kids. I missed my freedom!”

With lots of drive and initiative, and with help from Cindy and her home care staff, Tammy believes that the transition is going smoothly. “I love going to the grocery store so I can look at stuff,” Tammy says with a smile. “I’ve gone to the movies, park concerts, and to karaoke. That sure beats sitting around the nursing home!”

Long-time Possibilities readers know that I conclude each story by asking the subject for some sage advice to be shared with individuals considering a move to the community. Some have trouble responding. Tammy, on the other hand, had no problem. “Look into it; just do it! “Nursing homes aren’t fun when you don’t really need to be there. “There’s nothing to be afraid of. “Be responsible for your own actions.”

It’s clear to this author that Tammy knows of what she speaks!

**Editor’s Note** Money follows the Person (MFP) is a Federal program which provides up to 365 days of support to select Medicaid waiver participants transitioning from congregate to community-based settings. Learn more at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/ime/members/medicaid-a-to-z/mfp>.

## Quality and the Struggle for Equality

**Mitch DeFauw**, Librarian, Center for Disabilities and Development

The Disability Resource Library has several new books which contain LGBTQ+ characters with disabilities. Our goal is to offer books that portray all individuals as unique people with their own values, hopes, and aspirations. Suggested age for these books is: 13+

Also new is a book on gender identity and autism. This is a wonderful resource for individuals of all ages.

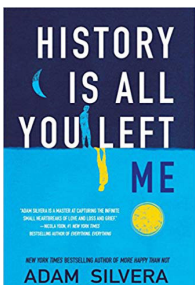


**Run** by Kody Keplinger

"Bo is a girl with a wild reputation, Agnes is a blind girl with over

protective parents, and the two of them are best friends. When Bo shows up one night in trouble, Agnes runs away with her without hesitation. But will they be able to escape Bo's cruel father to freedom?"

Disability: Blindness



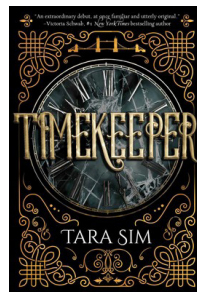
**History is All You Left Me** by Adam Silvera

"When Griffin's first love and ex-boyfriend, Theo,

dies in a drowning accident, his universe implodes. To make things worse, the only person who truly understands his heartache is

Jackson. But no matter how much they open up to each other, Griffin's downward spiral continues. He's losing himself in his obsessive compulsions and destructive choices, and the secrets he's been keeping are tearing him apart."

Disability: OCD



**Timekeeper** by Tara Sim

"A prodigy mechanic who can repair not only clockwork, but

time itself, determined to rescue his father from a Stopped town. A series of mysterious bombings that could jeopardize all of England.

"A boy who would give anything to relive his past, and one who would give anything to live at all."

"A romance that will shake the very foundations of time."

Disability: PTSD

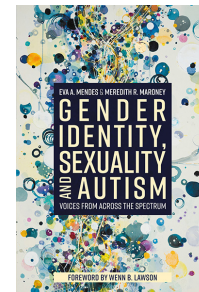


**The Raven Cycle** by Maggie Stiefvater

"The first in a series of four urban fantasy

novels known as The Raven Cycle, The Raven Boys examines love, friendship, good, and evil through the tale of a group of teenagers searching for the resting place of the legendary Welsh king Glendower."

Disability: Depression, PTSD



**Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Autism** by Eva A. Mendes and Meredith R. Maroney

"Bringing together a collection of narratives from those who are on the autism spectrum while also identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and/or asexual (LGBTQIA), this book explores the intersection of the two spectrums as well as the diverse experiences that come with it.

By providing knowledge and advice based on in-depth research and personal accounts, the narratives will be immensely valuable to teenagers, adults, partners and families."

***Possibilities in Education and Training*** is a quarterly publication of University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa's University Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities. It is an outreach initiative of the Conner Training Connection, a program funded by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) to support the transition of individuals with disabilities from congregate to community-based settings.

You can't be afraid to fail.  
It's the only way you succeed -  
you're not gonna succeed all  
the time, and I know that.

*-LeBron James*

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