

Possibilities

in Education and Training

Winter 2025



Closing Doors, Opening Possibilities: Glenwood's Transition to Community Living

by Michelle Johnston, Program Coordinator, Center for Disabilities and Development



Glenwood Resource Center (GRC), a state-run facility in Iowa that cared for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), closed on June 30, 2024, after nearly 160 years of operation. Its closure represents a major shift in how people with disabilities are supported, moving away from large institutions to care in smaller, community-based settings.

GRC was founded in the 1860s as a home for children orphaned by the Civil War. Over time, it expanded to serve children with disabilities and eventually became a center for people with significant medical or behavioral needs. By the 1950s, GRC housed over 1,900 residents, as institutional care was the main way people with disabilities were supported back then.

In the late 1900's, attitudes began to change, and the deinstitutionalization movement pushed for people with disabilities to live in community settings rather than large facilities. As a result, GRC's population steadily declined as Iowa shifted to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS waivers).

In April 2022, Governor Kim Reynolds announced the closure of GRC following investigations by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). The investigations uncovered significant issues at the facility, which included inadequate care and unethical experiments, prompting efforts to transition residents to safer and more supportive environments. At the time of the announcement there were 152 residents living at GRC.

The federally funded Money Follows the Person (MFP) program, which started in Iowa in 2008, was instrumental in helping residents transition to community living. MFP provided resources and support to make the move successful. Before a move, MFP helps people plan the transition by finding housing, coordinating care, and setting up services for each individual's needs. MFP funding can also assist with essential needs like

home modifications and adaptive equipment. After a move, MFP Transition Specialists provide care coordination for the first year the person lives in their new home.

Conner Training Connection (CTC), a state funded appropriation that provides direct financial support to individuals transitioning from Iowa's two Resource Centers under the MFP program, also provided support to some of those transitioning from Glenwood. CTC funds help with rent, utilities, groceries, reducing social isolation, household set up and support individuals in retaining their home in the community.

Of the over 90 residents who moved to HCBS programs, many used MFP resources. This support system helped them live more independently and improve their quality of life in the community.

The closure of GRC reflects a broader move away from institutional care toward personalized support in community settings, following principles from the 1999 Olmstead decision. This Supreme Court ruling requires states to provide services for people with disabilities in the least restrictive settings possible.

GRC's closure signals a commitment to helping people with disabilities live more independently as part of their communities, with dignity and autonomy. Programs like MFP are critical in making this transition successful and creating a more inclusive society.



2024 Community Transition Firsts

- Took out the garbage
- Dressed self
- Slept in own bed
- Started working
- Getting to run errands
- Going to church
- Choosing own daily activities
- Using a debit card
- Shoveled snow
- Washed dishes
- Cleaned house
- Attended birthday party
- Learned how to cook
- Rode bike
- Did own laundry
- Rode the bus

Living in the Community:

Updates from Jo Schumacher, MFP Transition Specialist

“These individuals had no choice but to move as Glenwood Resource Center closed, however, their quality of life has improved!”



Diane (above, with Salty Heifer shirt), Patty, and their roommates go to the Salty Heifer cafe every Saturday night for burgers and fries.

Diane Urban has settled into her new home with Nishna Productions. She spends her days watching Lawrence Welk and doing her puzzles. She loves getting kisses from the friendly dog that passes through the home on occasion. Diane loves to go shopping with staff for a new blanket or a new watch. She also loves to watch Channel 7 News with the Nishna staff every morning. Overall, Diane is enjoying her days spent with her peers.



Katie Dvorsky is “quilting” – helping at least. And she loves it. Katie is very talented in putting “colors” together... She cuts threads and absolutely loves to quilt. She does this activity three times per week with the host home providers daughter.



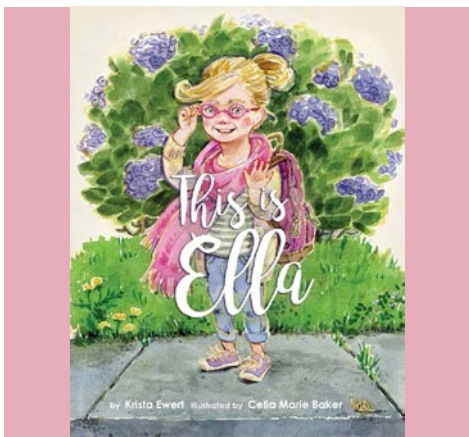
Patty Ritz has adjusted to her new home with Nishna Productions incredibly well. Patty has her favorite spot in the home. Staff always makes sure the shades are open so that she can enjoy the small-town views from the window. Patty enjoys rocking in her big comfy chair and interacting with the dozens of sensory items that she owns. Day to day it has been fun to see what item she will be more entertained with, and staff have had fun introducing her to different things such as fidget toys and stress balls. Patty enjoys time spent outdoors weather permitting and watching birds. Overall, Patty is enjoying her days spent in front of the window and in her big comfy chair.

What makes me me?

Mitch DeFauw, *Disability Resource Librarian*

The disability resource library is a resource for and about people with disability and their caregivers. This includes children's books, which can serve as a valuable learning tool for children with a new diagnosis. The book list below follows this example and are available for check out from the disability resource library.

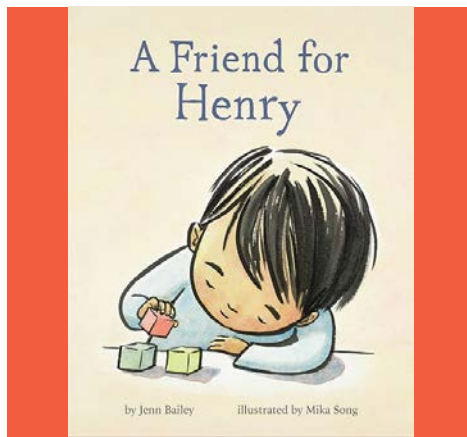
For more questions about the DRL and its collection, you may contact the librarian through email at mitchell-defauw@uiowa.edu or by phone 319-356-1345. To further explore the collection, please visit uichildrens.org/drl-catalog.



This is Ella

by Krista Ewert
(Down Syndrome)

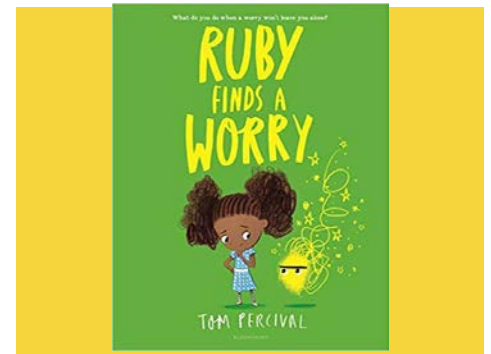
Ella is a happy, fun-loving girl who is just starting school. Ella has Down syndrome. Though she might look a bit different and have trouble saying some words, she is more the same than different, and she wants to be accepted and included just like any other child. In a simple, welcoming way, *This is Ella* teaches children about Down syndrome, inclusion, and friendship.



A Friend for Henry

by Jenn Bailey
(Autism)

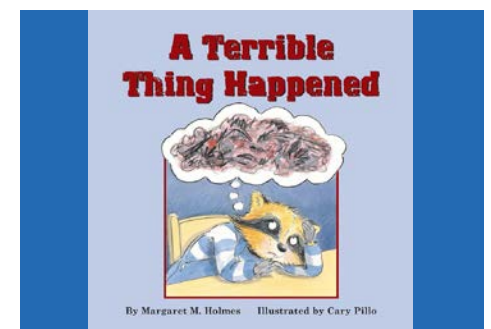
In Classroom Six, second left down the hall, Henry has been on the lookout for a friend. A friend who shares. A friend who listens. Maybe even a friend who likes things to stay the same and all in order, as Henry does. But on a day full of too close and too loud, when nothing seems to go right, will Henry ever find a friend—or will a friend find him? A story from the perspective of a boy on the autism spectrum.



Ruby Finds a Worry

by Tom Percival
(Anxiety)

Meet Ruby - a happy, curious, imaginative girl. But one day, she finds something unexpected: a Worry. It's not such a big Worry, at first. But every day, it grows a little bigger...and a little bigger... until eventually, the Worry is ENORMOUS and all she can think about. Can she ever feel happy again? This perceptive and poignant story is the perfect springboard for talking to children about emotions and anxieties.

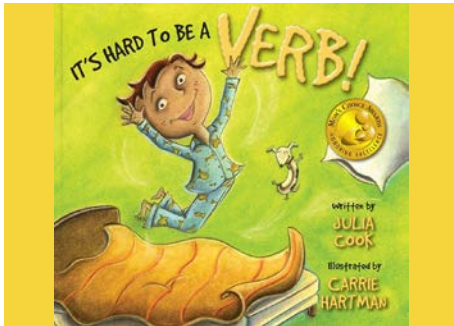


A Terrible Thing Happened

by Margaret M. Holmes
(Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

A gently told and tenderly illustrated story for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic episode. Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing happen. At first he tried to forget

about it, but soon something inside him started to bother him. Then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing that he had tried to forget. Now Sherman is feeling much better.



It's Hard to be a Verb

by Julia Cook
(Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder)

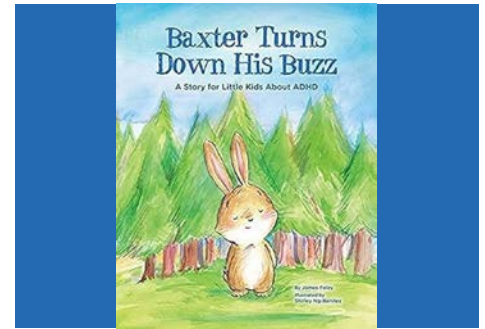
Especially for Louis, who can't seem to control himself when he gets the urge to move at the wrong time and situation. Louis' mom comes to the rescue by teaching him techniques to help keep his inner itching, twitching, and jumping to be a verb in check. A positive resource for anyone dealing with ADHD or challenged by someone who has ADHD.



Brilliant Bea

by Shaina Rudolph and Mary Vukadinovich
(Dyslexia)

An endearing and empowering story that demonstrates that a learning difference like dyslexia doesn't define who you are. Despite her struggles with reading and writing, Beatrice is a natural and brilliant storyteller. With the help of a kind-hearted teacher, Beatrice uses an old-fashioned tape recorder so she can speak her words and then play them back. With her new approach, Beatrice is able to show her classmates who she really has been all along.



Baxter Turns Down His Buzz: A Story for Little Kids about ADHD

by James M. Foley
(Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder)

Baxter Turns Down His Buzz is the story of a high-energy rabbit who learns to control his activity level. Baxter was the fastest bunny in the forest. But sometimes he lost control of his buzz and his zoom, like when he rammed into the raccoons during the annual forest race. His uncle Barnaby guides Baxter through the steps necessary to "turn down his buzz" through behavioral strategies like mindfulness, progressive relaxation, and visualization. At the next forest race, Baxter finds that his buzz is just right!



Meena Meets Her Match by Karla Manternach
(Epilepsy)

Meena's life is full of color. She wears vibrant clothes, eats every shade of the rainbow, and plucks eye-catching trash from the neighborhood recycling bins. But when Meena's best friend, Sofia, stops playing with her at recess and she experiences an unexpected and scary incident at breakfast, nothing can fight off the gray. That's when Meena comes up with a plan to create the BEST and most COLORFUL Valentine's Day Box in the class. With the help of her cousin, Eli, and her stuffed zebra, Raymond, Meena discovers that the best way to break through the blah is to let her true colors shine.

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.

Being fearless isn't being
100 percent not fearful;
it's being terrified but
you jump anyway.

– Taylor Swift

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