

The Ride of His Life

Brandon was thrilled to get on the snowmobile...

Brandon is a determined young man. One day, while the two of us were visiting, he said, "Rhonda, I really want to ride a snowmobile. Do you think you could find someone to take me?" He explained that his caregivers were running into all kinds of road blocks. The road blocks included access to a snowmobile, financial restraints and people being afraid of the liability - Brandon needed to be a passenger not the driver. I immediately sent an e-mail to CCRI Board Member, Char Gust, who is involved with the Rural Cass Snowmobile Club. I explained that Brandon is a well-built man who is 6'5". Riding on a regular sled would be too snug, so we needed to find a snowmobile with two seats known as a "two up." Within the day, Char found him a two-up snowmobile to ride on. It turned out that Brandon would be on patrol with Pat Conner from the Cass County Sheriff's Office. Pat patrols the trail system on the weekend and he invited Brandon to ride along with him. So we set a date and started working on the next obstacle - finding appropriate winter gear in his size.

Brandon's stature ruled out borrowing clothes from most everyone we knew. However, with the help of many other friends and acquaintances we were able to outfit Brandon and only had to purchase snow pants which we got on clearance and used donor dollars to purchase. Finally, we were "in business." According to Brandon, all that was left was counting down the days and losing sleep over his excitement and anticipation.

The day of the event we all met in Mapleton. As I pulled out all the borrowed pieces of clothing - right down to wool socks, I teased him that he shouldn't expect to make any fashion statements! He firmly told me he didn't care. To our surprise, five snowmobiles pulled up beside us. The Rural Cass Snowmobile Club members wanted Brandon to experience a real trail



Brandon & Pat Conner, his driver, from the Cass County Sheriff's Office and the two-person snowmobile used for his ride.

Brandon's snowmobile ride, story continued on Page 2

Brandon's snowmobile ride, continued

ride. Right before they left on their ride, they presented Brandon with a club sweatshirt that had his name embroidered on the hood, an honorary membership plaque and a baseball cap. Next they showed Brandon how they all carried their own hats down the front of their bibs so that when they took off their helmets they could cover up their "helmet hair." So he quickly stuffed his hat in his coat and off they went! Brandon and Pat lead the way down the trail with the snow dust flying behind them.

That afternoon was a special day for Brandon, one that he won't soon forget. The club gave Brandon their club memorabilia; but most importantly, they shared their love of snowmobiling with Brandon and gave him the opportunity to participate alongside them. Brandon was a member of their club - a club that loves to snowmobile!

I commend Brandon for advocating for his dreams and not giving up. Brandon is already planning for next year. I hope his new friends realize he'll be calling them! In the meantime, he is just happy looking at his pictures and wearing his favorite sweatshirt and hat.

*Story by Rhonda King,
Executive Director*

Enjoying the ride!



*Brandon received an Honorary Membership
from the Rural Cass Snowmobile Club.*



*Brandon was
interviewed
by a local
television
channel and
featured on
the weekend
news.*

Brandon is just a young man (with a few disabilities) with a passion to experience the free feeling of a sport. Thank you so much.

~ Brenda Kluth, Brandon's mom

FM Crusaders Live Auction a Success

After months of preparation, the FM Crusader's live auction was a huge success!! I am happy to report it surpassed all of our expectations. Over \$12,000 was raised for CCRI's Camp H.E.R.O. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this event. Many of you were donors, bidders, purchasers and volunteers at the auction. CCRI-related people purchased 30% of the items. Wow, what awesome support. In addition, many of you who were working brought the individuals you serve to the event. It was very moving to look out across the room and see all of the support from CCRI people.



The Ramada Ballroom is filled with bidders for the FM Crusader Motorcycle Club 35th Annual Bike Show's Live Auction.

In an effort to get to know the people we serve and learn more about them, the FM Crusaders hosted a billiards party in early March at the Fargo Billiards & Gastro Pub. We had a great turn out and everyone had a wonderful time.

Shena Holtgrewe enjoyed the night and made some new friends. She was happy to announce to everyone after playing a few games of pool, "I woopped 'em!!!"

We are hoping that there is a second annual FM Crusaders live auction benefitting CCRI in 2011. If you see or know any members of the FM Crusaders, please let them know how much we appreciate their generosity and hard work on our behalf.

Camp H.E.R.O. is just around the corner, June 8-10. Sixty campers have signed up who are counting down the days until then. We have extended an invitation to the FM Crusaders to come to camp and are hopeful some of them will be able to fit it into their schedules. It would be really fun for them to see the camp facilities and the camping experience they helped support.



FM Crusader Motorcycle Club members, Ron & Jon, ham it up with Shena.

ARRM Day at the Capitol



Fearing another rough year of budget cuts in 2010 to health and human services funding, 15 people from CCRI along

with people from many other providers across Minnesota participated in the Association for Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM) Day at the Capitol event.

Our goal was to visit with every legislator to ensure they understood the importance of services people receive and associate faces with services when making decisions about budget cuts. Legislators continue to be challenged with the difficult task of balancing the budget and figuring out what to cut.



A view from the third floor of the Minnesota Capitol Building rotunda during ARRM Day at the Capitol.

Minnesota Legislative Update

When Governor Pawlenty's budget first came out, he had recommended a 2.5% cut to all of our services. After a lot of grass roots advocacy, hours of negotiation amongst legislators and lobbyists, we prevailed with no direct cuts to our services. To put this into perspective from CCRI's standpoint, for every 1% our budget is cut it equates to \$120,000 less in funding on top of the \$400,000 cut we received in 2009. Thus, by avoiding a 2.5% cut we will not have to figure out how to cut an additional \$300,000 out of our budget. This is wonderful news.

Another victory is in the area of dental services. For most of the legislative session, dental services for people with disabilities had been eliminated. Again, because of an uproar from constituents, critical dental services were reinstated with some modifications. ARRM is still trying to weed through the bill to determine what those modifications are.

While we can breathe a sigh of relief for now, it may only be temporary. The 2011 legislative session will be another funding cycle and predictions are that there will be an additional \$7 billion dollar shortfall. My fear is that this is the legislative session that could have devastating results. All of the "easy" things have already been cut or reduced. The next round of cuts could cause significant changes to our service system. Thus, our legislators still need to hear from us. First, please take the time to thank them for their hard work and for not cutting our services at this time. Second, let them know how important services are and why people need them - not just now, but in the future years, as well. The morale of the story is that the power of the people really does prevail.

Legislative information can change quickly. For the latest information, please visit CCRI's website at www.creativecare.org and click on News and Events.

Dianne Sanden Wins Award

CCRI's Dianne Sanden was selected from over 200 nominees as one of this year's winners of an ARRM Cares Award. ARRM (Association for Residential Resources in Minnesota) is a state-wide organization that represents agencies and Professional Caregivers of people with disabilities. The award is given based on professional integrity, innovative, and proactive approaches to providing services and care for people with disabilities.

CCRI is very proud of Dianne and the exemplary work that she does. Dianne is dedicated and passionate about her work. She has worked for CCRI for twenty years and with Linda for thirteen years.



Dianne, left, and Linda pose for a snapshot..



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The mission of CCRI is to enhance and enrich the lives and learning of people with disabilities.

The vision of CCRI is to provide an environment where people of all abilities may experience life's possibilities.

CCRI LEADERSHIP TEAM

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CCRI Sr. Leadership

Rhonda King, Executive Director	21 Years
Lynette Weber, Options Director	18 Years
Shannon Bock, Director of Programs	15 Years
Sue Lopez, SLS Director	13 Years
Jody Hudson, Development Director	11 years
Mark McGuigan, Business Manager	9 years
Carmel Froemke, ARMHS Director	6 years
Andrea Ryan, HR Director	4 years

Save the Date

Walk & Roll-a-thon for Disability Awareness Fundraiser & Picnic Event

Saturday, September 18, 2010
 Gooseberry Park, Moorhead

