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**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

My sister Emilea is a business owner who experiences an intellectual disability. Before she started her business, Em’s Coffee Co., Emilea was told she was unemployable and she attended a segregated workshop. My sister acts as my compass to ensure that I am an advocate for her and for others with disabilities so that employment is the first and preferred option for all.

**EDUCATION**

* Drake University, M.A. (Rehabilitation Counseling), Expected Matriculation 2015
* Certified Employment Support Professional Certification, 2013
* Virginia Commonwealth University, CWIC Certification, 2009
* University of Iowa, B.A., 2006

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Candeo, Johnston, Iowa**

*Director of Employment*  October 2013 – present

I oversee a 100% community-based supported employment program that serves over 200 clients and has nearly one million dollars in annual revenue. Candeo promotes employer collaboration through chamber involvement and currently works with over seventy employers. I manage forty supported employment staff ranging from coordinators to job developers and job coaches. Our program braids and blends funding sources including Medicaid, Vocational Rehabilitation, and local county dollars to offer innovative strategies for competitive employment. We have implemented customized employment strategies and tools to enhance employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities. I have provided support and mentorship to community rehabilitation providers to further enhance supported employment services and operations in Iowa.

*Lead Employment Coordinator* June 2010 – October 2013

I directed the growth of a supported employment program from 40 clients to over 170 clients in 3.5 years; provided oversight and direction to 14 direct report staff; implemented programs to monitor services and billing; collaborated with local school district and employers to develop transition program for high school students with disabilities to gain work experience and skills. Our program obtained two grant initiatives to implement customized employment strategies and practices, and we implemented full-time benefit counseling support to clients who are SSI/SSDI beneficiaries and as a result increased averaged hours worked by clients to 16 hours per week.

*Employment Coordinator* September 2007 – June 2010

I provided oversight and direction to Candeo’s supported employment program; recruited and retained a team to provide excellent customer service and support to clients who sought competitive employment in Polk County.

*Job Developer* February 2007 –September 2007

I supported and provided assistance to individuals with disabilities who were looking for competitive employment; developed relationships with employers throughout Polk County; provided timely and accurate documentation adhering to Iowa law and Medicaid rules and regulations; managed a caseload of over 25 clients.

**STATE WIDE INITIATIVES**

**Iowa Olmstead Consumer Taskforce** May 2014 – present

*Taskforce Member and Employment Chair*

Advocate and influence public policy and programs in Iowa to uphold *Olmstead* principles to ensure people with disabilities are living and working in the most integrated settings in Iowa. Lead the Taskforce’s Employment Committee to influence and advocate for rate rebalance and definitions to promote integrated employment options for Iowans with disabilities.

**Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Project** 2012—present

*Leadership Committee Member*

Collaborate with providers across Iowa, funding partners and schools to enhance Iowa’s Employment 1st Initiative. Increase societal expectations for people with disabilities by developing and leading the Iowa Parent and Family Coalition, which is a grassroots initiative to support Employment 1st through advocacy at the state and local level.

**Iowa Coalition of Integrated Employment** 2012—present

*Committee Member*

Participate in quarterly coalition meetings to enhance Employment 1st Initiative in Iowa through advocacy, collaboration and studying capacity-building for providers to enhance supported employment programs through customized employment strategies.

**Iowa APSE** September 2010 – present

*President* *and Co-Trainer*

Organize annual statewide Employment 1st Summit; work collaboratively to increase membership of Iowa APSE; develop Iowa APSE website; increase and enhance communication with members through social media, training and networking opportunities; participate in statewide advocacy efforts holding Iowa APSE Day at the Iowa State Capitol. Support Iowa APSE Past President in providing ACRE certified employment specialist training.