

# The LOOP

Read about the latest news with all the Aurora families!



February is **American Heart Month**.

We celebrate **YOU**, the heart of Aurora and hope you will take steps to care for your heart. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. You need your heart, and we need it, too—to demonstrate compassion to those we serve!

**Thank you for sharing your heart with us!**

## Owners Corner

featuring Paula Mickelson

This month we feature Paula Mickelson, Administrative Specialist for Aurora Community Counseling.

After hearing about a full-time job opening from her sister-in-law, Kristen Shaw, in November of 2004, Paula Mickelson joined the Aurora team as the Administrative Specialist for ACC. She started out working exclusively at the corporate office in Menomonie, and then moved across the road to the Red Cedar building until 2012. Since that time, Paula has taken on managing the Spooner, Chippewa, and Siren ACC offices.

Paula explained that she gives 100% in everything she does. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Paula stated that her job has been extra challenging, but with the support of her supervisor, Linda Aton, and the staff that take her straightforward nature with a grain of salt, she enjoys her work. Paula said it's also nice to see that the people who come into the ACC office in need of services, walk out content and better off than when they came in.

When Paula is not working, her 4-year-old grandson occupies all of her free time. They like to plant flowers and garden in the summer on their dairy farm.

Paula is the glue that holds ACC administrative services together and has been a valued member of the Aurora team for 17 years. **Thank you for your contributions, Paula!**

## Longevity Bonus

Direct support employees (those who work in our residential homes, day centers, supported employment) who are paid an hourly wage are eligible for Aurora's longevity bonus. 11051 This bonus is paid to the employee annually within 1 month of the employee's anniversary date IF the employee is In Good Standing.

In good standing relates to the employee's corrective action history. Any employee who is not in good standing at the time of longevity eligibility will have their bonus suspended. If the employee completes the following 90 days without any further corrective

action, the bonus WILL be paid. If there is further corrective action, the bonus will be forfeited for the year.

When you are notified that you have been issued corrective action—through a snap message, phone call, or text message—please contact the HR Department in the corporate office in Menomonie if you feel the action is in error so we can correct it. We want you to receive all benefits for which you are eligible! For more information, please refer to ARA Policy 1.B.09 and let us know if you have questions.

## Coming Soon

Aurora employees will soon have access to their pay BEFORE payday!

We are currently working toward the integration of the Rain app. Using this app will allow employees who are paid hourly to have access to their pay up to two times between pay days!

Stay tuned for more information!

## 2022 EAP Benefits

Here is an updated list of YOUR 2022 EAP benefits through REALiving.

**Resources you receive at NO COST annually:**

- 4 sessions of counseling to be used by you OR your immediate family members
- 4 sessions of professional coaching to be used by the employee only
- One 30-minute financial consultation session, per issue, to assist with budgeting issues, employee only
- One 30-minute legal consultation session, per issue, to assist with legal issues, employee only

Call the 24/7 Call Center for authorizations at 877.256.9302.

For additional information and resources, visit REALiving.com and log on with:

Username: Aurora@REALiving.com

Password: Auroraemployee

## Recertification

Gina Krueger earned her recertification as an Employee Assistance Professional through the Employee Assistance Certification Commission. This came after weeks of sessions that lasted multiple hours and passing FIVE exams! There is no doubt her completion of this recertification and the knowledge learned will benefit REALiving and all EAP clients now and in the future. **Way to BE YOUR BEST, Gina!**



## Featured Team

This month, we send a shout out to our Maintenance team!

**Orlando Simon, Jim Showalter, Mark Daniels, and Brian Bender** cover our Wisconsin maintenance needs under the direction of Nikki Coss while **Rich Jaramillo** manages Colorado maintenance, supervised by Mandi Mouw.

This small team of amazing people handle vehicle issues and transfers, remodeling, repair, painting,

flooring, walls—putting them up and taking them down—adapting homes with ramps, bathrooms, doorways, managing full construction projects, and whatever else needs to be done to keep Aurora's staff and consumers safe! 4132 They cover large geographic areas, respond to urgent requests, and balance it all with respect and kindness!

Thanks, Maintenance team! We appreciate you!

## Safety Winners

Congratulations to **Betty Cangi** from 093 in Wisconsin Rapids and **Albert Phelps** from 044 in Eau Claire! These team members have demonstrated their commitment to safety and have won a bonus for having done so!

## Welcome Aboard!

Please give our new hires a warm welcome.

**Lori Lynn Burns**  
Aurora Vocational Services  
Vocational Coordinator, Eau Claire

**Why I applied for the job:** After hearing from Jen Faught about how she is enjoying her job, I knew I wanted to apply. Aurora sounds like a place where I want to work, where people—no matter who they are—clients are well taken care of, loved and respected. Aurora sounds like a rewarding place I want to work at.

**What I will bring to the job:** Hopefully a sense of humor, teamwork, work ethic, kindness, to meet people where they are at in life, and to come along side of them. A heart of empathy and an ear to listen.

**My background:** I worked for 15 years in education with the ECASD. Then into the Chippewa Falls District, working as a health assistant at Halmstad Elementary School. I played the "school nurse." In 2018, I started working with the Master Driving School as a driver's ed teacher, working with G. E. kids and DVR clients.

**Family:** Married to my husband Dan of 27 years. We have 1 daughter, who is married for 4-1/2 years. Both are nurses in La Crosse. We are grandparents to our first grandson, who is 3 months old.

**Hobbies/interests:** Biking, walking, hiking, snowshoeing, canoeing/kayaking, baking, and anything to do with crafting and working with my hands.

**Natalee Ochoa**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, Plover

**Why I applied for the job:** I really love making a difference in people's lives.

**What I will bring to the job:** Good teamwork, I am fast on my feet, and I'm always willing to learn new things.

**My background:** Worked with a lot of elderly and teens with behavioral and disability.

**Family:** My mom is a CNA, and my sister-in-law is a RN.

**Hobbies/interests:** Painting, anything crafty, reading, going for walks.

**Abby Lazarcik**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, La Crosse

**Why I applied for the job:** I have a big heart, and I love taking care of individuals.

**What I will bring to the job:** Teamwork, leadership, enthusiasm.

**My background:** Group home working with disabled children/adults; nursing home, memory care unit, assisted living, dermatology (GHS); going to school for EMT certification/nursing degree; have medical assistant associates in science.

**Family:** I have a daughter named Soraya. She is almost 2.

**Hobbies/interests:** Basketball, spending time with my daughter, traveling, being outdoors when the weather is nice, also being around family.

**Madeline (Maddy) Kulwicki**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, La Crosse

**Why I applied for the job:** I applied at Aurora because I care for people and I think it will help build necessary skills for my future.

**What I will bring to the job:** I will bring a positive attitude and possibly new ideas to the team.

**My background:** I worked as a head lifeguard, associate at Old Navy, and as a resort team member at a dog clinic.

**Family:** My family (mom, dad, sister, brother) live 3.5 hours away. My fiancée (Hunter) and I are getting married August 2022.

**Hobbies/interests:** Volunteering, reading, Sigma Sigma Sigma.

**Jeongwon Kim**  
Aurora Vocational Services  
Employment Specialist, Menomonie

**Why I applied for the job:** I'd like to serve individuals with disabilities so they can find a job and meaning in their life.

**What I will bring to the job:** Positive energy and commitment.

**My background:** I had worked for Korean Worker's Compensation and I'm expected to graduate in May 2022. MS Rehabilitation at Stout.

**Family:** I live with my husband in Menomonie.

**Hobbies/interests:** I enjoy language learning and cultural experience!

**Anna Bjerkebek**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, Eau Claire

**Why I applied for the job:** I enjoy helping people, looking for a fulfilling job.

**What I will bring to the job:** I care for the consumers greatly and love to be a part of their lives.

**My background:** Previous employment with Aurora.

**Family:** I have my parents and 2 older sisters in Minnesota, 2 cats with me in Eau Claire.

**Hobbies/interests:** I enjoy crafts like crochet or painting.

**Joy McMullen**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, Plover

**Why I applied for the job:** I applied for the job because I love taking care of others, and I used to work with the company before. I left because I was a second job at the time.

**What I will bring to the job:** My OCD-ness. My quirkiness.

**My background:** I've done quite a few different jobs for my background.

**Hobbies/interests:** Gym, kayaking, biking, walking, cat loving, hiking, clean others' homes, help others with anything, game night with kids, etc.

**Crystal Robinson**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Program Assistant, Wausau Day Center

**Why I applied for the job:** I really enjoy working in a day program.

**What I will bring to the job:** My caring and loving side, enjoy taking care of others.

**Family:** 3 boys, full-time mommy. They are my world.

**Hobbies/interests:** Enjoy spending time with my kids and working.

**Anabelle Xiong**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Program Assistant, Wausau Day Center

**Why I applied for the job:** To get more experience working with people.

**What I will bring to the job:** Positivity and energy.

**My background:** Bachelor's in psychology (graduated December 2021), intern with MLC.

**Family:** From GM, stepmom, stepdad, sister, stepbrother, dad, stepmom, stepbrother, boyfriend.

**Hobbies/interests:** Singing, dancing, roller skating, thrifting.

**Elizabeth Hersant**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, Mosinee, Stevens Point

**Why I applied for the job:** I love caregiving and have done it for years. I used to work for Aurora in the past and loved it!

**What I will bring to the job:** A caring, positive attitude.

**My background:** Caregiver.

**Family:** Boyfriend Zsolt, my mom, brother, sisters-in-law, niece and nephew.

**Hobbies/interests:** Sewing, watching HGTV and documentaries, walks.

**Demetrius Norwood**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, Spooner

**Why I applied for the job:** I love helping people and bettering my community.

**What I will bring to the job:** Laughter, kindness, and humility.

**My background:** Military, retail.

**Hobbies/interests:** Art, sports.

**Liberty Anderson**  
Aurora Residential Alternatives  
Community Living Assistant, Stevens Point

**Why I applied for the job:** I have always loved helping others, if it's mental health or elders.

**What I will bring to the job:** Someone who is always smiling and ready to help others.

**My background:** I worked at a nursing home, mental hospital, and assisted living.

**Family:** My mom and dad live in the UP along with my little brother.

**Hobbies/interests:** Love eating food, playing with my cat, and helping my boyfriend with his job.

## We Have the BEST Staff

During the month of February, we celebrate anniversaries for these Aurora managers:

**Colette Spielman** (17 years), **Teresa Lien** (10 years), **Mindy LeMere** (5 years), **Stephanie Polenz** (9 years), **Julia Klimeck** (8 years), and **Brett Mesner** (8 years).

**That's nearly 60 YEARS of experience from just 6 employees!**  
**Thank you for sharing your time and talents with Aurora!**

Information for *The Loop* may be sent to [asolberg@auroraservices.com](mailto:asolberg@auroraservices.com) at any time. Publication is usually on the Friday of the 2nd full week of the month.