

The LOOP

Read about the latest news with all the Aurora families!



Aurora extends our deepest appreciation to all our employees, consumers, and families who have served our country in the military. Thank you, Veterans!

Owners Corner

featuring Kristen Dusek

Kristen Dusek works at the Day Center in Menomonie. She's been with Aurora since January 2011 and has also worked in residential services.

Kristen is a genuine Smile-Maker! She says the best thing about her job, hands down, is the consumers. She enjoys making people smile, even though it may not always be easy. Offering consistency and routine is important, according to Kristen, but she also enjoys that her days are different from one day to the next.

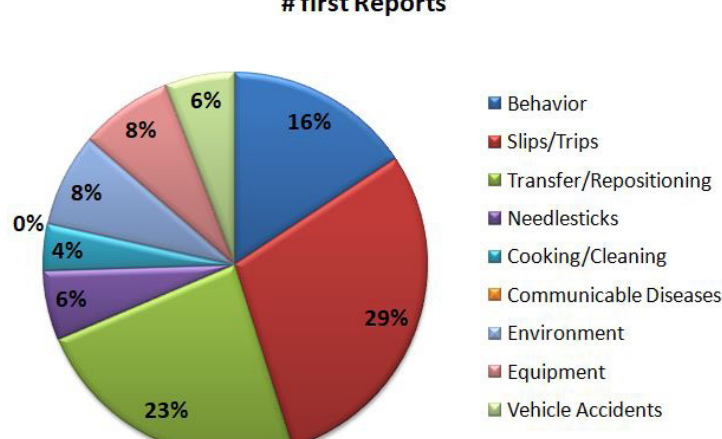
Kristen believes she is here to serve others and has done so with a positive attitude and a smile. She is all about seeing how she can make the day better for others, including her coworkers. Kristen says it's important to recognize issues promptly and get them corrected. That's a commitment she makes to others—it may not always be perfect, but we'll always fix it or make it better.

Safety Snapshot

Working safely is a huge priority for Aurora! When you work safely, you keep yourself, colleagues, and consumers safe and healthy. You are able to continue to provide for yourself and your family, partner with your colleagues to continue excellent services to our consumers, and help consumers remain confident in our commitment to their safety.

We track all incidents that lead to First Reports of Injury. The graph below shows you our leading causes of injury so far this year. Safety messages are geared toward these trends and expected safety concerns.

Workplace injuries have a cost to everyone. The cost to Aurora is in our Workers' Compensation Insurance premium, potential additional staffing costs, and overtime. The cost to the injured employee is treatment and recovery time, disconnection from work, loss of ability to perform other tasks outside of work (lifting your kids, groceries, etc.), and at times, loneliness or depression. The cost to the consumer may be the loss of direct services when we are even shorter staffed than typical.



Please work safely for yourself and others!

Aurora Budget Trivia

\$438,799 is a lot of money! It's Aurora's premium for Workers' Compensation Insurance for 2021.

Could we spend less money on that so we can use it in other ways? Absolutely!

How can that happen? Our premium is calculated based on our experience—just like your auto insurance rates are based on your driving record. Our Experience Modifier for 2021 was 1.49. That means we paid 49% more than other similar organizations. Had our Modifier been 1.0 (average) for this year,

our premium would have been \$295,000, a savings of \$143,000. Our modifier for 2022 is projected to be 1.42, resulting in premium of \$389,686—a little better than this year.

We all need to work together to manage this expense. Being safe in the workplace, reporting injuries promptly, and following treatment and recovery recommendations can greatly impact our claim experience and, more importantly, keep our employees and consumers safe!

Thank you for your efforts to provide superior services to our consumers! **Be safe!**

Colorado Services

In Colorado, we serve individuals specifically who have sustained a form of brain injury. Many consumers have co-occurring mental health diagnoses as well. We have 5 licensed homes that serve 5 individuals per home, and one single placement home. Our staff assist our consumers with anything from managing their day-to-day functions, such as hygiene and self-care, to assisting them with applying for and preparing for gainful employment, and everything in between.

We have a fairly consistent turnover in consumers as our main goal is to help them to attain the life they want to have, which often means going out to an independent or semi-independent living situation. We have successfully supported several people with this goal who are happily functioning in the community, are employed, and are able to support themselves.

Our consumers typically have regular house chores that they complete, and many of them cook meals throughout the week with the staff. We do one-on-one and group Functional Rehab Activities that are created specifically for individuals with brain injuries to

address cognitive function, including memory, speed, comprehension, and processing. We teach skills that have been impacted, such as social skills, stress management, money management and budgeting, interpersonal relationship development, job skill development, and health and wellness, including meditation and exercise, hygiene, etc.

We work with our consumers as a group within each home to address any conflicts between them directly and openly, and encourage communication and altering perspectives to resolve conflicts quickly.

We do large groups throughout the week that include Grief Processing, Yoga, Tai Chi (led by one of our consumers), Art (led by a consumer), Bible Study, and we have different employees who create and lead workshops on many different topics, including Self-Advocacy, Self-Esteem, Positivity, Self-Accountability, etc. Our staff work hard to individualize each person's program so that we are assisting them with reaching their specific goals in the most efficient way possible.



Aurora Community Services values you as an employee and offers EAP resources to you and your immediate family members at **NO COST!** These EAP supports are designed to equip you with the tools you need to manage any issue that may arise in your life!

Resources You Receive at NO COST annually:

- **4 sessions of counseling and/or coaching.** Counseling can be used by you OR your immediate family members. Coaching is for the development of the employee only.
- One **30-minute financial consultation session**, per issue, to assist the employee only, with financial issues.
- One **30-minute legal consultation session**, per issue, to assist the employee only, with legal issues.
- **Website** to find information about a number of topics, legal and financial resources, and much more. Visit www.REALiving.com and click on "EAP Login."
Username: Aurora@REALiving.com
Password: Auroraemployee
- **24/7 Call Center** to meet your needs any day, any time. The highly trained professional Call Center Specialists will welcome your call and help you define which service is BEST for you, or they can help get you the resources you need for your situation.

Mental Health and overall well-being are your number one priority. Aurora has given you the opportunity to manage it **confidentially** and effectively. Give REALiving a call at **877.256.9302**.

Welcome Aboard!

Please give our new hires a warm welcome.

Braedon Masterson

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, New Richmond

Why I applied for the job: I wanted to challenge myself in a work environment, to be able to apply myself to something new and exciting.

What I will bring to the job: Determination, enthusiasm, and an exceptional work ethic.

My background: I have a background in restaurant work, fast food, maintenance, and housekeeping.

Family: I have a mother, father, lots of siblings and cousins.

Hobbies/interests: I play guitar. I write and make music. Avid journaler. I draw and paint.

DeAndre Moffett

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, Menomonie

Why I applied for the job: I am a people person. I like helping people.

What I will bring to the job: Hard work, loyalty.

Family: I am married and have two kids.

Hobbies/interests: Basketball.

Nicole Polhamus

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, Menomonie

Why I applied for the job: I love working with people and taking care of others.

What I will bring to the job: Happiness, smiles, and lots of love.

Family: I'm married and have 4 grown kids: 3 boys and 1 girl, ages 23, 20, 18, 17.

Hobbies/interests: Swimming, reading, enjoying time with family.

Kiersten Gardner

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, La Crosse

Why I applied for the job: Aurora Community Services has a better environment in order for me to help get to know the residents better one on one and meet needs above from expectations.

What I will bring to the job: Being that person for residents to be able to communicate with, without the feeling of self-doubt.

Tanya Lynn Kendrick

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, Eau Claire

Why I applied for the job: I applied for this job because I have a genuine passion for people who need assistance in helping themselves and especially those who can not do for themselves.

My background: Group homes/behavior, senior living and patients with dementia, housekeeping and customer service.

Hobbies/interests: Going to church, singing at nursing homes, spending time with my family, especially my grandkids.

Cassandra Goldsmith

Aurora Vocational Services
Program Assistant, Eau Claire Day Center

Why I applied for the job: I have previous health care and customer service experience, combining them and exploring a new venue.

What I will bring to the job: Experience and a positive attitude.

My background: CNA, office work, pharmacy, release of information.

Family: My daughter Elayna and son Jonah, parents, 3 sisters, 3 nieces, 1 nephew.

Hobbies/interests: Outdoor activities, family time, music, crocheting, etc.

Annalyssa Land

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, River Falls

Why I applied for the job: I have had a passion for working in this field for 13 years, and it all came from watching my stepdad do the same thing when I was growing up.

What I will bring to the job: Amazing attitude, organization, friendliness.

My background: I've worked in mental health for 13 years. I love to help others.

Family: Myself and 2 daughters, Malayiah (8) and Novah (6).

Hobbies/interests: I am very artsy and also have a huge passion for cars.

Anna Egan

Aurora Residential Alternatives
Community Living Assistant, Menomonie

Why I applied for the job: I have worked with Aurora before, and I really enjoyed it.

What I will bring to the job: I will bring a positive mindset to the job.

My background: I have been working in this field for about 6 years now.

Family: I have 2 kids; all my family lives around the area.

Hobbies/interests: I enjoy outdoors, anything in the water.

Deb Nichols

Aurora Vocational Services
Vocational Coordinator, Eau Claire

Why I applied for the job: Aurora Community Services' mission has always been close to my heart. That is why I came back to Aurora. I have a strong passion to serve others and support them to be the best version of themselves. This happens by having goals to work toward.

What I will bring to the job: Having a degree in Vocational Rehabilitation, I feel that I will be able to assist individuals in meeting their vocational outcomes. Being my third time back to Aurora, I do not plan on ever leaving. I feel like I am back with my work family and am very grateful!

My background: I love to kayak, travel, watch the sunrise, attend music festivals, and volunteer. I serve on the Board for the Arc of Dunn County.

Family: I have a wonderful family. My son, Tyler, is 21 and plays football at UW-Stout. My daughter, JoJo, is 10 and loves school and dancing.

Hobbies/interests: Music, playing polka, traveling.

We Have the BEST Staff

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

Paula Mickelson (17 years), Maronda Klassa (4 years), Ann Weinzatl (3 years), Tara Reitan (1 year), Melanie Lee (1 year), Ethan Liss (1 year), Pam Kegley (4 years), Weandi Mouw (12 years), Heidi Lang (17 years), Beth Alexander (26 years), and Rebecca Radke (9 years).

Combined, that's a whopping 95 YEARS of experience within our ranks!

Thank you for sharing your time and talents with Aurora!

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