



A Note from Our Executive Director

We all get so busy that it is easy to forget why what we do matters. With a recent staff transition and significant increase of loan applications, it has been easy to get overwhelmed with the transactions of the workload. But then you have an interaction with a borrower and it brings you right back to our mission.

I called a borrower and before I could ask about his late loan payment, he let me know that we were next on his list to call to inform us that hospice had been called in – he didn't know if he had one day or several years left, but he was at the point where he needed their care. He has a very rare, progressive syndrome that affects the nervous system.

When his loan was first approved, we had a conversation in which I invited him to be a guest on the community radio program that Able Up Iowa produces and hosts. At that time, he was not ready to share his story. But because he knows that he will lose his voice, he has recorded his final album (*he writes, produces and performs his own music*) and agreed to share his story with our listeners.

This past Saturday, I pre-recorded an interview at the KHOI studio for a future I Am Able IOWA radio program. What he wants to share with the world about acceptance, love, and kindness is incredibly powerful. As I listened to him talk about how a stranger who complimented his hat made his entire day a happy one, it made me think about how just one kind interaction can make all the difference in a person's life.

In the interview, he expresses appreciation for both Easterseals and Able Up Iowa for bringing hope and joy to his life by making it possible for him to get a ramp so he could get out and about – to be independent – to make it possible for a stranger to compliment his very cool hat. It is a privilege and honor to be part of an organization that helps individuals like Braden.

Able Up Iowa exists to help with the financial transactions that make it possible for our members to achieve and maintain independence; however, it is our interactions with those who need our programs that are valued most.

Thank you to our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and donors who make it possible for us to serve Iowans.

Anna Magnuson
Executive Director



New Website Unveiled!

We have been working very hard over the past year to build our new look, logo and identity as Able Up Iowa and are ready to unveil our new website! Find information about ALL our programs [HERE](#)

Financial Empowerment Opportunities

The Financial Empowerment Program at Able Up Iowa empowers our members to gain the knowledge, habits, and behavior needed for long-term success.

The personalized empowerment program is focused on the specific needs of individuals living in poverty. Many individuals living in poverty also have disabilities.. Individuals with disabilities often qualify for additional financial assistance (federal benefits) which can be very difficult to navigate. Due to this, Able Up Iowa offers Benefits Planning to any Iowan on SSI or SSDI, or any Iowan who could qualify for SSI or SSDI.

lowans living in poverty can often benefit from the resources offered in their community such as food pantries, temporary housing, or clothing drives. However, finding and accessing these resources can be a challenge. This is why Able Up Iowa offers FREE resource counseling. In this sector of our personalized empowerment program, lowans work one-on-one with resource counselors to find and access all the community resources they are eligible for.

To experience long term financial success, it is important that our members not only have financial knowledge, but also exercise positive financial behaviors. Our financial mentoring sector of the personalized empowerment program focuses on helping lowans establish or improve financial habits. Financial mentors work one-on-one with our members to create and follow financial goals that encourage positive financial behaviors.

Financial Solution Opportunities

The Financial Solutions Program provides our members with solutions to their immediate financial needs.

The personalized loans are focused on the specific needs of individuals living in poverty. Many individuals with disabilities living in poverty are faced with very expensive accommodations. Many of our personalized loan options have been structured to help lowans with disabilities.

Assistive Technology is defined as any product used to improve the functionality of a person with any form of disability. Examples of assistive technology could be hearing aids, wheelchairs, computer systems or mobility scooters. Assistive technology loans are commonly requested at Able Up Iowa because they can range widely and apply to many different types of disabilities.

A **Home Modification** is defined as an alteration made to a home to meet the needs of a person with physical limitations so he or she can live independently and safely. Examples of home modifications include installing a stair lift, widening a doorway to accommodate for a wheelchair, or installing a ramp.

A **Vehicle Modification** is defined as an alteration made to a vehicle to meet the needs of a person with physical limitations so he or she can drive or be transported independently and safely.

There are two types of **Support Animals**, service and emotional support. A service animal is a dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks. An emotional support animal is a companion animal that is intended to provide some benefit for a person with a mental health condition or emotional disorder. Support animals are Able Up Iowa's newest loan type.

Meet Our Staff



Parker Meyer
Loan Officer



Lynette Plander
Financial Empowerment Director

Parker grew up around Algona, Iowa and is currently studying Financial Counseling and Planning at Iowa State University. In high school, Parker played football, track, and golf and participated in band, model UN, and quiz bowl. Some of Parker's favorite hobbies include video games, sports, listening to music, playing guitar, reading, playing with his two cats, and spending time with family and friends.

"I am passionate about Able Up Iowa because it provides help to people who greatly need it and may not be able to get it anywhere else." - Parker Meyer

Lynette enjoys working with people and helping them achieve their goals. Prior to joining Able Up Iowa, most of her career was spent helping individuals with disabilities develop and achieve their career goals. Now, she assists people in achieving a broader range of goals. She has also rediscovered how much I enjoy working with those who are aging, having worked as a nurse's aide in high school.

"Able Up Iowa is a wonderful place to work, because our mission fits my values. Everyone deserves to have their basic needs met and to have a path to move beyond the basics. I love hearing how our members gain freedom, confidence, and independence through their efforts. It's also important to me that my children and grandchildren see me working in a role that helps our community." - Lynette Plander

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