

# INREACH

Empowering people with disabilities to live life their way

· Summer 2020 ·



## A Message From Our President *Lori Gougeon*



Lori Gougeon

This has been a challenging time for us all, and the most challenging in my 30+ years as President/CEO of InReach. Our staff has truly risen to the occasion and done an outstanding job of ensuring that the health and safety of the more than 1,100 individuals we serve is our highest priority.

Our COO Debbie Shiflett has worked tirelessly to create new guidelines and protocols that are ever changing to provide the tools and support needed to keep individuals healthy to the best of our ability. Operating 15 group homes in the community 24/7 has presented the biggest challenge for staff and residents. Having to stay home for months at a time is difficult, but our group home staff and Activities Coordinator Nikki Twyman have done an outstanding job providing creative in-home activities for participants – including arts projects, yoga, bingo, after lunch reading bunch, and karaoke to name a few!

Our administrative offices were closed through June 1 and now are partially opened. Many administrative staff are working remotely most days, and this new way of doing business is surprisingly efficient. Our IT department has done a great job setting us up with the equipment and software needed to be effective working from home, and our training department has gone online to make training easier and safer for our staff. TEAMS is our new go-to for meetings and a great way to stay connected.

Most all of our services are continuing at InReach in the midst of COVID-19. Our front-line staff are true HEROES and play such an important role in ensuring that services and supports are being delivered to those who count on us every day. Thanks to generous donations from individuals, foundations and other organizations, we also have set up special assistance funds for individuals who have lost their jobs or have had their hours reduced due to this pandemic.

I can't thank our InReach team enough – board members, staff, family members, clients, volunteers, donors, community partners, foundations – for all of your support, wisdom, and guidance as we navigate these trying times now, and in the months ahead.

Please take care, stay well and do your best to stay safe.

# WELCOME



*Chris Campolmi*  
Infosys



*Bruce Downing*  
YTM Construction



*Justin Elliott*  
Precision Plumbing



*Caitlin Horne*  
Moore & Van Allen



*Douglas Knowlton*  
Retired CFO



*Rob Ponton*  
Duke Energy

## New Group Homes in Union County



*Camden Road home.*



*Stewart Street home.*

InReach is pleased to announce the addition of two group homes in Wingate, N.C., effective July 1, due to the acquisition of Union County Residential Services (UCRS). We are thrilled to be providing group home services to 12 residents in two beautiful homes – one on Camden Road and one on Stewart Street.

The UCRS Board opened its first group home in the 1970s and continued as a small nonprofit until Executive Director Julie Stanaland announced her retirement this year after 40+ years. The UCRS Board of Directors decided to turn over operations to InReach to coincide with her retirement.

InReach staff have been working tirelessly on the transition for the past six months, and we are looking forward to getting to know each resident and staff member as we continue growing our support services in Union County.

## *We Are Grateful*

InReach has been fortunate to have received support from several organizations at a time when we needed it most. The following five organizations have made a tremendous difference for our agency during this challenging time.

- |                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| • The Merancas Foundation    | \$55,000 |
| • The Leon Levine Foundation | \$40,000 |
| • COVID-19 Assistance Fund   | \$15,000 |
| • Elevation Church           | \$10,000 |
| • The Piedmont Club          | \$1,500  |

Enormous thanks to these generous friends!!

## Thank You



*Big thanks from Kelly and Jacob!*



*InReach program participants Jack, Missy and Tammy, sporting their CamCam masks.*

CamCam, a small company specializing in professional kitchen aprons and restaurant textile accessories made and designed in New York City, did a quick pivot in April to join the effort to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for those at lower risk of COVID-19, helping to free up medical-grade masks for medical professionals and others at higher risk of infection.

The huge heart of Margaret Cam, founder of CamCam who grew up in Charlotte, prompted her to commit a portion of the masks her company produced to nonprofit organizations like ours that serve at-risk individuals. Through a fortunate twist of fate, a friend of Margaret's happened to be on a call with the "Siblings Leadership Network" group when InReach HR Director Beth James, who was also on the call, mentioned the need for masks within our agency. A week later we had a box of 150 expertly constructed face masks delivered to our office! Margaret and the CamCam team have generously committed to provide InReach with 150 masks every other week – a true godsend during a time when masks are not only hard to find but also expensive.

The CamCam donations program is funded by direct contributions and a portion of sales through the CamCam website – [www.camcam.nyc](http://www.camcam.nyc). Please consider purchasing a CamCam mask. By doing so you'll be providing masks not only for InReach, but also The Arc of Upstate New York, WinNYC (Women in Need), S:US (Services for the UnderServed), and many other deserving nonprofit organizations.



Three cheers for CamCam!!

## InReach Salutes Our Frontline Heroes



*Frontline staff Tomekia Faulkner and Betty Duncan are two of our heroes.*

At a time when all of our lives have been changed because of the pandemic, the world of those with special needs has been profoundly disrupted with anxiety and loneliness being experienced by so many. Our frontline staff, also known as Direct Support Professionals (DSP), are our HEROES. They not only have been there to attend to the needs of our program participants, but also have simply been their friends and kept them from feeling isolated.

InReach applauds and gives thanks to our dedicated DSPs. If you see someone around town proudly wearing our HERO T-shirt, please give them a virtual pat on the back and tell them "thank you." These individuals have put their own personal safety on the line to be there for our InReach friends, day in and day out. We are so grateful for each and every one of them!

COVID Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) doesn't put a damper on the fashion sense of InReach program participants and staff. We're doing our part to keep ourselves and those around us safe, and doing it all with flair!



### Staff Spotlight Shines on Nikki Twyman



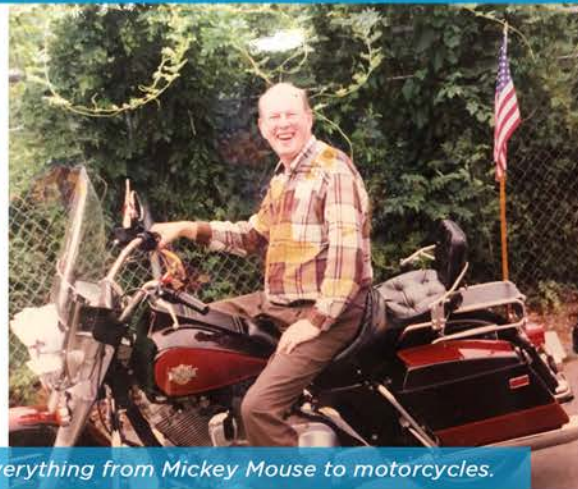
*Activities Coordinator Nikki Twyman keeps program participants engaged.*

As the Activities Coordinator for InReach's Day Supports and Activities Center, Nikki Twyman has forged new territory in creating fun, engaging experiences for 200+ program participants per month who, prior to the pandemic, looked forward to their time at the Center with friends new and old.

But never fear! There's not a pandemic out there that can stop Nikki from making sure our folks are able to visit with friends, explore their artistic talent, and play a few rounds of Bingo – virtually! Nikki's supervisor, Jennifer Carter-Barber, compliments Nikki's efforts in saying, "Nikki's passion for the health, safety and overall well-being of our program participants shines through in everything she does. She really strives to support everyone's wish to live their best lives. Nikki puts enthusiasm into every class, event and activity she organizes."

Nikki has three children – Isiah, 9, Julianni, 8, and Gabriella, 3. A Charlotte native, Nikki graduated from West Charlotte High School in 1996. A double amputee who serves as a motivational speaker in addition to her job with InReach, Nikki helps participants and staff alike see their full potential. In Nikki's own words, "I just want to make a difference. I smile because I am full of gratitude and thankfulness. I recognize that our program participants are beautiful gifts to be unwrapped. I love my life! I have been blessed!"

One thing is for sure. You could never walk away from a conversation with Nikki without a huge smile on your face. She is pure JOY!



*Dickie always had a smile and loved everything from Mickey Mouse to motorcycles.*

Dickie. Around InReach, the name alone evokes a smile.

Our gentle giant passed away from a sudden heart attack in January at the age of 74. He was dearly loved by all who were fortunate enough to meet him, and is remembered as the towering figure who would always greet each person he encountered with, "You my friend?"

This sweet soul grew up in Dilworth and was a regular at Dilworth Baptist Church, often walking there by himself from the family's McDonald Avenue home. He devotedly volunteered every Monday at the Dilworth Soup Kitchen, and loved to hold the hand of Pastor Jolin McElroy when she offered the blessing before lunch was served.

A lover of Mickey Mouse, model cars, motorcycles, and NASCAR, Dickie led a full, happy life. He was an original member of InReach's Melody Makers singing group and bell ringers that regularly perform for 600 people at our annual Dream Maker luncheon. Although he never learned to read (though he always wanted to learn), his comprehension of the world around him was deep and wide.

Dickie was with InReach for more than 25 years, most recently as a resident of our Nevins group home where Christie Sproles serves as the manager. In Christie's words, "Dickie was sweet, loving and kind, and he loved Diet Coke. How he lived to get his soda each day! I will miss the smart plaid shirts his sister Jean kept him dressed in, and I will miss that smile. Oh, what a beautiful smile!"

We all felt we were drenched by a beam of sunshine whenever we'd see Dickie in our office or out in the community. And if we could talk to him again, we would let him know we were blessed to know him. His bright light will shine on in our fond memories forever.

*"Butterflies don't know the color of their wings, but human eyes know how beautiful they are. Likewise, you don't know how good you are, but others can see that you are special."*



We also offer many thanks to Natalie and John Corrigan, Bertha Martin, Elayne McCormack, Anne and Jim McQuiston, Robert Northrop, and Jim and Sandra Woolsey, who memorialized Dickie with a gift to InReach in his name.



Sharon Towers is a shining example of an organization whose mission statement can be seen and felt in everything they do. Theirs states: “We enrich the lives of those we serve by providing a nurturing environment that fosters joy, purpose, and well-being.”

This not only applies to the residents who are served by of one of Charlotte’s leading continuing care senior living facilities, but also is demonstrated by the environment the staff created for Angie, Andrew, Lisa and Virginia – four InReach program participants who were employed as Certified Feeding Assistants for the past four years in the facility’s memory care unit.



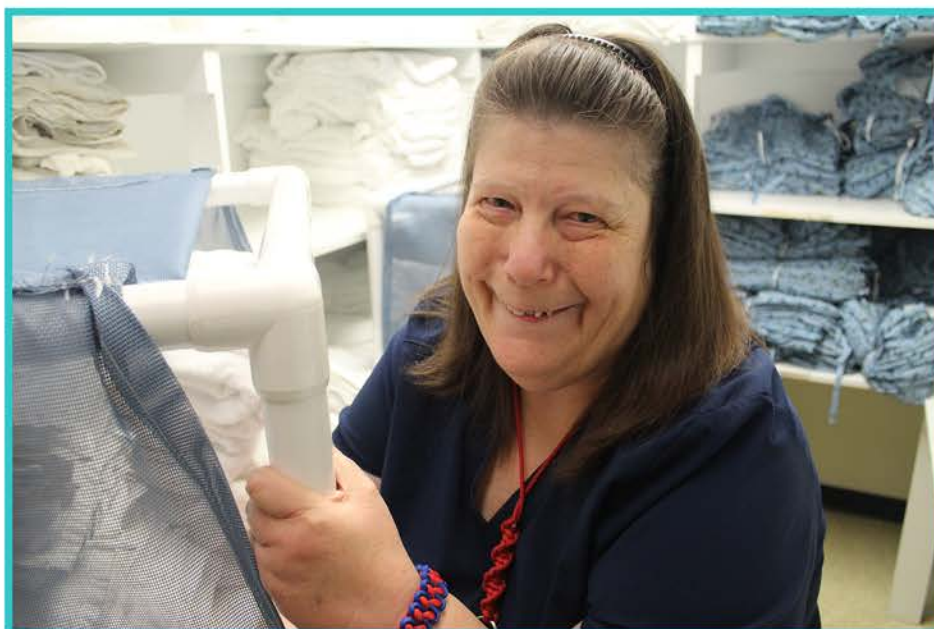
Begun through a volunteer relationship between an InReach staff member and a resident of Sharon Towers, the Feeding Assistant Program was created to provide extra care and attention for those with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia, support the CNAs working with those residents, and give InReach participants with developmental disabilities the training and skills necessary to earn the status of Certified Feeding Assistants.

From their first day on the job, the nurturing environment of Sharon Towers provided meaning and purpose to all four InReach employees – especially Angie, a longtime InReach program participant who displays palpable JOY as she goes about her daily tasks at the facility, greeting every person with a smile and calling them by name.

In the words of Sharon Towers’ Chief Operating Officer Angela Rigsbee, “Angie has shown tremendous empathy in her work with residents. Her understanding of the personality changes and confusion that come with this disease and the aging process is extraordinary.”

Sharon Towers has given Angie a sense of purpose during a difficult time. Although she has been battling cancer with weekly chemo treatments since last fall, her positive outlook and dedication to the residents persist. She has found that working helps her maintain a “can do” attitude, and the camaraderie and friendships are like a dose of good medicine for her.

We are all so proud of Angie, Andrew, Lisa and Virginia, and are forever indebted to the Sharon Towers leadership team for taking a chance and opening the door to employment for these individuals. The Feeding Assistants have brought joy to the residents and staff at Sharon Towers, and those at the facility have provided true happiness to our program participants – a “win-win” all the way around. Once the pandemic is in the rearview mirror, Angie, Andrew, Lisa and Virginia will be back in action at Sharon Towers. All four have missed their Sharon Towers friends and are excited to get back to work.



*Angie loves her job as a Certified Feeding Assistant.*

*Sustain. Encourage. Hearten. Support.* Each of these words and many more describe the positive effect our Dream Maker Society members have on the work and the people provided services by InReach.

Seventy-four individuals and families comprise the dedicated group of supporters who have pledged to provide \$1,000 per year for five consecutive years.

If you'd like to become part of this devoted group of supporters, please contact Kathi Knier (704.536.6661, ext. 418 or [kknier@inreachnc.org](mailto:kknier@inreachnc.org).) Pledges can be made monthly, quarterly or annually. United Way contributions also can be directed to InReach and count toward a Society commitment.

When asked why they decided to join InReach's Dream Maker Society, two of the group's newest members, Trina and Greg Proctor, didn't hesitate. "While we do not have a child with special needs, we see vividly the important role InReach plays in ensuring our neighbors and friends with disabilities 'live their best lives.' We want to be certain InReach is provided the dollars they need to continue to make a positive difference in the lives of so many special people."

Even if each of the 74 individuals and families provided 74 different reasons for committing to the Society, one thing is for sure – they each believe in our work – which gives us even more reason to do the very best job we can to safeguard the safety, happiness, health and success of every individual we support through InReach.

We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to these contributors, whom we honor every year at an appreciation event in the fall. We invite you to join this terrific group of people who help make so many dreams possible.

## DREAM MAKER Society

Kathryn and Darren Ash  
Susan and Robert Aulebach  
Rowena and John Barker  
Jean and Don Bass  
Candy and Darren Bing  
Corine and Bill Bockenek  
Dorothy Bonett  
Judy and Larry Boppe  
Woodson and Bill Bradley  
Elaine and William Brooks  
Bridget and Shippen Browne  
Mallen and Adam Bruggeman  
Rhett and Mike Campbell  
Maritza and David Cannady  
Bonnie and Russ Case  
Barbara and Timothy Cloninger  
Lisa and Rhyne Davis  
Amy and Alfred Dawson  
Molly and Steele Dewey  
Kristin and JD Downey  
Nancy and Bruce Downing  
Sandy and David Dupuy  
Deanna and Jon Dycus  
Meredith and Justin Elliott  
Christine and Lance Eubanks

Linda and Jeff Fink  
Patty and Alex Funderburg  
Karen and Patrick Glaser  
Lori and Dan Gougeon  
Meredith and Kelly Graves  
Patricia and Ken Greenberg  
Ellen and Patrick Hammeke  
Kelly and Jeff Hickman  
Dawn and Brad Van Hoy  
Eve and Johnny Isley  
Gale Jackson  
Mindy and Bob Jones  
Kenna and Phillip Jordan  
Chris and John Kirkland  
Kathryn and Luke Kissam  
Kathi and John Knier  
Donna and Doug Knowlton  
Peggy and Neill McBryde  
Anna and John McCoy  
Suzy and Ed McMahan  
Cassie and Cam Montgomery  
Audrey and Bill Moody  
Marie and Van Moore  
Joan and Mike Musser  
Amy and Tom Okel

Ridgely and John Phillips  
Lee and Heidi Pisacano  
Ryan Platt  
Mike and Dorothy Poell  
Bill and Susan Porter  
Trina and Greg Proctor  
Beth and Drew Quartapella  
Laura and Mark Reynolds  
Dawn and Mark Ryan  
Cary and Michael Sherck  
Carl and Jane Showalter  
Meg and Peter-Pike Sloan  
Anne Carter and Dean Smith  
Jessica and Jake Stewart  
Liz and Jeff Tarumianz  
Julie and Mike Tuggle  
Cindy and Steve Wagner  
Kristel and Jeff White  
Peeps Whitner  
Velva and Tommy Woollen  
Nancy and Terry Young  
Joan Zimmerman  
Jean Zoutewelle  
Rae and Jeremy Zupp

Upcoming  
Events



2900 Griffith Street • Charlotte, NC 28203

2ND ANNUAL



Saturday, October 3rd • 1 – 4 p.m.

Tickets: \$50 until September 20th • \$60 at the door *(subject to availability)*

Triple C Brewing Company  
Live Music • Hole-In-One Cornhole Competition  
Raffle • Beer, Wine, Sodas  
*Ticket includes all you can eat oysters, bbq, sides & 1 drink ticket.  
Children 10 and under eat free.*

*Event is contingent on Phase 3 status in North Carolina.*

Benefits **INREACH**

<https://www.InReachNC.org/PigsandPearls>

*All proceeds support the programs of InReach,  
providing services annually for over 1100 individuals with special needs.*

COME  
JOIN US!

## Mark Your Calendars

It may look a bit different, but InReach's

**DREAM MAKER**

event **WILL** take place in November!!

Our event team, led by Co-Chairs Donna and Doug Knowlton,  
is working to solidify plans for two formats for our 15th Annual Event  
– a virtual program that can be accessed via a web link and small  
“in home” gatherings.

While we don't yet know all the details, we guarantee Dream Maker 2020  
will be engaging, fun, and a program to remember!

Can you guess what our theme is?



*“Just be kind and brave.  
That's all you ever need to be.”*

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