



STAFF

Spotlight

Laura McCormick, Supervisor

Laura is a Case Management Supervisor for East Central Indiana. Laura provides case management for the FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I had never really considered a career in this field until a friend of mine began telling me about an opening for a job developer at a provider. I applied, got the job, and have never looked back. I found where I was supposed to be.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I absolutely love nature, hiking, bird watching, kayaking and can identify over 100 different species of trees and woody plants.

What do you love most about your job?

I love being an advocate and seeing others reach their goals and dreams. Living your best life is very important.

Do you have a career success story to share?

Throughout my career, I have been involved with many successful stories. This has ranged from individual successes to an agency/provider success to a state-wide initiative becoming successful. Each time, it has taken not just one person, but a team of positive people to make things happen. Being successful in a career, takes being an active part of that unstoppable team.

Do you have kids or pets?

I have 5 grown children and 3 grandchildren who I enjoy spending time with. I also have a black cat named Ping Pong.

~ Laura



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Spotlight

Nikki Anderson, Case Manager

Nikki serves Madison and surrounding counties for the FSW and CIH Waivers.

What led you to the social services field?

I was sort of born into the social services field. My older brother is on the CIH waiver, and I started volunteering with Special Olympics at 8 years old. I was there every weekend anyway and decided I might as well help, and it just sort of snowballed from there. I worked as direct support staff through college and then worked in children's mental health for the last 10 years. I decided it was time to step away and take a break from community mental health. I thought I knew exactly what I was getting into as a case manager for waiver services, but I have been pleasantly surprised to find that it is much more diverse and varied than what I expected.

What is a random fact about yourself?

My toxic trait is seeing something and thinking "Oh I can make that." I have dabbled in just about every artsy crafty thing you could think of and am even pretty decent at most of it. I really enjoy painting and scrapbooking. I also really enjoy making things with my Cricut.

What do you love most about your job?

I enjoy getting to know the individuals and families that are on my caseload. The best part about my job is getting to see individuals succeed and become more independent. I absolutely love seeing individuals excel and show the world what they can do! I also love the job flexibility, as it allowed me to be with my family when they needed me most.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

I love going camping. We have a small pop-up camper, and our dogs get excited every time they see us get out the camping bags. We have several small groups of people we like to camp with, so a trip is never dull.

Do you have a career success story?

I created a board game to go along with a curriculum I was using when I lead autism groups. It quickly spread to other locations within our company, and I was asked to make them for different locations. Eventually my co-workers encouraged me to contact the company about distribution. Since the game was based on the intellectual property of Social Thinking, I sold the production rights to them.

Do you have any pets?

I have 3 fur children: a yorkie/min pin mix named Jack, and two chihuahuas named Benny and Jasey. They're all 3 rescues.



~ Nikki



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Spotlight

Caitlyn Bernhart, Case Manager

Caitlin serves Hamilton and Boone counties for the FSW and CIH Waivers.

What led you to the social services field?

From a young age I was taught the important of The Golden Rule- to treat others as you would like to be treated. As I grew, I noticed that certain populations in our society weren't afforded the kindness and respect that they deserved, especially those with developmental or intellectual disabilities. As I went through my training to become a Music Therapist, I became drawn to that population and saw how much music could help them express themselves when words might fail. I worked as a Board-Certified Music Therapist (MT-BC) for 9 years and loved it, but recently felt called to become a more involved team member, working with these individuals to achieve the best quality of life they can have. I'm incredibly excited to learn more about being a Case Manager!

What is a random fact about yourself?

Myself and my family are Disney nerds. I've been to Disney World over 35 times (more times than years I've been alive)!

What do you love most about your job?

I love meeting new individuals and learning about their interests and desires for their life. I believe everyone has unique gifts to bring to the table and I look forward to seeing them!

Do you have a career success story to share?

As a Music Therapist I had the opportunity to work with an individual who was non-verbal and incredibly shy. He had difficulty making eye contact and when asked to make music choices he wouldn't respond in any way. After some digging into his likes and dislikes, I was able to create several original songs to present to the individual to start to engage him. Within a couple of months of working with him, he began to verbally make his song preferences known to me. We worked together for many years and by the end of our time together he was basically running the sessions, telling me in his own way what music he wanted to listen to and what topics he wanted to discuss.

Do you have any pets or kids?

We have two dogs. Oscar (a dachshund/terrier mix) and Bandit (cocker spaniel). Oscar is truly Oscar the Grouch- seriously acts like a grumpy old man- and Bandit is the wild child. We also have two children here on earth- Rose is 4 and Rhys is about to be 5 months. We also like to acknowledge our second daughter, Evelyn, who was stillborn in July of 2020.

~ Caitlin





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Kerri Felton, Case Manager

Kerrie serves Randolph and surrounding counties for the FSW and CIH Waivers.

What led you to the social services field?

I was led into the social services field because I love helping people. I love encouraging people to explore and reach their fullest potential. I love to explore and provide resources that may assist people with reaching their goals.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I have traveled abroad to China and Africa. Both were amazing, life changing experiences! Meeting the many beautiful new people and exploring the surrounding areas was truly a once in a lifetime experience!

What do you love most about your job?

Connections is an amazing place! Connections is truly about making "connections" -- with individuals, families, and community members. I love meeting new people, building relationships and listening to their own unique stories and aspirations.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

My faith, family, and friends are so important to me. I have three grown children and one granddaughter. I also have two fur babies. We love to spend time outdoors, hiking, exploring, camping, playing cards or just hanging out and laughing.

Do you have a career success story to share?

One of the many success stories I have is that I was able to help a single mom regain custody of her young son. This was truly an amazing experience to be able to work so intricately with each of them: the ups, the downs, and all the pieces of reuniting mother and son!



~ Kerrie



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Spotlight

Rebecca Pysh, Case Manager

Rebecca serves Kosciusko and surrounding counties for FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I have always felt the need to be in a field where I helped others. Growing up, I was set on being in the education field. I took a psychology course in college, and everything changed. I then added a minor of psychology and shortly after just switched my whole major. After being in the field for a couple years after school I went back and got my master's degree...and the rest is history. I have worked in a variety of social services settings and with a variety of populations and I have loved them all.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I play or have played 7 instruments over my life. I still play the piano regularly but have played a variety of others with one of my favorites being bassoon. (I wish to own another someday!) Playing the bassoon led me to partake in a trip to Europe when I was in high school with a concert band where we traveled 7 countries playing concerts for locals. It was amazing!

What do you love most about your job?

I love people and connecting with others on a variety of levels. I also love the sense of community Connections has even though we work all over the state and don't see each other regularly in person.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

I typically dabble in many things just to try them out. This year I learned how to do stained glass! Of the hobbies that I have stuck with my whole life, some favorites would be reading, golf, playing the piano, and jigsaw puzzles.

Do you have pets?

I have a white German Shepard named Rizzo. He is very quirky.

~ Rebecca



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Spotlight

Cailyn Vernetti, Case Manager

Cailyn serves Grant and surrounding counties for the FSW and CIH waivers.

What led you to the social services field?

I have known that I wanted to be a social worker since I was in high school and we did career testing. Social Work was always my number one, and when I tried to pursue a career in creative writing, I found myself drawn to helping others inadvertently. I was offered the opportunity to be a Social Services Assistant at a skilled nursing facility and I knew that this was the field I was meant to be in.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I have three dogs and three cats and just as importantly- more than three times as many plants than I have animals.

What do you love most about your job?

My favorite part about my job is that I get to encourage others to be independent and get to teach self-advocacy/utilizing one's "voice".

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

My hobbies and activities of daily living include spending time with family (this includes the pets and plants) and friends, crafts such as watercolor art/ sketching/ painting/ etc., watching anime, and playing video games.



~ cailyn