Get to Know Our New Staff!

We will now feature new staff throughout the year by asking them a few questions to get to know them better. We asked:
- What is your career background?
- What is your educational background?
- Tell us something that makes you unique.

Jennifer Burns
(Reading Recovery Teacher Leader/JO)
I have taught several years in kindergarten before my previous position as the Southeast Iowa Reading Recovery Teacher/Teacher Leader.

Mike Boneshefski
(School Psychologist/JO)
Before joining Heartland AEA, I attended graduate school at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I completed my school psychologist internship at the Derry Township School District in Hershey, Penn.

Shari Butler
(Special Education Consultant/AM)
I have taught special education for a total of 12 years and owned/operated a preschool for five years. My experience with special education is in elementary and middle school with levels 1, 2 and 3. Before joining Heartland AEA, I was working as a level 3 teacher in Waukee South Middle School.

I have a special education degree from Northeastern Illinois University. I earned my master’s of special education from Morningside College.

I have been sky diving and parasailing.

John Butz
(Math Consultant/IN)
I started my teaching career in Lake Mills, Iowa where I taught 5th grade for nine years. I then taught 5th grade for one year at Oak Park Elementary in Des Moines. I then taught 5th and 2nd grades at Jefferson Elementary in Des Moines for nine years. The past two years I was the math coach/math interventionist at Jefferson Elementary in Des Moines.

I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Northern Iowa. Currently, I am working on my master’s degree from Drake University.

I play bass guitar in a band named Mill Street Band with two former teaching colleagues and two former students.

Melissa Emanoil
(Instructional Coach/JO)
I have been a classroom teacher for 15 years, most recently a 5th grade teacher in a suburb of Chicago.

I have a degree in psychology from Indiana University and my master’s in education from Drake.

I grew up in West Des Moines and am now returning with my family after being gone for 20 years. I’m happy to be back!

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Special Olympics Rappelling Challenge Has Special Meaning for Heartland AEA Staff

On Sept. 17 nearly 100 brave volunteers rappelled almost 350 feet down the Financial Center in downtown Des Moines to raise money for the Special Olympics of Iowa. All participants in the “Over the Edge” challenge as it’s called, had to raise $1,000 to take the challenge, and the Special Olympics of Iowa estimates they raised a record-breaking $110,000 from this year’s event.

Two of those brave rappellers had Heartland AEA ties—Mindy Jost (COTA-Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant/JO) and Marissa Schletzbaum, daughter of Maureen Schletzbaum (Parent Coordinator/IN).

“I had thought about the Over the Edge Special Olympics fundraiser for over a year,” Jost said. “The day they opened the event for this year, I clicked on it without hesitation. I decided to do this for several reasons, but the main one was I wanted to do something to give back to all the families I have met and the children I have served. I have been blessed to be a part of their journey. All the money raised goes to support their events. This was the most amazing thing on so many levels! I plan to do it next year, too!”

“My daughter, Marissa, who is 20-years-old and has Down syndrome, did the rappelling for the Special Olympics Over the Edge,” Maureen Schletzbaum said. “She did it after Mindy (Jost) that day. Last year Marissa, who is a Global Messenger for Special Olympics, was there congratulating the rappellers and decided she was going to do it this year. She teamed up with Ken Clary, Iowa Highway State Patrol liaison officer for Special Olympics, to raise the needed $1,000 to do it. She had a fantastic time. Marissa said ‘I had an awesome time, and I did it for my fellow Special Olympic athletes.’”

Indianola Staff Features Agency Services at Warren County Health Fair

Kim Kirkpatrick (Early Childhood Special Education Consultant/IN), Rebecca Carver (School Psychologist/IN), Shalee Torrence (School Social Worker/IN), Kathy Teigland (Regional Administrative Assistant/IN), Marlys Gjerstad (Speech-Language Pathologist/IN) and Marla Roush (Regional Administrative Assistant/IN) represented Heartland AEA at the Warren County Health and Safety Fair on Sept. 11. Staff answered questions about AEA services and handed out brochures, early childhood developmental wheels and earplugs donated by our audiology staff. “It was great to visit with teachers, parents and young adults who said they benefited from and appreciated Heartland AEA services,” Roush said.
**Get to Know Our New Staff!**

**Kris Engler**  
(Audiometrist/IN)  
I was a substitute teacher for approximately 20 years (Why? I don’t know either!) and for 11 years I was a Pre-K associate and one-on-one. Summers I either taught Pre-K or tutored autistic kids.  

I have an elementary education degree with reading and early childhood endorsements.  

My love of scrapbooking and card making is so strong I have a room designated just for my collection of “needs.”

**Tracy Gappa**  
(School Psychologist/IN)  
This is my 16th year as a school psychologist. I spent the last 13 years working in rural mid-western Arizona, in a small town on the Colorado River. The town was surrounded by an Indian Reservation that included four tribes. My assignment included students preschool through second grade. Prior to moving to Arizona, I worked for Heartland AEA out of the Knoxville Office for two years. I truly enjoyed my time with Heartland and feel like I am “coming home!”

I graduated from the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. with a double major in English and psychology. I have a master’s degree in educational psychology and an educational specialist degree in school psychology from the University of Northern Iowa.  

While in Arizona, I was active in off-road racing for several years. I spent most of my time as a co-driver (co-dawg) in a Jeepspeed (modified Jeep Cherokee), but I did drive in a Powder Puff event. Fortunately, I was never involved in a crash or rollover (although we came close on several occasions including when a Jeep drove across our hood).

**Rachael Gettes**  
(Speech-Language Pathologist/GC)  
I completed my degree in May and am excited to begin my first job at Heartland.  

I attended both undergrad and grad school at the University of Northern Iowa.  

I enjoy traveling and recently visited London.

**Alex Glade**  
(Instructional Technology Consultant/AD)  
For the past 15 years I have been a high school social studies teacher in Omaha Public Schools.  

I earned a bachelor’s degree in social science education from the University of Northern Iowa and a master’s degree in history from the University of Nebraska Omaha.  

I enjoy camping and spending time outdoors with my wife and three sons.

**Brooke Hamann**  
(Hearing Teacher Assistant/AD)  
I just finished my master’s degree and this is my first full-time job!  

I received my bachelor’s degree from UNI in communicative disorders, and I received my master’s degree from Fontbonne University in early intervention in deaf education.  

I am the first-ever Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Assistant to be at Heartland, and I was told that I also have the longest job title at Heartland!

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Get to Know Our New Staff!

**Tori Heisterkamp**  
(Speech-Language Pathologist/AM)  
This will be my first full-time position as a speech-language pathologist, and I couldn’t be more thrilled to begin my working career here at Heartland AEA.

As an undergraduate at the University of Northern Iowa, I double majored in communication sciences and disorders & family services. I continued on at UNI and completed my master’s in speech-language pathology this past May.

I write with my left hand but do everything else with my right hand.

**Rebekah Hereth**  
(School Psychologist/AD)  
I recently finished graduate school where I worked for a tutoring organization as well as an assessment and consultation clinic. Previously, I worked as a behavior therapist at an autism center.

I have a B.A. in psychology and recently graduated from the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO (Go Tigers!) with an M.A. in school psychology.

I have traveled to every continent (except Antarctica)!

**Janet Hiatt**  
(ESL/Diversity Consultant/JO)  
Prior to Heartland AEA, I worked with the Des Moines Public Schools in many capacities including ESL teaching, professional learning for ESL and non-ESL teachers and providing regional support.

I have a B.A. in linguistics, M.S. in elementary education with a specialization in reading for ELLs, an Ed.S. in educational leadership and am currently working on my doctorate at Drake.

Both of my sons went to college this fall. My oldest is at Purdue and youngest at the University of Iowa.

**Jessica Ihrke**  
(Special Education Consultant/AD)  
I taught for one year at FBISD in Sugar Land, Texas as a level 1 special education teacher. The following three years I taught at a private school for students with significant behavior concerns in Houston, Texas. Most recently, I taught for eight years at Western Hills Elementary as a K-6 social skills/special education teacher.

I received my undergraduate degree from Waldorf College in elementary education with reading and special education endorsements. I recently graduated with a master’s in teaching degree from Morningside College.

I enjoy biking with my family, especially riding RAGBRAI with my dad and watching my kids learn to ride. I also love spending time with friends in Texas each summer!

**Rachel Jones**  
(School Psychologist/AD)  
I was employed at Great Prairie AEA for the last three years, working out of the Fort Madison and Keokuk school districts.

I attended Simpson College in Indianola for my undergrad degree and completed my graduate work at the University of Northern Iowa.

I like to knit.

**Judson Kuffel**  
(School Psychologist/AM)  
I’m fresh out of graduate school at the University of Northern Iowa. Previously I was a part-time assessment intern with AEA 267 and before that I was the head chef at the Holiday Inn in Ames. I can microwave just about anything.

I got my bachelor’s degree from Iowa State University in psychology and went right to UNI for graduate work.

I’m very, very good at Ping Pong and lawn games.

**Erica Lea**  
/Instructional Technology Consultant/JO)  
I’ve been an elementary teacher, in a few different positions, before joining the team at Heartland AEA. I taught kindergarten and Title 1 in Postville, and most recently taught 4th grade at Northeast Elementary in Ankeny.

I completed my bachelor’s degree in elementary education at the University of Iowa and my master’s degree in educational leadership at the University of Northern Iowa.

I strongly believe that schools need to be providing children with wonderful learning experiences that are preparing them for the world outside of school, which as we all know, is overwhelmed with technology. I’m anxious to help schools and teachers provide their students with this.

**Jenny Merk**  
(School Psychologist/NE)  
This is my internship year!

I went to Iowa State University for my undergrad and the University of Northern Iowa for school psychology.

**Kristyn Nobiling**  
(Early Childhood Special Education Consultant/AM)  
I was an ECSE teacher at Saydel for eight years. The last two years I have been a stay-at-home mom.

I earned my bachelor’s degree from UNI and my master’s degree from University of Phoenix.

I snowmobile with my husband in the mountains in Wyoming every winter.

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Get to Know Our New Staff!

Ashley Panno
(Speech-Language Pathologist/NE)
I began working as an SLP in 2009. My very first job was in the school setting, in suburban Memphis, TN. After one semester in the schools, I switched to the acute/skilled nursing setting. When we moved to Iowa in 2010, I began working at Skiff Medical Center in Newton. My caseload was primarily pediatric outpatient, but with adults sprinkled in here and there.

I attended Illinois State University for both undergrad and graduate school. I still have a hard time remembering that when I say ISU here it doesn’t mean Illinois State University!

I’m ALWAYS cold! Because of this I’ve been known to drink plain hot water if there are no other more “traditional” hot beverage options available.

Jennifer Pearson
(Speech-Language Pathologist/JO)
I have been a speech language pathologist in Illinois for the past 14 years serving students from birth through 21 in various settings. My previous job was in a special education preschool setting.

I have a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in speech language pathology from Illinois State University.

We just moved here from downtown Chicago! My family and I are loving our new house with a YARD!

Jane Peterson
(Speech-Language Pathologist/KN)
Earlier I worked at Heartland AEA but then I followed my husband to Michigan for the past 7 years. While in Michigan I worked in the public schools as a speech-language pathologist. I am very excited to be back at Heartland!

I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa (Go Hawkeyes) and my master’s degree from Southern Connecticut State University.

My husband and I bought an acreage in Knoxville and a tractor!

Angie Platner
(Special Education Consultant/JO)
I taught special education in the Norwalk School District for the past 20 years. It was my first teaching position out of college! For my first 13 years I was a collaborative special education teacher. I collaborated in 1st grade for five years, 2nd grade for five years, and I looped between 2nd and 3rd grades for three years. I spent the past seven years working with students who have significant disabilities in kindergarten through 5th grades.

I did both my undergraduate and graduate work at the University of Northern Iowa. I graduated with my B.A. in elementary education and learning disabilities in 1993, and with my master’s degree in special education with an emphasis in consultation in 1999.

This maybe doesn’t make me unique, but I love doing outdoor activities with my family. As a family, we boat, hike, ice fish, cross-country ski, ice skate and garden. Most recently we went to Colorado to hike. Our biggest hike was 7 miles round trip to the top of a 12,000 foot pass, Arapahoe Pass. My 8-year-old son said it best, “Mom if we can do this, we can do anything!” My family brings out the best in me!

Cari Poock
(Special Education Consultant/NE)
I taught for three years in K-4th special education in Mediapolis, one year as a 6th grade general education teacher at Charter Oak-Ute and 11 years as a 4th grade special education teacher at Carroll.

I got my B.S. from Iowa State University in elementary education and special education. I then got my master’s of education specializing in literacy from University of New England.

I have twins, a boy and a girl.

Diane Royer
(Math Consultant/GC)
I have been a middle school math teacher at a variety of schools over the past 15 years. Prior to that I served 20 years as a paralegal in both Nebraska and Iowa. For the past three years, I have served as a middle school math teacher and technology coach at Coon Rapids-Bayard.

I learned my bachelor’s in elementary education at UNI, and I earned my master’s with middle school endorsement at Viterbo.

My previous employment in the legal field combined with my musical abilities (piano/organ/percussion) and enjoyment of technology allow me to bring additional elements to my position.

Kari Shane
(School Psychologist/JO)
I have worked in the medical, mental health and educational fields prior to my employment at Heartland AEA. I am completing my last year of graduate school this year, so my most recent position before joining Heartland was a full-time student. I am very excited about joining the “real” world that doesn’t include frequent meals of macaroni and cheese and ramen noodles.

I graduated from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. I graduated with my master’s degree in May 2014, and I will complete my specialist degree in May 2015.

I collect coffee mugs from around the world, which is a perfect hobby to compliment my coffee obsession.
Get to Know Our New Staff!

Kelly Sigler  
(Reading Consultant/CA)  
I've been a classroom teacher for the last five years. I taught four years in 1st grade at East Sac County, and one year in 2nd grade for Carroll.  

I have a bachelor’s degree from UNI in elementary education and my master’s degree in education is from Morningside.  

I am the 5th generation of educators (all in Iowa!) on my dad’s side of the family!

Janelle Thompson  
(Reading Consultant/OJ)  
I taught 5th and 6th grade at Van Meter Elementary School. I taught all subject areas and most recently served as the Instructional Strategist and had Assistant Principal duties.

My undergraduate degree is from Upper Iowa University, and I have my language arts and reading endorsements. My graduate degree is in educational administration from Iowa State.

I have four teenagers; two in college and twin freshmen in high school.

Erica Thorson  
(Speech-Language Pathologist/AM)  
I have worked in both medical out-patient and in the schools before deciding to stay home with my young kids for a few years. Most recently I was working per-diem at ChildServe before deciding to return to the schools.  

I received both my undergrad and graduate degrees from the University of Northern Iowa.

I am currently teaching myself to play the piano!

Shalee Torrence  
(School Social Worker/IN)  
After graduating from the University of Iowa in 2004, I started working overseas for the Department of Defense Education Agency as a long-term substitute teacher for various grade levels/subjects at Aviano Air Base, Italy. I also worked as a full-time Youth Programs Director for the federal government overseeing the youth sports program, before/after school activities and teen program. Following my three year tour at Aviano AB, I moved to Texas with my husband on active duty orders to San Angelo, TX where I worked for the San Angelo Independent School District as a family services worker for the Head Start program.  

When my husband transitioned from active duty Air Force to the Air National Guard, we moved back to Iowa, and I worked at McCombs Middle School in Des Moines as the Boys & Girls Club Director for two years and then left this position to work in family programs for the Iowa National Guard for four years where I recently resigned from the position as the Airman & Family Readiness Program Manager at the 132d Fighter Wing. During graduate school in 2012-2013, I was a practicum student with Heartland AEA working as a school social worker intern with Amy, Pam and Emily in three different regions where I had the wonderful opportunity to work and learn from these amazing ladies and am very excited to be back as an employee!

I attended University of Iowa for both my undergraduate degree and graduate degree. I graduated with my master’s in social work in 2013. Go Hawks!!

I became a certified open water diver in 2003 while living in Okinawa, Japan.

Megan Tucker  
(Speech-Language Pathologist/AM)  
Prior to Heartland AEA, I worked at ChildServe in their Transitional Care Unit and outpatient clinic.

I earned my bachelor's degree in elementary education from William Penn University then a second bachelor's from the University of Northern Iowa in communication sciences and disorders. I continued at UNI to receive my master's degree in speech and language pathology.

I come from a large family. I have 5 brothers and 2 sisters who I call my best friends.

Annalise VandeHaar  
(School Psychologist/NE)  
This is actually my first full-time position in the field of school psychology! I have worked previously as a teachers' aide in a non-profit after-school program in Chicago, as a classroom aide in a preschool/early childhood development center and a graduate-level teaching assistant.

I completed my B.A. in psychology at Trinity Christian College near Chicago and my M.A. in school psychology at Michigan State University. I am currently working to complete my Ed.S. through Michigan State, and this position serves as my final internship year.

I love to travel and try new (and strange) foods.

Kelli Waldorf  
(Early Childhood Special Education Consultant/OJ)  
I began in the Urbandale school district during the 2007-08 school year as a special education associate. I received my first teaching position with Urbandale as an ESL teacher in 2010. I also worked as an Interventionist and then, most recently, an ECSE position.

I have an associate's degree in criminal justice from DMACC, a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Upper Iowa University and a master's degree in special education from Graceland University. I have endorsements in early childhood special education, reading, instructional strategist I, ESL, special education consultant and classroom.

I won a hula hoop contest in Okoboji!

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Aubrey Walker
(Speech-Language Pathologist/CA)

I am a recent graduate of the University of Northern Iowa. Heartland AEA is my first position since graduation, and I’m very excited to be a team member.

I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa in 2012 and my graduate degree from the University of Northern Iowa in May 2014.

Along with my major in communication sciences and disorders, I also earned a minor in theater arts from the U of Iowa. In my opinion, there’s nothing better than live theater!

Caleb Wiegmann
(Speech-Language Pathologist/CA)

I have worked as an SLP for the last 1.5 years. My last job was for Great Prairie AEA covering schools in Chariton and Wayne in southern Iowa.

My bachelor’s degree is from the University of South Dakota and my master’s degree is from Fort Hays State University.

I am a big football guy - I have coached football at the college level (University of South Dakota) and at the high school level (Albia High School). I am now the quarterbacks coach at Carroll High School. Go Tigers!

Paige Wintz
(School Psychologist/JO)

This is my first job out of graduate school as a school psychologist (internship year).

I completed my undergraduate degree at Nebraska Wesleyan University with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. I then completed my master’s degree in school psychology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I am working towards my Ed.S. degree through my job as a school psychologist at Heartland and will officially graduate from UNO next May.

I am new to Iowa. I just moved here from Nebraska. I love to wakeboard and do other water sports during the summer at the Lake of the Ozarks.

Tyler Youngers
(Instructional Technology Consultant/IN)

I taught high school social studies, coached middle school football, directed the middle school play and worked on the district technology team at Grinnell High School before joining Heartland AEA.

I received my bachelor’s degree in secondary education, social studies and vocal performance from St. John’s University in Collegeville, MN, and I received my master’s degree in instructional technology from UNI.

Although I do not have as many opportunities to sing as I have had in the past (I’m looking for new opportunities), I am a classically-trained singer and can be found singing at weddings, funerals, church and the local community theater musical if given a chance!

Welcome to Heartland AEA!
This message was sent to MaryAnn Strawhacker (Special Education Nurse/JO) and Rachelle Dawson (Regional Director/JO) by Laura Kacer, principal at Johnston Middle School.

MaryAnn, I can’t thank you enough for your presence at the 504 review meeting on Thursday afternoon at JMS. Having you there to share your knowledge and expertise greatly helped to repair a relationship with a family we have been struggling with since they enrolled their daughter.

This message was sent to JoAnn Klocke (Regional Director/CA) from Dianne Battani, assistant principal at Adams Elementary in Carroll.

Wanted to share with you what a phenomenal job Christie Crouch Babb (School Psychologist/CA) did during a recent IEP meeting. This information is true of how Christie works in every circumstance in our district. She is always thoroughly prepared for IEP meetings! She takes the time to know our students well and clearly puts in many hours of work to study and understand all attributes of the child’s needs and how to best meet those needs. This student’s needs were very involved and required many hours of preparation and meeting time! Christie went above and beyond to ensure that this meeting had a successful outcome!

This message was sent by Kevin Fangman (Executive Director of District Services/JO).

In the spring of 2014, a group of leaders from the Collaborating for Kids (C4K) Committee was asked to coordinate the rollout of a statewide training on the FAST assessment. Mark Crady (Regional Director/AM) served as co-chair for that committee, and as a Heartland AEA employee, it seemed natural to him that our agency would serve as the fiscal agent and facilitator of the registration process. Once a plan was created, the Professional Development Department began work assisting Mark with the necessary paperwork and protocols to register 2,000 educators from across the state who would attend the trainings.

Registration opened in May, and the PD Department spent countless hours dealing with e-mails, phone calls and the various other aspects of the registration process. Andrea Krier (Registrar/Licensure Assistant/JO), Carol Naylor (Registrar/Licensure Assistant/JO) and the rest of the department went above and beyond the call of duty to make this endeavor successful.

In addition to the PD Department, the Business, Operations and Administrative Assistants Departments all provided key levels of support at crucial times of the process. Brian Whalen (Business Manager/JO) and the Business Office spent extra time with contracts, purchase order requests and the other myriad of details necessary to keep us fiscally sound. Dustin Gean (Operations Manager/JO) was a miracle worker with his department arranging and providing transportation for 6,000 binders throughout the state of Iowa.

Chris Jeffryes (Executive Assistant/JO) and numerous administrative assistants were huge behind the scenes support throughout the summer printing 4,000+ name badges, organizing and setting out binders for our Des Moines trainings and keeping things organized from the beginning to the very end.

Everyone’s patience, organizational skills and desire to serve Iowa educators were second to none! Thanks for doing such an outstanding job!
This message was sent to Stacy Volmer (Regional Director/JO) by Kerri Schwemm (Speech-Language Pathologist/JO).

I just wanted to take a minute to share how much I appreciated Jason Elliott’s (Operations Worker/JO) assistance last May with moving my materials out of Mitchellville to accommodate construction on short notice. And again, he helped me move them all back into my new room! It took a lot of stress away knowing that I didn’t have to move myself!

Stephaney Jones-Vo (ESL/Diversity Consultant/JO) and Shelley Fairbairn, who leads the ESL endorsement program at Drake, collaborated as invited authors to describe and model the process of linguistic differentiation for K-12 teachers of English Learners and were published in The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics. This online journal is password protected and features well-known experts from institutions of higher learning throughout the world. Editor Carol A. Chapelle is a professor at Iowa State University.

This message was sent to JoAnn Klocke (Regional Director/CA) by Sue Ruch, principal of Fairview and Adams elementaries in Carroll.

I want to thank you for having Denise Carlson (Math Consultant/AM) and John Butz (Math Consultant/IN) provide our CGI Year 3 training this August. They work extremely well together. The relationship between Denise and John was fantastic. They were able to build on each other’s knowledge and skills. The 21 teachers who attended the training trusted both Denise and John. Teachers felt safe asking questions and participating in the activities. It was a great experience for my staff. Thank you so much!

This past summer Judy Cleveland (Technology Support & Inventory Control Specialist/JO) and other members of the Bulldog Builders community-wide youth ministry from Ogden received a 2014 Governor’s Volunteer Award. Bulldog Builders was honored with a group Volunteer Award by the Department of Transportation for participating in the Adopt-A-Highway project. Bulldog Builders has adopted a 2-mile stretch of Highway 169 south of Ogden since 2004.
In this space you can read about the great things Heartland staff members are doing professionally, to support our schools or to support their co-workers! Please send these types of good news messages to comms@heartlandaea.org

This message was sent by Lynn McCartney (Instructional Technology Consultant/JO).

Janice Walter (Central Office Administrative Assistant/JO) and I would like to express our appreciation for Maria for the positive attitude, hard work and innate joy she shares as she makes her rounds. She happily and thoroughly cleans desktops, bookshelves, waste bins, restrooms and more—all with a smile on her face and willingness to work with everyone. Maria is a welcome addition to the Heartland AEA family, and we hope she enjoys a long and successful career here at the Johnston REC.

Three groups of Heartland AEA staff members recently volunteered their time at Meals From the Heartland and one group lent their talents to Habitat for Humanity during a home build. We are proud of these staff for getting out into the community and demonstrating that “Heartland Cares!”

Those who participated in another Meals From the Heartland volunteer opportunity were Meghan Rupiper (School Psychologist/JO), Eric Weichers (School Psychologist/JO), Erin Ott (School Psychologist/JO), Nell Slusark (Special Education Consultant/JO), Denise Eslinger (School Psychologist/JO), Karlene Baskins (Special Education Consultant/JO), Nikki Jacobs (School Social Worker/JO), Sharese Beresford (School Social Worker/JO), Barb Mortensen (Special Education Consultant/JO) and Kristi Truitt (Special Education Consultant/JO).

This message was sent by Dave Wood (Regional Director/KN) and Stacy Volmer (Regional Director/JO).

We want to recognize the following individuals for their support of Behavior Capacity Building: Aaron Cook, Julie Sypersma, David Hammer, Sheree Bergstrom, Andrea Krier, Carol Naylor, Kathy Bringle, Dawn Peitzman, Lindsey Turner, Carol McDaniel, Dustin Gean, Jason Elliott, Chris Jeffries, Steve Howard, Brenda Royer, Claire Sowder, Courtney Croatt and Lynn McCartney. Your efforts are greatly appreciated by our work team and instructors!

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**Name Changes**

Bryce Carlton from Bryce Chidester  
Chelsey Mykleby from Chelsey Hammes  
Megan Schultz from Megan Stroud  
Carlcy Weber from Carly Hammes

**New Employees**

Katherine Boonstra (Parent Coordinator/JO)  
Richard Kohnert (Substitute Van Driver/JO)  
Susan Tridle (Substitute Special Education Consultant/CA)

**Thank Yous**

I wanted to thank Heartland AEA for a fantastic work experience over the past 15 years. Particularly, I wanted to thank a few people who had the opportunity to work very closely with over the years and will never forget the experiences. First, Suzanne Holmes-Bunde and I worked on a team together in Region 1 and did great things to bring the districts we served along and to partner with them. Suzanne allowed me to stay at her house when I needed to be at Exira (it was 75 miles from my home). Second, I had the pleasure of creating a training (Introduction to Assessment and Social Interaction Skills) over the past two years with Laura Rodgers, Andrea Matheson and Linda McAtie. What great collaboration, and I admire all for going “above and beyond” to work on this together. Next, I would like to thank Jerry Gruba and Tracy Kreis. This past year was a challenging one, and Tracy stepped in and provided assistance, and Jerry was incredibly caring and supportive. How can our work be completed without everyone working together? In this vain, I want to thank Dustin Gear and Jason Elliot for their help in getting things where they need to be for some of the trainings I was involved with, along with the professional development office (Carol Naylor, Andrea Krier, Kathy Bringle and Dawn Pletzman). I can’t speak highly enough about their care, concern and professionalism. Aaron Cook and Thanh Le have been absolutely helpful with technology! Also, I would like to thank Stacy Volmer and those providing Challenging Behavior and Autism support (formal CBAT team) for partnering to serve those students with the most barriers impacting their ability to access FAPE. Thanks to so many others (some I am forgetting no doubt and others who have passed away, have moved on or who have retired). We have learned from each other and supported each other, and I will always remember. Thanks for a GREAT experience!  
Former staff member Wendy Acri

**Births**

Congratulations to Abby Conrad (Speech-Language Pathologist/AD) her husband, Tim, on the birth of their daughter, Evelyn Elizabeth Conrad. Evelyn was born Sept. 9 and weighed 8 lbs. 2 oz. and was 19.5 inches long.

Congratulations to Megan Weaver (Speech-Language Pathologist/IN) and her husband, Andy, on the birth of their daughter, Leah Paige Weaver. Leah was born Aug. 18 and weighed 8 lbs. and was 21 inches long.

**Office Changes**

Mary Montgomery to KN from IN  
Kristin Orton to JO from AD  
Nicole Patton to AM from JO

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Key: AD-Adel, AM-Ames, CA-Carroll, GC-Guthrie Center, IN-Indianola, JO-Johnston, KN-Knoxville, NE-Newton, PCDC-Polk Co. Detention Center, RS-Rosedale Shelter, YESS-Youth Emergency Services and Shelter

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