

You should get to know ... Heather Deering

REGISTER STAFF • DECEMBER 3, 2009

Owner, Seniors Helping Seniors, Waukee

Job description: Seniors Helping Seniors is about helping seniors who want to remain in their own homes and stay as self-sufficient as possible. The first in Iowa, my franchise serves greater Des Moines communities by providing loving, caring, compassionate nonmedical in-home services to less able seniors and employment opportunities for active seniors who want to help. In-home services include companionship, transportation, light housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping assistance, yard work, pet care and more.

Background: I grew up in Okoboji and moved to Des Moines after high school to attend Drake University. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in public relations and later obtained my master's degree in public administration. I have worked in the insurance industry most of my professional career, most recently with Marsh Global Consumer for the last eight years.

Notable achievements: Being a full-time working mother and still having my sanity.

Why I do what I do: I wanted to provide a service that helps people feel good about themselves and in turn found a service that is greatly needed in central Iowa. By matching seniors who want to help with seniors who need a little help, both gain something valuable. Senior providers are able to feel helpful and connected to their communities, while senior receivers get the care they need while maintaining the quality of life they deserve.

What I do to get away from work: Most of my free time is taken up by my kids. However, I am a huge Iowa Hawkeye football fan, so we attend most of the home games. When I have the chance to escape, I like to run, listen to music and read my weekly People magazine.

Words to live by: I recently had a friend die at 37, and she was an avid quote collector. This one really hit home. "Nothing is worth more than this day."

The best place in central Iowa to entertain clients or colleagues: There is so much to experience throughout all areas of the city, but some of my favorites entertainment spots are Sam and Gabe's in Urbandale, Centro downtown and Dish in Clive.

One thing I would change about the Des Moines area: My husband and I moved back here a few years ago after living in central Illinois for four years. Des Moines was our first choice. Can I put a plug in to please bring back a minor-league hockey team to Wells Fargo Arena? The Stars and Chops games were a regular family activity we thoroughly enjoyed.

What Iowa can do to attract more people like me: Getting the word out that the winters aren't that bad and promote all of the activities and fun that comes with the changing of seasons. However, Des Moines is a great little secret that all of us here know about - do we really want to share it?

My mentor: I have had several mentors. The biggest one would have to be my grandmother. She is a hard worker, has a smile on her face and enjoys every day to the fullest. She is resilient, kind, funny and full of life - all traits I hope to master on my journey. My grandfather and she were my inspiration for changing my career and providing this service for seniors.

If I could do something else, I would: I always wanted to author a novel. I actually started a book several years ago and completed around 100 pages. I haven't touched it since my children were born.

If you want to contact me: Call (515) 661-2169 or e-mail me at shsdsm@hotmail.com. Also, obtain more information on Seniors Helping Seniors by visiting www.seniorshelping seniors.com.

Know someone we should get to know? E-mail Renda Lutz at rlutz@dmreg.com.



Heather Deering, right, with her grandmother, Ruth Hansen, 92, who still lives independently on her own.