

President's Award Nomination

Award Description:

The President's Award will be presented to an individual who has responded to the needs of individuals with disabilities in a significant and effective manner.

NOMINEE:

ORGANIZATION:

Include a narrative including answers to the following questions. You may also attach a maximum of three letters of support. Additional information may be attached if necessary.

- To what needs has the person responded?
- How were those needs fulfilled?
- List any personal services and/or achievements that are pertinent.
- Provide a biographical sketch of this person.
- Additional information.

NOMINATION NARRATIVE:

It is my honor to nominate Andrea Polf for this year's President's Award. As Vice President of Client Services for Arrowhead West, Inc., Andrea has worked tirelessly to support choice, independence, and self-advocacy for persons served. Her leadership has led to numerous improvements in facilities and equipment, processes, procedures, staffing, and training, supporting the needs of individuals served in Arrowhead West's Residential and Day programs, Transportation, Case Management, and Infant-Toddler Services.

After graduating from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva, Oklahoma, where she majored in Psychology and minored in Business and Speech Pathology, Andrea joined Arrowhead West. During her 28-year career with Arrowhead West, she has served as a Job Coach, Case Manager, Community Employment Manager, and Division Manager before assuming her current role of Vice President of Client Services. Through her broad range of experiences in these various positions and commitment to her own professional education and growth, Andrea has gained a deep understanding of federal and state laws and regulations, CARF standards, and other best practices in the field of I/DD services. Along with that knowledge, her positive attitude and can-do spirit inspire staff and clients to always strive for improvement and goal achievement.

One of my favorite stories about Andrea comes from early in her career. At the time, Arrowhead West had a contract in Medicine Lodge to manufacture wooden storage pallets. Facing a delivery deadline and several workers out unexpectedly, Andrea, dressed in a skirt and heels, jumped in to help build pallets for the day. I think this story encapsulates one of the things that makes Andrea so special. She is totally committed to supporting persons served and will do everything that she possibly can to help them overcome barriers and achieve their goals for choice, independence, and community inclusion. She is a truly inspiring leader and colleague.

NAME OF PERSON MAKING THIS NOMINATION: Mike Stein, President of Arrowhead West
ORGANIZATION: Arrowhead West, Inc
TELEPHONE: 620-227-8803
E-MAIL: mstein@arrowheadwest.org

*I have reviewed and agreed to the criteria for filming the awards video.
I have obtained approval for this nomination from the submitting agency's Executive Director.*

Send this form via email to mshreve@interhab.org
The deadline to submit award nominations is June 7!



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June 3, 2024

Interhab Award Nomination Committee
Re: Nomination for Andrea Polf for the 2024 President's Award

Have you ever been asked to write a letter of support for someone, and you say, "Of course! That will be easy!" And then you sit down to write the letter and you become overwhelmed with emotion and don't know where to start? Well, here I am. Overwhelmed. But the letter must be written, and the memories must continue to be made.

I'm not sure where to begin when discussing the impact that Andrea Polf has made on myself and the I/DD community. She has been an incredible force in Southwest Kansas, and we are better for it because of her dedication. Her tireless, and I do mean tireless, devotion leaves me in awe. I would say she is definitely a person who embodies the phrase, "Do as I say and not as I do," because she always takes the time to support and back up my time off from work, but when she takes time off, I continue to get e-mails from her. If I were to do that, she would kindly chide me to enjoy my time off and get away from my e-mail.

Andrea is a true believer in community involvement at all levels. She has been the momentum behind the drive for stakeholders at all levels to be involved in the lives of everyone at Arrowhead West. The amount of time and effort that she has put in is truly beautiful. She knows all the names and all the stories.

Last year at the Interhab conference, I remember the crowd laughing as John with Silfies Media regaled us with the story of his first day at an I/DD agency. We loved it and related to him. But goodness, if Andrea were ever write a book or decide to become a public speaker, the whole I/DD community would feel seen. She has been through it all and only grows in her passion for training the next generation of I/DD providers. Andrea believes in personal growth and succession planning. She is always willing to assist any I/DD stakeholder in reaching new goals and dreaming new dreams.

My brother receives services from Arrowhead West. I don't know if you have noticed this yet, but Andrea and I share the same first name. My brother affectionately calls me "Yenya". For years, I have answered to this name. The first time I heard my brother call Andrea Polf "Yenya", I was shocked and a little shaken at hearing someone else receive that affectionate nickname. But of course, she deserves it! She is a total rock star any time she walks into a room with clients present. They all gravitate towards her. Her career has been a blessing to us all.

I am honored to write a letter nominating Andrea Polf for the 2024 President's Award. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Stegman
Western Kansas Division Manager
Arrowhead West Inc.



Accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities



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May 28, 2024

Dear InterHab Awards Committee,

On behalf of Arrowhead West, Inc. (AWI), I recommend Andrea Polf, Vice President of Client Services, for the 2024 President's Award. Andrea is amazing in this position. She is dedicated to the clients we serve and truly lives our mission to **empower people to live meaningful and productive lives**.

Andrea has worked for AWI for 28 years, during which time she has worked in nearly every aspect of the agency. As she gained knowledge of each position, she continually worked on ways to improve and make a positive difference in people's lives every single day.

Andrea has worn many hats and took pride in each of them. Her official positions included Job Coach, Case Manager, Community Employment Manager, and Division Manager before she accepted the position of Vice President of Client Services 7 years ago. She currently oversees client services in our 14-county region with 3 Division offices for adults and 2 Infant-Toddler Services locations. The services include 6 Day Programs, 50 Residential locations, Case Management, Community Employment Programs, and 2 Infant-Toddler Service Programs. All these programs employ over 200 staff members that she directly or indirectly supervises and served nearly 1,000 individuals with developmental delays or I/DD.

Andrea's leadership is solid. Staff respect her and lean on her for guidance and leadership.

Andrea is an advocate for the clients we serve. She feels very strongly about their rights and the importance of staff understanding they have choices. Not only does she feel strongly about them, but she will always speak up to remind others of the importance of their rights.

Recently, Andrea and a group of co-workers met with a State Representative. We discussed many important issues facing the I/DD world. She always reminded him that the individuals we serve should have choices and rights like everyone else. She is very passionate about this subject.

Two years ago, Mike Stein became the successor to AWI's President after 40 years. Mike has done a phenomenal job learning the ropes of the organization on both the business and client side. I witnessed Andrea jumping in and guiding Mike through all aspects of the organization. She has a wealth of information and devoted herself to Arrowhead West by sharing her knowledge and expertise.

I am proud to say I have worked with Andrea for 17 years and had the opportunity to watch her soar in this organization. She is a role model for all those who work with her, and she makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. Please consider Andrea for this award, which I feel she deserves.

Sincerely,

Nadine Lampe
Arrowhead West, Inc.
Development Manager



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Dear Interhab Selection Committee,

I am writing to recommend Andrea Polf, Vice President of Client Services, for Arrowhead West, Inc., for the President's Award. I have had the pleasure of working under Andrea's guidance as a Division Manager at the Central Kansas Division for the last 7 years. During this time, I have been impressed by her dedication and leadership across the three divisions and Infants and Toddler Services, which covers a total of 14 counties. She travels hundreds of miles a week to make sure she is present and involved from Wichita to Dodge City and all the surrounding areas. On top of that there are many times she goes to meet with elected government officials or community members to help advocate for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and those who care for them.

Andrea has been apart of Arrowhead West since 1996 and has spent time as a Job Coach, Case Manager, Community Employment Manager, Division Manager, and is now the Vice President of Client Services. Andrea draws from her experience and uses it to help client support teams come together. She focuses on fostering an environment where everyone feels valued and able to contribute ideas on how we can continue to maintain the Arrowhead West vision of "Providing outstanding service that leads to making informed choices about: Independence, Employment, Community Participation, and Healthy Lifestyle." She values all the staff, is constantly trying to find ways to show appreciation and will go out of her way to tell someone how much she appreciates the work they do to help make our clients' lives better.

With all the years Andrea has been at Arrowhead West, she has built many special relationships with the clients. When she is in Wichita, she always has time for the clients, no matter what they need. It is clear to anyone who spends time working with her that they are the number one reason why she comes to work every day.

Andrea has a positivity and dedication I wish we saw in more individuals. She helps our agency set goals for the future to help our clients live full and meaningful lives for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ryan
Division Manager, Central Kansas Division
Arrowhead West, Inc.



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