



2023 RISING STAR AWARD FINALIST

RYAN ORSTAD DRCC

One of the individuals Ryan works with has been having health issues. His communication is difficult to understand, so when he needed to go to the emergency room get admitted to the hospital, Ryan was always willing to take him, stay after his shift ended, and stay with him until the early morning hours to be sure he was settled into his hospital room and the medical team had all their questions answered.

Ryan also passed along the most critical fact to ensure the hospitalizations would be a success. This fact is the individual only watches Channel 3. It was always written on the dry-erase board in his hospital room. After one more serious hospitalization, we were told the individual would pass away. Ryan stayed with him throughout the day and was there when life support was removed. At the time, none of us realized that medical teams could make mistakes, and this individual was not ready to go yet and surprised everyone by pulling through. When the individual woke up, the first call he wanted to make was to Ryan.

During COVID, one of the individuals at Birch could not continue with his monthly family dinner. When the family dinners started back up again, Ryan was eager to help transport the hour drive each way so the family could get together again. The first dinner had over 30 family members there, and Ryan didn't know a single one of them, yet he was able to ensure that the individual could reconnect with his family. The monthly suppers are now back on, and Ryan is learning more about the extended family members each month.

Ryan started working soon after he graduated from high school. He worked for a couple of weeks and became everyone's favorite staff. He always listens to the guys at Birch, and they know he cares about what they have to say. One of the individuals loves Elvis and purchased a pair of gold-rimmed glasses like Elvis wore. About a week later, Ryan came to work with the same pair of glasses. Instead of creating a hierarchy between staff and the individuals, he does all he can to make them feel like they have all of the decision-making power and focus on the similarities rather than differences between him and the guys at Birch. Ryan's rapport with the guys is natural and shows his caring personality.