

NETWORK

News from Sertoma Centre, Inc

Sertoma's First Executive Director passes away at age 92

Richard "Al" Watterworth was the Executive Director from 1971 to 1993

With sadness, Sertoma Centre shares the news of the recent passing of a dear friend, colleague, and former Executive Director, Richard "Al" Watterworth, at the age of 92.

Al served as the Executive Director when Sertoma opened its doors in 1971. Initially known as the Sertoma Job Training Center, he oversaw the agency through two decades of name changes, facility expansion, and program growth before retiring in 1993.



*Al Watterworth,
courtesy of Schuler
Funeral Home,
Hendersonville, NC*

In the early seventies, three area Sertoma clubs saw the need for a resource that provided employment and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The founding clubs –Action Sertoma Club, Evergreen-Beverly Sertoma Club, and POW-R Sertoma Club– opened the facility at 4343 W. 123rd Street with the help of land donated by the Lombard family. Al was appointed Executive Director due to his expertise originating at the St. Coletta School (Lt. Joseph Kennedy School) in Palos Park, now in Tinley Park.

Much of Sertoma's early progress was a direct result of the dedication of its Executive Director. As a tribute to his contributions, Al was a recipient of the esteemed Service to Mankind award in 1973. He was selected for this honor for his deep regard for those in need and for personifying Sertoma's maxim "Service to Mankind." He was lauded for working well past five o'clock, five days a week, and devoting extra days to accomplish the goals of the training center. His obituary justly describes his time at Sertoma. "His selfless, life-long devotion and commitment in helping and supporting people with disabilities resulted in placing hundreds of Sertoma clients in satisfying, self-sustaining jobs and careers offering hope, dignity, and

self-worth. He was directly responsible for improving thousands of lives."

Born and raised in Chicago, Al and his wife Louise relocated to North Carolina after his retirement. He served in the Army and attended the University of Illinois. After volunteering as a Big Brother for the Cook County Public Aid Department, he felt called to help those in need and began his time at The Kennedy School as Associate Director.

Sertoma is heralded as an outstanding center of its kind in the country, with much of that owed to Al's leadership. Under his direction, Sertoma Centre grew over time, and the agency still offers many programs that started with his dedication and vision.

He was succeeded by Gus van den Brink, who has filled the position of Executive Director for over 30 years. There have only been two Executive Directors in the 50+ year history, Watterworth and van den Brink.

Special thanks to Ernest Wulff, Past President, POW-R Sertoma Club, for this story.



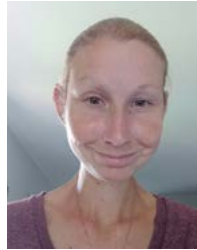
Al interacting with Sertoma Job Training Center Consumer

Meet Our Sertoma Staff

Jen Schmuhl is an integral member of the CMHC Staff and someone you should know

The mission of Sertoma Centre is to provide opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve personal success. This mission is carried out through many different programs and services, but without the staff dedicated to supporting our Consumers, these successes could not be achieved.

Today, we would like to introduce you to one of these staff members, Jen Schmuhl.



Jen Schmuhl

Jen is an Integrated Health Manager with Sertoma's Community Mental Health and Counseling (CMHC). In this role, she leads Care Coordination efforts across CMHC, including coordinating and facilitating psychiatry services for Consumers. She also serves as Sertoma's lead clinical liaison to managed care organizations (MCOs), Integrated Health Homes (IHH), and The Illinois Health Practice Alliance (IHPA).

While the position of Integrated Health Manager is new for Jen, she is not new to Sertoma. Jen has worn many hats and been in numerous roles in the ten years she has been with Sertoma, all in service to our Consumers. Her penchant is any position in which she can help advocate and assist people, especially those who might struggle if they were not provided with assistance and direction by our agency.

A people person by nature, the opportunity to get to know, work with, and help Consumers and Staff members is very fulfilling for Jen. She is most proud of the psychiatry services she helps link our Consumers too. She explained, "I am grateful for and inspired by the Consumers and Staff that are a part of our agency. I learn so much each and every day; I am truly grateful to be a part of such an amazing agency! Quality psychiatric services are very scarce, and I am happy that I am a part of the coordination and efforts that go into offering this service to our Consumers."

Jen strives to help expand mental health services/outreach and to educate the community about mental health. "I could go on and on about the services that CMHC/Sertoma offers. However, it is truly the employees that drive the amazing programs/services we offer to the community."

She feels CMHC strengthens the communities it serves in so many ways through the comprehensive and quality programs offered to communities that need it the most. Adding, "Sertoma is one of the very few Community Mental Health Centers that offer quality and free programs and services to the community. And our community education program does an amazing job of providing education seminars that strengthen the community."

"I wish people would be more open-minded about individuals with mental illness. There is still a huge stigma in our society about individuals with mental illness. Every day I try to break down this stigma by educating the community about all of the amazing services we offer and the Consumers that take part in these programs. Recovery really is possible, and people can change if given the chance!" said Jen.

Given how busy her time is at Sertoma, people are usually surprised to know Jen has also worked at Starbucks for over 16 years. She always jokes that she is a Mental Health Advocate by day and a Barista by night. But thanks to this connection to Starbucks through Jen, Sertoma's CMHC was a recipient of a \$1,000 Starbucks Foundation's Neighborhood Grant.

**"Train your mind to see the
good in every situation" - believes Jen**

Jen enjoys participating in Yoga and aspires to obtain her Yoga Teacher training certificate someday. And if she could have a superhero power? She would choose to heal the sick. That, and the ability to be in two places at once. Jokingly saying, "I am so busy and would love to be able to duplicate myself so that I can accomplish more."

Her mantra is "Train your mind to see the good in every situation," and she treasures the time spent with family. And although Wisconsin with her mom is a favorite place for Jen, you may have to look for her in a warmer climate when she leaves Sertoma. Hopefully, that will be decades from now, as her contributions to helping the Consumers at Sertoma is invaluable.

Sertoma Heroes Cook-off Chef's Brush with Fame

Stickney firefighter Dominick Iovino appears on Food Network show

From the humble beginning as a First Responder Chef at Sertoma Centre's annual Heroes Cook-Off event, Dominick Iovino can now add TV stardom to his accolades. He recently competed on an episode of the new "Big Bad Budget Battle" on the Food Network and agreed to tell us about this unique experience.



*Contestant
Dominick Iovino,
as seen on Big
Bad Budget Battle,
Season 1.*

The Stickney Fire Department Lieutenant has been a cook at the firehouse for as long as he's been there – almost 23 years. "My interest [in cooking] was immediate. We have a few really good cooks there, and I wanted to be in that club," Dominick said. Laughingly adding, "My favorite dish to make is lasagna with its layers of ooey-goey meaty goodness."

Learning about the Food Network opportunity through a Facebook friend, Dominick decided to take a shot. "I would be lying if I said I never thought of becoming part of the food network family," he admitted. Overall, he feels the audition was pretty easy, consisting of emails, pictures of his dishes, a video chat, and a few phone calls.

The premise of the Big Bad Budget Battle show is to transform everyday affordable ingredients into mouthwatering meals on a budget. Each episode features three home cooks in two rounds of judged challenges. Hosted by The Pioneer Woman, Ree Drummond, the cook

with the best-tasting and cost-saving dishes is named the episode winner.

"It is very different from cooking at the firehouse and the [Heroes Cook-off] event. It is fast-paced, and you need to know what you want to do and do it asap. At the firehouse and the event, I already have a plan and know what I want to do. On the show? You need your head on straight," he recalls.

Despite the 8-10 hours of filming, he is glad to have done it and says he would do it again in a heartbeat. "It was not hard per se but challenging. There are a million different things going through your mind," he said.

"You want everything to be just right; you have to think on your feet. I learned I need to be more mindful of spending!"

**"Now I REALLY know why my wife doesn't
let me shop!" - exclaimed Dominick**

During the show, the cooks are tasked with shopping for the ingredients they need for their themed meals. In Dominick's episode, the cooks had to make a day's worth of meals on a \$30 budget, including a brunch and enough leftovers to make dinner. Dominick ended up putting ingredients back to stay with the allowance, regretting the decision later during his meal prep, explaining, "I would only change one thing I did on the show...I would have kept the tortillas!"

He thanks the Food Network for giving him a chance to showcase his personality and cooking abilities, especially on camera. In the end, he was not selected as a winner on the Big Bad Budget Battle show, but he has won many times over at Sertoma's Heroes Cook-off, and we are glad to welcome his talent back year after year.



Dominick at Sertoma's Hero's Cook-off event, May 2022



*Dominick grilling during
the Hero's Cook-off event,
May 2021*

SPECIAL THANKS

Shout out to everyone who supported the POW-R Sertoma Club's recent Candy Days fundraiser and the Alsip Community Garage Sale Sertoma participated in. These two events collectively raised nearly \$4,000 for our programs and services and would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers. Thank you!

UPCOMING EVENTS



Giving Tuesday Campaign November 15 - December 15

This year our theme is "Connecting to the Community," and our fundraising goal is \$25,000 to begin a fund to support community integration for people with disabilities. For community integration to be a long-term success, persons with disabilities must have equal access to programs and incorporate various activities, instruction, and services. Without enough support, Sertoma Centre cannot offer the programs and activities that are vital to successful community integration.

Remember, giving is not about making a donation; it's about making a difference! Learn more about how to support Sertoma on Giving Tuesday at sertomacentre.org/event/giving-tuesday-2022/



Holiday Bazaar 2022 December 2 @ 9:00 am - 7:00 pm

Sertoma Centre's Holiday Bazaar is back, bigger and better than ever. Stop by on December 2 from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm at our 127th Street location, 4100 W. 127th Street, for homemade crafts, Christmas decorations, sweet treats, and much more. The Holiday Bazaar features one-of-a-kind, modestly priced gifts for everyone on your list, including you! Shoppers will enjoy a variety of holiday craft booths.

Proceeds from this event will support individuals with disabilities at Sertoma Centre.

For more info or to inquire about volunteering or being a vendor, contact Gwen at grucker@sertomacentre.org or 708-730-6210.

SAVE THE DATE

Housewares Super Sale April 1-2, 2023, 9:00am–5:00pm

A great way to stock up on housewares while supporting our mission. We are one of five organizations receiving donated items from vendors attending the Inspired Home Show. These new items are sold at the Super Sale, raising much-needed funds for the programs and services at Sertoma. Volunteer opportunities available.

Heroes Cook-Off May 20, 2023 5:00–9:00pm

This fun event raises money for Sertoma Centre AND celebrates local First Responder Superheroes. First-responder Chefs vie for bragging rights and judges' votes while guests sample the delicious entrées prepared by these heroes. Includes celebrity judges, dancing to classic rock-n-roll hits, and funtastic children's activities. Sponsorships available.