

Central Iowa Networking

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You should get to know...

BRENDA HUMMEL

Client service manager,
VW Advisors LLC,
West Des Moines

Business description: Our mission is to change the way investors create wealth by eliminating the speculation and costs of active management. At VW Advisors we value honesty, integrity and continuous commitment to our clients.

Background: I graduated from the University of Northern Iowa with a bachelor's degree in criminology, then moved to the Des Moines area in 1997. I worked for a large electronics retailer, then spent 10 years as an administrator at the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. I joined VW Advisors earlier this year.

Notable achievements: I am the proud single parent of two amazing children, Anthony and Andrea. When Andrea was just 5 months old, she began to have seizures and was eventually diagnosed with infantile spasms, a form of epilepsy. Andrea is nonverbal and nonmobile, and she receives several types of therapy weekly. Now my goal is to raise awareness and educate others about disabilities and special needs.

How I give back to the community: My life has

involved many amazing people who have helped me through tough times, so now I'm paying it forward. One way I have chosen is to sponsor a child through World Vision, and this fall I will be a "Parent as Presenter" speaker to address those coming into the job field of working with special needs.

Best business book I've read lately: "Rhinceros Success: The Secret to Charging Full Speed Toward Every Opportunity" by Scott Alexander. "A rhinceros is nothing but attitude. ... We do have the attitude that we are going to succeed, despite the obstacles," he says.

What I do to get away from work: My son is very active in sports, which keeps us busy. My daughter also participates in Special Olympics. I advocate and raise awareness for epilepsy and special needs through fundraisers and social media.

Words to live by: I once asked a man in his 80s what he did to get through each day, and he replied: "I think good thoughts." I have since used this as my online tagline and motto for life; I even created www.ithinkgoodthoughts.com.

One thing I would change about the Des Moines area: I would love for Des Moines to have an amusement park like Morgan's



Brenda Hummel is an advocate for children with special needs and disabilities. She's shown here with her son, Anthony Capaldo, and her daughter, Andrea Capaldo, who has infantile spasms, a form of epilepsy. SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

Wonderland in San Antonio, an ultra-accessible family fun park designed with special-needs individuals in mind.

What I would do if I could do something else: I would become a stay-at-home mom and continue to "pay it forward." I would spend more time advocating, educating and raising awareness for my daughter

and others with disabilities and special needs.

To contact me: Visit my website or email me at brenda@vwausa.com.

— Kirsten Jacobsen

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