OUR **Mission** ...

TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA
BY PROVIDING REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS.

ANNUAL REPORT 2011
The year 2011 began with some discouraging news. The recession was having an impact on available work opportunities and the state was projecting large revenue shortfalls. As we moved toward the summer months our work contracts began picking up and really stayed strong through the remainder of the year. In July we dealt with the “state shutdown,” but we were able to keep all our programs going with the exception of vocational evaluation and competitive placement, which started up after the state government was up and running again.

For the third year in a row we did receive reductions in our state funding rates. Although the reductions were small, when funding is reduced and costs continue to go up you do “have to do more with less.” Most of the responsibility “to do more with less” falls onto our staff. ABC’s staff did a remarkable job dealing with the challenges of the state shutdown in July and the ongoing impacts of funding reductions.

There were several major accomplishments that occurred in 2011. One of the most notable was the establishment of the Project Assistance Center (PAC) with Mayo Clinic. The center is located within the Mayo Systems Support Services Department and provides work for 14 ABC participants on a daily basis. The job entails digital imaging of pictures and documents for many of the departments within Mayo Clinic. ABC appreciates the support and training that has been provided by many of the staff at the Mayo Support Center to make this project a success.

The Ability Built Computer program, which began in the early fall of 2010, really took off in 2011 with the rate of sales doubling from 2010. A big boost to this program came to the program when IBM provided financial and human resources to make the IBM Day of Caring a huge success for the entire community. The June event resulted in over 50 IBM volunteers helping out to provide 150 refurbished computers to individuals who may not otherwise be able to afford technology. In addition, IBM provided ABC with nearly $15,000 in grant money to improve and increase the production of refurbished computers.

In December of last year we moved our Ability Options program back to the main ABC building in Rochester. The program had been operating in the Valhalla Plaza for nearly five years. Because transportation and other administrative support services are housed in the main ABC building, it is much more efficient to also house the program in the main building. The focus of the program will continue to be to provide services that are community based.

Thus despite some major causes for concern in the first half of the year and ongoing challenges, 2011 was again a very successful year for ABC. We want to take this opportunity to thank our funders, business partners, donors, stakeholders, volunteers, Board of Directors and staff for making this success possible.
**DEVELOPMENT**

Highlights ...

- IBM worked with Ability Building Center and its Ability Built Computer program sponsoring a day that provided volunteers from IBM helping sell and demonstrate over 150 computers to families in the Rochester area. In addition to the volunteers and sponsorship, IBM also donated $10,000 to the Ability Built Computer program to offset costs of organization and expansion.
- Ability Building Center received an estate gift of more than $62,000.
- Mayo Clinic donated furniture with a cost of $5,000.
- The Minnesota Star program provided grants and equipment in the amount of $11,954.47 to procure and maintain assistive technology for the People Achieving Change through Technology (PACTT) program, and to cover expenses of continuing PACTT as one of three state wide regional resource centers for assistive technology.
- The annual ABC golf tournament and auction rose over $60,000 in revenue from golf sponsors, golf registrations, donations and auction items.
- Memorial gifts and gifts of recognition in excess of $8,700 were received in the names of friends and loved ones.
- Charter Media again provided opportunities for Ability Building Center to air close to $28,000 in television spots throughout the year promoting program participant’s work abilities. KTTC donated television air time to promote the golf tournament. KAAL also provided opportunities for Ability Building Center to reach out to the surrounding communities.
- Additional contributions to ABC over the year of over $136,000 were received in a variety of ways for use in programs to help improve the quality of life in Southeastern Minnesota by providing rehabilitation and employment services for persons with disabilities and other special needs.
- Houston County operations received $19,119 in donations and contributions during two fundraisers held in Houston County.

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**2011 FINANCIAL STATEMENT**
(unaudited revenue)

**Revenue:**
- Trade Sales & Community Contracts: $3,201,853
- Program Service Fees: $7,446,804
- Contributions: $331,124
- United Way Allocations: $107,564
- Other Income: $153,636
- Investment Income: -$17,971
- **Total Revenue:** $11,223,010

**Program Services Expenses:**
- Vocational Development: $182,405
- Center Based Employment: $3,062,811
- Ability Enterprises: $2,364,663
- Abilities Unlimited: $385,949
- ABC Works: $2,108,170
- Community Based Employment: $1,952,085
- **Total Program Services:** $10,056,083

**Supporting Services:**
- Management and General: $782,362
- Development: $263,330
- **Total Supporting Services:** $1,045,692

**Total Expenses:** $11,101,775

**Change in Net Assets:** $121,235
For over 55 years, Ability Building Center has offered people who have disabilities as well as other barriers to employment a full offering of programs and services designed to assist them in meeting their personal measure of success. Through the creation of solid relationships, opportunities are created, people learn new vocational skills, independence is realized, businesses benefit, and staff are rewarded in so many ways.

As you read through the Program Update, you will find information and data about the programs Ability Building Center offers. Don’t miss, however, the real story about people who are getting jobs, developing self-worth, and becoming part of their communities. There are too many stories to be told of the hard work and efforts to achieve their personal and employment goals in this limited space. Some experience significant life changes, while others may experience a slower pace of change.

“I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed.”

~ Booker T. Washington

Against the gloomy economic conditions and reduced government financial support, Ability Building Center has continued to provide quality services to people with disabilities and other needs in Southeastern Minnesota stakeholders have come to expect. However, we do recognize that behind any success, there are many stakeholders whom have significant involvement in our success, providing support and encouragement. Often these include county social service personnel, Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff, employers, and of course, family and friends.

Stakeholder satisfaction with the Ability Building Center services remains high and reflects the levels seen in years past; consistently ranked high in meeting a person’s individual goals, expected outcomes established by referral sources, and the person’s team. Surveys are distributed throughout the year to stakeholders and the feedback is used by program staff as it comes in to the agency to make adjustments to programming as necessary.

In addition, several of the programs have held dialogue sessions with some stakeholders in order to address their suggestions for improving services. We believe this has contributed a great deal to program success and stakeholder satisfaction in 2011.

In 2011 Ability Building Center served 841 people. Supported Employment continues to represent the largest group of individuals served by ABC, followed by our Center-based program. The demographics of those served by ABC remained relatively unchanged from year-to-year, as persons served with developmental disabilities and mental health concerns made up a significant portion of those served.

Accessibility to programs and services is often one comment many stakeholders make about Ability Building Center. Variety in the programming offered, meaningful community employment, as well as a seamless transition for people progressing through programs of ABC is also a frequent reason why stakeholders select Ability Building Center.

Opportunities for those we serve were very strong in 2011, with the support of local employers who maintained and/or increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities despite the poor economic conditions. While many community jobs center around the service industry, opportunities have been created for a number of individuals working onsite at the Mayo Clinic facility digitally imaging clinic documents.

The Ability Built Computers project has provided a source of training for people in computer teardown, testing, and sales. Those working in this area benefit from interaction with our dedicated volunteers, as well as with the community when customers come to ABC to purchase a computer, have their computer repaired, or just require extra assistance.

The second half of 2011 proved to be much more positive than expected with the mid-year state shut down. DT&H programs, including ABC Works suffered a 1% funding cut effective September 1st. Although the cut impacted overall budget projections, DT&H programs received the smallest decrease of all disability-related programs, and was much less than anticipated. However, during
the state shut down, there were limited work opportunities available. Although challenging, meaningful alternative activities were developed, such as fishing and boating activities two times per month through an agency in La Crosse WI.

The **Options to Work** program in Houston County expanded from one day per week to three days per week and focused on community integration.

In-house work opportunities also improved during the second half of the year. A contract with Infastech, provided a packaging job that offered productive work for participants with varying skill levels. A second contract with VO2fx which started in December appears to have on-going packaging/labeling opportunities that will carry over into 2013 for ABC's Houston County programs.

The **Community Based School Employment** program has provided several students this year with vocational exploration needed to determine future employment goals. Each student has experienced 3-4 varied types of work this school year. Students, their support teams, and ABC work together to determine areas of interest for each rotation. There were 8 graduates in October and 1 in November of 2011. All of the graduates in June of 2011 and in November of 2011 have selected ABC as their choice for employment programming.

**Abilities Unlimited** (AU) had a good year overall as the state shut down had little noticeable impact on staffing and programming. Over the past year AU has grown in the numbers served by the program and with current participants choosing to increase the number of days they are receiving AU services each week. The slow economy has affected the amount and type of contract work available to for people in the program, but everyone interested in working has been able to find some work.

Reflecting upon 2011, Ability Building Center opened many doors for people with disabilities seeking employment and other services. Despite the fact that people with disabilities and other barriers to employment typically are found to be unemployed at a higher rate than persons without disabilities, Ability Building Center successfully created positive outcomes for those we served. Ability Building Center remains committed to providing accessible, effective, and meaningful services to persons with disabilities in our community. Our success lies not only with our dedicated and skilled staff, but our volunteers who devote their talents so that Ability Building Center can realize its Mission. While it may be difficult work at times to achieve successful outcomes, Ability Building Center remains committed to the success of those we serve, and the 2011 results demonstrate our commitment.

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, “I will try again tomorrow.”

~Mary Anne Radmacher~
A tale of three parts

PART 1
Corey Groves began working at Woodland Industries in 2001. Utilizing Woodland’s Job Placement Services, Corey tried a variety of community jobs including: a school crossing guard, a dishwasher and a custodian. Although Corey did well at each site, it wasn’t quite the right match for him until he started working at Rud’s Trucking in Caledonia. Currently, Corey works 35 hours per week, washing trucks, running for parts and doing miscellaneous janitorial work for Joe Rud Trucking. Corey is a direct hire, aiming to get his CDL license so he can someday drive semi trucks. Corey’s favorite part of his job is working with the public on a daily basis. Corey says that the visits he receives from Woodland staff along with the natural supports he receives at his job keep him on track and successful at work.

PART 2
With support from Woodland Industries in 2010, April McCollum began her work experience program in the community doing custodial crew work and as a dining room attendant at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. When April moved to Caledonia, she decided not to commute to her job in Wisconsin. Because of April’s versatility, she easily transitioned into general production work at Miken and Woodland Industries. She also became a valuable custodial crew member at the Haulers, Law Office and Ag Center. April says she has found her niche at work and says her favorite job is working in the Twice Is Nice store. April says she likes to sort clothing, jewelry, and miscellaneous items as well as meeting and helping all of the customers. April appreciates all of the work skills she has developed through her Woodland Industries experience. April was selected by her co-workers as, “Woodland Industries Employee of the Year 2011”!

PART 3
As fate would have it, Corey and April met at Woodland Industries and the rest is history! So not only are we congratulating the two of them on their successful career endeavors but we also have the honor of announcing their recent marriage in January. Congratulations Mr. and Mrs. Corey Groves!!! May you continue to follow your dreams, grow with your life together and enjoy your vocational experiences!

Congratulations!

Steve Hulbert has been working with Ability Building Center since May 2005; he has made many improvements while at ABC. Steve was awarded the prestigious Lowry Award in Rochester in February 2012. The Lowry award recognizes participants with excellent work skills and attitude, Steve exemplifies these traits. He has worked at many community sites during his time with ABC some of them include: Mayo Waste Recycling, Guest House Inn and Suites, Courtyard Marriott and the Stewartville Schools. When he was younger Steve worked independently as a Paraprofessional for special needs children with several local school districts. He enjoyed helping students and helping them do things they wouldn’t normally be able to do. Steve felt that was a very rewarding job. Some of his hobbies are participating in Special Olympics track in field and bowling. He went to the State games for bowling, winning fifth place. He has worked as a security guard at a local race track; also he had driven a race car for three years in Lansing. Steve enjoys running 5k races when they are available. Steve has a 10 year old son named Dale that he has every weekend who loves going to the race track. Steve says “Spending vacations together is a joy and spending the weekends together is highlight of my week.” Thank you Steve for your dedication to your work and thank you for working towards your goals at ABC.
Thank You!

2011 Benefactors & Donors

The Benefactors Circle was established in 1994 to honor key leaders in the ABC mission. Donors who give cumulative gifts of $1,000 or more are recognized at 5 different levels. Listed below are our new Benefactors and those who have achieved a new level of giving in 2011.

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Names in bold are our Benefactors.
Ability Building Center’s success over the years is greatly attributed to the leadership of its board members.

Board: Back Row: President Tom Bergquist, Angela Murphy, Tom Murphy, Middle Row: Judy Tollefsrud, Vice President Alice Adamson, Kreg Kauffman, Front Row: Secretary Patty Simcox, Steve Kann and Dick Quinn.

Not pictured Treasurer Roger Dearth
For all of the latest information about Ability Building Center visit our interactive website.

www.abcinc.org

You can register to receive newsletters, annual reports and program updates electronically.

We strive to be as accurate as possible; if you notice an error or omission, or would like to make a contribution, please contact Laurie Kellagher, Development Director at (507) 535-7105.